

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

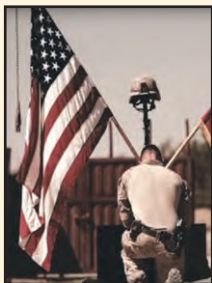
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POWER *of* PRAYER

Dedicated prayer meetings help members find connection through intercession



TAB
augmented
reality

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

If there is one thing all church leaders can agree on, it is that prayer must be the foundation upon which every church ministry and activity rests.

“Prayer for the Christian is like air to the human. Without it we don’t survive very well,” said Mike Jackson, director of the office of leadership and church health at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. “Prayer is our communication channel with God. It’s the way we connect to His power and strength and discern His will to know what to do.”

Recent national and international events that have challenged not only foundational Christian values but also the lives of Christians around the world have driven many believers to intensify their prayer lives. Many churches are establishing dedicated prayer services to set aside time to intercede as well.

In August members of Spring Hill Baptist Church, Cullman, in West Cullman Baptist Association began meeting weekly on Saturday mornings for prayer. Twenty or so members come each Saturday, which is almost half of the church’s normal Sunday attendance.

Leader Kathern Gray said the vision for the prayer ministry started with the Holy Spirit.

“We felt we needed to start praying together as a church and set a time to do so. We left it in God’s hands to move people,” Gray said.

NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association began a monthly prayer

service in August too. The church designated the first Wednesday of each month at 6 a.m. as a time

“[Prayer is] the way we connect to His power and strength and discern His will.”

Mike Jackson
director of the office of leadership and church health, SBOM

of prayer. Many people stop by on their way to work, said Pastor Bill Wilks. Several students have participated as well. Each month there is a different and specific prayer focus, which helps participants stay on track. There also is a brief time of worship and testimony, but Wilks said the

emphasis has and will remain on prayer.

“This started out of a sense of urgency for spiritual awakening and revival in our nation and world and the need to draw together and really intentionally, as the body of Christ,

pray for God to move,” Wilks said.

Jackson said he has seen an increasing emphasis on prayer in the local church.

“There is a great movement among churches to join together for prayer for a great awakening and revival in our land. People are realizing the desperateness of the times and the only hope is that God through prayer will do something miraculous to turn us back to Him,” Jackson said.

‘Seek Him’

“Scripture emphasizes that if we seek Him we will find Him. We’ve got to do what we need to do with prayer while the time is still right,” he said.

Gray said Spring Hill Baptist bases its prayer effort on 2 Chronicles 7:14: “If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, (See ‘Prayer,’ page 17)

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Coming Nov. 19 ...
Churches
in **DECLINE**

Knowing when to revitalize your church



COMMENT

The Corporate Life of Ministry and Missions

This is the time of year when Alabama Baptists devote special attention to their corporate life of ministry and missions beyond the local church. During October most of Alabama's 75 Baptist associations gathered for their annual meetings. In November attention turns to the annual meeting of the state Baptist convention.

Associations are the oldest form of Baptist cooperation beyond the local church with the first Baptist association in America being formed in 1707 — Philadelphia Baptist Association.

Alabama Baptist churches helped form their first association in 1814. Although the majority of member churches were from what would later be designated as Madison and Limestone counties, the Flint River Baptist Association was actually formed in Tennessee. The first Baptist association formed on what would become Alabama soil was Beckbe Baptist Association organized in 1816 by churches in Washington and Clarke counties.

These early associations were concerned about Bible teaching and Bible distribution, about local missions efforts, about missions in far-off places like Burma through the work of famed missionaries like Adoniram and Ann Hasseltine Judson and about doctrine among other issues.

These concerns continue today as associations work to strengthen local churches, to share the love of God in ministry and missions at home and around the world and continue to be the safeguard of Baptist doctrine. The local association is the only Baptist body which actually votes to accept cooperating churches and only after assuring that new members share "like faith and order."

Forming the state convention

By 1823 concern for Baptist work in the 3-year-old state of Alabama resulted in an organizational meeting for the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC). The meeting was held at Salem Church near Greensboro on Oct. 28–29 of that year. Records show messengers contributed \$427.42 for missions causes which was evenly divided between domestic and international missions. Fifteen domestic missionaries were appointed to serve in various parts of Alabama for six weeks at a time. They were



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

paid \$1 a day as long as funds were available.

Interestingly the messengers also pledged \$461.25 toward an Alabama scholarship in the theological seminary of recently opened Columbian College in Washington. Obviously higher education has been a priority of Alabama Baptists from their earliest days.

Almost 200 years later these same concerns for ministry and missions still guide Alabama Baptists. From one college scholarship, Alabama Baptists have grown to three institutions of higher learning — Judson College in Marion, the University of Mobile and Samford University in Birmingham.

From 15 men working up to six weeks a year to an ongoing emphasis on church planting, numerous expressions of Christian social ministries and support for directors of missions in each of the state's associations, today's state convention continues that early concern for sharing the good news of the gospel with people in Alabama who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord.

The state convention continues to undergird ministries of local churches, now numbering 3,286 according to the 2014 Alabama Baptist Annual, through training for Bible teachings, Christian discipleship, leadership development, church renewal, evangelism, worship and more.

In 1823, Baptist messengers may not have envisioned the extensive ministries of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries to help children in emergency situations and strengthen families through a statewide network of Christian counselors. The first messengers may not have foreseen Baptist homes for senior adults dotting the state or the extensive complex called Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega which provides Alabama Baptists a wonderful setting for camps, retreats and other special moments with God.

Today ABSC is a far-reaching network of entities, ministries and relationships touching every part and every association in this place so beautiful people describe it as the "place where the stars fell."

At the same time, Alabama Baptists continue their concern for missions and ministries beyond their borders as did those first messengers gath-

ered at Salem Church in 1823. Alabama Baptists continue to give more dollars to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ministries and missions through the Cooperative Program (CP) than any other state convention as well as provide more financial support through CP and special missions offerings than any other state convention.

It is amazing how faithful Alabama Baptists have been to the earliest commitments of ABSC. And it is amazing how God has blessed the work, even expanded the work, of Alabama Baptists.

The men and women appointed by their churches as messengers to the Nov. 17–18 annual meeting at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, will continue the responsibility of directing the ministry and missions of the state Baptist convention as they hear reports about our work together, as they select those charged with overseeing the various ministries, as they act on proposals to increase the reach and effectiveness of the work of Alabama Baptists within the kingdom of God and as they share biblical perspectives about selected social and ethical issues facing Alabama.

Not from earthly wisdom, wealth

Such growth in ministry and missions across the years did not happen because of earthly wisdom or material wealth. Alabama is one of the least wealthy states in America. Alabama Baptists depend on God's leadership as they struggle to establish new ministries as well as to send missionaries across the state and world.

This year's annual meeting theme, P.R.A.Y., continues that heritage. ABSC President Travis Coleman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, recently observed that historically most encounters or revelations from God were preceded by prayer.

"I think this year's theme is providential," Coleman said. "We need the reminder of prayer and how God wants us to depend on Him."

Your church needs to be represented at the ABSC annual meeting in Daphne. Perhaps you should be a messenger. Come early for the annual Pastors Conference held Nov. 16 at the same location. Pastors Conference President Greg Pouncey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tillman's Corner, in Mobile, has planned an excellent program of inspiration and instruction.

Above all pray for the upcoming annual meeting. Pray that God will guide at every point as Alabama Baptists focus on the corporate issues of doing ministry and missions together beyond the local church. 🙏

Have you
tried it yet?

TAB augmented reality
is here. Check out page 21
for more details.

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

See page 19





"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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**TAB
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Student disaster relief volunteers work on the roof of a home in Manning, South Carolina. The team of nine University of Alabama (UA) students were led by Nate Young, senior Baptist campus minister at UA.

'Opportunity

Photo by Brian Harris

to work together'

Baptist Campus Ministries students share gospel through actions in SC

By Jennifer Davis Rash and Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

It's only been a year and a half since Alabama Baptists trained their first group of college students for disaster relief, but the move has already proven to be beneficial.

Nate Young, senior Baptist campus minister at the University of Alabama (UA), was part of the Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) team trained in April 2014. In fact, he headed up the chainsaw training portion of the event.

And Oct. 29-31, he led a group of nine UA students to work in Manning, South Carolina.

"We are excited to be able to train, equip and give collegiates a vision for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR)," Young said. "I'm thankful to have the trust and partnership of our Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) disaster relief folks to be able to mobilize collegiates more quickly and easily."

Alabama Baptist campus ministers have all been trained by the state's SBDR to be able to provide emergency, abbreviated training sessions for college students when disaster strikes, said Mel Johnson, SBOM disaster relief strategist.

Young said, "My hope is that over time and deployments, collegiate volunteers will gain a greater vision, understanding and appre-

ciation of what we (Southern Baptists) can do through DR. It's an opportunity to work together for the Kingdom — being the hands and feet of Christ."

While the UA team was in Manning, they placed tarps on homes with severe roof leaks and visited with the homeowners.

Caleb Andrews, UA sophomore, said, "It was challenging but very rewarding. The opportunity to share Christ's love practically and bless individuals who have been through devastating events is something for which every disciple of Christ should have a passion. Love is a verb, now more than ever."



Photo courtesy of Lee Dymond

Julie Fuller, an Auburn University at Montgomery student, removes carpet from a home in South Carolina.

David Herder, also a UA sophomore, added, "It is a little overwhelming to see the physical and emotional damage the flooding has caused. However, it is empowering to see many other followers of Christ come together from all over the country to try and help those affected."

State missionary Brian Harris was in Manning on Oct. 29 and noted, "The students had positive attitudes and were willing to get dirty to get the job done. They literally took exams before fall break and drove through the night to get to the DR worksite the next morning."

But the UA team was not alone. It basically grabbed the baton from a BCM group at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM).

The AUM team worked in Summerton, South Carolina, Oct. 22-25.

The team of eight — seven students plus AUM Baptist campus minister Lee Dymond — helped with demolition efforts and cleaning out (mud out) a low-income apartment complex.

Desire to do more

"We went in and everything [below the] 48-inch mark we took out so rebuilders could build it back," Dymond said.

The students were struck with the amount of damage to neighborhoods and wanted to do more to help, he noted.

AUM student and DR team member Julie Fuller said, "You do service projects and you're not really able to verbally tell people about the gospel ... but a lot of people came up to us and told us how needed we were and how necessary the work was that we were doing."

"One woman in charge of (some) low-income housing that we worked on said, 'If it hadn't been for you then we would've been boarded up by now.'

"I think that service is one of the most effective ways of worshipping the Lord," Fuller added. "The love that Jesus has shown to us is so great, and I think that it overflows from us. And one way to show other people that love is through acts of service like [disaster relief]."

"Even if we weren't able to share the gospel verbally, we were able to share the gospel with our actions."

Fuller added that the work done by SBDR helps cut down costs for homeowners as they rebuild.

"It was such a blessing to be the blessing. If it hadn't been for our team and other teams like ours, then so many people would be out of housing." ❧

Veterans Day is Nov. 11.

**There are 4,000 veterans
in Alabama alone.**

'Invisible Scars'



Photo courtesy of Crosswinds Foundation

Alabama-based ministry produces documentary addressing post-traumatic stress disorder

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

To Samuel Montalbano, it's a sacred thing.

"I don't feel like talking about it to a lot of people," he said of his tour of duty in Iraq.

Staying quiet is largely self-protection for Montalbano and other military personnel, said Cameron Elspeth Ritchie, a doctor and Army colonel.

"When you're with people who haven't been there, who think the most important thing is what you're going to have for lunch that day and you've been worried about whether you're going to make it to lunch that day, whether you'll be alive that long, whether your buddies will be there," it's hard to reintegrate back into normal life, Ritchie said.

Vietnam veteran John L. McCarty agreed, saying, "Society expects us to kill, kill, destroy, then come home and change clothes and [act] like it never happened."

Offering insight

It's because of soldiers like McCarty and Montalbano that the Alabama-based ministry Crosswinds Foundation recently produced "Invisible Scars: Hope for Soldiers With Hidden Wounds," an hour-long documentary film addressing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The film interviews people like Ritchie, Montalbano and McCarty and offers insight into PTSD's roots, expressions and treatment.

It's a big effort to reach out to a hurting population, and it all started with a simple question, said Bob Waldrep,

president and founder of Crosswinds.

"I asked one of my coworkers who had served as a chaplain in the Middle East, 'What's it like to be over there?' And instead of telling me what it was like there, he told me a story about how the first time he heard thunder back at home, he thought he was under a mortar attack," Waldrep said. "He said, 'I wasn't even outside the walls. Imagine how much more it would impact the ones who were.'"

It was a story Waldrep said he couldn't shake.

So in 2013, Crosswinds started a media division to address the need. They started working toward a PTSD-related film — as best they could tell, the first of its kind. And soon they realized that they wouldn't sell it — they'd just give it away as fast and furiously as they could to get it into the hands of as many veterans as possible.

In Alabama alone there are 4,000 veterans.

"Churches have veterans. They encounter veterans. And veterans know other veterans," said Waldrep, who served as executive producer of the film. "It's our duty and obligation as Christians to help these guys. People needed to see this. Families needed to understand. The message is too precious."

Often when soldiers come back, they withdraw and self medicate, he said.

"Marriages dissolve. Families dissolve. That's why we have such a large contingency of veterans on the street," Waldrep said. "We need to get them on their feet and encourage them."

A number of state Baptist organizations have stepped up to serve as distributors of the film, including Shelby, Autauga, North Jefferson and Bessemer Baptist associations and North Valley Church, Odenville; Eden Westside Baptist Church, Pell City; and the Widows Might Ministry of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea.

Waldrep encouraged other churches, associations and individuals to consider distributing the film.

He and others at Crosswinds also have distributed it at events near military bases and at Veterans Day parades.

Already they've had an overwhelming response, with a number of veterans saying the film made them ready to talk about their experiences with someone

else for the very first time. The film has been so well received that Crosswinds is already in production for a second film, "Honoring the Code," aimed at helping soldiers work through moral injury and to be released early 2016.

Waldrep said he's glad to get the message of healing in the hands of veterans, and he just wishes it could've been done sooner. Even his father could've benefitted from the message, he said.

'Hope is available'

"Through the process (of producing 'Invisible Scars') I realized my own father suffered with PTSD. His experiences in WWII had clearly left their own scars," Waldrep said. "But the truth is they weren't exactly invisible. They could be seen in the nightmares that plagued his sleep, in the attitude with which he faced the world and in the alcohol which offered temporary relief. I am convinced his life would have been different if someone could have shared something like 'Invisible Scars' with him."

Linwood Bragan, executive director of Capstand Council for Policy and Ethics, said as more people have familiarized themselves with PTSD, the more healing they've seen happen.

"Hope is available. Healing is available. Our veterans can be restored and reintegrated back into society fully and completely," said Bragan, who is interviewed in "Invisible Scars." ■

TAB
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**For more information,
visit invisiblecarsmovie.com. For more information
on 'Honoring the Code,'
visit honoringthecode.com.**

Steps toward working through PTSD

1. Seek out a "battle buddy" — someone who has been in combat — and share your story. It is incredibly therapeutic to sit with others who share a common experience and listen to one another's stories.

2. Learn more about mental trauma associated with military service. Learn the symptoms or identifiers related to PTSD and moral injury. The "Invisible Scars" film is one resource for this, but there also are books on the subject as well as information available on the Internet.

3. Don't be afraid to seek professional help. (If available, a military chaplain is a great place to start in getting help through the process.) Even though your training may tell you to push through the pain, you would certainly seek help for a physical injury such as an arm broken in combat. Likewise it is okay to seek help for mental or emotional trauma.

4. Involve your family in the healing process. PTSD and moral injury affect not only the soldier but the family as well. Let your family know what you are going through. Though you may not want to share specific details regarding what you saw and experienced in war, it is important to try and help them understand how these things have affected you.

5. Find something positive in which to invest the skills and training you received while serving in the military. It is often hard for veterans to find meaningful employment when returning from deployment. That does not mean you do not have anything to offer.

6. Don't ever give up. You are still a warrior. As one soldier stated, "Don't ever quit. Don't ever surrender. And if they didn't kill you over there, don't let them kill you over here." (Data released by the Veterans Administration indicates 22 veterans a day take their own lives.)

Source: Crosswinds Foundation

TAB
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Keeping it QUIET

Couples mask threat of divorce



Disconnect exists in church culture related to discussing marital problems

Before a divorce, churchgoers in troubled marriages look a lot like their happily married counterparts at church — participating, serving and leading at similar rates.

After a divorce, the differences can be stark. Twenty percent have dropped out of church entirely. In many cases, their children have stopped participating too.

Yet pastors may have difficulty helping couples save their marriages, because churchgoers on the brink of separation often keep quiet at church about their marital woes.

Those are among the findings of new research by Nashville-based LifeWay Research. The study, sponsored by Focus on the Family, surveyed Protestant pastors, churchgoing Americans in healthy marriages and churchgoing Americans who divorced in the past five years.

The research points to a problem with church culture, said Scott McConnell, LifeWay Research vice president. If couples are unwilling to discuss marital struggles at church, they don't get the help they need. Many couples also may not realize help is available.

"Either pastors are overstating what they're doing or not everybody is noticing what their church is doing," McConnell said. "There are clearly gaps in communication when people don't even know help exists."

No obvious clues

Forty percent of pastors say at least one couple in their church separated or divorced in the past year. Yet among regular churchgoers — those who attend once a month or more — church involvement offers few clues to distinguish troubled marriages from healthy ones. Three months before their separation, 7 in 10 regular churchgoers who divorce are attending church once a week or more. For those in healthy marriages, the rate is 87 percent.

The two groups also report similar levels of involvement in small groups at church (46 percent for those who divorce

Do you compare your worst with 'Sunday best' of others?

Do churches encourage boasting in weakness or impressing with strength? (2 Cor. 12:9)

The "law" sets a high standard — perfection — to help us and those within our congregation see and fully understand our desperate need for Christ and His amazing grace.

But if churches are simply touting the standards of the "law" without pointing individuals to the finished work of Christ, we are often



LOVVORN

guilty of turning prodigals into rule-following elder brothers who are proud of their self-effort.

In this culture, a healing community is impossible because we become so busy striving and comparing our strengths instead of being honest and vulnerable about what is really going on.

For resources on this topic, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org. (Traylor Lovvorn/undoneredone.com)

vs. 41 percent for those in healthy marriages), serving in community ministries (34 percent vs. 31 percent), and positions of responsibility at church (39 percent vs. 45 percent).

"Many of the people who end up divorcing are average churchgoers," McConnell said. He noted one exception — regular churchgoers whose spouses do not attend.

Eighteen percent of those who divorced say their former spouses never attended church three months before their separation. In contrast, just 2 percent of those in healthy marriages say their spouse never attends.

After divorce, 8 in 10 still look like average churchgoers. They may switch churches, but they're as involved as ever.

Twenty percent, though, no longer attend church — and the loss among their children is even higher. Among those with children who attended church before the separation, 35 percent say at least one child no longer attends.

Nearly half of those who divorce (47 percent) leave the church they attended before their separation.

A third of those who divorce (32 percent) say they give less to their local church than they gave before their separation. More than a quarter of this group stops giving at all.

Pastors say the repercussions of divorce affect others as well. Thirty-one percent say divorce has fractured other relationships in the church, and 16 percent say it created leadership voids. About 1 in 10 say divorce has hurt the church's reputation (11 percent), halted its momentum (10 percent) or disbanded an adult small group or Sunday School class (9 percent).

Not seen as safe place

Greg Smalley, vice president of Focus on the Family, said, "The vast majority of churches do not have an effective marriage ministry.

"The church should be the No. 1 distribution center for healthy marriages because of its unique role. Eighty percent of marriages began in church, giving the church a unique opportunity to build a relationship with couples that can last throughout their marriage."

Nearly 8 in 10 churchgoers — and 94 percent of pastors — say their church is a safe place to talk about marital difficulties.

Experience, however, tells a different story. Among those who divorced, only 48 percent discussed their marriage problems with the pastor. Even fewer talked to anyone else, such as another staff member (13 percent) or a member of a small group or Sunday School class (11 percent).

Thirty-one percent told no one — a troubling sign of church culture, McConnell said.

Pastors say their churches offer a wide range of marriage support services, including resources such as books and videos (77 percent) and referrals to professional counseling outside the church (75 percent).

Many churchgoers, however, seem unaware of the services. Just 38 percent of those in healthy marriages and 21 percent of those who divorced believe their church offers books and videos about marriage. Thirty percent of those in healthy marriages and 23 percent of those who divorced think their church refers people to outside counselors.

Churches can be more effective by being more proactive, McConnell said. He pointed out that two-thirds of pastors say their church has no lay leader responsible for marriage ministry, and 43 percent have no written plan.

Deeper involvement by churches is critically important, Smalley said.

"While the impact is not always immediate and obvious, nothing can negatively affect a church's ministry and mission and thwart future health more than hurting marriages and divorce." (LifeWay)

To read the full story, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search for "divorce."

More topics like this one coming to

TAB Talks

15-minute live interviews taking place Nov. 17–18 during the breaks between state convention annual meeting sessions at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

Watch for more details

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.

BETHLEHEM

► **Mineola Church, Uriah**, will host Caleb Dennis in concert Nov. 14, 2 p.m. followed by the start of the church's fall festival at 3 p.m. Sidney Aaron is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Bonnie Mullis** is the new children's minister of **Lakeside Church, Birmingham**. Greg Corbin is pastor. ► **First Church, Center Point**, will host Jimmy



MULLIS

DeYoung, prophecy and end-times speaker, Nov. 22, 10:15 a.m. and 5 p.m. David Haynes is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **Oak Bowery Church, Ohatchee**, will host revival services Nov. 15-18 with evangelists Gary Bowlin and Joe and Kim Stanley. Nov. 15 services will be at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Nov. 16-18 services will be at 6:30 nightly. Sam Fordham is pastor.

CENTRAL

► **Candler Mountain Church, Goodwater**, will host Crimson Flow in concert Nov. 14, 6 p.m. Donations collected will be given to the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. A cake auction and crocheted items auction will take place. For more information call Pastor Jimmy Nelson at 256-839-5739.

MORGAN

► **Walnut Grove Church, Decatur**, will host singer/songwriter Jason Runnels on Nov. 8, 11 a.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information call Pastor John Bain at 256-654-1160.

ST. CLAIR

► **Mark Lee** is the new minister to young adult families at **Eden Westside Church, Pell City**. He previously served as associate pastor and worship leader at Calvary Church, Odenville, and as pastor of Hanks Memorial Church, Irondale. He and his wife, Heather, have three children. **Stephen Johnson** is

the new student pastor at Eden Westside. His first Sunday was Sept. 27. Johnson previously served as student pastor for The Church at Chelsea Westover and as student minister for a church in Georgia. He holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and is working on his master of divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, through distance learning. He and his wife, Kassi, have three children. Jacky Connell is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Ray Blanton** is the new minister of music at **Ridgecrest Church, Tuscaloosa**. His first



BLANTON

Sunday was Oct. 4. Blanton holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He previously served as minister of music and education at Southside Church, Fayette, and in leadership roles at churches in Georgia and Missouri. He and his wife, Debra, have two children.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Timothy Aris** is the new pastor of **Spring Hill Church, Cullman**. His first Sunday was Oct. 25. Aris earned a certificate from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and previously served as pastor of White Oak Church, Cullman; Bethlehem West Church, Vinemont; and Daniels Chapel Church, Eva. He and his wife, Pattie, have two children and four grandchildren. ☞

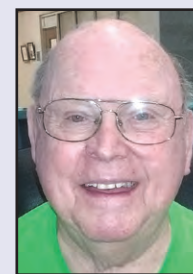
COSBE update

The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists (COSBE) will sit together at the Alabama State Convention annual meeting Nov. 17-18. For more information email COSBE President Bo Shedd at lennonshedd@gmail.com. (TAB)

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Billy Barton



BARTON

*Alberta Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSES: Philippians 4:13; Psalms 23 and 100

FAVORITE HYMN: "I Can't Even Walk without You Holding My Hand"

HOBBY: Collecting baseball cards

FAMILY STATUS: Wife of 53 years, Doris; son, Danny Barton (wife, Mary Jo); one grandson; two great-grandsons

Billy Barton, 83, of Tuscaloosa, seeks to be faithful to God in every responsibility he is given. In so doing he wants to be a positive example to others, he said. This dedication is evident by the fact that he has been Sunday School director for more than 25 years, a member of Gideons International for 30 years and was employed 35 years at the B.F. Goodrich tire plant in Tuscaloosa. Barton is a deacon, member and president of the choir and a soloist. He also assists with his church's homebound ministry. He has been on missions trips to four states to build churches and served in the Army during the Korean War. He works part-time with Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation Authority.

go to church. I was just there and it just happened.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?
A: Time.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: Personal satisfaction, in that maybe you're having an influence on somebody.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: They are right along beside me. They encourage me, especially my wife.

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

A: I'll be doing this as long as the Good Lord will let me do it.

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

A: My biggest influence was probably my mother. I had a "second" mother (friend of the family), Lois Lancaster. I felt like I needed to ask Jesus to come into my heart and be my Savior when I was somewhere around 12 years old.

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

A: I've just been there all these years. I was raised to

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

A: I hope it makes me a better person. Reading the Bible and studying lessons, you're never through learning. My wife and I read the Bible through every year. We're on our 26th straight year.

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

A: All the difference in the world. No telling where I would be now if I hadn't invited Him into my life. ☞

REFLECTIONS

"I WAS FEELING PARTICULARLY HUMBLE WHEN I WENT BY THE SPORTS STORE TODAY."



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

International Mission Board (IMB) President David Platt speaks to Southern Baptists during an IMB-hosted live stream to discuss present challenges and future vision for IMB.

Working through IMB reset



IMB photo by Chris Carter

Platt addresses downsizing, answers viewers' questions during live stream Q-and-A

Restoring the International Mission Board (IMB) to full financial health will be a long process that requires patience among Southern Baptists and the cooperation of local churches through a variety of avenues, IMB President David Platt said Oct. 27 during a live stream Q-and-A session.

Addressing a live audience that tuned in using more than 1,500 separate electronic devices, Platt reiterated IMB's need to reduce by 600–800 its total number of field personnel and staff in light of spending \$210 million more than Southern Baptists have given since 2010. Reserve funds and proceeds from property sales made up the difference, he said, incurring no debt.

Despite the sobering financial report, Platt said the future of Southern Baptist missions is not “a dismal picture.”

“I want to reframe” negative prognostications “based on reality,” Platt said. “When I think about SBC I don't think decline. Yes we've got challenges in the culture we're in and when it comes to reaching people in the culture and seeing them baptized. ... At the same time know

this: the global witness that God is providing the nations through the SBC right now is nothing short of awesome.”

He expressed appreciation that “churches' giving to the IMB through [the] Lottie Moon [Christmas Offering for International Missions] and [the] Cooperative Program actually increased over the last couple of years.” Platt's goal, he said, “is in no way to shame the churches and say, ‘If you just gave more, we wouldn't have to do this.’”

Still as IMB downsizes its missionary force through a voluntary retirement program and other voluntary resignation options, Platt answered questions submitted via Twitter and Facebook about how local churches can help improve the organization's financial situation. Among the questions submitted:

▶ **“How would you advise our church to consider its missions budget allocation in light of the IMB needs?”**

Platt replied, “I would encourage your

church ... to give sacrificially for the spread of the gospel to the nations and specifically for the spread of the gospel to people who have never heard it. And I hope that your church sees IMB as a valuable partner in seeing that happen.”

▶ **“I struggle because I feel like our local church should send teams, not just give money. How do we balance?”**

Platt noted that giving and sending teams should be a “both/and” proposition rather than an “either/or” scenario.

“Send money and send people,” he said. “As more people are going out from churches to get the gospel to the nations, then more people are going to want to give to see more people going out to get the gospel to the nations.”

▶ **“Has any thought been given to changing the funding model of IMB missionaries?”**

Platt said he hopes some IMB missionaries will be “totally self-funded,” travel-

ing overseas as students in international universities, business professionals employed by corporations and retirees funded by their own savings and U.S. government programs. He also raised the possibility of fully-funded IMB church planters expanding to a mobilization model where business professionals on their church planting teams “begin to pull together” and “actually begin to support the full-time church planter much like we support a pastor here.”

Another possibility is for churches to utilize IMB's existing GC2 (Great Commission Global Connect) and SBC Direct programs to fund specific missionaries outside traditional cooperative funding channels.

Every method of funding IMB missionaries should be consistent with a model that “bolsters and fuels the cooperative giving that goes on among Southern Baptist churches,” Platt said. “And I'm convinced there's a way to do that. We've just got to think wisely through it.”

Platt closed by asking Southern Baptists to help returning missionaries by providing houses, vehicles and jobs. (BP)

To view a recording of the live stream event, visit www.imb.org and click on “David Platt live stream replay.”

CLEAR the STAGE

Making Room for What Matters

2015 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2015 • 8:30 AM–9 PM
Eastern Shore Baptist Church • 6847 Park Drive • Daphne, AL 36526

For more details, visit alpastorsconference.com.

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, Nov. 16, 2015 • 4:45–6 p.m. • Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

TICKETS ARE FREE

Tickets are available in advance at alpastorsconference.com/pastorswivesdinner/

Only 150 seats available.

The Pastors' Wives Dinner is sponsored by the University of Mobile and Israel Ministry of Tourism.

Israel Ministry of Tourism will give away a trip for two to Israel during the evening session of the Pastors Conference following the Pastors' Wives Dinner. Visit their booth to register. Limited to pastors and their wives. One entry per couple.

Church ANNIVERSARIES



Goodwater's Hatchett Creek marks 175 years

Hatchett Creek Baptist Church, Goodwater, celebrated its 175th anniversary Sept. 13 with special music by Maribeth Cobb, a brief historical overview by Pam Horn and a message by Pastor Mark Zeladonis.

Sonja Adams, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented a framed commemorative certificate to mark the occasion. Carey Baptist Association Director of Missions Bruce Willis also presented a framed certificate to the congregation, which was received by pastor emeritus Thompson Pitts and his wife, Rosie, and chairman of deacons Leo Green and his wife, Gloria.

After the service, members and guests could view the lists of former pastors, deacons and clerks, and could search the digital version of the minutes from 1840 to present compiled by church member Cary Horn.

Members and guests shared a dinner together. (Pam Horn)

Midway celebrates 125th anniversary

Conecuh Baptist Association's Midway Baptist Church, Evergreen, marked its 125th anniversary with a celebration service Aug. 9.

At the 11 a.m. service, former pastor Wayne Boswell brought the message and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Dalton Campbell presented a plaque to the church. Lunch followed the service.

Anniversary committee member Brenda Cobb said the anniversary saw "a good crowd with good food."

E.J. Waters is pastor. (Maggie Walsh)

Newton Baptist celebrates 175 years

More than 175 participants gathered at Newton Baptist Church in Dale Baptist Association to celebrate its 175th anniversary Sept. 27.

The festivities began at 10:15 a.m. with a time of fellowship before the 11 a.m. service where former pastor Kris Mullis brought the message and a men's trio from the church performed. Clinton Silver was the pianist for the service and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Ellen Dewberry presented a commemorative plaque to the church.

Following the service, participants took a group picture in front of the church before the fellowship lunch.

Participants were able to look back in time thanks to photos in the fellowship hall and booklets with stories of former and current members compiled at the 150th anniversary celebration.

"We had a very good celebration," said church clerk Polly Gober. Shane Traylor is pastor. (Maggie Walsh)

Pine Hill commemorates 125 years

In a celebration service that's been anticipated all year, Pine Hill Baptist Church in Bethel Baptist Association commemorated its 125th anniversary Sept. 27. Beginning in January, Pine Hill Baptist had a monthly celebration service with a guest speaker, usually a former pastor, leading up to the September anniversary.

During the September service the church choir performed and church member Becky Vick sang special music.

After Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Laura Leavell presented a plaque, Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, brought a sermon about spreading the gospel and faithfulness.

A fellowship meal followed. Chris Kynard is pastor. (Maggie Walsh)

Dadeville's Calvary marks 75 years

Currently in a season of revitalization, Calvary Baptist Church, Dadeville, took a day to celebrate 75 years of "partnering with Tallapoosa Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Convention" on Aug. 2, according to Pastor Reginald Gabel.

At the morning service, southern gospel group The Dixie Echoes performed and Wendell Dutton, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, recognized the church for its years of service.

The more than 100 participants shared a fellowship meal following the service.

Gabel said of the celebration, "What a blessed day and beginning of a new journey." (Maggie Walsh)

Glynwood Baptist celebrates 25 years

With the theme of "Celebrating the past ... Anticipating the future," Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville, marked its 25th anniversary Oct. 4.

At the 10 a.m. service the University of Mobile's vo-

cal ensemble Voices of Mobile performed and Pastor Bruce Hose served as emcee. Church member Larry Kelley read a history of the church and Autauga Baptist Association Director of Missions Bill Morgan read the minutes of the associational meeting when the church was formed.

Former staff, including former pastor Noel Walker, and charter members were recognized. Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, brought the message and Johnie Sentell, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented a plaque to the church.

Lunch followed the service. (Maggie Walsh)

Pleasant View commemorates 75 years

Pleasant View Baptist Church, Foley, may have celebrated 75 years in ministry Oct. 4, but it's committed to remember its history in order to propel it forward. That's why the congregational theme for the year has been "75 Forward."

Continuing with the theme, the Baldwin Baptist Association church was presented with the "75 Forward Quilt" which was created by the church's Woman's Missionary Union and included historical images and photos of the past. The 10 a.m. service also featured a presentation by John Reid, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative; a review of historical slides; and special music by the church choir. Pastor James Kelly Brown delivered the message.

Participants also were able to view a display of the Pleasant View Baptist historical collection, which was largely donated by longtime member Lillie Flowers. (Maggie Walsh)

Atmore's Sardis marks 150th anniversary

In a joint service, Sardis Baptist Church, Atmore, celebrated its 150th anniversary as well as homecoming Oct. 11.

During the service, the Escambia Baptist Association church was presented a plaque by Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Members of the Milton, Florida-based southern gospel group The Master's Men + 1 performed and Pastor Drexel Copeland brought the message. A fellowship meal concluded the celebration. (Maggie Walsh)

Ministry Tips



REFOCUS ON EVANGELISM

By Chip Warren

Minister of education, FBC Albertville

As the number of baptisms across our beloved convention have been on a downward trend, it is time for our churches to examine what we are about and to refocus on evangelism. I have observed that other aspects of church life have

become more in vogue and now we are paying the price.

Here are a few tips on how to refocus on evangelism.

► **Set specific goals for evangelism.**

If churches do not plan for evangelism to take place, it most likely will not. Set goals that can be measured and attained. Instead of setting a goal for the number of

people you want to baptize, set a goal for the number with whom you want to share the gospel.

► **Be sure a significant amount of your budget dollars and ministry man-hours are spent on ministries that present the gospel to the lost and unchurched.**

For most churches, the majority of dollars and man-hours are spent on themselves.

► **The real "DNA" of evangelism is personal evangelism.** When people are trained in personal evangelism, they are more likely to share the gospel when they rub shoulders with those who participate in church outreach events, their neighbors and their co-workers. (chip@albertvillefbc.org)

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

MY PLEDGE TO YOU

I believe in a decision of rededication of one's life to Christ. I have preached that conviction throughout my pastoral ministry.

Several times in public worship services, I have publicly rededicated my life to Christ.

Recently, while on a missions trip to various places in Europe, I had another such experience. It was a quiet, personal moment with the Lord, and it has brought me to a fresh understanding of what my life for Christ should be.

I believe I need to share some of my reflections related to that commitment to Christ. Since I have pledged my life anew to Him, I want to share my pledge to you, my Alabama Baptist and Southern Baptist family.

From a personal perspective, I want you to know that I am even more committed to the One Mission, The Great Commission we have as followers of Christ.

I know you have heard me use that phrase frequently through the years, but please know that I am indeed passionate about being a Great Commission Christian. I want to help Alabama

Baptists be all we need to be and do all we need to do in order to become more effective as Great Commission people.

In that spirit, I pledge to you to pray more earnestly



By Rick Lance
State Missionary

for our churches and for our missionaries in Alabama and around the world.

I want you to know that I need your prayers too. I depend upon them. I am in this with you, and we have to lift each other up to the Father.

Furthermore, Pam and I have decided to give our largest gift to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering that we have ever contributed. I would respectfully ask you to do the same. Our International Mission Board will utilize those funds on the mission fields in a global way. Let's endeavor to reach our all-time highest goal as Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists.

From a missional perspective, I want to help our churches as much as I can to be One Mission or Great Commission people. Alabama is a state populated

with individuals who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord. I am praying that the 3,250-plus churches in our state will rededicate themselves to evangelism and discipleship in all of our communities. We can regain the momentum needed to reach people for Christ.

One day soon, I would love to see our baptisms rise above the 25,000 mark again. I believe it can be done for God's glory.

Beyond Alabama, we are sending more than \$20 million to IMB through CP and Lottie Moon. We give more than \$10 million to NAMB through CP and Annie Armstrong. I pray for a day when those numbers will appear small by comparison with what we do in the future.

From a financial perspective, I want to see us grow our CP budgets in a healthy way for the future. I have 2020 on my mind. Before or by 2020, I would like to see us at a point of parity with the SBC related to Alabama Baptist ministries and Southern Baptist ministries.

For the 2016 budget, your SBOM is recommending 53 percent for Alabama ministries and 47 percent for SBC ministries. This 47 percent does include approximately 2 percent for SBC

GuideStone. This is the retirement and protection amount that supports ministers and other church employees as they labor for the Lord. The 53 percent includes all of our entities and the State Board of Missions.

This is my pledge to you! As I said to our board of trustees in August, I am prepared to recommend that all increases in our budget be given to SBC ministries until we are at this point of parity. That means we could potentially arrive at our goal before 2020.

This rededication of my life is something I take seriously. My pledge to you from a personal perspective, from a missional perspective and from a financial perspective is rock solid in my mind and in my heart.

So now you know something of my burden and desire.

As we gather at our convention November 17-18 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, let us celebrate what God has done in the past, and then let us anticipate what our God will do in the future.

Proverbs 1:7

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



alsbom.org/cp

My appreciation of the Cooperative Program dates all the way to childhood memories.

My dad, a bivocational Southern Baptist pastor, instilled in us the discipline of tithing. Our Saturday evening routine focused on preparing for church on Sunday: bathing, shining shoes, selecting clothes and counting pennies.

We would spread out any pennies earned during the week. Our parents would help us determine our Sunday School offering by showing us how to take one penny out of every group of ten to put in our 5-point record envelopes.

In Vacation Bible School, we eagerly listened to mission stories during the joint worship service. We learned how our daily offering and our Cooperative Program gifts affected the daily lives of our missionaries.

During my tenure at Samford University, Cooperative Program funds assisted in virtually every aspect of my college career. Baptist Campus Ministries, campus pastors/counselors, Christ-centered service organizations and so many other vital influences were dependent on CP gifts.

New Orleans Seminary offered me quality education at a nominal personal financial expense because of the faithfulness of cooperating Southern Baptist churches.

This truth remained absolute when I later enrolled at Southern Seminary. As a student pastor, I cheerfully encouraged the churches I served to consistently support the Cooperative Program.

Since 1925, the Cooperative Program has reliably provided a God-ordained and Christ-focused connection between the local people in the pew and the global ministries of the Kingdom of God. The tangible perception of influential participation in worldwide events that the CP offers smaller churches invigorates personal giving and accentuates personal gratification.

Even some of the most narrow-minded, short-sighted Baptists have grasped the ripple effect of small churches giving small amounts to work together to accomplish great ministries.

During the SBC "wars" in the 1980's and the 1990's, many of us witnessed the struggle of Southern Baptists to remain a viable theological influence upon the ethics and morality of our world.

Many times I heard pastors and lay leaders alike speak disparagingly of the Cooperative Program. Candidates for offices within the SBC were vetted more closely for their party-line affiliation than for their personal support of the CP within their own churches.

Granted, the SBC does not impose upon the local church's autonomy by mandating CP giving, but the CP has rightfully become the engine empowering our multiparty missionary focus of winning the world to Christ.

SBC leaders should be illustrative of those refusing to undervalue CP giving, for doing so truly chips away at the core of the SBC.

Many of our SBC churches continue to deal with enormous financial challenges as do those individuals who faithfully support our churches.

Without hesitation, I preach the biblical standard of percentage giving to the people in the pews. Some respond in faith, and some respond in doubt, as do SBC churches in relation to CP giving.

My choice has been to promote and support the CP as the absolute best venue for every church to be realistically involved in every ministry of the SBC.

As has been said before, we are far more powerful together than we are apart.

Robert F. Crawford is pastor of Lake Catoma Baptist Church (East Cullman Baptist Association) and is a trustee of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.



CRAWFORD



Upcoming Enrichment Events from Alabama WMU

Student Missions Weekend

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, JANUARY 15-16

Students grades 7-12 and their leaders

WorldSong Missions Place

Register by Monday, January 4, 2016

\$45 per person

#smw16

Renew, a day away with friends

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Women of all ages

Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster

Register by Thursday, February 18, 2016

\$35 per person

#renew216

Complete, a gathering for girls in grades 7-12

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, MARCH 4-5

Teen girls, grades 7-12

Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

Register by Monday, February 15, 2016

\$35 per person (includes lunch Saturday & a t-shirt)

#complete16

For more information or to register for these events, please contact Alabama WMU at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or (334) 613-2226, or go online to AlabamaWMU.org.



1. ASSESSMENT

This area involves the process whereby we assist potential planters with application, background checks, instruments, interviews, etc., to hold a mirror up to ask them if they see what we see in them. This helps them examine their call to see if it is on track for planting. We are currently making some upgrades in this process.

2. TRAINING

We offer a variety of training opportunities for the planter and his leadership team to learn what is needed to plant a church from the ground up. Alabama Church Planting Basics is foundational. We have offered this training four times to the general public this year in English and twice in collegiate settings at the University of Mobile and at New Pilgrim Christian Bible College and Seminary in Saraland.

In addition, we have offered it to the Deaf community this year. Other trainings available through our office include Churches Planting Churches, which assists churches that desire to send out or support a church plant from their church. Other trainings are also available. See the list at plantalabama.org.

3. COACHING

We offer 12 months of in-person coaching throughout the state. These network sessions deal with the how of church planting and have also proved to be very helpful to established churches. We have seen approximately 40 men go through coaching in the past year. We are currently hosting six of these networks across the state. For more information, see plantalabama.org.

By Lamar Duke
State Missionary



WHY THE CONCENTRATION UPON THESE THREE AREAS?

Because it has been found that quality assessment, training and coaching leads to an 85 percent success rate for church plants through the fourth year.

It is not too late to register for the **Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner**, Sunday, November 15, 6-8:30 p.m. at 3 Circle Church in Fairhope. Our speaker will be Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research. For more information, check plantalabama.org.



For more information about church planting among Alabama Baptists, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist, at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.

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

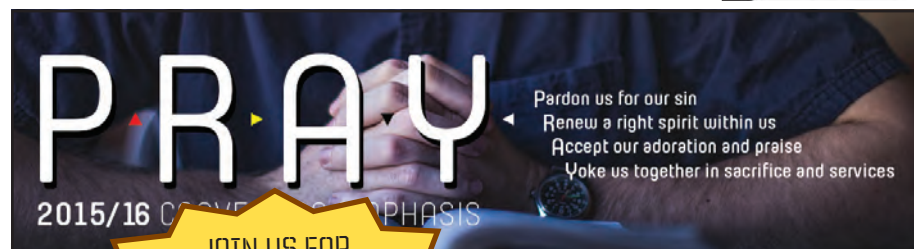
churches in their ministry of making disciples. I provide training, consulting and resourcing to churches across the length and breadth of our country, African-American churches," he said. Croston holds a doctor of ministry degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond with a concentration in Christian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

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

SPEAKER:

Ronnie Floyd

president, Southern Baptist Convention



MUSIC:

Veritas

Contemporary Classical Vocal Group, Mobile

**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*

**CONVENTION
SERMON**



Buddy Champion

*pastor, First Baptist Church, Trussville
Wednesday morning*

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Travis Coleman, Jr.

*president, Alabama Baptist State Convention,
pastor, First Baptist Church, Prattville
Tuesday 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](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](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 abscannualmeeting.org.

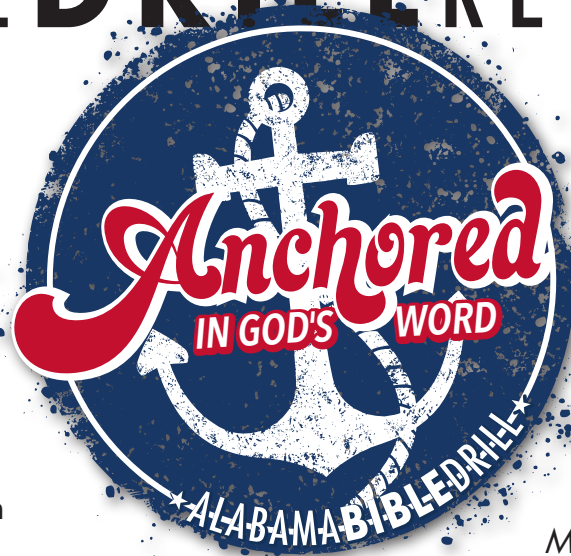
★ BIBLE DRILL RETREAT ★

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

Congratulations and Thanks

*to these associations who have had 100% of their churches complete and submit the Annual Church Profile**

Autauga * Barbour * Bessemer * Bethel * Bigbee * Bullock-Centennial * Cahaba * Cherokee * Clarke * Columbia * Covington * East Cullman * Fayette * Franklin * Hale * Judson * Muscle Shoals * Pickens * Sand Mountain * West Cullman

20 MORE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE FIVE OR FEWER CHURCHES LEFT TO REPORT.

Please make every effort to submit your ACP at adx.alsbom.org. It's quick and easy, and the information you provide will enable your State Board of Missions to more effectively partner with you in Great Commission Ministries. For assistance or more information, please contact your local association or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 266, or 334-613-2266.

*as of October 27, 2015

State Evangelism Conference

Free Admission

February 29 & March 1

Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday at 9 a.m.

First Baptist Church, Montgomery

SPEAKERS: Steve Gaines, Don Wilton, Danny Lovett, Jimmy Jackson, Mac Brunson, Dusty McLemore, Daven Watkins, Ted Traylor

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Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

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“They’re Saying I’m Intolerant”: Communicating a Biblical Perspective in a “Co-Exist” Culture

Making a Covenant With Your Eyes: Helping People Overcome Pornography

Teaching the Next Generation: Equipping Students with a Biblical Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality

Preaching About Biblical Sexuality: Key Strategies for Developing Relevant Messages

Appropriate Policies and Procedures for Your Church: Navigating the New Cultural Landscape

What’s Wrong With Just Living Together?: Countering the Culture of Premarital Sex and Cohabitation

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*For more information, please contact
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*This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama
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THE LARGEST TRAINING IN 20 YEARS has been taking place in 2015, led by the Evangelism Office, in preparation for a great implementation — called “Sharing Across Alabama” — planned for 2016.

The final GPS training event is scheduled for **Thursday, January 7, 2016, at Samford University** in Birmingham. Three strategic tools will be taught:

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

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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.

The training session will begin at 1 p.m. and adjourn by 7 p.m. and 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.

If you have not already been trained, please consider attending this final session to learn more about equipping lay persons to share their faith in Christ.

Online registration is required at alsbom.org/sharingacrossalabama. Deadline to register is 5 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



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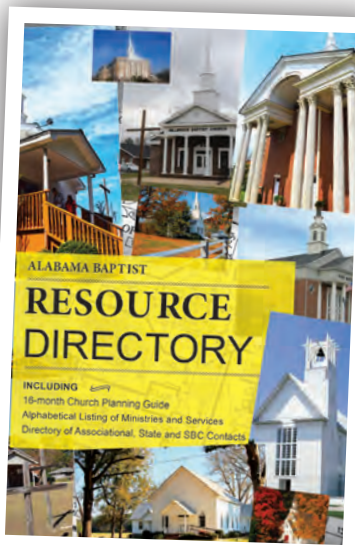
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Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of guides needed (up to 20).



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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:

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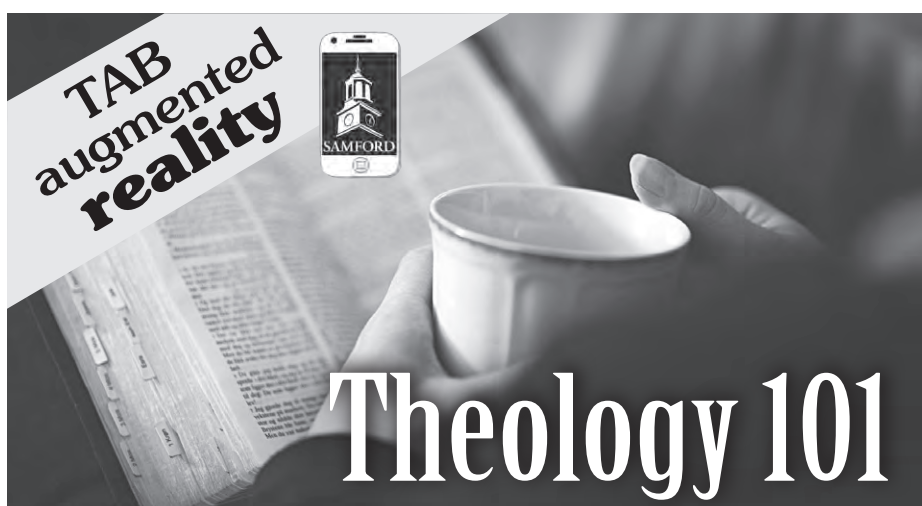
Worship Leaders: Adam & Marie Bishop, Frankfort, Ky.

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.



BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Name Above Every Name**Jesus**

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

In the weeks from now to Christmas, Theology 101 will consider some of the names and titles that refer to Jesus. The purpose will be to inquire as to what theological significance or truth may be extracted from the various ways the Bible refers to Him. Sometimes He is referred to by poetic names like Lily of the Valley or Rose of Sharon. Some of His names or titles have roots in the Old Testament, terms like Messiah or High Priest. Many references to Jesus are analogies that found their source in first-century Jewish life, such as Good Shepherd or Bread of Life.

Our point of beginning is the most common name by which we know Him: the very human name, Jesus. Again this year, Christmas will remind us that His earthly name had a heavenly origin. As the Christmas story tells us, an angel of the Lord instructed Joseph that Mary's child would bear the name "Jesus" (Matt. 1:21). Likewise when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would miraculously conceive a child, he instructed that her Son would be named "Jesus" (Luke 1:31).

Although this name was chosen in heaven, it was a rather common earthly name. In fact we read in Colossians 4:11 of a man by the name of Jesus who also was called Justus. Interestingly some ancient manuscripts of Matthew 27:16-17 record the name of the insurrectionist released at the time of Jesus' crucifixion as "Jesus Barabbas," reflecting that others may have borne the name "Jesus."

Since the name "Jesus" was rather common, often when referring to our Lord, clarity was assured by attaching to the name an association with His place of residence ("Jesus of Nazareth") or His family connection ("Jesus, son of Joseph"). In John 1:45 both identifiers are used. Such extensions implied the need to distinguish Jesus from others with the same given name.

The name "Jesus" for Mary's Son was a name as ancient as the time of

the Exodus, where the name appears most famously as Joshua. Joshua in the Hebrew Bible is the same as Jesus in the New Testament. In fact older translations render "Joshua" in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 as "Jesus," since the Greek spelling is the same for both Joshua and Jesus. All of this is to recognize that the name "Jesus" was not an otherworldly or sacred name but a very earthly human name. Even so Jesus of Nazareth took a common name and poured into it an uncommon life. In so doing, He invested it with unparalleled sacredness. In passing we might ask ourselves, "How is my life ennobling the name I bear?"

'The Lord is salvation'

This common name, whether rendered Joshua or Jesus, means "the Lord is salvation." As Jesus grew from infancy to adulthood in Nazareth, the mere mention of His name carried overtones of His saving mission in the world. His common name foreshadowed God's purpose for sending Him into the world. Perchance the theological significance of the name "Jesus" may be best appreciated when we note that the apostolic preaching of the gospel message was sometimes referred to simply as "preaching Jesus" (Acts 8:35; 17:18).

As we approach the Advent season this year we can remind ourselves that every time we say "Jesus" in conversation or in song, we are doing more than identifying Him. By using His earthly name we are confessing Him to be the Savior sent from heaven for the salvation of sinners. ☞

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.

**Prayer unites believers, is 'most important thing we do'***(continued from page 1)*

then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

"This verse is certainly applicable to all who call upon the Lord in repentance and faith," Gray said, which is why Spring Hill has made a commitment to open the church to members and community members for an hour devoted to prayer.

"We are seeking His face for our country and for our leaders that our land will be healed," Gray said.

Missions is another important prayer focus at the local church level, said Tom Glander, a lay minister and prayer ministry leader at Beulah Baptist Church, Muscadine, in Cleburne Baptist Association. In addition to praying for missions work in the

United States, prayer warriors at Beulah Baptist are praying for international missions requests and the International Mission Board staffers who are returning to the United States. Europe is a focus region as well because of a missions support partnership between the church and missionaries in Scotland.

The group also prays for people in their community to come to Christ, and Glander said the church is seeing the fruit of those prayers.

"We have been praying for revival at Beulah," Glander said. "We have seen God work by sending people in our congregation out to lead others in the 'Multiply'

discipleship plan. We also have seen people coming from outside our immediate vicinity to visit or become members."

Discipleship enters prominently into the prayer strategy at NorthPark Baptist as well, Wilks said. The church's discipleship program has grown tremendously in the past two years, and every discipleship group has been trained to pray for revival and spiritual awakening.

Including intentional prayer throughout the life of the church can be transformative, both in the effectiveness of ministries and the attitude of those who serve, Glander said.

"We complain about the direction of our country. We complain about the direction of our lives. But what are we doing about these things besides com-

plaining? God wants our prayers to be personal. Prayer is the most important thing we do," Glander said.

Prayer also unites believers, both in the local church and globally, he said.

"When I pray for a person doing ministry in China or Russia, I not only participate in their ministry, but I touch their lives even though I'm half a globe away," Glander said. "Our country, our world can change through the prayers of His people."

Gray wholeheartedly agrees.

"There is nothing that can't be accomplished by prayer if it is God's will," she said. ☞

"There is nothing that can't be accomplished by prayer if it is God's will."

**Kathern Gray
prayer ministry leader, Spring Hill Baptist Church, Cullman**

Sharing Ministry building note paid off

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Bethlehem Baptist Association churches celebrate a noteburning for the association's assistance ministry building — Sharing Ministry — Oct. 18 during the associational annual meeting at Excel Baptist Church, Monroeville. Burning the note were (l to r) Robert Knowles, moderator and pastor of FBC Goodway; John Marks, director of missions; Richard McRary, who helped find the location; Terry Kilpatrick and Billy Garner, two of the Sharing Ministry trustees.

Rockford Baptist shows support to law enforcement, honors fallen officers

By Christa Jennings
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Law enforcement officers work hard to protect the people of Rockford, something members of Rockford Baptist Church and area residents don't take lightly. They wanted to honor the officers in a special way so they gathered Sept. 30 in the church's parking lot, many wearing blue, and holding tightly to the strings of blue balloons.

The event, hosted by Rockford Senior Citizens Center and Rockford Baptist, was organized in part to show appreciation for those serving in law enforcement. About 50 participants gathered to also honor fallen law enforcement officers. Members of the Coosa County Alabama Sheriff's Office and Rockford Police Chief Corey Shaw were honored guests at the event.

Senior Citizens Center manager Michelle Hunter shared her appreciation for the officers and everything they do for the center as well as for individuals in Rockford.

Sheriff Terry Wilson spoke to the crowd and said he was honored by the outpouring of support for his staff, other officers and for remembering the fallen.

Jeff Willis, chief assistant district attorney, also addressed the crowd during the event.

Appreciation for officers

Jeff Fuller, pastor of Rockford Baptist, shared his appreciation for law enforcement officers, especially in light of the somber statistics that serve as a reminder of how law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day.

Only nine months into the year, already 98 line-of-duty deaths had taken place in the United



Photo by Christa Jennings

Participants quietly release their blue balloons into the air in memory of fallen officers and in appreciation of those still serving in law enforcement.

States, Fuller noted. Four of those 98 were in Alabama.

"With the time that we live in and (with) all the negative things going on regarding law enforcement, they need to know that there are people [who] support them," Fuller said of law enforcement officers.

Sharing hope

"Just showing the support and Christian love and sharing hope with them is what the event was all about."

After a moment of silence in honor of the fallen, the blue balloons were released into a sunny blue sky. ☀️



Photo by Joel Glover

Jeff Fuller, pastor of Rockford Baptist Church, speaks to the group about the number of law enforcement officers who have died so far this year.



Photo by Susan Campbell

Ministry assistant marks 35 years

Bigbee Baptist Association honors Muriel Powell (left) for 35 years as ministry assistant to the association during its annual meeting Oct. 20. Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, sent Powell a commendation letter honoring her years of ministry service that was read during the meeting. Director of Missions Brad Campbell (right) said he is proud to be able to minister with Powell who 'has served tirelessly and faithfully for these 35 years.'

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LETTERS

CARDS FOR INMATES

Christmas will be here soon. It is time to begin gathering Christmas Cards for MAC D Ministries to share with inmates in the Alabama Prison System, ADOC. When we started it was an initiative to share love and brighten the lives of HIV-positive inmates who were then segregated at Limestone Correctional Facility. Fortunately in the last few years ADOC no longer segregates them and they have been integrated into the system with the same privileges as the general population. Because of this the cards are delivered to a number of different facilities. We ask you to gather Christ-

mas cards, sign them including a short personal note if you like. Please do not seal the envelopes. Do not include your address. Postage is not required. If you would like to include something to help with the expense of delivery, feel free to do so.

Send your cards to: MAC D Ministries, 4030 6th St. East, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404 by Dec. 5. For more information, email adunnam4030@comcast.net or call 205-553-1592.

Scarlett Dunnam
Tuscaloosa, Ala.



TAB recognized for following 'model of biblical accountability,' receives accreditation from ECFA

Among its many accolades for reporting, writing, design and more, *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper hit another milestone in October — accreditation by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). ECFA is a nonprofit that “enhances trust in Christ-centered churches and ministries by establishing and applying” stewardship standards.

ECFA accredits more than 1,900 evangelical charities that have met ECFA’s Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship, which includes financial accountability, transparency, sound board governance and ethical fundraising.

According to a press release from ECFA, “*The Alabama Baptist* ... demonstrates its willingness to follow the model of biblical accountability.”

Dan Busby, ECFA president, wrote in the release, “We are pleased to accredit a ministry committed to producing an award-winning Christian newspaper.”

Bob Terry, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, said of the accreditation, “We are proud

to be a member of ECFA. The integrity of every ministry is reflected in the way they use and account for the money entrusted to them. In addition to complying with the strenuous requirements of the Alabama Baptist Business and Financial Plan, we

want to assure every Alabama Baptist — churches and donors alike — that the ministry of communication and information known as *The Alabama Baptist* complies with the highest Christian ethical standards related to its finances.” (Neisha Roberts)



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Reverse Mortgage News

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 large sums, set up a line of credit, fixed monthly amounts or a combination of options.

For a free brochure or more information, call Jimmy Dixon at 205-567-4800 or email jdixon@mcgowinking.com. Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state, helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a deacon and Sunday School teacher for Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.



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Searching for Foley's successor

University of Mobile presidential search committee formed

The University of Mobile (UMobile) announced Oct. 27 the members of the presidential search committee that will choose the next president to succeed President Mark Foley.

Foley announced in early October that he planned to retire in 2016, after more than 17 years as head of UMobile. Foley said he will continue as president until July 31, 2016, or until a successor is in place.

Executive search firm

Board of trustees chairman Terry Harbin said the committee will be assisted by the executive search firm JobfitMatters, a nationally recognized company specializing in higher education and the nonprofit sector. JobfitMatters recently completed the presidential search for Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and has worked with similar faith-based institutions.

Members of the presidential search committee are:

▶ Terry Harbin — chair of the presidential search committee and the UMobile board of trustees; market president of BancorpSouth Bank, Mobile.

▶ Fred Wilson — chair-elect of the UMobile board of trustees; partner, P.J. Lumber Co., Mobile.

▶ Deborah Nelson — vice chair of the UMobile board of trustees; real estate management, Orange Beach.

▶ David Connor — secretary of the UMobile board of trustees; attorney, Bay Minette.

▶ Kevin Wilburn — UMobile trustee; pastor, First Baptist Church, Cullman.

▶ Richard Gaal — UMobile trustee; attorney, Mobile.

▶ Lonnie Burnett — faculty representative; dean, College of Arts and Sciences.

▶ Kim Leousis — staff rep-

resentative; vice president for enrollment and campus life.

▶ Jerry Henry — board of regents representative; pastor, First Baptist Church, Fairhope.

▶ Jim Averett — former UMobile trustee; Birmingham.

"We have assembled a remarkable committee whose

members have a deep love for this university," said Harbin, who will chair the 10-member presidential search committee.

"I am grateful for the commitment of each person as we begin a national search for the next president of the University of Mobile." (UMobile)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

First Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tennessee, is prayerfully accepting resumés for senior pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 369, Gallatin, TN 37066.

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

Union Baptist Church, Grand Bay, Alabama, seeking part-time minister of music. Send resumé: Union Baptist Church, 5251 Grand Bay Wilmer Rd., Grand Bay, AL 36541.

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.

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

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Sand Mountain Baptist Association in northeast Alabama is accepting resumés for the position of director of missions. Candidates must have a history of participation in associational missions and support for the Southern Baptist Convention. Send resumés to: David Hairston, P.O. Box 398, Henagar, AL 35978.

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Want to know GOD?

By Brian Law

Lay leader, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills

One of the great words of the Bible is the word "come." The theme of invitation is constant throughout God's Word. The Psalmists called the people to worship: "Oh come, let us worship and bow down" (Ps. 95:6). The Prophets called the people to repent, "Come, let us return to the Lord" (Hos. 6:1).

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus called to the spiritually weary, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). His invitation to discipleship was, "Come, follow Me" (Mark 10:21). The last page of the Bible continues the same theme: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' ... And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Rev. 22:17).

This small word has a number of significant facets, but let me call your attention to three. One is the element of promise. The invitation includes a blessing for those who respond: rest for our souls, or the water of life. The word also holds within it the element of relationship. The invitation is not to a place or an event but to a person. He says, "Come to Me," and, "Follow Me."

A third facet of the call to come is the element of challenge. When we are called to come we are being challenged to move from where we are to where He is. We have to change our location from where we are now to where He wants to take us. Sometimes this is literal — we get up out of our pew and walk the aisle at church or we get up and go to help a person in need. But the spiritual principle applies to the beginning of true salvation and to every day thereafter. Salvation happens when we come to Jesus in response to the Father drawing us to Him (John 6:44). Have you ever really come to Christ? The invitation and the promise and the challenge still stands: "Come!"



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 allow you to follow *The Alabama Baptist*.)
- 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** 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.

CAMPUS News

JUDSON COLLEGE

university of
mobile

SAMFORD
UNIVERSITY

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College to Host Second Preview Day on Nov. 14:** Judson College in Marion will host its second fall Preview & Scholarship Day on Nov. 14. The day will begin with check-in and a student activities session at 8 a.m. Prospective students may spend the night in a residence hall, meet faculty and staff in breakout sessions, have lunch in the dining hall and participate in campus tours guided by Judson student ambassadors.

Students who have applied to Judson may take an aptitude test to compete for one full- and five partial-tuition institutional scholarships and Judson's Fine and Performing Arts division will host music and theater auditions. Scholarships are available in piano, organ, voice and theater. Student-athletes may try out for Judson's intercollegiate soccer, softball or tennis teams. For more information, visit judson.edu/admissions/visiting-judson/preview-days/.

► **Judson Singers to Perform at Alabama Collegiate Choral Festival:** Judson College's 40-member Judson Singers choir will participate in the 2015 Alabama American Choral Directors Association Collegiate Choral

Festival on Nov. 5 at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Twelve other area college choral ensembles will participate in addition to Judson. Each participating choir will perform its chosen literature followed by a 20-minute offstage clinic. For more information, contact Camilla Horne at 334-683-5142.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile's 'Christmas Spectacular' Tickets on Sale:** Tickets are on sale now for the University of Mobile's "Christmas Spectacular," the largest family-friendly Christmas concert along the Gulf Coast. Christmas Spectacular will be held Nov. 19, 20 and 21 at 6:45 p.m. and Nov. 22 at 4 p.m. at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile.

Tickets can be purchased at itickets.com. For more information, contact the Center for Performing Arts at 251-442-2383 or email Shadoe Valentin at svalentin@umobile.edu.

► **University of Mobile Offers Workshops for Homeschooled Students:** The Univer-

sity of Mobile faculty is teaching workshops to middle and high school homeschooled students during the 2015-2016 academic year to give them a taste of a college environment. Subjects range from "Separation Science: Paper, Chromatography" to "Beginning Ceramics" to "Basics of Music Production."

Limited spaces are available. For more information, contact Lonnie Burnett at 251-442-2319 or lburnett@umobile.edu.

► **University of Mobile Invites Students to Visit Day on Dec. 4, Offers Scholarships:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) will welcome prospective students and their families to campus for UMobile Visit Day on Dec. 4. Students who attend a visit day and later enroll may earn a \$2,000 scholarship.

For details or to register, visit www.umobile.edu/visit or call Enrollment Services at 251-442-2222.

► **Veterans Day Celebration Set for Nov. 11 at University of Mobile:** Retired Gen. Paul M. Hankins will be the featured speaker at the 2015 University of Mobile (UMobile) annual Veterans Day Celebration. The celebration, which is open to the public, will take place Nov. 11 at 11 a.m. in front of Bedsole Library on the UMobile campus.

During the Veterans Day ceremony the university will recognize members of its faculty, staff and student body who have served or continue to serve in the armed forces. RamCorps, the university's award-winning 30-member brass and percussion ensemble, will perform. For more information, call 251-442-2319.

► **University of Mobile Receives \$250,000 Matching Gift to Become All-Steinway School:** The University of Mobile is closer to becoming an All-Steinway School with a \$250,000 donation from Sherry Turner and Mike Atkins, of Naples, Florida. The donation will have an impact of \$500,000 because it is a matching challenge gift.

The designation of "All-Steinway School" means 95 percent of the university's piano inventory, from the practice room to the recital hall, must be designed by Steinway & Sons. Donations to the "All Steinway, All Together" campaign can be made online at giving.umobile.edu or by calling Bill Hart at 251-442-2223.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **'Genius' Archaeologist Connelly Speaks at Samford University:** Samford University's Howard College of Arts and Sciences in Birmingham hosted MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award winner Joan Breton Connelly for the 2015 J. Roderick Davis Lecture on Oct. 29. The public lecture, "Memory and Values: The Parthenon and the Greeks Who Built It," explored what it meant to be Greek at the time of the Parthenon's creation and discussed the ways human material culture preserves and projects values.

► **Celebration Benefit Concert Celebrates 100 Years of Samford University's School of the Arts:** Samford University's School of the Arts and Legacy League in Birmingham will present the Centennial Celebration Benefit Concert and School of the Arts Birthday Party on Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m. at Samford's Wright Center featuring music performed by Samford Combined Choirs and University Orchestra.

Tickets may be purchased at tickets.samford.edu or by calling 205-726-2853. For more information, visit www.samford.edu/legacyleague.

TAB augmented reality

TAB offers communications, technology support



10-Minute Makeovers

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

James Hammack (center), web consultant and pastor of West End Baptist Church, Aliceville, assists *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) staff and Samford University representative Chris McCaghren (standing) in 10-minute communications and technology makeovers for churches and ministries in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association (TBA). TBA Director of Missions Sam Day partnered with TAB to offer the sessions prior to the associational annual meeting at Rosedale Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, on Oct. 20.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 8

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

WHERE WICKEDNESS RULES Genesis 18:20-25; 19:12-16

Man's Sin (18:20-21)

God revealed to Abraham what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. We naturally think of the sins of these cities as largely sexual in nature. Sodom provides the basic word (sodomy) for sins outside normal sexuality. In Genesis 19:1-5 the men of Sodom desired to have homosexual relations with the two visitors, angels who appeared as men.

But if we think of their sins only in sexual terms we will miss the depth of their depravity. The word "outcry" is used in the Bible to describe the cries of the oppressed and brutalized. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah cared only for themselves while they brutalized and oppressed each other. There were no human rights. The great outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah came from the inhabitants themselves. Unpunished sin cried out to heaven for vengeance.

God knows everything. But through a huge act of condescension, the Lord responded anthropomorphically (like a human being) to Abraham. The Lord declared: "I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know." God would send His angels on a fact-finding mission, to gather information He already perfectly knew.

Abraham's Intercession (18:22-25)

Abraham prayed for the sinful inhabitants of Sodom. He demonstrated a God-like compassion for others. He knew people in those wicked cities, and he cared for them despite their paganism and depravity.

Abraham had absolute confidence in the righteousness of God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" Abraham had no doubt that God is right-

eous in His being and just in His actions.

Abraham, however, was wrong in supposing that the righteous cannot suffer the same tragedies as sinners. Abraham was wrong-headed in his bold admonishment: "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked. Far be that from You" (v. 25). Abraham's bold charge came from his having never imagined that it could be possible for the righteous and sinners to fall to the same trauma at the sovereign hand of God.

Unlike us, Abraham did not have the benefit of all the Scriptures. He did not have Psalm 73, which wonders at the prosperity of the wicked and the hardship of the righteous, nor the answers that God there provides. Neither did Abraham have the words of Christ explaining that the victims of the fallen tower of Siloam were not greater sinners than the rest of Jerusalem's population (Luke 13:4-5). And he did not have access to the New Testament truth that earthly judgment cannot touch the righteous in the ultimate sense because they are in Christ.

Abraham was right in stating that God is righteous and just. It is impossible for God to do anything that is unjust.

God's Grace (19:12-16)

The angels instructed Lot to get his family together and get out of Sodom immediately. The picture that focuses before us in 18:15-17 is backlit by the appearance of the dawn. The final dark night of Sodom had come to an end. Silhouetted against the red dawn two angels, grasping the hands of Lot, his wife and their two daughters, could be seen running out of Sodom and toward the rising dawn.

Lot's deliverance was a divine exercise of grace. It was completely undeserved, just like God's amazing grace that saved a wretch like you and me (Eph. 2:8-9). ☞

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

LIVE HUMBLY Daniel 4:28-35

As one empire gave way to another in ancient Mesopotamia, the great emperors of these nations saw the stars of their fame and power rise and fall. The Babylonian empire traced its origins back to the 18th century B.C. and King Hammurapi.

In its waning years some 12 centuries later, a renewed Neo-Babylonian empire would reach the zenith of its power under King Nebuchadnezzar. In his day Nebuchadnezzar's rule was virtually uncontested. Media and Persia in the East and Egypt in the West had little interest in challenging Babylon. And the minor kingdoms like Syria and Judah posed no threat at all to Nebuchadnezzar's powerful imperial state. Nebuchadnezzar could rightly dare any to challenge his rule. The book of Daniel suggests, however, that in his arrogance the great king failed to recognize that even his powerful rule was subject to the authority of another, God Himself.

Daniel 4 takes the form of a testimony from Nebuchadnezzar. Here the king recalls a terrible dream. Eager to know the meaning of the dream, the king summoned his magicians, astrologers and diviners. All these together could not interpret the king's vision. Finally the king turned to his trusted servant, Daniel.

The king's dream had been one of a strong tree with abundant fruit reaching into the heavens. But while the king admired this singular tree, a voice was heard to decree that the tree should be cut down.

When the king explained his dream, Daniel said, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries. Your majesty, you are that tree." Daniel then foretold that Nebuchadnezzar would be cut down from his high position, visited with madness and driven away from his people until he

learned to acknowledge "that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone He wishes" (4:25).

Pride is a sin that places self over others. (28-30)

Daniel's final words to the king took the form of an urgent plea for Nebuchadnezzar to repent of his arrogance and live justly before God. However, the king failed to do so. Some 12 months after his dream Nebuchadnezzar found himself walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. There he surveyed his great accomplishments and boasted to himself, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" It was at this moment that the king's dream became a reality.

Humble yourself or God will humble you. (31-33)

No sooner had the king uttered his boast than a voice echoed from heaven, announcing to Nebuchadnezzar that his authority had been taken away, that he would be driven away from the people to live like an animal and that it was in this condition he would stay until he had learned to acknowledge the sovereignty of God Most High.

God restores us as we humble ourselves before Him. (34-35)

Remarkably the story does not conclude with Nebuchadnezzar's madness. On the contrary it goes on to recount that after his time of suffering and exile, the king finally humbled himself, raising his eyes toward heaven and acknowledging the One whose power and dominion were even higher than his own. It was at that moment, the story tells us, that the king's sanity was restored. Nebuchadnezzar's power was only derivative; the source of all greatness was and is God Himself. ☞

Christian Crossword

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

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Across

- In the beginning was the _____. (John 1:1)
- I _____ rather be a doorkeeper. (Ps. 84:10)
- Two of every _____ shalt thou bring into the ark. (Gen. 6:19)
- One of the Great Lakes.
- Come down _____ my child die. (John 4:49)
- Between blood and blood, between _____ and plea. (Deut. 17:8)
- God hath _____ the body together. (1 Cor. 12:24)
- Thou shalt _____ this law before all Israel. (Deut. 31:11)
- He loved them unto the _____. (John 13:1)
- Figures of speech.
- Signs, good or evil.
- To glance at quickly.
- Be ye _____ one to another. (Eph. 4:32)
- He that sweareth to his own hurt, and _____ not. (Ps. 15:4)
- Last book of the Bible.

Down

- Blackboard or roofing tile.
- Confederate commander.
- In any place.
- Russian emperor.
- The very hairs of your _____ are all numbered. (Matt. 10:30)
- Your fathers _____ are they? (Zech. 1:5)
- Middle.
- To hasten.
- Entrance.
- Twirling.
- He loved Rachel _____ than Leah. (Gen. 29:30)
- Give _____ to my words. (Ps. 5:1)
- Applaud.
- I am alive forevermore, _____. (Rev. 1:18)
- Tint.
- Electrocardiograms.
- Thou shalt kill of thy _____. (Deut. 12:21)
- They _____ all plain to him. (Prov. 8:9)
- King David did _____ unto the Lord. (2 Sam. 8:11)
- _____ up, O well. (Num. 21:17)
- Butter substitute.
- A quantity of paper.
- Urchins.
- Dashes.
- Great _____.
- Vegetable.
- Manner.
- Let not thine heart _____ sinners. (Prov. 23:17)
- Broken pottery.
- His leprosy was _____. (Matt. 8:3)
- He is God; there is none _____ beside Him. (Deut. 4:35)
- His anger did _____ perpetually. (Amos 1:11)
- _____ a little, and there a little. (Isa. 28:10)
- Karite tree.
- To bleach.

- Thou shalt by no means come out _____. (Matt. 5:26)
- That I may _____ Christ. (Phil. 3:8)
- Mother.
- Esau, who is _____. (Gen. 36:1)
- Dreadful.
- Weigh silver in the balance, and _____ a goldsmith. (Isa. 46:6)
- For this cause _____ ye tribute also. (Rom. 13:6)
- Kind, breed.
- Old horse.
- Gallons per second. (abbr.)



SBOM's Kellum competes on 'Wheel of Fortune'

Scooter Kellum, come on down!" An associate in the collegiate and student ministries office at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Scooter Kellum got the chance of a lifetime when he flew out to Los Angeles to become a contestant on the "Wheel of Fortune" gameshow.

"It was such a great opportunity," Kellum said. "Knowing so many people who watch the show ... made it even more special."

While the behind-the-scenes look at how the show has thrived for more than 30 years gave Kellum a new-found respect for it, his favorite part of the experience was seeing himself on TV when the show aired Oct. 12.

"I had thought that since I knew the results that I wouldn't get excited or be nervous, but as I watched I got excited because my friends and family were excited. Even knowing what was going to happen ... I caught myself cheering."

An unexpected loss of a turn could have knocked Kellum off his game, but he stayed focused and kept competing. Life's like that a lot, he said.

"Sometimes ... you have a plan and a strategy and then unexpected struggles come your way. So often when a tough time comes we run away and don't keep our eyes on the prize. But we are to run the race of life with endurance toward the finish line, not away from it."

"On the show I didn't walk off the stage ... when things didn't go my way. I kept trying to win the prize."

It's a lesson for all Christians to remember when trials come: run the race of life with endurance, knowing eternity with Christ is at the end, he said. (Maggie Walsh)



KELLUM



'For a mature audience'

'The Muppets' content 'not suited for children,' study finds

In a study of "The Muppets," the Parents Television Council (PTC) reports that the new TV show includes a preponderance of sexual innuendos and other offensive content not suited for children.

The first four episodes of half-hour comedy featuring characters created by the late Jim Henson decades ago included adult-themed content every 3 minutes and 38 seconds, PTC found.

PTC joins another critic of the series, the morality watchdog group One Million Moms (1MM), in saying the show is not the kid-friendly offering it once was.

'A tragedy'

PTC President Tim Winter said in a news release, "It is a tragedy that one of the most iconic children's television shows in history, 'The Muppets,' would be so filled with adult content — sexual innuendoes, sexual references, drugs and alcohol, to be exact — that it would become too toxic for children."

"Our research shows that 'The Muppets' isn't a show for kids, yet it was supposedly created for families to watch together."

The characters, headlined by Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog, hadn't been featured in a series in 17 years. The series is especially cunning because it features characters that appeal to children, but casts them in adult storylines, the groups said.

Family blogger Michael Foust agreed. "We live in an age where nearly every so-called 'children's movie' contains adult dialogue and inappropriate language, so it's not surprising that ABC is pushing the envelope with a 'Muppets' series catered to adults," Foust said.

He called "The Muppets" "filthy mouthed" and said his children are not allowed to watch it.

The show slid in the Nielsen ratings, garnering 1.3 percent of viewers for its Oct. 13 episode, Nielsen reported, but PTC said many children still watch the show.

Children 'inherently attracted'

Winter said, "Make no mistake, children are inherently attracted to 'The Muppets,' and over a million young children are watching the program each week. We urge the network and everyone involved with this program to re-think the dangerous direction of this program. And in the meantime, we urge parents to be warned about letting their children watch 'The Muppets.'"

Before the show debuted Sept. 22, 1MM called for a boycott.

On its website, 1MM said, "1MM suspects there are going to be a lot of shocked moms and dads when they discover that the family-friendly 'Muppets' of the 1970s are no more. No subject is off-limits in ABC's 'Muppet' show aimed at a mature audience, and it is not suitable for family viewing."

While the original characters were featured in story lines that were considered kid-friendly 40 years ago, Henson's original intention was to feature the characters in plots that also would appeal to adults, Tech Times reported.

Tech Times quoted Henson's pitch for

the original Muppets variety show: "Small children will love the cute and cuddly characters. Young people will love the fresh and innovative comedy. College kids and intellectual eggheads will love the underlying symbolism of everything. Freaky, long-haired, cynical hippies will love our freaky, long-haired, cynical Muppets because that is what show business is all about."

Pilots for the show hinted at adult content, including the 1975 pilot "The Muppets Show: Sex and Violence," Tech Times said.

"Skits like 'For the Birds,' 'Mount Rushmore' and 'The Seven Deadly Sins Pageants' featured jokes and commentary that was more suitable for adults," Tech Times said.

Study findings

Among the top findings in the PTC study, "An examination of iconic children's characters delivering adult-themed content":

▶ Most of the adult-themed content referenced sex, alcohol or drugs; with 46 percent referencing sex and 54.5 percent referencing alcohol or drugs.

▶ More than 72 percent of all alcohol and drug references aired in episodes three and four.

▶ Eighty percent of all the sexual content aired in the first two episodes was in the form of sexual innuendos, sexual references and anatomical references.

▶ The iconic characters Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy delivered nearly half of all sexual content discovered in the study. (BP)

"ABC has ruined 'The Muppets' by introducing adult subjects to children."

One Million Moms



Photo courtesy of Kansas City Royals

Ben Zobrist (center) is the son of an Illinois pastor who played college baseball at Dallas Baptist University in Texas before entering the Major Leagues.

Representing CHRIST

Royals player is 'missionary in a very difficult missions field'

Ben Zobrist has proven his value on the baseball field to the Kansas City Royals. In Game 4 of the American League Championship Series, Zobrist homered off Toronto pitcher R.A.

Dickey in the top of the first inning to give the Royals a quick 2-0 lead, sparking a four-run inning in a blowout 14-2 win.

Two games later, Zobrist again went deep in the first inning to give Kansas City a quick lead, setting the stage for a clinching 4-3 win over the Toronto Blue Jays and a World Series berth.

At press time, the Royals were up in wins 2-0 in the World Series against the New York Mets.

Highly coveted throughout his career for his versatility, Zobrist also brings a consummate professionalism and veteran presence to the team's clubhouse. More important to him, however, is the influence for the kingdom of God that he has on his teammates.

Byron Yawn, pastor of Community Bible Church, Nashville, where Zobrist and his wife, Julianna, are members, said, "Ben, by virtue of the providence of God, has ended up being a missionary in [the] very difficult missions field of professional sports."

Recommitted to God

Zobrist, the son of a pastor in Eureka, Illinois, became a Christian as a child. In high school after realizing that sports held too prominent a place in his heart, he recommitted himself to the Lord. After a collegiate career at Dallas Baptist University in Texas, Zobrist spent most of his professional career with the Tampa Bay Rays, making the American League All-Star team twice and playing in the 2008 World Series.

A trade after the 2014 season sent him to Oakland. Kansas City gained Zobrist in a mid-season

acquisition this year, and he offered the Royals what he has brought to teams throughout his career — a little bit of left field, a little bit of third base, a little bit of right field — before settling in at second base down the stretch.

Zobrist said in an interview, "Like anybody else that goes and does their job, there's a way to do your job with excellence. You want to represent Christ well with doing your job, first and foremost, because that's what you're there to do."

Family comes first

For Zobrist family is a major part of his life, whether it's his wife and kids, his baseball family or his church family. Even with Zobrist on the road so much for his job, he and his wife have made a commitment never to be apart for more than six days at a stretch — which means that Julianna Zobrist and their two kids spend a fair amount of time traveling with him or hanging out at the ballpark.

His teammates are another of Zobrist's priorities, and his positive attitude and approachable spirit in the locker room make him a unifying force with the team. He often prays for his teammates and engages them in conversations about the gospel.

Yawn said, "The consistency of the godliness of his life is a natural attraction to a diversity of personalities on the team."

Even though his job requires him to be absent from his church family for much of the year, Zobrist stays connected as much as he can to Community Bible Church. He listens to podcasts of the sermons and church members make a point to stay in touch.

"We try to view Ben somewhat like we would a salesman that has to travel throughout the year," Yawn said. "Of course, his spirit is such that when he's done with baseball, we know exactly where he'll be." (BP)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Video shows Christian beheading in Libya

CYRENAICA, Libya — A group claiming affiliation with the Islamic State (ISIS) announced the beheading of a Christian from South Sudan in a video posted Oct. 18.

A masked man who carries out the killing in the video, presumably in Libya, states he is defending Muslim brothers he claims were persecuted by South Sudan. However, there is no record of any Muslims dying at the hands of Christians there.

In the video, which a group calling itself ISIS in Cyrenaica (eastern coastal Libya) released, the victim is identified in an inaudible voice, possibly as Kual Gai Wek, a native of South Sudan who has been living in Libya since 1989. His name does not appear to be Mohamed Al-Ghaid, as reported elsewhere.

The video also shows an enemy soldier, said to be Faraj Al-Saiti, being shot to death in the same area as the beheading. The identity of the South Sudanese Christian has not been verified and it is unclear when the executions took place.

The ISIS figure accuses South Sudan of mistreating Muslims despite an interim constitution that defines the country as a secular state.

The videoed execution is thought to have taken place Sept. 23, during the Muslim holiday of "Festival of the Sacrifice," according to media reports. (MS)

Muslims kill Christian man's wife in Uganda

KALAMPETE, Uganda — Muslims in eastern Uganda angry at a Christian for leaving Islam killed his wife Oct. 19, a month after his brother was killed for the same reason, sources said.

Mamwikomba Mwanika, wife of George Mwanika and mother of eight children, died en route to a hospital after Muslims unknown to her dragged her from her home at about 9 p.m. and assaulted her.

"The attackers dragged our mother outside the house as she screamed and cried for help," said her 13-year-old child.

Converts from Islam to Christianity in eastern Uganda have recently experienced regular instances of persecution.

About 85 percent of the people in Uganda are Christian and 11 percent Muslim, with some eastern areas having large Muslim populations. (MS)

Islamists suspected for killing long-time evangelist

KALAMPETE, Uganda — Islamists upset by a Christian-Muslim debate are suspected in the killing of a long-time evangelist in eastern Uganda who led many Muslims to Christ, sources said.

The mutilated body of Samson Nfunyeku was found close to his home in Kalampete village, Kibuku District on Sept. 23 after the latest in a series of organized debates with Islamic scholars at Tirinyi Trading Center ended prematurely because of flaring tempers the previous night.

Gauma Samuel of the Church of Uganda's Budaka Archdeaconry said at Nfunyeku's funeral service, "We are going to miss the courage and passion seen in the life of Samson, who was out to win Muslims for Christ." (MS)

Local officials demolish church in Sudan

OMDURMAN, Sudan — Police in Omdurman, Sudan, demolished a church building Oct. 21, sources said. A bulldozer rammed down the Sudanese Lutheran Church building in the Karari area of Omdurman. The building was reportedly also used by an Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation.

Local authorities said they tore down the building because it was located in an area designated for business. Area Christians said they did not accept this rationale as a mosque stands nearby. Karari officials had told church leaders that they would not demolish the building but later gave them 72 hours' notice to prepare for its destruction, church leaders said.

Appeals from the church to let the building remain were dismissed. (MS)