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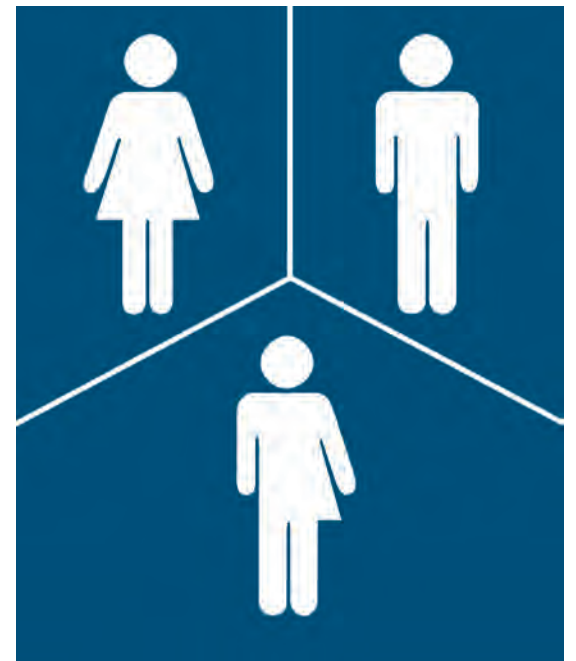


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TRANSGENDER bathrooms in public schools



New Obama directive could cause more children to struggle with gender dysphoria

Alabama and at least four other states have indicated they'll say "no" to the May 13 transgender bathroom directive issued to all United States public school districts by the Obama administration.

However, Obama's Departments of Justice and Education, which issued the directive, warned school districts that they could lose millions in federal education funding if they don't allow students to access bathrooms based upon their gender identity rather than their biological sex.

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange vowed to fight the directive and said in a May 13 statement that he will "work with other attorneys general to challenge it." Bathroom usage is a topic that local school officials and parents should be able to decide, Strange said.

'Separate sexes'

"Title IX allows schools to have separate facilities for separate sexes," Strange said. "The law says 'sex,' not gender identity."

Other leaders throughout the U.S. have voiced their opposition to the directive.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said he will fight any attempt at coercion from the Obama administration on the issue, according to Christianity Today.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt said the directive is "disingenuous at best" and "elevates the status of transgender students over those who would define their sex based on biology and who would seek to have their definition honored in the most private of places."

"By conditioning the receipt of federal funds on compliance ... schools have been given an ultimatum: take it or lose it. As you must know this leaves many schools without any real choice."

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant said in a statement, "Mississippi's public schools should not participate in the president's social experiment."

Beyond the legality of the issue lies another concern: Could the directive regarding bathrooms harm children struggling with their gender identity and increase the number who become transgender?

Two members of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Mental

Health Advisory Council, psychologists who have treated adolescents with gender dysphoria (the condition of not feeling at home in one's God-given body in terms of gender), say it is possible.

"The science alone — neuroscience and psychology — demonstrates that what was done the other day was a terrible, terrible thing for our children."

**Matthew Stanford
psychologist and
neuroscientist**

"The science alone — neuroscience and psychology — demonstrates that what was done the other day was a terrible, terrible thing for our children," psychologist and neuroscientist Matthew Stanford said of the directive.

Stanford, CEO of the Hope and Healing Center in Houston, Texas, said most children with gender dysphoria naturally accept their biological sex after passing through puberty because of increased maturity, positive social pressures and sometimes professional counseling. Obama's directive strikes at a key aspect of the healing process by attempting to decrease or remove healthy social pressure for children to act according to their biological sex.

The administration "has pre-empted the process by which the majority of children go on not to live as transgendered individuals," said

Stanford, who served on SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page's 2014–2015 Mental Health Advisory Council.

The departments of Education and Justice are "saying we should treat these children as if they are transgender [and] we should begin to affirm that. And what's going to happen is those numbers [of students to naturally outgrow gender dysphoria] are going to start to slip," Stanford noted. "We're going to have more and more children that move into adulthood as transgendered."

Negative effects

Even most secularists and social liberals in the counseling profession agree gender dysphoria is bad and has negative effects, Stanford said.

Obama has "come up with a policy" under which there will be "higher levels of suicide," "more psychological distress" and "more people unable to form appropriate relationships," Stanford said, citing demonstrated effects of gender dysphoria.

Chuck Hannaford, a clinical psychologist in Germantown, Tennessee, said that by calling more attention to transgenderism in public schools, the Obama administration might cause an increased number of children and adolescents to identify with the opposite sex.

"The old joke is when you take psychology courses in college, you begin to identify with every pathology you read about," said Hannaford, (See 'Clinically,' page 12)

COMMENT

Miscarriage Is Personal

It is not a dramatic story unless you lived it. I did and it changed me forever.

It was the summer before my last year of seminary. My wife, Eleanor, and I were expecting our first child. She was five months pregnant and as excited as a human being could be. Because she was tiny, Eleanor was already in maternity clothes.

When she went for her monthly checkup, the doctor said something was wrong. The next day, Eleanor miscarried at almost six months. That was the beginning of a bitter journey. Tears flowed. Our baby was gone — one we had never known except in our hopes and prayers. Dreams were shattered, as a life we longed to share would never be.

The miscarriage occurred on a Saturday. I called the chairman of deacons of the church where I served as pastor and told him I would not be able to preach the next day. When I told him what had happened, he was relieved. He told me he had feared that someone had died. Many of our church members never understood that for Eleanor and me, someone had died. Our promised child was no more.

‘God works for the good ...’

We grieved the loss of our baby. We had already picked out names, depending on the child’s sex. Those names would never be used. We questioned whether something was physically wrong with one or both of us. Eleanor struggled with a sense of failure because of the miscarriage. I remember when she was dismissed from the hospital, she cried about other women going home with a new baby while all she was taking home was a plant. You can imagine the variety of emotions we both experienced but especially her. It took time to regain a sense of balance.

About 15 months later we left that same hospital with a baby boy. Later Eleanor would say she could not imagine life without Brent, and without the miscarriage we would not have been blessed with such a wonderful son.

Still the miscarriage had a lifelong impact on



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

her. Eleanor developed a great sensitivity to other young women who experienced miscarriages. She identified with the loss of a hoped-for child. She wanted to protect young women from careless comments like that one made by the deacon chairman. She encouraged their sense of worth. She helped them express emotions that those who had not experienced a miscarriage might not understand. And, always, she pointed them toward hope.

My role became talking to husbands, helping them understand some of the emotions and issues with which their wives dealt following a miscarriage as well as getting them to own their own emotions about losing a longed-for child. It is sad but true that men can sometimes be afraid to acknowledge their pain.

For most of the next 30 years Eleanor taught young adults in Sunday School. At times she had more than 50 young adult couples in her class. Frequently we got out of bed to go to a class member’s home or a hospital room where Eleanor could help a young woman walk the journey of loss because of a miscarriage.

God took our bitter and broken experience and used it for good. As one young woman said, “God takes all our ‘yuck.’”

Why that surprises us, I do not know. That is what God promises to do.

Romans 8:28 declares, “And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him.”

God moves over the chaos

The apostle Paul, in writing this verse, did not say God causes all things. God is not the author of evil. The Bible clearly describes sin’s power in the world, including sin’s power to corrupt

the natural order. Miscarriages are not in God’s perfect will.

Sin’s purpose is to undermine God’s perfect will in the believer’s life and His world. Sin wants to create chaos out of God’s perfect order.

But God moves as mysteriously over the chaos of life’s experiences as He did over the chaos of creation. From both, He brings order. From both, He creates and calls the results “good.”

“Good” is not a forgone conclusion imposed on the believer, however. “Good” is available to the believer who opens to the work and will of God in the midst of a chaotic situation. For Eleanor and me, it was taking our experience in the miscarriage and making us sensitive to others with similar experiences. For a friend, it was walking with people who lost a child with whom they were privileged to live and love for a time.

Have you ever noticed how many evangelical believers who minister to alcoholics or drug addicts first had experiences similar to those they now serve?

For a time, I was privileged to know a woman who was a bold Christian witness. She would go anywhere to witness for the Lord and talk to anybody. Later I learned she developed those traits working the seamier side of life in bars and other such places.

Another friend ministers to prostitutes by providing a sandwich or a cup of coffee. She is a friend who listens and points them toward a new type of life. In this friend, the prostitutes see one in whom God worked the miracle of bringing

order out of chaos, good out of evil, one who understands from experience some of the issues with which they deal.

Bringing out the good

God takes all our “yuck,” and He alone can bring good out of the ugly, broken, bitter situations in which we find ourselves.

What is your story? Have you allowed God to take your “yuck” and bring about good? That kind of creative power is available to those who love God through faith in Jesus Christ and allow God to work His creative power in their lives in order to bring order out of the chaos created by sin.

EDITOR’S NOTE — This editorial originally ran in the Oct. 27, 2011, issue of the paper under the title “God Takes All Our ‘Yuck!’” ✠

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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

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Dealing with a miscarriage

Grief is normal response to loss of child through miscarriage

Unexpected grief

When Spencer and Donya found out they were going to become parents they were beyond excited. Within days of confirming the pregnancy they shared the good news with their parents and friends. Though it would be several weeks before the sex was revealed, Donya was considering paint color and décor for the nursery and Spencer was playfully suggesting names.

However, one terrible morning everything changed. Donya woke up with pain and bleeding, and an examination by her doctor confirmed a miscarriage. The couple wept in the room after the doctor left. How could this have happened? Did they do something that caused this? Why would God let this happen?



123rf.com

By Lisa Keane, MAMFC, LPC-S, RPT-S, NCC
Clinical Director, Pathways Professional Counseling

Behind every woman's joy at learning she is pregnant, there is a fear as well — the fear of losing the baby. Most of us have family members or close friends who have experienced miscarriage, which is defined as a pregnancy terminating itself before the 20th week.

An average female has about a 10–25 percent chance of her pregnancy ending in miscarriage, and the older a woman is, the greater her risk of miscarriage.

These statistics sound scary to many women and that fear can lead to anxiety. This anxiety is often heightened during the first trimester (13 weeks) of pregnancy because it is during that time that the chances of miscarriage are often highest.

There is very little that women can do to prevent a miscarriage from happening, but when it does, the woman who has miscarried needs the love and support of her family to cope with her loss.

Grieving process

Many people do not realize how common miscarriage is because many women choose not to share their experiences. However, miscarriage is a death, and the baby's mother, father and family will experience a range of emotions in response to their loss.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve any loss, and miscarriage is no different. Each individual will handle the loss differently and experience a range of emotions throughout the grieving process. Women and men even experience pregnancy loss differently from one another.

If you experience a miscarriage, it is impor-

tant not to compare your grieving experience to that of others. Allow yourself your own grief and your own timetable to heal.

Do not believe the lie that says your loss is not significant. There was a part of you that you will never know, a life that was never fully developed. It is OK to acknowledge that loss and the amount of pain it brings.

Some women find they want to share their loss with others while some want to grieve privately. Either is an appropriate response. Often a shroud of silence about miscarriage or a feeling that it is a taboo subject can keep women from seeking support. You should never feel like miscarriage is something you cannot talk about with a counselor, pastor or trusted friend. For many women connecting with others who share their experience can help bring healing because it reassures them that they are not alone.

Regardless of how publicly or privately you choose to grieve, you also must take care of yourself physically and emotionally. Physically, your body has been through a very traumatic event. Hormones are elevated and your body had already started gearing up to grow a baby. It will take time for your body to heal.

Eating well, getting plenty of rest and doing simple exercises approved by your doctor can improve your physical health. In turn, these steps will aid in taking care of your emotional needs too.

You also need to allow yourself time to process your loss. Whether you write, talk, pray, meditate on Scripture or use some other means, make sure you carve out the time you need.

Don't shove the emotions of grief aside. As painful as it may be, allow yourself to feel all that you are experiencing.

No one likes feeling disappointed or sad. Many of us have spent a large part of our lives trying to avoid those two feelings. In the wake of a painful loss like miscarriage, we can easily lose heart and look to the future with skepticism and bitterness. But is that really the kind of life we are called to live as followers of Christ? The answer is "no." Regardless of our circumstances, even our suffering, God is still good. He is truly close to the brokenhearted and helps those who are crushed in spirit (Ps. 34:18).

Whether you are in the journey of grief following a miscarriage or supporting someone through this kind of loss, know that you are not alone. Not only is Christ there to sustain you, to comfort you and to listen to your anger, but fellow believers are out there who have been where you are now. You will not always feel the way you feel right now. Though you will never forget your loss, your feelings will change.

Take care of yourself, reach out for support and allow Christ to envelop you with His love while you cry and grieve.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lisa Keane is the clinical director for Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry that helps individuals and families seek solutions to their problems through professional, affordable counseling from a Christian perspective. Pathways is a ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. ✠



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A miscarriage story

Pathways clinical director shares about experiencing a miscarriage

By Lisa Keane
MAMFC, LPC-S, RPT-S, NCC
Clinical Director, Pathways Professional Counseling

Almost two years ago I received devastating news. Sitting in a cold examination room in my doctor's office, I was anxiously anticipating the moment I would see my baby on the screen above me. My husband was on my left, waiting to see our future child too.

However, when silence filled the room, I instantly knew. Instead of hearing a heartbeat we heard nothing. Instead of seeing a baby and the hope of life we saw loss and the death of a dream. Instead of feeling excitement or anticipation, we felt despair, sadness and grief crashing down on us.



KEANE

Roller-coaster emotions

The next few days, weeks and months brought with them a roller coaster of emotions. Waves of intense feelings would hit me at the most inopportune times. The mere mention of babies or pregnancy caused deep pain within my soul. I ached and longed for the child I never knew. Anger at God crept into my heart. How could

a good God, a God who loves children, allow this?

I questioned how God could do this to me. I wondered whether I could have done something to prevent this from happening.

I also had days when I was so overcome with sadness that I couldn't see an end in sight. Then there were days that I felt OK

and thought I was coming out on the other side, only to be hit with a wave of grief the following day or week. In this time I was quickly reminded grief is not linear. Grief is not something that takes a nice, neat path toward a finish line. Grief is messy.

Just recently I was reading a story that ran in a national paper. The woman in the story had suffered a miscarriage and said, "Miscarriage and infant loss are different because (in a miscarriage) you lose potential — not the person they were but the person they could have been."

Her statement resonated with me and my grief journey. This explained what my heart and mind were attempting to sort out. I was grieving the loss of hope and of what I thought my life would look like along with the loss of a baby.

C.S. Lewis once said, "To love is to be vulnerable." Sometimes in my grief jour-

ney it felt safer to imagine that I would never experience joy again. It even felt safer to say we would never again try to have another baby. But I know God did not call me to remain in that emotional place, nor is that kind of hopelessness true to His character. While God does allow refinement, grief and sadness, He also is the giver of joy. You really cannot know what unspeakable joy is until you also have experienced the opposite of that — great sadness and despair.

Ultimate sustainer

The Lord is my ultimate joy and my ultimate sustainer even in the midst of unspeakable loss. "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning," we're told in Psalm 30:5. My weeping lasted for many nights and days and in that weeping I did a lot of crying out to God. Crying out for understanding, for peace and comfort.

The good news for us as Christ followers is that joy does truly come again, though not because we forget what we walked through or because time has simply passed. Joy comes by knowing that no matter what we feel or how bad it gets, Christ is still with us, walking with us or even carrying us through the valley to get to the next peak of joy. ✝

Honesty can help grieving parents receive needed support

Megan had two young children when she discovered she was pregnant with a third. Though surprised, she and her husband, Brandon, were excited and shared the news immediately with family and friends. Not long after, Megan lost the baby. A subsequent pregnancy also ended in miscarriage.

In their grief, Megan and Brandon found their church a safe place for to share their hearts.

"People shared their stories with me and told me it was OK to hurt the way I was hurting," Megan said.

Not everyone is as fortunate. While some women who experience miscarriage want to grieve privately, others need to talk about their pain.

Valeri Cowart, group counseling coordinator at The Amelia Center, a grief counseling service of Children's of Alabama, said, "Talking is what helps the most, whether that is talking to a counselor, pastor, friend or family member. If the emotions get stuffed down, the grieving person can get angry or depressed."

Though dads often get overlooked, they too have experienced a terrible loss and may need to share their grief, though they may express that grief in different ways.

"Dads sometimes literally want to work through their grief by staying busy," Cowart said.

"It's important to be aware of differences in grieving styles. While the mom may not want to get out of bed, the dad may cope by working late. Friends and family members should be open and accepting of the differences."

Communicate openly

Though no part of the grief journey is easy, being honest with family and friends about your needs can make interactions during times of suffering less tense.

The March of Dimes recommends that grieving parents communicate openly with those who want to help.

▶ Tell them that their calls and visits are important to you.

▶ Tell them you want their support even if they don't know the perfect thing

to say. Hearing honest words like, "I just don't know what to say to make it better," or "I want to help you but I don't know how," can be comforting.

Sometimes people may say things that are not helpful to you like, "It was for the best." Or "You can always have another baby." Try to remember that they are doing their best to support you, even if what they say is hurtful.

▶ Tell them exactly what you need. Do you just want someone to listen? Do you want them to spend time with you at home? Do you need someone to bring you a meal or do your laundry? Try and tell them specific things they can do to show their support. For example they could take your children for an afternoon or do your grocery shopping.

▶ Ask them to use your baby's name and to remember your baby. Let them know that even if you get pregnant again and have other children you won't forget the baby who died.

▶ Thank them for their patience and support. (March of Dimes, *TAB*)

Ways to support someone after a miscarriage

1. Be around for them when they want to talk, but do not ask a lot of questions. Let them be the guide for the conversations.
2. Offer to bring meals during the recovery process.
3. Write cards, emails or text messages with uplifting words, Scriptures and prayers.
4. Do not attempt to change the person's feelings or minimize how they feel. Whatever they are feeling is OK. Do not offer unsympathetic words such as, "You can just get pregnant in a few months" or "At least you already have a child."
5. Understand that grief and tears are healthy responses. Allow time for them to cry and be sad.
6. Remind her that there was nothing she could have done to prevent this. It is important for her to know it was not her fault.
7. Remember that grief is not linear. There will be good days and bad days. Grief recovery is a journey not a destination.
8. Offer to spend time with them. Staying in contact with people who understand and know what is going on is important so they do not feel isolated or alone.
9. Acknowledge the loss. No matter how brief or how long the pregnancy had progressed, a miscarriage is still the death of a baby.
10. Pray. Pray for them often, and pray for God's peace to be over them and to fill their hearts.

(Source: Lisa Keane)

Possible causes of miscarriage

- ▶ Chromosomal problems
- ▶ Chronic medical conditions including diabetes, thyroid disease, lupus or heart disease
- ▶ Hormonal imbalances
- ▶ Cervical insufficiency

What doesn't cause miscarriage

- ▶ Too much stress
- ▶ Depression or mood
- ▶ Too much exercise
- ▶ Traumatic events
- ▶ Lifting heavy objects

Take refuge in the Lord

Alabama Baptist pastor's wife finds God forever faithful following miscarriage of first child

By Karen Prickett
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The greatest loss I have ever experienced was the miscarriage of our first baby 10 weeks into the pregnancy. There are no words to describe the depth of emptiness I felt in the days, weeks and months following my miscarriage, but in the wake of my pain I learned how faithful God really is.

After a year of trying to conceive we were finally expecting our first child. We were beside ourselves with excitement. Then I began to experience some bleeding and went to see my doctor. They performed an ultrasound and discovered that I had miscarried. The news was devastating. I could not wrap my brain around this loss.

Begging God for help

For days I broke down numerous times a day, sobbing uncontrollably. One minute I would think, "I'm OK," only to fall apart again. I begged God to make the hurt stop. I just did not see how I was going to survive this kind of pain. To be honest, I didn't know if I wanted to survive it. I just wanted the aching in my heart to stop.

Well-meaning friends attempted to comfort me. They said things like, "At least you

know you can get pregnant" and "at least you weren't any farther along. It could always be worse." Really? It could be worse? I couldn't even imagine that anything could be worse than this loss. Job had friends who tried to help him too. We can learn from them.

In Job 2:13 we see them sitting with Job, not saying a word. "Then they sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, but no one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very intense."

Job's friends had the right idea. When someone is in a tremendous amount of pain and grief, it is good to just be there. You don't have to try to give advice or an explanation. Just grieve with them. Your presence can make all the difference.

There will always be those who try to speak comfort into a difficult situation. After my miscarriage I was given some not-so-great advice by an older woman in the church. She said that because I was the pastor's wife, I should keep my grief to myself. No one needed to see me "fall apart."

I don't believe she meant me harm, but I took her bad advice to heart. No one knew the desperation, loneliness and depression

I felt in the months and years to follow, including my own husband. Everyone thought I was fine because that's what I told them. I lied. I went through all the stages of grief over and over again for many years. This is not healthy.

So many times there are no explanations for miscarriages. Trust me — I looked for some reason, a cause for what had happened. There were no answers. In some moments I wondered if God took my baby to punish me for past sins. At other times I assumed something must have been wrong and God was sparing our child.

The truth is that this side of heaven, I will never know why we had to endure this loss.

However, one thing I am sure of now is this: God never wastes a hurt. He has used me to minister to many women. Many times it has just been to say, "It's OK to grieve. You need to mourn." Because of the misguided advice I was given in the aftermath of my miscarriage, I feel it is important to give families permission to grieve their loss. I also know that grief looks different for every person, so I'm careful not to criticize or question how someone mourns a loss.



PRICKETT

God has taught me so much by learning to depend on Him and His Word. He is forever faithful, as 1 Corinthians 1:9 and many other verses remind us. He also is our refuge. Nahum 1:7 has become a life verse for me: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of distress; He cares for those who take refuge in Him."

Trust God

As much as any experience in my life, my miscarriage taught me to trust God with my hurt. Psalm 56:8 tells us God knows every tear that falls from our eyes. It truly is in the valleys that we learn to really trust Christ with everything and lean on Him, to place "all our cares upon Him" (1 Pet. 5:7).

God is in control. He will use our hurts and deepest losses if we let Him. He will use us to be His feet to go and serve families suffering the anguish of a loss we understand. He will use us to be His hands as we love those who hurt.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Karen Prickett is a teacher, writer and pastor's wife. Her husband, Rodney, is pastor of Riddles Bend Baptist Church, Rainbow City. They are parents of three sons: Mackenzie, Mason and Micah.

Helping children through grief after a miscarriage should not be overlooked

Before giving birth to her daughter, Melissa experienced several miscarriages. Following the birth of her daughter, she experienced several more miscarriages before giving birth to a son six years later. Each time, her young daughter had been excited about the baby, and each time she too grieved the death.

Helping children cope with a loss while you are grieving yourself is one of the most challenging tasks a parent will ever face. Like adults, children may exhibit very different responses to death. Some may display anger or sadness very openly. Others may hold their feelings inside and withdraw. Some children may think they are going to die or feel like they are to blame for the baby's death.

Communicate clearly

Though a child's age and maturity will play a role in how they respond to their grief, all children can cope better with grief when they know what's happening. The following suggestions from the March of Dimes can help parents and caregivers

talk about miscarriage with children:

- ▶ Talk with them about death using simple, honest words. You can say things like, "The baby didn't grow," or, "The baby was born very tiny." Don't use words that may confuse or scare them, such as, "The baby is sleeping," or, "Mommy lost the baby."

- ▶ Read them stories that talk about death and loss. Your local funeral home, library or school may have children's books that may help them understand death.

- ▶ Encourage them to ask questions. Give as

much information as your child needs.

- ▶ Be aware of changes in your children's behavior. They may be hurt, confused and angry, just like you. Younger children may be clingy or cranky. They may act in ways or do things that they haven't done since they were younger. Older children may be worried about school, friends or sports. Or they may show no reaction at all to the baby's death. They also may ask questions that you think are rude or uncaring. These are normal reactions. Be as patient and loving as you can.

- ▶ Tell them they are not going to die.
- ▶ Tell them that no one is to blame for the baby's death.
- ▶ Ask them to find their own ways to remember the baby. Older children may want to go to the memorial service or funeral.
- ▶ Younger children can draw a picture

or make a keepsake for the baby.

- ▶ Ask a counselor to meet with you and your children to help all of you understand your feelings.
- ▶ Tell your children's teachers and other caregivers what has happened so they can support your children too. (March of Dimes, TAB)

For more information, visit www.marchofdimes.org.

Resources for those grieving a miscarriage

- ▶ *Inheritance of Tears: Trusting the Lord of Life When Death Visits the Womb* by Jessalyn Hutto

- ▶ *30 Days of Hope for Restoration in Infant Loss* by Maegan Roper

- ▶ *I Will Carry You: The Sacred Dance of Grief and Joy* by Angie Smith

- ▶ *Empty Arms: Hope and Support for Those Who Have Suffered a Miscarriage, Stillbirth or Tubal Pregnancy* by Pam Vredevelt

- ▶ *Grieving the Child I Never Knew: A Devotional for Comfort in the Loss of Your Unborn or Newly Born Child* by Kathe Wunnenberg



Faith  Family

Hope in the midst of grief

God can handle questions, doubts, Barrett says

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Some of the most joyful words ever spoken are those announcing a pregnancy. The words invite hugs, pats on the back and well wishes for the parents-to-be.

For some, however, that initial joy will turn to despair when the pregnancy ends in miscarriage. The March of Dimes estimates that for every 100 women who know they are pregnant, 10 to 25 will experience an early pregnancy loss.

The risk of miscarriage is lower in younger pregnant women and goes up with age. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the risk for miscarriage for women aged 20 to 30 years is between 9 and 17 percent. At age 40 a woman's risk of miscarriage increases to 40 percent. By age 45 the risk goes up to 80 percent.

Miscarriages are more likely to occur within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Most are isolated events with no discernible cause, and the majority of women who experience miscarriage will later have a normal pregnancy and delivery.

Encouraging statistics do not negate the pain of miscarriage, however.

'A tragic, full stop'

"In every case, the miscarriage brings a tragic, full stop to the hope and excitement and fear of pregnancy," writes Elise Erikson Barrett in "What Was Lost: A Christian Journey through Miscarriage."

For the believer, a miscarriage often raises significant spiritual questions as well. Why would God allow an unborn baby to die? Is this a punishment for the parent? Or a lesson?

Jessalyn Hutto, author of "Inheritance of Tears: Trusting the Lord of Life When Death Visits the Womb," writes, "When terrible things happen for no apparent reason, the most basic question we ask is 'why?' We may compare ourselves to Christian women who only have successful pregnancies and

wonder what's different between us that would produce such horribly different outcomes."

Such thinking is a dangerous path spiritually because it views suffering as a reflection of God's feelings and our relationship with Him as performance-based rather than grace-based, Hutto says.

Trials that bring suffering are inevitable for broken people living in a broken world, but those trials are not evidence of God's disfavor. Instead the Bible assures believers that "in each and every event, whether good or bad, God is always doing more than we could possibly imagine in ways we could never anticipate. His plan to take something altogether awful, like miscarriage, and use it for our good and His glory is beyond our understanding," Hutto writes.

God can not only handle the questions and doubts of grieving parents, He can handle their anger and bitterness as well, Barrett says.

"Do not feel as if to be a good Christian you have to accept your loss, to immediately find meaning in it or to pretend to be happy with God when you are not," Barrett writes. "One of the precious, life-giving things about our Scripture is that it contains searing prayers of anger, betrayal, bewilderment, longing and doubt. These are all legitimate ways for the people of God to feel toward their God. God is big enough to receive your doubt, your anger, your bitterness. God does not need to be protected from real grief and emotions."

God also is big enough to help grieving parents walk through suffering with confidence in the Lord's lovingkindness and the Spirit's comforting presence, Hutto says.

"Recognizing how our suffering relates to the gospel story allows us to walk victoriously through trials," she writes. "If we are to find peace and hope in the midst of grieving, we must fix our gaze upon our wonderful Savior who loves us with an incomprehensible love. He is the one who will guide us through the fog of despair." ¶

"Do not feel as if to be a good Christian you have to accept your loss, to immediately find meaning in it."

Elise Erikson Barrett, author

TAB
AR

Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Knowing God

God Who Reigns

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

In preparing to leave the general theme of knowing God, Theology 101 takes a look at how the Bible ends its revelation of what God is like and how He acts. The Bible's consummate picture of God is of a sovereign God who reigns supremely. God wants us to know Him ultimately as the Book of Revelation presents Him in its declaration: "Alleluia. For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns." The prelude to this exalted exclamation is: "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him both small and great" (Rev. 19:5-6).

From ancient times travelers have used the North Star as their point of reference to guide them across deserts and over the seas. The truth that God reigns is like a North Star to guide Christians amid turbulent times, through social upheavals, personal tragedies and natural disasters. This truth about our God has a rich and attested history. From ancient times God's people have confessed that He reigns. Psalm 47:8 declares: "God reigns over nations; God sits on His holy throne." Psalm 146:10 adds: "The Lord shall reign forever — your God, O Zion, to all generations." With its vision of the future, Revelation 11:15 echoes the same conviction: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever."

Missionary implications

The truth that God reigns has missionary implications. After calling for all the earth to tremble before God, Psalm 96:10 instructs: "Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns.'" Everyone in every place needs to know the true and living God. Only those who know God as He has revealed Himself can teach others to know Him. In a world where despots seek to rule and ruthless terrorists count human life as cheap, people need a point of reference that gives stability, guidance and comfort. In such times and for such a need, we cannot improve on the Bible's declara-

tion that our God reigns. Our world needs to hear this message of hope. Isaiah 52:7 exclaims: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'"

Reality of worship

The vision of God reigning over history and over our lives can renew and fuel the reality of our worship. The more exalted our vision of God, the greater are our responses to Him in worship. Isaiah's vision of God on His heavenly throne accompanied by the worshipping seraphim prompted the prophet's worshipful response that included the confession of sin and confidence of cleansing. The prophet's worship led to a commitment to go forth to tell others of His reigning God (Isa. 6).

That God reigns lies at the core of Christian hope both now and into eternity future. This truth enables us to look beyond present calamities, atrocities, disappointments and losses to a future that has been secured for the children of God. Our reigning God is working all things in the present for our good, the good of being formed into the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

Beyond this time and the present world, God is moving history toward the future with its new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1). When faith is tempted to waver believers can look up and look ahead to confess anew that God is in control and will remain in control all the way to the end times. ¶

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.



Church ANNIVERSARIES



Pilgrim Rest Baptist marks 175 years of service

Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Fayette, marked its 175th anniversary April 24 with a "good crowd," said Janice Anderson, wife of Pastor Randy Anderson.

The morning service included a historical presentation by Jerry Armor, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, and a message by Fayette Baptist Association Director of Missions Larry Barnes. Barnes and his wife, Jane, also sang special music, as did several church members. Philips Elliott, a deacon, read a brief history of the church.

A large banner announced the anniversary and participants received bookmarks commemorating the day. Participants also could view a history book with pictures of past and present members, as well as pictures of the previous structures that housed the church.

Special guests included Eugene Junkin and Tommy Hughes, both former pastors. The celebration concluded with lunch.

Robertsdale's Bethel celebrates 75th anniversary

The pre-service slideshow of historical pictures set the mood for the 75th anniversary celebration of Bethel Baptist Church, Robertsdale, on May 1.

The morning service included special music by former pastor Raymond Bishop and former member Tommy Brill. David Hedden, former member and son of founding member Ford Hedden, brought the message after the church honored his father for being its oldest member.

Additional special guests included Lonette Berg, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission executive director, and Rick Ellison, director of missions for Baldwin Baptist Association. Berg presented a certificate to the church and Ellison read a congratulatory letter from Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Messages from former pastors who were unable to participate also were read. Harvey Earls is pastor.

Lake Martin commemorates 25 years with time capsule

While still collecting items for its time capsule to mark the occasion, Lake Martin Baptist Church, Dadeville, celebrated its 25th anniversary April 24.

During the 10:30 a.m. service, charter members were recognized and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Calvin Milford presented a certificate to the church. Two former pastors, Tim Calloway and Gerald Hallmark, also were recognized. Lake Martin Baptist Pastor Mark Gainey brought the message and Lindsey Sanford performed special music.

A collage of historical pictures was displayed for participants to view during the fellowship lunch that concluded the celebration.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB

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CALHOUN

▶ **Roger Willmore** is the new director of missions for **Calhoun Association**. Willmore has served as pastor of Deerfoot Church, Trussville; president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in 2006–08; LifeWay board of trustees member; University of Mobile (UMobile) board of trustees member; and is currently on the board of trustees for Judson College in Marion. He also serves as a speaker and missionary for Roger Willmore Ministries. He holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University; a master's degree and doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia; and an honorary doctorate from UMobile and Judson. He and his wife, Sandra, have one child.



WILLMORE

CHEROKEE

▶ **Max Roden** is the new interim pastor of **Pine Grove Church, Centre**. He previously served as interim pastor for First Church, Crossville. He also served at East Gadsden Church, Gadsden; Sardis Church, Gilliam Church, Arab; First Church, Rainsville; and Southside Church, Albertville. Roden holds an associate's degree from Mid-America Seminary in Cordova, Tennessee. He was married to the late Judy. He has three children, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



RODEN

COOSA RIVER

▶ **Ernest "Skip" Parvin** is the new pastor of **First Church, Childersburg**. He previously served as minister of senior adults and pastoral care at Bellevue Church, Memphis, Tennessee. He served as a trustee at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, for nine



PARVIN

years. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama, a master's degree from New Orleans Seminary and a doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia. He was married to the late Jeanie. He has two children and seven grandchildren. ▶ **Westview Church, Sylacauga**, will hold VBS on June 6–10, 6–8 nightly. Classes are available for 4 years through teens. Register online at www.wherethefriendsbecomefamily.com or at the church. Jimmie Roberts is pastor.

COVINGTON

▶ **Les Hughes** is the new interim pastor of **Bethany Church, Andalusia**. He previously served as pastor of Highview Church, Louisville, Kentucky. He also has served at Westwood Church, Ababaster. He is co-founder of Anchor Deep Ministries with his wife, Page. They have four children and two grandchildren.

JUDSON

▶ **Bob Pemberton** is the new interim pastor of **Camp Springs Church, Columbia**. He previously served as director of missions for Judson Association. He also has served at Calvary Church, Abbeville. He and his wife, Evelyn, also served as missionaries to Mexico.

MARION

▶ **Mount Olive Church, Hackleburg**, will host Archie Watkins and Smoky Mountain Reunion in concert June 2, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. James Nichols is pastor.

PLEASANT GROVE

▶ **Liberty Church, Adger**, will hold revival services May 26–28, 6:30 nightly. Chris Waddell will speak and Blake and Angelia Gann will perform special music May 26. Dan Lanier will speak and Paul Davis will perform special music May 27. J.W. Kornegay will speak and Theresa Bell, Edward Starnes and Joan Ethridge will lead special music May 28. Mike Bell is pastor.

SIPSEY

▶ **New Hope Church, Berry**, will celebrate homecoming June 5, 10 a.m. The Kingsmen will perform special music. A covered dish lunch will follow. Ryan James is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

▶ **Tim Thompson** is the new pastor of **Eagle Creek Church, Dadeville**. He and his wife, Virginia, have three children and three grandchildren. #

If you emailed a news item and did not receive a reply, please call 205-870-4720, ext. 112.

Smith awarded ALCAP award



Photo courtesy of Jim Cooley

Eunie Smith (right), president of Eagle Forum and member of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, was given the 2016 Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) — Dan Ireland Salt and Light Award during the May 15 worship service at First, Birmingham. Smith was surprised with the presentation from Ireland (left) and Joe Godfrey (not shown), executive director of ALCAP. Ireland is director emeritus of ALCAP and was the recipient of the first award in 2013.

Encouragement & challenge

Samford graduates more than 1,000 in 7 ceremonies

Samford University in Birmingham graduated about 1,074 seniors during seven commencement ceremonies that were held May 6–14.

Speakers touched on themes of service, persistence in pursuing goals, finding contentment in personal and professional life, not waiting to be a force for good, being the hands and feet of Christ and other topics of encouragement and challenge.

At the ceremony for the Howard College of Arts Sciences on May 14, Samford President Andrew Westmoreland made special mention of two women who completed their academic work decades after they began it.

Lottie Jacks, 85, of Vestavia Hills, received the bachelor's degree that she began pursuing in 1948. After dropping out of Howard College in 1951 one semester shy of graduation, she re-enrolled at Samford in 2015 to complete a degree in biology. She is a member of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

Awards, recognitions

Elois Ewart, 90, of Mooresville, North Carolina, received an associate's degree after recently earning the three remaining credits she needed for the degree she had begun in 1944.

Samuel T. Hahn, a classics major and University Fellows honor student from Siloam Springs, Arkansas, received the President's Cup — the valedictorian honor.

Laura C. Bean, a Brock Scholar and University Fellow from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, received the Velma Wright Irons salutatorian award.

Lauren Elizabeth Sims, a journalism and mass communication major from Trenton, Georgia, earned the John C. Pittman Spirit Award, which recognizes a graduating senior who has consistently exhibited exceptional Christian character in community life.

Cumberland School of Law graduating senior Stewart Alvis, of Birmingham, received the law school's annual Daniel Austin Brewer Professionalism Award.

Commencement speakers were: Nashville business executive Stuart C. McWhorter, McWhorter School of Pharmacy; Episcopal Diocese of Dallas Bishop George R. Sumner, Beeson Divinity



Photo by Caroline Summers

Elizabeth Kolakoski celebrates as she walks across the stage after receiving her diploma from Samford University.

School; Samford vice president for marketing and communication Betsy Holloway, Brock School of Business; Cherokee County physician Ryan Dru Rainer, College of Health Sciences; Birmingham attorney Terry McCarthy, Cumberland School of Law; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary administrator William F. Warren, Howard College of Arts and Sciences; and Samford Legacy League Executive Director Jeanna Westmoreland, School of the Arts and Orlean Bullard

Beeson School of Education.

In a relatively new tradition of spring commencement weekend, about 300 graduates and faculty members gathered for a prayer breakfast May 13. Words of inspiration and encouragement around the themes of friendship, scholarship and faith were voiced by students and faculty, including Andrew Westmoreland.

"In every way imaginable you have touched our lives and caused us to be better people because you were here," Andrew Westmoreland said. "This institution will endure long after all of us are gone. But it will be stronger because you are here today and because of the memory that you were here. You will make the world a better place because of your time at Samford."

Three graduating seniors were commissioned second lieutenants in the United State Air Force during ceremonies for Samford's Air Force ROTC Detachment 012 on May 12. They are: Benjamin Edward Coleman, of Pleasant View, Tennessee; Kaley McRae Glenn, of Fairburn, Georgia; and Katie Elizabeth Kosan, of Madison.

Seven Samford faculty members will retire this year. They are: Patricia Outlaw, divinity; Jim Brown, history; Lavone Warren, law; Arlene Hayne and Joy Whatley, nursing; Eric Olson, theatre; and Millicent Bolden, world languages and cultures. (Samford)

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ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Montgomery Association DOM to retire

For Ken May, director of missions (DOM) for Montgomery Baptist Association for more than a decade, life as an Alabama Baptist started nearly 60 years ago when he began serving at Royal Ambassadors camps at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.



MAY

May, who later served as pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church and Southside Baptist Church, Troy, will retire from his DOM role in August.

He earned his bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master's degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

May also served as a Baptist Campus Minister for 19 years through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He served at Troy University, Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama State University in Montgomery, the University of Alabama at Huntsville and Alabama A&M in Huntsville.

Not only did he spend several summers serving at Shocco Springs camps, he also met his wife, Helen, there.

The Mays have two children and three grandchildren. In retirement they plan to move to Hendersonville, Tennessee, to be with family. Ken May said he also plans to work more intentionally with the Baptist Student Union Alumni National Network, of which he is chairman. (Neisha Roberts)

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'CREATED to IMPROVE'

UMobile graduates encouraged to be 'courageous, bold, adventuresome'

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson urged University of Mobile (UMobile) graduates to follow the "voice of adventure" and change the world with boldness during commencement ceremonies May 14 at the Mobile Civic Center.

The university awarded Stimpson the honorary doctor of human letters and presented its top two awards to the outstanding male and female graduate selected by vote of the faculty before awarding diplomas to 285 graduates.

Stimpson encouraged graduates to follow God's calling in their lives and not be discouraged by thinking they are unqualified or unprepared. As a UMobile graduate, he said, they have been uniquely prepared to change the world for the better.

'Allowing God to use you'

"In preparing you, the University of Mobile is not suggesting you change the world by doing things you can do by yourselves — change it by allowing God to use you. Don't settle for just changing it just a little bit — think about how you are going to significantly impact it in a profound way. Have a bold vision. We are all created to improve the condition of mankind," Stimpson said.

He encouraged graduates to follow "the voice of adventure" over "the voice of safety."

"I challenge you to not listen to the whines of those who have settled for a

second-rate life and want you to do the same so they won't feel guilty," Stimpson said. "If you are following God's promptings, then step out. Be bold — start a business.

Be courageous — join the military. Be adventuresome — teach in another country. Or just change careers — run for mayor. Yes, you will make a difference. You are going forth from here today to change the world. Sure, your journey may not be safe, but it never has been."

The UMobile Weaver awards were presented to graduates who exemplify the mission of the university and selection is based on scholarship, Christian character, leadership and service.

The Annie Boyd Parker Weaver Excellence Award was presented to Tinsley Griffin, of Savannah, Georgia. Griffin graduated summa cum laude with a 4.0 GPA and a bachelor of arts in political science. She also received the President's Scholastic Achievement Award, Political Science Area Award and is an honors with thesis program graduate.

Griffin was accepted into 11 law schools and will pursue her juris doctor at the University of Alabama School of Law. She is a founding member of UMobile's Mock Trial Club and won awards for her role as attorney at the American Mock Trial Association tournament two years in a row.

She is student leader and musician in Welsh Revival, a music ensemble in the UMobile Center for Performing Arts that travels across the country performing in churches and at civic events.

Griffin is vice president and former senator of the Student Government Association (SGA), served as executive board member and team captain of the Mock Trial Club, is Alpha Chi Honors Society's representative to the SGA and was president of the Honors Council.

She is a Chatham County Distinguished Young Women program volunteer and was assistant coordinator, has served on the campaigns of a U.S. representative and a Public Service Commissioner, was orchestra

assistant for the Armstrong Atlantic Youth Orchestra, a tutor for the Savannah Baptist Center and helps teach at the Southside Baptist Church, Bay Minette, nursery.

The William K. Weaver Jr. Excellence Award was presented to Aaron Pouncey, of Mobile, who graduated summa cum laude with a 3.99 GPA and a bachelor of science in music education.

Pouncey is a member of Voices of Mobile, a vocal ensemble in the UMobile Center for Performing Arts that tours internationally. He has been first tenor in the Voices of Mobile for three years and has been a featured soloist in several operas and the university's annual Christmas Spectacular. He has been a member of Chamber Singers, University Singers, Covenant Gospel Quartet and UMobile Opera Workshop.

He recently completed student teaching, and plans to pursue a career in music ministry and music education. Pouncey was nominated for the Weaver award by faculty in the School of Education, who described him as "a great example of a scholarly musician."

"Aaron Pouncey is a terrific example of a young man who devotes himself to serving others, which is a reflection of his commitment to his Christian beliefs. Aaron is a superb example of the excellent young people who attend the University of Mobile," the School of Education nomination reads. (UMobile)



Photo courtesy of UMobile

UMobile President Mark Foley (right) presents the Annie Boyd Parker Weaver Excellence Award to Tinsley Griffin at the spring commencement ceremony.

Watch your complimentary Ministry Training Institute lecture on Philippians here



Photo courtesy of Samford University's MTI

As part of your subscription to *The Alabama Baptist*, you will receive a complimentary lecture taught by Kevin Blackwell, executive director of the Ministry Training Institute at Samford University, for the next few weeks. Use your Aurasma app to watch the fourth lecture on Philippians by placing your mobile device over this photo. App instructions noted on page 10.

Shaw named pastor emeritus of FBC Pelham



Photo by Michael Wade/Wade Event Photography

Mike Shaw (left), past president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention who also served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, for 35 years before retiring in 2014, was named the church's pastor emeritus May 15. He and his wife, Mary (center), were honored at the ceremony and Mike Shaw was presented with plaques by Pastor Daven Watkins (right). Mike Shaw was recently called to serve as interim pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Helena.

Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago May 1966

FBC Montgomery member Bettye Jennings is named Mrs. Alabama. She said it was a great thrill for her to be named, but the greatest moment of her life was when she accepted Jesus. Jennings shared this testimony as she sat before television cameras in Montgomery following a selection that made her "the outstanding homemaker in the state." Next for Jennings was to compete in the Mrs. America competition in California.

100 Years Ago May 1916

Several meetings highlighted this month in Alabama Baptist life.

W.F. Feagin, state superintendent of education, spoke to students of Howard College on May 3. He urged them to take a more active part in ending illiteracy in Alabama, where more than 350,000 men and women could not read or write in 1916.

The 30th annual session of the Carey Baptist Sunday School convention was held at Mount Olive Church on May 20-21.

Second Avenue Baptist Church, Opelika, hosted evangelist W.J. Ray and singer "Jack" Johnston. The services continued throughout the week at the courthouse.

150 Years Ago May 1866

After the war many African-Americans who were now freedmen chose to stay with the white churches where they had worshipped for many years.

However, with the ending of the war came a Southern redefinition of what being a "freedman" meant

and this began separations in churches that were already struggling to remain whole.

In May 1866, African-American members of a Eufaula church "applied for their letters" to begin their own church.

The church granted the request and offered to allow the black members use of the building until they could build a church of their own.

Eventually the African-Americans offered to buy the building, which became the home of their separate church. †

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Stave Creek Baptist Church in Jackson, Alabama (Clarke County), seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Stave Creek Baptist Church, ATTN: Rickey Manchester, P.O. Box 685, Jackson, AL 36545.

BIVOCATIONAL/FULL-TIME PASTOR

New Market Baptist Church, New Market, Alabama, is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumé along with CD, DVD or website of recent sermon to: nmbcpsc15@gmail.com or mail to: New Market Baptist Church, P.O. Box 128, New Market, AL 35761.

MUSIC MINISTER

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is seeking a part-time music minister. Please send resumé to: steve.potts@wbclive.com.

MUSIC MINISTER

Carrollton Baptist Church, Carrollton, Alabama, is accepting resumé for a part-time minister of music. Two different morning services and Wednesday night rehearsal. Please reply to: Carrollton Baptist Church, Box 457, Carrollton, AL 35447, or cbc01@centurytel.net.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

Haven Baptist Church in Madison, Alabama, is currently seeking a bivocational minister of music. The music minister must be a Christ follower willing to be a member of the Haven family. He is to lead our choir and congregation in worship. In our music,

we aim to be multi-generational and seek to glorify God by singing Christ-centered songs. Please send inquiries or resumé to: Havenbap@knology.net.

BIVOCATIONAL SONG LEADER

East Huntsville Baptist Church is searching for a bivocational song leader. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 808 Maysville Rd., Huntsville, AL 35801.

MINISTER TO YOUNG ADULTS

First Baptist Church, Huntsville, is seeking a full-time minister to young adults. More information is available at fbchsv.org/employment. Resumé and inquiries may be sent to: search@fbchsv.org.

YOUTH MINISTER

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is seeking a part-time youth pastor. Please send resumé to: steve.potts@wbclive.com.

YOUTH MINISTER

Chulafinnee Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. We are located on Hwy 431 South between Wedowee and Oxford in the Cleburne County/Heflin area. Send resumé to: Chulafinnee Baptist Church, 6961 Hwy 431, Heflin, AL 36264.

YOUTH/CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Kentucky, is accepting resumé 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.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN MINISTRIES

Northwood Hills Baptist Church in Northport is receiving resumé for our part-time paid position. This person will be responsible for programming, enlisting volunteers and connecting with visiting families. Resumé accepted through June 1. Job description, additional information or to submit a resumé, please email Rusty Selman at: office@northwoodhillschurch.com or call the church office at 205-339-3196.

OTHER POSITIONS

ORGANIST

Meadow Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is currently seeking an organist. Responsibilities include playing for Sunday morning worship, assisting with Wednesday evening rehearsals, occasional Sunday evening services as well as playing for weddings and funerals. Please contact worship pastor, David Vaughan at dvaughan@meadowbrookbaptist.org.

TECH ASSISTANT

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is seeking a part-time tech assistant. This position involves worship service media, website and other computer needs. Please contact steve.potts@wbclive.com.

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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.

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Laura Hughes



HUGHES

*First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, EaglePoint campus
Calhoun Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSE: Isaiah 61:1-3

FAVORITE HYMN: "Trust and Obey"

HOBBIES: Playing with grandchildren, reading, traveling, swimming

FAMILY STATUS: Married 46 years to husband, Lawrence K. Hughes; daughter, Amie Hughes Knight (husband, Keith); son, Alan Hughes (wife, Heather); five grandchildren

Laura Hughes, 63, of Ohatchee, believes missions work is vital to every season of a person's life. She has served as a youth leader, women's ministry leader and conference speaker and in support roles as her husband was a pastor and director of missions (DOM). For five years she and her husband were International Mission Board representatives in Western Europe. She recently retired after working seven years at Calhoun Baptist Association.

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

A: My parents and extended family were very faithful. I started going to church at one week old. I saw my father and my mother on their knees often. Mom read us Bible stories every night in her bed and then prayed with us. I accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior when I was 6 at a children's revival.

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

A: I never really imagined being a pastor's wife, DOM's wife or a missionary when I was older. Through (my husband's) ministry, my ministry grew. ... In our missions field of Western Europe we worked with refugees. I also was the family ministry consultant. I was asked to return to my job at Calhoun Association in 2010. I love the work there because every telephone call or visitor would direct your ministry.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: My new ministry is total

care of my husband, whose Alzheimer's disease has progressed to the point that we are basically homebound. ... It demands patience because if he thinks I am stressed, overworked or hurting, he will get very distressed.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: Every day there is joy. We go outside and he points to trees, flowers, birds and stars. When he sees pictures of family or friends, he laughs or smiles. I get the satisfaction of knowing that I am faithful in sickness and health in our marriage.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: My son and daughter, with their spouses, are on call if I need them. They show up when times require another hand. They are all faithful believers.

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

A: I really take life one day at a time with Larry's situation. I want to be active with the association work again one day. They have so many ministries and opportunities and need volunteers.

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

A: I have become very reliant on my Bible studies and prayer life for strength.

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

A: I do not know how people go through life without His comfort and guidance. I have seen miracles by Him through my service. Just working in His fields opens your eyes to His wondrous presence. †

Volunteers from 3 diverse churches unite to fill food bags for children

By Hannah Muñoz
Intern, *The Alabama Baptist*

Boxes of pre-packaged food items lined the floors at the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama on May 12 as members from Vestavia Hills Baptist Church; Tabernacle Baptist Church, Birmingham; and Baptist Church of the Covenant, Birmingham, filled plastic grocery bags for the Weekenders Backpack Program. The Community Food Bank program works to end childhood food insecurity in the Birmingham area.

Each bag the volunteers put together holds two breakfast items, two entrees, two snacks and fruit. The bags are discreetly distributed to children each Friday at schools to take home.

Weekenders Backpack Program, which started distributing bi-monthly in 2007, increased distribution to weekly in 2014, serving 1,200 children every week.

"The change to a weekly distribution cycle allows us to greater solve the problem of children going home for the weekend without any food," said Jon Barnacastle, programs coordinator for Community Food Bank. "We (can now) provide food every weekend."

This became possible when the three churches formed the Covenant of Action in 2014, along with the help of the New Baptist Covenant, a diverse national movement of Baptists engaged



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

Members of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church; Tabernacle Baptist Church, Birmingham; and Baptist Church of the Covenant, Birmingham, fill bags of food for children May 12.

in social action including service work, advocacy, racial reconciliation and the transformation of their communities, according to its website.

'Unifying' community

Mike McBrayer, minister of discipleship and missions at Vestavia Hills Baptist, said, "It's great to see the three churches come together for this common goal."

Allan Burton, member of Church of the Covenant, said in a press release, "In our Covenant of Action we are unifying a Baptist community that has been split apart for too long. We have brought together three diverse

churches for fellowship, worship and service."

In the food bank storehouse, volunteers immediately divided tasks and began to work. One volunteer said, "It seems like such an easy task, filling grocery bags with food, but its impact on a hungry child is great. And we're living out Matthew 25:40 as we do this together: 'Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for Me.'"

Tabernacle Baptist Pastor Chris Hamlin said in a press release, "As followers of Christ, when we see human needs we meet them. ... It's not enough to preach it and teach it. My hands and feet have to move." †

Mulberry Baptist holds missions fair for 'hands-on approach'



Photo courtesy of Andy Mims

For Mulberry Baptist Church, Maplesville, in Chilton Baptist Association, missions is a vital part of life. The church recently held its monthly Missions Night emphasis, but the April 17 event held a new feature — a missions fair. Nine local ministries and several churches participated in the fair and more than 110 people participated. Volunteers and leaders from the participating ministries and churches are pictured here. Pastor Andy Mims said of the new missions fair and monthly missions emphasis at the church, "We now have more of a hands-on approach to missions work as well as continuing to support missions through our Cooperative Program and the Southern Baptist Convention."



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‘Clinically ... a bad idea,’ psychologist says

(continued from page 1)

president of HeartLife Professional Soul Care and a former member of the Mental Health Advisory Council. Similarly, “now that we’ve made this transgender issue such a big deal,” children who have “had feelings or thoughts of same-sex attraction ... are immediately going to begin to think, ‘Gosh, I wonder if I’m in that category’” of transgender.

“And they’re going to feel freer to experiment with that, which is a very detrimental process,” Hannaford said.

For teens struggling with gender dysphoria, a better policy than open restroom access is to provide a single-occupant restroom or changing facility, Hannaford said. Children and adolescents with gender dysphoria are “disgusted” with their own anatomy and do not want to be around peers of either gender in situations involving nudity, he said.

Feelings of a teenager

Though media reports have pointed to some transgender adolescents who say they feel happy about Obama’s directive, Hannaford said the feelings of teenagers are a poor way to measure the wisdom of public policy.

“Kids by nature are going to over-identify with groups that make them feel valuable, that make them feel comfortable,” Hannaford said. A transgender teen who says the administration’s restroom directive makes him feel relieved “is not going to feel very relieved when he goes into a restroom and receives ridicule. It’s going to create problems. It just creates a dynamic that isn’t healthy. It doesn’t allow them to work through” their issues.

“As many as **98%** of gender confused boys and **88%** of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty.”

— Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

“Clinically, this is a really bad idea. There are better solutions for reducing stigma and providing support,” he said.

The views of Stanford and Hannaford align with a document released in March by the American College of Pediatricians, a socially conservative medical association distinct from the larger American Academy of Pediatrics. The document, titled “Gender Ideology Harms Children,” rejected “all policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex.”

Citing the American Psychiatric Association’s “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” the document noted, “As many as 98 percent of gender confused boys and 88 percent of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty.”

The college concluded, “Endorsing gender discordance as normal via public education and legal policies will confuse children and parents, leading more children to present to ‘gender clinics’ where they will be given puberty-blocking drugs. This, in turn, virtually ensures that they will ‘choose’ a lifetime of carcinogenic and otherwise toxic cross-sex hormones, and likely consider unnecessary surgical mutilation of their healthy body parts as young adults.” (BP, TAB)

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African-American pastors say transgender bathrooms, civil rights have 'no relation'

As the number of people pledging to boycott Target over the retailer's transgender restroom use policy surpassed 1.2 million, African-American leaders with Southern Baptist ties rebuffed Target CEO Brian Cornell's suggestion that the push for transgender rights is parallel to the American civil rights movement.

Cornell appeared on CNBC on May 11, the same day the American Family Association (AFA) delivered to Target's corporate headquarters in Minneapolis the signatures of 1 million people who have pledged to boycott Target stores. Cornell said his company is "constantly listening" to customer feedback, but he was unwavering in his support of an April 19 announcement from the retailer stating, "We welcome transgender team members and guests to use the restroom or fitting room facility that corresponds with their gender identity."

Cornell seemed to imply a parallel between the quest for African-American civil rights in the mid-20th century and the quest for open restroom access by transgendered people today.

"We've had a long history of embracing diversity and inclusion," Cornell said in response to a question about the boycott.

"One of our team members sent me a note reminding me that if we went back to the 1960s, our company was one of the very first to use African-American models in their advertising. And back then it wasn't well received. But ... we know we made the right decision."

'Illogical' and 'racist'

Dwight McKissic, pastor of the predominantly African-American Cornerstone Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, said Cornell's comparison between African-American civil rights and transgender restroom access is "illogical" and "racist."

In 2012, McKissic, along with then-Maryland

pastor Eric Redmond, submitted a resolution to the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Resolutions Committee which led to the convention's adoption of a resolution "on same-sex 'marriage' and civil rights rhetoric." The resolution called it "regrettable that homosexual rights activists and those who are promoting the recognition of same-sex 'marriage' have misappropriated the rhetoric of the civil rights movement."

Similarly, racial identity, McKissic said, "is not a matter of choice or feeling" while identifying outwardly with a gender different than one's birth gender is "a matter of choice" — even if the underlying feelings of dissatisfaction with one's gender are involuntary.

"The transgender person is telling God that He (God) made a mistake," McKissic said. "The African-American is telling God no such thing."

Morris Johnson, African-American pastor of Integrity Church, Hueytown, agreed and said there is "no relation at all" between transgender restroom issues and civil rights.

"Being black isn't a choice," Johnson said. "God made us all one people. Civil rights was about accepting different colors. ... When it comes to gender we're talking about someone

trying to be different than what God made them to be."

Johnson said he thinks the boycott is a good thing.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Target's sales have seen the largest drop in two years, despite Cornell's insistence that the boycott is not playing a major role in the decline.

Johnson also thinks it's "a slap in the face" to compare transgender restroom issues to civil rights.

"Don't try to use the civil rights movement to push your agenda," Johnson said of Target. "Going back and using a freedom issue that was for all people to push an issue that is about one person wanting what they want, when they want it, is not right." (BP, TAB)



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 29

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

EXTRAORDINARY Acts 12:7-12, 16-19

Deliverance (7-10)

So far in the biblical account, the persecution was largely instigated by the religious authorities. Now, however, the government began to initiate the persecution. Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, killed James earlier and now he was going to kill Peter. However, it was not time for Peter to die. God sent an angel to free Peter from prison.

It is interesting to see God's sovereignty in this story. James was killed by Herod, but Peter was spared. Why? We do not know why God chose to save Peter and not James, but we need to trust God's sovereignty.

Often, Christians question whether or not God is there in our time of need. We have seen loved ones die without God intervening to extend their lives. But this should not cause us to question God's sovereignty. We need to trust that God works for our own good — we see this in Romans 8:28. God loves us and wants what is best for us, but sometimes we do not see it that way.

Just as a child may not understand why he is being disciplined and may think his parent harsh for doing so, it is out of love that parents discipline children. Because we know God loves us (Rom. 5:8) we can trust Him even when circumstances try to make us question God.

We need to be grounded in Scripture so that when trials come our way, we can lean on the promises of God to help us through. And how we handle trials can serve as a witness to other Christians and strengthen their faith.

It also can serve as a witness to non-Christians by showing them that the hope we have is not contingent upon our cir-

cumstances, but is instead in Christ who lives within us.

Delight (11-12)

Once Peter was rescued, it took him a few minutes to realize what had happened. Just because Peter was saved in this miraculous fashion doesn't mean God will rescue us in dire circumstances.

Some Christians believe that if you just have enough faith, God will keep you from bad circumstances. The Bible repeatedly shows that this is clearly not the case. Paul had plenty of faith and yet was executed by the Romans. Jesus says we will suffer if we follow Him, so we should not be surprised if the world hates us (see John 15:18-19).

Determined (16-17)

Peter shared his miraculous rescue with the other Christians. It is important for us to remember to share with other believers how God has answered our prayers. These believers had been praying for Peter's release and God answered their prayers. Telling others of God's love and care for us is an important aspect of Christian fellowship. It builds up the faith of believers and this is crucial, especially when society is opposed to Christianity.

Disturbance (18-19)

The escape of Peter brought frustration to the authorities. Governments have been trying to silence Christianity since its inception, but all have failed. In fact, it often seems that the harder the authorities try to stamp out Christianity, the less they succeed.

This is encouraging for us today. In spite of a world that often plots against Christianity, we can have hope that the Church will never be destroyed. The very gates of hell cannot prevail against it, which gives us the strength to live in confidence that God is for us. And if God is for us, who can be against us (see Rom. 8:31-39)? †

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

SEIZE THE DAY: A CALL TO MISSIONS Acts 8:26-35

Be willing to go where God sends you. (26-27a)

Once Philip's ministry in Samaria was well established, he was sent by the Holy Spirit to make contact with the treasurer of the kingdom of Ethiopia. The location where Philip witnessed to this man was the road south of Jerusalem that led to Gaza. The town of Gaza, built in 57 B.C., was by the sea and was the last watering place before the desert on the route to Egypt.

The encounter between the Ethiopian God-seeker and Philip, which includes an angelic visitation and chariot riding, are an interesting echo of the Old Testament accounts of Elijah's ministry (see 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 3). Many commentators also note the parallels of this story and Luke's recounting of Jesus' exchange with Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24).

Be open to cross cultural boundaries. (27b)

The Ethiopia referred to here likely was the ancient kingdom of Meroe, which lay south of Aswan along the Nile. It is not to be confused with modern-day Ethiopia, which is in the hill country to the east of the upper Nile. Meroe was a flourishing culture from the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. The Old Testament refers to it as the Kingdom of Cush, and dark-skinned Africans inhabited it. This remote, advanced culture was an object of fascination for the Greeks and Romans. For the Greek and Roman empires, Meroe represented the extreme edge of the civilized world. The king of Meroe was deified as child of the sun-god and was regarded as too holy to deal with secular functions. His was a more ceremonial role.

The powerful queen mother, who had the title of "the Candace," supervised actual administration of the kingdom.

The Ethiopian whom Philip encountered was the minister of finance. Whether he was an actual eunuch is uncertain. Eunuchs were found to be particularly trustworthy and loyal to their rulers. So common was the practice of placing them over the treasury that in time the term "eunuch" became a synonym for "treasurer." Thus one bearing the title of "eunuch" was not necessarily one who had been castrated.

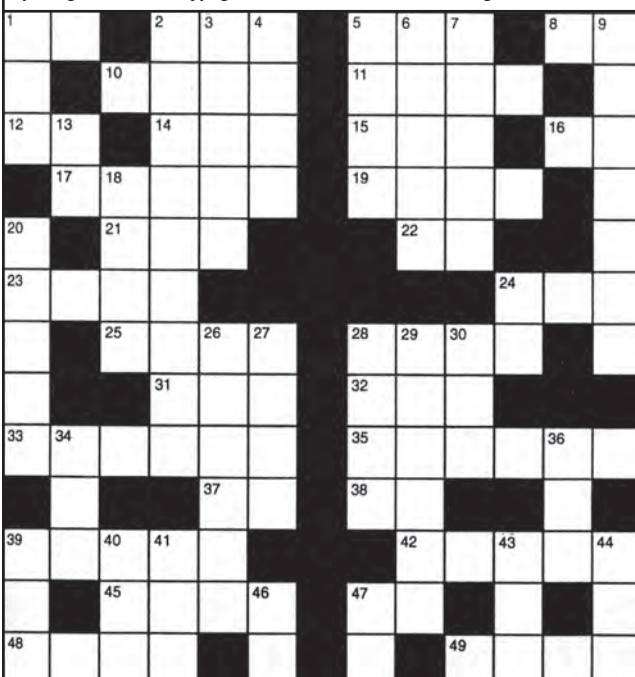
Be ready to share Jesus. (28-35)

Why was the Ethiopian reading from the prophet Isaiah? Perhaps he was dwelling on this book because of its hopeful references about Ethiopia's participation in the blessings of God (see Isa. 18:1; 45:14-15). Philip gets to his evangelistic witness right away: "Do you understand what you are reading?" Such a question asked by a stranger of a literate man could be perceived as condescending and offensive. Nevertheless, Philip risks such offense for the sake of sharing the gospel.

The Ethiopian wanted to know the identity of the prophet of whom Isaiah speaks. Jews of that day debated about whether Isaiah was addressing his own suffering, the nation of Israel's suffering or the suffering of the hoped-for Messiah. There is no doubt that as Philip opened the Scriptures to this God-seeker, Philip pointed him to Jesus as the Messiah of whom Isaiah prophesied. Most striking is that of all Old Testament passages, the Ethiopian was reading from the servant songs of Isaiah. Few verses of the Old Covenant point so clearly to the suffering death of Christ. What a perfect evangelistic opportunity for Philip. This was not mere coincidence, but clear leading of the Spirit. May we be so prepared for the Spirit's leading as witnesses for Christ. †

Christian Crossword

By Marge Lifto Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. Thou shalt not muzzle the _____. (1 Tim. 5:18)
2. To put on a garment.
5. ____ of me, and I shall give thee. (Ps. 2:8)
8. Washington, _____.
10. Set the city on _____. (Josh. 8:19)
11. The wicked ____ their bow. (Ps. 11:2)
12. _____, the winter is past. (Song of Sol. 2:11)
14. Why ____ we here? (2 Kings 7:3)
15. A time to be born, and a time to _____. (Eccles. 3:2)
16. 40 (Roman numeral).
17. Mexican fare.
19. ____ with her suburbs. (1 Chron. 6:70)
21. A place to store coal.
22. An elevated track.
23. From whence cometh my _____. (Ps. 121:1)
24. I will break also the ____ of Damascus. (Amos 1:5)
25. Time in nothing ____.

(Acts 17:21)

28. Biblical word for "wash."
31. The 7th Greek letter.
32. _____, lama sabachthani. (Matt. 27:46)
33. Subject for an essay.
35. Delivers a blow.
37. New Testament. (abbr.)
38. I go ____ prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)
39. To begin.
42. Elimelech's wife. (Ruth 1:2)
45. ____ up and walk. (Luke 5:23)
47. In the year of our Lord. (abbr.)
48. Where Christ was placed after His Crucifixion.
49. A heavenly garden.

Down

1. Thou anointest my head with _____. (Ps. 23:5)
2. Jesus had 12 _____. (Matt. 10:1)
3. Which maketh Arcturus,

____, and Pleiades.

- (Job 9:9)
4. They forsook their _____. (Mark 1:18)
5. Son of Shammua. (Neh. 11:17)
6. To fish a certain way.
7. Let us ____ before the Lord. (Ps. 95:6)
9. When they were come to the place, which is called _____. (Luke 23:33)
13. Old Testament. (abbr.)
18. Having the ability.
20. _____, O Israel. (Zeph. 3:14)
24. To exist.
26. Limits to a certain amount.
27. As far as the ____ is from the west. (Ps. 103:12)
28. ____ some evil take me. (Gen. 19:19)
29. The ____ tree shall flourish. (Eccles. 12:5)
30. Seven. (Roman numeral)
34. The sun waxed _____. (Ex. 16:21)
36. A shade tree.

39. ____ on the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)
40. Put on strength, O ____ of the Lord. (Isa. 51:9)
41. Adam lost one for Eve.
43. Not young.
44. Hotel.
46. For example. (abbr.)
47. I ____ the bread of life. (John 6:35)



“I really believe that the heart of missions is in Baptist churches. If we don’t continue to teach that history and legacy ... it could die in one generation.”

Rosalie Hunt
retired missionary, author



Rosalie Hunt

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Telling the story

Former IMB missionary Hunt continues sharing missions through monologues, writings

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Rosalie Hunt has had a long-standing love for three things — China, missions and words. “I grew up as a child of a missionary in China,” she said, “and I met Bob when I was still in high school. He felt called to serve Chinese people.”

So in 1961, after getting married, the two were appointed through the International Mission Board to move overseas to serve among the Chinese.

“We went to the missions field with two little children, and we ended up over the years in eight countries primarily

working with Chinese people,” Hunt said. Thirty-four years later they found themselves back in Alabama as so-called “retirees,” Hunt said with a laugh.

40 years of writing

But that hasn’t stopped her from telling the story of China — and the story of missions in general. Hunt, a member of First Baptist Church, Guntersville, spends a lot of her time penning books and writing and performing monologues with missions at their core.

She wrote her first work — a missions story book for children — in 1975.

And 40 years later she still hasn’t slowed down.

In 2006 she released “Bless God and Take Courage: The Judson History and Legacy,” a book about the challenging lives of the three women who served alongside missionary Adoniram Judson in Burma. In 2013 she wrote “We’ve a Story to Tell: 125 Years of WMU” for national Woman’s Missionary Union’s (WMU) 125th anniversary celebration.

Passing the legacy down

And now she’s releasing “Her Way: The Remarkable Story of Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend,” the story of a lesser-known WMU pioneer she uncovered when doing the research for the WMU history book (see story, this page).

“I think her story is inspiring,” Hunt said. “We need to pass that legacy down. Our problems aren’t a patch on what she went through, what she endured. We need to keep that legacy going for the next generation.”

In addition to the book, one way she’s brought Hephzibah’s story to life is through a monologue she presents to various missions groups, dressed in character as Hephzibah.

“I did one once that was 25 minutes long — that’s the longest I’ve ever done. That was a challenge. The older I get, the harder it is to memorize,” she said.

In the years before Hephzibah was on Hunt’s radar, she traveled doing monologues as Lottie Moon, a Southern Baptist missionary who gave her life in service to China.

“Lottie and I have been working together for 20 years now,” Hunt said.

She said it’s important to keep the stories of people like Lottie and Hephzibah alive.

Fully invested

“I really believe that the heart of missions is in Baptist churches,” Hunt said. “If we don’t continue to teach that history and legacy to our young people, it could die in one generation. It’s so important to keep them informed and caring.”

That’s why she’s so firmly invested in the work of WMU. Hunt’s connections with WMU have been strong for quite a while. She’s served in different roles over the years, including Alabama WMU president for four years and national WMU recording secretary for five years.

Laurie Register, executive director-treasurer of South Carolina WMU, said Hunt’s sense of and love for history is “important as we look to the future.”

And, she said, Hunt’s ability to capture a story for an audience is amazing.

“I have had a chance to travel with her a little bit as she interviewed people for the book, and her work is fascinating — she has a way with people and with words,” Register said. †

Hunt’s discovery of Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend

Six years ago, when she was working on writing the history of national Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU), Rosalie Hunt found a surprise — a surprise named Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend.

“I was researching and digging and trying to find out more information about WMU, and I came across her story and I thought, ‘Why don’t we know more about this woman?’” Hunt said.

Quite a story

She had quite a story, that Hephzibah, Hunt said.

“She was born in Charleston during the siege, two days after it fell to the British. Her father was in prison in a dungeon.

And her mother died after she was born.”

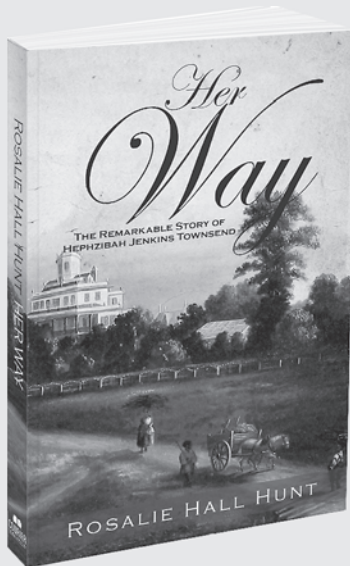
The slaves there promised Hephzibah’s mother they would take care of the baby and get her back to their home in Edisto.

“All of her life, Hephzibah said the slaves were her people and she meant it,” Hunt said. “I have woven that thread through the whole story.”

The story — written in the form of a historical novel — is told in Hunt’s new book, “Her Way: The Remarkable Story of Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend.”

Hephzibah had an untold impact on the slave community and beyond, blazing the trail for the start of WMU by starting a missionary society.

And that society became the model for many that followed — not just WMU.



— ‘IN — His hands’

Shank says God's purpose for his life is to 'spread His Word'

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While he may have been picked up late by the Seattle Mariners in the 2013 Major League June Amateur Draft, Zach Shank's pickups were on time in his off-season job.

A third baseman for the Jackson Generals, Shank worked for UPS Inc. in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, during his first two off-seasons. The manual labor was physically demanding and exhausting but had a side benefit: "It makes this seem like fun," Shank said of baseball.

His grit-and-grind attitude have been evident in the field where he has played every position but catcher in his minor league career.

"Anywhere" is his favorite position, he said. "I want to establish myself as a guy who can play in the lineup every day. I don't want to be labeled. I know a lot of utility guys are labeled as fill-in players."

During the 2015 season he was called up from Jackson, the Mariner's Double-A affiliate in the Southern League, to Tacoma, the Triple-A Pacific Coast League club of the Mariners. He played 33 games for the Tacoma Rainiers.

Shank's former teammate, Paul Fry, a pitcher now with Tacoma, said, "Zach is one of the hardest working guys on the team. He is a grinder for sure, an all-around athlete."

Tacoma shortstop Tyler Smith, who played with Shank in Jackson in 2015 and had been a teammate for three years, said, "We feed off everything he does. He comes to the field with a positive attitude every day. He's the nicest guy in the world."

Through Shank's actions that include the way he treats people, Smith said, "You can definitely see God in him. From the moment I met him I could that he had it (faith) in him. Faith is important to him."

Raised by Christian parents in Lititz, Pennsylvania, Shank said, "I accepted Jesus into my heart a long time ago." His parents are spiritual role models for him and his sister.

'Blessed numerous times'

Shank is a member of the former Lancaster County Bible Church, which has now changed its name to Lives Changed By Christ.

"I have been blessed numerous times in many ways. I was born into an unbelievable family which is part of His plan obviously. I have been blessed physically to be able to play a game that I love. I have been

touched by Him in many ways for sure," said Shank, 25.

"I never doubted from the time I was a little kid that Jesus died for our sins. Jesus is the way to eternal life. It is really comforting to know that there is something bigger than you out there. Everything is in His hands."

When he was young, his faith buoyed him while facing a health crisis. Shank had an intestinal obstruction that required surgery to remove a section of his intestines.

"I went through some pretty rough times with my health and to bring it back to sports, you are going to go through some rough times in baseball because it is a game of failure," Shank said.

He has learned to be resilient, which is a strength of his game.

Jackson outfielder Ian Miller, a Christian, said, "I see the (Bible) teachings with how positive he is and his optimism. I ask him a lot of questions about his faith and we talk about it a lot. For our team spiritually, he is always an upbeat guy."

God's purpose for his life, Shank said, is to "spread His Word. I think that is what I came here to do."

And baseball has provided a platform. "It introduces you to a lot of different people. Every season you have new guys coming through," he said.

Shank's call-up to Tacoma last season was unexpected.

"It was kind of a surprise," he said. "I didn't feel like I deserved to

go up. I didn't have great numbers and a few of my teammates had much better numbers. I would have been more comfortable with them going. I feel like they had earned it over me."

Shank was first team All-Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) in 2013 and led Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, in batting average (.370), home runs (three), slugging percentage (.517), total bases (109) and runs scored (50). A mathematics major, Shank was on the 2011 MAAC All-Academic team.

From Marist, Shank went to Pulaski, Virginia, in the rookie Appalachian League in 2013, then to Clinton, Iowa, in the Midwest League (Single-A). In 2014 he batted .302 with Clinton. He had 71 hits including 17 doubles. Shank also played with High Desert (California League, High-A) in 2014 before Jackson and Tacoma in 2015. His batting average in Jackson was .249 in 60 games last season, .252 in Tacoma.

Through early May this season, Shank was among the General's leading hitters with a .327 average. ♣



Zach Shank

Photo by Kyle Carter/Jackson Generals

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Christians in India beaten by Hindu extremists

TEWARDIH, India — Police in India initially declined to take action after Hindu extremists tortured one Christian and severely beat another, sources said.

In the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, Hindu extremists in Tewardih, Varanasi, who have long insisted that a 30-year-old convert from Hinduism, Joginder Gold, stop worshipping Christ, took him to a farmhouse April 9 and tortured him.

Police later took Gold to a government hospital. When area Christian leaders submitted a police complaint against the assailants, however, officers took no action and instead cast into question the legality of Gold's conversion, asking when he had converted and "who converted" him, according to Pastor Patsy David.

On the same day in Saidpur Garur, Jaunpur, about 31 miles from Varanasi, Hindu extremists severely beat a 57-year-old pastor, sources said.

Area Christian leaders and relatives of the pastor called the police. "Initially the local police refused to take our complaint and told us to leave the area and go back to our native place, Kerala," an area Christian said. "They even told us to rewrite our complaint and delete many of the details."

Area Christian leaders intervened, however, approaching higher officials and submitting a new complaint against the attackers. Police registered a case against the Hindu extremists, but they absconded, and at press time no arrests had been made. (MS)

Church leader in Sudan released after months in jail

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Sudan recently released 1 of 2 church leaders jailed since December 2015, sources said.

Telahoan Nogose Kassa, head of discipleship at the embattled Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church, was released after Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested him without charges Dec. 13, 2015, according to church members.

It was unclear why Kassa was released but NISS can hold detainees for up to four and a half months without judicial review, according to Human Rights Watch.

Said to be staffed by hard-line Islamists, NISS is known for its torture and other abusive tactics.

NISS agents went to the home of the 36-year-old Kassa the night of Dec. 13 and told him to report to their offices, sources said. When he went to a NISS office the following day officials arrested him and took him to a detention center in Khartoum.

NISS officials gave no reason for the arrest, though they questioned him for five consecutive days about his relationship with a foreign missionary who had attended a discipleship class, sources said.

They believe he was targeted for his Christian activities and his opposition to government interference with his church. (MS)

Kazakh Baptist imprisoned, fined for sharing faith

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Baptist prisoner of conscience Roman Dimmel spent three days in prison in Kazakhstan's Karaganda Region in early May for refusing to pay a fine handed down in 2015 for offering Christian literature and sharing his faith.

He has already served an earlier three-day prison term and been banned from leaving Kazakhstan because of the unpaid fine.

In a separate case two Baptists have been fined in Kostanai Region for offering Christian literature on the streets. A criminal case on charges of inciting religious hatred was dropped. The Christian books, leaflets and CDs seized from them were ordered to be destroyed.

An official of the Regional Religious Affairs Department — which would carry out the destruction — said he would do so if the lower court verdict were confirmed on appeal.

Leaders on the Religious Affairs Committee refused to discuss why individuals are punished for offering religious literature or sharing their faith with others and why courts order religious literature destroyed. (F18)