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ESL MINISTRIES



Photos courtesy of Kristy Kennedy

English as a Second Language (ESL) ministries are a vital part of gospel outreach across the state, according to Kristy Kennedy (top photo, center in pink), an Alabama Baptist state missionary.

ESL ministries provide Alabama Baptist churches with way to reach internationals

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Kristy Kennedy said she doesn't have a number. She doesn't even have a ballpark figure. "I just kind of hear about it as I travel around visiting churches," she said.

But what she hears, she loves. "What I've really enjoyed seeing is that some of our smaller churches and small towns are really catching the vision for ESL (English as

a Second Language) ministry," said Kennedy, a state missionary who leads ESL ministry efforts for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. "Internationals are all over the state right now. It isn't just a big-city opportunity."

As a result churches from all corners of the state are calling and asking about how to start ESL ministries, she said.

"Word is getting out that it's a great way to reach and share and just meet needs," Kennedy said. "They have so many other needs with learning English, like helping children in

school — it's a never-ending list."

In areas like Greenville with several companies that make car parts,

"Internationals are all over the state right now. It isn't just a big-city opportunity."

**Kristy Kennedy
ESL ministry, SBOM**

populations of immigrants have swelled to significant numbers over the years.

And the opportunity is great, said Mary Bertha Zorn, a member of First Baptist Church, Greenville.

"Our ESL ministry originally started when we had two Spanish speakers come to the church to get some help,"

she said. "Between the pastor and I and the little bit of Spanish we had together, we managed to get them what they needed. But that was as

far as we could go that day."

So Zorn decided they needed a more organized effort.

"It's probably been 10 years since that first language class, and it's waxed and waned over the years," she said.

The Korean population in the area greatly increased, and they also picked up students from Mexico, Guatemala and other places.

"I don't know how the word got out, but slowly it did," she said.

Their classes always stayed small but over time they became more friends than teachers and students. Over time their English got better.

And eventually Zorn began to see them understand the gospel too.

"We see the growth. We see the questions," she said. "They need me to be their friend first, then it's easier (See 'English,' page 7)

COMMENT

Shepherd or Sheepdog?

The imagery of the title is so graphic I wish I had thought of it. Instead the question comes from “Hearing God,” a book by Dallas Willard, in a section dealing with Christian leadership.

My mind’s eye immediately went to scenes witnessed during a trip to Ireland and England. In Ireland we were privileged to watch Border Collies drive sheep in from the hills where they had been free grazing for weeks. In England we saw the dogs drive flocks along narrow country roads.

Each time the collies were like perpetual motion darting here and there, nipping at heels of dawdling animals, positioning themselves to keep a wayward sheep from drifting from the flock. The dogs never led the flock. They busied themselves on the edges to keep the flock together.

Willard observes that some Christian leaders (talking mostly about paid church employees but not exclusively) work tirelessly to keep the church flock together but do so through manipulation and control to drive the church and its members in a particular direction.

In doing so, these leaders often act like sheepdogs.

That kind of leadership may be in step with secular practices but is it what God outlines for His Church? Can resorting to manipulation, power, control and other human traits be clothed with spiritual terminology and accepted in the kingdom of God?

Willard contends Christian leaders must have confidence in the Word of the Great Shepherd. They must be willing to walk in front of their spiritual flock voicing the Word of God and trust the sheep to follow.

The Shepherd’s voice

In John 10:27, Jesus said, “My sheep listen to My voice, I know them and they follow Me.” That verse is part of a larger treatment on the relationship of the sheep to their shepherd in John 10 where Jesus teaches that sheep will only respond



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

to the voice of their shepherd. They will not follow the voice of a stranger.

If the church leader’s message is the Word of God, the Bible teaches those who belong to God will recognize it and follow. But if the message spoken by the church leader is not the Word of God, members will not respond.

Following God’s Word

Shepherd-like church leaders would have it no other way. The goal is not for church members to follow a pastor or a deacon or a Woman’s Missionary Union leader. The goal is for all members to follow the Word of the Great Shepherd together.

Hopefully, that word comes through the pastor most of the time. But the Bible gives numerous examples where someone other than the anointed leader spoke God’s counsel in a particular situation. Remember the advice Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, offered him in Exodus 18?

Shepherd-leaders follow the directive the apostle Peter offered when he wrote, “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it as with the strength God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Again the goal is to trust the Word of the Great Shepherd to govern and guide the people of God

no matter whom God uses to speak His message. That leaves no room for one to brag about “my church,” “my ministry,” “my abilities” or “my victory” since all the glory goes to God.

Still that goal requires a level of trust between members of the family of God that is sometimes hard to find. One prominent Christian leader wrote, “A redemptive teaching relationship is bilateral. ... The teacher has to learn from his students. ... Teachers and students are fellowmen who together are searching for what is true, meaningful and valid.”

Said more simply, ministry is not supposed to be a one-way street. Leadership is not lording over the faith of another (being a sheepdog) but helping one in their joy (being a shepherd) — see 2 Corinthians 1:24.

Often we read the apostle Paul’s admonition that “anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor” as meaning ministers are to be materially supported by those receiving instruction. That is true but a closer reading broadens the verse’s implications.

The word “share” comes from the Greek word meaning “fellowship.” It denotes mutual participation in a cause. The biblical concept is for a team spirit to emerge between teachers and learners in a Christian congregation. In a real sense the apostle Paul says we are all teachers of one another and we are all learners from one another.

Listen and learn

If we are to be shepherds to one another instead of sheepdogs nipping at one another we must listen and learn from one another as together we seek to hear the voice of the Great Shepherd.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the famous 19th century English Baptist pastor, once said to his students, “For my part I should loathe to be the pastor of a people who have nothing to say, or who, if they do say anything, might as well be quiet for the pastor is Lord Paramount and they are mere laymen and nobodies. I would sooner be the leader of six free men whose enthusiastic love is my only power over them, than play the director to a score of enslaved nations.”

He closed that lecture by saying, “Our system was never intended to promote the glory of priests and pastors but it is calculated to educate manly Christians who will not take their faith at second-hand.”

The world, the churches, the kingdom of God does not need more sheepdogs. What is needed is more shepherds.✠

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

‘WIPING OUT’ CIVIL WAR

I read *The Alabama Baptist’s* June 23 article, “Messengers vote against display of Confederate flag” plus the “Resolution.”

Inspired, I drove by every house in my neighborhood in Chelsea to encourage anyone flying the Confederate battle flag to cease and desist immediately — I was shocked to see only American flags flying, those with red and white stripes and 50 stars on a blue field.

With the 4th of July approaching, I

was sure some Confederate holdouts would be showing their true colors; after all, it’s only been 151 years since the end of the Civil War. Oh well, I’ll stay ever vigilant for those who stray.

Let me see if I have this straight:

In 1845, 171 years ago, the SBC broke ties with the American Baptist Home Mission Society because of differences on the slavery issue.

In 1995, 150 years after the break, the SBC approved a resolution repenting of racism and asking for forgiveness from African-American

Christians.

In 2015 the SBC expressed continued grief “over the presence of racism.”

And in 2016 the SBC resolved to discontinue the display of the Confederate battle flag.

I have a few ideas; Why doesn’t the SBC rekindle ties with the American Baptist Association, get that offensive word “Southern” out of its name (See ‘Letters,’ page 21)



The Alabama Baptist
will not publish a July 7 issue.
The next issue will be July 14.



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

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SATIRE

CONFUSED AS TRUTH

No truth to article suggesting Baptists are building mosques in US

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

Southern Baptists are not building mosques in the United States despite what an article posted in May on a satirical website suggests. The article "Southern Baptist Convention Launches Mosque Building Program to Promote 'Religious Liberty' And 'Niceness'" was published in May on "The End Times," a news satire and parody website. Accompanied by a picture of Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) President Russell Moore against a backdrop of a mosque under construction, the article lays out a plan for Southern Baptists to build mosques in order to foster religious tolerance. The article is not true.

Fielding calls

However, because it looks and reads like a news story, the article has been widely shared on Facebook and other social media sites. Keith Hinson, associate for public relations and Christian ethics for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said his office and several associational offices have fielded calls since early June from Alabama Baptists distressed over the article.

"Obviously this looks like a bona fide news story. However, if one scrolls to the very bottom of the web page — which is quite a journey, especially on smart phones — there is a link labeled 'About The End Times,' linking to an explanation that the site is satire and parody," Hinson said.

"The End Times" About Us page describes the website as a "news satire and parody site presented from a Christian worldview perspective," seeking to "engage in the culture-shaping realms of satire and parody in a manner that not only makes people laugh, but prompts them to think critically and, more importantly, biblically, about the issues, causes and personalities shaping current events."

It joins numerous secular and religious sites that regularly post articles that are easily mistaken for news. The attention-grabbing headlines lead readers to share the articles on social media, inflaming and upsetting those who fail

Nutrition plan launched to help end malnutrition

Malnutrition, according to a new report, remains a global issue and affects 1 out of 3 people.

The 2016 Global Nutrition Report (GNR) was recently launched in seven capitals across the world, including Washington.

The effects of malnutrition include wasting, stunting, obesity, diabetes and heart disease, according to Bread for the World.

Bread for the World hosted the Washington launch of GNR, where the United States announced it's new U.S. Government Global Nutrition Coordination Plan — which will allow

Before you share on Facebook

By **Scott Slayton**
Pastor, Chelsea Village Baptist Church

It has to be true, I read it on the Internet" is a saying that I first heard in the late 1990s. At the time it was referring to email forwards and the scary tales that they included such as "don't flash your lights at a car without its lights on."

With the advent of social media, sharing things that may not be true is easy and the stories can spread like wildfire.

For people who are Christians, we care about truth and telling the truth. The ninth commandment and the injunctions against gossip and slander make it incumbent upon us to know that what we are sharing is actually true. So here are three places that you should look before you post a link to a story on social media.

Google

You can put it in the form of a question or type in the title of the headline. While you're at it, search the name of the website that posted the content you are sharing to see if they are reputable or not. Do they have a good reputation or are they known for sensationalism?

Snopes.com

Snopes researches popular stories and presents the evidence for and against their veracity. Each story is given a color ranking with red, green, yellow or silver to show whether the story is false, true, undermined or undeterminable. They also have a ranking for stories that are a mixture of truth and fiction.

Truthorfiction.com

This is a site much like Snopes. They will share the origin of a story and present the research behind its truthfulness. I mention this site alongside Snopes because sometimes one will have the story and the other won't.

Is It from The Onion or LarkNews?

This is very important to check. The Onion is a satirical news site. None of their stories are true, but most of them are hilarious and bizarre. LarkNews does the same thing, except they focus on satire related to Christianity.

In conclusion, in your rush to make a point, make sure that the story you are sharing isn't satire and is actually true. Even if it is true, make sure that you have the proper motives for sharing. ✝

to verify the accuracy of the information.

The issue of Southern Baptist Convention support for building mosques has been a topic of discussion since early May, when ERLC and the International Mission Board joined 16 other religious groups including Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faith communities as cosigners of an amicus brief in support of the right of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge (New Jersey) to build a mosque in Bernards Township, New Jersey. The city denied the Islamic Society's application to build a mosque in January after several years of hearings and discussion.

The brief was filed by The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a Washington-based religious freedom public interest group. An amic-

us, or friend-of-the-court, brief is a legal document filed in a case by a person or group who is not part of the lawsuit but who has a strong interest in the matter and wishes to advise the court of relevant, additional information or arguments that the court might wish to consider.

Amicus brief

In a June 8 blog post, Moore defended ERLC's participation in the amicus brief, asserting that the principle of religious freedom for all religions must be upheld in order to protect evangelical Christians.

"The idea that religious freedom should apply only to Christians, or only to religious groups that aren't unpopular, is not only morally wrong but also self-defeating," Moore wrote.

"A government that can tell you a mosque or synagogue cannot be built because it is a mosque or a synagogue is a government that, in the fullness of time, will tell an evangelical church it cannot be constructed because of our claims to the exclusivity of Christ."

Moore's full response titled "Is Religious Freedom For Non-Christians Too?" is available at www.russellmoore.com.

Hinson said Alabama Baptists who have concerns related to information being circulated on social media, email or traditional news outlets are always invited to call his office at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 289, or 334-613-2289. ✝



'Jewels' in a 'haystack'

Alabama WMU missions team takes gospel to streets of Queens, New York

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

Thirty-three women from 13 Alabama Baptist churches served on mission with Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) on June 5–11, traversing the streets of Queens, New York, to find "people of peace," spiritual seekers open to hearing the gospel.

The team participated in a Sifting Week, an outreach effort coordinated by Global Gates, a ministry whose mission is to see gospel transformation of the world's most unevangelized people groups by reaching them through large "gateway cities."

Sifting is defined as: "to go through very carefully to find what is useful or valuable." Brad W., director of strategy and leadership development and co-founder of Global Gates Network,

describes what happens during a Sifting Week using the analogy of a haystack.

"We think of the city as a haystack, and we believe there are jewels to find throughout the city," he said.

Those "jewels" are "people of peace," individuals the Holy Spirit is already drawing to Jesus. Global Gates uses a strategy based on Luke 10 to find these individuals. Alabama WMU workers helped by prayer walking in communities with high populations of unreached people and seeking out people of peace in those neighborhoods through personal engagement and evangelism.

The work was physically challenging — volunteers walked more than 30 miles during the week, moving from one apartment building and home to the next to seek out contacts.

The spiritual challenges were even stronger.

Amanda Yancey — a team member from Woodland Baptist Church, Phenix City, in Russell Baptist Association — said, "Our team was assigned an apartment building none of the interns from Global Gates had been able to access. After prayer walking in the community on Monday, one of our teams was able to get inside later in the week."

In one of the apartments the team spoke to a Muslim woman who wanted to receive a Bible in

her language. In an apartment building in another neighborhood a Muslim college student also requested a Bible and expressed interest in learning more about Jesus.

Throughout the week team members shared stories of personal encounters of open doors — literally and spiritually. Several team members had the opportunity to share

the gospel, give out "JESUS films" and deliver Bibles to interested individuals. Global Gates team members will continue to follow up on those contacts.

The closed doors were powerful testimonies as well.

"We spoke with a woman on Thursday who asked for a Bible, but when we went back on Friday, a man answered the door and said she did not want the Bible because she only read the Koran," Yancey said.

In need of the gospel

The encounters were reminders of the need and the opportunity to share the gospel with unreached people groups who reside in major North American cities, many of whom are very religious, identifying as Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh.

Global Gates presently ministers in "gateway cities" in the United States and Canada, broadly defined

as cities where large numbers of people from other nations come to live and work, sometimes permanently, sometimes for a few years and often for extended visits.

If individuals within these unreached people groups receive the gospel while they are in gateway cities like New York, they can carry the gospel to their countries of origin, to their families in those countries and to others within their people groups, thus becoming a means to fulfilling the Great Commission command to reach "the ends of the earth."

Global Gates has prioritized 69 communities of unreached or under-reached peoples in the New York City metro area. Most of these communities have no church and little to no gospel witness.

Many of these communities also have high South Asian populations, which is how Alabama WMU got involved. The trip to New York City was just the latest effort in the ongoing work by Alabama WMU to increase awareness of South Asian people groups, a focus that began several years ago during preparation for the organization's 125th anniversary celebration in 2014, according to Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU.

God's direction

"We had in mind to focus on two missions connections, and the Lord revealed to us opportunities to invest in South Asians both internationally and nationally," McIntosh said.

Soon after, McIntosh met Brad, who was interested in beginning a prayer partnership with Alabama Baptists, which fit right in with the direction God was leading Alabama WMU leaders.

"We chose them because they chose us," McIntosh said.

The prayer partnership began, but McIntosh and her team soon realized there was more Alabama WMU could do to support the work of Global Gates.

"We loved the mission of Global Gates to reach the unreached in the cities of North America, and at the time no one else was doing what they were doing," McIntosh said.

Sifting Week volunteers like those from Alabama WMU help Global Gates reach people faster, expanding the reach of the gospel in these communities, Brad said.

Volunteers also were reminded of the need for continued prayer for these individuals, who are mothers, fathers and grandparents who love their children yet are leading them into darkness, said DeAnnette Sharp, WMU director at First Baptist Church, Vina, in Franklin Baptist Association.

Continued partnership

"Many were so gracious, so willing to listen. Many wanted to know more, but there were also many who completely rejected any talk of Jesus," Sharp said.

McIntosh said the Global Gates

partnership will go on "as long as the Lord allows," and she knows those who participated in the trip will take what they saw and learned back to their churches. Not only will South Asian people groups in North America and abroad be reached, but many in Alabama as well because of the empowering lessons learned while ministering in New York City.

"We've been reminded many times that New York City is not an easy place to minister but we've also been reminded that to be silent about Jesus is the worst thing we can do," McIntosh said.✝

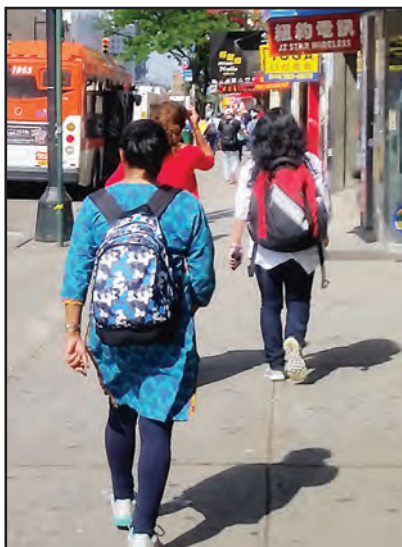


Photo by by Melinda Poole

An Alabama WMU missions team traverses the streets of Queens, New York, to find spiritual seekers open to hearing the gospel.



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Hayley Barber, daughter of Mark Barber, pastor of Hillview Baptist Church, Forestdale, is welcomed with excitement at her home church after winning Miss Alabama 2016.

Photo courtesy of Hayley Barber

MISS ALABAMA

Forestdale's Hillview Baptist Church 'went crazy' over 2016 crown

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

Though watching his daughter being crowned as Miss Alabama 2016 on June 11 was a "proud moment" for Pastor Mark Barber, seeing Hayley Barber come to know the Lord, be baptized and live for His glory has been "one of the greatest joys any pastor could have."

Mark Barber, who has served as pastor of Hillview Baptist Church, Forestdale, for nine years, said his daughter has a servant's heart that is evident in her daily life, as well as in her new platform as Miss Alabama 2016.

Saved at a young age

Being a pastor's kid, Hayley Barber said she heard the gospel as a child. "I was saved at a young age," she said, "but felt I only went through the motions (since) my older sister was doing the same thing at the time. At my middle school Disciple Now one of the speakers spoke about being lukewarm with Christ ... and that struck a chord with ... my relation-

ship with God. I decided to rededicate my faith."

As she grew in her faith, her interest also grew in pageants.

Two-fold meaning

She began to compete in the Miss Alabama's Outstanding Teen Program. The pageant held a two-fold meaning for Hayley Barber — it would fulfill the need for college scholarships and fulfill the call she felt the Lord had placed on her life. After placing second runner up, she began to compete in the Miss Alabama Pageant Organization.

"God sent many signs to let me know that participating in the Miss Alabama Pageant Organization was what He wanted for my life," she said.

After competing four years in a row, and only placing in the competition but not winning the title, Hayley Barber began to question why she was still competing.

But "because of the other godly women

involved in the program," she knew she was supposed to continue.

Through the years she also found that working on her weaknesses in the competition led her to place her "attention more toward Christ." She said she learned a lot about who she is as a Christian and how to stand up for what she believes. The pageant also provided "unparalleled opportunities to serve others, just as God serves," she said.

As Miss Alabama 2016, Hayley Barber gets to work through her community program, "Sight for Small Eyes," and advocate for comprehensive eye examinations for young children, as well as provide corrective tools for children with low vision.



BARBER

Mark Barber said of his daughter's program, "She's done so much with 'Sight for Small Eyes.' She's volunteered more than 3,000 hours and raised lots of money for Children's of Alabama. She's reached more than 2.2 million children with her curriculum on eye care. She's done a lot because that's her heart.

You really have to have a servant's heart to be successful at all of this."

And through her platform as Miss Alabama 2016, Hayley Barber said she hopes to "shine God's light through all I do and exemplify God's grace and love to all people I meet in the state of Alabama."

She'll also graduate from the University of Alabama at Birmingham debt free because of the scholarships she's earned through the Miss Alabama Pageant, and will have extra to use when she applies to optometry school in 2017.

'God's doing'

When she went to Sunday services at her home church, Hillview Baptist, after winning the crown, the "church went crazy" with excitement, Mark Barber said. "It was so wonderful."

And she may have been judged by people in order to win the title, but Mark Barber believes "it's all been God's doing."

"He wanted her on a larger platform to be able to share who she is and her purpose in life," Mark Barber said. "We just see this as a God thing." †

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

BCM students volunteer at SBC in St. Louis



Photo courtesy of Jeffery Gardner

Students from Alabama colleges and universities served as volunteers at the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, in mid-June. Here Kathy Chung Luu (right), a University of South Alabama student involved in the university's Baptist Campus Ministries, registers Bobby DuBois (left), associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Around 120 students from across the state participated in the One Mission Students experience — volunteering at the SBC registration tables and serving churches in the St. Louis area, like Faith Community Bible Church, in evangelistic outreach.

ESL MINISTRIES

Life-changing relationships

Mobile Association shares gospel through English classes

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Kim Wilson said she can't pick just one. They're all wonderful, she said. And they all have great stories.

"Every student that we've had has been special," Wilson said of Conversation Café, an English as a Second Language (ESL) class held regularly at her church — College Park Baptist Church, Mobile.

A 17-year-old exchange student from Japan is one of those.

"She's not a believer, and we've been working with her trying to share the gospel with her," Wilson said. "She stands out in my mind. We will continue to pray that the Lord will continue to work in her life."

Another lady from China comes "just because she's lonely," Wilson said. "She doesn't have any family or friends here and she needs that fellowship."

Another, an au pair from France, comes to the class to improve her English so she can do her job better with English speakers back in France.

For all the students, it's a safe place to go, she said.

"Their faces light up because our people hug them and ask how their week has been, and they open up and smile," Wilson said.

And College Park Baptist's Conversation Café is just 1 of 7 ESL programs in the area welcoming students weekly as



Photo courtesy of Kim Wilson

Students learn English in creative ways at Conversation Café, an English as a Second Language class held in Mobile.



Photo courtesy of Kim Wilson

Students at the Conversation Café, an English as a Second Language class held regularly at College Park Baptist Church, Mobile, learn English from more than 50 volunteer teachers. And along the way those teachers also share the gospel.

part of Mobile Baptist Association's International Language School (ILS).

The school, directed by Wilson, has been going strong since 1981, doing ministry based on relationships, she said.

Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for Mobile Association, agreed.

"More than 50 caring teachers build relationships while meeting an important need to help internationals become functional or fluent in English," he said. "Students often ask why our teachers donate their time and skill to help."

That gives teachers an opportunity to share how the love of Jesus impacts their lives, Wright said.

"The schools are labor intensive but can make an eternal difference in the life of each student and teacher," he said.

And the seven participating Baptist churches in Mobile — College Park; Crawford; Airport Boulevard; Spring Hill; First, Tillman's Corner; 3Circle and Dauphin Way — are invested in building those life-changing kinds of relationships by meeting a practical need, he said.

It's a great way to reach out to the 68 language groups in the Mobile area, Wright said.

Wilson agreed.

"ESL is such a unique ministry," she said.

Some people come, for example, because they have arrived in the United States with engineering degrees but not enough English proficiency to get a job, she said. Others just want to be able to build a normal life in

Alabama.

Between the seven sites, there are eight meeting times available for students to attend ILS. There also are different proficiency levels that they can join, Wilson said.

Many of the sites have classes that offer in-depth work on sentence structure and grammar. Many also offer citizenship class help and practice sessions for TOEFL, the standardized Test of English as a Foreign Language that prospective students have to take before enrolling in a university in the U.S.

Informal classes

But at College Park's Conversation Café, the classes are informal and focused strictly on helping them speak clearly, Wilson said.

"We help them with their proficiency and pronouncing words correctly, as well as helping with conversation techniques," she said. "We also try to do cooking projects, crafts and sometimes special things like manicures and pedicures. We try to do things that are a little bit different but that make them feel special." ¶

TIPS

for starting a
Literacy Missions
ministry

- 1. Contact** the state literacy missions coordinator, Kristy Kennedy, at kkennedy@alsbom.org or 334-613-2311 to discuss starting an ESL ministry.
- 2. Enlist** prayer support.
- 3. Obtain** church or associational approval.
- 4. Select** a literacy missions program director or literacy missions committee.
- 5. Secure** funding for training and materials.
- 6. Train** volunteers.

Source: Kristy Kennedy

Possible positions in Literacy Missions

- ▶ Prayer warrior
- ▶ Director
- ▶ Assistant director
- ▶ Teacher/tutor
- ▶ Substitute teacher/tutor
- ▶ Teacher's/tutor's aide
- ▶ Nursery worker
- ▶ Furnish refreshments
- ▶ Serve refreshments
- ▶ Transportation/van driver
- ▶ Clerical duties/finance duties
- ▶ Fundraising

“There are 5,000 Mixteco in Alabama, and we’re just finding more and more of them all the time.”

Kristy Kennedy, ESL ministry, SBOM

Integrating ESL into VBS



Photo courtesy of Hallay Cagle

Hallay Cagle (top, center), founder of Every Tribe Ministries, helps with a Vacation Bible School held in an area of Montgomery heavily populated with the Mixteco people.

Retooling VBS to include ESL provides opportunities for Alabama Baptist churches to reach Mixteco families

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Hallay Cagle remembers when it hit her. “A little boy came in and he was in first or second grade, and his mom was really upset,” she said.

The mom didn’t speak English but through a translator Cagle learned that the little boy hadn’t made it to the bathroom in time at school and had been sent home. He was embarrassed, upset and on top of that, he thought he was in trouble.

“It all came down to the fact that he couldn’t say in English, ‘I need to go to the bathroom,’” she said.

And for Cagle, that just wasn’t OK.

“I knew we needed to do something about this,” she said.

From that experience English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for preschoolers were started in Montgomery’s Mixteco community, a people group from southern Mexico that has its own language.

“We found that over the years when the Mixteco kids would go to school they would really struggle because they wouldn’t learn English until they started kindergarten,” said Cagle, a member of Morningview Baptist Church, Montgomery, who runs Every Tribe Ministries as an outreach to the Mixteco community.

So the kids would struggle to learn,

struggle to engage and would often be held back, she said.

“It was because of (those situations) that we started the preschool ESL in the summer four years ago,” Cagle said. “It’s not anything like a normal classroom setting — it’s all just interactive play.”

At each station, two tutors engage a small group of children, constantly repeating words and phrases to describe what the children are playing with.

“Because it’s not pressured learning, they pick it up fast,” Cagle said.

Most of them start speaking words by the middle of the summer, and by the end of the summer, they’re speaking in phrases, she said.

“Our goal is for them to start when they’re 2 years old and have a really good foundation by the time they start kindergarten.”

And the goal also is to engage them with the gospel while meeting a practical need, said state missionary Kristy Kennedy, who leads ESL ministry efforts for the Alabama

Baptist State Board of Missions.

This summer volunteers from Baptist churches all across Alabama are helping ramp up Cagle’s ESL classes for preschoolers into a full-scale Vacation Bible School (VBS) effort.

“What’s going to happen with ESL this summer is going to be huge,” Kennedy said. “There are 5,000 Mixteco in Alabama, and we’re just finding more and more of them all the time.”



Photo courtesy of Hallay Cagle

Mixteco children in Montgomery participate in a Vacation Bible School where they also are taught English.

And the ESL emphasis isn’t just for the preschoolers — every Thursday during the summer, classes also will be offered for Mixteco women.

“They don’t have a written language — it is all oral,” Kennedy said. “So when they learn English, they will be starting from scratch. They are going to have to learn to hold a pencil just like kindergarteners. That is going to be very different for us as far as adult ESL goes.”

Other churches may be able to leverage ESL for the gospel during VBS by offering English classes for adults while their children are participating in the regular VBS program with the rest of the children.

“People have been calling and asking how to integrate ESL into their VBS programming, and I’ve been really researching that,” Kennedy said. “We’re trying it this summer and we’re going to start promoting it more and more.”

It’s a way to retool VBS to meet the needs of immigrants, she said.

And Lisa Rose, director of community ministries for Montgomery Baptist Association, said VBS can be such an effective tool to share the gospel.

“Vacation Bible School has always been a great way to reach the community,” she said. “By using Vacation Bible School to reach the nations right here in Alabama, even more families have the opportunity to have an encounter with Christ.”

Reaching parents

Her hope, she said, is that as VBS is held “in a neighborhood saturated with an indigenous people group, not only will the children have the opportunity to know Christ, but the parents will have that opportunity as well.”

For more information about holding an ESL VBS in your area, contact Kennedy at 334-613-2311. For more information about volunteering with the Mixteco VBS in Montgomery, contact Rose at 334-271-6227. ☩

English effective way to reach internationals

(continued from page 1)

for them to accept my faith and my beliefs. It’s a beautiful thing to watch them understand it and come to see it for themselves.”

It’s something that’s happening all over the state, Kennedy said.

First Baptist Church, Montgomery, is still running a strong ESL outreach, including ministry to the Mixteco people (see story, this page).

And Mobile is a refugee city with a lot of opportunity, Kennedy said.

But the truth is that immigrants are in every corner of Alabama, and Kennedy

said she’s glad to see that ESL ministry is “spreading like wildfire.”

“You can see internationals everywhere,” she said. “I hear them

talking and I know they need help with their English. To me English is the most effective way to reach internationals in the U.S. with the gospel.”

It’s an instant need they have when they show up in Alabama, Kennedy said.

“And helping them learn can open doors to make friends we might not otherwise be able to make.” ☩

For more information about starting an ESL ministry, contact Kennedy at 334-613-2311.

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.

AUTAUGA

► **Calvary Church, Prattville**, will hold VBS on July 9, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. For more information call the church at 334-365-5213. Winston Brooks is pastor. ► **Liberty Church, Deatsville**, will hold VBS on July 17–21, 5:30–8 p.m. The theme is LifeWay's "Submerged." For more information call the church at 334-365-9720. Larry Teal is pastor. ► **New Prospect Church, Marbury**, will hold VBS on July 11–15, 6–8:30 p.m. The theme is "Cave Quest." Jeff Fray is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Malvern Church** will hold a gospel singing July 9, 6 p.m. Marty Glover, Kelly Collins, Mary Turner, Victor Glover and

Three Days Out will perform special music. Refreshments will be served following the singing. Hosea Parker is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Ricky Alldredge** is the new pastor of **Fairview Church, Ragland**. He previously served as pastor for Evening Star Church, Pell City. He also served at Victory Church, Goodwater, and Union T. Church, Talladega. He and his wife, Tammy, have three children and two grandchildren.

WALKER

► **Edgil Grove Church, Jasper**, will celebrate homecoming July 16, 6 p.m. The Page Trio and The Lovelace Family will perform special music.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Jeff Meyers** is the new pastor of **First Church, Opelika**. He previously served as pastor for Greenwell Springs Church, Greenwell Springs, Louisiana. Meyers holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas,



MEYERS

and a master's degree and doctorate from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Traci, have three children. †

Saraland's Litton honored with Dawson Award

Ministers' wives awarded Saraland's Kathy Ferguson Litton the 2016 Willie Turner Dawson

Award during the annual Ministers' Wives Luncheon in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 14 during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting.

Each year the Dawson Award recognizes a minister's wife for making a distinct denominational contribution beyond the local church and for her Christian character and service to others.



LITTON

Litton was recognized for her more than 40 years of investment in women and ministers' wives across the nation and the world.

Since 2011, Litton has served on the staff of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) as national consultant for ministry to pastors' wives. In that role she has traveled to 36 states and visited 21 of NAMB's 32 Send Cities to serve and encourage pastors' and planters' wives. She also developed "Flourish," a ministry of encouragement to these wives.

Litton and her husband, Ed, serve together at Redemption Church, Saraland, where he is pastor.

On the denominational level, Litton has served as member of the Committee on Committees

(2009), Committee on Resolutions (2015) and the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (2009). She serves on the Pastors' Wives Conference Advisory Board and was past president of the Ministers' Wives Luncheon.

Being honored

The Willie Turner Dawson Award was established in 1963 when the ministers' wives group posthumously honored Willie Turner Dawson, wife of J.M. Dawson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas. Willie Turner Dawson was a teacher and lecturer who in 1930 successfully challenged the Southern Baptist Convention to give more to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. (BP)

Rural associations find ways to communicate well

For Alabama Baptist associations in rural locations, with few churches and even fewer full-time church leaders, communication can be difficult.

Blount Baptist Association, for example, located in Blount County with a population of around 57,000, has 50 churches. Of those, only two have a full-time pastor, according to the Alabama Data Exchange database, with the rest of the churches being served by bivocational, part-time or volunteer pastors.

Blount Association also has existed without a director of missions (DOM) since the 1950s, when Friendship Baptist Association came into existence.

Consistency vital

In a situation like Blount Association's, how do church leaders and members keep in touch? What if you want to visit an area church? How can you communicate with a church if there is no phone number to call or email to write to?

Brad Campbell, DOM of Bigbee Baptist Association since 2014, has found specific ways to reach the pastors of the association's 17 churches with the help of

the association's secretary of 36 years, Muriel Powell.

Powell developed the association's website and maintains it, which is a great help for those looking for information on the association, Campbell said.

Each month the association also hosts a pastor's fellowship, where many updates and news items are shared, Campbell said, but because only four full-time pastors serve in the association, with the rest of the leaders being bivocational or semi-retired, Campbell also shares information and needs via cell phone or email. Powell also sends a lot of communication through the mail, Campbell said, which works well for the rural area.

"I try to keep the communication lines open by letting leaders and others know that they can always call me," Campbell said. "Being consistent with communication is vital."

And from *The Alabama Baptist's* communication with the association, Campbell's tactics work.

He returned a phone call the day of, even though he wasn't in the office. He also called twice to make sure the paper's questions were answered. (TAB)

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Pleasant Grove Assoc. center reaches community

Churches in Pleasant Grove Baptist Association regularly send volunteers and supplies to the Christian Ministries Center (CMC), located in the association's building in Brookwood and organized by Director of Missions Dan Wiggins. The center opened in May 2008 with the goal of serving anyone in the area needing assistance with necessities such as food, clothing, toiletries and cleaning supplies. Everything is free and the amount of food distributed is determined during an interview where a family's household income and number of family members are discussed.

Along with meeting physical needs, pastors frequently volunteer to minister to the people who come to CMC. The volunteers participate in a gospel presentation that is set up at the front of the building and counseling and prayer meetings are held before the clients leave.

Jennie Pierson, a member of Evergreen Baptist Church, Vance, volunteers at the center in the food pantry. In her volunteer position, which she has held for almost four years, she has seen the impact that CMC has on the people who come for assistance.

"We are lucky to have seen several people come to know Christ through the center," Pierson said. "It's a great, great, great place."

CMC is open every Monday and Thursday, not including federal holidays, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. For those interested in volunteering or donating to the center, call the associational office at 205-554-7706. (Hannah Muñoz)

State Baptist Foundation's McCrary to retire

Bill McCrary, vice president for church relations at The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA), will retire June 30. He has served at TBFA since 2007.

During his time at TBFA, McCrary said he has most enjoyed "meeting and developing relationships with Alabama Baptists all over the state."

McCrary said he desires his legacy to be that he "played a small part in energizing the legacy stewardship 'muscles' of Alabama Baptists," calling the opportunity "truly an Ephesians 3:20 experience."

McCrary also served as the safety and training officer for the Montgomery Water Works and Sanitary Sewer Board for 12 years and in the United States Air Force for 25 years, including several combat missions in Vietnam.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a master's degree from Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

McCrary is a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, where he has served as deacon chairman, stewardship chairman, building committee member, Sunday School teacher and sanctuary choir president.

He and his wife, Diane, have two children and four grandchildren. (Hannah Muñoz)

Gardendale FBC member receives national award

Tony Cooper, a member of Gardendale First Baptist Church and executive director of The Jimmie Hale Mission, was presented with the Russ Reid Lifetime Achievement award June 9 at the annual Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM) conference held in Jacksonville, Florida.

The award recognizes mission leaders who have served at least 15 years in a rescue mission leadership role and led missions that have remained in good standing with AGRM.

Cooper has served as a mission director for 40 years, including 25 years at Jimmie Hale. He also was a member of the Alabama Rescue Services Association and AGRM, where he previously served as a board member. (Hannah Muñoz)



COOPER

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

INAUGURAL WEEK OF PRAYER SEPTEMBER 11-18

“Things don't matter, but people do”

That was a quote often cited by martyred international missionary Dr. Martha Myers. She lived out sacrificially the fact that people really do matter. The things of this world — no — they don't really matter; they're temporal.



Martha Myers

She looked at the eternal. Every time she touched a life,

Dr. Martha, as she was so often called, knew that people really did matter.

Today, we are standing upon the shoulders of two spiritual giants: Dr. Martha Myers and also Kathleen Mallory who was an iconic figure, both in the lives of Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists.



Kathleen Mallory

Our new state missions offering is named the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. More information is available on page 10 in this

issue of “FOCUS on One Mission.”

You will be hearing more in the days to come, but please save the dates of **September 11-18** to participate in the inaugural Week of Prayer for State Missions. It's a time when many Alabama Baptists will immerse ourselves in prayer for the ministries supported by the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.



By Rick Lance
State Missionary

For resources and other information about the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, please go online to myers-mallory.org.

John 17:18, 20:21

REMEMBER: *“Things don't really matter, but people do.”*

FREE

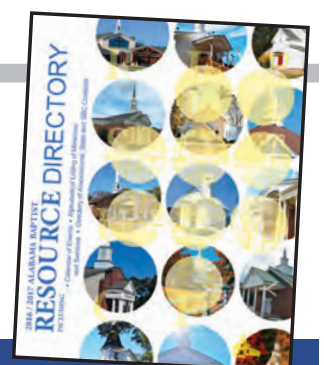
THIS 16-MONTH CALENDAR (Sept. 2016–Dec. 2017) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

Limit 20 copies per church. To order, please call, fax

order your 2016-2017 RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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 **www.alsbom.org/cpg**.

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





Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

STATE GOAL: \$750,000

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

Your gifts help support:

ALABAMA WMU

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CHURCH PLANTING

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GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

Visit **Myers-Mallory.org** to
order or download videos,
posters, bulletin inserts
and other resources.



WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

"I believe in the Cooperative Program, because it is one of the most effective tools to help churches fulfill the mission mandate of Acts 1:8. When we give through the Cooperative Program, we are able to reach people and places with the Gospel message that we as individuals could never reach. Our gifts have a multiplied effect when combined with the gifts of other Christians and churches to fund ministries around the state, nation and world. Truly, we can do more together than we can separately. As a pastor, it is great to talk about ministries

like disaster relief, theological education, church planting, church revitalization, campus ministries and missions partnerships around the world and say, 'We are part of that; that is our gifts at work because of the Cooperative Program.'"

— **Gregg Woodard**, pastor, Greenhill First Baptist Church, Killen



WOODARD



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

Discipleship is an inside-out process, whereas planting churches should be an outside-in process.

We begin with a heart for reaching the far-from-God in church planting.

Let me quote my friend, Pastor Jeff, who planted Sanctuary Church in Toronto:

That evening came. In that room sat 60 friends. Here was the question:

How would you describe your ideal spiritual community? Elaborate by explaining what is important? What is not? What is significant? What is irrelevant? What does it do? What doesn't it do? Paint a picture. I was not expecting to hear what I was about to hear.

Unchurched person after unchurched person stood up and shared a picture of the ideal spiritual community. These were the three most common themes:

1. God would be important every day, not on just one day.
2. It would be a spiritual community that cared for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of one another.
3. It would be a spiritual community that took responsibility for the greater community.

Only as the Holy Spirit could have arranged it, I had already had my index finger jammed in my Bible to hold the place open to Acts 2:42-47.

Over the next 12 months, we baptized 52. Over the next nine years, these friends

would "give themselves away" nine more times, multiplying themselves into 10 congregations in the Toronto area.

They would give time, resources and leadership away to start two church planting organizations, which together have started numerous churches within our city. (*Jeff Christopherson, Kingdom Matrix, Russell Media, 2012, pages 68-71*)

Pastor Jeff will be our speaker at the Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner on Sunday, November 13, 2016, at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery. Registration and fellowship time will be from 4:30 to 6 p.m., followed by dinner, worship and sessions for planters and wives. The cost is **\$25** per couple or **\$15** per person. **More details are available at: plantalabama.org/dinner.**

CHURCH PLANTING: AN "OUTSIDE-IN" PROCESS

Before we started The Sanctuary in 2001, we had a core team of four committed families. We spent six months cultivating relationships with people in order to develop the beginnings of trust.

Six months in, we had a pretty good list of names of friends. We asked if they would gather in a community center one evening and give us some advice.

We explained that two things would take place. We would have a meal together, and I was going to ask one simple question. No one would be embarrassed or put on the spot. We valued and needed their thoughts.

By Lamar Duke
State Missionary



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

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

2016 for girls, boys and teen girls

Missions Adventure Camp for Girls

(girls completing grades 2-6)

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

Missions Adventure /// Camp at WorldSong ///

Missions Adventure Camp for Children

(co-eds completing grades 2-6)

July 11-15

Cost: \$230 per person

Mom & Me Little

(girls completing grades K-3 and their moms)

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.

FOCUS on One Mission



Alabama
ACTS 1:8
connections
CONFERENCE
Thursday, JULY 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
First Baptist Church, Prattville
\$10 (includes lunch)
a18c.org/aa18c

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



ONE DAY 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.

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, d Watkins@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.

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22-23
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Walt Barnes
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worship with
The Museum

In Concert
Flame

Only **\$30 per person** if you register before **July 15**. Price goes up to **\$35 per person** on **July 15**.

Speak

Ephesians 4:15

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!

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

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.

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.

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, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

On Mission with the Great Commission



**NOT a
Typical
Summer
Camp!**

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.



Training For Church Leaders

The Summit

SHOCCO SPRINGS, **AUGUST 5 - 6, 2016**

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

This summer, 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.

children's choir 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.

NORTH
ALABAMACHURCH
LIBRARY
CONFERENCE

November 5, 2016

Central Baptist Church
2801 Hwy 31 S., DecaturREAD,
WHITE' &
BLUE

This is the 16th annual training event for North Alabama librarians and others who wish to attend. There is no cost to attend, but registration is necessary. Conferences will cover all areas of library work plus church history, copyright, card making for ministry, and training in both Concourse and Atrium. Lunch will be provided at which time an author will be guest speaker.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., followed by general session at 8:25 a.m. and conclusion by 3:30 p.m. There will be a book swap and lots of free items.

Online info: alsbom.org/churchlibrary

To register or for other information, please contact Eva Nell Hunter at (church) (256) 353-5912, (cell) (256) 303-7739, enhunter@charter.net or library@cbcdecatur.org.

Fall Senior  Adult Retreat
October 10-12, Shocco Springs

If you need a getaway in Alabama, you don't have to travel far to find a beautiful woodland setting to do just that! Fall is a great time to come to Shocco Springs. If your ideal escape from the everyday includes drawing closer to God through Bible study and worship, please consider the Fall Senior Adult Retreat.

This is a great occasion to spend time with friends and meet new ones. In addition to gorgeous scenery, good teaching, up lifting music and encouraging worship, there's always fun, food, games and entertainment. **Start planning now.**

It all begins with lunch on Monday and ends with lunch on Wednesday. The cost per person will depend upon choice of lodging.

COST/RESERVATIONS: 1-800-280-1105 or go online to shocco.org

ONLINE INFO: alsbom.org/senioradultretreat

For other information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

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

SENT
HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE2016 Alabama Baptist State Convention
Annual Meeting

November 15-16 at Eastmont Baptist Church,
4505 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36109

HOTEL GUIDE The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and is not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate is at any of these hotels, please contact Charleen Hobbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or chobbs@alsbom.org.

HOST HOTEL:**Drury Inn & Suites**

1124 Eastern Blvd, 36117 (I-85, exit 6)

334-273-1101

Free hot breakfast (Belgian waffles, scrambled eggs, biscuits & gravy, sausage and more); free hot food and cold beverages daily, 5:30-7 p.m., and soda/popcorn in lobby daily, 3-10 p.m.; free Wi-Fi ➔ **Rate: \$109** (king or 2 queens) Reservations: 1-800-325-0720 or visit druryhotels.com ➔ **Rate Code:** Group # 2268369

Deadline: Wednesday, October 12, 2016

I-85, exit 1, or I-65, exit 172 (Downtown)

Doubletree by Hilton, Downtown Montgomery

120 Madison Avenue, 36104

334-245-2320

Free parking, breakfast and Wi-Fi ➔ **Rate:** \$109 ➔ **Rate Code:** Ask for Alabama Baptist State Convention

Hampton Inn, Downtown

100 Commerce Street, 36104

334-265-1010

Free breakfast, parking fee waived ➔ **Rate:** \$109 (king or 2 queens), \$119 (king or 2 queens studio suite) ➔ **Rate Code:** SMB ➔ **Deadline:** Wednesday, October 26, 2016

I-85, exit 4

Hilton Garden Inn Montgomery East

1600 Interstate Park Drive, 36109

334-272-2225

Breakfast cooked to order (\$10.95) and free parking ➔ **Rate:** \$104 ➔ **Rate Code:** ASB

Homewood Suites by Hilton

1800 Interstate Park Drive, 36109

334-272-3010

Full hot breakfast buffet, parking and Wi-Fi, kitchens and sleeper sofas in every suite, pet friendly (fee applies) ➔ **Rate:** \$99 ➔ **Rate code:** ABC ➔ **Deadline:** Tuesday, November 1, 2016

I-85, exit 6 (East Blvd.)

Holiday Inn Express

5135 Carmichael Road, 36106

334-270-9199

Rate: \$99, includes breakfast buffet ➔ **Rate code:** ASB ➔ **Reservations:** 855-914-1442

I-85, exits 9 and 11 (EastChase)

Hampton Inn & Suites - EastChase

7651 EastChase Parkway, 36117

334-277-1818

Free hot breakfast buffet, parking, Wi-Fi, mini refrigerator and microwave in every room ➔ **Rate:** \$109 (king or 2 queens), \$119 (king studio suite) ➔ **Rate Code:** CHXABC or use ALABAMA STATE BAPTIST CONVENTION

Holiday Inn Express - EastChase

9250 Boyd Cooper Parkway, 36117

334-271-5516

Free hot breakfast, high-speed internet access and self-parking ➔ **Rate:** \$109 ➔ **Rate Code:** BSC ➔ **Reservation Link:** http://bit.ly/BSCHIE2016

Deadline: Sunday, October 30, 2016

Staybridge Suites - EastChase

7800 EastChase Parkway, 36117

334-277-9383

Free breakfast buffet (7 days a week), free full dinner (M-TH nights 5:30-7:30 p.m.), parking and Internet ➔ **Rate:** \$119 ➔ **Rate Code:** Ask for Baptist State Convention

I-65, exit 164 (Hope Hull)

Fairfield Inn and Suites Montgomery Airport South

7560 Mobile Highway, 36106

334-281-6882, ext. 702 (Debbie Bozeman)

Breakfast included, free parking and Wi-Fi ➔ **Rate:** \$89 ➔ **Rate Code:** Ask for Baptist State Convention

Hampton Inn, Airport South

60 Wasden Road, 36043

334-280-9592

Free breakfast, Wi-Fi and parking ➔ **Rate:** \$94 ➔ **Rate Code:** Ask for Baptist State Convention

For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit alsbom.org/convention.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Last Things

Resurrection

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

The indeterminate period between death and the conclusion of the intermediate or disembodied state will come to an end in the resurrection of the dead. Those who have died in the Lord will be reunited with resurrection bodies. Thus, God's plan for His children in eternity future will be an embodied life, just as life on earth is for each of us is an embodied life. Since New Testament times, the question people have wondered about is what will our resurrection bodies be like. The apostle Paul acknowledged this very question in 1 Corinthians 15:35: "Someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?'"

Inquiring minds may well enlarge on this basic question. Will those who died in infancy be raised with infant bodies or will those who live to a ripe old age with all the bodily changes caused by age be raised in bodies that reflect continuity with their bodies at the time of death? Will believers who have been disfigured or maimed have evidences of this in their resurrection bodies? Will resurrection bodies reflect ethnic differences in skin color or facial features?

We may think in a general way that all these distinctions belong to the present age, but what will be the case in eternity will involve resurrection bodies that will not be living within the ravages of aging, diseases or disfigurements. Resurrection bodies presumably will be perfectly suited to the timeless and sinless realms of a new heaven and a new earth. Presumably, factors that are a part of human life in the present age will not be factors in the age to come. These and other questions might be raised but such matters are not addressed directly in the Bible.

However, we do find some general biblical statements that cast some light on some of our questions. The most notable passage is 1 Corinthians 15:37-44 which addresses death by explaining that "what you sow, you do not sow

that body that shall be" before adding that "God gives it a body as He pleases." We can posit that God who makes all things perfect will not likely give anyone an imperfect resurrection body. Then concerning the resurrection of the dead, the passage promises, "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (vv. 43-44).

'A spiritual body'

Immediately we wonder about "a spiritual body." Our best insight probably lies in thinking about Jesus' resurrection body. Philippians 3:20-21, in asserting that our citizenship is in heaven and that we anticipate Christ's return from heaven, states that He "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." An obvious feature of Jesus after His resurrection was that He transcended time and space. He could appear suddenly in a room whose doors were locked. He could suddenly cease to be seen, such as when He departed from Cleopas and his companion in Luke 24, vanishing from their sight. Our resurrection hope is not dependent on the shape or nature of the resurrection body, but in that we will be like Jesus. "It has not been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).✠

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.



Special surprise

Huntsville's Hillwood Baptist honors pastor, wife at annual churchwide event

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Every year for the past two decades Huntsville's Hillwood Baptist Church's senior adults put on a churchwide event called "This Is Your Life," based on the 1950's TV show by the same name. A church member is secretly selected and on the day of the event the recipient is surprised with special people in his or her life. Each special guest announces him or herself via microphone in another room, then the recipient guesses who each guest is.

At this year's March 21 event, the honored recipients at "This Is Your Life" were Hillwood's Pastor Charles Freeman and his wife, Paula, who have been serving the church for almost three decades.

Charles Freeman said when he and his wife's names were announced they were completely shocked.

"We had no idea," he said. "I should have known something was up, because when it was time to read out who it is, they called me up to read the name. When I opened up the card with our names on it and we saw it was us, my wife said, 'No it's not!'"

After their name was revealed, the Freemans were directed to sit in chairs in the dining room and, in the nearby gym, special guests began introducing themselves using the microphone. Each one would talk about a memory or share a fact about him or herself to help the Freemans guess who was on the other side of the wall.

"They do a lot of behind the scenes things to get family and friends there, and then they hide them until it's time," Charles Freeman said. "They do it like the old show used to do. They say something about themselves and their relationship and we had to guess who it is. Sometimes it's a

couple and sometimes it's an individual."

The Freemans' daughter, Keri Anconetani, was instrumental in bringing her parents' special guests together for this year's event, according to Dana Workman, Hillwood's associate pastor.

Workman said, "Each candidate is always surprised because family members and friends keep it a true secret. Charles and Paula were totally shocked and surprised by the attendance and the response."

The Freemans' guests included family members, former church members and seminary friends — a mixture of people who have known them since their early days of marriage, or before, and in more recent years.

Anconetani said she enjoyed her coordination role and loved getting to surprise her parents with such a special day.

Hugh Michaels, a Hillwood Baptist deacon and "This Is Your Life" event creator and organizer, helps make

every year's event possible by keeping things organized and doling out roles, like the one he assigned to Anconetani.

'Blown away'

In addition to the guest-introduction portion of the event, Anconetani and her brother, David Freeman — who serves as the minister of praise and worship at Wil-lowbrook at Bailey Grove, another Huntsville-area church — sang a song called "We Will Remember." Charles and Paula Freeman's four grandchildren sang "Jesus Loves Me."

"My parents were blown away," Anconetani said. "Most of the people who came thought it was wonderful, how it all came together. I think everyone thought it was neat that we pulled it off — that we actually surprised the preacher. People were excited we were able to do it for them."✠



Photo courtesy of Hugh Michaels
Hillwood Baptist Church, Huntsville, surprises Pastor Charles Freeman and his wife, Paula, at an event called 'This Is Your Life.'

"My parents were blown away. Most of the people who came thought it was wonderful, how it all came together."

Keri Anconetani
Charles and Paula Freeman's daughter

Workers for Christ United helps with construction projects at Brother Bryan Mission in Birmingham (main photo) and River East Baptist Church, Glencoe (small photo).

‘Good growing pains’



Workers for Christ United helps churches with construction projects

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In 15 years, Marshall Lewis has worked on a lot of church buildings. It's quite a list.

But the list of friends he's made is even longer.

It's because the men of Workers for Christ United (WFCU) — volunteers who travel around helping churches with construction projects — don't just build churches, they build relationships, he said.

"We approach it as a mission to make sure we engage with the local church people, and we generally make some lasting friendships while we work there," said Lewis, a member of First Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Original vision

That was the vision of Dick Muckleroy, who founded WFCU in 1996 while serving as a part of First, Birmingham. He wanted to support churches that were having "good growing pains" so they could have the facilities they needed to reach more people. And he wanted volunteers to make friends with each other and the church people as they

worked, invest in them and together spread the gospel as far and wide as they could.

Larry Byrd, who took over the helm of the organization after Muckleroy passed away in 2015, said its founder had a "phenomenal vision."

The group focuses on churches within a 300-mile radius and helps them frame up, finish out, repair or renovate buildings.

"The churches provide their own materials, and the organization has funds to pay the way of the volunteers — all we need is

their time. There's no out of pocket expenses for volunteers," said Byrd, also a member of First, Birmingham.

All the resources are in place —

they're just looking for churches that need their help.

To date, WFCU has worked on dozens of churches around the country, and Byrd says you "can just feel God's presence on the job site."

"In the evenings we have worship and fellowship, and it's very complementary to the work," he said.

The volunteers — who come from a variety of denominational backgrounds — share with each other during that time,

"allowing us to get to know each other in a way we wouldn't normally get to do," Byrd said. "The camaraderie that develops there and the spirit of working together is just wonderful."

Good fellowship

Lewis said the fact that the men come from all different backgrounds and professions only contributes to the good fellowship — not to mention the work they're able to do.

"We do framing work, basic electrical work, trim work. Depending on who's with us, we can wind up doing a variety of things," he said. "We've put in floors before, wooden ones and ceramic tile."

As for Lewis himself, "I'm a really good eater," he said with a laugh.

But he, like the other men, helps out in a lot of different ways.

"We try to contribute and help however we can," he said. "It always amazes me through God's help just how a bunch of guys can get a lot done in a short period of time."

And the churches are always touched by how people they've never met are willing to do whatever they can to help them in their time of need, Lewis said.

Sandy Cavender, a member of Unity Baptist Church, Newnan, Georgia, said,



Photos courtesy of Workers for Christ United

"They're the greatest group of Christian men ever," noting that the fellowship her church had with the volunteers while they worked was sweet.

'New brothers in Christ'

"It's amazing to see how they work together, how they love the Lord and how they have worked to help us get into our building," she said. "We feel so honored, and we have new brothers in Christ. We're the blessed ones."

And in July, the group will do it all over again at a church in Gordo, Lewis said. They're looking forward to getting their hands dirty and helping a congregation there install Sheetrock.

But even more than that, he's looking forward to making more friends. †

For more information or to find out how you or your church can be involved, visit www.workersforchristunited.com.

Ministry Tips



PREVENTING BURN-OUT IN MINISTRY

By James Preachers
Director of missions, Sardis Baptist Association

Pastors are busy people. And pastors of churches in Sardis Baptist Association are no exception — plus, all of Sardis Association's pastors are bivocational.

A good pastor realizes that min-

istry is a lifestyle and not a by-product of their calling.

They realize that ministry is a 24/7, 365-day calling.

That's probably why we hear about burn-out in ministry.

Can this be prevented? Yes. How? Here are some suggestions I've picked up from

more than 53 years of ministry.

▶ Stay focused and prioritize.

Your lifestyle should be a reflection of your ministry, which includes prayer and study.

▶ Stay informed on current events. Be "well read."

▶ Participate in Southern Baptist Con-

vention and Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meetings and other events.

▶ Keep a balance between ministry and family.

▶ Take vacations with your family.

▶ Continue your education. †



Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Can we agree to disagree?

I look back now and see that it was actually kind of rude of me to dump all of my frustrations on my friend and colleague. He didn't have any control over the decisions that were being made nor the seemingly disrespectful way they were being carried out. Sure he was employed by the organization but he was not among the leaders making the difficult moves.

Why I let the situation upset me so much I don't recall, but I do remember the graciousness with which my friend handled me. He stopped what he was doing and let me vent, which actually left him with a late night working to finish up a deadline because I held him hostage debating the issue that was forefront in my mind.

I never once thought of his schedule, his responsibilities, his energy level nor even what heavy burdens he might already be carrying. I used him as a sounding board whether he wanted to be or not.

And he kindly sat there and listened, nodding sympathetically as I talked. I asked him why but my question was not sincere. My mind was made up and I wasn't really interested in why nor any of the details that led to the decision. And I certainly wasn't interested in hearing viewpoints from the other side. I really thought that if I could convince my friend to agree with me then we might have a chance to change the leaders' minds.

Gracious response

When I finally took a breath, he said he understood how frustrating it must be to hear the news without having been part of the internal discussions. He also agreed there was no guarantee the decision was the right one, but he reminded me that I was not privy to all the information and that sometimes tough decisions have to be made for the greater good.

Sometimes individuals or even groups have to sacrifice their preference in a situation if it means unifying the whole.

Granted there are essentials of the faith on which we as believers in and followers of Jesus Christ must never compromise. But when the issue falls in the nonessentials category, there must be a willingness to — at the very least — have calm, controlled and open dialog.

What gets hard is when people on the various sides speak disrespectfully to each other or when one side tries to shut down the other side without a fair hearing. When this happens, it takes a lot of discipline to control emotions and not take the comments personally.

The difficulty level rises if conversations about controversial topics develop into a time of tossing blame or indicating the way it is being done by an opposing force is "wrong" merely because the person doing the talking disagrees. Conversations where all parties are respectful to the various viewpoints being shared are certainly more productive.

I know it disappoints me when my opinion is not valued, even if my opinion is still being shaped as I'm attempting to understand a situation.

Another friend shared with me recently that he enjoys reading articles and comments from people on all sides of an issue. He said it helps him better understand the issue. Many times it serves to solidify his own thinking while helping him know how to converse with those who disagree. And then other times, he might even adjust his own way of thinking.

As I attempt to learn from the wisdom of my two friends, I also am reminded to seek direction and wisdom from the Word of God in how to relate to others (Gal. 5:22-23), truly stay in tune with God (2 Chron. 7:14) and live life in general (Luke 10:27). †

Rashional Extras...

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness ... Galatians 5:22"

5 must haves for Christian mom (really all) business owners

By Mitzi Eaker
mitzijanemedia.mykajabi.com

You've got to have MOXIE to be a mom business owner. ... It is not honoring God when we are sacrificing the very people He has given us to nurture and care for.

"Moxie is force of character, determination or nerve. As a Christian mom, the force is really the Holy Spirit."

M — Marketing

O — Outcome

X — X-Ray

I — Infrastructure

E — Expectations

Marketing: "The key to a successful business is marketing. ... Marketing is more than manipulating people to buy your products. It is listening to people, finding out where they are and meeting their needs. That is different from secular marketing.

"How can we create things that really meet the needs and point people to Jesus?"

Outcome: "What do you want your business to be like? What is the vision that motivates you? What are the outcomes you want for your family and work? Write down goals."

X-Ray: "Take an x-ray of your resources. What skills and talents do you have? What do you need? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Be honest with yourself.

"What people do you have in your network in person and online to teach you or assist you?"

Infrastructure: "The Holy Spirit

is our foundation and then we have all these pillars that strengthen us and allow us to do what we need to do. The first pillar is support ... from people in your inner circle.

"Evaluate the strength of your support network. Identify areas for improvement. If you are lacking in support, who do you know who can step in to support you?"

"The second pillar: systems. What areas of your life do you need to systematize or outsource? We do systems with the things that are nonrelational that we do every day in our life so we can do them quicker and get them done so we can spend time in relationship with others and invest in the relational area of our lives.

"Boundaries make up the third pillar. Set clear and healthy boundaries in business with work hours, meetings, clients, etc.; with children with behaviors, roles, responsibilities, etc.; and between work and family work schedule, social media, etc.

"We tend to sacrifice our boundaries for everyone else."

Expectations: "Identify the gap between your expectations on yourself and others' expectations upon you. List all the expectations on you and allot time to each expectation to see your reality. Categorize the expectations that need to be systemized, outsourced or eliminated.

"You don't have time to do everything, so you have got to prioritize. What area do you need to set realistic expectations?"

"Every person who works is hired to do two things, and they have to figure out what those two things are. They should spend 80 percent of their time doing those two things and 20 percent of their time making sure the rest gets done by others."

**Pastor Buddy Gray
Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover
(Excerpt from article by Jon Anderson in the Hoover Sun on Gray's 30th anniversary as pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church.)**

"Great leaders empower others to reach their full potential. In doing so productivity increases and the future leadership of the organization is in place for long lasting success."

An excerpt from the endorsement for Russ Crosson's book "What Makes a Leader Great" by University of Miami head football coach Mark Richt

@EdLitton

You can't confess what you can't see or grieve over, and then repent of what you are not convinced is wicked before the heart of God.

@AlabamaBaptist

@edstetzer #SBCPC16: Pastors, "you can't lead what you won't live. ... Jesus' last words have to be our first priority."

@RashionalThts

Wanda Lee's parting advice for @nationalWMU: "Never lose sight of needs of world ... never turn eyes/heart inward ... never forsake missions."

@ThomRainer

Transparency and truthfulness from church leadership are absolutely necessary for a healthy church culture.

@RashionalThts

@edstetzer #SBCPC16: "Stop asking God to do what He's called us to do."

*Follow me on Twitter and Periscope:
@RashionalThts*

Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago June 1966

The June 9 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* reflected on the past, present and future of the paper. The paper had been a vital part of life in Alabama for more than 100 years. The front page stated that though there had been fluctuating circumstances throughout the years, *The Alabama Baptist* had a glorious history. Photos were featured of the three editors: L.L. Gwaltney (1919–1950), Leon Macon (1950–1965) and Hudson Baggett (April 1966–present). Efforts were made to establish a denominational paper as far back as 1835. The first of these efforts was made by Wil-

liam Wood in 1834 when he issued a small Baptist paper called the *Southwestern Baptist Pioneer* at Jacksonville in Calhoun County.

100 Years Ago June 1916

Professor John C. Dawson declined a call to Mercer College in Georgia to stay in his current position as head of the department of modern languages at Howard College. It was the third time within recent years that Professor Dawson had been called to another school and each time he had chosen to decline. Dawson had been with Howard for 15 years and had built one of the strongest departments of

modern languages in any Southern college. (*Dawson would later become president of Howard College and remain in that position until September 1930 when he would leave the school to accept a teaching position at the University of Alabama.*)

150 Years Ago June 1866

The wife of M.B. Harden, pastor of the Baptist Church at Union Springs, died June 16 after an illness. Pastor Harden himself was quite ill with typhoid fever, but as of last accounts the paper reported hopes that he would recover. The death of his wife was

seen as a most crushing calamity upon this young pastor as well the congregation under his leadership. "The Master instructs His servants in the school of adversity for more extended usefulness," the paper reported. Sincerest sympathy was sent out to the Harden family through the paper in such a difficult hour of bereavement. It was hoped that Harden would find solace in his hour of affliction through the gospel he preached so earnestly to others. The testament of his wife's Christian faith was her many virtues and the responsibility that she fulfilled in the church as wife of the pastor. "Her children will rise up and call her blessed." †

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

SENIOR PASTOR

Family Baptist Church, Trinity Alabama, is seeking a senior pastor — a Spirit-filled man of integrity, with a passion for family and the community. Send resumé to: pastorsearch@familybaptist.org.

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

Macedonia Baptist Church, Maplesville, Alabama, is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumé to: Hershel E. Smith, 7965 Franklin Street, Thorsby, AL 35171 or MacedoniaBaptist-MaplesvilleAL@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION

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

WORSHIP PASTOR

Bethel Baptist Church in Moody, Alabama, seeks a full-time worship pastor. More information is

available at www.bethelnet.com. Resúmes and inquiries may be sent to: JBurnham@bethelnet.com.

MUSIC MINISTER

Hillcrest Baptist Church, Lebanon, Tennessee, is seeking a full-time minister of music. We have a blended type of worship and our congregation averages 1,000 for Sunday morning service. Please email resumé to: resume@hillcrestbaptist.org.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Preferably married couple. Experience working with young people. Desire to see young people grow in the Lord. Please send resumé to: Philadelphia Baptist Church, ATTN: Youth Search Committee, 1200 Burrows Crossing Rd., Jasper, AL 35503.

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FBC Opelika, Alabama, is seeking a full-time minister to children (grades 1–6). Experience as a children's minister required. Recommendations and resúmes

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OTHER POSITIONS

CHURCH SECRETARY

Deerfoot Baptist, Trussville, Alabama, is seeking a part-time church secretary, M–Th., 24–28 hours per week, minimum 5 years experience. You must have office/church office experience in Microsoft Office, ACS and general office duties and report to senior pastor. Self-motivating, work in confidence, organize/planning skills, personable, preferred. Interact with members and guests in a friendly atmosphere. Please include cover letter with resumé ATTN: Personnel, email: churchoffice@deerfootbaptist.org. USPS: 5450 Mt. Olive Church Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

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

Lives Being Restored hosts first simulcast event

It's a difficult place to be — knowing you've made poor decisions that have led you down a path of muck and then recognizing your sin and trying to break free.

But sin is sticky sometimes. Even when you've moved past the bad decisions and are on the path to freedom, guilt and remorse can hang around causing you to feel "broken" and "too ashamed" to face God.

To reach those who are in that place right now, that place of needing restoration, Lives Being Restored is hosting "Back to the Potter's House: A story of mercy, forgiveness and new beginnings" July 30 at The Lovelady Center in Birmingham at 6 p.m.

Reaching shelters

A Russellville-based ministry, Lives Being Restored shares the gospel in schools, drug and alcohol rehabs and homeless shelters.

At "Back to the Potter's House," Shea Lowery, executive director of Lives Being Restored, who has experienced God's restoration in her own life, will share a message from Jeremiah 18.

In that chapter, Lowery said, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah and told him to go to the pot-

ter's house. Once there, Jeremiah watched the potter use his hands to remake a broken vessel into something new and usable.

Broken vessels

"The Lord told Jeremiah, 'That's what I can do with you.' When we messed up, thank the Lord He doesn't give up on us," Lowery said. "He wants to remold us, re-shape us and heal us and use us again for His glory."

The event is free and open to the public but there also is an opportunity to stream the simulcast from other locations. Lowery said at press time multiple groups, churches and individuals from across the nation had already signed up to host a simulcast.

"This is open to anyone in need of restoration," Lowery said. "We have churches taking this simulcast to communities around them and will be streaming the event on a big screen outside. We have a woman who is sharing it with her Bible study group. You can take this to a prison ministry or inner city ministries that your church might be involved in. Or if you are one person and in need of restoration you can watch this in your own home." (Neisha Roberts)

To host a simulcast at your church or home, visit livesbeingrestored.com/host-a-simulcast.

LETTERS

(continued from page 2)
and eradicate the Civil War? This would free up our leaders to focus on the needs of the people of Christ rather than the egos of the goofballs making these never-ending senseless resolutions.

Finally, seeing the Confederate flag on the front page of *The Alabama Baptist* desecrated with a "don't use symbol" made me wonder — do you think we could use this symbol to wipe out the Vietnam War? That war has caused me much anguish over the last 50-plus years.

Ken Lorino
Chelsea, Ala.

RESOLUTION ON FLAG

While the issue of the Southern Baptist Convention resolution on the Confederate battle flag was the highlighted story in the convention wrap-up by *The Alabama Baptist* (June 23 issue), my quoted comments were not representative of the entirety of my comments. In

light of the fact that Dr. Merritt's comments were more thoroughly reported, I would hope you will more completely cover my statements as well.

In my comments I pled that disavowing a historic symbol, founded upon the Christian St. Andrew's Cross would raise further questions:

1) Would we further challenge United States symbols, such as the United States flag which flew over slave ships or the honor of George Washington who owned slaves? I would hope we would not make that move toward political correctness.

2) What will we do about Southern Baptist heritage? Will we cease to use names like Broadus or Manly and take Broadman off everything, knowing that our publishing arm bears the name of two strong supporters of the Confederacy? Will we cease having a Lottie Moon Offering because

Lottie Moon was an avid supporter of the Confederacy?

The motion has passed, has no binding authority on local churches and will be applied only as people choose to do so. While I agree that no symbol should be misused, I believe the Merritt amendment to this resolution condemns even a proper and historical use of the flag of our ancestors.

John Killian
Maytown Baptist Church

'DISCONTINUE DISPLAY'

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has spoken loudly asking Southern Baptists to "discontinue the display of the Confederate battle flag." This is only one of several such attempts by the nation's largest Protestant denomination "to bring about racial reconciliation."

No mention of the Confederate battle flag's design being based upon a Christian symbol, the Cross of St. Andrew. No mention that a majority of rural Baptist churches were founded by, property donated by, pastored by men who were Confederate veterans.

Since the SBC has now involved itself with flags and symbols, I must question their silence on the following:

The Supreme Court legalized marriage between two men or two women on June 26, 2015. The White House immediately was awash with the rainbow flag lighting. I did not read that the SBC condemned the display of that flag at the nation's presidential residence.

In 2014 the 9th Circuit Court of Appeal in California upheld the sending home of several students who wore United States flag T-shirts on Cinco de Mayo Day (May 5). Mexican students wore Mexican flag T-shirts but the wearing of the U.S. flag was "offensive" to them. Will the SBC weigh in on this violation of the First Amendment involving our national flag?

A recent article in *The Alabama Baptist* reported 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches report less than 100 in attendance on Sundays. Small churches are struggling; many are closing their doors. As a lifelong Southern Baptist I sincerely wish the SBC would become as motivated to support and encourage the struggling, endangered churches who support it financially, as they are in banning historical symbols.

Ellen Williams
Leroy, Ala. ☪



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 3

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

FEARED 1 Samuel 12:12-22

The Covenant Revisited (12-15)

After years of service, Samuel gives his farewell address, arguing that he has served Israel blamelessly (12:1-5). He then reminds them of the major events (the exodus, the entrance in to the land and the period of the judges) leading up to their request for a king (12:6-12).

Subsequently, he introduces Saul as king. In so doing, Samuel reminds Israel of the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, recalling Moses' farewell address in Deuteronomy 28. If the Israelites and their king follow the Lord, "It will be well with them" (v. 15). But if they disobey, "the hand of the Lord" will be against them (v. 15).

Looking at Deuteronomy 28, we see the curse for disobedience leads to exile from the land (vv. 41-68). During the monarchy, the Temple is the place where God's presence dwells in the midst of His people. Exile from the land therefore meant being driven away from God's presence, as Adam and Eve had been driven out of the garden. Kings and Chronicles record that Israel did not heed Samuel's warning and were driven out of the land, away from God and into captivity.

A Sign Delivered (16-18)

To show the sinfulness of their request for a worldly king, Samuel asks God to provide a thunderstorm during the harvest, demonstrating His power and judgment. As a result of the storm, God was feared by the people, producing reverence and trepidation.

Like the Israelites, we should realize that we stand before a holy God as sinners. God is not to be mocked. He is not to

be taken lightly. Rather we should tremble and fear, for we know we deserve to face His wrath and judgment. Israel trembling before God does not compare to the day humanity will stand before His judgment seat (Rev. 20). That day mankind will quiver before their Maker and will be condemned for their transgressions.

God's Mercy and Grace (19-22)

Realizing their sin, the Israelites plead for their lives. They beg Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king" (v. 19). Samuel then encourages them not to fear but to serve their God. For the sake of His name, the Lord will not forget His people. If mercy depended on their merit, they would never attain it. They would only get what they deserve: a curse.

The Israelites, like the rest of humanity, have all disobeyed God (i.e., they have sinned) and deserve to be under a curse, separated from the presence of God forever. That's what we deserve — you and I, no exceptions. On the cross, however, Jesus took the curse upon Himself in our place. He was our substitute. Paul says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us — for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13).

In Christ we don't get what we deserve, we get what we don't deserve: grace. We deserve to suffer the curse of death because of our sin. But Jesus suffered in our place by hanging on a tree (the cross). If you believe this, the curse you deserve has been lifted and you are no longer condemned before God. One day you will dwell with God forever in a new land, a new garden (Rev. 21-22). This is the good news of the gospel, a gift we could never earn or merit. †

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

TRANSFORMED IN MY ACTIONS Matthew 7:1-12

Words lie at the heart of the universe. Sometimes we use words to impress. We have so many kinds of words in us and so many ways to say them. We say the words "I love you" with a different tone than "I can't stand you."

In an age of 24-hour news coverage where we speak and hear thousands and thousands of words every day, it's easy to forget how powerful they are. Words can heal and, sadly, words can harm.

When we were young we used to say to people: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." It wasn't true.

Unkind words stick and they hurt and they are hard to forget or take back. Then there are the words that are passed around about people, not spoken to them directly. The attacks of the gossips and the slanderers. They spread false rumors and gossip about people. Jesus speaks here about words that are judgmental against others.

Evaluate yourself instead of judging others. (1-6)

Jesus is speaking against judging others. This is not the same as having a judicious discernment but is a censorious spirit which delights in finding fault in other people and their actions.

The picture of the man with a log in his eye who is judging someone with a speck of dust in their eye demonstrates how ridiculous such an attitude can be. It's as close to humor that we find in the teaching of Jesus: irony.

Seek God's wisdom. (7-11)

The connection of these verses on prayer with what has preceded may be in the way in which we use words. Instead of

using our words to condemn others, why don't we use words by prayer for people?

These verses reinforce the earlier teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:5-15 and does so by means of the "how much more" argument that Jesus used on several occasions in His teaching. If a reluctant and weary person will get up at midnight to answer the phone call or the knocking on the front door by a neighbor to give the person some bread for the sake of peace, then how much more will our heavenly Father answer our prayers?

Why do we waste our time, our emotional energy and our words on harming other people, when we could be spending time in prayer, thinking of these very people and praying to God for them?

Treat others the way you want to be treated. (12)

This verse is often referred to as the "Golden Rule." It is the summary and quintessence of the previous 11 verses. It seems to Jesus to sum up the "law and the prophets" which spoke of the majority of the Hebrew Bible.

To follow this command of Jesus is to cease being confrontational and critical toward others and to be considerate of their life situation. It means we ensure that we don't use our position in the family, the workplace and even the church in a way that is abusive. Rather we will be gentle.

This doesn't mean being without convictions, but being willing to hear different aspects of a situation and come to a measured judgment which is gentle and reasonable, and always impartial and sincere.

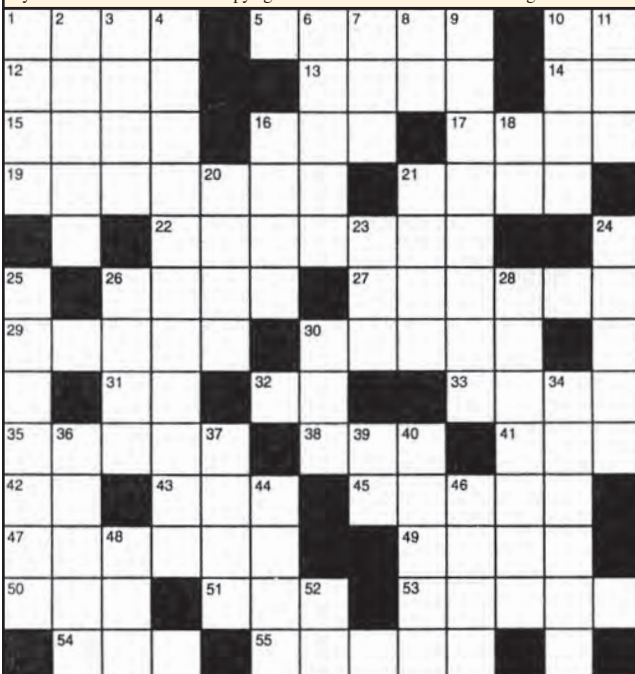
Mercy is compassion driven to action. It's not just a feeling — it works itself out in daily living.

Why don't you try it? †

The Alabama Baptist will not publish a July 7 issue. Sunday School lessons for July 10 will be available at www.thealabamabaptist.org.

Christian Crossword

By Glenn G. Luscher Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



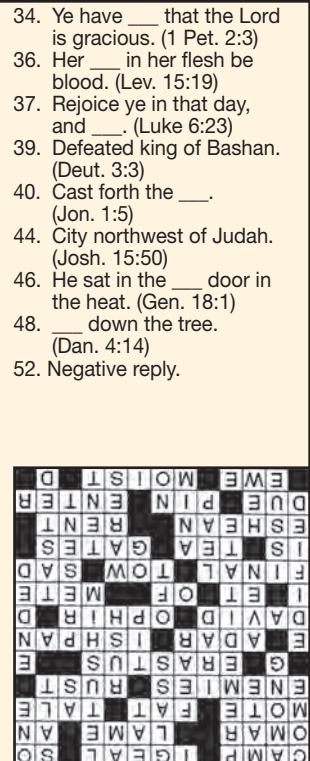
Across

- In the uttermost parts of the _____. (Num. 11:1)
- A son of Shemaiah. (1 Chron. 3:22)
- And she said, Yea, for _____ much. (Acts 5:8)
- A son of Eliphaz. (Gen. 36:11)
- The legs of the _____ are not equal. (Prov. 26:7)
- Used before a noun.
- Speck.
- And ye shall eat the _____ of the land. (Gen. 45:18)
- A _____ bearer revealeth secrets. (Prov. 11:13)
- But love ye your _____. (Luke 6:35)
- Where moth and _____ doth corrupt. (Matt. 6:19)
- Paul sent him into Macedonia. (Acts 19:22)
- The 12th month of the Jewish sacred year. (Esther 3:7)
- A son of Shashak. (1 Chron. 8:22)
- Youngest son of Jesse.
- A son of Joktan. (Gen. 10:29)
- Extraterrestrial. (abbr.)
- Desired _____ him letters to Damascus. (Acts 9:2)

- I will divide Shechem, and _____ out. (Ps. 108:7)
- The last one.
- As a thread of _____ is broken. (Judg. 16:9)
- Why is thy spirit so _____? (1 Kings 21:5)
- The word of the Lord _____ with him. (2 Kings 3:12)
- A drink made from leaves.
- To open before him the two-leaved _____. (Isa. 45:1)
- Mountain city of Judah. (Josh. 15:52)
- His clothes shall be _____. (Lev. 13:45)
- In _____ season we shall reap. (Gal. 6:9)
- Will men take a _____. (Ezek. 15:3)
- When they _____ in at the gates. (Ezek. 44:17)
- Abraham set seven _____ lambs. (Gen. 21:28)
- Neither shall he _____ eat _____ grapes. (Num. 6:3)
- Take no thought ... neither do ye _____. (Mark 13:11)
- A sea of _____ mingled with fire. (Rev. 15:2)
- No man _____ fruit of thee hereafter. (Mark 11:14)
- God said unto Moses, I _____. (Ex. 3:14)
- Son of Dedan. (Gen. 25:3)
- No fountain both yield _____ water and fresh. (James 3:12)
- Be not ignorant of this _____ thing. (2 Pet. 3:8)
- I will not _____ what man shall do. (Heb. 13:6)
- Let him be _____ the younger. (Luke 22:26)
- Son of Enoch. (Gen. 4:18)
- Can the _____ grow up without mire? (Job 8:11)
- Put it upon the _____ of the right ear. (Lev. 14:25)
- Until they have _____ all my harvest. (Ruth 2:21)
- The churches ... were _____. (Acts 9:31)
- Inhabitant from the plain of _____. (Amos 1:5)
- _____ yourselves before the Lord. (1 Sam. 10:19)
- I punished them _____. (Acts 26:11)

Down

- _____ near, ye nations, to hear. (Isa. 34:1)
- Why seek ye the living _____ the dead? (Luke 24:5)
- Companion.



TOP 10

downloaded books from iTunes

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY



1. The Christian Atheist
By Craig Groeschel
(Zondervan)



2. The Husband Project
By Kathi Lipp
(Harvest House)



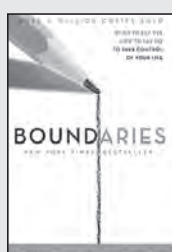
3. Heaven and Hell: Are They Real?
By Christopher D. Hudson
(Thomas Nelson)



4. Living Beyond Your Feelings
By Joyce Meyer
(FaithWords)



5. A Touch from Heaven
By Neal Plyant and Christopher Plyant
(Destiny Image)



6. Boundaries
By Henry Cloud
(Zondervan)

7. Jesus Calling
By Sarah Young
(Thomas Nelson)

8. The Love Dare
By Alex Kendrick
(B&H)

9. Mere Christianity
By C.S. Lewis
(HarperOne)

10. Fervent
By Priscilla Shirer
(B&H)



Jason Gray

Photo courtesy of Centricity Music

Singer Jason Gray shares grief in wake of divorce

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Nobody really ever goes into marriage thinking that it will end, said contemporary Christian musician Jason Gray. “You enter marriage with hope and belief and joy,” he said. “And when everything falls apart, it’s surreal. It’s gut-wrenching.”

It was like a devastating slow bomb that exploded and sent shockwaves into every part of his life. “My failing marriage broke me down,” Gray said. “It broke down a lot of what I believed. It broke down a lot of my hope.”

And then when the worst thing he could imagine happened — when his marriage ended — it felt like part of him died, he said. “It is a kind of death, a very real death of something that you loved very much.”

It’s a complicated kind of grief when something dies that you can’t lay to rest in the ground — things like failed marriages, miscarriages and broken dreams, Gray said. “A lot of people around you don’t know what to do to help or how to handle it. It’s a dark place.” That’s the feeling that led him to write the song “Death Without a Funeral” for his new album, “Where the Light Gets In.”

The song says: “When you see me, I’m still breathing, though a million things have died inside of me.”

Gray said he hoped the song could serve as a kind of funeral for people like himself who have experienced that kind of loss.

“I wrote this album hoping that it would be a ray of light for people in the middle of darkness,” he said.

Gray was quiet for about a year after his marriage legally

ended in January 2015, working through his grief privately and having a lot of “real” moments with God.

“It was confusing. I’ve never prayed harder for anything in my life, and it still went the way it did. It’s very lonely, confusing and painful at times,” Gray said. “Yet there were also ways in which I experienced His presence in a very intimate and dramatic way. It requires a deep engagement with grace and trust.”

There is something about pain that’s holy, he wrote on his blog recently.

“The best anyone can do is try to not lose themselves in the storm of it and in time work toward wholeness again,” he wrote. “The best way I know how to do this is to bring the broken pieces of my life to the God who redeems, restores and puts broken things back together.”

One of Gray’s favorite quotes is by the poet Rumi — “The wound is where the light enters you.” It prompted the name of the album’s

track, “The Wound Is Where the Light Gets In.”

“It’s empowering to know that these hard things don’t have the last word in our lives — God’s Word has the final say,” Gray said. “The very thing that could destroy us, if we allow love and light into the wound, it could be the thing that makes us beautiful.”

Bringing hope

He said he believes that’s the core message God has entrusted to him.

“At those times when we can feel abandoned, alone and confused, if there was some way that these songs could speak into that moment, that’s my desire — that they could bring hope.”

For more information, visit www.jasongraymusic.com.#



“It’s empowering to know that these hard things don’t have the last word in our lives — God’s Word has the final say.”

Jason Gray, singer

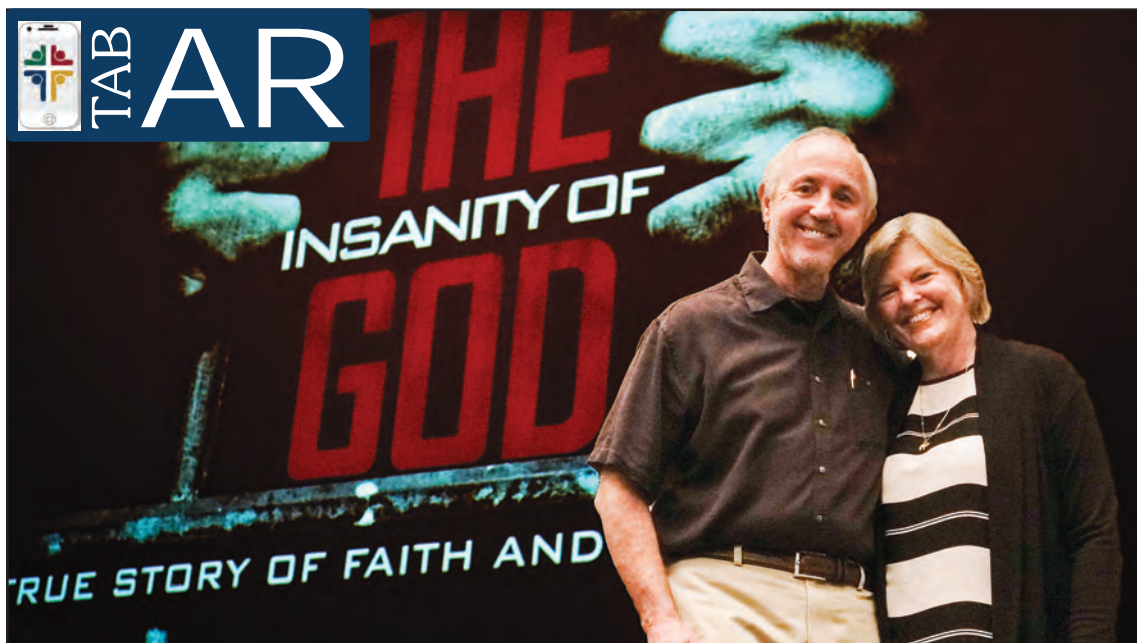


Photo by Jenna Wachsmuth

Nik (left) and Ruth Ripken (right) appeared at the screening of 'The Insanity of God' documentary June 13 in St. Louis, Missouri. The film is based on Nik Ripken's book by the same name.

Persecuted believers 'count cost'

Persecuted Church needs Westerners' prayers, Ripken says

According to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) immediate past president Ronnie Floyd, "More Christians around the world are being persecuted and killed for their faith than any other time in modern history."

That's something Ruth and Nik Ripken care deeply about. After serving in war and famine in Somalia for seven years, the couple has learned a few things about the persecuted Church.

Ruth Ripken said prayer is critical for persecuted Christians all over the world.

"The darkness was so dark (in Somalia), you could taste it," said Ruth Ripken, comparing it to the plagues of Egypt in the book of Exodus.

But over time, she and her husband, Nik Ripken, author of "The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected," which also

is being released as a documentary, learned that the stronger the believers' persecution, the stronger their convictions.

'No comparison'

"I found a faith in [persecuted believers] — there's no comparison — and I began to think, 'What have we done with our faith in the West?' It is watered down so much, whereas these believers have paid the price," Ruth Ripken said in an interview with Donna Gaines of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tennes-

see, at the Pastors' Wives Conference held June 13 prior to the SBC annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

Living victoriously

"Persecution has made them count the cost but it has also made them live victoriously," Ruth Ripken said.

She pointed to the biblical story of Joseph, who was falsely imprisoned because of Potiphar. "Brothers and sisters around the world have reminded us that sometimes God needs Joseph in Pharaoh's prison. ... If we get Joseph out of prison before he has a chance to interpret Pharaoh's dream, Egypt dies." And Israel dies.

"So, can we from the West who do have a freedom — that believers from persecution call a 'miracle' every single day — can we from the West be so strong" to be there, praying, if God needs them to be in prison to win prison guards to Christ, Ruth Ripken asked.

"Believers in persecution can only stand because you are praying," she said, relating how believers would weep when they learned other believers were praying for them and they were not forgotten.

Messengers and others at the SBC annual meeting were able to screen "The Insanity of God" documentary June 13. (BP, TAB)

**For more information
on the documentary,
visit nikripen.com.**

**"Persecution has made them (persecuted Christians) count
the cost but it has also made them live victoriously."**

Ruth Ripken
wife of author Nik Ripken

'The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected'



Muslims stab, attack non-Muslim in Nigeria

KAKURI, Nigeria — Young Muslim men stabbed a non-Muslim in Kaduna state, Nigeria, on June 7 for failing to observe a daytime fast during the month-long Islamic celebration of Ramadan, according to local reports.

Francis Emmanuel Olokpo sustained multiple wounds in the attack. At St. Gerard Hospital in Kaduna City, he said he was recovering well.

The 41-year-old carpenter recently said he had gone to a market to buy wood and returned to his workplace in Kakuri.

"As I was eating, about six Muslims came to ask me if I am a Muslim or a Christian but I did not answer them," he said from his hospital bed. "They asked why I was not fasting, then I told them that I am not a Muslim. Before I know it, one of them slapped me. As I stood up, the rest came and surrounded me and started attacking me with knives."

Kaduna City Gov. Nasir El-Rufai visited Olokpo June 8 at the hospital and later told reporters his administration would not accept the use of force and coercion to compel others to embrace religious beliefs.

"Nigeria is a free country and that means no imposition of faith or religious practices on anyone," El-Rufai said. "We should not allow differences in faith to be a barrier to harmony or a cause for conflict." (MS)

Christian homes looted, torched by Muslim mob in Egypt

AL-BEIDA, Egypt — Christians in Al-Beida village in Egypt recently wanted to turn a building into a church but their goal was abruptly stopped when a Muslim mob destroyed the building and torched and looted 80 Christian family homes.

According to International Christian Concern (ICC), the attack happened June 17 and one witness, Mousa Zarif, said, "Following the noon prayer a great deal of fanatic Muslims gathered in front of the new house of my cousin, Naim Aziz, during its construction because a rumor spread in the village that this building would be turned into a church."

ICC reported there are no churches within four miles of the village. The Muslim mob destroyed the building, all construction materials and injured two Christians, according to The Christian Post. All of the homes owned by Christians in the area were then looted and torched.

ICC's regional manager for South Asia, William Stark, said, "It continues to show how Christians in Egypt are treated like second-class citizens. We call on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that justice is served and that Christian communities like this be protected from further assault in Egypt." (TAB)

Christians in Pakistan told to leave, convert or die

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.

While Masih's family, still in the village, was told to produce him before the committee, a local Muslim businessman announced a \$9,500 bounty on Masih's head, dead or alive.

One of the mosque committee members, Riaz Ahmed Dhadhra, had proposed burning down area Christians' homes if they did not hand Masih over to them. (MS)