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TAB augmented reality

'THE GOSPEL

is enough'

Photo courtesy of North Clay Baptist Church/Redemption Road

Alabama Baptist churches focus on upcoming Reformation Sunday

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Nathan VanHorn says we "just never know when God is going to do something big to shake up things that are too quiet."

That's what happened when Martin Luther took a hammer and nailed his 95 theses to the door of Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany, almost 500 years ago and sparked the Protestant Reformation.

"It was at a time when the Catholic Church was selling indulgences," said VanHorn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Payne. Indulgences were letters from the church that, for a price, supposedly granted pardon

and took away the punishment for sin.

"And what Luther said in the face of that was, 'The gospel is enough.'"

That legacy was huge, as was the boldness it took to make it happen, VanHorn said. Luther was willing to face excommunication from the church and whatever other consequences might come from challenging the trappings that weighed down the truth.

Similar boldness

And recapturing those brave Christian roots might just help today's Church have a similar boldness "to approach our mission in a new and fresh way," VanHorn said.

That's why this Reformation Sunday (Nov. 1), VanHorn is entering the sanctuary through a large wooden door and nailing onto it a document, the contents of which he hasn't revealed yet.

He's setting the scene to make a big point.

"I'm very big on visual imagery,"

VanHorn said, "and to me what Reformation Sunday is about is to corporately look to see how our hearts can get more in tune with God and His Word. Where are we misaligned? Where are we majoring on the minors?"

Luther is part of a long line of

"generation after generation after generation who have sought counsel from God's Word through God's Spirit to address their unique ministry and missional circumstances," VanHorn said.

And with the same Spirit-led
(See 'Special,' page 12)



Photo courtesy of North Clay Baptist Church/Redemption Road
Almost 500 years ago Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany, and sparked the Protestant Reformation.

COMMENT

Alabama Baptists Set a Worthy Example

In mid-October the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) confirmed what many people already anticipated. Alabama Baptists once again led the nation in giving to SBC missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program (CP).

The SBC Executive Committee reported that for the 2014–2015 fiscal year which ended Sept. 30, Alabama Baptists gave \$17,375,698 to SBC missions and ministries through CP. That was about \$850,000 more than the state giving the second largest amount.

Being the largest giver to SBC causes through CP is a wonderful accomplishment that Alabama Baptists have achieved several times in recent years. But when the giving is placed in perspective, it is an even greater accomplishment than first recognized.

Membership numbers

For example six other state conventions have more members than Alabama's 1.011 million members. Georgia Baptists form the largest state convention with 1.406 million. North Carolina has 1.244 million members. Both Baptist conventions in Texas and the conventions in Florida and Tennessee also have more members than Alabama, according to SBC statistics.

Churches in several state conventions also had total receipts ahead of the \$711,449,330 reported by Alabama Baptist churches during the last year of record. Georgia and the two Texas conventions each reported receipts north of \$1 billion. North Carolina reported \$894 million while Florida and Tennessee reported \$782 million and \$760 million respectively.

State income statistics

To further place Alabama Baptists' accomplishment in perspective one must remember that these other state conventions are wealthier than Alabama. According to the United States



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Census Bureau, the states mentioned previously all have higher median incomes and higher per capita incomes than Alabama.

That means that with fewer people who earn less money and with less total receipts by the churches, Alabama Baptists again provided more support for SBC missions and ministries than any other state convention.

In fact, of the money contributed by all 42 cooperating state conventions, Alabama Baptists gave 9.455 percent of every CP dollar. That is a wonderful accomplishment for Alabama Baptists. It shows most Alabama Baptists believe in cooperative giving to support all Baptists do together in our state, our nation and to the ends of the earth.

SBC special offerings

Recognition of Alabama Baptists' support for CP giving sometimes creates the impression that support for SBC special offerings like the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American Missions is lacking among Alabama Baptists. Not so.

Again, according to SBC statistics released in mid-October, Alabama Baptists were second among all state Baptist conventions in designated giving to SBC causes. Alabama Baptists gave \$18,155,157 during the last fiscal year. North Carolina Baptists were first in designated giving to SBC causes with \$19.343 million.

Through CP and designated offerings together, Southern Baptists gave a total of a little more than \$375 million to SBC missions and ministries during the just completed fiscal year. Alabama Baptists gave \$35,530,855 of that amount which is 9.47 percent of the total.

Combined giving rankings

Do not miss that Alabama Baptists gave a higher percentage of CP and designated giving combined than it gave through CP alone. The difference may be slight — 9.45 percent for CP and 9.47 percent combined — but it is still more.

Dollarwise Alabama Baptists' combined total of CP and SBC special offerings was more

than \$2 million ahead of the second place state convention and more than \$5 million ahead of all others. Combining the two channels of giving actually increased the dollar lead of Alabama Baptists over Baptists from every other state convention than considering CP alone.

Where individual offerings are concerned, Alabama totals placed the state convention second in gifts to Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Global Hunger Relief. No other state demonstrated such consistency.

Also worthy of notice is that Alabama Baptist giving to CP and to designated offerings grew at a higher rate than did SBC as a whole. Alabama's CP total was 2.32 percent above the same time frame last year. SBC growth in CP giving was 1.39 percent. The percentage growth in designated giving for Alabama was 1.08 percent. For SBC it was 0.17 percent.

Compared to other states

And this was done by a state convention with fewer members who earn less money and with churches receiving less total giving than other top giving states.

These numbers will not match figures reported by Alabama's State Board of Missions because Alabama keeps records on a calendar year basis which is different from the SBC's fiscal year. But these numbers compare SBC totals from the recently completed fiscal year to the previous year so the picture is clear.

Alabama Baptists believe in CP and Alabama Baptists believe in supporting special offerings. Both are important. Each plays a distinct role from the other. To sacrifice support for one in order to support the other is to destroy both.

The foundation

Just as a local church cannot exist if the majority of its giving goes for the youth program or the music program, Southern Baptist missions and ministries cannot exist unless Baptists support all we do together through our churches, associations, state conventions and SBC. As we have written before, CP provides the foundation. Special offerings provide avenues to support personal passions.

So congratulations again to Alabama Baptists for a faithful demonstration of financial stewardship through CP giving and support of SBC special offerings. Your members make up only 6.4 percent of SBC total membership but your giving accounts for 9.47 percent of the total given through state conventions. That is a worthy example. May God bless you as you continue to help underwrite missions and ministries in our state and to the ends of the earth. 🙏

Have you
tried it yet?

TAB augmented
reality is here.
Check out page 10
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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Dating after death of a spouse

How adult children can deal with the emotions of a widowed parent

When mom or dad starts to date

Carl's father, Henry, died 15 months ago after a long battle with cancer. Throughout Henry's illness, Carl's mother, Juanita, had been his primary caregiver. Juanita had devoted herself to Henry's care, sacrificing time with her friends and hobbies for several years.

After his death, she rejoined her quilting club and regularly enjoyed lunch at the local senior center with many of her friends. Last month Juanita told Carl that she had dinner plans with Phillip, a man she had met at the senior center. They have been going to dinner regularly since then. Carl is not sure how to respond to his mother's new friend. Are they dating? Does she want to get married again? Is he betraying his father by supporting this new relationship?

By Ross Hickman
Vice president, Pathways Professional Counseling

Many adult children have a story similar to mine. My mother died of complications from dementia after a 10-year struggle. My father had been her primary caregiver for most of those years. Like many surviving spouses my father had no plans to date after my mother's death (see story, page 7). One of the first things he said was, "I'm just not interested in dating anyone, let alone remarrying." In my eyes that was the honorable and chivalrous thing to say.

However, within 18 months of my mother's passing, my father had met, dated and married a sweet widowed lady from our church. So much for not being interested!

Looking back at the situation I had some conflicting emotions ranging from amusement to anger to confusion to slight betrayal. It was a new and strange situation and when it happened I was not prepared.

Whether a parent's death is the result of illness or accident, sudden or prolonged, all of our parents will eventually pass on. After the services are over, the casseroles have been eaten and the well wishers fade, both the remaining parent and their adult children must look ahead to the next stage of life.

For many widows and widowers that next stage will include remarriage. Adult children have significant choices to make when that happens, so there are several important truths adult children who find themselves with a widowed parent should remember.

1. Individuals grieve differently even when going through the same situation. The parent and/or adult child may hold resentment, anger, unmet expectations or other feelings toward the deceased spouse/parent. God created marriage as a covenant relationship between two individuals who become one person, so when the surviving parent has lost his or her lifelong partner, a piece of that person's entire being has been removed. Surviving parents are often completely exhausted and need time to recover.

This recovery process sometimes lasts for several years. Some surviving parents never quit grieving. The parent as well as adult children might benefit from grief counseling or a support group to practice coping skills and strategies to live through their loss.

2. As adult children it is our responsibility to let the surviving parent grieve even as we walk through grief ourselves. The adult child who loses a positive parental role model often has lost a mentor, caregiver, hero and friend, yet after the initial grief process we go back to the normal routine of our lives, albeit with a changed perspective. However, the surviving spouse has lost a friend, confidant and companion. It should be obvious but as adult children in this situation we must realize we cannot fill the void for a deceased parent nor should we try. I remember trying to fill my dad's every moment with activities with his grandsons or with my wife and me. However, a spouse-sized hole is not filled with a son-and-his-family-sized plug. We can definitely spend time with our parent, but in doing so we need to respect their feelings, desires, time and boundaries.

3. Marriage after the death of a spouse, both from the law and from grace, is bibli-

cally permissible and honorable in the eyes of God. As we examine the Scripture the remarriage of widows is addressed more often than the remarriage of widowers for three main reasons.

First men had much shorter life spans (they still do today though not as much). Second women at that time had difficulty supporting themselves and their children without a husband. And finally continuing the husband's family line was very important in Jewish culture. In both the Old and New Testament there are several passages that address remarriage. In each case the only truly acceptable reason is the death of a spouse. In Corinthians, Paul encourages younger widows to remarry, a testament to the fact that remarriage is important.

So what do we do when our single parent starts to think about dating or, heaven forbid, goes out on a date?

Initially we need to make sure we don't overreact when our parent shares his or her desire to start socializing with others or to date again. It's a lesson learned from basic parenting or friendship. If someone close to us shares confidential information and we react with anger or frustration, there is a strong possibility that person won't share personal information with us again.

Give them room

Next we need to let the parent lead. Your parent was able to grow up, marry, raise a family (which included you) and navigate life without your help. They have arrived in a very strange new chapter in their lives. Give them some room to process and grow. Also be respectful of their feelings when sharing your thoughts on the subject. It is definitely OK to share your opinion. However, this is their decision not yours. You can advise but from a distance.

Finally remember that God is sovereign and He doesn't need your help or suggestions leading your parent through their later years. 🙏

8 tips for helping a widowed parent

1. Pray unceasingly.
2. Make sure your living parent's physical needs are met. If needed, offer assistance but allow your parent to control the decisions as much as possible.
3. Listen to your parent without offering solutions or suggestions. There will be time for those later.
4. Ask your church for support group resources for both you and your parent.
5. When your parent talks about dating, stay calm and listen. If they ask for feedback, take time to process and respond.
6. With grace and respect, communicate your feelings and possible concerns with your parent.
7. Reiterate to your parent that it is his or her choice and not yours.
8. If you see a safety concern, verify before discussing with your parent.

Source: Pathways Professional Counseling



HICKMAN

**FOLLOWING
DEATH OF A SPOUSE**

Decision to remarry

Overcoming sense of guilt to commit to new relationship is hard but essential

123rf.com

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

Richard Smith and his wife, Gloria, started first grade together in their small Georgia hometown, so her death from cancer in 2009 ended not only their 37-year marriage but a lifelong friendship. When he took the first steps toward dating again, he felt guilty — as if he were somehow betraying his wife and her memory.

“That was the hardest part. I felt like I was stepping out where I shouldn’t and those feelings were hard to overcome,” he said.

One person who helped him overcome those feelings was Pat, whom he met in 2012. She had lost her spouse, Vernon, in 1990, and though she had occasionally gone out on dates she was content living on her own except for the loneliness that set in every afternoon.

“During the day I didn’t think too much about it. But evenings were always family time — time to eat dinner, talk about the day. After Vernon died there was never a day when that wasn’t

hard until I met Richard,” she said.

Richard and Pat married in 2013. Both said the time they took after the deaths of their spouses allowed them to heal from their grief and prepare to be happy with someone else, which grief experts agree is one key to a successful remarriage after the death of a spouse.

There’s no right answer for how long one should wait to remarry, though many authorities suggest that a surviving spouse not make any major decision, including marriage, until at least a year has passed.

‘Survivor guilt’

However, regardless of how much time passes any such relationship is subject to “survivor guilt” and a sense of being unfaithful to the departed spouse, writes Richard Mabry, author of “The Tender Scar: Life After the Death of a Spouse.”

As a surviving spouse himself, Mabry encourages other widows and widowers to cherish the memories of their deceased spouse regardless of whether or not they choose to date again.

“Whether you remain single for the rest of your life or God prepares you for another union, your first marriage cannot and should not be ignored or buried in your memory,” Mabry writes.

“Recognize how it influenced and shaped your life. You may and you should continue to love your first husband or wife. It’s possible to do that and at

the same time commit yourself to another marriage.”

Alan Wolfelt, founder and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado, says surviving spouses can find comfort in talking about their loved ones.

“Healing in grief doesn’t mean forgetting your spouse and the life you shared together,” Wolfelt writes in his article “Helping Yourself Heal When Your Spouse Dies.”

Both Richard and Pat Smith said the freedom to talk about their former spouses has enriched their life together.

Pat said, “It’s not taboo for me to say something about my husband or for him to tell me what she cooked.”

Richard said, “It has brought comfort to me that Pat doesn’t mind talking about our pasts.”

Unfortunately memories from the first marriage are still “baggage” that each spouse brings into the new marriage, said Sid Nichols, who married his wife, Pam, a widow herself, after his wife of 37 years died in 2010.

“Pam is so different in many respects from Barbara and I am so different from her late husband,” said Nichols, director of missions for Calhoun Baptist Association.

Sometimes the memories are bitter ones, which was the case for Eve S., whose husband died after an extended illness just before their 30th wedding anniversary. Eve had hospital bills to pay and

a mountain of mortgage and credit card debt, some of which her husband had hidden from her.

“I had a lot of anger when he died because he had the attitude that I could take care of myself once he was gone,” she said.

She also had seen friends whose second marriages had ended in divorce because they could not let go of their memories

of their deceased husbands. She was determined not to fall into that trap and said she kept an “open mind” to her second husband’s interests, which included riding a motorcycle and traveling.

Navigating the mix of emotions, fears and expectations from a first marriage is critical to the success of the second, according to Steve Sweatt, clinical director of Community

Grief Support Services in Birmingham.

“One cannot assume the second spouse will be just like the first. It often takes patience to find a balance between the past, present and future,” he said.

Full measure of love

Commitment to the second marriage also is essential, Mabry writes.

“Constantly endeavor to give the person you are marrying your full measure of love and devotion,” he writes. “Admittedly it’s a balancing act to move forward with your new husband or wife while honoring your first one. But it’s possible and, like most good things in life, well worth the effort.” ❧

“Admittedly it’s a balancing act to move forward with your new husband or wife while honoring your first one.”

“The Tender Scar: Life After the Death of a Spouse”



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7 tips

for coping with grief when a spouse dies

Though there is no single way to cope with grief after the death of a spouse, Alan Wolfelt, founder and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado, suggests several practical coping strategies in his article "Helping Yourself Heal When Your Spouse Dies."

1. Allow yourself to mourn.

Feeling disoriented is natural. Mourning is an essential part of healing.

2. Recognize your grief is unique.

There is no universal experience of grief. Don't try to compare your experience with that of others or adopt assumptions about how long your grief should last.

3. Talk out your thoughts and feelings.

Don't be afraid to talk about your deceased spouse. Find out if there is a support group in your area you might want to attend. There is no substitute for learning from others who have experienced the death of their spouse.

4. Expect to feel a multitude of emotions.

Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, relief and anger are just a few of the emotions you may feel. As strange as some of these emotions may seem, they are normal and healthy. Allow yourself to learn from these feelings.

5. Treasure your memories.

Memories are one of the best legacies that exists after your spouse dies. Treasure those memories that comfort you but also explore those that may trouble you. Share memories with those who listen well and support you.

6. Embrace your spirituality.

You may hear someone say, "With faith you don't need to grieve." Don't believe it. Having your personal faith does not mean you don't have to talk out and explore your thoughts and feelings. To deny your grief is to invite problems to build up inside you. Express your faith but express your grief as well.

7. Move toward your grief and heal.

Remember grief is a process not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Be compassionate with yourself as you work to relinquish old roles and establish new ones. No, your life isn't the same but you deserve to go on living while always remembering the one you loved.

Adapted from "Helping Yourself Heal When Your Spouse Dies" by Alan Wolfelt, director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, www.centerforloss.com.

Dealing with grief important before moving forward with social activities

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As a longtime pastor, Sid Nichols has stood at the casket with many surviving spouses, assuring them of the sufficiency of God's grace in difficult circumstances. However, when Nichols lost his wife, Barbara, to cancer in 2010 he found himself desperately seeking to feel the grace he knew was present.

"Though I believed it with every fiber of my being, after Barbara died there were times that I could not feel it," Nichols said. "I was hurting so badly and grieving so hard that I just could not feel His grace in that moment. I know that was me and not Him but there is truth in the statement that you cannot imagine how it feels to lose your spouse unless you have been there."

Nichols, director of missions for Calhoun Baptist Association, writes about the months following Barbara's death in "When the Crying Stops and the Weeping Begins: An Intentional Ministry Plan for New Widows or Widowers."

He describes the weeks following Barbara's death as "the darkest days of his life," filled with pain, loneliness and the realization that Barbara was "not there and she was not ever going to be there again."

When a spouse dies the routine of what had previously been considered "normal life" is disrupted, writes June Hunt, founder of the biblical counseling ministry Hope For The Heart and author of "How to Handle Your Emotions: Anger, Depression, Fear, Grief, Rejection, Self-Worth."

"Life will eventually return to normal, though what that looks like will be different than before," according to Hunt. "When death takes someone dear to your heart, your life will not 'return to normal.' However, you need to establish a 'new normal.'"

Sadness and grief are part of the new normal, at least for a while, writes Richard Mabry, author of "The Tender Scar: Life After the Death of a Spouse."

"Foremost is a certain kind of sadness — a sadness engendered by the knowledge that the spouse whom the bereaved loved for so many years, the spouse who loved that widowed person so intimately and knew him or her so well, has passed from this present life," he writes.

Grief also is a natural response to death. However, mourning, which is the expression of grief, is different for every individual, said Steve Sweatt, clinical director of Community Grief Support Services in Birmingham.

Readiness to date and remarry

Multiple factors affect the intensity and duration of one's grief but all are related to one's readiness to date and remarry, Sweatt said. Two important factors are the nature of the loss and the nature of the relationship the survivor had with the deceased.

In cases where the deceased spouse has been ill for some time the surviving spouse may have assumed all of the responsibilities for running the household and feel more independent as a result. In such cases the surviving spouse may feel a greater readiness to move forward into social activities, including dating.

The opposite also can happen. "Sometimes in a long-term caregiving situation the surviving spouse has put so much into caregiv-

ing that they have nothing to fall back on. They often have let social relationships go or not attended church in a while. When their spouse dies they have lost their sense of purpose and have a tremendous adjustment to make to being on their own," Sweatt said.

Emotional responses

Surviving spouses who have experienced a sudden, traumatic loss also typically have a harder time coping than those who have had time to anticipate and prepare for their loved one's death, Sweatt said.

Regardless of the circumstances the surviving spouse will experience a wide range of emotional responses in the weeks and months following the death of a spouse.

"There may be anger, guilt, hurt, sadness or longing. The surviving spouse may even feel ambivalent. One task in grief is the maintenance of a continuing bond with the one who has died. The surviving spouse has to make peace with those feelings," Sweatt said.

Reconciliation of those feelings and emotions toward the deceased is just one factor that might signal readiness to date again, however, Sweatt said. Another is a substantial reduction in pain and stress over the loss. A third is the survivor's functionality, or the way the individual has moved from a couple's identity

into a single's identity and taken on the responsibilities previously shouldered by the deceased, which is a very important indicator.

"One thing we don't want to see is that an individual replaces one's spouse," Sweatt said. "There's an old adage that says, 'Women mourn, men replace.' Men are often quicker to move into relationships with new spouses because they have greater difficulty adapting to the loss of their mate, who is often the one who ran the household, cooked the meals and kept the social calendar."

Women are less prone to marry again quickly because they typically have better developed social networks, Sweatt said. However, he counsels both men and women to refrain from leaping directly into dating and instead to participate in group events that women and men, such as a singles group at church.

"The creation of a new social circle and patching up one's network of support is another key task in healing from grief," Sweatt said.

Even during the time of mourning a surviving spouse can begin to look outward and forward, Mabry writes. Solitary activities such as painting, reading or writing can help fill time. Increased involvement in church, social activities and recreation can help as well.

Though marriage may not be on the mind of the surviving spouse there is always a possibility that God has prepared another person to share the future with a widow or widower, Mabry writes.

"Our culture has led us to believe that for every man or woman there is one perfect mate. When that match is dissolved by death we've been conditioned to think that there'll never be another love in our lives," he writes. "I don't begin to understand how this can be but I can attest that it's possible for God to place in our paths other individuals whom we can love and cherish." ❧

"It's possible for God to place in our paths other individuals whom we can love and cherish."

Richard Mabry
author



123rf.com

Open lines of communication with adult children important when parent remarries

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

After her mom died Susan spent many Sunday afternoons crying in her car as she drove home from visiting her dad, knowing that he felt terribly lonely without her mom.

So a few months later she was glad when her dad said he was going to dinner with a woman from work. Her gladness turned to surprise when he announced a month later that he planned to marry the woman. Though she was happy her father would have someone to share his life with, her stepmother was not the person Susan would have picked, she said.

"She was very different than mother, but honestly I didn't expect him to remarry someone to replace mother. I just didn't expect him to get married so soon," Susan said.

Leah found herself in a similar situation when her mom began dating a year after Leah's father died. Leah's mom had made it clear that she hoped to remarry someday and when Leah met Willard she was struck by how different he was from her father.

Different histories

"My dad was a big football fan who was always the life of the party," Leah said. "Willard was a military man who rode a motorcycle."

Like Susan, Leah was happy her mom would have a companion. Though the motorcycle scared her Leah felt confident her mom would be safe physically, emotionally and financially with Willard.

Both women admit that learning to love their stepparent and to blend two families

with different histories and traditions was challenging.

"The dynamics of our family changed overnight," Susan said. "Suddenly we had a stepmother and a stepbrother and there were other grandchildren in the family."

The fact that Susan, her brothers and their families had to share their dad with another family caused some resentment.

Leah's brother had a hard time because though he was a young adult, he lived with his mother and had to adjust to a new father figure in the house.

The struggles that Susan and Leah faced are not unusual in stepfamilies formed through later-life marriages that often happen after a former spouse has died. Later-life marriages bring many emotional transitions for adult stepchildren including feelings of abandonment and betrayal, according to Ron Deal, founder and president of Smart Stepfamilies and author of "The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family."

"Many couples marrying later in life mistakenly assume that because their children are adults their transition to a stable intergenerational stepfamily will be smooth," Deal writes.

Adult children often fear that grandchildren will be overlooked in the excitement of the new marriage. Concerns about family inheritances and finances are common.

Adult children also realize that the family's heritage is changing. There is hope, however.

"These negative emotions can eventually give way to feelings of bondedness and connection and multigenerational blessings," Deal writes. "The pace of this developing relationship varies and some will never be more than respectful friends. But for most a basic sense of mutual respect and care for one another is genuinely attained. Others will develop a deep, loving and trusting bond that is very special."

For Leah the bond with her stepfather grew when she became a mother. Both she and Willard realized that he would be the grandfather her children remembered.

"My dad wasn't there to be a grandfather but Willard was there when they were born. They were the first grandchildren and that fact added a lot of dimension to our relationship," Leah said. "Willard's connection with my kids has meant a lot to my mom too. There's a layer of 'glue' that wasn't there before."

In Susan's family her father's relationship with the grandchildren was a point of contention with her brother, who felt like their stepmother had taken away his children's grandfather.

Deal writes that regardless of their age adult stepchildren feel loyal to their original family, so uncomfortable attempts to blend

the two families, such as for holiday gatherings or special events, can be difficult.

"Accepting a stepparent means the established family ties and special family holidays and celebrations must stretch to make room for newcomers," Deal writes at SmartStepFamilies.com. "This isn't easy and frankly it hurts."

Deal counsels the marriage partners not to take their adult children's response personally.

No longer like home

"It's not really about you. It's about home no longer feeling like home," Deal writes.

Leah felt that when she realized her mom did not have any photos of her dad in the house.

"There were times that would get to me a little bit," Leah said. "I remember thinking, 'just because he's your new husband doesn't mean daddy wasn't my dad.' But my sensitivity to things like that has decreased over time."

Open lines of communication can help avoid some difficult situations. Deal advises adult children to acknowledge their feelings about their parent's remarriage in order to avoid those emotions turning into withdrawal, criticism or hurtful behavior.

He also counsels adult children to act in loving ways toward a new stepparent even if they don't feel love yet.

"Resist the urge to withdraw in anger or judgment," Deal writes. "Acknowledge that your parent has legitimate needs and desires that include pursuing a dating or marriage partner. Doing so does not diminish the importance of your other parent, your family history or their relationship with you." ❧

"Resist the urge

to withdraw in

anger or judgment.

Acknowledge that your

parent has legitimate

needs and desires."

Ron Deal

**founder and president
Smart Stepfamilies**

A look at what Scripture says about remarriage

By Wayne Stevens
Special to The Alabama Baptist

While Scripture often addresses marriage the Bible has few passages that speak to the specific situation of remarriage after the death of a spouse.

In the Old Testament we see God's involvement in bringing couples together. In the book of Ruth, for example, we see the widow Ruth and her husband's kinsman, Boaz, come together through God's guidance of their circumstances.

The story of Ruth and Boaz also gives us insight into the status of women in Bible times. In Jewish tradition and culture men were the breadwinners, the providers for the family. In those days women had no real voice and depended on the protection of a father or a husband. Without a man's protection women were subject to abuse by those who would take advantage of her situation.

Therefore if a woman's husband died, there were specific instructions in the law for how she should respond in this situation. The message is clear. If a woman had the unfortunate experience of losing her husband, then it is definitely okay to marry again. Men obviously had the same right.

In the New Testament remarriage for surviving spouses is permissible as well. Paul mentions remarriage in two specific passages. In Romans 7:2-3, he writes that "by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies she is released from the law that binds her to him."

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul encourages widows and widowers to stay unmarried. However, he continues that it is better for them to marry than to enter into sinful relationships outside of marriage (vv. 8-9). Later in the chapter Paul addresses widows specifically when he writes that "a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord" (v. 39).

That last phrase is very important to Christian widows and widowers considering

remarriage. Regardless of the age of the couple the spiritual aspect of marriage should not be ignored. Two people considering marriage should be on the same page when it comes to their spiritual beliefs. This is true for a first marriage as well.

For those considering marrying again after the death of a spouse, I would tell them to go right ahead. There is nothing spiritually or morally wrong with marrying again. However, both individuals should

be prepared to face the changes that the marriage will bring. A second marriage is going to be different from the first. The life experiences of each individual will affect the marriage, as will the reaction of family and friends to this new union.

A couple considering remarriage later in life needs to be aware of how their children feel. Are they willing to give their blessing? Are you and your new spouse willing to accept the conflict that may happen? Often these blended family relationships work out great but sometimes they don't.

Adult children of widowed parents who choose to marry again would be wise to take Paul's counsel in verse 18 as well: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone," which includes the person your parent has chosen to marry and the blended family that results from that union.

Love in action

The truth is that if we are who we say we are, if we are truly Christians who live like we ought to live, we are going to treat everyone, including mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters by marriage, with dignity and respect.

As Paul writes in Romans 12, love in action must be "sincere." We are instructed to "rejoice with those who rejoice" and to "live in harmony with one another" (vv. 15-16).

EDITOR'S NOTE — Wayne Stevens is a chaplain for New Beacon Hospice, retired pastor and widower who lives in Aniston. He currently serves as interim pastor of Bethel North Baptist Church, Lineville, in Clay Baptist Association.



STEVENS

Personal reflection

FBC Trussville member shares firsthand experience

By Jim Hickman
Special to The Alabama Baptist

My wife and I had plans for a wonderful retirement — enjoying our children and grandchildren, taking trips and spending time together at our home. However, those plans changed as her dementia became readily apparent and got progressively worse as the years passed.

The dementia diseases are known as the "long goodbye." As symptoms increase and victims' actions change, stress on the caregiver, especially a spouse or close family member, increases drastically. I often wondered how a person who did not have the basic assurance of faith in God, His Word and prayer could face such a difficult situation.

A short time after my wife's death, I felt a tremendous relief. I simply did not realize how great the emotional and physical burdens had been until they were gone. As I began to take stock of my own physical and emotional needs, I realized how important my friends were in everyday life.

My relationship with my son and his family also helped me during that time. In the last few months of his mother's life, my son had been building an apartment in his home. I had assisted in that project, and a month after her death the apartment became my home. I had the joy of spending more time with my son, his wife and my two grandsons. They included me in many of their normal activities, including family gatherings and vacations. I also made long trips alone to see family in Colorado, New Mexico and Missouri. The long hours driving and the visits were soothing and relaxing for me.

My church life also was a wonderful help. The minister of our senior group at First Baptist Church, Trussville, invited me to accompany him on several day trips in the area and encouraged me to participate in various trips with the seniors of the church. As time went on I was occasionally asked if I intended to get married again. My honest answer was "no." I was not interested at the time in dating or even thinking of getting married. While spending time around so many other senior adult singles, I had observed several different scenarios of how people dealt with their widowed status. Some appeared happy and content with family and

friends nearby. Others seemed desperately lonely and were openly and aggressively searching for a spouse. Some were in between. They were lonely but not yet lonely enough to consider remarrying.

I was in that last category. As the months passed I did not feel overwhelmed by loneliness or desperately in need of a companion. From time to time though when observing a beautiful view or participating in an activity, I would think how nice it would be to have someone with me to share those experiences. Around that time I began to notice an attractive lady at some of our senior activities. I eventually engaged in conversation

with her and then asked her to dinner.

She had been a widow for several years and lived by herself in her own home. We discovered we had many mutual interests. I determined privately that a decisive test of our continuing relationship would be how she felt about my two small grandsons and how they responded to her. It was an instant success. Naturally my son was more reserved and cautious but he was very supportive of my decisions (see story, page 3). The same was true of our friends and our



HICKMAN

senior minister.

We prayed about our situation and we asked the Lord for guidance. We soon decided to get married but not everyone was happy with our decision. We encountered strong opposition from her daughter and son-in-law at first though the rest of our family and friends, especially the other seniors, were strongly supportive and pleased. Eventually her family accepted our news as well.

Our decision to marry was made more than eight years ago and we have enjoyed our lives together. We continue to pray and ask for guidance and we both believe we have been especially blessed to find someone to share life with after the loss of our first spouses.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Hickman and his wife of eight years, Jimmie Ann, live in Clay. They are active members of First Baptist Church, Trussville. Jim's first wife, Delia, was a school-teacher and musician. They were married for 36 years and active in several churches before her death Dec. 18, 2004. A Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, Jim retired from the U.S. Forest Service in 1993 with 40 years of service, including military.

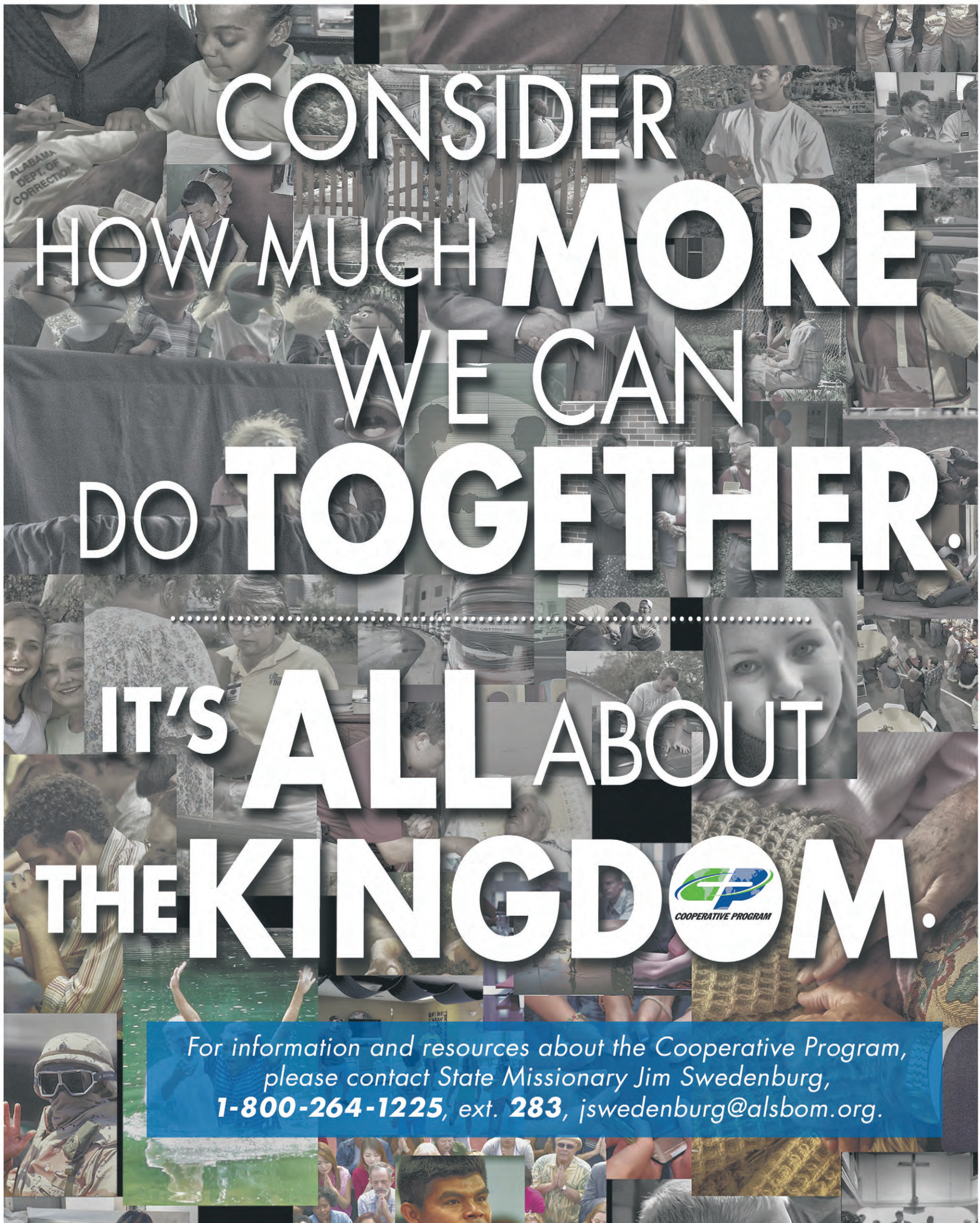


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“Travis personifies the ‘one mission’ we have as Alabama Baptists, which of course is the Great Commission.”

Rick Lance
executive director, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



Travis Coleman

Photo by Neisha Roberts

‘Denominational statesman’

Coleman reflects on past year as president of Alabama Baptist State Convention

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama is filled with a lot of great people just coping with life and trying to serve their church, love their families and serve well in their vocations.

And meeting lots of them has been one of the most special parts of serving as Alabama Baptist State Convention president for the past year, said Travis Coleman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville.

“One of the best parts of my position is being able to meet a wide range of Alabama Baptists,” he said. “We are all serving the larger Kingdom.”

‘Passion for teamwork’

It’s one thing, he says, to hear the reports of the convention’s entities; it’s another thing entirely to have the opportunity to sit on their boards and “hear their heart, the joys, the struggles.”

“They really have a passion for where they are serving ... a passion for teamwork and a passion to see the Kingdom built,” Coleman said.

For him, attending board meetings this year was a poignant reminder that each

entity wants to “see the Kingdom advanced in what they do.”

Coleman, for one, is excited about seeing them tell the stories of what God is doing during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 17–18 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne.

“During recent years we’ve moved to telling our story better, and we’ve seen the faces of where the dollars are going and where the transformation is taking place,” he said.

Coleman said he hopes Alabama Baptists will catch a vision for renewed Cooperative Program (CP) giving so these ministries can continue to pick up steam and so entities like the International Mission Board (IMB) can avoid cutbacks like the recent announcement to reduce personnel by 600–800 missionaries and staff.

“It’s important that we all strengthen our CP giving going forward,” he said.

“This is no reflection on any person or churches or IMB.”

It’s just that churches may have gone through a patch of time where CP took a cut because of economic recession and

then as the economy recovered, churches never adjusted their giving back to previous levels, Coleman said.

“Let’s get back to what we have done well in the past,” he said.

There is a true movement happening right now to get back to the heart of CP and its value, and one of the leaders of that movement is Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd, Coleman said.

Theme of ‘PRAY’

He’s excited Floyd will be addressing Alabama Baptists during the Tuesday night session of the annual meeting. He’ll be speaking on the theme “PRAY,” a topic four other speakers will focus on over the course of the meeting.

For more information about the state convention annual meeting, visit www.abscannualmeeting.org.

“The reason I personally appreciate it is that that’s been our focus at my church, and I’m so glad to be a part of that emphasis this coming year as a convention,” Coleman said.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Coleman’s service this year has been “exemplary” as he has led Alabama Baptists.

‘Leader among leaders’

“He has demonstrated a sense of wisdom and discernment as a leader among leaders,” Lance said. “Travis personifies the ‘one mission’ we have as Alabama Baptists, which of course is the Great Commission. Our Baptist family in Alabama can be proud of the service he has rendered sacrificially this past year as president.”

The term “denominational statesman” isn’t used as much as it used to be, but Coleman definitely fits the term, Lance said. “The gavel of being president of our convention is in skillful hands.”

Coleman said it’s been nothing but joy for him.

“It’s been a great year to serve,” he said. ☪

Ministry Tips



USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR CHURCH

Using social media as part of your church’s communications plan may seem overwhelming and even confusing, so here are a few tips to help you start thinking about the options.

1. Don’t start without a plan but make time to determine a plan.

2. Start with one or two outlets and grow from there. For instance, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are good options for churches. Start with one, then build to the other two before starting too many different social media accounts.

3. Determine your purpose for using each social media outlet and develop

a strategy around that purpose. Don’t launch a Facebook page and then never update it. At the same time work hard to stick to the purpose of the page. The purpose may change over time but it is important to have some type of strategy outlined and articulated.

4. Put one person or one team in

charge of social media for your church. Then make sure the person or team understands the strategy. It may be that the person or team appointed will be the one or ones who come up with the strategy.

5. Update it often. Social media is meant to be social. (TAB)

Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Year Ago October 1965

Historical Marker Installed: Jefferson Baptist Church has been honored by the Alabama Historical Association with a highway marker in the churchyard. James Yarbrough, one of the first Baptist ministers in the region, helped constitute the Baptist church in Jefferson — originally named Mount Pleasant Baptist Church — in 1820 with 27 members. The marker notes that Jefferson Baptist is among the oldest in the Demopolis area.

40 Years Ago October 1975

Church Disbanded: After 54 years Elyton Baptist Church, Birmingham, held its last service

Sept. 17. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama will dispose of the church property and the money will be invested by the Foundation for the church. In 1921, Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham, organized Elyton Church, and B.F. Giles became the first pastor. He was pastor until his death in November 1925.

30 Years Ago October 1985

Disaster Relief Teams Assist in Mississippi: Several Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief teams were dispatched to Biloxi, Mississippi, to assist in feeding and cleanup following the devastation caused on Labor Day by Hurricane Elena. In the first day 500 hot meals were served to survi-

vors of the storm who lost their homes and belongings.

20 Years Ago October 1995

Air Mobile Kitchen Lands on St. Croix: Within hours after Hurricane Marilyn battered the Virgin Islands on Sept. 15, the American Red Cross had sent out a request for a disaster relief team to carry the Alabama Baptist State Convention's air mobile kitchen to St. Croix. Team organizers Cliff McMahan of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, and Larry Murphy of Bethany Baptist Church, New Brocton, assisted Reggie Quimby of the state Brotherhood department in assembling a team of nine Baptists from around the state. While at

St. Croix, the group prepared and served 35,000 meals.

10 Years Ago October 2005

Disaster Relief Teams Stretched by Hurricanes: Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief continues to serve in response to Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. More than 1,000 volunteers from across the state are working in feeding, shower, child-care and mudout crews, preparing 13 million meals for hurricane survivors and relief workers. The Alabama Baptist Temporary Emergency Child Care (TECC) unit was relocated from Lawrenceville, Georgia, to Mobile after Rita hit. TECC volunteers served 780 children after Katrina. ☮

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

First Baptist Church of Geneva, Alabama, is accepting resumés for full-time pastor. Please email your resumé to: rbennett8115@gmail.com. Deadline for resumés is Nov 8.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION

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.

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.

TWO POSITIONS

Mulberry Baptist Church is seeking to fill two bivocational leadership positions — minister of music and youth minister. For more information and to send resumés, contact Andy Mims: amims279@gmail.com or 205-755-6816.

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 MINISTER

University Baptist Church is seeking a full-time youth minister. Send resumés to: University Baptist Church, ATTN: Ashley Barrios/Search Committee, 904 Menard St., Thibodaux, LA 70301, or email: ubc@ubcthobodaux.net.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

Park Avenue Baptist Church of Oneonta, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational youth minister. A husband/wife team is preferred. Please send resumé to: Park Avenue Baptist Church, 909 Park Ave., Oneonta, AL 35121.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Cypress Shores Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. If interested, please send resumé to: Cypress Shores Baptist Church, 4327 Higgins Rd., Mobile, AL 36619.

OTHER POSITIONS

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mount Zion Baptist Church in Warrior, Alabama, is seeking a secretary/treasurer. Send resumés through October to: 2427 Corner Rd., Warrior, AL 35180. Phone 205-647-1938 for details.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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JUDGMENT DAY

Evangelistic drama. Cottage Hill Baptist, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 24-25, 6-10 p.m. Oct. 26-27, no presentation. Oct. 28-29, 6-9 p.m. Oct. 30-31, 6-10 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521.



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- 1 Download the Aurasma app from your app store.
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- 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 If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.
- 7 Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.

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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Word of God Across the Ages

God's Eternal Word

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

We began the theme of God's Word across the ages by going back before time when God's creating Word spoke everything we know into existence. We also explored the channels and methods by which God has communicated His Word to human hearts. We studied His engraved Word which He etched on the two stone tablets and made central to His covenant with Israel. We focused on His prophetic Word which He made known through the voices and writings of Old Testament prophets. That brought us to the high point of His revelation to humankind in His incarnate Word in the person of His Son.

From the life, work and words of Christ, God spoke His clearest and fullest revelation. Even so Christ Himself declared there was more to be revealed than He could disclose during His earthly ministry. The Holy Spirit's ministry would include completing divine revelation through the inspired preaching and writing of the apostles and their close associates.

All that had gone before led to the written Word, the Holy Bible, as the final and complete self-revelation of God to human hearts. Last week we pondered God's encrypted Word in the Book of Revelation with its message of hope for the Church and judgment for the enemies of the gospel.

Eternity future

One other idea remains. Just as the Word of God was spoken in eternity past before time began, so His completed revelation will endure into eternity future.

Isaiah 40:8 says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever." Just before 1 Peter 1:24 repeats this declaration from Isaiah, it likens God's Word to imperishable seed and describes that Word as "the living and abiding Word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). Toward the end

of His earthly ministry Jesus declared, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Eternal hope

God's enduring and imperishable Word gives us the basis for eternal hope. From new birth by the Word (1 Pet. 1:23) through spiritual growth by means of that same Word (1 Pet. 2:2) to the consummation of God's plan of eternal salvation, as 1 Peter 1:25 affirms, "The Word of the Lord remains forever." God's abiding Word is the foundation for our hope. His Word holds out to us hope that will never disappoint or stop short of realization. We can embrace what the psalmist confessed, "I hope in Your words" (Ps. 119:147).

Solemn oath

After noting that humans give their word and then confirm it with a solemn oath, the Book of Hebrews speaks of Christian hope based on God's eternal Word. Underscoring the changelessness of God's Word, the declaration is made by two immutable things that it is impossible for God to lie — His Word and His solemn oath. God's sure Word and His confirming oath combine to give us hope that is like "an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19).

All God's children can enter into the hope expressed by the psalmist by making his prayer our confession, "Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). 📖

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.



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BALDWIN

▶ **James Kelly Brown** will retire from his role as pastor of **Pleasant View Church, Foley**, on Dec. 31. He has served as pastor for 36 years in six congregations. Brown and his wife, Donna, have two children.



BROWN

CENTRAL

▶ **Rockford Church** will celebrate homecoming Nov. 1, 10:30 a.m. with guest speaker Richard Wells. Special music will be provided by the church. A covered dish luncheon will follow. Jeff Fuller is pastor.

COLUMBIA

▶ **Smyrna Church, Dothan**, will celebrate its 150th homecoming Nov. 1 with 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m. special music by The Giles Family and 11:15 a.m. worship with guest speaker Hosea Parker. Lunch will follow the service. James Bell is pastor. ▶ **Malvern Church** will host a night of worship with The Perry's on Nov. 7, 6 p.m. A homecoming and Harvest Day will be Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m. with guest speaker Mark Anderson, former student minister of the church. Special music will be provided by Walter Wilson. Dinner on the grounds will follow. Hosea Parker is pastor.

ELMORE

▶ Members of **Santuck Church, Wetumpka**, and others in the group Charis Crafters will host its 17th annual "Home for the Holidays" craft show Nov. 12-14 at the Wetumpka Civic Center. The show will be open Nov. 12, 4-7 p.m., Nov. 13, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. and Nov. 14, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information call Nancy Brunson at 334-399-0350. B.R. Johnson is pastor.

MOBILE

▶ **Jerry L. Bousard** is the new minister of administration/education at **First Church, Theodore**. His first day was Oct. 1. He previously served as pastor of Daphne Church and as a staff intern at Dayspring Church, Mobile. He holds a bachelor's degree from Covington Semi-



BOUSARD

nary in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and is currently earning a bachelor's degree through New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Melissa, have two children. David Gill is pastor.

MORGAN

▶ **Walnut Grove Church, Decatur**, will host its annual Trunk-or-Treat on Oct. 31, 5-8 p.m. Everyone is welcome. John Bain is pastor.

PINE BARREN

▶ **Chris Wells** is the new pastor of **Camden Church**.

He holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He previously served as assistant pastor of Christ Fellowship Church, South Portland, Maine, and as worship pastor of Vine Street Church, Louisville, Kentucky.



WELLS

He and his wife, Laura Don, have one child.

TUSCALOOSA

▶ **Rosedale Church, Tuscaloosa**, hosted a SEND Conference in conjunction with Tuscaloosa Association's annual meeting Oct. 20. More than 300 people participated in the event, including missionaries to Indiana. The choir from Chapel Hill Church, Northport, provided special music and guest speakers included Tuscaloosa Association's Eric Boykin and Sam Day and the North American Mission Board's Kevin Ezell. *The Alabama Baptist* also hosted 10-minute communications and technology makeovers to help Alabama Baptists enhance their ministries. Kenny Overstreet is interim pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

▶ **Tuskegee Lee Association** will host its annual senior adult celebration and luncheon at Carrville Church, Tallassee, Nov. 2, 10 a.m. Derwin Hinson will be the featured musician. Bill King is director of missions.

WALKER

▶ **First Church, Cordova**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m. Pastor Robert Blankenship will speak. Music will be provided by The Sharps Quartet, of Fort Payne. Lunch will be served at noon and a singing will be held at 1:15 p.m. 📖

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Special focus a time 'to see how our hearts can get more in tune with God'

(continued from page 1)
counsel that Luther had, God could very well do something big again now just like He did then, VanHorn said.

"The Church never gets to go into coast mode — we should always be reforming ourselves with the Word," he said.

VanHorn's sermon will be on one of John's letters in Revelation that was written to a stagnant church.

"The only two churches about which John has nothing negative to say (in Revelation) are the ones who are being persecuted," VanHorn said. "And today it's the same — Christianity on the worldwide scene is thriving where it's being persecuted. It's in the contexts where it's comfortable that it's often stagnant or declining."

So he said he wonders what Luther or John would have to say to the Church in Alabama today.

"We want to take a personal inventory, evaluate ourselves and have our own personal reformations as believers and as a church," VanHorn said. "It's a legacy we want to build on."

So when he takes a mallet this Sunday and drives a nail into the big prop door built by church member Kendall Shankles, that's the point he'll be trying to drive home.

Tim Evans, pastor of North Clay Baptist Church, Pinson, said he feels the same way.

This weekend, for the fifth year in a row, his church is putting on a dramatic walk-through presentation of the day Luther nailed his theses to the door, emphasizing the integrity of the gospel and the need to challenge practices that don't line up with God's Word.

The drama — called "1517" and written by children's minister Josh McDaniel — is family friendly and will be staged Oct. 31, 2-5 p.m., and Nov. 1, 5-8 p.m., in vignettes that take about 45 minutes to walk through.

"Luther was the man God used to recover and restore clarity to the gospel," Evans said. "If you lose the gospel, you've lost it. You have no purpose for existing as a religious entity."

Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, said 1517 tells a message churches today need to hear.

"The Reformation of the 16th century was an age of spiritual renewal which focused on salvation by grace alone and the clarity and certainty of God's Word in the Holy Scriptures," he said. "This is a message we still need to hear



Photo courtesy of North Clay Baptist Church/Redemption Road
A member of North Clay Baptist Church, Pinson, participates in the annual children's drama '1517,' a walk-through Reformation Sunday presentation about Martin Luther's 95 theses.

today and learning the story of Martin Luther is a good way to do this."

North Clay's 1517 presentation is a "one-of-a-kind retelling of these events that changed the world," George said.

Reservations for groups for 1517 are encouraged but not necessary. 📞

For more information on 1517, call 205-633-9700. To watch a video clip of the presentation, visit <https://vimeo.com/113117875>.

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RESOLUTION IN MEMORY OF — REV. JERRY SMITH —

WHEREAS, the Central Baptist Association, meeting in its One Hundred Seventy First Annual Meeting on October 5, 2015, desires to remember Rev. Jerry Smith, who passed from this life to his eternal home on December 21, 2014;

And WHEREAS, Jerry Smith was born June 27, 1931, in Lyon, New York, to Ezra A. Smith and Margaret Marie Brewer Smith;

And WHEREAS, the family moved to Coosa County in 1934, settling into Rockford, Alabama, and the Flint Hill Community;

And WHEREAS, while a student at Clarke College in Mississippi, Bro. Jerry surrendered to the call to preach;

And WHEREAS, Rev. Smith served as a bivocational pastor of approximately ten churches in Mississippi and Alabama, notably churches within the Central, Elmore, Clay, Chilton and Coosa River Baptist Associations;

And WHEREAS, he had been a member of Rockford Baptist Church from October 2, 1988, through January 20, 2010;

And WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of 61 years Mrs. Dean Gantt Smith and children Danny Smith of

Sylacauga, Deanne Hodges of Moody, and Larry Smith of Hanover;

And WHEREAS, at his death he was serving faithfully as pastor of the Weogufka First Baptist Church;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Central Baptist Association honors the memory of one of our faithful pastors;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Association continues to remember the family of Bro. Jerry, the church he served at the time of his death and the many friends who still mourn his passing;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we join together to affirm the promises Bro. Jerry preached and sang about — that Jesus loves us and has gone to prepare a home for all who will come to him with repentance and sincere heart;

And, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, we ask that the Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting be dedicated In Memory Of Rev. Jerry Smith and a copy of this resolution be published in *The Alabama Baptist*.

Resolution Committee:
Mr. Ken Raison
Mrs. Sherry Heath
Dr. Jeff Fuller

— Paid Advertising —



Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

When no one wants to tell you

It was a bit disappointing and hurtful that I wasn't asked to help with the event — much less direct it. After all the project fit perfectly in my wheelhouse and I would have been brilliant in the lead spot — or at least in my opinion I would have.

So why would those handing out the assignments not pick me? Surely they didn't realize what they had done. It had to be an innocent mistake.

I decided to prevent the blunder from happening again by alerting those in charge that I was interested and skilled in that particular area.

'We'll keep you in mind'

Right on cue they thanked me for my interest. They said they would definitely keep me in mind for future projects. I walked away feeling good about what must have been amazing communication skills on my part to have worked out everything so quickly and easily.

But when the next opportunity came I was overlooked again. And again. And again.

Then it hit me. The group had worked with me once a few years prior. They had brought me on to assist with a project because of my skill set and had asked me to serve in a support role.

Once the assignment got underway, I looked around and realized we were not working efficiently nor effectively and we could do a lot better job if they would do it my way. I elbowed my way to the top spot, took over the project and completed the assignment.

The end result turned out well as far as quality of the project was concerned; group morale not so much.

Overstepping the role

It may be true I had a higher level of experience and training in the area but that wasn't the point. I was not selected to be in control of the project. I was asked to serve a support role. When I didn't honor what I had agreed to do, the group took note and made sure never to invite me to help again.

I've also been on the other side of the situation and not appreciated when someone who thought they knew more than I did — even if they did — took over a project that was mine to lead. If

I were chosen to manage the project, then those assisting should play the specific roles they were asked to do even if I seem to be missing some important insights, right? Not exactly.

After all a leader should want to be challenged and sharpened by his or her team. That means allowing team members to have the right to make suggestions for improvement. It doesn't mean the leader has to do all that is suggested, but encouraging feedback and then sincerely listening and considering the concepts suggested help make sure the leader is thinking around all sides of the subject.

At the same time, team members must remember to be respectful of the leader and the leader's decisions. Discussions, debates and even disagreements can happen while a topic is being decided, but once a decision is made, the team needs to be unified around the decision in order to function smoothly and healthily.

Working with a mismatch

Of course the difficulty comes in a situation when the leader is a mismatch for the project and no one wants to tell him or her. Or when a team member can't handle not being the one in control and continuously causes issues for the team because he or she won't cooperate appropriately. And no one wants to tell this person either.

I often wonder why we are so afraid to speak truth to one another. Yes some people make it hard because they are offended easily and end up pouting about it. Others don't know how to deliver truthful messages with compassion. They only know one style and it cuts deep.

We all should do more self evaluating and determine what we are doing to make people afraid to be honest with us. We also should welcome honest feedback and not be so easily offended.

At the same time we should work harder at sharing (with grace and love) our concerns with those in our lives rather than avoiding them or humoring them with fake responses.

The truth hurts sometimes but it hurts more to discover that someone you trusted didn't tell you the truth.

Rashional Extras...

TAB augmented reality



5 critical issues facing the Church

By Thom Rainer
LifeWay Christian Resources

(Excerpts from Thom Rainer's presentation to the Birmingham Baptist Association Ministers Conference on May 18)

In Zechariah 4 the temple of the Lord has not been built yet, but the foundation has been sitting there for 10 years. It is time to rebuild the house of God and Zerubbabel is the one to lead the effort. He can't do it in his strength but by the spirit of the triune God.

But just like Zechariah and Zerubbabel, we also face discouragement and obstacles. Many times we also find ourselves like them and at the point of giving up because we face five critical issues.

1. Culture — We have a tendency to say the culture is killing us. ... Yes culture is shifting ... but we have a God who is victorious over all, including culture.

2. Change — This is an issue of deep pain for many in our churches. It can cause all kinds of conflict.

3. Comfort — Less than half of our members show up for worship on any given weekend. Something has happened in our churches where for many of the members, membership is an entitlement to a country club-type of organization rather than a responsibility to serve the living God. When did it happen where membership shifted to (the mindset that) the church will meet all your needs rather than church membership being, "I will serve, go, give, sacrifice"?

4. Crisis — The rate of church closures are at an all-time high and many are barely hanging on.

5. Community — Nine out of 10 U.S. churches do not reflect the community in which they are located. If you don't reflect the community in which you are located you have already become an island in the midst of a community looking for hope.

What if churches said, "We are here not to keep our doors open for the sake of keeping our doors open, but we are here for the community"?

We may be living in the most precarious times in church history, but we are living in the greatest time of opportunity. ... We can truly be the metaphorical salt and light.

"The great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day is the conception of practical work that has not come from the New Testament but from the systems of the world in which endless energy and activities are insisted upon, but no private life with God. ... In our Lord's life there was none of the press and rush of tremendous activity that we regard so highly, and the disciple is to be as His Master."

Oswald Chambers
"My Utmost for His Highest"

"Constructive use of even minimal power makes you a leader worth following."

Caitlin Estes
Featured speaker
September Christian
Women's Leadership Center
luncheon in Birmingham

"No disease spreads faster than the disease of me."

David Jeremiah
Pastor, author, host of
Turning Point broadcast
ministry



When the request is for everyone but you ...

Thanks to 11-year-old Jared Davis from Calvary Baptist Church, Russellville, for illustrating the October Rashional Thoughts column.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 1

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

A NEW NAME Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22

God's Promise Renewed (1-8)

When Abram was 99 years old God appeared to him and declared himself to be "El Shaddai," God Almighty. This is the first use of this divine designation in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. The name "El Shaddai" signifies God's power and sovereignty. God Almighty is a good translation because it describes the God who makes things happen by means of His majestic power and might. In this context God was saying there is no need for Abram to give up on His promise to make him the father of a multitude because of his old age.

Christians, the same is true for us. The way we live is determined by what we think of God. If our God is "El Shaddai," then we ought to trust Him to fulfill all of His promises to us.

When God established an eternal covenant with Abram, He changed Abram's name to Abraham. Abram's name meant "exalted Father" and referred not to the patriarch but to God as exalted Father. But when God changed Abram's name to Abraham it referred to the man himself as a "father of a multitude."

Abraham's new name was matched by another revelation: "Kings shall come from you" (v. 6b). This promise was beyond Abraham's dreams, but 1,000 years later the founding of a line of kings in the Davidic dynasty began the fulfillment of this promise which was ultimately fulfilled in another 1,000 years at the birth of Jesus Christ.

Abraham Offered an Alternative (15-18)

God also gave Sarai a new name — Sarah. Both Sarai and Sarah mean "princess." It was God's plan all along that she would be a princess because princesses have

kings. Not only would Sarah bear a child in her old age, but the sacred, royal dynasty would have her blood in its veins and ultimately the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

God had revealed His new name, Abraham had a new name, the sign of the covenant (circumcision) had been commanded and Sarah had her new name. How did Abraham respond? He laughed.

He initially fell to the ground in the prostrate posture of deepest respect, but as he lay in reverence he thought about his situation and their ages and he laughed. Then Abraham suggested Ishmael's name to God.

Was Abraham doubting God? Evidently not because God did not voice disapproval of His laughter. In contrast, in the next episode when Sarah laughed at the same promise, God rebuked her (18:13). Her laughter reflected her ongoing lack of belief in the promise that she would bear a son, despite what God had said to Abraham. The absence of correction for Abraham implied not that he lacked faith but rather that his faith was limited. Abraham was like the father in Mark 9:24 who told Jesus: "I believe; help my unbelief."

God's Power Declared (19-22)

God had announced His name as "El Shaddai," the almighty, omnipotent, sovereign God who can do anything. Abram became Abraham, "father of a multitude." Sarai became Sarah, "the princess." Together they would birth a royal dynasty of kings. Their yet-to-be-conceived son was named Isaac ("laughter"), a sweet symbol of faith's struggle.

God is capable of delivering on all of His promises. Our impatience can lead us to substitute our imperfect plans for God's perfect plan. Like Abraham we need to trust God for more than our eyes can see. Abraham believed God and by grace we need to do so as well. 🙏

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

STAND COURAGEOUSLY Daniel 3:13-18, 26-28

For Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah — more commonly known as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego — life in exile was a decidedly mixed affair. On most days life consisted of learning how to maneuver the minefields of life at court. How should one respond to a king's troubled dreams and petulant demands for interpretation (Chapter 2)? How should one respond to a king's mental breakdown (Chapter 4) or outright rejection by God (Chapter 5)? But on other days a more ominous note was struck. On these days, decisions had to be made concerning royal decrees that fell afoul of God's own decrees. When must one resist the king's edict? When must one move beyond resistance and into outright defiance? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego faced just such a dilemma in the third chapter of Daniel.

As Daniel 3 opens, the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar is said to have erected on the plain of Dura an enormous image of gold. This image he intends all his government officials to honor by bowing before it and worshipping it when the musical call is sounded. This, the Hebrew children rightly believed, they simply could not do. To serve the king was one thing, to worship the king and his idol was another thing altogether. And so Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down.

This decision would not be without consequences. Nebuchadnezzar had not only commanded that his officials worship his image he also had spelled out in painstaking detail what would happen to those who did not: "Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately

be thrown into a blazing furnace" (v. 6). To draw the line at this point for the three youths could well mean death at the hands of the Babylonian king.

Your commitment to the Lord will often cause clashes with the world. (13-15)

Determined to follow their own consciences, the Jewish youths refused to bow down. Their refusal did not go unnoticed, however. Immediately their actions were reported to the king, who was thrown into a furious rage. Summoning Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego before him, the king demanded once again that the youths submit and threatened them anew with a terrible death in the fiery furnace. Ominously he warned, "What god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" (v. 15).

You must stand against a hostile world with immovable faith. (16-18)

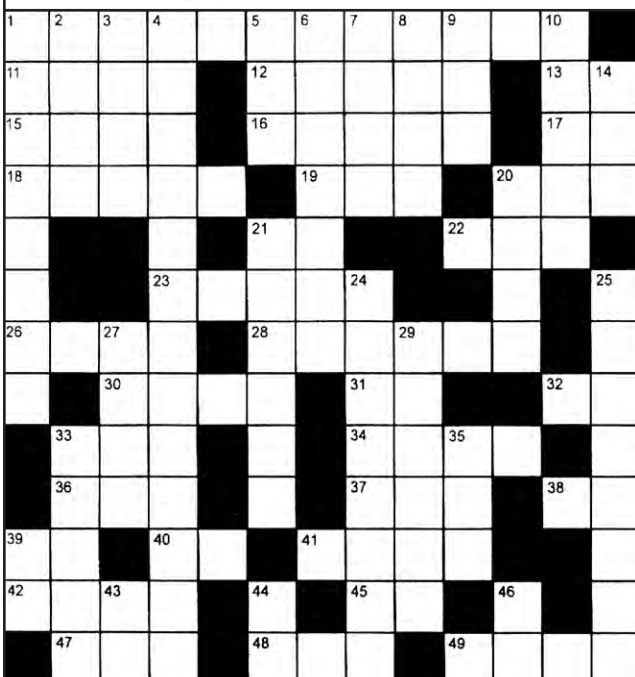
The Babylonian king must surely have been taken aback when the Jewish youths remained unimpressed with his intimidations. Rather than submit the youths defiantly answered back, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to answer you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it and He will deliver us from your majesty's hand. But if not, we want you to know, O king, we still will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (vv. 16-18).

Honor God by loving Him more than your own life. (26-28)

The cost was just as Nebuchadnezzar had warned: they were thrown alive into the fiery furnace. As Daniel recounts, the youths were miraculously saved from such a terrible fate. But saved or not, their determination to obey what they believed was God's decree for them had already won the day. 🙏

Christian Crossword

By Faith Wade Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- I am the ___ and the life. (John 11:25)
- First garden.
- Shiphai, the son of _____. (1 Chron. 4:37)
- I stand ___ the door. (Rev. 3:20)
- Ye do well that ye take _____. (2 Pet. 1:19)
- Abstain from ___ offered to idols. (Acts 15:29)
- ___ not steal. (Mark 10:19)
- Set in _____. (Titus 1:5)
- Positive votes.
- What you do at meals.
- Short for Ezra.
- Taxi ____.
- A Hebrew refrain found often in Psalms. (Ps. 4:2)
- Uncle's mate.
- The captain's name. (Jer. 37:13)
- His ___ are open unto their prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12)

- Rosemary's nickname. (1 Chron. 23:23)
- I am not come ___ destroy. (Matt. 5:17)
- Benjamin's nickname.
- Joseph's uncle. (Gen. 33:1, 2)
- ___ thou not unto his words. (Prov. 30:6)
- Allow.
- They shall ___ comforted. (Matt. 5:4)
- Pronoun.
- A fool hath no delight ___ understanding. (Prov. 18:2)
- The harvest is _____. (Joel 3:13)
- Not fat.
- New Hampshire. (abbr.)
- England. (abbr.)
- A man shall ___ a pit. (Ex. 21:33)
- Have no other ___ before me. (Ex. 20:3)
- Solomon's son. (1 Kings 11:43)
- Mushi, Mahli, and ____.

- The ___ is the Word of God. (Luke 8:11)
- Be not children in _____. (1 Cor. 14:20)
- Abraham's sacrifice. (Gen. 22:13)
- Aaron's son. (Num. 3:32)
- Bodies of _____. (Job 13:12)
- Small children.
- ___ and outs.
- And she bare him _____. (Ex. 6:23)
- Total. (abbr.)
- In lowliness of mind let ___ esteem others. (Phil. 2:3)
- Elijah's companion. (2 Kings 2:11)
- He that is an _____. (John 10:12)
- Book of wisdom written by Solomon.
- Help in time of _____. (Heb. 4:16)
- Israel's favorite son. (Gen. 37:3)

- ___ himself in water. (Num. 19:19)
- ___ it up. (Rev. 10:10)
- I will raise ___ up. (John 2:19)
- Opposite of "out."
- Edwin's nickname.
- ___ forth into Galilee. (John 1:43)



Filling the void

Christian rock band desires to help teens find worth, purpose in life

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While performing concerts around the country, the Christian rock band RED focuses on sharing the gospel message with hard-to-reach youth.

“If you think of the color red, it’s the power color and it’s symbolic of strong emotions like love, hate and passion,” band member Anthony Armstrong said. “It’s the embodiment of who we are as a group, as well as our music. The different themes that we discuss in our songs lend themselves to those emotions that we all feel and go through. The name is short, bold and it means so much to us.”

More than having a passion for music, the group has a calling to touch lives.

‘Identity in Christ’

“First John 3 talks about how your true identity can only be revealed when Christ is revealed in you,” Armstrong said.

“We’ve noticed there are a lot of kids struggling to find who they are and what they are here for. By discovering their identity in Christ, we want to help them realize what impact they can have on the world rather than how the world currently has an impact on them.”

As they share the message behind the music and their personal testimonies, band members hope to connect students to Christ by breaking down walls and providing a safe zone where they can establish authenticity and reliability.

Combating worldly influences

“All of the guys in the band have been through the ringer in a lot of different ways, and we’ve noticed that the world has crept its way into a lot of people’s lives and has defined them,” Armstrong said.

“We’ve constantly seen people hurt by the fact that they don’t know who they are, what they are here for and what their purpose is. They soak up and gravitate toward this worldly view of what they should look like and be like. We want them to realize their full potential and not listen to the lies being thrown at them by the enemy.

“It’s a scary place to be when you are roaming the halls of your high school and the streets of your town and being this empty, broken person. It is a difficult thing, but to find yourself in all of that craziness is what’s most important.”

Their concerts benefit World Vision and help provide clean water to commu-



Photo courtesy of Provident Label Group

nities around the world. This fall they are touring with Christian recording artists Tedashii, Capital Kings and Wolves at the Gate.

Searching for meaning

During concerts the group hears countless testimonies about lives being changed for God’s glory.

“I think kids who listen to our music are the ones who gravitate toward the heavier side of rock ‘n’ roll,” Armstrong noted. “They are searching for something that is meaningful and inspiring, and I think our band helps them fill that void of what they are searching for and gives them the music they enjoy but without

the negative lyrics. It’s mind-boggling some of the stories we receive and how these kids talk about our music being life-changing and life-saving.

“It hits home really hard that the talents we have been given are from God, and the opportunities to be obedient to Him have turned into these situations where we are getting the attention of others and pulling them out of near-death situations.

“We’ve had kids come up to us after shows with tears in their eyes as they tell us how our music has rescued them from a pit of despair and darkness. We realize the importance of making this music and how it’s making a difference to save these kids for eternity.”

UMobile RamCorps starts off new year with new members



TAB
augmented
reality



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

The University of Mobile’s RamCorps has assembled new and old members for another year of ‘high impact visual brass and percussion’ instrumentals. In the 2014–15 academic year, RamCorps performed 142 times across the Southeast. In October it performed on the Duck Commander Cruise to the Bahamas with Ricky Skaggs and Lee Greenwood. For more information about RamCorps, contact Kenn Hughes at 251-442-2321 or khughes@umobile.edu.



BP photo

As rugby attracts attention around the globe during the sport's 2015 World Cup, churches in the United Kingdom are using the event to draw people together.

Rugby opens doors for churches to reach communities for Christ in United Kingdom

As rugby attracts attention around the globe during the sport's 2015 World Cup, churches in the United Kingdom are using the event to draw people together, build relationships and reach their communities for Christ.

"The reason why we've thrown [this rugby party] is largely just to create a presence in the community," said Pastor Ross Gunderson of St. Barnabas Church of England, Dulwich, London. "I think quite often churches can be a lot of things but yet they're not always a voice for just the community-building event."

Creating community

Building community around rugby is what Engage 2015 had in mind when they created a website along with outreach and evangelism resources for church-

es to use during the Rugby World Cup, which began Sept. 18 and will end Oct. 31. A variety of churches have contributed to the events calendar on the Engage 2015 website including the Church of England, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterian and more — all joining together with one goal: sharing the love of Christ.

Engage 2015 has collected and shared the testimonies of popular rugby players to draw a direct link between faith and sports.

David Chawner, U.K. coordinator for Engage 2015, noted, "I've been involved in professional sports for 15 years now, and when you get out there you find that many people are actually quite interested in spiritual things and want to know more but they very rarely step over the doorstep of a church. But when we go to them, they're interested and they're open."

The Rugby World Cup party held at St. Barnabas was an open door for the community to watch the match, enjoy food and get to know the church. Gunderson estimated the crowd was made up

of 60 percent churchgoers and 40 percent people new to the church.

A local resident who attended the party said, "Yeah, first time to come to the church. Really lovely event that they're putting on at the church. It's totally welcoming and a really nice event — the sort of thing I love to see a church do because it makes you feel part of the church."

The hope is that as people come together to cheer for their team, relationships will be formed and people will find

community in the Church and faith in Christ.

Building relationships

An International Mission Board worker who serves in Wales as a journeyman recently joined a rugby club to help him meet new people.

"The rugby community is huge and it's opened up a really big door [for] relationships," the worker said.

"Out of the time that I have been playing rugby, I've had the opportunity to have a couple conversations about God. God is def-

initely doing something [here]."

Gunderson said, "Christ always was extending the hand of hospitality to everybody He met and, therefore, we're trying

to do much the same within our local area. Sports [are] really a great way of extending a hand of friendship toward another person, no matter who they are." (BP)

"Sports [are] really a great way of extending a hand of friendship toward another person."

**Ross Gunderson
Pastor, St. Barnabas
Church of England**

REFLECTIONS



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