



INSIDE



Faith and Family: Helping students with college/vocational decisions

◆ Pages 3–6



Athens' Clements Baptist brings new life to Poplar Creek through partnership

◆ Page 7



BCM students assist with disaster relief during spring break

◆ Page 12



Photo by Doug Rogers

— BASICS OF —
church security

Alabama Baptists learn how to respond to threat of physical violence in church

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

The craziness happens,” Mark Wakefield said. “It’s there and you’ve got to do something.” Citing recent examples of armed encounters at churches, including the March 6 shooting of an Idaho pastor in his church parking lot, Wakefield and other Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) personnel addressed “The Basics of Church Security” on March 10 to more than 100 participants. Wakefield was joined by SBOM’s Jim Swedenburg and Lee Wright in addressing issues such as how to protect children in church, how to secure church grounds, what to do in the event of a shooting and how to make a church financially secure.

With a background in pastoral ministry as well as law enforcement, Wakefield has a unique perspective on how to respond to the imminent threat of physical violence in church.

“I want to balance the tactical side of that with the ministry side,” said Wakefield, SBOM’s state chaplaincy strategist. “Church security is not just about [if we should] have armed people walking around during the worship service.”

The question is “more broad based,” he said. “Should we be willing to lay down our lives or should we protect our congregations and our flock? I think that’s a question that ought to be wrestled with.”

Churches are first and foremost the body of Christ, Wakefield said, and as such we have a “relational purpose” to care for those outside of the church. The goal is to welcome new people in and engage them and minister to them. But how do you blend an “open door policy” with a secure facility?

By being aware, Wakefield said. “You need to, as a church, think through the ‘what ifs.’ ... Start planning now for how you’re going to respond to any kind of disruption, particularly the threat of physical violence.”

The most common threats a church will face are a noncustodial parent trying to take a child from church and someone who is chemically or mentally unstable entering the church.

“Have people who are prepared to deal with situations and practice and rehearse and talk about it ... because it’s tough to [handle] under the best of circumstances,” Wakefield said. “It’s tougher if you haven’t given it any thought.”

Churches can look at a variety of resources (see graphic, page 13) to develop a high-quality

emergency operations plan.

“Use guides and think through, ‘If we’re going to do this, how are we going to make it the best we can?’” Wakefield suggested.

For instance if churches decide to have congregants carrying firearms in every service, then those congregants need to be certified yearly by a National Rifle Association instructor, he said.

Plan and prepare

Regardless of what churches decide regarding the armed aspect of security, planning and preparation are paramount to church security.

“In your planning look at all you can, make a good plan, ask somebody to evaluate it for you and then practice what you plan,” Wakefield said. “When the event happens, you protect lives first and foremost and then you keep the crisis from getting worse. Then you protect property.”

(See ‘Practice,’ page 13)

For helpful resources and links, visit alsbom.org/safe.

COMING NEXT WEEK ...

A look at different styles of counseling



COMMENT



The First Commission

The words came from Jesus Himself. Jesus said to all gathered in an upper room “as the Father has sent Me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

Later Jesus expanded this thought. In the Great Commission, recorded in Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus used his final words on earth to instruct His followers to “make disciples of all nations.”

Luke’s account of Jesus’ final words (Acts 1:8) has the Lord commissioning the disciples to be witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

But the First Commission came on Resurrection Day eve, not at the end of Jesus’ 40 days after being raised from death to life.

The First Commission came when His followers were afraid and confused. That is part of the reason they gathered behind locked doors.

Empty tomb

Something had happened to Jesus’ body. That much was clear. The tomb where Jesus was buried on Friday was empty on the first day of the week. The Roman guards accused the disciples of stealing the body during the night and many of the Jews believed that lie.

The disciples were already afraid after witnessing the arrest, trial and crucifixion of their leader. Now to be called thieves by the Romans practically terrified them.

Jesus was alive

And there were those amazing reports — reports that Jesus was alive. Mary Magdalene claimed to have seen Jesus that very morning. Two of Jesus’ followers also claimed to have seen Jesus during the day. They said He walked with them on the Emmaus Road.

Perhaps the disciples wanted to learn more about these reports. Perhaps they wanted to talk to one another about whether the rumors of resurrection could be true. Christians gathering to comfort one another, to encourage one another, to learn from one another has always



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

been a positive experience. Perhaps that is why the writer of Hebrews urged believers not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25).

As the disciples talked Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. One might expect the appearance to be confirmation of the resurrection reports from earlier in the day. Not so. Luke reports the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost (Luke 24:37).

Receiving confirmation

It was not until Jesus “showed them His hands and side” that the disciples believed and were overjoyed. The information about Jesus’ resurrection was confirmed by their own personal experience (John 20:20).

In a brief moment, promises of Jesus were fulfilled in ways no one expected. When Jesus announced His approaching death in John 14, He promised “I will come to you” (v. 18). Now Jesus stood in their midst (John 20:19a). Jesus had promised His peace (John 14:27) and now He said “peace be with you” (John 20:19b).

Jesus had promised a time when “I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice” (John 16:22) and now the disciples’ joy overflowed when they saw the Lord.

There could be no doubt

Interestingly John points out the disciples were overjoyed after they saw the marks of the crucifixion on the body of the one standing before them. There could be no doubt. The Jesus to whom they had given their devotion, the Jesus whom they and multitudes of others had seen crucified three days earlier was the same One who stood before them.

At Caesarea Philippi, Peter had confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Now the disciples realized that fact again as they saw their Lord.

Jesus’ presence calmed their fears and encouraged their faith. Peace was certainly with them. Perhaps not peace as the world gives but a peace that reaches beyond circumstances to a steadfast assurance that Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings.

But the peace Jesus offered was not meant for personal contentment. It was to encourage them to accept the commission coming their way.

In Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer recorded in John 17, He had prayed, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (v. 18). Now to the disciples He says, “As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

This commission is not the charge of an uncaring dictator who only cares about the completion of a task. The verb used for “sent” is perfect tense indicating the mission of Jesus continues. All who were gathered in that upper room were to continue the ministry Jesus started but their mission was not in mortal hands alone. It was still a divine mission as the work of Jesus continues.

‘I am sending you’

Matthew expresses the same thought in different words. He quotes Jesus’ final words of the Great Commission: “And surely I am with you always, even unto the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

The disciples and others in that room could never be the mediators of reconciliation as Jesus was but they could certainly proclaim what God had done through Jesus. Their mission was not to the Jews alone but to all people everywhere. Their commission to share this message was as much a word from God as that given any Old Testament prophet, for Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” What more authority could be asked?

John says Jesus then “breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). Just as Jesus received the Holy Spirit at the beginning of his ministry (John 1:32–33) so Jesus provided the Holy Spirit for the work of the Church. It is part of being “with” His people to the end of the age. It is part of the continual “sending” of the Son by the Father. God always equips His people for the tasks to which He calls.

A new creation

One cannot miss the comparison to the first creation where God breathed the breath of life into His creation and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Now Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit into His disciples and creates a new humanity. What sinned marred, Jesus redeemed. For the one who trusts in Jesus, he is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

What Jesus said to the disciples that Resurrection Day eve still applies to all Jesus’ followers. He gives us His peace, not for personal contentment but to prepare us to accept the First Commission. As the Father sent Jesus to us, so Jesus sends us to others. ☩

Connect with us

>>>> **ONLINE** <<<<



thealabamabaptist.org



facebook.com/thealabamabaptist



twitter.com/alabamabaptist

TAB
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chairman Amelia Pearson, Mike
Shaw, George Foust, Rosalie
Hunt, Ken Meggins, Jane
Bellew, Travis Coleman, Eddie
Davidson Jr., Helen W. Mayo,
Jim Oakley Jr., Lawrence Phipps,
Arthur Williams, Rick Patrick,
Bradley Rushing, Jana Wyatt, Rick
Lance (ex officio).

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

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

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

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

**Full member of
Alabama Press Association**

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

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

Helping students with college/vocational decisions

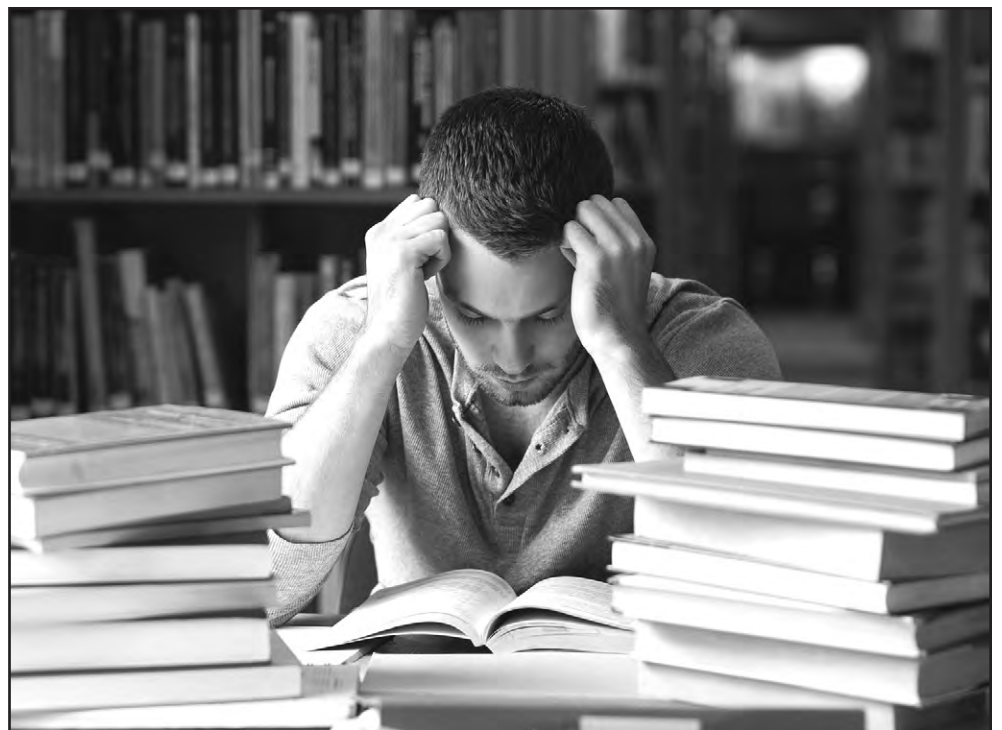
How can you discern God's will for future vocation, calling?

Choosing a path

Marcus will finish high school in May and it's time to select a college. His parents want him to enroll at the nearby community college so he can live at home during his first year of college.

But Marcus wants to meet new people and try new things, which will be hard to do if he lives at home.

Then there's the issue of what he will study. His dad hopes he will work in the family's business, but his mom tells him that he can be whatever he wants to be. Marcus prays about these decisions regularly but there are so many options. If it's true that God has a plan for him, how will he ever know how he's following the right one?



123rf.com

By Leah Owens, ALC
Pathways Professional Counseling

What do you want to be when you grow up?" This is a common question we ask of our children. Of course, over the years, this answer can change. One minute a child might aspire to be a hairdresser and the next, a teacher. A child with a love for animals might talk of being a veterinarian while a child who loves space might dream of being an astronaut.

As children become teenagers and young adults they will have different interactions in the world around them, exposing them to different professions. These interactions can allow them to discover a whole world of possibilities for their future vocations, careers or callings in life. Parents, teachers, school counselors and youth pastors are all trying to help high school students figure out what they want to be when they grow up — quite a tall order.

So how do you help? What should you do to help a teenager find his or her next step?

These are especially critical questions during a high school student's junior and senior years. The junior year is a great time

to explore college and career options, since many decisions are made early in the senior year. Even with decisions in place, high school seniors often feel a range of emotions including excitement, anxiety, fear and confusion as graduation draws near. It can be overwhelming for 17- or 18-year-olds to know what they want to do, especially with the vast number of potential paths available.

For parents of these teens, it also can seem daunting to know how to best help them discover what they want for their life or what step may be next for them. The teens and young adults in your life need to know this is normal and that they are not alone in feeling this way.

In his book, "Now What?: The Young Person's Guide to Choosing the Perfect Career," Nicholas Lore states that 55 percent of all United States employees are not engaged in their work and only 30 percent of college educated professionals say they like their work. That sounds discouraging. However, Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God has a plan for us and that it is a good plan. The Bible tells us we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). It tells us He created us all with different gifts, talents and abilities (Rom. 12:6-8). The

Bible also instructs us to do the best we can with whatever our hands find to do (Eccles. 9:10).

God designed you for the work He wants you to do whether in ministry or in a vocational calling. Even with this knowledge, how do we figure out what God's plan is for us and what our hands are supposed to do? How do you help point your child in the right directions for their future calling?

The Bible is not a career manual, but it does tell us how to live our lives, how to become wise decision makers and how to make good choices. To do this we must have a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and grow in spirit and truth.

Seek God first

Encourage the teens and young adults in your life who are making college and career decisions to seek Him first. He tells us in Proverbs 3 that if we ask and seek Him, He will direct our paths. To make good vocation or career choices, teens also need to know and understand their personality, skills, abilities, interests and values. You can help them discover these things by asking a few questions:

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What are your dreams and desires?
- ▶ What classes did you like in school?
- ▶ In which classes did you perform well?
- ▶ What are your strengths and abilities?

(See 'Success,' page 4)



PATHWAYS
Professional Counseling

www.pathwaysprofessional.org
1-866-991-6864

Call to be disciples

Scripture offers direction for students seeking God's path for their futures

By Douglas K. Wilson,
Dean, School of Christian Ministries
University of Mobile

How does a Christian young person discern God's will regarding career, college and calling to ministry?

Should students forget about college and start an African orphanage at 18 years old like Katie Davis did? Or pursue a degree in intercultural studies from a Christian university like the University of Mobile? Why not earn a business degree, get a job, marry and then answer God's call on their lives?

Scripture offers direction for students who are seeking God's path for their futures. Christians are called to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Under the lordship of Jesus, we are called to worship, stewardship, fellowship, discipleship and leadership. A calling to ministry is a call to be a disciple, a call to preparation and a call to global disciple making.

There is no secret formula, but Acts 1 provides us principles that the early Church followed to discern and obey God's will.

Principle 1: Remain faithful to Jesus' last instruction until He gives you something else (vv. 4, 8, 12).

The disciples returned to Jerusalem after the ascension because Jesus told them to do so. We live in a day when God's Word is treated as optional. The New Testament tells us that it is God's will for us to experience grace (John 6:40), ex-

ercise growth (1 Thess. 4:3) and express gratitude (1 Thess. 5:18). If we are unwilling to obey God in these instructions, why should He grant us discernment for a college major, a career or a call to missions?

Principle 2: Gather with fellow believers in unity and in prayer (vv. 13-14).

Whatever petty grievances or competitions they had previously, the disciples put them aside as they awaited empowerment by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses. Seeking God's face in prayer aligns our wills with His will. Whatever He teaches us in prayer will be for His glory and for the benefit of the body of Christ.



WILSON

Principle 3: Listen to what God is saying in His Word (vv. 15-20).

Peter took the position of leadership entrusted to Him (John 21:15-17). He called believers to discern God's will for a replacement for Judas as 1 of the 12 disciples. His evidence for this call was Scripture, quoting from the Psalms. God continues to speak today through His Word. We must pray God will give us ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

Principle 4: Discern what preparation is required for the Christ-centered task at hand (vv. 21-22).

To be qualified, a man must have followed Jesus from His baptism until His resurrection. Many men followed Jesus through His ministry but only two met the requirements. High school students may choose to major in fields for which

they have little aptitude and no experience, or they may discern a calling for ministry for which they have no training. Personal experience, godly counsel, character development and faithfulness over time are often factors in the preparation. A call to ministry is a call to preparation. At the University of Mobile, we require ministry students to participate in ministry teams and a semester-long ministry internship to help them prepare for their vocational call. While attending college, students will encounter all sorts of opportunities to gain experience in ministry and missions. Students who can identify spiritual mentors and discover where God is working in communities around the world will be prepared for a lifetime of global disciple making.

Principle 5: Look at the circumstances and trust that God will guide you as a group and as an individual (vv. 23-26).

Once the disciples discovered that two men met the qualifications, they used a method for discerning God's direction. They cast lots. The early Church believed God was so involved in the affairs of the congregation that He would direct them to the man of His choosing. He did and Matthias was affirmed.

Here is one caveat: Beware of looking at the circumstances first. Immature believers have a tendency to look for short cuts to God's will, assuming that every open door is an indication from God. Mature believers recognize that He guides in a variety of ways.

Remain faithful. Pray together in unity. Seek the Lord in prayer. Study the Word. Make preparations. Look at circumstances. Trust God. He will lead you. ✝

Success comes when callings are fulfilled

(continued from page 3)

By this point in school, most students probably have taken some type of interest inventory or an achievement/aptitude test. If they have not, then share with the teens and young adults in your life these tools and encourage them to take advantage of these self-administered online assessment tools. ONET and Career Finders are good resources to use without the need for professional interpretation.

Most colleges and universities also offer vocational or career counseling and can administer assessments such as the Strong Interest Inventory and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Encourage them to talk with their teachers or mentors and ask what those individuals see as their strengths and weaknesses.

Shadow someone

Help your teen arrange to shadow someone in the fields in which they are interested. Sometimes it is easier for them to rule out what they don't want to do rather than what they do want to do.

Remind young people that they are not guaranteed success by choosing big money careers. Success comes when they fulfill their calling. What they are called to do may likely be revealed one step at a time. Whatever God has for them to do, whether it is a traditional Christian vocation or not, is unique. Looking at it in light of the Kingdom, the vocation they pursue will be important as they seek to fulfill their purpose in their work. Be sure to emphasize this with your teens as they are researching different possibilities for professions.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Leah Owens is a counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry that helps individuals and families seek solutions to their problems through professional, affordable counseling from a Christian perspective. Owens serves offices in the Decatur and Huntsville areas. To learn more about Pathways Professional Counseling and the services they provide, visit pathwaysprofessional.org or call 866-991-6864. Pathways is a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. ✝

Useful tips

Below are a few additional tips for parents, youth pastors, family or friends who have teens and young adults in their lives making college and career decisions:

1. Start the conversation
2. Encourage them in their career pursuit
3. Be willing to listen to their dreams and aspirations without judgment or forcing your opinion
4. Help them pinpoint their strengths and interests
5. Explore career information with them
6. Encourage them to seek out training, whether technical, vocational or college, since certificates and degrees do open more doors



God's 'larger purpose'

Ministries like GenSend show young adults how missions, ministry might fit into their future

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As a college student at the University of Alabama, Evan Johnson knew God was calling him to serve in church planting work. What he did not know was the “who, where and how.” Serving with GenSend Indianapolis changed that.

“GenSend taught me that we all are missionaries and I got to see what that looks like — how people with all kinds of different majors, different jobs and different things we want to do with our lives can work together to reach the lost,” Johnson said.

GenSend, short for Generation Send, is a ministry of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and is just one of many opportunities in Southern Baptist life that allows young adults to see how missions and ministry might fit into their future.

Steve Turner, director of missionary discovery for NAMB, said, “For young adults, GenSend is a great laboratory for discovering not only your passions but also your calling.”

The purpose of GenSend is to teach “life on mission” principles in an urban context, Turner said. During six-week summer sessions young adults live in 1 of 32 Send North America cities and receive training and experience in missions and leadership. Through GenSend students have the opportunity to see the connection between vocation and missions in a new way.

“GenSend allows young adults to see that they can live a life of missions whether they are vocational missionaries, pastors, accountants or teachers,” he said. “They see how they can leverage their careers for the gospel.”

Several opportunities

Encouraging believers to use their professions to share the gospel is increasingly a focus of International Mission Board (IMB) efforts to mobilize students as well. Through IMB young adults have several options for missions opportunities, ranging from short-term experiences of one to four weeks to long-term experiences requiring a commitment of up to two years. Regardless of the length of service, the goal is for students to use their training professions and skills to advance the work of the King-

dom among unreached people, according to IMB’s website. For many students, the connection between vocation and missions begins in college which is why IMB works closely with state leaders, according to Chad Stillwell, IMB student mobilization strategist.

“We have a strong partnership with the Alabama Baptist Convention’s student and collegiate office to mobilize students all across Alabama to the nations,” Stillwell said.

Another idea taking root in student ministry is the “gap year,” the name given to an intentional break between high school and college in which a student might travel or work. In a Christian context the gap year offers an opportunity to serve in missions while also acquiring stronger language skills and an immersive cultural experience.

Global Year, based in Atlanta, has been providing gap year experiences to students for the past 15 years, first as a ministry of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, and independently

since 2008. Johnny Condrey, president of Global Year, said the organization was born out of a desire to see young people understand that God wants to use them in His kingdom in ways they cannot imagine. A former youth minister, Condrey said he saw too many students who grew up in church lose their way in college. He was burdened by polls that suggested that 75 percent or more of high school students would stop attending church after graduation.

So in 2000, after being challenged by Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist, Woodstock, and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, to send a group of students to Argentina to serve and study, Condrey decided to step out in faith and see what God would do.

“I was hesitant at first. I was not sure if any parents would let their students leave the country for a year,” he said.

Nine students went on that first trip. Of those, Condrey said five are now in full-time vocational ministry and all are serving the Lord in some capacity.

“I saw the impact of what that experience did in their lives,” he said.

Condrey’s hesitation was gone and in the years since he has helped send more than 500 young adults, including 65 current participants, to serve unreached, un-



NAMB photo

Young adults serving in GenSend cities such as Indianapolis teach ‘life on mission’ principles in an urban context during six-week summer sessions.

engaged people groups in 11 countries.

Language, culture and discipleship are the primary goals of the experience.

“It might sound more academic than spiritual but we believe it is about understanding the heart of God that every heart, every tongue, every tribe and nation will be reached,” he said. “We want to do whatever we can to accomplish that and we believe that means we have to start doing things differently than we have been.”

Various benefits

For Global Year participants that means staying with host families in countries including Ireland, China and Honduras and teaching them to make disciples in those countries. By getting students plugged into discipleship they grow in their own faith.

The benefits are more than spiritual, however. Many Global Year students say the experience has helped distinguish them from other applicants for college admissions or scholarships. Once Global Year students go to college, they are better prepared, not just in language classes but also in living independently and seeing a larger purpose for their lives.

Lorin Holt, a Global Year student who spent a year in Ireland, said, “When I got home from Global Year, God had completely showed me I could live in another country and that whatever He allowed me to do, He was going to be there.

“After Ireland, I wanted to do nothing but ministry,” said Holt, now a student at

the University of Mobile and a member of Parkview Baptist Church, Tusculumbia, in Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association.

Both Holt and Johnson believe the most significant result of their missions experiences was the confirmation of God’s leadership in their lives.

“I learned that God is not going to hide His plans from you,” Holt said. “If you ask Him, He is going to answer and guide you.”

Johnson, whose home church is Fairview Baptist Church, Valley, in East Liberty Baptist Association, heard about GenSend through his college church, Forest Lake Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association. Looking back, he wishes he had spent more time in Christian service during his high school and early college years. Internships, camp jobs, gap year experiences or other opportunities allow students to engage with new people and participate in new things, which in turn can help a young adult get a clearer sense of God’s plan, he said.

“As a high school student you are asked from sixth grade on what you want to be,” he said. “Then you hit college and have to make that decision. I encourage young people to let the world slow down a little. Find a place to work in the summer. Find a camp. I wasted two summers as a college student, and I know now that there are many top-of-the-bar experiences you can have that help you see how God wants to use you.”

Helpful websites

www.sendnetwork.com/gensend
www.globalyear.org
www.imbstudents.org

Seeking God first

Samford student shares how God's life-giving plan for her began when choosing a major

By Taylor Gillilan
Student, Samford University

When I started college at Samford University in Birmingham, I was a pre-med major with the goal of becoming an optometrist. Now that I am in my senior year, I look back and smile up at heaven. I will graduate this spring with a major in marketing and an entirely different goal: to spread the good news of Jesus through technology, written communication and creativity.

My plan failed

After I took my first biology class, I knew science was not what I wanted to spend years learning. I began to research other majors. I started asking questions of my resident assistant, who was in accounting. I knew I had always loved numbers, so her route interested me, but not for long. I soon realized that my way of deciding my major was not working.

The moment my plan failed was the very moment God's life-giving plan for

me began. I started to pray that God would reveal to me what His plan was.

However, a week before my decision was due to my adviser, I still did not have a clear answer. I visited the Career Development Center on campus and took a skills and personality test. It told me the majors I would be best suited for and marketing was on that list.

It was obvious to me in that moment which major I should choose — suddenly it all made sense. With this major my love of concreteness and structure was able to combine with my creative mind in one career path.

During the summer after my sophomore year I began to pray that God would lead me in how to use my major after graduation. I vividly remember being at the lake with my family one day, lying on a towel reading a book and hearing the voice of God say, "You will work in a church."

At first I didn't know what to do with

that. I questioned whether that statement was truly from God, but I felt assured that it was, knowing I would never come up with that on my own.

I reached out to the social media specialist at my church and shadowed her a few times to see what marketing in a church looked like. I fell in love with the idea of loving God's people through social media. I later secured an internship with Redstone Church, Vestavia Hills, where I drove all of their social media accounts by myself for an entire semester and learned what it means to serve on a church team, be a part of a culture outside my own and work together with leadership to develop a cohesive communication strategy.

After graduation I hope to work in a church or nonprofit ministry as part of the communication/social media team. However, because such positions are rare (especially in churches), I am open to jobs in the secular marketplace as well.



GILLILAN

Cleburne County High School 9th grade student shares about trusting God to reveal plan for his future

By Avery McWhorter
Student, Cleburne County High School

When I hear my Sunday School teacher, preacher and even my friends say, "God has a plan for your life," I think two things:

1. Well, what is it?

2. I know He does, but how do I know I am following that plan right now?

I know they mean it as encouragement, which is awesome, but sometimes it seems they are just saying words but not really trying to help me figure out what that plan looks like.

I think I will probably go to college after high school. Unfortunately there's no guarantee that going to college will get you a job.

We visited our local technical school recently and the counselor told us about all these jobs that require a certification in-

stead of a degree and that pay pretty well. So that made me think there are more options than college.

What I know is that I am good at getting projects done. I work well on my own but also in a group. I am good with deadlines so time management is one of my strengths. I also think I have a good work ethic that I learned from doing projects with my parents. Through them, I have learned that if you work hard at training for your job and then work hard at your job, you can be successful. I also have taken karate and piano, and I learned that even though practice is not always fun, working hard can get you to a point where you can enjoy what you do thanks to the practice.

Right now I think God is calling me to glorify Him through music but that might change in the future. When I was younger

I attended missions camp at WorldSong and I felt like God might be calling me to missions, to go to new cultures and new areas and be bold and share about Jesus. Music applies in that area. I think I could pursue music and missions at the same time. When doubts and frustrations about the future push in, I just work harder on my music or find another project to do. I pray about it too.

God is leading me

When the time comes for me to choose a college or choose a major, I hope it will be something that all just works out at the right time and ends up being the best. I know a lot of people who say, "I did this first and I wasn't good at it, and then I did this or this." Then they say, "Be careful what you choose." It seems that even though they changed jobs or career paths several times, it worked out OK for them. So I am confident it will for me too. Everything in my life so far is proof that God is leading me and His plan is happening, so I try to trust Him for my future too.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Avery McWhorter is a 9th grade student at Cleburne County High School in Heflin. He writes and performs Christian rap music under the stage name "AYM" and participates in band and drama. †

I also anticipate earning a certificate of ministry leadership through Highlands College, through which I hope to learn more about Jesus and vocational ministry. I hope this will serve as a complement to my marketing degree from Samford by growing my skills in graphic design, effective communication and technological knowledge.

Trusting God

Though the future is always uncertain, I am trusting that God will lead me to where He wants me to work and where the gifts He's given me will most benefit His kingdom right now.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Taylor Gillilan, of Pell City, is a senior marketing major at Samford. After graduation she hopes to pursue a career in marketing in the ministry environment. She is a member of Church of the Highlands and in her spare time enjoys reading, mentoring, writing, traveling to new places and venturing to local coffee shops. She blogs at www.socialsteeple.wordpress.com. †

Helpful books

▶ **All the Places to Go ... How Will You Know?**
by John Ortberg



▶ **Here I Am: Now What on Earth Should I Be Doing?**
by Quentin J. Schultze

▶ **It's Your Call: What Are You Doing Here?**
by Gary Barkalow

▶ **A Journey Worth Taking: Finding Your Purpose in This World**
by Charles D. Drew

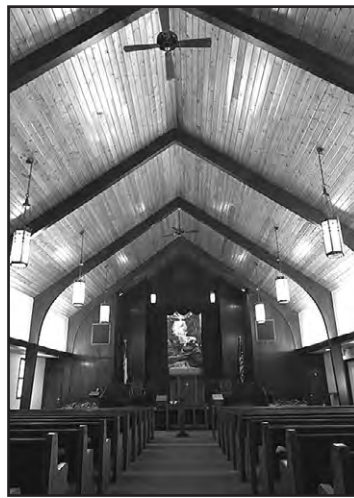
▶ **Live Your Calling: A Practical Guide to Finding and Fulfilling Your Mission in Life**
by Kevin and Kay Marie Brennfleck

▶ **Don't Waste Your Life**
by John Piper

"Everything in my life so far is proof that God is leading me and His plan is happening, so I try to trust Him for my future too."

Avery McWhorter
student, Cleburne County High School

Main photo: Along with its new name, Clements Baptist Church at Poplar Creek now has a more modern look and its facilities and interior design have been brought up to speed. A 'trial run' took place March 13. **Small photo:** Poplar Creek Baptist Church's sanctuary (shown here) and building were in need of major repairs before partnering with Clements Baptist Church, Athens.



Photos courtesy of Tim Anderson

Efforts of revitalization

Athens' Clements Baptist brings new life to Poplar Creek through partnership

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Clements Baptist Church, Athens, had been familiar with the city's Poplar Creek Baptist Church for quite some time. After all, the churches are located just five miles apart from each other. But it wasn't until the Poplar Creek Baptist congregation started to wane significantly that the churches decided it was time to partner.

"The Poplar Creek congregation has been declining for several years and they were down to just seven people last fall — all senior adults," said Tim Ander-

son, who has served as Clements Baptist's pastor since it was planted 21 years ago. "I knew of their struggles and approached them about the possibility of us taking the church over and they were more than ready to do so" since they'd been without a pastor for eight months.

Not only did Anderson feel the church needed support from Clements Baptist's congregation (which has an average of 750 each Sunday), he and his church also felt the Poplar Creek building needed to be renovated. Clements Baptist purchased the church building and financed its renovation work and Anderson became pastor in August 2015.

They also renamed the church Clements Baptist Church at Poplar Creek to maintain the church's history (Poplar Creek dates back to the 1800s) but also create a distinct link between the two congregations.

In need of renovations

"The church was in need of major repairs and now they have been made," Anderson said, noting that renovations began in October 2015. "The entire church now has a more modern look and has been brought up to speed as far as its facilities and interior look and design."

Clements Baptist then turned their attention to other ways to support the growth of the new campus.

The church identified 60 members who would be missionaries at the Poplar Creek campus for one year. While the missionary program was officially kicked off on Easter, a "trial run" took place March 13. The trial run gave members a chance to "celebrate the opportunity to be a part of keeping a church open," Anderson said.

"The 60 Clements Baptist missionaries are all people that felt the leadership of the Lord to move over to the Poplar Creek campus when I first cast vision of this project," Anderson said. "Those 60 people consist of pre-school teachers, children's teachers, adult life group leaders, praise team, greeting team and more."

Brian Murphy, education and campus minister at Clements Baptist, said one thing that's been especially interesting throughout the process has been uncovering the strong ties that already existed between the two congregations.

"We were shocked at the number of people who are members of Clements who at one point were members of Poplar Creek," Murphy said. "They were baptized there, married there, their parents were members there. We're hearing things like, 'I left my home church but now my home church has come back to me.'"

For now, Anderson will lead both church campuses as pastor, since the buildings are so close

to one another. He will preach first at Clements and then deliver a sermon at the Poplar Creek service. The future plan is to place a pastor at Clements Baptist Church at Poplar Creek to be dedicated to that campus.

"The entire process has been a real joy and a sweet process over the last six months," Anderson said. "Our people have been absolutely wonderful and the community was buzzing to see the church reopen March 27. Poplar Creek's seven members have been very involved during the project, and they are simply thrilled to see the church remain open and once again become a vital church in the community."

Dedication service

On April 10, Clements Baptist Church at Poplar Creek will host a service of dedication.

Murphy said, "During that service we'll dedicate the building, reflect back on its long history and look forward to a new day. It's been great to see how our community has really stepped up to the plate to help with this project. Everyone was so excited to see life at this church again."

Anderson emphasized his excitement in getting to be involved in this true community effort to help revitalize a church that has been such an important part of their community for so long.

"I have such respect for Poplar Creek and see this as an incredible opportunity for us to partner with the community," he said. "I feel privileged and honored to be a part of this revitalization process." ❖

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

We know you love our beach!
Gulf Shores and Orange Beach strive to provide a safe, clean, family-friendly environment. You can help protect the coast by observing beach rules and regulations. Enjoy the beach responsibly and safely.

Prohibited items include glass containers, fires, pets & loud music.

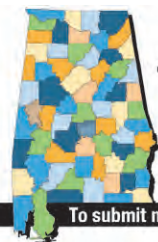
PLEASE REMOVE ALL PERSONAL ITEMS DAILY

Any personal property left on the beach one hour after sunset will be removed and disposed of overnight.

For more information, check www.cleanisland.org

Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

Email your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org; fax it to 205-879-6026 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



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.

COLUMBIA

► **Mike Shirah** is the new pastor of **Bluff Springs Church, Ashford**. His first day will be April 3. Shirah previously served as pastor of Maple Avenue Church, Geneva, for 23 years. He earned degrees from The Baptist College of



SHIRAH

Florida in Graceville; Troy State University in Dothan; and Covington Theological Seminary in Oglethorpe, Georgia. He and his wife, Beverly, have two sons (one deceased) and two grandchildren.



SCHOLL

his leadership a clothing closet ministry has been started.

SAND MOUNTAIN

► A new missions center has been launched for Sand Mountain Association. **Donny and Karen Johnston** will run the center, which will offer a clothing outlet, food pantry, transportation ministry and several other ministry opportunities.

ST. CLAIR

► **Scott Scholl** is the new pastor of **Son Rise Church, Odenville**. He began his new role in late February. Under

Johnston previously served as pastor of **Dutton Church** for 10 years. His last day with the church was March 20.

WALKER

► **David Miller** is the new director of missions for **Walker Association**. His first day will be April 4. He previously served as pastor of Edgil Grove Church, Jasper. He earned his bachelor's degree from Anderson-



MILLER

ville Seminary in Camilla, Georgia. He and his wife, Leigh Ann, have four children. ✝

IMB explains report of decrease in baptisms

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
The Alabama Baptist

When Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entities submitted their annual ministry reports to the SBC Executive Committee in early March, one report stood out among the rest.

The International Mission Board (IMB) report shocked some with the tremendous decrease that appeared.

For numbers representing work in 2014 but reported in 2015, overseas baptisms dropped to 54,762. The 2014 report, which is made up of the 2013 numbers, showed 190,957 baptisms.

The number of new churches also fell from 13,824 to 3,842 during the same one-year period.

According to Will Hall of the *Louisiana Baptist Message*, the baptism figure represents the lowest level reported in 46 years.

While IMB officials confirmed the collection and reporting of numbers between the 2014 and 2015 reports remained the same, they did note one difference between the two years.

An undisclosed number of missionaries (not reported for security concerns) connected to one large church planting movement were kept stateside because of visa denials and family circumstances.

Losing the reporting from this group left the 2015 numbers much lower than the 2014 numbers, they said.

IMB officials also told *The Alabama Baptist* "we are re-evaluating our processes of measuring and reporting our work around the world."

The reporting methods going forward will continue to evolve, a process started in 2009.

"IMB leaders are absolutely committed to practically accurate, biblically faithful reporting to the SBC," IMB President David Platt said in a March 21 news story released to Baptist Press.

Throughout IMB's history various approaches to missions have been employed and various

standards for reporting have been used, the news story said.

In addition, missionaries previously included numbers from partner conventions and unions as well as work in which IMB personnel were less directly involved. In recent years IMB decided to no longer include such numbers.

Another factor is that more missionaries today serve in high-security locations where there is little gospel access and fewer established churches. All of this will mean lower numbers than before, IMB officials reported. ✝

Suddenly, you're in
a whole different state of
finding real treasure.



**GULF SHORES &
ORANGE BEACH**
It's a Whole Different State

GulfShores.com
877-341-2400

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Local ministry centers impact community

It all started with one woman's passion to help the Hispanic population in the Judson Baptist Association area. Years later the association now runs two ministry centers — Love In Action in Abbeville, the first ministry center, and Overflowing Ministries in Headland, which opened in 2010.

Love In Action and Overflowing Ministries are much more than thrift stores and food banks, according to Linda Sheppard, director of both centers.

"Both have turned into something so much bigger," she said. "We get so many donations and so we are able to give to people in need, like those who go through home fires or people who are unemployed or just need some furniture."

The donations of money and items come from the community in Abbeville and Headland, Sheppard explained, and both centers run primarily through volunteers.

"Churches in Judson Baptist Association help a lot with the donations to the food bank portion of the ministry centers. Organizations in the community have caught on as well. We get donations from Wal-Mart in both communities for instance."

Combined, the two centers work to distribute food to 239 families.

Retired and actively serving pastors also volunteer at the centers. Each time a person comes to Love In Action or Overflowing Ministries they are required to meet with a pastor or other volunteer.

"We've seen 33 salvations in 2014," Sheppard said. Talking with a spiritual leader "gives people an opportunity to share and build a relationship." Bibles also are given to those who visit the centers.

Reflecting on the number of people who found Christ through the centers over the years, Sheppard said, "It's an amazing thing to see God at work if you'll join in with Him. It's amazing what He can do. ... To have an impact on eternity is such a blessing."

To donate or volunteer, call Sheppard at 334-648-0333. (Neisha Roberts)

Cornutt retires from full-time music ministry

For Ronnie Cornutt, being a full-time minister of music was never an option. He had never seen an example of that while growing up in a small town and didn't think doing it full-time was plausible because of finances. Even though he felt called at an early age to do some kind of music ministry, he didn't see himself doing anything but volunteering.

That all changed when he started helping in the music ministry at Dwight Baptist Church, Gadsden, and later 12th Street Baptist Church, Rainbow City, where he became music ministry assistant in the late 1970s.

Since that time Cornutt has served as interim minister of music at 12th Street Baptist and was called as full-time minister of music in 1997 at the age of 50.

"I didn't realize it was possible without studying (music) and such," Cornutt said.

"But I felt God calling me to do it. I left the business work I was doing and became full-time in music ministry."

After retiring Feb. 1, Cornutt told *The Alabama Baptist* he was "blessed to work alongside so many talented and devoted people throughout the years."

Cornutt earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Alabama.

He and his wife, Janice, have two children and four grandchildren.

The couple plans to spend more time with their grandchildren during retirement and to continue to be involved at 12th Street Baptist. (Neisha Roberts)



CORNUTT



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Knowing God

God Is Jealous

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

To think of God as loving, merciful and gracious seems a very comely and proper way to think of Him. By contrast, it seems a rather harsh thing to think of God also as jealous. However, the Bible that teaches us of His love and grace also tells us about His jealousy. We hardly consider jealousy a virtue. In its human manifestations we have described it as a green-eyed monster, hardly a description we would attach to God. We find its cousin, envy, numbered among the seven deadly sins. We are reluctant to attribute any sin to God and properly so.

The Bible reveals jealousy, which we condemn in human attitudes and behavior, to be in a sense absolutely and sinlessly true of God. Our God is a jealous God. In giving His law to Israel through Moses, God elaborated on the prohibition against the people making graven images, commanding, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:4-5).

'Dear Jealous'

In fact, as incongruous as it sounds, jealousy is actually a name that the Bible gives to God, when it commands, "You shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. 34:14). Likely none of us has ever begun a prayer addressing God by saying, "Dear Jealous, I come to you in prayer today." Having been thinking about God in the past few weeks as holy, loving, merciful and gracious, we are brought to an abrupt turnabout to think of Him this week as jealous. What are we to take from the idea that God is jealous and even wears that term as one of His names?

The fact that God is jealous informs our worship. Divine jealousy stems

from divine sovereignty. Being without any rival that even approaches His equal, God does not think kindly of humans attempting to displace Him by allowing any other entity to become the supreme object of affection, devotion or worship. Our danger is not likely to be that of carving an image from wood or chiseling one from stone then declaring our handiwork to be our god. Our idolatries are much more subtle and sophisticated than that. We are more likely to displace God in our affections by elevating some personal ambition, some earthly pleasure or some material object of devotion to the center of our time, attention and energy. Our jealous God, having our best interest at heart, instructs us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and give our highest service to Him alone.

A warning

In a rather lengthy passage that warns God's people against idolatry, the warning ends with the question, "Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" (1 Cor. 10:22). The warning is based on the realization that idolatry opens a person's life to the influence of demons. Our God, whose name is Jealous, does not share His children with demonic powers. Dabbling in any form of demonic practices provokes God to jealousy. Given that His is godly jealousy, God loves His children too much to let us go astray without bringing upon us His chastening and correction. In this sense, godly jealousy is divine love in action. ✠

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



Oldest living former Children's Homes resident turns 100

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

In the span of a month, Everett Lee Sharp's life changed dramatically. Five-year-old Sharp and his three older sisters — Daisy, Neoma and Ruby — went from a family of seven to a family of four when their parents and infant brother died within a month of each other in an influenza outbreak in 1920s Missouri.

"[The children's] grandfather lived in the Birmingham area and was a Baptist minister," said Preston Jackson, who is Everett Sharp's nephew. But he had just remarried and was only able to care for the children temporarily.

Since the grandfather couldn't take in the children long term, he contacted the Alabama Baptist Children's Home (ABCH) in Evergreen and arranged for the children to be placed in group homes.

Sharp grew up under the care of ABCH from the time he was 5 until he turned 18, from 1921 to 1934. Now at the age of 100, Sharp is the oldest living person who lived in an ABCH home as a child.

Although he lived in a separate group home from his sisters, the siblings were able to see each other and remain bonded. Sharp was relocated to a group home in Troy after ABCH moved their headquarters in 1923.

Being raised in an ABCH home "had a lot to do with shaping my life," he said. "[The ABCH caretakers] taught me how to be responsible and work hard."

Sharp said he remembers the home in Troy "as a good experience. I was in a group home environment with other boys and we all got along pretty well. There was a lot of work to be done and not a lot of time to get into trouble.

"Since it was a farm I did work in the dairy and I also butchered livestock for

meal time. ... As I got older more responsibilities were placed on me."

Sharp remembers the individuals who managed the group homes — Mrs. Thigpin and Mr. and Mrs. Harold — saying he had "good memories of them all. ... They were caring people who sent me in the right direction."

Being taught to work hard and be

responsible served Sharp well as he was enlisted in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, first as a torpedo man on a destroyer and then as a member of the crash squad at an air base. After he retired from the Navy in 1957, Sharp worked for 20 years at the Shawmut Bank in Boston, Massachusetts.

But Sharp was not "an idle person," according to Jackson, and he returned to work part-time after his second retirement as a maintenance man at Bentley College (now Bentley University) in Waltham, Massachusetts. He and his wife, Mary, were

married 68 years until her death in 2010.

Now a resident of Boston, Sharp took the values he was taught by ABCH caretakers and passed them on to his three children.

Jan Quinn, Sharp's daughter, said "My dad had a great work ethic that he instilled in his children."

Growing up, they were members of First Baptist Church, Belmont, Massachusetts, and Sharp has "kept very strong in his faith," Quinn said.

"My father is the kindest person that I know, never saying a bad word about anyone," she said, noting that she thinks this trait was learned in large part from his years in the ABCH

home in Troy.

Sharp said one lesson he learned from ABCH was to be polite and calm no matter the difficulty of a situation. "[This] has helped me relate to all the people in my life." ✠



Photos courtesy of Jan Quinn

Everett Lee Sharp grew up under the care of the Alabama Baptist Children's Home in Evergreen and Troy from the time he was five until he turned 18, from 1921 to 1934.



SHARP

"Being raised in an ABCH home 'had a lot to do with shaping my life. [The ABCH caretakers] taught me how to be responsible and work hard.'"

Everett Lee Sharp
oldest living person who lived in an ABCH home as a child

Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago March 1966

After returning from a visit to Vietnam, Wayne Dehoney, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), reportedly stated he supported U.S. policy “without reservation.” He had positive things to say about humanitarian efforts on the part of U.S. servicemen there. The president of the SBC had been on a six-week missions tour of the Orient. Dehoney was impressed by the amount of time soldiers were spending building hospitals

and orphanages and sharing in various other humanitarian efforts. There were six Southern Baptist missionary couples in Vietnam who Dehoney said were in “good spirits.”

100 Years Ago March 1916

A shortness of paper stock was threatening the livelihood of many papers in the United States and *The Alabama Baptist* was facing hard times because of it. The cost of paper was growing by “leaps and bounds.” The staff

at the publication explained to its readers that though paper usually cost a little more than 2 cents a pound, the paper they were currently using cost them 6 cents a pound and the manufacturers had already notified them that it would reach 10 cents a pound. In 1916 the paper was using 800 pounds of paper per week. The price had risen from \$16 to \$48, an advance of \$32 to produce a weekly paper for its readership. But Editor Barnett decided not to change the subscription cost (\$2 per year) and

launched a fundraising effort.

150 Years Ago March 1866

While suspensions ran high during 1866, southerners were adjusting to “newcomers.” “Newcomers” as westerners and New Englanders were found to be “loud in the praises of the South.” Alabamians had been given the opportunity following the Civil War to be kind and “harmonious” as they related tips to “newcomers” on cultivating cotton and hiring help. †

TAB* CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Cherokee, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. Send resumés to the church office. Email to: secretary@firstbaptistcherokee.org. 256-359-4325.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION

Union Hill Baptist, Oneonta, is seeking a full-time worship leader for a growing fellowship with two blended Sunday morning services. Educational experience should include small group ministry and discipleship for all ages. Please submit resumés to: 2919 Co. Hwy. 39, Oneonta, AL 35121. 205-274-9232. bbarnett@otelco.net.

WORSHIP PASTOR

First Baptist Church of the Islands in Savannah, Georgia, is currently seeking a full-time worship pastor. We are located in a community with many young families and are surrounded by much opportunity for impact for the sake of the gospel. Our current morning worship attendance averages approximately 550 weekly in two morning services. We utilize a unique mix of choir, praise team and praise band in our worship setting. The worship pastor will fit within a multi-staff team and an amazing number of volunteer leaders to help us fulfill our vision of leading others to know Christ, grow in Christ, show Christ through surrendered lives and to go with the gospel. The worship pastor must be able to effectively lead others into authentic worship and also disciple others. All applications will be prayerfully considered once we have received a cover letter,

a resumé with references and a 2–3 minute video introduction of yourself as you briefly share your call to ministry, your passion for worship and your heart to impact others. A webcam or phone video is perfectly fine. Please email your cover letter, resumé and video link to: searchteam@fbcislands.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

Turnerville Baptist Church, Mobile County. Contact Bro. Jason Meaux at jmeaux@turnervillebaptist.org.

YOUTH PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Alexander City, Alabama, is announcing the opening of a full-time staff position for minister to students. We are praying for the Lord to call His chosen man for our youth, grades 7 through 12. The search committee is at work receiving resumés at: P.O. Box 400, Alexander City, AL 35011. 256-234-6351. spsc@fbc-ac.org.

YOUTH/CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Kentucky, is accepting resumés for a full-time youth/children's minister. Bachelor's degree, seminary training and experience is preferred. Email: youthsearchteam@southsidebaptist.com or mail: Southside Baptist, ATTN: Youth Search, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Calhoun Baptist Association requests resumés for the position of director of missions. Please send your resumé to:

ATTN: DOM Search Committee, CBA, 1130 Woodstock Ave., Anniston, AL 36207.

PART-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY

10–12 hours per week, \$12 per hour. Needs to be proficient in Quicken, Excel, Word and Publisher. Working knowledge around a computer is a must. Send resumé to: fbcsouthside@bellsouth.net.

WEEKDAY EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Valley View Baptist Church is seeking a full-time weekday education program director. Submit resumé/questions to: jennifer.freind@valleyviewbaptist.com. The deadline for resumés is April 6.

BUSINESS

GREAT PRICES

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

TIME TO REPLACE THAT OLD CHURCH SIGN?

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

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION SERVICE

Lewis Webb Builders, Inc., active in church construction service for over 30 years. Remodel, rehab, repair. Call 334-285-9302.

TRAVEL/VACATION

NORTH CAROLINA COTTAGE

Hayesville, Western North Carolina — lovely, like-new mountain cottage for rent, April–December. 2 BRs, 2 BAs. All conveniences. Weekly/monthly. On beautiful Hiwassee River. Low price \$550 weekly. Sleeps five. Children welcome. No pets. 828-389-3302.

LOG CABIN

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

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach for over 25 years. Call 205-752-1231, 205-556-0368, 251-752-2366 or www.gulfshorescondos.com.

FOR SALE

TWO VANS

Ford, Econoline, 12-passenger van, 2006, all white, 65,356 miles. Asking \$14,000. Also Chevrolet, 12-passenger van, 2012, all white, 87,449 miles. Asking \$15,000. Contact Mona Padgett at Conecuh Springs Christian School, 334-738-4800.

BUS

2005 Ford E450 Starcraft bus 25-passenger, 5-speed auto transmission, new air conditioner unit, new batteries. Contact Randall Hicks, 205-351-2650 or email: randallbhicks@yahoo.com.



(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.



Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Finding Our Way Back to Him

He knew he had walked away from God — far, far away — and he couldn't imagine God would take him back, much less forgive him. His hands were dirty and he convinced himself he would need to figure out how to become clean before seeking forgiveness from God.

But without God he could never be purified.

With the help of a persistent group of prayer warriors and friends who refused to give up on him, the young man eventually found his way back to God. He is growing in the Lord now and helping those he hurt heal from the intense pain he caused.

Shea Lowery, executive director of Lives Being Restored, shares a similar experience about her life story and how there was a time she truly believed God would not want her. With God's tugging and the love and care of a group of accountability partners, she found her way back to Him and now leads a ministry to help other believers in need of restoration (www.livesbeing-restored.com).

Renewed faith

Both of these restored believers are teaching me as I watch them maneuver through their faith journeys. The richness of what they are learning and experiencing in the Lord, the depth of their renewed faith, the incredible turnaround in both their lives — it is inspiring.

It also reminds me that we all play a vital role in each other's lives as believers. We need each other as accountability and prayer partners.

None of us is immune to being attacked by the enemy nor is any one of us strong enough to avoid the various temptations of the world on our own.

It might be alcohol and/or drugs for one person while another struggles with lust-

ful thoughts and actions. Still another may be tempted with greed and personal possessions while the next person battles busyness and ambitious goals outside the calling of God. And then there is laziness, selfishness and other seemingly benign actions that actually hinder our growth in the faith and possibly harm others along the way.

Believers, just like nonbelievers, are attacked by the enemy at our weakest point. The difference is we have the power of the Holy Spirit within us. And if we allow Him to take charge, then we have the ability to fight.

It doesn't mean any part of the journey is easy nor does it mean we won't slip up from time to time, but it does mean we have the answer to defeat the enemy if we are truly walking with the Lord and seeking His face.

It is when we take our eyes off Jesus, stop meditating on the Word and spend too little time in prayer that we leave ourselves vulnerable. When we stop guarding the door to our hearts we will find ourselves walking on the wrong path. At some point we will realize we've gotten off track. And while "the sooner the better" definitely applies for the purposes of the people we will hurt along the way, the mercy of the Father is consistent no matter how far we've strayed.

He will be right there with open arms ready to take us back, cleanse our dirty hands and restore us fully to Himself, exactly how Jesus describes in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). When we finally come to our senses and see clearly, we realize God never moved. We were the ones who walked away, drowning out the sound of His voice and the drawing of His Spirit with the gleam of whatever worldly temptation caught our eye. †

Rashional Extras...



Following up on your Rashional Thoughts in the Feb. 25 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, I totally agree with the big frustration of getting only a partial reply to a three-part question. It makes me wonder if they think my other questions are stupid or inappropriate.

Mostly I believe they are trying to say they don't have the time or inclination for anything deeper than a tweet. Superficiality allows them to avoid considering anything seriously, such as their vacuous spiritual condition.

Similarly another big frustration is all those people in a rush who ask a question but do not wait for the answer. What are they thinking?

Another good example of not reading the directions is when you buy a car. Nobody reads the owner's manual. ... And while not reading the car manual might be excusable, when it comes to God's life manual, the Bible, there is no substitute. Since God's ways are totally opposite from our ways, we will always intuitively make the wrong choices unless we are diligently instructed to the contrary.

Bob Cosby, M.D.
Birmingham, Alabama

Endurance is the spirit which can bear things not simply with resignation but with blazing hope. Endurance is a quality that keeps a man on his feet with his face to the wind. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal.

Unknown
www.lifebeyondbetrayal.com

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.
Unknown
www.lifebeyondbetrayal.com

In order to really love people, I have to love God first. In order to really love God, I have to spend time with Him. In order to spend enough time with Him to really get to know Him, I have to have margin in my life. In order to have margin in my life, I have to say "no" to some things, some people, some plans.

But I won't be able to even begin to move down that chain to the place I really want to be — the place where I love God

so much that it infuses all my relationships — if I'm constantly chasing after the worth that comes from those around me.

So instead of believing that one friend, that one guy, that one co-worker, that one family member, that one person when they say I have worth, I want to rest in the One from whom all worth stems.

I have worth because He who is in me is worth everything.

Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

"Sometimes a heart can feel like a heavy weight; It pulls you under and you just fall away; Is anybody gonna hear you call?; Oh, oh; But there's a purpose; Under the surface; And you don't have to drown; Let me remind you; That love will find you; Let it lift you out; You are beloved; ... Oh, forget the lies you heard; Rise above the hurt; And listen to these words; You are beloved; ... Don't be afraid; ... In the heartbreak, in your mistakes, nothing can separate you from love; ... You are beloved."

"Beloved"

Song by Christian music artist **Jordan Feliz**

"Ordinary people do extraordinary things when committed to a process. Extraordinary people do ordinary things when not committed to a process."

Ministry Ventures

Building Better Boards conference (November 2015)

"Submission, even by its simplest definition, is about yielding your desires, plans and preferences. Putting someone else first — whether it's God or your spouse — takes constant effort."

Excerpt from www.relevantmagazine.com article "What 'Submission' Actually Means: The Bible reveals it's much more than household roles and gender bias" by Vikki Ledbetter/Feb. 16

@ricklance

The size of the church does not determine the effectiveness of its ministry. All kinds of churches reach all kinds of people.

@nobtspres (Chuck Kelley)

Oswald Chambers: "My worth to God publicly is measured by what I really am in my private life." See Proverbs 4:23.

Follow me
on Twitter
and Periscope:
@RashionalThts



Photo courtesy of Mel Johnson

BCM students from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and the University of Alabama spend their spring breaks aiding in disaster relief efforts in Michigan and Monroe, Louisiana.

Acts 1:8 model

BCM students assist with disaster relief during spring break

While most students think of spring break as an opportunity to hit the beach, Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) students can be found on the front lines of crisis providing ministry and relief for communities experiencing disaster.

Sixteen students from the University of Alabama in Huntsville led by campus minister Edwin Hocutt assisted with the disaster relief (DR) efforts in Monroe, Louisiana, the week of March 20 where Alabama Baptist resources and teams are working alongside other state conventions to provide mud-out ministry for area residents. Included in the resources from Alabama at press time is a shower unit, a laundry unit and two chaplain teams.

University of Alabama (UA) students also recently spent their spring break in Michigan assisting ongoing flood recovery efforts. Led by campus minister Nate Young, the UA students partnered with other BCM teams from across the country for rebuilding efforts and a continued evangelistic witness. Three mass feeding teams from Alabama were deployed to Michigan to provide meals and housing support for BCM student teams throughout March, reported Mel

Johnson, DR strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

DR teams from Baldwin, Chilton, Cleburne and St. Clair associations also are working with BCM students to reach more homes in Louisiana with the message of Christ. At press time Alabama was set to deploy 11 additional teams March 28.

Johnson said, "Local, national and international disaster relief efforts provided by Alabama Baptists reflect a deep commitment to Great Commission ministries and remain true to an Acts 1:8 model for missions. Remember to pray for families receiving a gospel touch from Christ through our missionaries." (TAB)

101.5 • 97.5
THE RIVER
Safe For **YOUR** Family

YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC
in the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.

www.wrvfmtheriver.com

Decision America Tour makes its way to Alabama

America is at a crossroads, according to Franklin Graham, president and CEO of Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. That's why he says believers should "take every opportunity to stand up for the things of God and His Word," especially during this presidential election season.

All 50 states

Graham plans to take a stand for God's Word by traveling to all 50 states in 2016 through his Decision America Tour.

Through prayer rallies, Graham has been preaching the gospel and challenging believers "to stand and take

action," according to decisionamericatour.com.

The tour will make its way to Alabama on April 14, meeting at the Capitol's front steps in Montgomery beginning at noon.

Through Decision America, Graham hopes believers will sign a pledge to "commit to living out your faith with boldness," become a part of each state's prayer team, volunteer during one of the rallies and register to vote.

"Every vote matters. Make sure your voice is heard this election year," the tour website encourages.

For more information or to find ways to volunteer or sign the pledge, visit decisionamericatour.com. (TAB)

VOICE YOUR OPINION

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

Remember to:

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

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU LOSE A SPOUSE

Free planning kit created by a local financial advisor specializing in planning after the loss of a loved one

Kit answers common questions such as:

- How to file for Social Security benefits
- Avoid taxes on asset transfer
- Tips for an executor when settling an estate



Philip Wilson

local author and advisor

SPAD0908154012

Securities and Advisory Services offered through ProEquities, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC

For a free planning kit, a consultation or to attend one of our local seminars, call Wilson Financial Group at 205-868-9297.

www.whenspousedies.com

Need more biblical training?

Samford's MINISTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE is for you!

ANNOUNCING TWO NEW ONLINE CERTIFICATES

Certificate in Student Ministry
Certificate in Pastoral Leadership

Cost of certificate is \$699.

Includes four courses, dedicated support staff and an Amazon Fire Tablet.

For 10% off, use code: **MT10**

Visit www.samford.edu/go/mti to register.

Practice situational awareness in church, Wakefield says

(continued from page 1)

Wright agreed that people are the No. 1 priority, offering that a church security team, armed or not, is one way to protect congregants.

“You should have greeters everywhere and have people at every door,” said Wright, SBOM’s coordinator of church compensation services. “[These greeters] are the first line of defense.”

Doing regular walk-throughs of facilities, especially areas where children and youth are, is a great way to ward off any suspicious activity, Wright said. This includes issues of child sexual abuse.

It can happen anywhere

Sexual abuse is often viewed with the attitude of “that would never happen here,” he said, but it can happen anywhere in churches of any size.

The two main areas where churches need to focus their attention when dealing with child care are proper screening and proper supervision.

“We want to have an application, have a criminal records or background check — a standard of care for everyone who works with minors,” Wright said.

Key leaders also should be regularly stopping by classes, day cares, nurseries — anywhere there are children. A good rule of thumb is to enact the “two adult rule,” Wright encouraged. This is an effort to have two adults in all classrooms with children at all times.

“The attorney general said thus far there has not been a case of child sexual abuse where the two [adult] rule was enacted,” Wright said.

“The background check protects the church from lawsuits in negligent hiring and the two adult rule is the one that protects the children.”

Background checks should be run every three to five years, Wright recommended, for everyone from the pastor on down.

No matter the threat, Wakefield said, church leaders need to prac-

Helpful resources

Book

- ▶ “The Church Guide to Internal Controls” by Richard J. Vargo

Video

- ▶ “Run. Hide. Fight. Surviving an Active Shooter Event” by Ready Houston on youtube.com

Websites

- ▶ cooperativeprogramresources.com
- ▶ publicdata.com
- ▶ brotherhoodmutual.com/index.cfm/resources/
- ▶ guideone.com/safety-resources/
- ▶ fema.gov (search “emergency operations from house of worship”)

tice situational awareness at all times and pray for discernment. And don’t forget to think about the recovery from a crisis.

“A lot of churches think about the crisis but not the aftermath,” Wakefield said. “Think about recovery. This is absolutely critical for the survival of your congregation mentally, emotionally, spiritually and even relationally in the community.”

Other overall security suggestions for churches to consider include:

- ▶ Buying additional insurance now.
- ▶ Having a church spokesperson in place.
- ▶ Planting low, thorny bushes outside all windows.
- ▶ Encouraging members

to lock their cars and not leave purses laying around.

▶ Increasing lighting around church facilities.

Addressing the financial security of churches, Swedenburg, director of SBOM’s office of Cooperative Program and stewardship development, offered a startling statistic.

Effective procedures

“Statistically speaking, 99 percent of churches in this room have had a financial anomaly occur,” he said, adding that he hears “at least once a month from a church who has dealt with a discrepancy or embezzlement over \$10,000.”

This is why it’s important to have good and effective procedures for handling money,

he said. Key among them is separating the financial duties. Swedenburg suggests having a stewardship committee authorize all checks, a different person recording the transactions and yet another person reconciling the bank statement.

There also should always be at least two people for each step of duty, he emphasized.

“Separation not only protects the church but the financial worker. ... If something goes wrong, who are [church leaders] going to look at? Make that personal (to the financial worker).”

Embezzlement from church funds requires two conditions, Swedenburg said — somebody has to need or feel as though they need money and they have no accountability.

“We need to be careful to do our part to keep those people who have that weak moment, that crash in their life that puts them in a position to take that other money to get by,” he said.

So what should churches look out for?


- ▶ Checks made out to “Cash”
- ▶ Missing credit card receipts
- ▶ Online fund transfers
- ▶ Misdirection of funds

To protect members from temptation, it’s important for a church to define roles and clearly outline procedures, Swedenburg said.

“You need to have strong policies with definitions of what each individual in that process is expected to do,” he said, noting that defined user roles and permissions help financial workers stick to their assigned duties.

Churches also can use the following guidelines to maintain financial security:

- ▶ Record-keeping and cash should never be recorded by the same person.
- ▶ Reconcile bank accounts monthly by a person not accountable for writing checks.
- ▶ Have a two- to three-person audit or stewardship committee.
- ▶ Create a paper trail for every transaction.
- ▶ Record every gift.
- ▶ Retain offering envelopes for three years.
- ▶ Maintain member contribution records.
- ▶ Audit accounting records and internal controls annually.
- ▶ Never sign blank checks.
- ▶ Rotate those who count offering money and always have two present.
- ▶ Instruct the bank in writing to never cash checks made out to the church.
- ▶ Use serially numbered checks or use electronic checking to make payments. ☪



Retired Pastor Max Youngblood recommends

REVERSE MORTGAGE


Specialist Jimmy Dixon

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

He represents McGowin-King Mortgage, which is an Alabama-owned and operated company.


CONTACT JIMMY TODAY

for a **FREE REVERSE MORTGAGE PROPOSAL OR BROCHURE**




PHONE: 205-567-4800

EMAIL: jdixon@mcgowinking.com



NMLS #207518



COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

WAY-FM FOR KIDS TOUR

wayfm.com



BUILDING 429



COLTON DIXON

AND



All Things New

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016 / 7 PM

Lindsay Lane Baptist Church / 1300 Lindsay Lane S / Athens, AL 35613

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT WAYFM.COM



DR. RAMSAY NUWAYHID
FACIAL ESTHETICS & COSMETIC DENTISTRY




SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

April 3

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

COURAGEOUS Acts 4:1-13

The Challenge (1-7)

Peter and John were in trouble with the Jewish authorities because they healed a lame man. Why on earth would anyone get in trouble for healing somebody? The reason they were arrested is because in this healing they promoted the living person of Jesus.

In order to understand this scenario, we need to go back to Chapter 3 when Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus. Instead of Peter taking credit for this miracle he pointed to the only true source of healing, Jesus Christ.

The crowd, seeing the lame man walk, gathered around with excitement. Peter took this opportunity to preach about Christ's resurrection and how Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. This is the reason Peter and John were arrested.

Peter and John serve as great examples for us today. First they took advantage of their situation to teach the people about Jesus. No matter our setting — at work, in line at the store, in the neighborhood — we need to look for opportunities to tell people about Jesus.

Second they pointed to Christ, not to themselves. All glory needs to be given to Christ; we take no credit for the salvation of others.

Third they preached to these people even at the expense of their own safety. They knew their salvation was secure in Christ and as such it didn't matter what happened to their temporal bodies because they knew they would spend eternity with God.

The Answer (8-12)

When the rulers arrested Peter and John, these two used this as a means to

preach the gospel to them, pointing again to the fulfillment of Scripture. Peter asserted that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is the only source of salvation which demonstrates the exclusivity of the Christian faith.

There is no other name under heaven given to men for their salvation — salvation is in Christ alone. This belief goes against the grain of modern society where it is politically incorrect to tell anyone that their religion does not provide salvation, that salvation is only in Christ, but this is what the Bible teaches.

As Christians we need to realize the dire situation that adherents to other faiths face. People who do not accept Christ as the one and only Savior, apart from any work they can do, will not go to heaven. Just as Peter and John preached the gospel to their audience, we need to do the same and encourage Christians to go to the end of the earths to tell others about Christ.

The Recognition (13)

Peter and John had no official rabbinical training yet they spoke with authority, just as Jesus did. This is because an education is not necessary to present the truths about God — the Holy Spirit is what is needed. Knowledge of Scripture and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are why Peter and John were able to speak thus and why so many people responded to their message.

Many Christians think they are not skilled or articulate enough to share the gospel with someone, but all God wants from us is a willingness to be used by God. If we realize the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts and convinces, then it frees us from the responsibility to see other people saved. We are only the messengers — we have to spread the message (see Rom. 10:14-15). ☛

Bible Studies for Life By Jim Barnette, Ph.D. Samford University & Brookwood Baptist Church, Mountain Brook

OUR NEED FOR PEACE John 14:1-7

Trust in Jesus keeps your heart from being troubled. (1)

Jesus' disciples are troubled. They need reassurance from this One whom they loved but often could not understand. He had spoken of one among them being a betrayer and also that soon He would be leaving them. The disciples are gripped by that same fearful emotion that Jesus had experienced when He faced death at the tomb of Lazarus and when He spoke of Judas betraying them (see John 11, 13:21).

It is Jesus who is heading for the agony of the cross. Yet on this night, when of all times it would have been appropriate for Jesus' followers to offer Him emotional and spiritual support, He is the one who comforts and encourages.

The disciples are "troubled" not because they are rushing toward trial, pain and crucifixion but because they are confused about what Jesus is saying about His imminent departure. While it can be quite appropriate to cite the words "do not let your hearts be troubled" at Christian funerals, they were first addressed to disciples who were confused and fearful about an uncertain future. Jesus assures them that their faith in the relationship of God and Jesus will lead to triumph over death.

We can trust in Christ because He is preparing a permanent place for us in heaven. (2-4)

Jesus describes heaven as "My Father's house" and in that house are many rooms. The point is not the lavishness of each dwelling place but the fact that there is more than enough space for every one of Jesus' disciples to join Him in His Father's home.

Jesus also promises to go there and "prepare a place" for them. The words presuppose that a "place" exists before Jesus gets there. It is not that He arrives there and begins to prepare the place. Rather it is the going itself via the cross and resurrection that prepares the place for Jesus' disciples.

"Come again" applies to both present and future realities. The Christ who returns at resurrection and at Pentecost through the Spirit is present in the world for His believers.

Furthermore, Jesus will "take" His believers to the future heavenly dwelling at the last day. And the believer is completely secure. For the disciple who is united with Jesus, his or her home is wherever Jesus is — here or in the Father's eternal home.

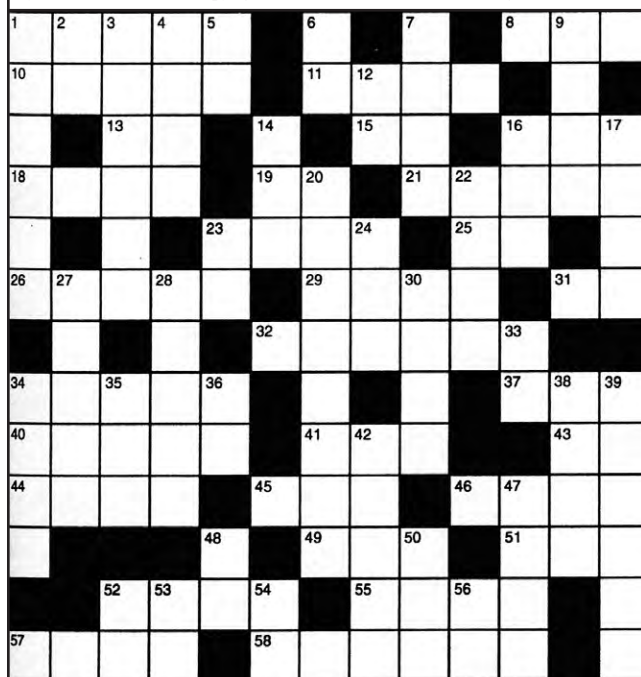
We can trust in Christ because He is the only way to live forever with God. (5-7)

"Lord, how can we know the way?" Thomas wants an unambiguous destination for without such a destination how can anyone know the "way" there? What the disciple fails to understand is that Jesus is Himself the Way. Jesus does not simply blaze a trail, calling others to take the way that He takes. Rather, He is the Way, He is the destination. Jesus is the Way to God because He is the Truth of God and the Life of God. And only through Christ — the Life of God — does a lost soul find life eternal.

In his 13th century devotional classic, "The Imitation of Christ," Thomas A' Kempis expressed it this way: "Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the Way which thou must follow; the Truth which thou must believe; the Life for which thou must hope." ☛

Christian Crossword

By Arlene Walker Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. ___; for thy servant heareth. (1 Sam. 3:10)
8. Screech ___ also shall rest there. (Isa. 34:14)
10. They rose up in the morning ___. (1 Sam. 1:19)
11. I have given you every herb bearing ___. (Gen. 1:29)
13. Roll over. (abbr.)
15. For example. (abbr.)
16. ___ me, and know my thoughts. (Ps. 139:23)
18. Not accused of ___. (Titus 1:6)
19. Obituary. (abbr.)
21. That I may ___ him out of sleep. (John 11:11)
23. Unto us a child is ___. (Isa. 9:6)
25. Her Majesty. (abbr.)
26. Ye shall eat it in ___. (Ex. 12:11)
29. Flow out slowly.
31. Irish. (abbr.)
32. Be ___ and of a good courage. (Josh. 1:9)

34. Written in the ___ of the book. (2 Chron. 24:27)
37. A ___ caught in a thicket. (Gen. 22:13)
40. Recorded.
41. Every ___ shall see him. (Rev. 1:7)
43. Bachelor of Arts. (abbr.)
44. Creative works, skills.
45. Vote in favor.
46. Newborn child.
49. The going down of the ___. (Deut. 16:6)
51. Exclamation of disgust.
52. Singing or piloting a plane alone.
55. Give us a ___ in His holy place. (Ezra 9:8)
57. I ___ in the way of righteousness. (Prov. 8:20)
58. Laugh.
- Down
1. When ye shall ___ for me. (Jer. 29:13)
2. Father.
3. Who can understand his ___? (Ps. 19:12)
4. A large amount.
5. Kentucky. (abbr.)
6. Bachelor of Science. (abbr.)
7. Great.
9. The men did the ___ faithfully. (2 Chron. 34:12)
12. Electrical engineer. (abbr.)
14. Is any thing ___ hard for the Lord? (Gen. 18:14)
16. Short for Scottish cap.
17. 365 days.
20. Am I my ___ keeper? (Gen. 4:9)
22. ___ he shall appear. (1 John 3:2)
23. And ___ ye kind one to another. (Eph. 4:32)
24. Neither/___.
27. If thou bring thy gift to the ___. (Matt. 5:23)
28. The ___ are gathered and burned. (Matt. 13:40.)
30. Region, space.
33. Sound of roaring lion.
34. The Lord was my ___.



‘Come to Jesus’

JJ Weeks Band seeks to offer hope in midst of heartache, difficult seasons

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As the JJ Weeks Band travels around the country, the group is earning a reputation for heartfelt lyrics and solid melodies in their original songs.

In addition to lead singer JJ Weeks, the Georgia-based band is made up of bass player David Hart, drummer Jon Poole and guitarist Cody Preston.

With the release of their debut album “All Over The World” in 2013, the group connected with audiences around the country while sharing personal struggles after experiencing a painful season — dealing with the loss of several family members, a difficult pregnancy and subsequent health risks with a newborn.

As their hit song “Let Them See You” from the album deeply resonated with audiences, the JJ Weeks Band continued to press on with purpose and passion. The song ranked No. 9 on the 2014 Billboard Hot Christian Songs Chart and remained on Billboard’s National Christian Audience Chart for 29 weeks.

Daily reminder

“It’s a song that I wrote as a prayer asking God to let people see more than just myself as I go through each day,” Weeks said. “It’s also a reminder for whatever situation I might face throughout the day that I want to reflect Christ.

“I remember getting an email about this song from a lady who has a severely autistic daughter. The mother shared that as she and her daughter were riding in the car, this song came on. As best her daughter could, she started singing at the top of her lungs, ‘Let Them See You in Me.’ That is a beautiful reminder of how powerful music is, and it’s a testimony of



The JJ Weeks Band is made up of (l to r) David Hart, JJ Weeks, Jon Poole and Cody Preston.

Photo courtesy of Centricity Music

how God can use music to break through every disability and speak to the heart. We’ve also heard a lot of great stories about how God has used this song to bring families back together.”

‘For His glory’

“These stories reaffirm what we are doing is worthwhile and making a difference by impacting people’s lives for eternity.

“Whether we are onstage or off, we are reminded that God is using us every single day for a purpose and for His glory,” Weeks said. “Wherever God leads us, we want to be there.”

Their latest album, “As Long As We Can Breathe,” also features powerful and

poignant songs designed to offer hope in the midst of heartache.

“I feel like this album was written to encourage believers,” Weeks said. “We are in chaotic and confusing times, not only in our country, but all around the world. We can find comfort in remembering that God is still in control and still on His throne. He hasn’t forsaken us.”

‘Spirit of unity’

“We have songs on this album designed to remind people that we are called to rejoice together and also mourn together. These songs are about a spirit of unity among the body of Christ as we walk through this journey together.”

The JJ Weeks Band maintains a busy

schedule performing more than 120 concerts each year, including the Winter Jam Tour Spectacular. Their music has also been featured in the major motion pictures “God’s Not Dead” and “Four Blood Moons.”

During concerts the group is focused on connecting people to Christ through their music and message.

“Making a difference in people’s lives is really why we do this,” Weeks said. “We can sing for two hours and it will not change anything on our own, but God can move in a moment and change everything. That’s how big our God is. Our main theme and central message is simply, ‘Come to Jesus, because He loves us more than we can ever understand.’”

TAB AR



Photo by Lisa Woodham

Children’s Honor Choir on tour

The 2016 Alabama Baptist Children’s Honor Choir (pictured here) sing and lead worship at First Baptist Church, Decatur, on March 6. The choir also sang and led worship at First Baptist Church, Boaz, on March 5.

The 148 choir members from 38 Alabama Baptist churches are all 4th through 6th graders.

Selected in November 2015 through an audition process, the group rehearsed twice regionally in January and February then came together for the first time for final rehearsals March 4. (Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions)

Language of hope

Mobile offers refugees resettlement opportunities

By **Jeremy Beaman**
Student, University of Mobile

Jorge and Sonia Gonzalez speak no English. As political refugees from Cuba, they know English is necessary for them to have success in the United States, though it is no easy feat.

“Every aspect of moving is difficult,” Sonia Gonzalez said. “We must change certain family customs and even our language. But we have hope.”

The Gonzalezes are among thousands of people from around the world who have come to Mobile seeking a new life.

They have been aided by the work of Catholic Social Services, the social ministry organization of the Archdiocese of Mobile and Alabama’s only resettlement agency. It helps families like the Gonzalezes adjust to a new life in the U.S., offering school registration for children, cultural and community orientation, medical case management, employment services and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

According to the Alabama Catholic Social Services’ website, “In recent years, resettlement opportunities have been provided in Mobile for Iraqis, Sudanese, Cubans, Liberians, Afghans, Somalis, Iranians, Burundians, Burmese, Eritreans, Congolese and Ethiopians. In each case, a plan is developed to assist the refugees achieve self-sufficiency in the shortest time possible.”

A native of Cuba, Jorge Gonzalez worked under the Castro regime as an economist, measuring and reporting economic productivity. But he and his family were forced to leave, seeking asylum from political oppression.

Language barrier

When Jorge Gonzalez first applied as a political refugee his only option was to move to Venezuela, another Communist country. In 1999 he and his family moved and lived there for 15 years, until Sonia was accepted as a visa applicant to the U.S. She moved to the U.S. in 2008 without her husband, who moved here in 2013.

It has been difficult for the Gonzalezes to start a new life because of the challenge of learning English.

Starting a new life has been just as hard for another family. Siamak and Jaleh moved to the U.S. in June 2013. They are members of the Baha’i’ faith, a relatively new faith with a small percentage of followers around the globe. The faith is not recognized

as legitimate in Iran, and the government persecutes its followers, considering them spies of Israel and the West. Leaving their home in Iran, Siamak and Jaleh moved first to Turkey. From there, after many interviews with the American government, they resettled in Mobile.

English language acquisition is a game changer for these couples.

Students of all different backgrounds gather every Tuesday and Thursday at Catholic Social Services’ new facility for one reason: to learn English. Instruction includes all elements related to the

language, such as grammar, speech and writing skills, while also providing lessons and resources for job interviewing. A main objective of the ESL program is to prepare students who have not received a high school education for GED testing.

Many students, such as Jaleh, have been educated at a high level. Jaleh has a master’s degree in world religions, which she earned in her home country of Iran. Unfortunately she doesn’t speak enough English to use her degree as a

university professor or lecturer. Instead she works as a seamstress, sewing sequins on costumes for Mardi Gras parades.

“My plan when I came here was to continue my education and get a high-level job but I’ve stopped at a job lower than my education,” Jaleh said.

Each family has the opportunity to become self-sufficient and successful because of Catholic Social Services. Both have benefitted greatly from the ESL classes and other assistance programs.

“They found us this place,” said Jaleh, as she showcased her apartment. But these are not the only things the U.S. offers those resettling nor are they the most important.

Jorge Gonzalez is thankful for the U.S. because of its principles.

“I am proud to be here even though I am not a citizen,” he said. “In the United States men are valued above the law. The laws are made for men not men for laws.”

This liberty offers hope.

“We have hope that our future will be better than our past,” Jorge Gonzalez said. “Hope is ultimate, and it’s something one must struggle for.”

EDITOR’S NOTE — Jeremy Beaman is a sophomore majoring in English at the University of Mobile. He volunteers as an ESL tutor for Catholic Social Services and is interested in politics. ☛



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile
Cuba natives Jorge (left) and Sonia Gonzalez practice reading and pronouncing English.



World of
RELIGION
Compiled from Wire Services

African bishops to boycott Anglican council meeting

NAIROBI, Kenya — The Anglican Consultative Council has another Church stating it will boycott the April meeting in Zambia over participation of the Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal Church was recently censured because of the American Church’s willingness to ordain and marry LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) people.

According to the sanctions, the Episcopal Church cannot represent the communion at the April meeting or vote on doctrine and polity.

But Anglican Archbishop Eliud Wabukala of Kenya said the Episcopal Church’s presiding bishop, Michael Curry, had made it clear that his Church would not reconsider its stance on same-sex “marriage” and that Curry expected his Church to play a full part in the meeting in Lusaka, Zambia’s capital.

“There can be no true walking together with those who persistently refuse to walk in accordance with God’s Word, and the Kenyan province will not participate in the forthcoming meeting,” Wabukala said. The Anglican Church in Kenya said it will boycott the April meeting.

Ugandan Anglicans announced a similar boycott in February. In a letter, Archbishop Stanley Ntagali said his Church would not participate in any such conferences of the Anglican Consultative Council until “godly order is restored.”

“It is like we are back in 2003 where we continue to be betrayed by our leaders,” Ntagali said. “The primates voted to bring discipline to the Episcopal Church, and yet we now see that the leadership of the Anglican Communion does not have the will to follow through. This is another deep betrayal.”

Nigeria also has written to say its bishops will not attend, according to church officials. At press time the Anglican Church of Rwanda, which has often acted in concert with Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda, had yet to make a decision, according to Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje. (RNS)

Church of England fails to deal with sex abuse, report finds

CANTERBURY, England — The Church of England has promised to make far-reaching changes in dealing with future sex abuse cases after the publication of the first independent review into its handling of such cases in the past commissioned by the country’s established church.

The report’s conclusions highlight the “deeply disturbing” failure of those in senior clerical positions to pass on information about the cries for help from a survivor known only as “Joe” over a period of almost four decades.

A report March 15 in *The Guardian* identifies the clergy as Tim Thornton, bishop of Truro; Richard Holloway, former bishop of Edinburgh; John Eastaugh, deceased bishop of Hereford; and Stephen Platten, former bishop of Wakefield.

According to *The Guardian*, the victim — who was 15 and an altar boy at the time — was subjected in 1976 to a “sadistic” assault by Garth Moore, then a leading figure in the Church. Moore died in 1990.

The report said that for the next four decades, Joe pleaded for help and contacted members of the Anglican hierarchy.

None of the men he contacted was able to fully recall the conversation with the survivor.

Holloway became a figure of controversy in Scotland as one of the first big-name campaigners for full Christian rights for gay men and women.

The report is deeply embarrassing to the Church, which acknowledged it made for “uncomfortable” reading. The Church of England said it would offer “full cooperation.” In October 2015 the church paid Joe \$49,300 in compensation. (RNS)