



INSIDE



Churches should address sexual violence, provide safe place to heal

◆ Page 3



While number of senior adults living alone has dropped, many still feel isolated, survey says

◆ Page 4



Could state prison system crisis be exactly what churches need?

◆ Page 8

Every TRIBE

Morningview Baptist member follows God's leading to reach community

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It might be easy to look at Hallay Cagle's life and ministry and think the doors just swung wide open.

But they didn't.

"The community was very closed off," she said of a Mixteco population living in a secluded apartment complex in Montgomery.

She'd gone there as a high schooler trying to build relationships with what she thought was a Spanish-speaking people group from Mexico.

"We went there to do a backyard Bible club, and we had brought a Spanish translator with us," said Cagle, a member of Morningview Baptist Church, Montgomery. "After a while, a young boy spoke up and said, 'We speak English well enough, and we don't speak Spanish at all.' And I thought, 'Oh no — what kind of assumptions have we made?'"

They were from Mexico, sure — but they were Mixteco, a people from southern Mexico with their own language.

And they didn't want to have a lot

to do with Cagle and her friends.

"But that same young boy, he asked me if I would come back and help him with his homework," Cagle said.

Relationship building

So she did — for a year.

"We would sit on the curb and do his homework," she said. "It opened the door. But it didn't happen quickly."

A year later his mom came outside and asked Cagle to come into their home and eat with them.

That's how her relationship with the Mixtecos started.

And two years later — at age 18 — she moved into their apartment complex.

It shocked the community, she said.

"At the time there was not a single white person living anywhere near the area," Cagle said.

"They were surprised but by then they were all comfortable with me because they knew why I was there and what my purpose was."

Kristy Kennedy, who directs English as a Second Language ministry for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Cagle's open door happened because she was willing to lay the groundwork.

"She's the American that they all know, love and trust," Kennedy said. "She befriended them and out of that has grown an incredible ministry."

Once Cagle moved in, every-

"They accepted me as part of the community because I became a member of the community."

Hallay Cagle
Every Tribe Ministries



Coming soon in an upcoming issue:
ESL ministries throughout the state

Photo courtesy of Hallay Cagle

thing began to really open up.

"They have a lot of (religious) rituals and ceremonies, and I'd hear about them before I lived there, but once I moved in I could see it, and they were willing to invite me in and have conversations about it," Cagle said. "They accepted me as part of the community because I became a member of the community."

And living there made a huge difference in her learning the culture and language, she said.

"The language is all oral and it's a tonal language," Cagle said. "One word with a tiny little change in a sound can mean something completely different."

Loving the people

But she loved it and she loved the people.

And when she got married, her husband, Bryant, moved right into the community with her and they continued with Every Tribe Ministries together.

"In our apartment, our ministry center was downstairs and we were living upstairs. We didn't move out until we found out we were expecting a baby, because there was no room for another person in that tiny apartment," she said with a laugh.

Community involvement

They moved into a house just outside the apartment complex, but they haven't slowed down their involvement in the community — they're in the process of becoming North American Mission Board missionaries to the Mixtecos.

It's just continuing what Cagle knew she wanted to do ever since she was a child.

"I was raised in a missionary family and this was just kind of everything that we did day to day," she said. "I always knew I loved missions and wanted to do missions, and once I met these people I knew this was exactly where I was supposed to be." ✠

COMMENT

Anticipating the SBC Annual Meeting

Southern Baptists by the thousands will descend on St. Louis, Missouri, on June 12–15 for the 159th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). At this point, however, how many thousands will participate is an open question.

In 1987 during the throws of denominational struggle, the annual meeting in St. Louis drew 25,607 registered messengers. This year it will be surprising if the number of messengers reaches one-quarter of that number.

Each of the last three years the annual meetings in Houston, Baltimore and Columbus, Ohio, drew less than 5,500 messengers. The low participation caused SBC President Ronnie Floyd to reference sacrifices made by leaders of the Conservative Resurgence and argue, “Certainly this price was not paid for us to see our annual Southern Baptist gatherings become so small we’re unable to mobilize thousands upon thousands of pastors and laypeople to our missions.”

Dwindling participation is such a concern that this year visitors and guests as well as messengers will be asked to register. This will give a truer picture of the number of persons participating in the annual meeting, officials say.

Early indicators predict a larger participation than the 5,407 messengers in Columbus. Room reservations are up about 11 percent over 2015 at this time, officials report. Early registrations are significantly ahead of 2015. Also participants may be younger than in the past. Despite increasing the capacity of preschool child care for the annual meeting, the slots available for pre-registration were claimed earlier than in 2015.

One reason for the probable uptick in participation may be the election of a new SBC president. Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in Northwest, Arkansas, completes two years as SBC president at the conclusion of the upcoming annual meeting and is ineligible for re-election. Participation usually climbs when a new president is to be elected.

Presidential candidates

Three candidates have been announced as of this writing: J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina; former Alabama pastor Steve Gaines, now pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee; and David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans.

A minor flap erupted when three SBC entity leaders appeared on a rap video promoting Greear’s candidacy. International Mission Board President David Platt quickly assured Gaines and others that he did not know how his video clip would be used when Greear asked for it and that he (Platt) was not endorsing anyone. Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, defended his participation saying being an SBC



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

entity head did not prevent him “from expressing support of a candidate or several candidates.”

Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), refused to comment on his participation in the video though contacted by two different state Baptist papers.

Some have tried to describe the election as a doctrinal showdown. Greear participates in at least one organization that requires church polity practices long associated with Calvinism. Gaines, on the other hand, is a strong voice for “whosoever will” evangelism. Crosby is often feted for his exemplary leadership in rebuilding New Orleans following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Some see the increase in pre-registrations as evidence of a stealth campaign for one candidate or the other. Others say it only evidences churches becoming more familiar with pre-registration options. If there are doctrinally related campaigns around the election of a president, the campaigns have been mostly underground for there are few indications of anything other than business as usual at this point.

Contested elections are not new in SBC life. Floyd was elected the first time with 51.62 percent of the vote in a three-way race in 2014. Bryant Wright received 36.84 percent of the votes in a four-person race in 2010 and then garnered 55.11 percent in a run-off. Johnny Hunt gained 52.94 percent of the vote in a six-person race in 2008 and Frank Page garnered 50.48 percent on the first ballot of a three-person contest in 2006.

Floyd continues to innovate in the program of the annual meeting. This year he led the Order of Business Committee to devote almost an hour of prime time to discuss racial unity in America. Jerry Young — president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, the largest predominately African-American convention, and pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Jackson,

Mississippi — will be a featured panelist. Also on the panel will be Marshall Blalock, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina.

During his presidency Floyd has worked to improve SBC relations with African-American groups, especially after recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, and shootings in Charleston, South Carolina.

Other innovations include a panel discussion about “Pastors and the Church in American Politics Today” and devoting the Tuesday evening session to a time of prayer for spiritual awakening in the United States and around the world.

Still another change will be a 50-minute time block during which messengers may ask questions of SBC entity presidents. Oversight of SBC entities is committed to elected trustees but the ability for messengers to raise questions with entity presidents from the floor of the convention is an important safeguard in Baptist democracy.

This year’s resolutions promise to be interesting. Doubtless the Resolutions Committee will ask messengers to express opinions concerning issues around transgender accommodations and the abortion mandate in the Affordable Care Act. It will be interesting to see what the committee does with the proposed resolution opposing the display of Confederate flags in government buildings in light of the emphasis on building racial unity.

ERLC’s Moore also may ignite a spark or two. Letter writers to *The Alabama Baptist* and other state Baptist papers have expressed sharp disagreements with him over his statements condemning Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump and other comments. Whether this disagreement will reach the convention floor is unknown.

The SBC annual meeting proper is June 14–15. The other days are filled with related meetings for pastors, Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) leaders, directors of missions and others. One important event for Alabama Baptists will be a Sunday afternoon reception for retiring WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee. Lee has given outstanding leadership to this important missions agency during a time of great change. She also is an active Alabama Baptist. The reception will be a time to express appreciation for her vision and leadership.

Every SBC annual meeting produces surprises and this one will be no exception. Please join in praying that God will be honored and the witness of Southern Baptists will be strengthened by how the messengers work together during this annual meeting as well as through what we decide to do together. ☛

“Every SBC annual meeting produces surprises and this one will be no exception. Please join in praying that God will be honored.”

TAB
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

PRINT

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

DIGITAL

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

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Neisha Roberts
Editorial Production Coordinator

Maggie Walsh
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Wanda Bergeron
Local Editions

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
Director of Circulation
and Public Relations

NEWS SERVICES

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

POSTMASTER

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

ADDRESS CHANGE

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

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

Full member of
Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of
Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional
Christian Newspaper'

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

Healing from abuse & violence

Churches should address sexual violence, provide safe place to heal

Something happened recently on Baylor University's campus in Waco, Texas, that Kyndall Rae Rothaus said she doesn't remember ever happening before. She and others hosted a four-part series for survivors of sexual assault and their advocates.

"We created a space for lament, then silence, next anger and finally hope," said Rothaus, pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church, Waco, and a columnist for Baptist News Global (BNG). "We acknowledged in each service that everyone's pace of healing is unique, and that the stages of healing are never linear."

And she wrote in a BNG column that she didn't remember any other single instance of hearing a sermon on sexual violence.

"The rarity of what we created strikes me as a sad failure of the Church," Rothaus wrote. "It occurs to me that perhaps not all pastors realize that around one quarter of the women in their congregations have been (often silent) victims of sexual or inter-personal violence/abuse. Some of the men in their congregations have been victims too."

Maybe pastors just don't know what to do about the "horrifying" statistics, and as a result the silence surrounding dangerous situations can persist, she wrote.

One thing they can do, Rothaus noted, is to always include comments for people in abusive situations when they preach on marriage and relationships.

Public caveat

"Some people do need to leave a relationship for their own safety or the safety of their children," she wrote. "I'm serious. Never talk about marriage or divorce again without that public caveat, even if it feels a little out of place. Maybe it is only one sentence in your whole sermon or Bible study lesson, but that one sentence could save someone's life."

Many people stay in severely abusive situations because they've never heard their pastor say it's OK to leave, Rothaus wrote.

"It's not your life that's in danger. Let your words make someone else uncomfortable if it could save a life," she said.

Pastors and youth leaders also should make



123rf.com

it their mission to educate their church about sexual violence, Rothaus wrote.

"Require everyone who works with children and youth, whether they are paid or volunteer, to complete child abuse prevention training before they can work with the children," she wrote.

Lisa Keane, clinical director at Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, agreed.

"We're huge fans of background checks," she said, but she added that churches should take it one level further and also get a child abuse and neglect check done.

"It's kind of a headache but it can really be worth it, because instances of child abuse don't show up on a criminal background check if charges are dropped," Keane said.

And it's important for church leaders to know their volunteers well, she said.

"It's good to do interviews beforehand and get your eyes on the person," Keane said.

"It's also good to occasionally drop in on classrooms just to be there and make your presence known."

It's also key not to relax on your policies, she said.

"The first thing we always talk about with a congregation is to make rules — for example there should be two adults present at all times with children or adolescents — and then stick with them," Keane said. "Sometimes church leaders get lax with following their own rules and think, 'Oh, it's OK this one time.' But you have to be firm."

Trust the victim

And if abuse allegations happen, trust the victim, Rothaus wrote. "This is crucial. Always respond to an abuse story with belief. The percentage of false accusations is small and you can do a lot of psychological damage to a victim by casting doubt on their story."

And if the victim is an adult in an abusive relationship, church leaders should never be the judge of whether or not they should go back to that relationship, she wrote.

"Never. That is never your job. No matter how sincere you think a perpetrator's apologies and confessions are, you do not know if he (or she) is telling the truth, or if that partner is safe," Rothaus wrote.

"Sometimes Christians are so afraid of condoning divorce that we uphold marriage to the detriment of someone's safety. Keep in mind that abuse can be very well hidden and it can happen in the homes you least expect." (BNG, TAB)

**"Always respond to an abuse story with belief.
The percentage of false accusations is small,
and you can do a lot of psychological damage
to a victim by casting doubt on their story."**

**Pastor Kyndall Rae Rothaus
Lake Shore Baptist Church, Waco, Texas**

CHANGING TRENDS IN senior adult MINISTRIES



123rf.com

Senior adult ministers should strive to respect seniors' need for independence while ministering to those who feel isolated, Alabama ministers say.

While number of senior adults living alone has dropped, many still feel isolated

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

Trends and attitudes are changing for senior adults, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey, and the shifts open up a discussion for senior adult ministers.

Changes outlined in the survey include an increased value on independence and a shift in senior adults' living arrangements by gender.

"After rising steadily for nearly a century, the share of older Americans living alone has fallen since 1990, largely because women ages 65 to 84 are increasingly likely to live with their spouse or their children," Pew reported.

Living alone

Overall, the share of older adults living alone has dropped 3 percent, to 26 percent, a decline primarily driven by women ages 65 to 84. The percentage for this group dropped eight points since 1990 to 30 percent, a change Pew attributed to more women living with spouses, children or other relatives.

This statistic doesn't ring true across the board, however.

Ann Self, who has been the senior adult minister at First Baptist Church, Haleyville, with her husband, Bill, for 10 years, said at her church many women over 65 live alone.

Health reasons

"I don't see (senior women living with relatives) in our church," she said. "The only time they choose to live with children or relatives is when they can no longer be alone because of their health."

David Puckett, who previously served as co-coordinator of senior adult ministry at First Baptist Church, Geraldine, with his wife for 16 years, agreed, adding that he's seen that women over 65 want to live near their children, but not with them.

"They don't want to interrupt others' lives so they stay by themselves," he said.

But living alone can be a two-edged sword. According to the survey, those who live alone reported feeling more socially isolated than those who live with

a spouse or other relative. And men who live alone are less satisfied with the amount of friends they have than men who live with others, Pew reported.

So how can churches best minister to senior adults who are feeling isolated while balancing their need for independence?

"It's a very important thing, the individual independence. [This ministry is] a matter of staying in touch and not just being dropped off the map with the church," Puckett said. "That's really the secret to [senior adult ministry] is being able to stay in touch."

"I think one of the problems sometimes is seniors, whether couples or individuals, may not want to actually seek help and they can get isolated especially if their family is limited or not able to help them."

"I think that's where the Church can be encouraging and realize that there are people who care and not only pray for them but help them too," he said.

Notification system

First, Geraldine, for instance, uses GroupCast, a mass notification system, to get the word out to members about prayer requests and special needs. Puckett said the automated system has worked better for the church than the traditional prayer chain method because it has made a wider variety of church members aware of

the senior adults in the pew next to them.

"Our people found out that they could minister just by going in and engaging in a conversation

with someone who may not have had any contact the whole day otherwise," he said. Self agreed that keeping a finger on the

pulse of the ministry is essential. And at First, Haleyville, the deacons have gotten involved.

"They've taken it upon themselves to have a list of all the widows ... that they check on," she said, and it's a point of contact that makes a big difference in these women's lives.

Both churches use fellowship meals to keep senior adults socially active, and these meals can

be weekly, monthly or just special outings. Just feeling like part of a group, Self said, can be enough to ease feelings of isolation.

"When [my husband and I] started this ministry we asked the pastor at the time, 'What do you want us to do?' He said, 'I want you to make them feel worthwhile, to make them feel like they're a part of something,'" Self said.

Pay it forward

Another way to accomplish that goal is by paying that worthwhile feeling forward. First, Geraldine, senior adults do this through a weekly visitation ministry to assisted living facilities and nursing homes in their area.

Puckett said, "[Senior adults] have a lot to offer. I think we're tending to live longer but also with quality health and they're a group that can minister." ☪

For resources and ideas for senior adult ministry, visit alsbom.org/seniors.

"It's a very important thing, the individual independence. [This ministry is] a matter of staying in touch and not just being dropped off the map with the church."

David Puckett

former co-coordinator of senior adult ministry, FBC Geraldine

OPPORTUNITY
to grow your business!

Less than 7% of advertising is geared toward boomers!

Reach more than 100,000 boomers weekly!

Contact our advertising department for more information:
bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org
205-777-6307

TAB
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Responding to grief

'It's important to give grieving persons permission to express what they feel,' Sweatt says

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Helen Keller once said that surviving grief is accomplished by going through it. Birmingham-area ministers had opportunity to learn how to help church members move through the grief process at a seminar held at Brookdale University Park in Homewood on April 28. The event was jointly sponsored by Brookdale, Community Grief Support and Dignity Memorial/Ridout's Valley Chapel.

"Bereavement is death-related and it literally means 'to be torn apart,'" said Steve Sweatt, Community Grief Support clinical director. "Loss refers to being separated from a thing of value and grief is the normal and involuntary response to loss. Mourning is how we give expression to our grief. Healing comes when we move from grieving to mourning and when we're able to talk to others about our loss.

"It's important to reminisce and release," he said. "It's important to give grieving persons permission to express what they feel. The first response is often anger. They need to express their anger toward God or others and get the 'bile' out of their system. The grief supporter can come along-



Photo by Michael J. Brooks

side them and encourage this process."

Sweatt introduced the group to a new term used in grief ministry: "habituation."

"Habituation means that a grieving person should be able to revisit their loss and touch their pain," he said. "It's healthy for those with losses to be able to talk about

the loss, to name their departed loved ones, to talk about the things they remember and to express how they felt then and how they feel now. This is the way we get to the point of mastering our pain."

Sweatt also uses the phrase "grief garden" as a way to refer to an environment of care the Church can provide.

"Sometimes this environment means doing practical things for grieving people, like hoeing or weeding in the garden," he said. "We can help with tax returns or mow the grass. We shouldn't tell a grieving person to 'call me if you need me' but rather take initiative and do the things that are helpful. Congregations can provide the warmth of their presence and people will grow through the process as living things grow in a garden."

Larry Michael, pastor for adult ministries at South Highland Presbyterian

Church, Birmingham, shared information from his 2015 book, "A Necessary Grief." "There are so many inappropriate responses to grief," he said, "and we've probably heard them all — things like 'It's time to move on,' or 'Don't cry; it only upsets your family.' We sometimes have the idea people should 'put on a happy face' rather than making the commitment to stay with them through the journey."

Appropriate humor also can be therapeutic as can sharing on social media, Michael added.

Michael encouraged congregations to consider grief ministry and to consider those who've suffered loss as the ones to staff the ministry.

One source in Michael's book who started a grief ministry in his church said, "Special sensitivity should be given to every special event that first year: the first holidays, the first birthday, the first anniversary for a married person and the first anniversary of the loved one's death should be noted. A simple statement such as, 'I know this must be a difficult day for you without [your loved one], and I want you to know that I'm praying for you' can mean the world to a grieving person."

Both presenters counseled the group to be tender with grieving people, realizing that what Sweatt called a "sudden temporary upsurge of grief" or what Michael called a "grief burst" may occur without warning or provocation.

"We [believers] are purveyors of hope," Michael said, "and helping people grieve is a ministry of hope." †

Community Grief Support sponsors a number of grief support groups in the Birmingham area. For more information, visit communitygriefsupport.org. Larry Michael may be contacted at lmichael@southhighland.org.

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 fifth lecture on Philippians by placing your mobile device over this photo. App instructions noted on page 20.

Award-winning

The Alabama Baptist won the following awards in Alabama Press Association's 2016 BNC Editorial Contest and BNC Advertising Contest for work done in 2015.

"Alabama WWII Veteran: Lord I'm In Your Hands"
by Neisha Roberts
first place Division C,
best feature story coverage

"Malbis Greek Orthodox Church"
by Lauren C. Grim
third place Division C,
best single ad half-page
and under — color

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email news@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-870-4720, ext. 112, at least three weeks prior to the event.

BESSEMER

► **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will host The Gospel Barn Quartet in concert June 3, 7 p.m. Doors will open at 6 p.m. Door prizes will be offered. A love offering will be taken. Scott Bush is pastor. ► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will hold VBS on June 20-24, 6-8:30 nightly. The theme is LifeWay's "Submerged." For more information call 205-425-4381 or visit www.canaanbaptist.net. Morgan Bailey is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, will hold VBS on June 20-25, 5:30-8:30 nightly. The theme is "Deep Sea Discovery." Children enrolled in kindergarten-6th grade can register. Early registration day is June 11, 10 a.m.-noon. Refreshments will be served. For more information call 205-608-0889. The church also will celebrate its 18th homecoming June 12 with a service at 10:30 a.m. Jay Parrack and Vocal Event will perform special music. A meal will follow the service. Allen Davis is pastor.

CHEROKEE

► **Max Roden** is the new

interim pastor of **Pine Grove Church, Centre**. He previously served as interim pastor of East Gadsden Church, Gadsden; First Church, Rainsville; and Southside Church, Albertville. He also served as pastor of Sardis Church; and Gilliam Springs Church, Arab. Roden holds an associate's degree from Mid-America Seminary in Cordova, Tennessee. He is married to Judy, his wife of nearly 55 years. The couple has three children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



RODEN

DEKALB

► **Ruhama Church, Fort Payne**, and Ruhama Junior High School hosted a reception May 15 to honor Pat Murdock and Debbie Early on their retirement from DeKalb County Board of Education after more than 30 years of service each. Early is a member of Second Church, Fort

Payne. She also serves as Woman's Missionary Union director of Second Church and DeKalb Association. Murdock is a member of Ruhama Church and the wife of Pastor Chris Murdock.

ST. CLAIR

► **David Jones** is the new bivocational pastor of **Sulphur Springs Church, Trussville**. He previously served as pastor of St. Clair Springs Church, Springville. He also served at Seddon Church, Pell City. He and his wife, Genevieve, have four children and two grandchildren with one on the way.



JONES

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Mineral Springs Church, Mount Olive**, will celebrate its 127th homecoming June 26, 11 a.m. A dinner will follow. There will be a singing at 1:30 p.m. with the bluegrass band Southern Heritage of Cullman. For more information call Pastor Doyle Creel at 205-647-1250.

WASHINGTON

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Millry**, will celebrate homecoming June 5. Clarence Carpenter and his group will perform special music at 10 a.m. Worship will be at 11 a.m. Ron Pierce will speak. Lunch will follow. David Carpenter is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Tim Bates** is the new pastor of **Northside Church, Cullman**. He previously served as minister of youth at Ridgecrest Church, Ozark. He also served at Post Oak Church, Ozark, and Carrville Church, Tallassee. He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University in Montgomery, a master's degree from New Orleans Seminary and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Hope, have five children. ☩



BATES

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

ABCH's Green now senior director of homes for WinShape

"Ranger Riley," as he's been affectionately known for years, started his new position as senior director of homes for the WinShape Foundation on June 1 and will oversee the organization's foster home program, homes child placement agency and independent living program.

During his nearly 20 years at the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), Riley Green, who most recently served as vice president of administration, was indirectly involved in every aspect of the Alabama Baptist entity. He began working at ABCH as a development officer.

He got his nickname, "Ranger Riley," from his leadership at ABCH's Camp of Champions, where he served as camp director for 16 years.

"A lot of the kids we serve at ABCH have never had real, good family memories. So when they came to camp for many of them it was their first camp experience. It's a big, great event in their life. And watching kids come in that may be apprehensive at first, or not smiling, then see them later just having a blast was always awesome," Green said.

As for foster and house parents working through ABCH, Green said, "Their willingness to take care of the kids in their homes is humbling. It has been a delight to partner with them to do their work better and I look forward to doing that through WinShape."

Green holds a doctorate from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; a master's degree from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham; and a bachelor's degree from Troy University.

He and his wife, Yvonne, are members of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and have three children. (Neisha Roberts)



GREEN

REFLECTIONS

"THIS WRITER SAYS HUSBANDS AND WIVES SHOULD READ IN BED TOGETHER. WE OUGHT TO TRY THAT SOMETIME."



in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

Blanton Leeth Adair

Former Winston Association DOM dies

Blanton Leeth Adair, longtime pastor and former director of missions (DOM) for Winston Baptist Association, died March 17. He was 81.

Adair received his education from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In Alabama he served as pastor of Welcome Baptist Church, Baileytown; Pleasant Mount Baptist Church, Remlap; East Side Baptist Church, Cullman; Roebuck Plaza Baptist Church, Birmingham; First Baptist Church, Addison; and First Baptist Church, Grant. He also served as pastor of Hasson Height Baptist Church, Oil City, Pennsylvania. Altogether he served as pastor for 21 years. He also served as DOM for Winston Association for 21 years.

Adair was preceded in death by his first wife, Jean, and a grandson, Jonathan Crider. He is survived by his wife of 13 years, Helen; four children; six stepchildren; five grandchildren; 11 step-grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and nine step-great-grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)



ADAIR



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Last Things

Faith, Hope And Love

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

Three major dynamics of the heart are brought together in the familiar closing verse of 1 Corinthians 13: “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” In a sense one might think of faith as the dynamic that looks back. Based on the Bible’s presentation of the gospel, we look back to the coming of Christ and His saving work and respond to Him in faith. In a similar temporal sense, we could say that hope is the member of the threesome that looks forward. As Christians we have a sure and steadfast hope of an indescribable future which serves as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19).

A glorious future

Based on the Bible’s promises about a Christian’s ultimate destiny and eternal blessedness, we live out our days in anticipation of a glorious future. Love, which is called the greatest of the three, is the one of the trio that is the preeminent dynamic for living in the present. Love lies at the heart of the Christian life here and now. We love God because He first loved us and we love others just as the Bible commands us. Love is the supreme motivation for serving Christ through ministering to others.

Future events

Of these three dynamics, Theology 101 will focus for a time on Christian hope in terms of future events that await us. To the extent that God has revealed aspects of the future, we will explore what lies ahead.

When it comes to the details and sequence of future events, we see them somewhat through a dark glass; but what we can see through various Bible passages leads to living in hope and expectation. Good and godly students of the Bible have different understandings of many of the details of God’s end-time events. During theological studies in seminary I encountered for the first time fervent and sometimes

fevered discussions about future events in terms of claiming a-millennial, pre-millennial or post-millennial views of the end times. Someone interjected a fourth view, termed “pan-millennial,” and explained that, differences aside, he believed it would all “pan out” just as God intends. A bit of seminary humor aside, our best way of looking ahead is to confess that in the Bible God has revealed truths about the future that we need to know, not necessarily all the details we would like to know. Human curiosity sometimes has a way of running ahead of divine revelation.

Study of eschatology

The formal way of speaking about hope’s future is to term it the study of eschatology. Eschatology is a theological term that conveys the idea of thinking or speaking of last things. Among the Bible’s passages that speak of the end times and its last things are such matters as death and resurrection, Christ’s Second Coming and final judgment, along with heaven and hell.

The goal of Theology 101 in dealing with these issues is not to map the sequence of these events as to their timing, but simply to allow thoughts about the future to fuel our hope in the present. A popular song of the past declared that what the world needs now is love. While this need is painfully evident in each day’s news reports, it also might be said that what much of the world needs now is hope. So next week begins the chase of the goal helping us lay hold on the hope that is set before us (Heb. 6:18). †

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.



Stewardship of influence

Hunt encourages Alabama Baptist pastors to focus on mentoring, discipleship, integrity

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt told 80 Alabama Baptist church leaders in Birmingham their influence is crucial in building strong churches.

During the May 17 North American Mission Board conference facilitated by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and held at First Baptist Church, Birmingham, Hunt said, “I’m teaching the stewardship of influence.”

“I ask pastors two simple questions,” he said. “First who influenced you? And second what have you done with your influence?”

“We’re all indebted to so many who helped us over the years and we must invest our lives in a new generation.”

Hunt said pastors of smaller-membership churches shouldn’t feel their voices aren’t important.

“Sixty-three percent of our churches have 100 people in worship or fewer,” he said. “Every pastor should pour his life into others no matter the size of the church.”

Hunt also said 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining, and that church leaders must change their mindset and become more proactive.

Reverse the trend

“We lost 900 churches last year,” Hunt said. “We’ve got to find a way to reverse this trend.”

One key component in becoming what he calls a come-back church is young men ages 18 to 35, Hunt said.

“I meet with a group of young men every Sunday morning at 8 a.m. for discipleship training,” he said. “These men commit to being part of the group for one year and commit to teaching others when we conclude. Success is making disciples who

make disciples and this results in community transformation.”

Hunt said he looks for opportunities to spend time with men, citing a recent speaking engagement when he asked eight men to travel with him.

One-on-one time

“We had eight hours together on a bus,” he said. “This was more one-on-one time than many pastors have with men in a year. This is one way I try to use my influence for God.”

Hunt also reminded those in attendance to guard their integrity and moral purity.

“The Bible doesn’t say we’re sinless,” he said. “We’re human and we make mistakes. We should be humble enough to admit our mistakes to our congregations and ask their forgiveness. But the Bible does say church

leaders are to be blameless. We should set parameters and hold to them. Our greatest love must be for Jesus, but our second greatest love must always be for our spouse.”

Hunt met earlier in the day with church leaders aged 55 and above.

“I’m 63 and the average man in America lives to be 76,” he said, “so we’re in the fourth quarter of our lives. But we have the wisdom of experience. As Solomon said, ‘We’re wise in the latter days’ (Prov. 19:20). We can do many things better now, and I’ve found that Millennials will listen to senior pastors who share the Word of God

with passion.

“Older pastors stay fresh with something to look forward to,” he said. “God can use older ministers in a unique way to encourage a new generation.”

SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance noted he and others at SBOM were glad to assist with the conference and are “committed to helping our churches and pastors.” †



HUNT

For more information on resources for churches and pastors, visit www.alsbom.org.

“Sixty-three percent of our churches have 100 people in worship or fewer. Every pastor should pour his life into others no matter the size of the church.”

Johnny Hunt
former Southern Baptist Convention president

— DOING — MISSIONS behind bars

Could the state's prison system crisis be exactly what Alabama Baptist churches need to bolster relevancy within society, discipleship efforts among believers?

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Prison reform, prison overcrowding, funding for new prison facilities, prison problems, prisons, prisons, prisons — we've heard it, read about it and watched the news clips on it until we can't process it any more.

Alabama prisons are in serious trouble and few can seem to agree on what to do about it.

I'm not sure many people even notice the media reports, legislative debates and pleas for help any longer. They have become white noise nagging at our consciences but easy enough to ignore if we aren't personally affected. Plus when it comes down to it, the numbers, options for help and degree of hopelessness are all truly overwhelming.

Grace and forgiveness

But if we as Christians believe what we say we believe about the gospel, about grace, about forgiveness, about being a new creation in Christ, then why are we not walking alongside every single inmate striving to truly change? Why are we not knocking down the prison gates trying to make a difference?

With more than 1 million names on the

rolls of the more than 3,200 Alabama Baptist churches, what type of reforms would naturally take place in the correctional system if every church was intentional about making a difference? If every church decided to focus on even one specific item needed by one specific chaplain at one specific prison facility? If each church saw the closest prison facility to them as a missions field?

What if church members prayed for those in prison by name? What if volunteers from the churches consistently showed kindness to those behind bars, sharing the gospel with unbelievers and encouraging believers? What if they intentionally built relationships, sincere relationships, with those on the inside?

And what if churches became an immediate and automatic support system for those in their congregations who have a family member in prison or jail? What if the church culture was a safe place without fear of shame for those families as they shoulder the pain and daily life difficulties of an incarcerated family member?

What if those same churches encouraged, mentored, loved on and disciplined the incarcerated men and women who are seeking forgiveness and grace? And what if the church was present during court hearings,



istockphoto.com

on visitation days and when those returning citizens walked outside the prison gates?

The re-entry period is critical, prison ministry advocates contend. Attempting to transition from behind bars alone most often is disastrous, they say, noting reports and statistics that prove the greater the support system, the greater the chance of becoming a positive, contributing member of society.

With more than half of those released from prison returning for parole violations or new crimes, it seems logical that an easy place to start on solving the overcrowding problem is at re-entry.

The federal government agrees, said Jesse Wiese of Prison Fellowship, noting billions of dollars a year go into re-entry programs. But the money, which is funded by taxpayers, is basically wasted when there's no one to walk with and mentor the returning citizen.

Mentorship needed

He described it like teaching someone to drive, giving them the tools they need to build a car and helping them build the car, but then forgetting to provide a road on which to drive.

"We've got to provide the opportunity for people to know what they owe, pay it, be accountable ... and live in a world where punishment has an end, where men and women

with a criminal record are valued and can give back to their communities at their highest potential."

Prison ministry advocates noted that the Department of Justice will gladly partner with churches in religious-based programs to help increase re-entry success stories — "but churches aren't interested."

Involving the whole church

And for the churches that are interested, the entire congregation needs to buy in to the mindset to make the biggest difference, prison ministry leaders said. "If the ushers are mean-spirited or judgmental, then the returning citizen will never find the four members who volunteer with the church's prison ministry," one leader explained.

Another leader in prison ministry, Rob Cleeton, a Southern Baptist Convention-endorsed prison chaplain in Illinois, said it comes down to authenticity and whether the Church is going to practice what it says it believes.

"If the Church is going to have an impact on culture, we are going to have to get dirty. ... The world has become so broken with so many casualties that it is really dirty and messy.

"But this should be the most exciting time in Christianity," he added. "It gives us a chance to prove our relevancy." †

How you can help

The Alabama Baptist (TAB) attended the May 20–22 Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association 2016 Correctional Ministry Summit in Atlanta to gather information and resources for readers. TAB staff will be developing the content during the next few weeks and would like to know about your prison ministry efforts as well as suggestions of inmates, returned citizens and prison ministry volunteers who would be an inspiration for readers to know. We also want to know your concerns and fears so we can ask the experts for advice in those areas. Email your information to jrash@thealabamabaptist.org.

Resources provided in the upcoming feature on correctional and re-entry ministries also will include names and contact information for Southern Baptist prison chaplains in Alabama and a list of their current needs. Please pray about how you and your church might participate in making a positive difference in the Kingdom and the state by intentionally focusing on the prison population in some specific way.

Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**



*Focus
on*

ONE MISSION

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

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

THE WORDS OF "THANKS" AND "WELCOME"

"Thanks" and "welcome" are two words that have been echoing in my mind in recent days. During the last trustee board meeting for the University of Mobile, I used these words to describe the transition from president Mark Foley to incoming president Tim Smith.

Mark Foley has completed his tenure at the university, and during these recent months he has led a smooth transition for the leadership of the new president, Tim Smith.

Mark has stood tall during this transitional time as he has throughout his entire tenure of service.

In 1998, at the end of a troubled period in the history of the university, Mark left his position at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to become the third president of the University of Mobile.

The university needed his optimistic, cooperative and hardworking leadership to rebuild trust and to work through some rather difficult challenges at the university. He was a perfect match for the presidency of the university.

During his more than 18 years as the leader of the University of Mobile, these tumultuous times settled into ancient history. Gone

were the days of mistrust and concern about the future. Mark personified his love for the Lord and God's people, which became infectious.



By Rick Lance
State Missionary

During our time working as partners,

I have often thanked Mark for his friendship, partnership and leadership. The word "thanks" seems so inadequate, but it is heartfelt. I love, admire and appreciate Mark and Marilyn Foley. They have served the Lord and Alabama Baptists so well during these almost two decades in our history.

The word "welcome" has been used recently to help begin the new tenure of leadership for Tim Smith, the newly elected president of the University of Mobile.

Tim Smith is a highly-qualified academic leader who will be well received by Alabama Baptists. He will be one of us, and we will learn to love and appreciate him just like we did Mark Foley.

Tim has served in strategic places of leadership at Union

University in Tennessee and Anderson University in South Carolina. He is eminently qualified experientially and academically to lead the University of Mobile into a bright and promising future.

Tim and I have many mutual friends, and I feel as though I already know him well. He is affable and approachable as a person and as a leader. He and his wife, Penney, have been well received everywhere they have served.

The trustees at the University of Mobile are of one mind in their selection and reception of Tim Smith as their new president. They have an unequivocal faith in him as a leader. They are completely convinced that he is the person to lead the university into the next chapter of its history.

Thanks, Mark Foley, for being used of God in restoring the trust in the University of Mobile.

Thanks for being a brave and innovative leader who saw the university as a Christ-focused change agent in this culture of confusion.

Thanks for being a devoted partner in ministry. Thanks for being a rock-solid Alabama Baptist who served as one of us.

Welcome Tim and Penney Smith to the Alabama Baptist family. We look forward to your leadership as the new president at the University of Mobile. We are delighted to serve as a partner with you in Kingdom service.

I have witnessed a number of transitions in my ministry but none any smoother than the one being experienced at the University of Mobile.

This is a tribute to many people, but Mark Foley and Tim Smith stand out as the main contributors to this cause.

Thanks, Mark Foley, for all you have allowed the Lord to do through your life.

Welcome, Tim Smith, to a family of faith who will pray for you and work with you.



John 17:18, 20:21

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

I had the blessing of growing up in a Southern Baptist church that taught and supported the Cooperative Program. These lessons came alive when missionaries visited and spoke at our church, telling us the results of giving. The greatest impact for me personally was with our seminaries that made education and training possible for me as I pursued God's call on my life into the ministry. It has been important to me as a pastor to give the Cooperative Program priority and to encourage generous giving by the churches I have served. It has blessed me and the lives of many others as we work together to fund missionary

work, seminaries, state conventions and so many other ministries that impact all our lives. We must continue to teach it and give generously through the Cooperative Program to ensure these vital works

continue for others.

Pastor Jesse Reeder, pastor of Moulton Baptist Church (Muscle Shoals Association), serves as a trustee for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



REEDER



ONEMISSION: TheGreatCommission ONEPROGRAM: TheCooperativeProgram MANYMINISTRIES: GreatCommissionMinistries

ALABAMA BAPTIST
Friday - Saturday, June 24-25 ★



DEACONS RETREAT

Shocco Springs ★ 2 p.m. Friday-5 p.m. Saturday

Retreat Faculty: Jasper Butler, Jimmy Messer, Don Graham, David Skinner, David Shepherd, Herbert Brown, Travis Coleman, Danny Singleton, Chad Burdette, The Redeemed

Cost: \$106 per person (double-occupancy with three meals) or \$126 per person (private room with three meals) ▲ **Online:** AlabamaDeaconsRetreat.org

To register, please call Shocco Springs at 1-800-280-1105 or go online to shocco.org.

ONEMISSION: TheGreatCommission ONEPROGRAM: TheCooperativeProgram MANYMINISTRIES: GreatCommissionMinistries

You have the unique privilege to be a part of the inaugural Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering this September.

The offering and the week of prayer, September 11-18, are worthy complements to your faithfulness to giving to missions through the Cooperative Program.

Here is another way to support church

ADOPT-A-PLANTER

planters in Alabama and beyond. The "Adopt-A-Planter" plan is a good next step:

- ~ Select 12 couples from your church to make monthly visits to an Alabama planter and his family. The purpose is to provide encouragement and prayer support for planters and their families.
- ~ Take the planter and family out to dinner on Saturday night. (Take care of childcare.)
- ~ Take them gifts from your church family.
- ~ Worship with the plant on Sunday. Take

the planter and family to lunch on Sunday, if appropriate.

~ Bring home fresh prayer requests.

What some Alabama pastors are saying about the "Adopt-A-Planter" plan:

Barry Wilkerson, pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Andalusia in Covington Association, says, "I believe this adoption will benefit our church as we develop a vision to reach Alabama with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We, will also know how to better pray and engage in missions in Alabama.

Basically, it will help us get out of our comfort zone."

~ **Johnny Fain, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dothan, says, "When I first heard of the idea of adopting a church plant in Alabama, I thought to myself: 'This is a way to help our people be a part of church planting.' It is a win-win situation! We get to come alongside of a church plant pastor to encourage them in the Lord. The church plant gets encouraged, and we get to be a part of**

something new and fresh. It is a way to grow the mission spirit and to grow the mission heart in the people of First Baptist Dothan."

The goal of this new "Adopt-A-Planter" partnership opportunity is to make it easier for your church to partner with a church planter — to provide the church plant with support through prayer and encouragement, and bring back the energy and excitement of being engaged with missions right here in Alabama.

For more information on Adopt-a-Planter within Alabama, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke (Lead Church Planting Strategist) at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org. For church planters outside Alabama, please contact State Missionary



By Lamar Duke
State Missionary

Scotty Goldman at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 387, or (334) 613-2387, sgoldman@alsbom.org.

This ministry is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

2016 for girls, boys and teen girls

Missions Adventure Camp at WorldSong

Missions Adventure Camp for Girls

(girls completing grades 2-6)
June 27-July 1
July 18-22
 Cost: \$230 per person

Missions Adventure Camp for Teen Girls

(girls completing grades 7-12)
July 18-22
 Cost: \$230 per person

Extreme MAC for Teen Girls

(girls completing grades 7-12)
June 13-15
 Cost: \$130 per person

Mini Camp for Girls

(girls completing grades 2-6)
June 13-15
 Cost: \$130 per person

CITs (Cabin leader In Training)

(girls completing grades 9-12)
June 27-July 1
 Cost: \$230 per person

Missions Adventure Camp for Children

(coeds completing grades 2-6)
July 11-15
 Cost: \$230 per person

Mom & Me

(girls completing grades 2-6)
June 16-18
 Cost: \$130 per person

Mom & Me Little

(girls completing grades K-3 and their moms)
June 24-25
July 15-16
 Cost: \$75 per person

Online: worldsongretreat.com

For more information, please contact Crystal Akers at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, cakers@alsbom.org.



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

Baptist Men's Softball Tournament

August 12-13, 2016
Lagoon Park & Fain Park, Montgomery

- 40-team maximum • ASA sanctioned
- Round robin tournament • ASA-sanctioned teams only • Single elimination in championship round of 16 teams

Cost: \$240 entry fee
 Each team will play at least four games.

For entry requirements to participate and an information packet, please contact Ministry Assistant Mondene Coker at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 273, or (334) 613-2273, mcoker@alsbom.org.



PASTOR, DEACON, SPOUSE RETREAT

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23-24 • SHOCCO SPRINGS

Begins with check-in at 4 p.m. Friday.
 Concludes with lunch at noon Saturday.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Chuck & Rhonda Kelley

COST/REGISTRATION: Call Shocco Springs at 1-800-280-1105.

ONLINE INFO:

alsbom.org/pastordeaconspouseretreat

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org.

Equip ...for missions, for ministry, for life

Friday-Saturday, July 22-23, Shocco Springs

FEATURING: ✨ Worship times ✨ Missionary testimonies ✨ Leadership, missions and personal enrichment conferences

For all church and associational directors, coordinators, facilitators, leaders and other team members of Women's Ministry, WMU, Women on Mission, Adults on Mission, Acteens, Youth on Mission, Girls Ministry, Girls in Action, Children in Action, Mission Friends and Royal Ambassadors (in collaboration with Alabama Baptist Men's Ministries).

REGISTER: 1-800-280-1105 or shocco.org

For more information, go online to alabamawmu.org, or please contact Dawn Watkins at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or (334) 613-2226, dwatkins@alsbom.org.



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

Offering training for:

- ✨ WMU Directors & Other General Leaders ✨
- Women on Mission/Adults on Mission ✨
- Women's Ministry ✨
- Acteens/Youth on Mission ✨
- Girls in Action/Children in Action ✨
- Royal Ambassadors ✨
- Mission Friends

Cost:
\$10 per person

One Day is a great option for leaders who are unable to attend Equip in July.

ONE Day Training

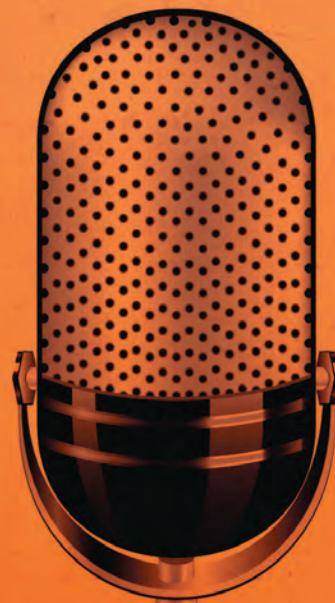
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery
9 a.m.-Noon

For more info, please go online to alabamawmu.org, or contact Kathryn Helms at **1-800-264-1225**, ext. **325**, or **(334) 613-2325**, khelms@alsbom.org.

youth evangelism conference yecal.org

july
22-23
2016
First Baptist
Trussville
\$30



messages from
Walt Barnes
Clayton King
Chad Poe

worship with
The Museum

In Concert
Flame

speak

Ephesians 4:15

FOCUS on One Mission

Watch for your Resource Packet in the mail this month!




Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering


WEEK OF PRAYER FOR STATE MISSIONS SEPTEMBER 11-18, 2016

Your gifts help support:

- ALABAMA WMU
- DISASTER RELIEF
- CHURCH PLANTING
- CHURCH REVITALIZATION
- GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS

Visit MYERS-MALLORY.ORG to order or download videos, posters, bulletin inserts and other resources.



FREE

order your 2016-2017 resource directory

This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2016–Dec. 2017) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

Limit 20 copies per church. To order, please call, fax or e-mail your request to Charleen Hobbs at

1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); chobbs@alsbom.org; or order online at alsbom.org/cpg.

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




ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

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

REGIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL & DISCIPLESHIP LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Multiple training opportunities are available for Sunday School and discipleship leaders. Experienced conference leaders will be at each location to offer tips on topics such as organization, lesson preparation and materials, and provide encouragement and affirmation for you as a servant leader in your church, and there are always some new ideas.

At each location, there are three one-hour conference times with multiple topics for each age group. Go online to the web pages listed for more information or to register. Registration is \$5 per person before the early registration deadline, \$10 per person after the deadline.

METRO
First Baptist Church, Trussville
Saturday, August 13
 EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
 Thursday, August 11
 alsbom.org/metro

SOUTH
Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile
Saturday, August 13
 EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
 Thursday, August 11
 alsbom.org/south

NORTH
Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens
Saturday, August 27
 EARLY REGISTRATION
 DEADLINE: Thursday, August 25
 alsbom.org/north



For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbwaldwin@alsbom.org.

2016 BAPTIST BOYS CAMP

Visit alsbom.org/boyscamp for schedules and other info.

WHERE ADVENTURE BEGINS!

More than just boys camp... Yes, there's outdoor adventure, camp activities, and making new friends,

But also... Developing outdoor skills, self confidence, teamwork, leadership and spiritual growth. ➔ All this in one amazing place!

For 2016 dates and other info go to:

alsbom.org/boyscamp or contact Ministry Assistant Monica Thompson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 227, or (334) 613-2227, mthompson@alsbom.org.

BOYS CAMP... ADVENTURE WITH A PURPOSE!

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

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR OUTSTANDING 2016 MISSION VOLUNTEER

The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2016 Mission Volunteer.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.

Please think about lay people you know whom you feel are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize that there are many who could fit this requirement; however, for this purpose only one individual (or couple) will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required if a person (or couple) is to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name, address and phone number of the nominee's pastor, the church to which he/she/they belong and their association.
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost where he/she/they have participated during the past five years, including locations and dates. (If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas, please do not nominate that person.)
4. Statements supporting your nomination as **Outstanding 2016 Mission Volunteer** (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner).
5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

To access an Information Sheet and Nomination Application, go online to a18c.org/volunteeroftheyear.

If you do not have web access, request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application by contacting Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, or (334) 613-2238, vgardner@alsbom.org.

Requests may also be made by mail to Global Missions Office, **Attn:** Virginia Gardner, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

Please note: No phone calls or e-mail recommendations and/or endorsements accepted! Nominations must be received, not postmarked, no later than Monday, September 19, 2016.



Training For Church Leaders

The Summit

SHOCCO SPRINGS, AUGUST 5 - 6, 2016

REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.SHOCCO.ORG OR CALL 1-800-280-1105

Now is the time to begin planning for the summer. While looking ahead, make sure to set aside time for family and friends. Give yourself some time to play and rest, but don't overlook another essential element in a happy, healthy Christian lifestyle that you must also reserve time to pursue: personal and spiritual growth.

AT THE SUMMIT: For Church Leaders, you will find plenty of opportunities to grow in knowledge and confidence in how to serve as a leader in your church. Ministers and other professionals in many different areas of church life and ministry will be on the Shocco campus to lead training sessions. From preschool to senior adults, all age groups will be represented.

The Summit begins on Friday with Early Bird Mega Conferences from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., followed by a worship rally beginning at 3:45. Supper will be served beginning at 4:45, followed by two conference times at 6:15 and 7:45. Saturday's schedule begins with breakfast at 6:30 a.m., followed by conference times of 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00. Lunch will be served at noon.

THE SUMMIT: For Church Leaders is for pastors, ministers, teachers, and other workers and leaders. There is no childcare.

UPDATES: alsbom.org/summit

Registration/Pricing: 1-800-280-1105 or shocco.org

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

childrenschoir summit



LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Friday and Saturday, July 8-9,
Shocco Springs

EXCITING, HANDS-ON TRAINING THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO:

- Discover new ways to make choir a favorite for kids.
- Learn how you can use games to enhance your music program.

CREATE AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE WORSHIP.

- Network with outstanding clinicians from across the U.S.
- Network with other people in similar situations.

Cost: \$135 per person (based on 3-4 persons per room, \$20 deposit per person due upon registration)

For more information, go online to alsbom.org/children-summit or contact State Missionary Karen Gosselin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 318, or (334) 613-2318, kgosselin@alsbom.org; or Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279 or scleveland@alsbom.org.

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

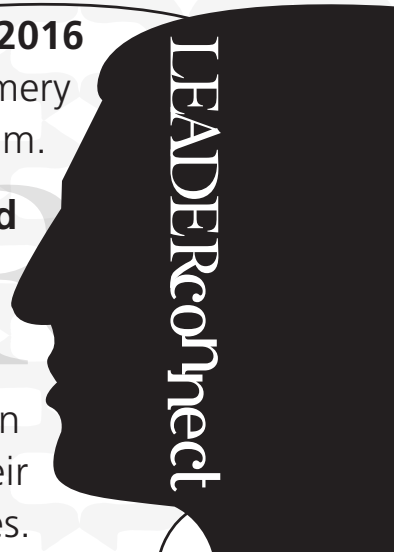
Tuesday, September 13, 2016

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER: **Jay Vineyard**

REGISTRATION FEE: **\$25** (includes materials and lunch)

This annual one-day workshop will help leaders in the church connect with each other and develop their leadership skills to create healthy churches.



Topics vary through a range of the most up-to-date leadership emphases.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org.



**musiCamp
@Shocco!**

**& Monday - Friday,
July 11-15 &
Shocco & Springs**

At **Mix Music Camp** we work to identify and help train worship leaders for the next generation.

Other activities will include:

- Wet Willie Water Slide
- Hiking Trails
- Miniature Golf
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Pedal Boats
- Horseshoes
- Octaball
- Disc Golf
- Poly Pong
- Fishing
- Ropes Course
- Paintball
- Pedal Cars
- Swimming

COST: \$310 per person (\$80 deposit per person due upon registration)



For more information, go online to mixmusiccamp.org or contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at **1-800-264-1225, ext. 230**, or **(334) 613-2230**, cparrish@alsbom.org.




alabama
ACTS 1:8
connections
CONFERENCE

Thursday, JULY 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Prattville
\$10 (includes lunch)
aa18c.org

- Meet and hear from Alabama IMB missionaries from each Affinity Group
- Seek out potential mission partners
- Network with others involved in missions



Monday through Friday, **July 11-15, 2016**  Shocco Springs

CAMP PASTOR: **Luke Johnson**, Laurel, Miss.
WORSHIP LEADER: **Alan Cagle**, Crossgates Baptist Church, Brandon, Miss.

Online Info:
supersummeral.org
Super Summer Alabama focuses on leadership and discipleship. Students will be challenged to deepen their faith and stand out as the leaders God wants them to be. The camp is open to students in Alabama who have completed grades 8-12 and exemplify solid spiritual leadership in their churches.

For more information, please contact State Missionary **Jamie Baldwin** at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Nearly 1,000 churches planted in 2015

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Christian Liberty Church, which meets in the auditorium at Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore, Maryland, has seen 262 people come to faith in Jesus. Launched in 2014, the church, which has an office in a nearby mall that was looted during April 2015 riots, became a North American Mission Board (NAMB)-funded church plant in 2015.

“We started with nothing,” said Wayne Lee, pastor of Christian Liberty. “So everything God has done He has done on His own and with the support and encouragement of NAMB.”

Throughout North America, there were 926 new NAMB churches started in 2015 that are taking root and are already making a difference in their communities, according to NAMB. Another 188 churches chose to begin cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention bringing the total count of new churches for the year to 1,114.

Of the churches started in 2015, 52 percent report congregational makeups that are predominantly non-Anglo with Hispanic (143) and African-American (92) comprising the largest groups of ethnic plants. (NAMB)

Bivocational pastor leader Elder retires

NASHVILLE — Lloyd Elder, chair of the development board of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN), retired May 31 after more than six decades of ministry.

Elder served as a bivocational pastor in five churches in Alaska and Texas, beginning in 1953, and later served in leadership positions at the Baptist General Convention of Texas; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay).

Elder earned degrees from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, and Southwestern Seminary.

During his time at BSCLN, Elder helped raise funds to produce needed resources for churches and pastors. He also contributed to resources and sought to be an advocate, listener and encourager to the ever-growing group of bivocational pastors.

He is married to his wife of 62 years, Sue. (BSCLN, TAB)



ELDER

Missionary slain in Jamaica was Iowa So. Baptist

KINGSTON, Jamaica — An Iowa Southern Baptist was among two American missionaries killed in Jamaica on April 30 in what appeared to be a violent attack.

Randy Hentzel, 48, a member of First Family Church, Ankeny, Iowa, was serving with the Pennsylvania-based Teams for Medical Missions when he was slain in a remote, rural area of Jamaica along with fellow missionary Harold Nichols, 53. The two men went for a motorcycle ride at approximately 8 a.m., and Hentzel's body was found hours later beside a motorcycle in some bushes. Nichols' body was found the next day in a separate area.

The Jamaican Constabulary Force said in a May 2 release it is “doing everything possible to identify the criminals.” (BP)

CP 6.45% ahead of year-to-date budget projection

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) are 6.45 percent above the year-to-date budgeted projection and 4.15 percent above contributions received during the same time frame in 2015, according to a news release from EC President and CEO Frank S. Page.

As of April 30 gifts received for distribution through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget totaled \$115,806,604.28. The total is \$7,014,937.61 above the \$108,791,666.67 year-to-date budget and \$4,618,397.25 above the \$111,188,207.03 received through the end of April 2015. (BP)

Contraceptive mandate

US Supreme Court sends 7 cases back to lower courts

The U.S. Supreme Court sidestepped the constitutional question May 16 of whether Obamacare's contraceptive mandate substantially burdens the rights of certain faith-based organizations to exercise their religion, sending seven cases back to lower courts after both sides conceded there may be room for compromise.

Judgments in lawsuits filed by groups ranging from an order of Catholic nuns to colleges and universities affiliated with Southern Baptist state conventions, churches and ministry organizations across the country were vacated and remanded for reconsideration by the United States Courts of Appeals for the Third, Fifth, 10th and D.C. Circuits.

After hearing oral arguments in March about whether an opt-out for certain groups — like religious colleges and social service agencies that don't qualify for automatic exemption from the contraceptive mandate afforded to churches and denominational offices — is the least-restrictive means of achieving a compelling state interest, the eight Supreme Court justices asked both the government and the groups challenging Obamacare more questions.

Modified procedures

In supplemental briefs submitted to the court, the religious groups said they would not object to their insurance companies providing contraceptive coverage to their employees as long as they did not have to do anything to their own insurance plans to help make it happen. The government said procedures could be modified to meet its goal of seamlessly offering cost-free contraceptive coverage in keeping with a court order.

In light of those responses, a court that appeared divided and possibly headed toward a 4-4 deadlock said it isn't necessary for them to address the central constitutional issues at this time. The court said both sides need a chance to iron out an approach that accommodates religious exercise while serving the government's interest of ensuring that women covered by employee

health care plans “receive full and equal health coverage,” including reproductive health.

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents parties including the Catholic order Little Sisters of the Poor, claimed the Supreme Court decision as a win.

“The court has accepted the government's concession that it can get drugs to people without using the Little Sisters,” said Becket Fund senior counsel Mark Rienzi. “The court has eliminated all of the bad decisions from the lower courts, and the court has forbidden the government from fining the Little Sisters even though they are refusing to bow to the government's will. It is only a matter of time before the lower courts make this victory permanent.”

O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources, which is exempt from the contraceptive mandate but filed one of the lawsuits on behalf of many ministries it insures that are not, posted on Twitter calling the ruling “great news” about “protecting religious freedom.”

Unlike the nuns, whose Catholic teaching rejects the use of any artificial birth control, evangelical organizations including Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Georgia; East Texas Baptist University in Marshall; Houston Baptist University in Texas; Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee; and Reaching Souls

International in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, object only to certain forms, like intrauterine devices and emergency or “morning after” birth control pills that take effect after conception, which they regard as abortifacients.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, expressed mixed feelings about the decision.

“In some ways this is something we ought to celebrate, that the court did take into account these basic principles of religious liberty,” Moore said in a video message recorded outside the Supreme Court building. “In other ways the very fact that we had to have this argument ought to remind us of how far we have to go in persuading our neighbors that soul freedom is not a government grant; soul freedom is a right given by God.”

Accommodating religion

The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty filed a brief in the case supporting the government's effort to accommodate religion in the Affordable Care Act.

“Today's decision does not resolve the controversy, nor will it necessarily change the results in the lower courts that previously ruled in favor of the government,” said Holly Hollman, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee. “It does, however, allow the parties to further refine their arguments about notice requirements and how employees will be covered.” (BNG)



“In some ways, this is something we ought to celebrate, that the court did take into account these basic principles of religious liberty.”

Russell Moore
president, SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

SCWC celebrates 25 years, presents first-time award

Now in its 25th year, the annual Southern Christian Writers Conference (SCWC) has added a special feature to this year's lineup.

The first-ever National Award for the Encouragement of Writing will be presented to Cecil "Cec" Murphey during SCWC 2016, which will be held June 17-18 at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa. Murphey is the author or co-author of more than 130 books, including the national bestseller "90 Minutes in Heaven" and "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story."

Murphey earned a master of divinity degree from Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, and an honorary doctor of literature from Richmond Virginia Seminary. Prior to pursuing a career in writing he served as a pastor, a hospital chaplain and a missionary in Kenya.

Conference speakers

At SCWC participants have the opportunity to hear from prominent keynote speakers and attend breakout sessions led by authors, editors, publishers and more.

Keynote speakers for the weekend will be Lurlene McDaniell and Patricia Sprinkle. The author of more than 70 novels, McDaniell will speak June 17 on "Selling Your Christian Worldview to the Secular Market." Sprinkle, the author of 25 novels and five nonfiction books, will speak on "The Mystery of Why We Write" on June 18.

Participants also will have the opportunity to schedule individual sessions with 1 of 3 literary agents: Julie Gwinn, an agent with The Seymour Agency and freelance book editor; Bruce Barbour, former publishing executive and founder of Literary Management Group; and Karen Moore, award-winning author of more than 60 books and nearly 10,000 greeting cards.

Additional SCWC 2016 speakers and

their individual session topics include:

▶ Lawayne Childrey, co-author of "Self-Publishing & Selling Your Book" — "Marketing and Selling Your Book"

▶ Debbie Dickinson, editor of *Mature Living* — "How to Catch an Editor's Attention"

▶ Denise George, Birmingham-based author of 30 books — "Writing Non-fiction Books"

▶ Wesley Harris, founder of consulting service Write Crime Right — "Researching Your Story Without Leaving Home"

▶ Ramona Richards, editor of more than 300 books — "10 Tips to Winning an Editor's Heart"

▶ Christopher Sloan, freelance magazine writer and author — "Using Your Writing as a Spiritual Gift"

▶ David Sloan, author and professor emeritus at the University of Alabama — "How To Self-Publish Your Book"

▶ Joanne Sloan, publisher of Vision Press — "The 10 Most Common Grammatical Errors — And How to Handle Them"

▶ Laurie Stroud, founder and president of The Christian Family Publication — "Writing for City and Regional Publications"

▶ Grace Thornton, freelance writer and author of "I Don't Wait Anymore" — "Working with Christian Editors"

▶ Jan Turrentine, edi-

tor with the United Methodist Publishing House — "Working with An Editor"

▶ Cheryl Wray, freelance writer and author of seven books — "Writing and Publishing Magazine Articles"

Registration

The winners of the SCWC Writing Contest will be announced at the conclusion of the conference.

Pre-registration for SCWC ends June 4. Those interested may register after June 4, but space is limited to 200 participants. (TAB)



MURPHEY

For more information or to register, visit www.scwconference.com.

Seminaries confer degrees on Alabama Baptists

Alabama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and divinity schools in May 2016. *The Alabama Baptist* was provided the following list of graduates by the schools.

▶ Beeson Divinity School:

Master of Arts in Theological Studies — LaSonya B. Clay, Trussville; Rebekah Elise DeBoer, Birmingham; Rebekah Ann Harper, McCalla; Lori Baldrige Hill, Vestavia Hills; Jeffrey Cole Mitchell, Birmingham; Lydia Corinne Nace, Birmingham; and Dennis Craig Schauer, Homewood

Master of Divinity — Trenton Deon Bell, Birmingham; Bradford Randall Brown, Birmingham; Landon Neil Byrd, Birmingham; Justin Ryan Carter, Birmingham; Walt Thompson Davis, Homewood; Daniel Timothy Flowers, Birmingham; Charles Andrew Gottshall, Calera; Griffin Thomas Gullede, Indian Springs; Christopher Ray Hanna, Birmingham; Wyatt Terrell Harris, Homewood; Myles Pursley Hixson, Birmingham; Samuel Elliott Hutchins, Homewood; Simon Peter Knighten, Birmingham; Lyle Anthony Lee, Huntsville; Edwin Oyange Ojodo, Birmingham; John Nelson Pearson, Birmingham; Paul Jay Santiago, Birmingham; Erica Winston Smith, Birmingham; Caleb Becker Stallings, Vestavia Hills; Kevin Douglas Stigall, Vestavia Hills; and William Larkin Sumnerlin, Indian Springs

Doctor of Ministry — John Lovelace Cantelow III, Hoover

▶ Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Arts — Andrew Lanford Wash, Alabaster; Savannah Jo Thigpen, Birmingham

Master of Divinity with Missiology — Justin Nicholas Hendricks, Rainsville; Brett D. Lamberth, Dothan

Doctor of Ministry — David Robert Snyder, Trussville

▶ Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Theological Studies — Heather S. Dean, Alexander City; and Roger D. Koonce Jr., Huntsville

Master of Divinity — Daniel Waid, Hueytown

▶ New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Arts — Megan Gorum, Atmore; and Sara Black, Northport

Master of Divinity — Joey Bentley, Anniston; Mitchell Bruce, Montgomery; Randy Cater, Locust Fork; Caleb Farrow, Selma; Stephanie Anderson Newton, Pell City; B.J. Price, Trussville; and Patrick Weaver, Satsuma

Doctor of Ministry — Jason Duckett, Birmingham

▶ Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling — Samantha B. Kritner, Pinson; and Chesley Lynn Peed, Bon Secour

Master of Divinity — Randal Curtis Mize III, Huntsville

Doctor of Ministry — Thad Lee Key, Parrish

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Joel A. Smelley Jr., Moundville

▶ Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Theological Studies — Sawyer James Whittaker, New Brockton

EDITOR'S NOTE — *Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary did not have Spring 2016 graduates from Alabama.* (TAB)

Ministry Tips

HOW TO ENCOURAGE PASTORS AND MINISTERS

By Pastor Greg Hyche
Ladonia Baptist Church, Phenix City

The role of a pastor is filled with many eternal rewards and earthly joys.

One of the many joys is seeing young children come to know the Lord as Savior and following

through in baptism. There is no greater joy as a pastor than to lead someone to Christ and to disciple them in the faith.

However, as much as ministry is encouraging, it also can be emotionally draining.

The shepherd must give encouragement to his flock, but he also must be willing

to give and receive encouragement from other ministers.

Here is one tip for encouraging other pastors as they serve: pray for them.

Pray that God will keep each of us holy in the face of spiritual attacks. Spiritual warfare is real and it is constant. Every minister is in need of friendship and

prayer in order to remain strong in ministry. James 5:1a says: "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray."

Many ministers are suffering from spiritual attacks and some do not even realize it until it is too late. We must pray for one another. †

 Find us on
Facebook

The Alabama Baptist
newspaper.





Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist



Rashional Extras...

“Most leaders cast vision for an enterprise fully expecting to be the one who declares, ‘Vision accomplished!’ The leadership modeled by Jesus of Nazareth incorporated succession into its core: preparing 12 men to take the lead was essential to the explosive growth of the movement we call Christianity after His departure.”

An excerpt from the endorsement for Russ Crosson’s book “What Makes a Leader Great” by Bob Shank, founder and CEO, The Master’s Program

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Select the best, toss the rest

My head and heart are full — full of ideas cushioned with a sincere desire to see them come to life, all of them. So many different thoughts coupled with scores of angles to develop each one.

The excitement builds as my mind chases the possibilities and dot after dot connects as if I’m in a virtual game of Frogger leaping from one log to the next, systematically making my way to the prize.

But in a flash my cute little froggy misses one of those logs and lands in the water. Game over. With a fresh game and a few more lives I try again and this time the screen changes to a highway with cars whipping past me. I dodge them for a while but my concentration drops for a millisecond and splat, I’m dead.

Too many ideas

The same is true with the constantly multiplying basket of ideas spilling out of my brain. Many of them are actually pretty good thoughts with lots of potential. I work hard to make sense of each one, organize it a bit and actually start developing a plan of action.

But then splat. I’m blindsided by life, possibly something unexpected that throws everything off course or maybe nothing unexpected at all, merely a reminder of all that is already on my plate.

Applying the 5 Ws

Who, what, when, where, why and how — these are not only questions a good reporter always asks but they also are front and center in my mind as I so desperately attempt to implement a new idea.

Focusing on prioritizing projects and goals while learning to be super selective in what new assignments and activities I add to my responsibility list is a daily battle for me.

‘Worth doing well’

Anything I choose to do — as well as anything that is imposed on me — will be given lots of attention. I tend to agree with the principle of “anything worth doing is worth doing well” (Hunter S. Thompson). And while I don’t always achieve the highest ranking for the goals I set, I do always start out intending for that mark.

Of course I consistently complicate things even more with all the fresh ideas. It is so tempting to spend my energy each day dreaming about and orchestrating what could be as I filter through the latest

list of applicants in the new ideas department.

Managing the excess

A new discipline I’m attempting is to not start anything new until I can complete some of my existing projects. I’m trying it in all parts of life.

At work

At work I’m putting all new ideas on a wish list rather than working on them as soon as they pop in my head. Each time I complete a project I can go to the wish list and select one item to put in motion, but only one.

At church

At church I’m resisting the urge to volunteer for every need that surfaces and focus solely on the roles I have committed to play at the moment. I try to remind myself that if I try to do too many things, then I won’t do any of the roles well.

I also try to remember what a former minister of education taught me — that just because someone wants a certain ministry or activity doesn’t mean it is supposed to be offered.

He believed in letting the person with the vision for the proposed idea work to bring it to life rather than allow people to order it up and expect others to do it. His philosophy was that if church leaders had to beg people to participate in or volunteer for a certain ministry or activity, then it probably wasn’t something the church needed to do anyway.

At home

At home I’m constantly scanning my closet for items to donate or discard. And if I acquire a new piece of clothing, then I have to find at least one item to remove.

A friend told me recently how she turns all the hangers in her closet the same way on Jan. 1 and each time she wears a piece of clothing she turns the hanger the opposite direction. Then on Dec. 31 she goes through and pulls out all hangers that were not turned. She doesn’t give herself a chance to look at nor debate whether to keep those pieces of clothing. She pulls them out right away and donates them. She says that if she didn’t wear the piece of clothing even once in a year, then it can’t be that vital.

Practice of purging

My friend’s annual practice of purging her closet made me wonder if we could expand that to all of life. I think about all the stacks of undone projects sitting around my office and in my drawers at home. I wonder what

would happen if I forced a true, hard deadline of one year on all those projects.

Would I have more energy and motivation to complete them and thus experience the victorious feeling of accomplishment while also making more room for new ideas to flourish?

Would the feeling of achievement and satisfaction of knowing I finally completed the projects provide a new level of rest and rejuvenation for my mind?

Courage and perspective

Would I have the courage to admit that some of the projects need to be tossed and feel the freedom from removing the guilt and heaviness connected to those particular projects?

Would all of this provide a new perspective and ability for me going forward? A perspective still filled with fresh concepts and dreams but this time under an approach to better filter, manage and distribute the best of the best and discard the rest. And in the midst of drawing boundaries and living with margin in our lives, what if we slowed down to assess what already exists in the various areas of ideas rumbling around in our minds?

Should we always start something new? Is it possible a resource already exists and we shouldn’t recreate the wheel, so to speak?

The hard questions

Could we trust someone else to be in charge and purposefully choose to be a follower rather than the leader? If we happen to be the leader, are we willing to listen to others who are interested and have ideas to share?

Are we willing to compromise on the nonessential parts of the plan, activity, project, ministry, etc., and pool our resources rather than work as individuals and actually end up competing against each other unnecessarily?

Lots of questions to ponder and not many answers, but thanks for hanging with me until the end. I would love to hear from you and learn how you are creating balance and margin in your life.

I’m also interested in knowing what you think about spending more energy pooling our resources to streamline and improve existing ministries instead of constantly starting something new.

Email me at jrash@thealabamabaptist.org or message me @RashionalThts. ☯

Leadership lessons from Romans 12

By Andy Westmoreland
Samford University president

1. Raise your standards
2. Put others first
3. Always show respect
4. Help develop talent
5. Practice the virtues (to aspire for good behavior)
6. Never give up

Leadership tips taken from Westmoreland’s Samford University MTI (Ministry Training Institute) augmented reality classroom in *The Alabama Baptist* (December 2015–January 2016).

“When God does not deliver you from the firestorm in your life, He will walk with you in the middle of the firestorm.”

Author Carol Kent
Prison ministry advocate

@RickWarren

Leaders constantly ask: What should I be doing TODAY that will get me to where I want to be tomorrow?



CAMPUS News



JUDSON COLLEGE

► Guntersville Pastor Wins 54th Ministers' Golf Tournament:

Alabama Baptist ministers gathered in Marion on May 9-10 for Judson College's 54th annual Ministers' Golf Tournament. First place went to Glen Stewart, former interim pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Guntersville. David Byrd, pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper,



STEWART

came in second. Winner of the Over 70 division was A.L. Courtney, retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Recognizes Faculty and Staff at Spring Luncheon:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) announced awards recipients and retirements during its annual luncheon May 11.

Faculty who recently retired include Tom Beville, Mitch Davis and Sue Gober.

The 2016 William A. Megginson Teaching Award was presented to Kenn Hughes, director of instrumental studies in the Center for

Performing Arts who is over the musical ensemble RamCorps.

The 2016 Emma Frances Megginson Service Award was presented to Pamela Buchanan Miller, director of faculty support and Quality Enhancement Program.

UMobile also granted service awards to faculty and staff in five-year increments, including Janith Wood (35 years); Carol Camp (30 years); and Mattie Easter and Rebecca Miller (25 years).

For more information, visit umobile.edu/news.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Hall Named Dean of Samford's College of Arts and Sciences:** Timothy D. Hall has been

named dean of Samford University's Howard College of Arts and Sciences, effective July 11. The appointment was announced May 6.

Hall previously served as associate dean of the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant.

Hall also will hold the title professor of history in Howard College, Samford's largest undergraduate academic unit. †



HALL

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

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: nmbcp15@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 mu-

sic. 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.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Centreville Baptist Church is

accepting resumé for a full-time children's minister. Please submit resumé to: centrevillebc@bellsouth.net.

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.

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.

BUSINESS

TIME TO REPLACE THAT

OLD CHURCH SIGN?

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

GREAT PRICES

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

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION SERVICE

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

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN

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

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

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



(augmented reality)

Follow these instructions

- 1 Download the Aurasma app from your app store.
- 2 Choose the "ALBaptist" profile under channel and tap "Follow." You will only have to do this one time. (Any ALBaptist options will allow you to follow *The Alabama Baptist*.)

- 3 Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.

- 4 You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.

- 5 Hold your device over a page or image in *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life.

- 6 If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.

- 7 Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.

Majority of Americans think abortion should be legal in all or most cases, survey shows

According to a recent survey of Americans, 56 percent now think abortion should be legal in all or most cases — up from the slight dip in percentages after the 2015 battle in Congress over funding for Planned Parenthood.

The latest Pew Research Center survey also found disagreement between political parties on the topic of abortion — with an even more polarized divide than two decades ago, according to Pew.

Republicans came in at 59 percent saying abortion should be illegal in all or most cases and 38 percent saying it should be legal, as opposed to the divide in 1995 when results showed 49 percent legal versus 48 percent legal.

For Democrats there has been less change throughout the last 20 years — 70 percent say abortion should be legal in at least most cases and in 1995 that number was at 64 percent.

There are no significant gender differences in views, according to Pew, with majorities of both men (57 percent) and women (55 percent) saying it should be legal in at least most cases.

Varies by age

Support for legal abortion also varies by age, education and religious affiliation, according to the survey. Six in 10 of those under age 50 say abortion should be legal in at least most cases. Only 36 percent of those under 30 say abortion should be illegal.

Those with higher education typically lean more toward sup-

port of legalized abortion, with 71 percent of those with a post-graduate degree in favor and 64 percent of those with a bachelor's degree in favor. Americans with a high school education or less are more divided on the issue. Fifty percent say abortion should be legal in at least most cases and 47 percent say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, according to the survey.

Despite the growing support in legal abortion, 69 percent of white evangelical Protestants, or 7 in 10, think abortion should be illegal in all or most cases.

A 2013 Quinnipiac poll also found that born-again evangelicals were far more likely to support right-to-life than any other religious group.

Fifty-nine percent of born-again evangelicals think abortion should be illegal in all cases (23 percent) or illegal in most cases (36 percent).

The poll also found that those who attend church services more frequently are far more pro-life than those who attend church less often — 60 percent of faithful church attenders say abortion should be illegal.

The Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution at its

2015 annual meeting on the sanctity of human life, noting, "God alone is the Author of life and He alone numbers our days, from the moment of conception until natural death."

"We reaffirm our repudiation of the genocide of legalized abortion in the United States and call on civil authorities to enact laws that

defend the lives of the unborn," the resolution reads.

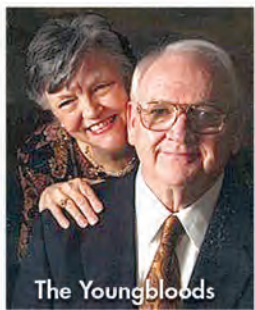
"We call on our fellow citizens of good will to collaborate with us on behalf of justice, the protection of human life and the cause of human flourishing."

The Alabama Baptist State Convention also passed a resolution on the contraceptive services mandate, stating, "Some of the

so-called 'contraceptive services' which must be provided under the contraceptive services mandate are not intended to prevent conception at all, but instead result in the destruction of a fertilized egg after conception has already occurred. Alabama Baptists have embraced the belief that children are a blessing from the Lord from the very moment of conception ... and have consistently defended both the right to life of the unborn and restrictions of wanton abortion."

Although those with religious affiliation tend to support life, for the religiously unaffiliated 78 percent say abortion should be legal in all or most cases and 66 percent of white mainline Protestants agree. The majority of Catholics (54 percent) and black Protestants (52 percent) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. (TAB)

Fifty-nine percent of born-again evangelicals think abortion should be illegal in all cases (23 percent) or illegal in most cases (36 percent).



Retired Pastor Max Youngblood recommends

REVERSE MORTGAGE

Specialist Jimmy Dixon

The Youngbloods

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

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

CONTACT JIMMY TODAY

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



NMLS #207518

PHONE: **205-567-4800**

EMAIL: **jdixon@mcgowinking.com**

Advertise in *The Alabama Baptist*

Contact Bill Gilmore at 1-800-803-5201, ext. 107 or bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

More than lessons. Life.

Teach a child in the way he should go. Even when he is old he will not depart from it. Be a Discovery Club volunteer and help children learn God's sustaining Word. One hour a week, after school. Lessons that last forever.



DISCOVERY CLUBS
A ministry of The Jimmie Hale Mission

Volunteers needed. For more information call: (205) 941-9852
DiscoveryClubs.org



YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC

in the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.

www.wrvfmtheriver.com

Want to get your news in **The Alabama Baptist?**

Call us! **1-800-803-5201**

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 5

Explore the Bible By Miguel Echevarria, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

ANSWERED

1 Samuel 1:10-18, 26-28

Hannah's Prayer (10-11)

The Book of Samuel begins with Hannah longing for a child, for at present she is not able to conceive. The theme of barrenness is not uncommon in the Bible. Women like Sarah and Rachel, and now Hannah, are barren for a time until God opens their wombs.

Their barrenness is not because of sin. On the contrary, these are righteous women whom God chose to close their wombs. Like these women, Hannah will give birth to a child, a child she promises to "give to the Lord all the days of his life" (v. 11).

Eli's Affirmation and Hannah's Presentation (12-18, 26-28)

As Hannah prays, Eli assumes her to be drunk. After Hannah explains her anguish and prayer, Eli prays that the Lord might grant her petition (vv. 13-17).

In time God answers Hannah's prayer and she conceives a son, calling him Samuel. After a period of weaning, Hannah fulfills her promise: she brings Samuel to Eli and offers him in service to the Lord. Samuel would serve the Lord all of his days and be a mighty prophet, eventually anointing a shepherd boy named David as king of Israel.

As we reflect on the story of Hannah, it is easy to focus solely on her longing for a child and his eventual birth. There is a larger story in view. Hannah's story contributes to the overall narrative of the Bible that begins in the garden (Gen. 1-3) and ends in a new garden (Rev. 20-22).

In the first garden, Adam and Eve sin and God curses them — He says they will return to dust, that is, they will die (Gen. 3:19). Yet in the midst of curses, God offers them hope. He promises that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent

(Gen. 3:15), a devastating blow that would undo the curse and open the way for mankind to dwell in a new Eden forever (Rev. 22).

But who is this mysterious child? Following the Old Testament storyline, we see that God gives Abraham the promise of offspring (Gen. 12:1-3). Then centuries later God promises to David that one of his descendants would rule over his people forever (2 Sam. 7). Paul explains that this kingly, skull-crushing offspring of Abraham and David is none other than Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:15-18; Ps. 2).

The birth of Jesus had been anticipated for centuries, being promised in Eden and pictured through the barrenness-birth motif in the lives of godly women like Hannah.

If Hannah prayed years for a child, humanity had been anticipating the child for centuries. And now that He has come and crushed Satan under His feet, defeating him at the cross, the way to a new Eden has been opened for mankind to live under His rule by placing our trust in Him.

So as we consider the story of Hannah, it is right for us to marvel at the way she longs for a son, pleads with God and He answers her prayer. But we must remember that this story, like that of Sarah and Rachel, points to the long expected birth of Jesus, the kingly son of the woman, born to set His people free from the curse of sin and death and into life in a new garden.

With this in mind, it seems appropriate to conclude with the words of one of Charles Wesley's most treasured hymns: "Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart." †

Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh, Ph.D. Armstrong Professor of Religion, Samford University

TRANSFORMED IN MY WORSHIP Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

In her book, Marva Dawn suggests that worship is "A Royal Waste of Time," which the book is titled, as we immerse ourselves in awesome worship, in thankful praise, in loving adoration of a God who is worthy of honor and glory and blessing. Worship, which is not merely a private encounter with God but a corporate expression of adoration, helps us to put God first in our lives.

Give to help others and not to call attention to yourself. (1-4)

Jesus speaks of three different aspects of worship, of piety — almsgiving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-15) and fasting (vv. 16-18). These were motivated by individual attitudes and demonstrated in private practice. Yet they were different aspects of the worship of the people of God. Jesus assumes we engage in each one of these activities and so He says throughout the chapter "when you give," "when you pray" and "when you fast."

The worship of God has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. We express our love to God but we also remember the needs of others. We are to remember the needs of the poor, of those who often are oppressed in life by circumstances and the actions of others. Daniel reminds us to "show mercy to the poor" (Dan. 4:27).

The danger, however, is that we seek to draw attention to our acts of charity. If we are looking for public recognition, we get precisely that and nothing more. It does not count with God.

In helping others, do we want our name to be placed on a plaque or a building or a scholarship, or do we simply want to help others?

Pray with humble sincerity. (5-8)

As for prayer, there is something dis-

tasteful in using an occasion to enjoy fellowship with God and turn it into an opportunity to be seen as being a pious person and gain the reputation of being a person of prayer.

The Christian will rather discover that prayer is our vital breath and our native air and will not pile up empty phrases. The latter do not count with God. God longs for the prayers of our hearts. We meet with Him in secret and our reward is fellowship with the Father.

Jesus uses the word "hypocrites" on several occasions in the Sermon on the Mount. It means "play acting" and refers to people who go through the motions of charity and prayer to be seen by others and receive their applause.

Deny yourself without making a show of it. (16-18)

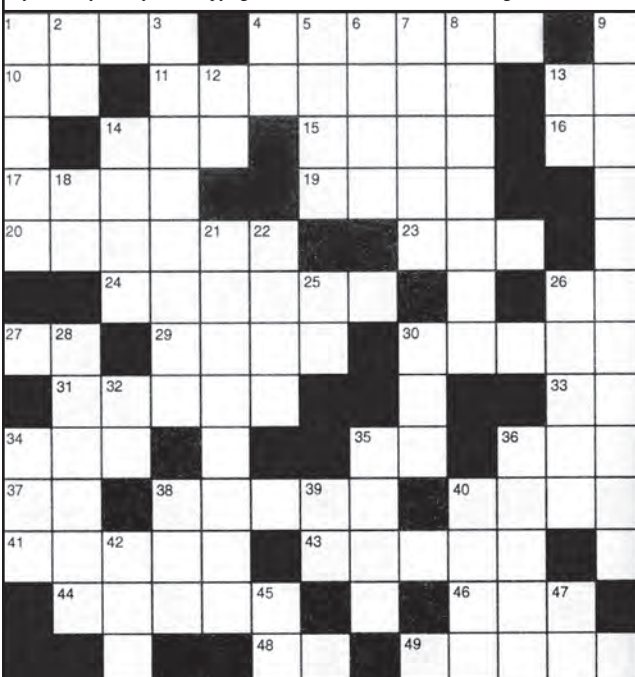
Fasting played an important part in the Jewish faith in which Jesus was nurtured. Yet the Hebrew Bible recognizes the dangers of fasting.

Giving up food for a period of time was not the essence of what fasting was all about. Isaiah reminds the people of Israel that "this (is) the fast that I choose ... to loose the bonds of injustice ... to let the oppressed go free. ... Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house? ... Then you shall call and the Lord will answer" (Isa. 58:6-9).

Fasting should be both voluntary and private, never a way of drawing attention to ourselves. It is not a means of acquiring credit either with God or other people. It is all too easy to follow rules and regulations in religious practice which are right and proper, but which we do in order to win the favor of other people rather than God. If this happens then we are the play-actors of the 21st century just as much as the Pharisees were in our Lord's day. †

Christian Crossword

By Bethany Keeny Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

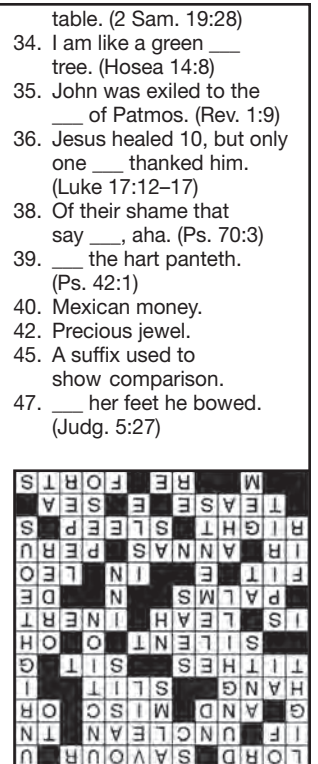


Across

- The ___ our God will we serve. (Josh. 24:24)
- The Lord smelled a sweet ___. (Gen. 8:21)
- ___ they can save thee. (Jer. 2:28)
- Any ___ thing shall not be eaten. (Lev. 7:19)
- Tennessee. (abbr.)
- This ___ that.
- Miscellaneous. (abbr.)
- ___ if he shall ask an egg. (Luke 11:12)
- And shall ___ thee on a tree. (Gen. 40:19)
- To cut.
- I give ___ of all that I possess. (Luke 18:12)
- ___ thou at my right hand. (Ps. 110:1)
- "___ Night, Holy Night."
- ___ that men would praise the Lord. (Ps. 107:31)
- Charity suffereth long, and ___ kind. (1 Cor. 13:4)
- Jacob married ___ after the first seven years of work. (Gen. 29:23)
- Very slow to move.
- Smote him with the ___ of

Down

- Neither do men ___ a candle. (Matt. 5:15)
- Ye are the light ___ the world. (Matt. 5:14)
- For the land, nor yet for the ___. (Luke 14:35)
- South Carolina. (abbr.)
- Delaware. (abbr.)
- Is ___ for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)
- Opposite of "out."
- ___ the Lion.
- And Huppim, the children of ___. (1 Chron. 7:12)
- ___ the high priest, and Caiaphas. (Acts 4:6)
- Home of the Andes mountains.
- Opposite of "wrong."
- God caused a deep ___ to fall upon Adam. (Gen. 2:21)
- To pester.
- Dead ___.
- Second note of the musical scale.
- And I will raise ___ against thee. (Isa. 29:3)
- Do not your ___ before men. (Matt. 6:1)
- The ___ of the temple was rent. (Luke 23:45)
- A body of water in the desert.
- But ye have an ___ from the Holy One. (1 John 2:20)
- Is God ___ who taketh vengeance? (Rom. 3:5)
- North Dakota. (abbr.)
- Paul was told ___ go ___ Macedonia. (one word)
- Go to the ___, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- Joshua sent men from Jericho to ___. (Josh. 7:2)
- The ___ shall melt with fervent heat. (2 Pet. 3:10)
- The waters called he ___. (Gen. 1:10)
- New Hampshire. (abbr.)
- And laid the wood in ___. (Gen. 22:9)
- I will pour out my ___ unto you. (Prov. 1:23).
- There was no room in the ___.
- Did eat ___ thine own



TOP 10

*best-selling Christian books
in May 2016*

FICTION

1. **Brush of Wings**
By Karen Kinsbury (Howard)
2. **The Atonement**
By Beverly Lewis (Bethany)
3. **The Stubborn Father: The Amish**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
4. **The English Son**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
5. **A Man of His Word**
By Kathleen Fuller (Thomas Nelson)
6. **God's Not Dead 2**
By Travis Thrasher (Tyndale)
7. **The Shack (Mass Market)**
By William Paul Young (Windblown)
8. **The Shack (Paperback)**
By William Paul Young (Windblown)
9. **War Room**
By Chris Fabry (Tyndale)
10. **Where the Heart Is (Romance Collection)**
By Stephanie Grace Whitson (Barbour)

CHILDREN'S

1. **The Jesus Storybook Bible**
By Sally Lloyd-Jones (Zonderkidz)
2. **The Prince Warriors**
By Priscilla Shirer (B&H)
3. **The Action Bible**
By Doug Mauss (David C Cook)
4. **Jesus Calling: 365 Devotions for Kids**
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
5. **Really Woolly Bedtime Prayers**
By Bonnie Rickner Jensen (Thomas Nelson)
6. **The Beginner's Bible: Timeless**
By Kelly Pulley (Zonderkidz)
7. **God Bless You & Good Night**
By Hannah C. Hall (Thomas Nelson)
8. **I Prayed For You**
By Thomas Nelson (Thomas Nelson)
9. **What is Easter?**
By Michelle Medlock Adams (Ideals/Worthy)
10. **Baby's First Book of Prayers**
By Melody Carlson (Zonderkidz)

Source: Christian Book Expo at press time



Photo courtesy of Centricity Music

Message of hope

Carrollton sings about God's sustaining power

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While tackling thought-provoking questions in their song lyrics, the contemporary group Carrollton desires to provide audiences with inspiring messages about God's sustaining power.

The group is made up of lead singer Justin Mosteller, bass player Jordan Bailey, drummer Michael Loy and guitarist Jeremy Menard. Their group name derives from a city in Kentucky located halfway between their hometowns.

"Two of us live in Cincinnati, Ohio, and two of us live in Louisville, Kentucky," Mosteller explained. "Exactly halfway between our cities is this little town called Carrollton. It's a small city that is the halfway point between us. It represents how hard we travel and being on this road together. It's a peaceful reminder of being halfway home and halfway where we're going. The name actually fits in a way we never expected."

During their travels the group members want to help audiences find clear direction.

"When we play a concert, we want to give people the space and environment to find some rest that night," Mosteller said. "We want everyone to take a collective deep breath together and experience some joy. It's always inspiring when we get an email about a song encouraging someone at just the right moment in their life. At a live concert, we get to experience those moments together. We love that interaction and engaging with audiences."

The theme for their new album, "Sunlight and Shadows," features songs about God's faithfulness in the midst of the peaks and valleys along life's journey.

"This record was written out of painful times and really good times," Mosteller said. "Some days are covered in sunlight and it's beautiful. Other days are covered in shadows and we see the opposite of beauty as we see the pain of life."

"We didn't realize it when we started writing the songs for this album, but when we got to the end of the recording process, we looked back and saw the theme. We have some songs that really celebrate the beauty of life and the goodness of God. Other songs are really heavy on our hearts."

The common theme is because of Christ, we can still express hope regardless of the circumstances."

The band keeps a busy schedule performing concerts around the country. The group has shared the stage with artists such as Matt Maher, TobyMac, for KING & COUNTRY, LeCrae, Switchfoot and Newsboys. In 2015, Carrollton performed at the International Conference on Missions in Richmond, Virginia. They also were featured on the More Than a Song

Tour with JJ Weeks before joining Jason Gray on the Christmas Stories Tour.

Wherever they perform, their goal is to connect audiences to the gospel through music.

"During our concerts we want to share a message of hope," Mosteller said. "Hope is what brings life into people. You see someone's eyes light up when they experience true hope and joy. Our prayer as we put out music and put on a concert is that people walk away with more hope than they walked in with."

"We want them to be reminded of the goodness of God, reminded of the gospel and the good news that Jesus came and rescued us. We've heard stories about how our songs have been an anchor for people who are struggling. Through these songs, we want people to know that no matter what they may face that God is always with them." †



Discerning truth

Publicity surrounding Chibok girl's escape questioned

The escape of a Chibok schoolgirl from Boko Haram is being exploited by the Nigerian government as an accomplishment in efforts to recover more than 200 girls still missing from the 2014 abduction.

The Nigerian government has used the escape of Amina Ali Nkeki to create photo opportunities for good publicity internationally, while skirting the ongoing tragedy that the government has not recovered any of the missing girls, said Open Doors USA's advocacy director Kristin Wright.

"It seems to be much more important to the Nigerian government to make good headlines around the world than it is to actually find the Chibok girls," Wright said.

Not only that, but details revealed in publicity after Amina's escape don't correlate with the facts of the Chibok kidnapping, Nigerian relations expert Adeniyi Ojutiku said, and raise speculation that Amina might not have been among the Chibok girls kidnapped.

"What is happening is the whole Chibok girl thing has been so highly politicized, that it's difficult to discern the truth from fabrications," he said. "There seems to be so many discrepancies in the story and those discrepancies make a person believe that the whole thing may have been stage managed. That's my concern."

The chief discrepancy is in Amina's age, 17, and her identity as a student in the first year of senior secondary school (SS1), Ojutiku said. Students abducted in April 2014 were all in the third year (SS3) and had been called back to school from vacation to take a required physics exam. All other classes were away from school on vacation during the raid, he said.

Not lining up

"She said she was not of the class level of the people taking the exams. She was in SS1. She could not have been [called] back to take an exam that she was not qualified to take," Ojutiku said. "At 15 [her age at the time of the kidnapping] the appropriate class level was SS1, and she actually said that she was in SS1. How could she have been among the group of SS3 students? They were recalled from their homes specifically to take a physics exam."

The details of her road to freedom, whether she actually escaped on her own or was aided by the government, also vary, Ojutiku said.

"People have speculated that the government may have created a story around her to appear that they are really doing something to rescue the girls," Ojutiku

said. "When you fabricate a lie there are always things that you overlook that will eventually point people to the fact that it's a lie."

Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 girls from the boarding school in the mostly Christian town of Chibok during a raid in the early morning hours of April 14, but as many as 60 of the girls escaped during the journey into the Sambisa Forest. An estimated 219 remain missing.

Ojutiku, a Southern Baptist in Raleigh, North Carolina, leading the Lift Up Now grassroots outreach to his Nigerian homeland, was on a 10-day business trip to southern Nigeria when Amina was discovered, but he did not travel to north-eastern Nigeria during his visit.

Wright, based in Washington, met with some of the fathers of the Chibok girls during a September 2015 visit to Jos in the country's middle belt. Amina's father, now deceased, was not among that group, but is among at least 18 parents who have died since the kidnapping, Wright said.

Open Doors USA welcomes the news of Amina's wellbeing, but is advocating for the safe return of those still missing.

"It is great news for this girl and for her family, but when you think of this unconscionable outrage that for more than two years these girls, over 200 of them have been held, there's really not a cause for celebration," she said.

"This is a time for us to soberly step back and think about the fact — these girls have been missing for over two years."

Open Doors USA has launched a petition to encourage President Barack Obama to visit Nigeria and issue a statement advocating for the girls' release. Thousands have signed the petition that will be available for a few more months, Wright said.

"There are many captives of Boko Haram and the government is actively seeking to rescue captives, whenever they are able, but the reality is that none of the Chibok girls, until Amina, have been rescued," she said. "And that's something that the world wants to hear about."

Wright was encouraged by the faith expressed by the girls' fathers, who are hopeful for their daughters' safe return.

"A lot of men told me that they do have hope that they'll see their daughters again and that they'll be reunited," Wright said. "And that's one reason why I do feel incredibly grateful and optimistic about Amini's escape. And the fact that she was able to make it home and be reunited with her family is incredible." (BP)



Open Doors USA photo

Yakubu Nkiki Maina (right), father of a kidnapped Chibok schoolgirl, shows a newspaper photo of the missing girls to Open Doors USA advocacy director Kristin Wright. Other Chibok fathers are in the background.

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Legislation would criminalize street evangelism

KADUNA, Nigeria — Street evangelists would be fined and "offensive" preaching at church services would send pastors to jail for up to two years under legislation proposed by the Muslim governor of Kaduna state, church leaders said.

As discussion of the legislation heated up, Christian leaders voiced alarm over the bill Gov. Nasir El-Rufai sent to the state assembly October 2015, which also would require clergy to obtain a preaching permit renewable every year. Church leaders said the Religious Regulation Bill, which would apply to all religions including Islam, is a ploy to stifle and persecute Christians under the guise of quelling extremists and charlatans.

"The proposed law is in contravention of the Nigerian Constitution and shall inhibit the preaching of the gospel when it becomes operational," said George Dodo, chairman of the Kaduna State Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria and Roman Catholic bishop of Zaria Diocese. "We have reservations over the bill and believe that it will curtail religious freedom of the people, particularly Christians in Kaduna state."

The bill stipulates that clergy would lose preaching rights if the state government or its agencies consider any of their words to be offensive. Preachers found guilty also could be fined \$1,000.

The bill also forbids the playing of evangelistic tapes and CDs in public places. In recent round-table discussions, Christian leaders said the legislation is unnecessary as all churches or ministries in Nigeria are already registered by the federal Corporate Affairs Commission. (MS)

Suicide bombing kills 70 Christians, children in Pakistan

LAHORE, Pakistan — A mass suicide attack in Lahore, Pakistan, claimed the lives of at least 70 Christians and children on Easter by the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar terror group. The group claimed responsibility for the attack and admitted it targeted Christians.

At least 300 others were injured in a bomb blast near a children's playground while the minority Christian population was celebrating Easter, according to BBC News.

The "suicide bombing in Pakistan, which was specifically targeted at Christians celebrating the Easter holiday, is one of the countless examples of the escalating global persecution against Christians," Open Doors USA President and CEO David Curry said in a statement.

"Countering the kind of terrorism we saw ... in Pakistan will take strong leadership and skilled diplomacy from the United States with other like-minded nations. Together, we must speak out against religious persecution wherever it may be found," Curry said.

Pakistani officials said they are searching for the extremists who could have been involved in the attack.

Pakistani's Christian population has suffered heavy persecution in the last few years, including a deadly bomb blast at a Peshawar church in 2013 where more than 80 people were killed, according to *Christianity Today*. (TAB)

Christians given ultimatum by Islamist leader

PUNJAB, Pakistan — Muslims in Pakistan have told 300 impoverished villagers they must either produce a Christian accused of blasphemy, leave the area, convert to Islam or be killed, sources said.

Imran Masih, a 28-year-old resident of a village in Punjab Province's Mandi Bahauddin District, was accused April 19 of keeping a "blasphemous" video clip on his cell phone.

Tensions flared after a local Islamist outfit issued a "fatwa" or "Islamic edict," against Masih and sanctioned his killing. Masih, a sweeper at a rural health center in nearby Bosaal, and his family have since fled the village. Some 44 Christian families are now left at the mercy of the 2,000-plus Muslim population, which has imposed a social boycott on the community after police thwarted an attempt to burn down their homes May 6. (MS)