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Hunger funds part of cooperative ministry effort in Marshall County

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Sometimes it takes the honesty of a child to open our eyes to the needs around us and remind us how much we take for granted.

That happened not so long ago for Linda Henry, executive director of Marshall County Christian Services (MCCS). Henry was completing a family intake interview and enjoying the playful 3-year-old who accompanied her parents. Henry thought she had just the thing to make the little girl's day — a big box of cereal to add to the family's food box. Henry was overwhelmed when the little girl whispered a question in her mother's ear: "Can we buy some milk?"

Henry said, "I thought I'd really done great with that box of cereal, but I never thought about them not

having milk to go on it or money to buy any."

Henry called the local grocery store and told them she was sending someone down to get a gallon of milk. The MCCS now offers a milk voucher as part of their "Got Food? Pantry" program, a ministry funded primarily by offerings to Southern Baptist Global Hunger Relief, formerly known as the World Hunger Fund.

Hunger occurs at every level of our society. An estimated 900 million people worldwide go hungry daily. In the United States, 9 million people, including 3 million children, live in homes where meals are frequently skipped. Almost a million Alabamians struggle daily with hunger.

The offerings to Global Hunger Relief combat hunger in Alabama and around the world.

In Marshall County hunger

funds help feed approximately 1,500 people each month. Some of those are participants in Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC), a ministry of national Woman's Missionary Union with sites around the state, including two in Marshall

County. The goal of CWJC is to provide a Christian environment for women to learn job and life skills. The 15-week program requires a commitment of three days each week.

Since many participants are single moms with children, meeting the program requirements and their family's needs can be challenging. Hunger funds help fill in the gaps, Henry said.

"Every woman who comes into the program has needs. One is that she needs to get a job, but if she's in our classes three days a week, it's really hard. So we try to help with food and other things she's

struggling with during that time," Henry said.

Marshall County's CWJC has experienced tremendous success, showing that the cooperative effort is working. In the past year, 67 women have graduated from CWJC. All 67 have professed Christ, either as rededications or salvations. Most have completed their GEDs and continue to give back to the program by volunteering for MCCS.

'God is great'

Amanda Williams is a CWJC graduate who continues to help as much as she can. When she came to MCCS, she was a single mother of three young children, ages 10, 6 and 3. She didn't have a car and her prospects of finding a job were slim because she didn't have a high school diploma.

Williams signed up for CWJC in February 2013 and graduated in May 2013. She finished her GED in May 2014 and is now employed. Without the help of the MCCS, it wouldn't have been possible, she said.

(See 'Meeting,' page 7)

Global Hunger Sunday is Oct. 11.

For more information, visit gobgr.org/hunger.

COMMENT



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A Church Is Like ...

The way we describe something is important. A description shapes our thinking, reveals our expectations. If something is described as being “tight as a drum” we immediately form certain images and anticipate certain results from whatever is being described.

Descriptions of the Church are important. They convey expectations. Descriptions also indicate the goals and priorities people work toward to fulfill those expectations.

Mark D. Roberts of the Foundation for Laity Renewal offered five common descriptions (outlined below) of the Church in a recent essay. Each can be seen in most local congregations. Each description conveys a truth but one must ask if any of the five descriptions expresses an adequate description of the Church.

A church is like a store.

There are different kinds of stores and so different kinds of churches. One church may be a “Purpose Driven Church.” Another may be a liturgical church. Another might concentrate on the sacraments while still another is charismatic.

Churches come in different sizes. Large membership churches might be like big box outlets. Smaller membership churches might be more like a neighborhood mini-mart. The big box might offer a wide range of programs and services. The mini-mart may be limited to basics. Both market their services in ways that emphasize their respective strengths hoping to attract “customers.” If one is satisfied by a particular outlet, one will likely continue to frequent the establishment.

The store model might work well for the narcissistic who thinks everything is about him or her but church is not supposed to be about “me and mine.” A church is supposed to be a fellowship. It is supposed to be a place where people are committed to one another as



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

well as to Christ, the head of the Church. The dual commitments to Christ and to His Church move one beyond individual consumerism to life-giving community.

A church is like a hospital.

When we are physically sick, we go to the hospital. When we are spiritually sick or face life’s challenges we turn to the Church.

Hospitals offer specialized services for particular ailments and so do churches — marriage preparation, parents-to-be classes, grief support ministry, recovery groups, age-related activities. Hospitals and churches both offer people with specialized training to help cope with the situation and care for the suffering.

Jesus cared for the physically sick and the sin sick. But comparing a church to a hospital has some shortcomings. A hospital is a place. A church reaches far beyond the boundaries of its property. A hospital is staffed by medically trained personnel. A church reaches to wherever its members compassionately touch the hurting in Jesus’ name. One leaves a hospital when one’s problem has been resolved. Even though a particular crisis may pass, one is never “healthy” enough to walk away from the Church.

A church is like a school.

Like schools, churches offer classes for various age groups. Churches provide curriculums and teach participants everything from doctrine to history to archaeology to foreign languages to ethics.

Like school, people are urged to memorize. And just as parents expect schools to teach children basic skills, parents often bring the children to church to ensure they receive basic moral training.

Teaching is a vital part of the church’s ministry. Teaching is listed in Romans 12:7 as 1 of 6 ministry gifts. The Great Commission urges Jesus’ followers to “teach all I have commanded you” as they go into all the world.

Teaching is important so one will not be blown off course “by every wind of doc-

trine.” But the purpose of teaching is more than learning facts and skills. The purpose of teaching in the church is to transform lives into the image of Jesus. That means people are called out of themselves into a life-changing relationship with God and with God’s people — the Church.

A church is like a concert.

At a concert, people file into an auditorium to be entertained or stimulated by those on stage. Positive emotions can overflow. One may clap or sing along or dance to the music. But the stimulus comes from what happens on stage. When the event is over one leaves feeling satisfied and looking forward to the next performance.

Churches can be guilty of being like a concert when what happens on stage is most important, when emotional expression is the primary emphasis. Cultivating love, joy, peace and hope through worship is a good thing.

But worship is not about what happens on the platform. Christian philosopher and theologian Soren Kierkegaard used the analogy of the theater to describe the worship experience. He explained that God is the audience in worship, those in the congregation are the performers. The pastor, musicians and others on stage are prompters helping the congregation offer the gift of worship to God.

There is a difference between a concert and worship.

A church is like a club.

Clubs have members and so do churches. Clubs have regular meetings like churches. Club leadership goes to members just like in churches. Both clubs and churches do service projects and offer social gatherings. Oftentimes one’s friends are drawn from within the membership of a club or a church. Either can become the center of one’s activities.

There are some not-so-flattering similarities too. Church membership can produce a feeling of entitlement just as in a club. One can expect certain privileges and services because one is a member. Churches and clubs can both be “closed” to “outsiders.”

Yet a church is focused on “outsiders.” Its purpose is to reach people with the Good News of life through faith in Jesus Christ. That is why the ministries of the church are open to nonmembers and members alike. Being part of the body of Christ is to share and to serve.

A church is like _____. You fill in the blank. Just remember a church is about a life transformed by the gospel lived out in a community of faith empowered by worship of God to a lifetime of service to others. 🙏

Have you
tried it yet?

TAB augmented
reality is here.
Check out page 19
for more details.



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

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Saving babies

Southern Baptists help rescue starving babies in West Africa

Whipping desert winds fill the air with dust which settles on the clinic's metal gate, muting its deep maroon color. A clinic worker opens the gate and two grandparents step into the clinic with their 2-month-old grandson. The grandmother and grandfather sit down. The emaciated baby lies motionless on his grandmother's lap. He closes his eyes. The only movement is the soft rise and fall of his chest as he breathes in the dry, hot afternoon air.

A clinic worker sits next to the woman and assesses her grandson's nutritional condition. The clinic worker gives the grandmother a bottle of formula to feed her grandson and listens as the woman tells their story.

The baby's mother died four days earlier, and he has not eaten since. His grandparents tried feeding him cow's milk and rice water — two of the only food options for babies in this part of Africa — but he was losing weight. The grandparents took him to a clinic in a nearby village, hoping to find help. The workers there told them about this clinic, where families in need could receive baby formula provided by Southern Baptist's Global Hunger Relief (GHR).

Most babies brought to the clinic are orphans or their mothers can no longer produce enough milk to feed them because of their own malnutrition. After an assessment of the baby's nutritional needs, families are provided alternative resources to feed their babies.

A simple formula distribution project like this saves lives in sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 1 in 4 persons is undernourished. Each week the clinic distributes formula for 250-300 babies.



Photo by Evelyn Adamson

Temperatures in parts of West Africa can soar well above 100 degrees in the hot season and babies can quickly become dehydrated. Mothers bring their babies to clinics for rehydrating and baby formula purchased by donations to Global Hunger Relief.

But distributing infant formula is only one way GHR combats hunger. In 2014 more than 36,000 people around the world received food as part of community development efforts and more than 200,000 as part of disaster response. More than 433,000 water needs were met.

Most effective channel

GHR is one of the most effective channels for donating toward the global hunger crisis. It is able to devote 100 percent of resources directly to meeting hunger needs because most administrative costs are covered

through Cooperative Program giving.

GHR-funded projects meet crisis hunger needs in famine or disaster relief situations, but also catalyze long-term change in conditions of human suffering and extreme poverty that cause chronic hunger. Such projects may involve job training and vocational education, livestock and seeds, clean water, home reconstruction and hygiene education, etc.

Visit globalhungerrelief.com for resources to mobilize your church or other small group to help hungry souls and offer hope in the midst of suffering. (BP)

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Beeson installs Smith in Charles T. Carter chair

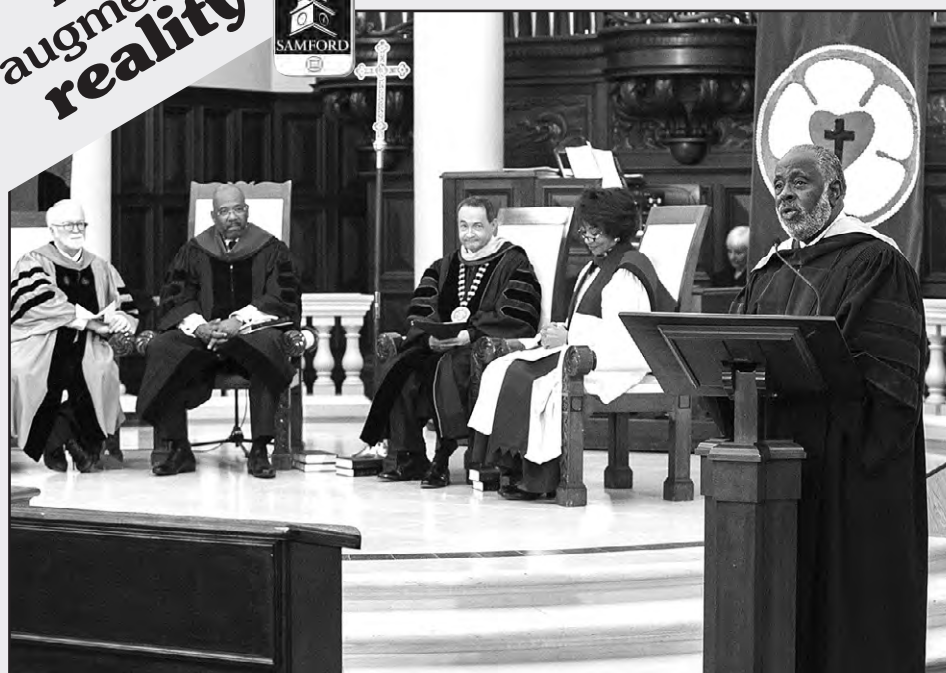


Photo by Caroline Summers

Robert Smith Jr. (far right), professor of Christian preaching at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, was officially installed in the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Beeson on Sept. 22.

A popular preacher among Alabama Baptists, Smith has been on the Beeson faculty since 1997.

Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, has served in leadership roles at local, state and national levels within the denomination. He also has taught at Beeson.

Participating in the installation and chapel service were (l to r) Beeson Dean Timothy George; Ralph D. West, pastor of The Church Without Walls, Houston, Texas; Samford President Andrew Westmoreland; and Kathi Jacob of The Cathedral Church of the Advent, Birmingham. James E. Massey (not shown), dean emeritus of Anderson University School of Theology, delivered the installation charge. (TAB)



Photos courtesy of Chris Mills



Greenville's Damascus Baptist marks 175 years

Both current members and members "from way back when" gathered at Damascus Baptist Church, Greenville, on Aug. 16 to celebrate its 175th anniversary, according to church secretary Bettie Huckabaa.

The celebration service, which began at 2 p.m., included singing by Madison Castleberry and David Norrell, both of whom have close ties to Damascus Baptist. Interim pastor Danny Duncan emceed the service that primarily featured a time of sharing from current and former members and former pastors.

Butler Baptist Association Director of Missions Allen Winn wrote a letter to accompany the plaque that was presented to the church. A presentation also was made by Dalton Campbell, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative.

A display of historic pictures, documents and memorabilia was arranged in the fellowship hall for participants to enjoy. Huckabaa said the day was marked by "a lot of history unfolding and a lot of history brought back to life." (Maggie Walsh)

Johnson Chapel celebrates 75th anniversary

The 75th anniversary of Johnson Chapel Baptist Church, Valley, in East Liberty Baptist Association, was a two-service affair Aug. 16.

In the 10 a.m. service Bob Threadgood was honored for serving 50 years as a deacon and former pastor Jerry Simmons brought the message. Also, a special presentation was made by Calvin Milford, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative.

After breaking at noon for food and fellowship, participants again gathered at 1 p.m. as former pastors shared about their memories of Johnson Chapel Baptist.

The day of celebration was preceded by a revival Aug. 9-12 which also featured messages from former pastors.

Pastor Steve Langley said he hopes Johnson Chapel accomplishes two goals in the coming 75 years: "reach the lost and grow as Christians." (Maggie Walsh)

'Train the trainer'

Campus ministers receive disaster relief training

Campus ministers from across the state recently gathered for a "train the trainer" session with Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) personnel. The session's purpose was to equip and train campus ministers to be ready to train students in the event of a disaster. Nate Young, campus minister at the University of Alabama, said, "[Disaster Relief] is one of the best kept secrets of (Alabama) Baptists. I'm hopeful that equipping and involving collegiates will make it one of the most widely known strengths of (Alabama) Baptists. Involving collegiates in DR will enable collegiates to more effectively serve in times of need and also build bridges between generations." (TAB)



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Ministry Tips



MAKING DISCIPLES

By Pastor Jesse Reeder
Moulton Baptist Church

We are all familiar with the Great Commission — or are we? "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

We are told by Jesus to go and make disciples and many have understood this to mean evangelism. However, making disciples includes so much more. Making disciples also means helping believers to have a growing relationship with Jesus that results in acts of service and evangelism.

The problem with these other aspects is that they are hard to measure and some take a long time to reach. The problem is more than lack of zeal for evangelism by most believers. It also is a lack of spiritual maturity, service and multiplication. We have not come close to completion of our task until a new believer is brought to

the level of a true disciple.

What does that look like? A believer that is spiritually mature, actively engaged in ministry in their local church and seeking to share their faith with others. Maybe it is time to expand our vision to encompass the whole ministry of making disciples. 🙏

Baptist

NEWS BRIEFS

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Ronnie Floyd seeks SBC committee candidates

SPRINGDALE, Arkansas — Candidates to serve on committees pivotal to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) are being sought by SBC President Ronnie Floyd.

In addition to sending letters to SBC entity and state convention leaders, Floyd is broadening his call for candidates for several committees whose work is key to SBC's annual meeting, including the Committee on Committees, the Resolutions Committee and the Credentials Committee and Tellers.

"Appointing these committees is a daunting challenge as you can imagine and we need your help in identifying solid candidates to serve," wrote Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

The Committee on Committees is at the heart of the selection process of pastors and laypeople as trustees of SBC entities. The Credentials Committee is responsible for addressing any registration uncertainty involving a messenger. Tellers are involved in any votes by messengers on motions and other business matters while the Resolutions Committee frames proposed stances to messengers on missions, evangelism and important cultural issues.

Floyd asked that names of candidates be forwarded to him by Nov. 1. Email information to Floyd's office at ronniep@crosschurch.com; fax 479-756-7110; or write to 1709 Johnson Road, Springdale, AR 72762. (BP)

Baptists assist refugees fleeing to Europe

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Baptists are providing assistance to refugees who are streaming into Europe. An initial sum of \$15,000 was sent by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) through its relief and development arm, Baptist World Aid, to Hungarian Baptists to aid refugees in that country.

The 2015 European migrant crisis arose through the increasing number of refugees and migrants traveling to the European Union across the Mediterranean Sea or Southeast Europe. A majority of the refugees are from the Middle East, such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq and in Africa, from Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

Bela Szilagyi, vice president of Hungarian Baptist Aid (HBAid), informed BWA that HBAid's temporary shelter is filled to capacity. He said medical assistance has already been extended to some 700 refugees.

The Hungarians have distributed water and food at the Nyugati and Keleti train stations, as well as hygienic kits,

medicine, disinfectants, diapers, baby food and toys.

In Germany, Thomas Klammt, commissioner for immigrants and refugees of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany, said, "Many of our churches are busy responding to the challenge in many different ways."

Christians and churches in Sweden are supporting refugees as well. (BWA)

PNBC names Boddie new general secretary

WASHINGTON — Timothy Tee Boddie, a former pastor, university chaplain and divinity school administrator, has been named general secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC).

Boddie who was until recently director of the master of arts in Christian education program at Shaw University Divinity School in Raleigh, North Carolina, began work Sept. 8.

As CEO, Boddie will execute the policies and programs of PNBC, including planning and supervising convention procedures while overseeing operations. The group was formed in 1961 by supporters of Martin Luther King Jr. active in the Civil Rights Movement.

PNBC President James Perkins, pastor of Greater Christ Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan, welcomed Boddie's selection. "We believe he is the right person for us at the right time," Perkins said. "I am looking forward to working with him to move our great convention forward." (BNG)

Florida Baptist Convention reduces staff by 47 percent

LEESBURG, Florida — A reorganization of the Florida Baptist Convention staff that reduces the number of employees statewide by 47 percent — from the 115 currently employed to 61 employees — was approved by the Florida State Board of Missions on Sept. 18.

The reorganization and downsizing was the fulfillment of a promise made by Executive Director-Treasurer Tommy Green on May 29 after being elected to the post. He stressed the need to have a responsive, lean missions organization that is decentralized, regionalized and personalized.

The downsizing will make it possible to send 51 percent of the proposed 2016 Cooperative Program budget to the Southern Baptist Convention — a nearly 10 percent increase — and ultimately "put more missionary families on the field," he said.

Four new staff persons were elected to fill vacancies within the restructured organization. The board eliminated 36 ministry staff positions, some of which were vacant, effective immediately. (BP)

Alcohol sales vote makes Sunday 'just another day' in Sylacauga

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

To the dismay of Alabama Baptists, the Lord's Day has yet again been deemed "just another day" with 689 "yes" votes for Sunday alcohol sales in Sylacauga.

The Sept. 22 vote saw 68 percent of

voters for Sunday alcohol sales and 32 percent against. It was the first time the city had voted on Sunday sales. At press time the city council was set to certify the election Sept. 29 at noon. According to the ordinance, alcohol will not be sold before 1 p.m. on Sundays.

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, said he was saddened by the vote that will cause "continued expansion of alcohol" in the state.

Both Godfrey and Randy Hagan, director of missions for Coosa River Baptist Association, said they were unaware of the vote until the day before it took place.

Hagan said he is against the sale of alcohol at any time, but especially on Sundays.

According to Godfrey, he's noticed more

recently that not all Christians are against the sale of alcohol.

"Christians, for a variety of reasons, seem to be less inclined to oppose expanded alcohol sales in spite of the fact that it is an addictive and mind-altering drug that is destroying lives and families at an alarming rate," Godfrey said.

Hagan agreed.

"Alcohol is America's No. 1 drug problem," Hagan said. "I wish we didn't have it and didn't sell it but we do and we have to learn how to live within those parameters."

The Sylacauga vote follows the passage of Sunday alcohol sales in three St. Clair County cities and two Marshall

County cities, despite opposition from local Alabama Baptist pastors and churches.

One of those Marshall County cities, Albertville, voted Sept. 21 to amend the standing ordinance and allow "free operation," removing all restrictions on operating hours for businesses. Businesses can now sell alcohol any day of the week and any time of day, according to news reports. ☞

For resources on alcohol issues, visit alcap.com/wetdry-issues or call ALCAP at 205-985-9062.

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Watch your complimentary
Ministry Training Institute
lecture here



Photo by Bryan Gill

As part of your subscription to *The Alabama Baptist*, you will receive a complimentary eight- to 10-minute lecture taught by Samford University's Ministry Training Institute each week. Use your Aurasma app to watch the fifth of an eight-part series on part of the book of Revelation by placing your mobile device over this photo. App instructions noted on page 19.

DEFINITION OF FOOD INSECURITY

A household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food

Source: United States Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service



Feeding hungry children

Churches aid Alabama Childhood Food Solutions in feeding 3,000 children

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Jim Jones has spent a lifetime making a difference. When Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, was bombed in 1963, Jones was the nurse on duty. At that time, African-Americans were not admitted to UAB Hospital. But when ambulances arrived with injured and dying children on that fateful day, Jones decided to treat everyone. And because of his decision the hospital policy changed. One man made a difference that affected thousands who needed medical care in the years to come.

More recently Jones and his wife, Linda, are making a difference in feeding Alabama's hungry children. They have identified 14,000 food insecure children in three counties and work to feed as many as possible.

It was the 23 short-term missions trips in the United States, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Kenya and Brazil that opened their eyes to the hunger needs around the world and within their own neighborhood. After much prayer and obtaining the proper licenses, the Joneses decided, "We can change a generation of food insecure kids."

They began Alabama Childhood Food Solutions (ACFS) in the back of their car in 2011. They fed 42 children at that time. Now they feed more than 3,000 people with the help of 16 churches in Talladega, Shelby and Coosa counties.

Corporations and individuals across central Alabama support this 501(c) 3 non-profit that has grown into a \$350,000 per year organization.

Nearly 1,500 people from 400 families (including senior adults and the homeless) who are food insecure are fed each month through a market-style distribution. Families can choose fresh and nutritious food their families will eat, which reduces food waste.

In addition to the monthly distribution, almost 1,600 children receive food in their backpacks every Friday during the school year so they will have food on

the weekends. ACFS also provides food for children during the summer months.

ACFS volunteers work with 38 schools and Boys and Girls Clubs to identify children who are food insecure. They are able to provide food in their backpacks 49 weeks a year.

They also include a small note in each

"(Being) food insecure is more than an empty stomach. It's not knowing if or when there will be another meal."

**Linda Jones
co-founder, Alabama
Childhood Food Solutions**

City Baptist, said, "People more than ever want to see where their missions efforts are working and be able to be the hands and feet of God in our own neighborhood."

Identifying with businesses

Part of the success of finding funds for ACFS comes from grants. Jim Jones suggests looking around the community and identifying those businesses that are part of a national chain or franchise. These businesses have foundations that can provide financial support. Work with the CEO or manager to locate funding for hunger projects.

Matthew 25:40 says, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me."

Jones said, "I think that means feeding hungry children." 🙏



Photos courtesy of Alabama Childhood Food Solutions

A team with Alabama Childhood Food Solutions sorts fruit for distribution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.alabamachildhoodfoodsolutions.com

Hunger in Alabama tops national average

Alabamians were hungrier than the national average in 2014. According to a Sept. 9 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report, 14 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in 2014.

This number is slowly declining but remains well above the rates of food insecurity recorded before the Great Recession. And food insecurity rates in Alabama sit above the national average at 16.8 percent, according to the USDA.

"It is time to make ending hunger a national priority," said Eric Mitchell, director of government relations at Bread for the World. "It is unacceptable that more than 17 million households in this country are struggling to put food on the table. We live in the most blessed country in the world, yet far too many people are at risk of hunger."

The USDA defines food insecurity as "when consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year."

Rates of food insecurity are higher than the national average for households with children, single parent households, black and Hispanic households and low-income households, namely those with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty threshold. The threat to children is especially high — 15.3 million children lived in food-insecure households in 2014.

Skippping meals

Nearly 1 million children lived in households in which "children were hungry, skipped a meal or did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food," according to the USDA's annual report.

Studies show that children who are hungry and at risk of hunger are more likely to struggle in school and have an increased risk for illnesses and weakened immune systems.

Through Bread for the World's 2015 Offering of Letters campaign, thousands of churches representing nearly 50 diverse Christian denominations throughout the U.S. have urged Congress to strengthen national child nutrition programs. The law governing these programs expired Sept. 30.

"Congress must pass a child nutrition bill that protects individuals and families who are struggling with hunger," Mitchell said. "We are making progress in combating food insecurity through vital programs such as SNAP, WIC and school lunches. However, much more needs to be done to connect children at risk of hunger with the meals they need to learn and grow." (Bread for the World)

*"I'm not lazy, stupid or dumb — I'm just hungry.
Can you help me?"*

Hungry teenager in Alabama

Meeting spiritual needs

Developing relationships opens door to share love of Christ

(continued from page 1)

"They helped me with a lot of things — food, diapers, transportation," Williams said. "I don't really have any words to describe what it meant to have all those things put together to help me. The only thing I can say is that God is great."

Kristy Kennedy, an associate in the office of associational missions and church planting at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, coordinates North American Mission Board hunger funds allocated to Alabama. She said it is important for Alabama Baptists to know that 25 percent of their offerings to Global Hunger Relief stay in the state to assist hunger ministries in Alabama associations and churches. Those funds do more than feed a physical hunger, however.

"Meeting the physical needs of individuals across our state also gives us the opportunity to meet the spiritual needs by developing relationships that allow us to share the love of Christ with those who are hurting and in need," Kennedy said.

Reports from state food ministries show the impact. From July to September, Alabama Baptist hunger ministries fed more



Photo by Fred Kemp

A client at Marshall County Christian Services selects food items from a variety of choices. In Marshall County hunger funds help feed approximately 1,500 people each month.

than 50,000 people. More than 14,000 evangelistic encounters were reported, resulting in 201 professions of faith and 23 baptisms. More than 1,200 volunteers serve in the 28 ministries that received funds and they regularly share the gospel with clients.

MCCS's Henry also makes sure clients

know that the volunteers depend on God for everything they give and do.

"We pray daily and invite those who are waiting at the door to join us," Henry said. "Not one person goes out the door that is not told about the love of Jesus and that God gets the glory for everything we do." ❏

Baptists among faith leaders pledging to fight hunger

Baptist leaders were among nearly 100 top officials from all major faith groups on the eve of Pope Francis' arrival calling for a shift in national priorities to end hunger and poverty.

Faith leaders gathered Sept. 21 at an interfaith summit that is part of a larger movement in the faith community to end hunger and poverty by 2030. They committed themselves to encourage their own communities to work for the end of hunger and signed a pledge to work to change national priorities.

"We are deeply pleased to welcome Pope Francis to the United States," the faith leaders said. "The Pope has repeatedly urged people around the world to address the problems that contribute to the persistence of hunger and poverty.

He has called us all to pray and work to end hunger. We trust that he will summon our nation to end the hunger in our midst and support global efforts to overcome hunger."

'Deeply engaged'

The leaders' pledge reads in part, "U.S. faith communities are deeply engaged with many sisters and brothers who struggle

with hunger and poverty, and we have become increasingly active in urging our nation's elected leaders to do their part — defending low-income people in the national budget debate, for example. Our experience of God's mercy and compassion for all people moves us to engage in God's work of overcoming hunger and human misery, and our sacred traditions include visions of the world transformed." (BNG)

RESOURCES FOR WRITING GRANTS

- **"The Only Grant Writing Book You'll Ever Need"**
By Ellen Karsh and Arlen Sue Fox
- **"Writing Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing and Writing Successful Proposals"**
By Tori O'Neal-McElrath
- **"Writing Grants for Faith-Based Organizations and Community Non-Profits"**
By Carolyn Tomlin

In Alabama,
26.2% of children
and
12% of elderly
live in low or very low food
secure homes.

Source: Bread for the World



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.

BIBB

► **Centreville Church** will celebrate its 125th anniversary Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. Glenn Sandifer will share a message titled "Glimpses of the Past." Henry Cox, former president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, will speak. Special music will be provided by the adult choir and ensemble. Lunch will follow in the family life center. An afternoon music celebration will begin at 1 p.m. Kenneth Fuller is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Sixth Avenue Church, Birmingham**, will host health symposium and expo "Love Yourself to HEALTH" on Oct. 3, beginning at 7:30 a.m. with the Pastor's Fun Run/Walk. Education forums will begin at 8:45 a.m. and expo activities will be noon-3 p.m. Oct. 4 worship services, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m., will focus on health with guest speaker Traci Blackmon, registered nurse. For more information call 205-251-5173 or visit www.sixthavebaptist.com. John Cantelow III is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Whitewater Church, Elba**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. Mack King will be the guest speaker. Dinner will fol-

low. Richard Collier is pastor.

CONECUH

► **Brooklyn Church, Evergreen**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. Everyone invited. Dinner on the grounds will follow the service. Pastor Jack Williamson will speak.

FRIENDSHIP

► **First Church, Oneonta**, will host revival services Oct. 11-14. Oct. 11 services will be at 10:15 a.m. and 6 p.m. with dinner at 4:30 p.m. Oct. 12-14 services will be at 7 nightly with dinner at 5:30 nightly. Greg Corbin, pastor of Lakeside Church, Birmingham, will be the guest evangelist. Moses Clark will lead worship Oct. 11 and 14. Chris Diffey will lead worship Oct. 12-13. Child care will be provided for each service. For more information visit www.oneontafbc.org. Larry Gipson is pastor.

JUDSON

► **Sardis Church, Abbeville**, will celebrate its 156th homecoming Oct. 4. Sunday School will begin at 9 a.m. with a worship service at 10 a.m. Otis Derrah, director of missions for Judson Association, will speak. A fellowship meal will follow. Ev-

eryone is invited. George Bryan is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Snowdoun Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 11, 11 a.m. Ken May, director of missions for Montgomery Association, will be the guest speaker and Harlan Burton will provide special music. The church also will hold revival services Oct. 11-14, 6:30 nightly. Guest speakers will include Eddie Newton (Oct. 11), Tommy Roy (Oct. 12), Jim Looney (Oct. 13) and Carmen Falcione (Oct. 14). Steve Campbell is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Cropwell Church, Pell City**, will celebrate 125 years and dedicate its new worship center Oct. 11, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. Phillip Burden is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Piney Grove Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host "Super Tuesdays" revival services every Tuesday in October, 7 p.m. Guest speakers include Joel Frederick (Oct. 6), Kevin Hamm (Oct. 13), Junior Hill (Oct. 20) and David Ring (Oct. 27). Special music will be provided each Tuesday. Nursery will be provided for children up to age 3. For more information call Mary Wallace at 205-758-1945. J. Steven Stamps is pastor. ► **Taylorville Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host "Women & Worship: God's Gift — Joy" services every Thursday night in October, 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and speakers include Susan Lovett (Oct. 1), Tollie Meggs (Oct. 8), Krista Snyder (Oct. 15), Lisa Stamps (Oct. 22) and Becky Garner (Oct. 29). Curtis Kelley is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **Spring Hill Church, Millry**, will celebrate homecoming and its 75th anniversary Oct. 11, 10 a.m. There will be guest speakers and musicians. Dinner will be served at noon and singing will follow. James O'Neal is pastor.

OTHER

► The former **Mount Moriah Fellowship Church, Birmingham**, will celebrate homecoming and its 187th celebration Oct. 11, 11 a.m. Elizabeth Cole Goodrich will be the guest speaker. Dinner on the grounds will follow. Mount Moriah's Yeldell Yellers Gospel & Bluegrass Band will perform in the afternoon. ☞

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Roger Lewis



LEWIS

Turnerville Baptist Church, Chunchula Mobile Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: John 3:16

FAVORITE HYMN: "Amazing Grace"

HOBBIES: Relaxing, tending cattle, working on his farm and ministering to others

FAMILY STATUS: Widower for 27 years after 41 years of marriage to wife, Corinne; children, Charles Lewis, Martin Lewis, Nelda Nicks, the late Anthony Lewis and the late Kim Lewis; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren

At 95, Roger Lewis, of Chunchula, is a deacon and Sunday School teacher, responsibilities he has held since 1949. He also participates in his church's visitation program. Through his community's Widowed Persons Service he is able to minister to individuals who have lost a spouse. He believes his mission is to spread the message of Jesus. Lewis tends 20 head of cattle each day and keeps up his farm with the assistance of a son and grandsons. Lewis served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and is a Purple Heart recipient. He retired as Chunchula's postmaster in 1972.

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

A: I walked the aisle in December 1944 and accepted Christ as my personal Savior. I know for myself that people need to be taught why we believe what we believe and that's what I've tried to do (since then).

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

A: When we married and moved back here. Pastors and their leadership. I had a real good teacher, who was a woman teacher. She taught men and women — adults. Probably a year or so after that, I became a teacher.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: I go to certain books (in the Bible) and start there to read. I like to look over the (Sunday School) lesson on Monday or Tuesday night and get an idea about it. Friday or Saturday night, I'll look it over again. I spend time in prayer.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: Seeing someone grow. Visiting someone and seeing them come into the church.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: My oldest son supports me a good bit. My daughter has been a big help.

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

A: I'd like to stay active. I'd like to be a help to someone.

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

A: I like to do what I can. We've got a big community. There are a lot of people out there who are lost — unchurched. I'd like to see the potential we've got being used.

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

A: He has taught me several things that I didn't do that I should have. I've got a whole lot of shortcomings. But I'm trying to be pleasing to what the Lord wants me to do. ☞

REFLECTIONS



Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**

**Focus
on**

ONE MISSION

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission **ONE PROGRAM:** The Cooperative Program **MANY MINISTRIES:** Great Commission Ministries

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions | (800) 264-1224 | alsbom.org

A PERSONAL MINISTRY AUDIT

I do not remember the first time I used the term “ministry audit” but, for some time now, we at the State Board of Missions have been using this approach in our effort to right-size our staff.

By early next year, our full-time staff will be 45 percent less in numbers.

Using a ministry audit for the staff and our ministries has proven to be an effective means of evaluation. Sure, there is a bit of subjectivity to the approach but this strategy, for the most part, has been an effective tool in determining priorities in ministry.

Recently, I took the ministry audit approach to my own life and ministry. One of the basic areas of this assessment has been asking the right questions.

This is something Peter Drucker and other leadership authors have encouraged us to do. It can be a painful process, but it is a profitable one.

A QUESTION WORTH ASKING

Time does not permit me to discuss all the appropriate questions. However, one of the essential self-evaluative questions relates to motivation in ministry. This is the one question I would like for us to consider: “What is our motivation for ministry?” Or

how do we motivate others in ministry?

We could easily say that this question is a no brainer. It is so self-evident, so why ask the question?



By Rick Lance
State Missionary

The answer comes when we look at our ministry as objectively as possible and try to ask ourselves personally what has been our motivation and how do we endeavor to motivate others?

GUILT

There are several poor motivators among us today that do not bring out the best in us nor bring honor to the Lord.

One such motivator is guilt. I know feeling guilty is natural and even a spiritual necessity at times, but I am not talking about conviction of sin or feeling guilty when know we have done something wrong.

No, I am speaking of what can be called “bad guilt.”

When we as leaders try to shame or blame our people into doing something we feel they need to do, then that can very easily be described as using bad guilt as a motivator.

This leads to finger-pointing and playing the blame game. This mindset can be most counterproductive.

If in our family life we are trying shame our spouses or children into what we want them to do, then we are certainly falling prey to the bad guilt approach.

In churches, bad guilt is evident too. A pastor can seek to motivate people by the “shame on you” approach. I must confess I have been “guilty” of using guilt as a motivator.

Most of the time, this approach was not well received, especially over the long term.

The bad guilt approach can go viral as much as anything else can. You can read on social media the good efforts of leaders seeking to motivate others by trying to guilt people into giving to noble cause like missions or going on the mission field.

Do not get me wrong: We must motivate people in giving, going and praying, but the way we do it needs to be Christ-honoring.

GRIEVANCE

Another motivator in our lives, which is sadly used even in our Christian lives, is grievance. I am amazed at how many mature Christians among us act out grievances in their interpersonal relationships.

Grievances are behind most conflicts in our churches. Conflict

resolution is the effective way of unveiling the grievances people have toward each other.

Grievances are behind all wars. Look at the Middle East or the former Soviet Union, and you will quickly see that old grievances and unresolved conflicts between people ignite into saber-rattling and, in its final form, all-out wars. You can see it playing out right now in the hot spots around the world.

As a pastor and missionary leader, I have seen not-so-veiled grievances do their destructive work. The Devil delights in such conflicts. It becomes a major distraction in being on mission with the Great Commission.

GREED

Greed is another motivator which is sometimes evident in leaders. We can see this in secular politics, but it can be found in other places as well.

Money, sex and power have always been vices that can wreak havoc in the lives of Christians and in our churches. Paul had something to say about this issue, and his admonition is as appropriate today as any other time.

GLORY

Glory — self-glory — is still another destructive motivator for ministry. When egos are out of

continued on page 10

FOCUS on One Mission

continued from page 9

control, then ministry for our Lord is hindered.

David Brooks, in his recent book *The Road to Character*, described our culture as one of self-promotion. We believe in humility, Brooks points out, but we live in this self-aggrandizing culture.

John the Baptist had the right approach when he declared, "I must decrease, He (Jesus) must increase."

That is the way of faithfully following Jesus.

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

The highest and holiest form of motivation is given to us in II Corinthians 5:14. "The love of Christ compels (motivates) us."

If we are not motivated to serve out of our love for the Lord, our ministries and our Christian

lives will be ineffective and not Christ-honoring.

Remember we love Him because He first loved us. His love for us and our love for Him is the motivation of all the we do for Christ.

His love was never hidden or camouflaged. It was always revealed in His life and ministry. Our Lord has given us an example that we should follow in His footsteps (I Peter 2:21).

I hope these reflections on motivation are helpful to you because they have most illuminating for me.

I do not want to be motivated by guilt, grievance, greed or self-glory.

I want to be motivated by the love of Christ.

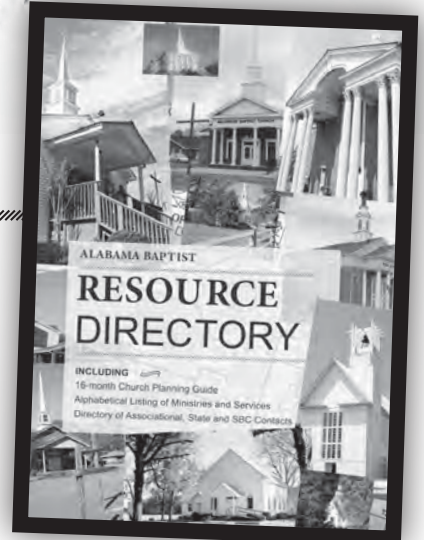


Proverbs 1:7



order your 2015-2016 RESOURCE DIRECTORY

This new resource includes all the information formerly published in our **Church Planning Guide** (including a 16-month calendar of State Board of Missions events and emphases) and the **Yellow Page Book**.



Limit **20 COPIES** per church. To order, please **call, fax or e-mail** your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); chobbs@alsbom.org; or order online at alsbom.org/rd.

Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of guides needed (up to 20).

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



I believe in the Great Commission. I personally cannot share the life-changing message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with every person in every nation, but I can give through the Cooperative Program so that our missionaries can.



The monies that I give becomes wisely diversified so that not only are missions supported but also the schools and seminaries that prepare ministers and missionaries.

— **Gail Burns**, member of State Board of Missions (St. Clair Association)

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission **ONEPROGRAM:** The Cooperative Program **MANYMINISTRIES:** Great Commission Ministries



Mark Croston

ALABAMA AFRICAN - AMERICAN PASTORS DINNER

November 16 ~ Faith Family Fellowship, Spanish Fort

African-American pastors from across Alabama are encouraged to attend this event. Make plans now to be a part of this family reunion of Kingdom-minded Alabama Baptists. Participants are urged to consider staying for the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference and State Convention meetings at Eastern Shore Baptist Church on November 16-18.

Mark Croston heads LifeWay's black church outreach. He helps African-American churches assess their needs and determine how LifeWay can help meet those needs.

"Our job is to help

churches in their ministry of making disciples. I provide training, consulting and resourcing to churches across the length and breadth of our country, African-American churches," he said. Croston holds a doctor of ministry degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond with a concentration in Christian education in the African-American church.

Dinner is at 4:45 p.m. The meeting will adjourn by 6:15 p.m.

The cost is \$10 per person. **Deadline to register is Wednesday, November 11, 2015.**

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Sandra Jones at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 315, or (334) 613-2315, sjones@alsbom.org.

Senior Adult Evangelism Conference

Free admission, no registration

TAYLOR ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH,
Montgomery ☀ Monday, May 2,
9 a.m.-3 p.m. *(lunch on your own)*

Karen Peck and New River ☀ Don Cass,
retired evangelism director, Southern
Baptists of Texas Convention ☀ Bob
White, executive director, Georgia
Baptist Convention ☀ David Burton,
evangelism director, Florida
Baptist Convention



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

Fall Senior Adult Retreat

October 12-14, Shocco Springs
Theme: My Inheritance

If you made it to the Spring Senior Adult Retreat, you will surely want to return to Shocco Springs in the fall for more great fellowship with other senior adults. If you weren't able to come in April, then you will not want to miss the fall retreat! Bring some friends to enjoy the beautiful surroundings as you worship together.

State Missionary Eileen Mitchell asks, "Have you thought about your spiritual inheritance? What has God promised you, and what is the spiritual legacy you are leaving others?" Eileen and other leaders of the retreat ask you to come and consider these important questions. The retreat will begin with lunch on Monday, October 12, and end with lunch on Wednesday, October 14.

REGISTRATION/COST INFORMATION:
1-800-280-1105 or shocco.org

For other information, please contact Eileen Mitchell, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

WE GOT YOUR BACK

WHAT IF ...

- ... the mission team from your church was detained by a foreign government?
- ... a volunteer on your team was held by criminals in a foreign country?
- ... a natural disaster interrupted travel plans for your team?
- ... a volunteer became seriously ill or injured on the field?

ALL of these situations have occurred with Alabama Baptist teams!

We can help. **Travelers' Shield** has you covered!

... in the event of natural disaster, health problem, government detention or criminal act.

Travelers' Shield is offered to all who complete Faith Focused Safe-Travel Training.

FAITH FOCUSED SAFE-TRAVEL TRAINING

LEVEL A (\$45 per attendee)

November 5, Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer

LEVEL B (\$250 per attendee)

December 8-10, Baptist Building, 2001 South E. Blvd., Montgomery

Register online at a18c.org/ffst

FOCUS on One Mission



**2015 Alabama Baptist State Convention
Annual Meeting**

November 17-18, Eastern Shore Baptist Church,
6847 Park Drive, Daphne

**JOIN US FOR
A CALL TO PRAYER AT
THE BEGINNING OF EACH
SESSION.**

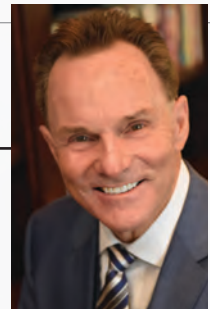
TUESDAY EVENING



MUSIC: *president, Southern Baptist Convention*
Veritas
Contemporary Classical Vocal Group, Mobile

SPEAKER:

Ronnie Floyd
president, Southern Baptist Convention



**THEME INTERPRETATION
SPEAKERS**



Scott Guffin
*pastor, Liberty Park Baptist Church,
Vestavia Hills*
Tuesday morning



Stuart Davidson
*pastor, Eastern Shore Baptist
Church, Daphne*
Tuesday afternoon



Dale Huff
*state missionary, State Board of Missions,
Montgomery*
Wednesday morning

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Travis Coleman, Jr.
*president, Alabama Baptist State Convention,
pastor, First Baptist Church, Prattville*
Tuesday morning



**CONVENTION
SERMON**



Buddy Champion
pastor, First Baptist Church, Trussville
Wednesday morning

HOTEL GUIDE The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate at any of these hotels, please contact Charleen Hobbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or chobbs@alsbom.org.

1 Hilton Garden Inn Mobile East Bay/ Daphne • (Convention Hotel)
29546 North Main Street, Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 625-0020 • \$119 (king or double queen) • Breakfast buffet included

2 Best Western Plus Daphne Inn & Suites
8931 Sawwood Street, Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 625-6260 • \$89 (king); \$94 (double queen) • Breakfast included

3 Comfort Suites
29450 N. Main Street, Daphne AL 36526
(251) 626-1113 • \$89 (king); \$94 (double queen) • Breakfast included

4 Courtyard by Marriott
1300 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort, AL 36527
(251) 370-1160 • \$85 (king or double queen)
Book room: <http://cwp.marriott.com/mobsf/albaptist>

5 Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott
12000 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort, AL 36527
(251) 251-370-1160 • \$80 (king or double); \$90 (king suite) • Breakfast included
Book room: <http://cwp.marriott.com/mobsf/albaptist>

6 Hampton Inn Daphne Mobile East Bay/ Daphne
29451 US Hwy 98, Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 626-2220 • \$109 (standard); \$129 (bay side) • Breakfast included

7 Hampton Inn Fairhope
23 N. Section Street, Fairhope, AL 36532
(251) 928-0956 • \$99 (king or queen); \$109 (king studio) • Breakfast included

8 Holiday Inn Express Daphne
29725 Woodrow Lane, Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 621-1223 • \$99 (king or double queen); \$109 (suite king or double queen). • Breakfast included

9 Holiday Inn Express Fairhope
19751 South Greeno Road, Fairhope, AL 36532
(251) 928-9191 • \$89 (single or double); \$119 (suite single or double)

10 Homewood Suites Mobile East Bay/ Daphne
29474 North Main Street, Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 621-0100 • \$129 (studio king suite or one bedroom king suite); • \$149 (standard or deluxe double queen suite); \$239 (two bedroom suite) • Breakfast & dinner buffet included (M-Th.)

For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit absannualmeeting.org.

★ BIBLE DRILL RETREAT ★

Friday and Saturday,
January 29-30, 2016
Shocco Springs

THEME: "Anchored in God's Word"

REGISTRATION: shocco.org/bibledrills
or call 1-800-280-1105

Conferences and activities designed for children, youth and high school drill participants and their leaders will be offered. Participants will navigate from conference to conference while



learning God's Word and how it relates to their lives. Leaders will have an opportunity to learn more about Bible Drill and how it can be an

effective ministry in their churches. The make-and-take conference for drill leaders, "Bible Drill in a Box," will be offered for children's leaders. Don't miss this time of learning more about the Word.

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Belinda Stroud, ext. 271, or (334) 613-2271, bstroud@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Julie Smith, ext. 255, or (334) 613-2255, jsmith@alsbom.org ★

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS

for Mississippi River Ministry



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions
This resource is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



Share a gift of **LOVE** and the **GOSPEL** with a child in need this **CHRISTMAS**.

Mississippi River Ministry works with **compassion ministry sites** and **church plants** in 8 states.

Alabama Baptists are **CHALLENGED** to provide at least **5,725** filled **backpacks**, bringing the Gospel to many who have never heard.

COLLECTION DATES: October 31 - November 7

Visit alabamawmu.org/backpacks for more information.

Christmas Backpacks is a part of LOVELOUD with the North American Mission Board. Original graphics designed by Georgia Baptist Convention.

CHURCH REVITALIZATION BOOK REVIEW:

Smooth Sailing:, How to Avoid Storms in Your Ministry, by Jerry Wilkins (New York: Page Publishing, Inc., 2014), 207 pages. ≈ (This book is available from LifeWay, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com, Kindle and other e-book sites.)

Jerry Wilkins is one of us, having served as the associational missionary for the Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association for 28 years. During that time, Jerry developed a reputation for excellence in leadership and ministry, one who defined and practiced the A-B-Cs for church health.

Like the biblical book of Proverbs, Jerry's book is filled with salient points of wisdom: 60 in all. Gleaning from his experience of working with 80 churches and 400 ministers, Jerry has near-Solomonic advice, do's and don'ts of effective leadership. Church revitalization is dependent on leadership: both clergy and lay.



By Dale Huff
State Missionary

toward church revitalization.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WORDS OF WISDOM:

~ **Storm 7: Balance:** "A minister must lead his church forward in all the church's ministries, not just the one the minister enjoys most."

~ **Storm 9: Criticism:** "Criticism is part of the ministry ... Look at criticism as helpful ... Thank the one who criticizes you."

~ **Storm 14: Vision:** "Many leaders slide into a 'reactive' leadership role rather than a proactive role, simply because of the fear of failure."

~ **Storm 33: 47,000 Words a Day:** "Too much talking could be the thunder that precedes a storm ... Some ministers just talk way too much."

This is just a sample of the words of wisdom that can make for an effective ministry and a healthy church: 60 storms and far more than 60 ways to navigate away from shipwreck and

State Missionary Dale Huff serves as director of the Office of LeaderCare & Church Administration. He may be contacted at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 316, or (334) 613-2316, dhuff@alsbom.org.



SHARING ACROSS Alabama

THE LARGEST TRAINING IN 20 YEARS is being undertaken by the Evangelism Office in 2015 with a great implementation — called "Sharing Across Alabama" — planned for 2016.

Four more identical events will be held this year at locations across Alabama, making it possible for each director of missions and pastor to attend fairly close to home. Three strategic tools will be taught in each location:

CAST: a great, easy way to share a three-minute testimony and tell one's story.

Life Conversation model: how to share one's faith using three circles that can be drawn on a napkin or read from a tract.

Media Evangelism model: an idea for hosting people in a home setting where a Billy Graham DVD will be shared or an iPhone app will be used to communicate the Gospel.

Each training session for Sharing Across Alabama will begin at 1 p.m. and adjourn by 7 p.m. Each event will include training materials, dinner, a concert and a challenging message — all free of charge, thanks to the gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Hopes are that each Alabama Baptist pastor will consider attending one of the remaining training sessions to learn more about equipping lay persons to share their faith in Christ. Each of the following events takes place on a Thursday:

~ **October 22**, Guntersville State Park Lodge, Guntersville

~ **January 7, 2016**, Samford University, Birmingham

Online registration is required at alsbom.org/sharingacrossalabama. Deadline to register is five days before each event.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Lori McGough at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 245, or (334) 613-2245, lmcgough@alsbom.org



SENIOR ADULT CHOIR CELEBRATIONS

Thursday, October 22 - Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover

Friday, October 23 - First Baptist Church, Opelika, and Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

All celebrations begin at 10 a.m.
To register, please go to alsbom.org/seniorfest

FOCUS on One Mission

FEBRUARY 19-20, 2016
Valley View Baptist Church | Tuscaloosa

PURSUE

Pursue 2016 is designed to help you live a life focused on Jesus Christ, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.

Life in Focus

Hebrews 12:2

A DISCIPLESHIP EVENT for Alabama college students, young adults and their leaders

PURSUEAL.ORG

Calling the Church to Respond to Sexual Issues with Biblical Wisdom and Christlike Compassion

THE CHURCH AND SEXUALITY CONFERENCE

February 29, 2016
10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Registration begins at 9:30a.m.

First Baptist Church, Montgomery
(Preceding the State Evangelism Conference)

Cost of \$25 includes lunch and a copy of Russell Moore's latest book. Register at alsbom.org/cas16.

FEATURING
keynote speakers *Russell Moore* and *Timothy George*, two panel discussions and nine relevant breakout sessions

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission **ONE PROGRAM:** The Cooperative Program **MANY MINISTRIES:** Great Commission Ministries

{SAVE the DATE}

alabama association of baptist secretaries 54th Annual Conference

March 6-9, 2016 at Shocco Springs

And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? — **ESTHER 4:14B (ESV)**

General Conference Leader: Becky Guinn, Valley

Worship Leaders: Adam & Marie Bishop, Frankfort, Ky.

Make plans now to join the Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries (AABS) for a time of spiritual, professional and personal growth through worship, study, fellowships and educational breakout sessions.

Registration will open in late fall 2015. More information will be posted at: AlabamaBaptistSecretaries.com

Also check our Facebook page for updates and additional information.

CONCLAVE

JANUARY 28-30, 2016
CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

A training and worship event for youth ministers, youth workers and their spouses.

Register today at ymconclave.org

FEATURING

Doug Fields	Clayton King	Jeff Torg
Richard Ross	Allen Jackson	Ken Coley

Conclave is jointly sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and five other state conventions.

Fall Missions Festival

Fall Missions Festival for Children

Friday and Saturday, October 9-10 or 16-17, 2015
WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs

Cost: \$50 per person (includes lodging and meals)

At Fall Missions Festival, children in grades 1-6 and their leaders will learn about what God is doing in Indonesia. They will also learn more about Alabama WMU's partnerships in south Asia and New York.

Join us to experience south Asian culture through food, customs and other activities led by young adults who love and serve the Lord and also have a heart for children and for missions.

Activities will begin at 5 p.m. Friday and conclude at 3 p.m. Saturday.

Fall Missions Festival for Adults

Tuesday, October 20, or Thursday, October 22,
2015 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs

Cost: \$16 per person (includes lunch)

Registration deadline: Wednesday, October 14

Held on the beautiful campus of WorldSong, this year's festival will focus on the amazing sights and sounds of Indonesia. You will also learn more about Alabama WMU's partnerships in south Asia and New York. We'll pray together and enjoy other special activities. The Fall Missions Festival for Adults is open to adults of all ages.

For more information about these events, go online to www.alabamawmu.org or contact Crystal Akers at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, cakers@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



AUDITIONS

children's
honor
choir



Between 150 and 175 children in choirs throughout Alabama Baptist churches will be selected to participate in the annual Children's Honor Choir tour which will take place **March 4-6, 2016**, in northern Alabama. Audition forms are available online at alsbom.org/chc and must be submitted with recorded audition on CD. A sample audition is now online also.  **Deadline for forms and CDs is November 1, 2015. Approximate cost for tour will be \$225.**

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, cparrish@alsbom.org. 

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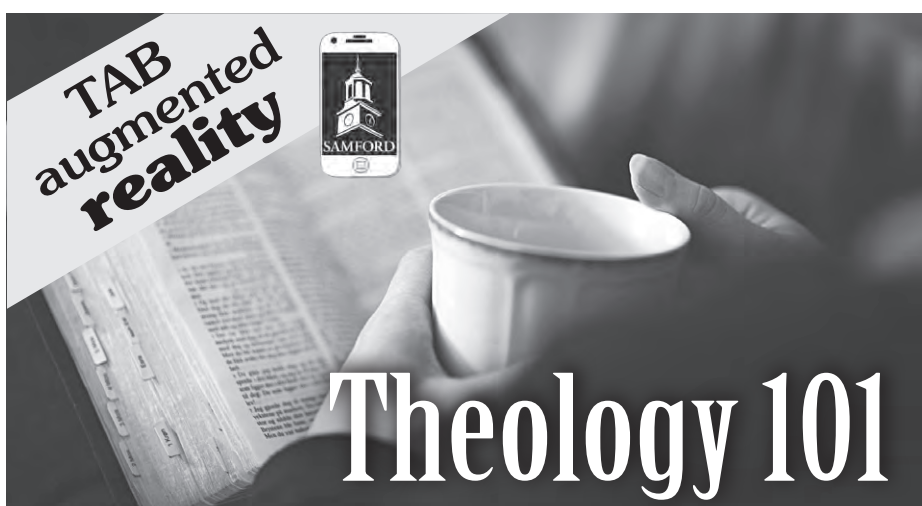
Saturday, November 7,
Central Baptist Church, 2801 Highway 31 S., Decatur

COST: Free, including lunch

This is the 15th annual training event for those from north Alabama and others who wish to attend. Conferences will cover all areas of library work plus history, copyright, cardmaking and training in both concourse and atrium. Lunch will be provided at which time an author will be guest speaker. Registration begins at 8 a.m. with general session beginning at 8:25. The conference will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

There will be a book swap and lots of free items.

To register or for other information, please contact Eva Nell Hunter (256) 353-5912, ext. 245, or (256) 303-7739 (cell), library@cbcdecatur.org or eva_hunter@att.net.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Word of God Across the Ages

The Incarnate Word

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

The coming of Christ into the world is captured by the word incarnation. The root of this word is “carne,” which refers to physical flesh. Before I ever knew the term had theological significance, I had heard of “chili con carne” (chili with meat). In a simple and basic declaration, our Christian faith holds that the Son of God (fully divine) became the Son of man (fully human) that sons and daughters of men (sinners all) might become sons and daughters of God (fully forgiven and accepted).

The Gospel of John opens by referring to Christ as the Word of God (John 1:1-2). In those exalted opening verses, witness is given to the eternity of the Word (“In the beginning”) and the divinity of the Word (“was God”), before declaring the incarnation, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Living Word

The idea of the Living Word (Jesus) becoming “enfleshed” is clearly affirmed in additional biblical passages. For example, Romans 8:3 declares, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” The coming of Christ in the flesh is attested both in 1 John 4:2, “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,” and in 2 John 7, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.” A real incarnation made His suffering and death possible. Thus 1 Peter 4:1 can say, “Christ suffered for us in the flesh,” after having explained that He was “put to death in the flesh” (1 Pet. 3:18).

With Christ’s coming we have

God’s incarnate Word — a personal, living, loving, truth-imparting, forgiving and restoring Word. As the Word incarnate, Jesus also spoke for God. God revealed truth in the words that Jesus spoke. Such were His words that He could confess to the Father, “For I have given to them the words which You have given Me” (John 17:8).

Becoming one of us

A helpful way of thinking about the incarnation is to imagine crossing a field in the midst of a severe draught. You see an anthill, but the ants appear to be about to perish because of lack of moisture. They are scurrying around but not finding water. With your superior height and vantage point you see a stream of water on the other side of the field. In your concern for the ants you determine to tell them about the water. How do you communicate your good news to them? You think first simply to call down to them your good news, but then you remember that ants cannot understand human speech. Then you think to write out directions and place it down where they are crawling, but realize they cannot read human writing. Finally it dawns on you. The only way you can communicate your good news would be to become an ant in order to show them the way in whatever ways ants communicate with one another.

But what we cannot do for ants, God did for us. He became one of us. That’s incarnation. As it is written, “God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). ☞

Jerry Batson, retired associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor at several schools of religion, is pastor of First Baptist Church, McCalla.



Church administrators should be careful about insurance, overtime pay, salaries

Insurance, overtime pay and staff salaries are three areas church administrators must pay close attention to, said Lee Wright, coordinator of church compensation services for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Through the Affordable Care Act, health insurance is now mandated for everyone, he said. “There are increasing fines for those who have no insurance. This year a new form will be issued by the insurance company, employer or the government — Form 1095 will be a proof of insurance document.”

Wright said every employer of 50 or more full-time employees is mandated to provide health coverage. Churches who offer group health coverage can provide it as a tax-free benefit for the staff. Plans offered by GuideStone Financial Resources are considered group plans even if the church only has one full-time employee, he added.

Wright also said churches must be careful about overtime pay.

“Ministerial staff are generally exempt from overtime pay requirements,” he said.

“But other employees should be paid for overtime work or be given equivalent time off within a seven-day period.”

Managing staff salaries is another area church administrators should monitor, Wright said.

“Many churches still offer a dollar amount ‘package’ and ask the minister to divide it as he wishes,” he explained. “This approach isn’t the best way to compensate our staff. It gives a false view of what the salary really is and it may cause the minister to pay more tax than is necessary.”

Wright said a better way of reporting is to specify salary and housing in one budget section and, in another, a benefits section which might include health insurance, life insurance and retirement.

The third line item is a minister’s business expense section for reimbursable expenses incurred in the practice of ministry.

An accountable reimbursement plan is the best way to cover necessary expenses without incurring further tax liability, he said. (Michael J. Brooks)

An accountable reimbursement plan is the best way to cover necessary expenses without incurring further tax liability.

**Lee Wright
coordinator of church compensation services,
SBOM**

**For more information, contact Wright at
1-800-264-1225, ext. 241, or lwright@alsbom.org.**

Northside member ministers in Namibia



Photo courtesy of Lisa Allen

Northside Baptist Church, Jasper, member Kyle Allen, 18, joined 20 other volunteers during a summer missions trip to Namibia, Africa. The team traveled with Samaritan’s Purse on July 14-23 to share a message of encouragement through Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. Allen serves year-round by leading efforts to collect items for the shoeboxes and to pack them, something he’s done for most of his life in Walker County.

Sharing *RESPONSIBILITY* and *POWER*

Employ, manage church personnel the right way

By **Michael J. Brooks**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The work of the personnel team is among the most important tasks in any church, and accordingly, members of the group must be chosen carefully, according to Chip Smith, associate in the office of LeaderCare and church administration for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

“The personnel team is 1 of the 4 major committees that should be included in the church’s by-laws along with property and space, nominating and stewardship,” Smith said during the Sept. 10 “Church Personnel: Managing and Employing” conference in Montgomery.

“Their work is vital, so the members should be objective, cooperative and good communicators. They should also be sympathetic listeners. Sometimes what they hear might seem trivial, but these matters may be important to someone employed by the church.”

Rotating teams

Smith recommended members of the personnel team serve set terms and new members rotate on the team as a way of sharing responsibility and power.

“There are different models for supervision but generally the team works with the pastor in supervising the paid staff.

Job descriptions for all workers should be written. Employees should know to whom they’re accountable and who has the authority to terminate.”

Sample job descriptions are available from the office of LeaderCare and church administration.

Churches also should institute annual job reviews for the staff. Smith said reviews could be done more frequently for newer staff, but that an annual review is a must.

“This is a good time to voice areas in the employee’s work assignment that need improvement,” he said.

Smith said termination is the least appealing of the team’s

possible duties but sometimes it is necessary.

“Termination should never be a surprise,” Smith said. “The disciplinary measures taken should be carefully documented and there

should always be another person present as a witness when termination is given.”

Smith recommended that churches be generous with severance and that care should be taken with church-owned housing.

He also offered a number

of models for hiring additional staff based on resident membership, worship attendance and budget. For more information, contact Smith at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 342, or csmith@alsbom.org.

“Employees should know to whom they’re accountable.”

**Chip Smith
SBOM state missionary**

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Okla. judge orders removal of Christian monument

OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma judge gave the state 30 days to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the state capitol grounds in a lawsuit filed by a Baptist minister. At press time there were about 10 days left and the monument had not yet been removed.

Bruce Prescott, an ordained Baptist minister and former executive director of Mainstream Oklahoma Baptists, sued the state in 2013, seeking the removal of a 6-foot-tall stone monument authorized by state lawmakers in 2009. Prescott and others argued that the monument’s location violated the Oklahoma Constitution’s ban against using public property to support “any sect, church, denomination or system of religion.”

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled June 30 that the monument, paid for with private funds, did violate a prohibition in the state’s constitution. Attorney General Scott Pruitt next asked Oklahoma County Judge Thomas Prince to consider if the state Supreme Court ruling “creates hostility toward religion that violates the U.S. Constitution.” Prince said during a Sept. 11 hearing that he has a duty to follow the Supreme Court order.

The state court refused to apply a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the placement of a similar monument on the Texas Capitol grounds, finding the issue lies with the Oklahoma constitution rather than the federal Bill of Rights. (BNG)

Religious leaders urge allowance of faith-based hiring

WASHINGTON — Seventy supporters of religion-based hiring discrimination urged President Barack Obama on Sept. 10 to continue to permit government-funded faith groups to employ people with like beliefs. Their request comes less than a month after a coalition of religious and secular organizations sent Obama a letter saying the current policy will tarnish his legacy of fair and equal treatment for all Americans.

“Religious staffing by religious organizations is protected in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and is not illegal discrimination,” they said. “This right is not somehow waived or otherwise lost simply by the receipt of government funds.”

Signatories included National Association of Evangelicals President Leith Anderson, evangelist Franklin Graham and Archbishop William Lori, who leads the U.S. Catholic bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. (RNS)

SPEAKERS

Jason Allen John Avant
Alan Floyd Willy Rice Ed Stetzer
Ted Traylor Len Turner Don Wilton

PASTORS WIVES DINNER

“Sailing to an Abundant Life” with Cheryl Rice

Cheryl Rice is our featured speaker. She is the wife of Willy Rice, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Clearwater, Florida.

**Monday, November 16, 2015
4:45-6 p.m.**

Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

COST: \$10 PER PERSON

Register at alpastorsconference.com/pastorswivesdinner/

For more details, visit alpastorsconference.com.



TAB augmented reality

Follow these instructions

- 1** Download the Aurasma app from your app store.
- 2** Choose the "ALBaptist" profile under channel and tap "Follow." You will only have to do this one time. (Any ALBaptist options will work.)
- 3** Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 4** You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.
- 5** Hold your device over a page or image in *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life.
- 6** Try viewing the full page first, but close in on the area marked augmented reality if the image doesn't load.
- 7** If the image is slow to load at any point, tap the screen to refocus it. It also may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.

'Brother in CHRIST'

Pope improves Protestant pastors' views of Catholic Church

Pope Francis is boosting the reputation of the Catholic Church among Protestant pastors in America.

Nearly 4 in 10 say the pope, known for his humility and concern for the poor, has had a positive impact on their opinions of the Catholic Church, LifeWay Research finds. Almost two-thirds view Pope Francis as a genuine Christian and "brother in Christ."

However, half of Protestant pastors say they do not value Pope Francis' opinion on matters of theology. LifeWay Research asked 1,000 Protestant pastors in America about their views in a phone survey Sept. 8–21 shortly before the pontiff's visit to the United States.

Pope Francis, who in March 2013 became the first non-European and first Jesuit priest to be named pope, has been outspoken on such issues as welcoming immigrants, shunning materialism and protecting the environment.



RNS photo

Pope Francis visits with the homeless who are served meals by Catholic charities in Washington on Sept. 24.

For 43 percent of Protestant pastors, Pope Francis has not changed their views of the Catholic Church. However, half say the current pope has affected their opinions — and almost three times as many cite a positive impact (37 percent) as those who cite a negative one (14 percent).

Ninety percent of Protestant

pastors agree Catholics can be "born-again Christians," but they are less certain whether Pope Francis is their "brother in Christ." Sixty-three percent believe he is a genuine Christian, while 22 percent disagree and 16 percent are unsure.

"The fact that some pastors don't see the pope as their 'brother in Christ' seems strange to many outside Protestantism and evangelicalism, I imagine," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research. "However, the forerunners of most Protestant pastors — from Luther to Wesley to Spurgeon to many others — certainly did not see the pope as their 'brother in Christ.' "Within a few centuries, the pope has gone from anti-Christ to 'brother in Christ' for a lot of Protestants."

Protestant pastors are divided on whether they value Pope Francis' opinion on theological issues. More than 4 in 10 (42 percent) say they value the pope's opinion, but 50 percent say they do not. Mainline pastors (57 percent) are more likely than evangelical pastors (36 percent) to say they value Pope Francis' opinion.

Mainline pastors also are more likely to say Pope Francis has influenced their opinion of the Catholic Church, with 50 percent saying the impact has been positive and 9 percent saying it has been negative. In contrast 30 percent of evangelical pastors say Pope Francis has boosted their opinion of Catholicism, while 15 percent say their opinion has declined.

Regional differences

Favorable views of Pope Francis are most pronounced among highly educated Protestant pastors and those in the Northeast, the survey finds.

Fifty-one percent of Protestant pastors in the Northeast say Pope Francis improves their opinion of the Catholic Church compared to 38 percent in the Midwest, 34 percent in the South and 31 percent in the West.

More than two-thirds of Protestant pastors with a master's or doctoral degree (69 percent) view Pope Francis as a genuine Christian and brother in Christ compared to 42 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or no college degree. (LifeWay)

What is reverse mortgage?

By Jimmy Dixon

A reverse mortgage is a loan sponsored by the U.S. Government that enables senior homeowners (62 and older) to convert part of the equity in their homes into tax-free money or pay off an existing mortgage. Increasingly, older homeowners are using reverse mortgages to supplement their retirement incomes, pay for health care, make home improvements and create cash reserves for emergencies.

The reverse mortgage is an excellent planning tool that has been used by homeowners from all walks of life to enhance their retirement years. The growing popularity of the product is evidence of its benefit in an array of financial circumstances. To be eligible for a reverse mortgage you must be 62 years old and be a homeowner with some equity in your home.

You may qualify even if there is an existing mortgage on your home.

How much you can get depends on a few factors, including your age, the value of your home, the amount of equity in it and interest rates.

There are several options available for how you receive the money from a reverse mortgage. You can receive the money in an upfront lump sum, a line of credit, fixed monthly amounts or a combination of options.

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a Sunday School teacher and children's worship leader at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure or free reverse mortgage quote, contact him directly at 205-567-4800 or jdixon@mcgowinking.com.



Jimmy Dixon



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Interested in church planting?

Stetzer to lead, teach at annual Church Planter Network Dinner

Are you a church planter or do you want to become one?

If so you may want to participate in the Church Planter Network Dinner on Nov. 15 at 3 Circle Church, Fairhope.

Sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), the dinner is open to church planters, their wives and anyone interested in church planting.



STETZER

or who may be called to do so."

Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, will be the keynote speaker.

A prolific author and conference leader, Stetzer will share an inspirational message with the full group and also lead a training session for church planters.

Stetzer also will speak Nov. 16 during the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

A session for church planters' wives will be led by Susan Lovett, wife of Danny Lovett, pastor of The Church at Chelsea Westover, in Shelby Baptist Association.

Registration for the evening will open at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 6 and worship and a message at 6:45. Training sessions will begin at 7:15 p.m.

The Alabama Baptist Disaster

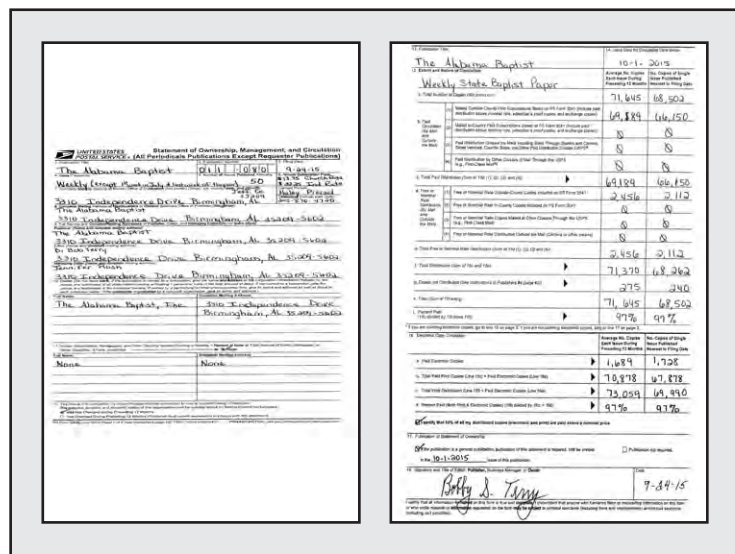
Relief child care team will provide child care at no additional cost for those who register in advance.

The dinner is one of several events held in conjunction with the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 17-18 at Eastern

Shore Baptist Church, Daphne.

3 Circle Church is located at 10274 State Highway 104, Fairhope.

For more information or to register, call Duke at 334-613-2332 or email lduke@alsbom.org. (SBOM)



Want to know GOD?

By Ben Birdsong
Minister of students, Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham

Have you ever been interrupted? It could have been an interruption from someone you knew who ran into you at the store or one of your kids needing your help or from a phone call. No matter what the interruption is — good or bad — interruptions refocus our direction.

When we experience God we have a divine interruption. In those moments when we realize we are lost and headed down a path to the wrong things, God at times chooses to reorient our lives with a divine interruption. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul speaks of the divine interruption that happens when someone surrenders their life to Jesus.

Paul describes the path prior to the divine interruption as: "dead in trespasses and sins" (v. 1); "following the course of this world" (v. 2); "following the prince of the power of the air" (v. 2); "living in the passions of the flesh" (v. 3); "carrying out the desires of the body and mind" (v. 3); and "children of wrath" (v. 3). It is clear from this verse that before Jesus comes into our lives we are headed on a negative path to negative consequences.

However, the story changes at the divine interruption in Ephesians 2:4 — "but God." God intervenes in our lives and changes our direction. Now because of Jesus and His work for us at the cross we are "loved" (v. 4), "made alive" (v. 5), "saved" (v. 5) and seated with Jesus in His glory (vv. 6-7).

We experience divine interruption in our lives by placing our faith in Jesus. Paul says: "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so no one may boast" (vv. 8-9).

If we place our faith in Jesus, our lives will be totally interrupted and changed forever. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul defines our interrupted life as one of good deeds where we join God in His work of bringing hope to the world. Let us embrace a life of divine interruptions. 🙏

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

PASTOR

Liberty Hill Baptist Church in Hampton, Georgia, is accepting resumés for full-time pastor. Please email your resumé to: LHBCpastorsearchcommittee@yahoo.com. Deadline for resumés is Nov. 1.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mount Philadelphia Baptist Church, Cordova, Alabama, is seeking a Spirit-filled, bivocational, strong in Southern Missionary Baptist doctrine pastor. Send resumés to: Mount Philadelphia Baptist Church, P.O. Box 13, Cordova, AL 35550.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP

First Baptist Church of Mount Olive is seeking a minister of music and education to lead a growing congregation in blended worship and discipleship programs. Bachelor's required and two to five years experience preferred. Send resumés to: Stephanie@fbcmo.org.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP

FBC of Blakely, Georgia, is seeking a full-time minister of

music and worship to replace the current retiring minister of music. We will receive resumés until Dec. 1. Please send resumés to: ldrew@fbcbklakely.com.

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

Crestline Baptist Church is accepting resumés for part-time minister of music. We are looking for someone to lead us in life-transforming encounters with God through greater creativity, excitement and involvement in our worship service. Mail resumés to: Search Committee, 13949 Highway 69 South, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405, or email: irb25@live.com. Any questions, call 205-344-5011.

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.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR/STUDENT MINISTRIES

FBC Florence is accepting resumés for the full-time position of associate pastor/student ministries. Send resumé to: FBC Florence, 209 North Walnut St., Florence, AL 35630.

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.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

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

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ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Jackson marks 20 years as DOM of Elmore Assoc.

In 1964 as a senior in high school, Jim Jackson began his ministry as pastor of Cardiff Baptist Church. Although it was an unexpected appointment, it was clearly divine as he was no stranger to the pulpit and was already a licensed minister. Fast forward 50 years and Jackson has stayed true to his ministry calling, celebrating 20 years as director of missions (DOM) for Elmore Baptist Association in September.



JACKSON

The son of a pastor, Jackson grew up in his father's church in Marengo County. "The Lord used him (my father) to bring me to ministry," Jackson said, and he pursued an education that would best equip him for such. After earning degrees from Samford University in Birmingham, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, he returned to Alabama to pursue his calling.

Jackson served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Tallassee; First Baptist Church, Lafayette; Ashville Baptist Church; Dogwood Grove Baptist Church, Montevallo; and Indian Grave Baptist Church, Billingsley, before serving as DOM for Elmore Association.

"I've been around long enough to see a lot of changes in the approaches of ministry today," he said, noting three aspects he believes are foremost for every pastor. "Giving attention to your relationship with God, being faithful to pastoring and loving the congregation and being faithful to God's Word and His proclamation" are "timeless" principles for pastors and ministry workers to hold fast to.

Jackson said his wife, Betty, has been significant in his ministry, even serving as a ministry assistant in the associational office since he became DOM.

The couple has three children and seven grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)

Vestavia Hills Baptist honors administrative pastor

Church members, family and community friends joined together Sept. 20 to celebrate Dennis Anderson's 30 years of ministry at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

Anderson, a native of Roswell, Georgia, began serving at the Birmingham Baptist Association church in 1985 as minister of education and administration before his title was changed to administrative pastor in 2014.

Anderson earned a bachelor's degree from Georgia State University in Atlanta and a master's degree and doctorate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Prior to serving at Vestavia Hills Baptist he served as youth minister for First Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Georgia; in ministry positions at three churches in Texas; and as minister of education for Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Anderson and his wife, Karen, are active in civic affairs. He served as president of the Vestavia Hills Rotary Club and founded Leadership Vestavia Hills in 1996. Anderson was named Vestavia Hills Citizen of the Year in 1997 because of his efforts in starting the citizen-training program that is still active today.

Throughout his years of ministry Anderson said he has tried to model his service after the word-picture in the Bible of the Church as the bride of Christ. He said he has sought to serve the Church "with respect, faithful service and loyalty and sometimes defend and protect it. (I've tried to be an) advocate and affirmer, encourager and to do what I can to make sure that the bride of Christ is prepared for the Bridegroom." (Neisha Roberts)



ANDERSON

Argentinian court fights religious persecution following years of inaction

After years of inaction, federal prosecutors in Argentina are pursuing criminal charges against perpetrators of religious persecution against an evangelical church in Rio Tercero, Cordoba Province.

The prosecution follows a May 29 judicial ruling that declared the long-running campaign of threats, vandalism and violence against Pueblo Grande Baptist Church "a clear violation of the law, the National Constitution and international treaties incorporated in it that pertain to freedom of religion."

Alejandro Zeverin, the church's defense attorney, said, "The fact that the Federal Court has initiated an investigation into this case is a victory. The fact that it has gone on for so long is a disgrace."

'Abuse of human rights'

Zeverin said he agreed to assume the defense of Pueblo Grande Baptist and its pastor, Marcelo Nieva, because he was convinced the case represents a clear abuse of religious liberty.

"I decided to defend this

evangelical pastor and his church — even though I am a Roman Catholic myself — because we are dealing with an abuse of human rights," he said. "This is increasing in Argentina with the rise of organized crime."

Outreach ministry

Troubles surfaced in Rio Tercero several years ago after the Pueblo Grande congregation opened Transit Home for Women, a shelter for women fleeing domestic violence, substance abuse and sex trafficking.

The church's outreach ministry angered local criminal gangs who profit from drug trafficking and prostitution, according to Nieva. He and his flock became victims of death threats, insults and a misinformation campaign. Opponents of the ministry sought to paint the Baptist church as a "cult" that "brainwashed" women and children who sought shelter at Transit Home.

One of the more serious incidents occurred Oct. 21, 2014, when unidentified gunmen sprayed Nieva's passing car

with bullets. The pastor and his passenger, Daniel Carreño, an active lay leader in the church, escaped injury in the attack.

For the greater part of their married life, the Nievas have endured constant insults in public and death threats from anonymous callers.

"It has been hard, very hard," Nieva said. "When my wife was pregnant, we would have to leave our house and take refuge in the home of another brother for weeks at a time, or we would go stay with my parents."

Police corruption

While the threats and violence escalated, Rio Tercero policemen looked the other way — or else joined in the harassment. Officers conducted searches of the church and Transit Home premises on the pretext of looking for "cultic" items or signs of "abuse."

Seven local attorneys refused to defend the church or else resigned soon after being hired. Nieva attributed their reluctance to threats from criminal gangs or fear of damage to their careers. (MS)

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

SUPPORT MISSIONS

I am writing this letter to encourage the readers of *The Alabama Baptist* to give to missions.

I was appalled to read in *TAB* recently that we Southern Baptists are not adequately supporting missions so the IMB is encouraging early retirement for missionaries. It is a shame and

a disgrace that we who have so much give so little.

Our Savior gave us the Great Commission. It is my responsibility and yours to support those who go through our prayers and through our giving. Obeying the Lord's command to take the gospel to all the world should be the first priority of every believer.

Please give so our missionaries can stay where they are doing what they do. Please give so many more can go.

Annelle Hughes
Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma



TAB
augmented
reality



NOW MORE THAN EVER...

Stay connected to *The Alabama Baptist*.

"I always enjoy reading what (Dr. Terry) has to write (in *The Alabama Baptist*). I teach an adult Sunday School class and ... in the Sunday School lessons in each publication I always find something to use ... as I teach my class. ... I'm always discouraged when I see the (stories about the) persecuted Church and what's going on across our country and world today. And just thankful that we have a Lord and Savior that knows how to take care of us and everything is in His hand and His control."

Source: Debbie Campbell



JIMMY DEVENNY
Member of Parkway Baptist Church, Auburn

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 4

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

A FRESH START

Genesis 8:15-22; 9:1, 11-16

A New Start (8:15-19)

As Chapter 8 begins the rain stops and a new world starts to emerge from the cleansing waters of the flood. God remembered Noah. This is the turning point in the flood story. When the Bible says that God “remembers” someone or His covenant with someone, it indicates that He is about to take action for that person’s welfare.

In verses 15-19, God gives the command for Noah, his family and the animals to go out from the ark and Noah obeys. Noah had obeyed God and entered the ark at God’s command and now he disembarks when God commands. There is an important principle to learn here: understanding can wait but obedience cannot. Noah did not completely understand what God was doing nor did he know God’s timetable but he obeys God anyway. We often will not understand what God is up to in our lives but we need to obey His clearly revealed commands.

In verse 17, God’s instructions to Noah are reminiscent of Genesis 1, especially the statement that Noah, his family and the animals are to be fruitful and multiply on the earth. It’s as if God has cleansed the world by these waters of judgment and a new creation is present. Noah is a new Adam entering into the world that God has cleansed by judgment.

God repeats the creation ordinance to be fruitful and multiply. Like a second Adam, Noah steps into a world washed clean by judgment and the spectacular deliverance in the ark is seen as a mere preliminary to salvation proper which is the new creation. Noah is assigned the job of seeing the creational ordinances as originally given by God to Adam reinstated in a new world. God’s work of redemption is something in which He restores and in some ways bet-

ters the conditions of His original creation.

A New Altar (8:20)

Noah responds to God’s work of redemption with worship. God’s saving work on our behalf should always evoke the response of worship.

This is the first time the word “altar” is used in the Bible. We are told about sacrifices in Genesis 4 in the story of Cain and Abel but no altar is mentioned there. On the altar Noah presents whole burnt offerings using some of the clean animals and birds that had been on the ark. This act of worship is intended to express gratitude for divine deliverance but also is an act of atonement. This is a normal aspect of burnt offerings and is supported by the mention of a pleasing aroma. The word “pleasing” conveys the idea of rest and the sense of soothing. The burnt offering soothes God’s anger at human sin so although human nature has not been changed by the flood, God’s attitude has changed because of the substitutionary sacrifice. In spite of the human propensity to sin, atonement through sacrifice is possible, securing a peaceful relationship between the Lord and humanity. Noah’s sacrifice is a foreshadowing of a greater sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice, the propitiation of God by the Lord Jesus Christ.

A New Promise (8:21-9:1, 11-16)

God promises never to destroy the earth with a flood again, establishing a covenant relationship with Noah, his descendants and all of creation. God’s sign linked to His covenant is the rainbow. Its presence, when rain clouds are in the sky, will be a visible reminder of God’s everlasting covenant with every living creature on earth. God offers a fresh start to people who confess their sin and repent and who trust in Him and His provision. No one ever meets the biblical Jesus and stays the same. A new life is possible in Christ. ☩

Bible Studies for Life By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

GOD’S PROMISE OF VICTORY Romans 8:28-39

When the Israelites who had endured the Babylonian exile finally came back to the promised land they returned to a nation in ruin. Under Nehemiah’s leadership the people rallied to repair Jerusalem’s walls, and at the prophet Haggai’s urging, they at last rebuilt the temple. But no sooner had the last stone of the temple been laid when Haggai offered this frank assessment: “Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?” (Hag. 2:3). Haggai’s piercing questions laid bare a bitter truth: for those old enough to remember, the glorious temple of Solomon far exceeded the meager structure they now saw.

The disappointment experienced by the Israelites at that moment was one nearly every believer has shared. We have seen a glimpse of God’s work but we have not seen the whole. Like the Israelites in Haggai’s day whose temple was a shadow of what once had been and a shadow paler still of what would be, we live in what theologians have called the “now but not yet.”

When Haggai’s listeners faced this dilemma the prophet offered them a word of hope. “Be strong,” he urged. Know that God’s word is “I am with you,” and “In a little while.” While the present may seem uncertain the prophet encouraged them that a glorious future awaited.

A fascinating parallel to the message of Haggai emerges in an unlikely place, the eighth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Wearing in soul by humanity’s unending struggle with sin Paul acknowledges that things are not now as we would want them to be. The whole creation groans under the weight of the curse

(Rom. 8:20-22) and we ourselves groan inwardly with longing and frustration (vv. 18, 23). Like the prophet, though, Paul counsels his readers to hold on in hope (vv. 23-25). He reminds them that they are God’s children and in time God will bring to completion the good work He has started in them.

God has a plan and it is for our good. (28-30)

In the remainder of Chapter 8, Paul goes on to lay a foundation for the hope that should characterize God’s people. A great deal of ink has been spilled over the precise meaning of the words, “those whom He foreknew He also predestined” (v. 29). Perhaps it is unavoidable that this sort of language should elicit discussions of the intricacies of election, foreknowledge, predestination and the like. At its heart Paul’s argument is not about a process; it is about a person, God Himself. God’s people can hold on in hope precisely because it was God who first called them to Himself.

God already has given us His best: Jesus Christ. (31-34)

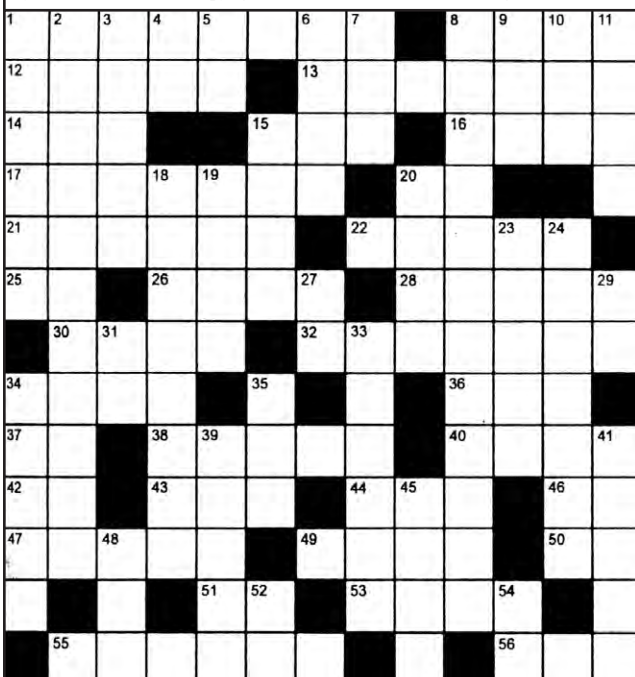
To this Paul adds a second reason for hope: not only did God call us, God also is for us. While we are often tempted to believe God exists for us the Scriptures argue emphatically that it is we who exist for God. And yet this same God around whom all creation revolves has chosen to take our side.

Nothing can separate us from God’s love. (35-39)

Paul’s concluding thought in the passage is less an argument than a bold confession of faith. Although it may be our lot to suffer hardship in this life Paul knows no suffering can separate us from the love of Christ. Now we struggle but one day we will experience at God’s hand the fulfillment of all our hopes. ☩

Christian Crossword

By Pamela Jensen Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



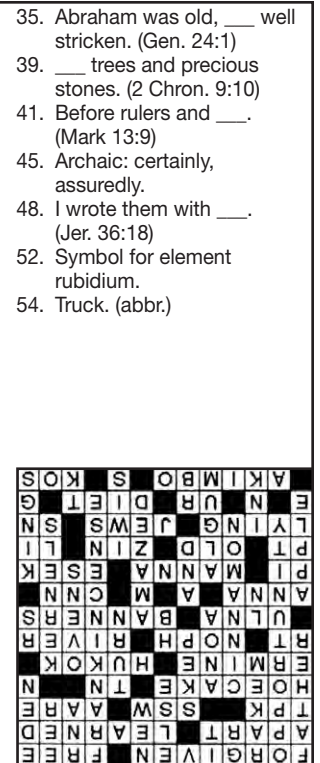
Across

- Your sins are _____. (1 John 2:12)
- Ye shall be _____ indeed. (John 8:36)
- _____ to pray. (Matt. 14:23)
- I have _____ by experience. (Gen. 30:27)
- Turnpike. (abbr.)
- South-southwest. (abbr.)
- River in Switzerland.
- Thin cornmeal cake.
- Tennessee. (abbr.)
- A weasel.
- And _____ with her suburbs. (1 Chron. 6:75)
- Right. (abbr.)
- The children of _____. (Jer. 2:16)
- In the _____ of Jordan. (Mark 1:5)
- Bone from the elbow to the wrist.
- Set up our _____. (Ps. 20:5)
- One _____, a prophetess. (Luke 2:36)
- Cable News Network. (abbr.)
- Sixteenth letter in Greek alphabet.
- They did eat _____.

- The name of the well _____. (Gen. 26:20)
- Symbol for element platinum.
- Abraham and Sarah were _____. (Gen. 18:11)
- The desert of _____. (Num. 27:14)
- Symbol for element lithium.
- From _____ lips. (Ps. 120:2)
- King of the _____. (Matt. 2:2)
- Symbol for element tin.
- _____ of the Chaldees. (Gen. 11:28)
- There was a continual _____ given him of the king of Babylon (Jer. 52:34)
- With hands on the hips and elbows bowed outward.
- Greek island.
- _____ (1 Chron. 7:16)
- Greece. (abbr.)
- _____ came to pass. (Josh. 1:1)
- There is none _____. (Isa. 45:18)
- He is a _____ creature. (2 Cor. 5:17)
- Gold and _____. (Matt. 2:11)
- Ribonucleic acid. (abbr.)
- Poetic: ever.
- Garden of _____. (Gen. 2:15)
- A straw beehive.
- And of sweet _____. (Ex. 30:23)
- A small buffalo of Celebes and the Philippines.
- _____ not to the right. (Prov. 4:27)
- Frogs ... into thine _____. (Ex. 8:3)
- From the _____ even to the husk. (Num. 6:4)
- Hemoglobin. (abbr.)
- Royal Society. (abbr.)
- Lane. (abbr.)
- They were _____. (Job 32:15)
- The _____ of his eye. (Deut. 32:10)

Down

- Peace from God the _____. (2 John 3)
- We have therefore _____. (Gal. 6:10)
- His sons were Ulam and _____.



TOP 10

best-selling Christian books

FICTION



1. The Harbinger

By Jonathan Cahn
(Frontline)

2. War Room

By Chris Fabry
(Tyndale)

3. The Gift

By Wanda E. Brunstetter
(Barbour)

4. A Season of Love

By Amy Clipston
(Zondervan)

5. Plain Peace

By Beth Wiseman
(Thomas Nelson)

6. The Half-Stitched Amish Quilting Club Trilogy

By Wanda E. Brunstetter
(Barbour)

7. The Shack

By William Paul Young
(Windblown)

8. Redeeming Love

By Francine Rivers
(Multnomah)

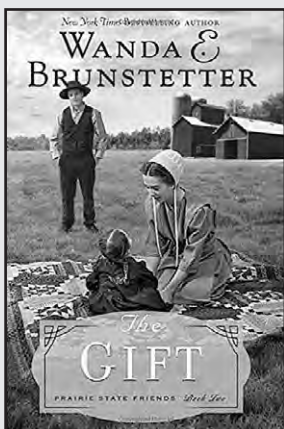
9. A Life of Joy

By Amy Clipston
(Zondervan)

10. Angels Walking

By Karen Kingsbury
(Howard)

Source: christianbookexpo.com at press time



Big Daddy Weave



Photo courtesy of The Media Collective

Sharing the reality

UMobile-rooted band continues weaving a way

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

With their new album, “Beautiful Offerings,” Big Daddy Weave hopes to encourage and equip worshippers as they tour across the country this fall.

“We want people to know that they are precious to God and that their identity is sealed in what Jesus has done for them on the cross,” lead singer Mike Weaver said. “In the last couple of years, the Lord has done a huge work in my life by reminding me of His great love for His children.”

These five musical talents met while attending the University of Mobile and began leading worship for events. From the start, the group felt led to share the message of Christ’s love with songs of praise for God’s glory.

Their previous album, “Love Come to Life,” garnered four consecutive No. 1 singles. The album featured the hit song, “Redeemed,” which was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America.

“The song ‘Redeemed’ impacted people in ways we never could have imagined,” Weaver said. “As people around the world received the message of being redeemed, we began hearing powerful stories about the freedom and forgiveness they were experiencing while discovering their new identity in Christ. It’s been incredible.”

Wherever the Dove Award-winning band performs, their focus remains directed toward Christ, who they consider their “audience of one.”

“We are followers of Christ and His goodness is captivating,” Weaver said. “We’ve seen the value of

sharing the reality of personal struggles and being vulnerable about hard times. Everyone struggles, but the good news is that we have a Savior who walks with us and never leaves us. Our desire is to connect with people by sharing these experiences and leading them to Christ. The encouragement comes from hearing stories about lives being changed, people worshipping God and praying that God’s will be done and His kingdom come.

“We’ve had some times where we were certain in our minds that we were totally messing up, and no one was getting it,” Weaver said. “Then, at the end, all these people come up and share all these different experiences. They have said things like, ‘I was having a rough time, and the Lord really spoke to me through this.’ That’s so cool to see and reminds us that God is not nearly as interested in our ability as much as He is in our availability. We are ready, willing and able to be used for His glory.”

While performing around the country, band members desire to see lives changed.

“Our spiritual act of worship is to offer our lives to God and honor Him through our words and actions,” Weaver said. “We not only have to look at what we are saved from, but we have to look at what we have been saved for. As believers that is the high calling placed on all of our lives and we can respond by taking action and leading people to Christ.

“We want people to experience God’s love in a very real way, and we want them to realize that God wants to fill them up with His Spirit and use them for His glory. It’s about laying ourselves down and letting Jesus live through us. The truth of God’s Word will be seen, not just heard, by a move of God’s Spirit in our lives.”



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Playing the game from a new perspective

'I decided to give myself up and let Him lead,' Delmonico says

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Baseball has been pitched to Nicky Delmonico all 23 years of his life. When he was born, his father, Rod Delmonico, was head baseball coach at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

"It was unbelievable. Growing up, the baseball field was pretty much like my home. We had to love baseball growing up. That was somehow thrown at us but I fell in love with this game. We were very blessed to be able to have a baseball atmosphere in the SEC, a dominant conference, to grow up and watch," said Nicky Delmonico, a recent third baseman for the Birmingham Barons.

From 1990 to 2007, Rod Delmonico coached the Volunteers and became the winningest coach in school history with a 699-396 record.

After playing on four Tennessee state championship baseball teams at Farragut High School in Knoxville, including his 2010 junior year when he hit a walk-off home run to defeat Houston High School of Germantown in the state championship game, Nicky Delmonico signed to play at the University of Georgia in Athens. He wanted to play with his brother, Joey Delmonico.

He never got the chance. He went from preps to pros. Drafted in the sixth round of the 2011 Major League Baseball Draft by the Baltimore Orioles, Nicky Delmonico was later traded to the Milwaukee Brewers.

Ready for pro ball

It was a "tough decision" not to play at Georgia, he said.

"At the end of the day, I felt like I was ready to go play (professionally)," said Delmonico, who played 62 games for the Birmingham Barons in 2015 after becoming a member of the Chicago White Sox organization. He batted .238 with an on-base percentage of .313 and slugging percentage of .386. He had 26 RBIs, 24 doubles, 53 hits and three home runs. He currently is on the active roster of the Glendale Desert Dogs in the Arizona Fall League.

In 2014, however, Delmonico's career took a detour. On July 28, 2014, he was suspended 50 games for testing positive for amphetamines. Milwaukee released him but a week later Chicago gave him a second chance.

"I felt like I was in a place where I didn't really understand what my purpose was in life. ... I felt like I didn't have a reason to do anything. I had a couple of rough years in pro ball where it led me to a different mindset.

"I felt like I could do everything on my own. I kind of fled away from my family and I didn't have a huge faith. I had a hard route over the past two years with baseball and figuring it out. There has been a lot of growing up in pro ball, just overcoming things," Delmonico said.

"I felt like that was God's way of humbling me, bringing me back to my family and being thankful for what I have. It led me back to Him.

"I had a lot of people praying for me. I was raised in a church atmosphere but I never really had a relationship with Him. This past year was when I decided to give myself up and let Him lead and give me a path. He has given me that purpose. I turned my life around ... because of God."

Delmonico was five years old when he was baptized at First Baptist Church, Concord, Tennessee, and attends there when he is in town.

Delmonico turns to James 4:7 when

he faces struggles: "So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

"That is the reason why I picked it. Every day we have temptations. You have got to humble yourself. You can't be bigger than anything you are doing. You've got to be thankful and be appreciative. That verse reminds me always to let God lead me and to follow Him. As a person, I am powerless over a lot of things as in temptations. I understand God has a plan and for me to live by that."

Delmonico also uses the devotional book "Jesus Calling" and feels like it "changed my life because it is God's Word every day," he said.

When on the field, Delmonico feels a great sense of gratitude. Teammates see his happiness, which Delmonico said he uses as a witness for Christ.

Birmingham shortstop Tim Anderson said, "He is always happy. He brings a lot of excitement to the table and is a great guy to be around."

Since giving God the reigns, Delmonico's perspective of the game he loves has shifted.

"I am more appreciative of having my teammates around and just enjoying life. ... Every single day I wake up and thank Him for another day because we are not guaranteed tomorrow." ❧



Photo by Michael Wade Event Photography

Nicky Delmonico

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Missions agency evacuates volunteers from Cameroon

MAROUA, Cameroon — Baptist missions agency EBM International (EBMI) evacuated all its missionaries and volunteers from the Far North province of Cameroon following a series of bombings by Muslim extremist group Boko Haram.

"Since January 2013, Boko Haram has started to kidnap foreigners in order to release them for money," said Christoph Haus, EBMI general secretary. "They have kidnapped almost 20 foreigners, some of them were missionaries. Over the past six weeks they have started a series of six suicide bombings that have left more than 50 dead and hundreds injured," Haus said.

Magloire Kadjo, EBMI regional representative in Cameroon, said Boko Haram has changed its tactics. "(Boko Haram is) now using adolescents as kamikazes. They take time to brainwash them and to convince them that if they die as kamikazes, God will be very pleased with them; they will have special privileges in paradise; they will be together with their loved ones who are already dead." (BWA)

Prison official stabs pastor to death in Laos

NA-ANG, Laos — A pastor in northern Laos who disregarded officials' orders to stop preaching about Christ has been stabbed to death, sources said.

A prison official, Wansai, entered the home of pastor Singkeaw Wongkongpheng in Na-ang village, Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province, on Sept. 8, relatives told advocacy group Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom (HRWLRF).

While four other unidentified men who accompanied Wansai waited outside the pastor's home, Wansai first grabbed Wongkongpheng's wife. When the pastor came to help her, Wansai tried to take him away. The pastor called out for help and Wansai stabbed him three times in the back. Wansai is a Luang Prabang provincial police serving as a prison guard in Pha-Oh Prison.

The HRWLRF director (name withheld for security reasons) said area Christians believe the killing was the direct result of the pastor's refusal to stop speaking of Christ. (MS)

Muslim Fulani herdsmen continue to wreak havoc

KADUNUNG, Nigeria — Authorities declined to acknowledge that Muslim Fulani herdsmen were behind a rash of recent attacks on Christian communities in Plateau state, Nigeria, that took 38 lives and displaced 5,000 people.

More than 100 armed Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacked the Christian community of Kadunung, in the Mangu Local Government Area, on Sept. 16. About 150 houses were destroyed in the attack and the 18 found dead were buried while the injured were taken to the Plateau State Specialist Hospital in Jos, according to Titus Bise, chairman of the Mangu Local Government Council.

The 5,000 displaced residents of the village constitute a serious humanitarian problem. "The situation of the displaced is worse because the rainy season is at its peak," Bise said. "Most of the displaced are living in the open and the rains are here. That alone can increase the casualties if nothing is done fast." (MS)

Extremists attack Christians in prayer meeting

HUTUTAG, India — An attack on a prayer meeting in Jharkhand state, India, sent six people to the hospital Sept. 4. It began when Hindu women entered the home where Anugrah Church was meeting and began insulting Christians, sources said, escalating to about 15 Hindu extremists armed with guns, axes, spades and clubs beating church members.

The Hindu extremists demanded that the Christians denounce Christ, worship Hindu idols and hand over the pastor of the church in Hututag village, Palamu District, who they had hidden on the roof for his protection.

The Christians refused all the demands and were brutally beaten. Four of the Christians were hospitalized for 10 days. (MS)