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Evangelical Christians gather at the nation's capital for a prayer rally July 16.



TOGETHER

PULSE photo

Thousands gather at nation's capital to pray for unity, healing

Evangelical Christians converged on the nation's capital for a prayer rally on one of the hottest days of the summer.

With the nation reeling from recent shootings and shocked by news of a terrorist attack in France and an attempted coup in Turkey, speakers at Together 2016 cited the global events from the stage July 16 and spoke of the challenges facing Americans.

Together 2016 focused on unified prayer and worship and called on Christians to be a source of catalytic change.

'Jesus can heal'

"Jesus can heal our nation," said immediate past Southern Baptist Convention president Ronnie Floyd to applause and cries of "Amen." "Jesus can heal relationships. Amer-

ica is like a broken bone that needs to be put back into its correct place in order to experience healing."

With their calls for prayer and unity, speakers generally focused on spiritual rather than concrete solutions to the nation's problems. The event had been promoted by Pope Francis and noted by President Barack Obama.

Nick Hall, leader of the evangelical ministry PULSE that organized the event, also addressed the crowd in the shadow of the Washington Monument.

"God, we don't need to hear from some man or some woman," he said in an opening prayer. "God, we don't need to hear from some band. We need to hear from heaven today. That's why we've come."

Others taking the stage included

some of the top names in evangelicalism, preachers such as Josh McDowell and Samuel Rodriguez, Christian artist Lecrae and the group Hillsong United.



PULSE photo

Immediate past SBC president Ronnie Floyd speaks to the crowd at Together 2016 on July 16.

Hall, speaking especially to Millennials, said, "We want to get the hashtag #JesusChangesEverything trending around the world today." It remained one of the top trending tweets hours after the event.

Many in the multi-ethnic crowd joined in as contemporary Christian singer Michael W. Smith sang a song about compassion. As peo-

ple sweated and fanned themselves, wearing beach hats and hovering under umbrellas, they offered bottles of water and welcomed others to the scant shady spots in earshot of the stage's speakers and songs.

Though cut short because of the heat, the event moved methodically through discussions of how to "reset," with sermons and prayers calling for repentance, prayer and service. The generation of Facebook and Twitter was urged to put down cellphones and meet people for coffee instead, and to think about people less fortunate than themselves.

Fervent prayers

Christian author Ann Voskamp prayed, "We, the people of the cross, repent of 1.2 million children who will be trafficked around the globe this year while we care more about traffic reports. We repent of the 3.1 (million) children under 5 who will die this year because of starvation while we spend \$60 billion this year trying to lose weight."

Some members of the audience prayed for others who they thought needed a divine touch.

Jennifer Yeisley, a nondenominational Christian in her 30s from Rockville, Maryland, got on her knees and prayed for Jackie Herbertson, 73, from Brooksville, Florida, who sat in a wheelchair, her toes curled by arthritis.

(See 'Let,' page 12)

COMMENT

Making A Difference

Life was spiraling downward for Doris; her depression so deep she felt hopeless. Life wasn't worth living. Late in the night she sat alone reading her Bible and praying for the last time before ending her life.

Doris got up to throw something away and that is when she saw the picture of the Portland Head Lighthouse on the front page of *The Alabama Baptist*. Her husband, David, had put the paper in the trash after reading it that afternoon.

Doris, who collects lighthouses and who had visited the iconic site in Fort Williams Park years earlier, picked up the paper to see the picture. That is when God spoke to her. Next to the photograph of the famous lighthouse were these words: "For thou art my lamp, O Lord, and the Lord will lighten my darkness" (2 Sam. 22:29).

"I knew the Lord was speaking to me," she shares in a video promoting Read *The Alabama Baptist* Day. It took seven more years but Doris held on to that verse until a medicine was developed that turned her life around.

Doris calls seeing that photo and reading that verse a miracle that made a difference in her life.

Faye (not her real name) had lived a physically challenged life since birth. Part of the way she learned to cope was through drugs and alcohol. Her life had long since spun out of control.

During an infrequent visit to her mother's house she saw a copy of *The Alabama Baptist*. The front page featured a Christian substance abuse program not far from where she lived. Faye read the story when no one else was around and decided to try again to change her life before it was too late.

Difficult journey

It was a difficult journey but today Faye is working regularly and is active in her church. Family relationships have been restored. More importantly, Faye has been sober and clean for more than five years.

Like Doris, Faye calls finding the Christian substance abuse story in *The Alabama Baptist* a



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

miracle that made a difference in her life.

Not all the stories reported about *The Alabama Baptist* making a difference in the lives of individuals and churches are as dramatic as the experiences of Doris and Faye. Recently a small membership church reported being unsure of what to do after their pastor resigned. A part-time staff member read a feature section published in *The Alabama Baptist* on calling a pastor. He made copies of the entire four pages and gave them to all the members of the pastor search committee.

The staff member reports the information made a difference in how the committee went about its task and now several families in the church read the state Baptist paper regularly.

Seldom do staff members of *The Alabama Baptist* visit churches without hearing stories of how the state Baptist paper is making a difference. The stories are about ministry ideas gathered from reading about what other churches are doing. The stories share how a family or a church became involved in a missions project or trip because of information in *The Alabama Baptist*.

Readers tell about using the Sunday School lessons to prepare for teaching assignments, about insights gained from columns like Theology 101 and about being encouraged by stories of fellow Baptists.

Stories range from grandparents who learned new ways of being involved with their grandchildren because of stories in the paper to stories about the emphasis on remarriage after the death of a spouse, helping grown children better understand their surviving parents.

Frequently pastors jokingly comment that they have to be sure and read *The Alabama Baptist* before going to the Wednesday night service because someone will ask them about something in that week's paper. Many times these pastors

comment on the way providing *The Alabama Baptist* for church members made a difference in the discussion of church members. Instead of the weather or the local sports team, members often talk about stories read in their state Baptist paper.

In churches taking advantage of the local edition service, leaders practically always express appreciation for the stewardship savings the church enjoys by having its local news combined with association, state and national stories in *The Alabama Baptist*. There is not a better communications network available to Alabama Baptists than a customized local edition of the state Baptist paper.

Ongoing program of information

Numerous studies have documented that churches providing the state Baptist paper for active resident families give more to missions, participate more in denominational activities and pray more directly for Baptist activities than churches that do not provide the paper. Again, *The Alabama Baptist* is making a difference.

Perhaps that is because the state Baptist paper

is the only ongoing program of information and promotion Alabama Baptists have. Whether it is a national entity like Southern Baptist Convention missions boards or the work of a state convention entity or work done by the State Board of Missions, *The Alabama Baptist* makes a difference as it tells the story of what God is doing among Baptists at home and around the world.

Sometimes the stories are dramatic like those of Doris and Faye. Sometimes they are inspiring to see how God used the experience of one person or one church to birth similar ministries across the state.

More often it is the long-term

impact of being informed for understanding and perspective, being inspired for Christian discipleship and being connected with other Baptists for missions and ministry that allows *The Alabama Baptist* to make a difference in the lives of its readers — a difference made every week and a difference made for a lifetime.

As Alabama Baptist churches across the state participate in Read *The Alabama Baptist* Day on Sunday, July 31, please pray the state Baptist paper will continue to be used of God to make a difference in the lives of individuals and the lives of churches.

For information about Read *The Alabama Baptist* Day, visit www.thealabamabaptist.info/resources. ☩

"Frequently pastors jokingly comment that they have to be sure and read *The Alabama Baptist* before going to Wednesday night service because someone will ask them about something in that week's paper."

TAB
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"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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'Journeying alongside people'

Global Impact Alabama seeks to reach immigrants in state with gospel

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A lot could change if we'd be willing to just go in a grocery store and strike up a conversation with the people who work there.

At least that's what Alan Cross says. "Imagine if you moved to South Asia. You would want to know somebody local in the community. It just makes your life better."

And Alabama Baptists can make that happen here for someone else by being willing to befriend the South Asian — or immigrant from any other country — here in our state.

"It's amazing how much first-generation immigrants are open to having relationships with Americans," said Cross, president and executive director of Community Development Initiatives and former pastor of Gateway Baptist Church, Montgomery. "If we just got to know people and built relationships with them, what a vehicle that could be for the gospel."

That's the thought behind Global Impact Alabama, an effort to reach out to immigrant populations around the state with the gospel, he said.

Gaining traction

A spinoff of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) Impact Alabama effort, the new initiative focuses on gaining traction specifically in multihousing developments, he said.

It's a joint project with SBOM and the North American Mission Board and it's

something near and dear to Cross, who works with immigrant and refugee ministry and advocacy across the Southeast.

"We are trying to plant missional communities ... in apartment complexes, mobile home communities and housing projects ... in the 12 largest Alabama cities," he said. "If there are people here in our community from other countries, then it's our privilege and opportunity to share Christ with them."

Unreached people groups

For example in Montgomery, one apartment complex is host to a large population of Mixtec people, an unreached people group from southern Mexico, he said.

"We had a couple who went in and rented an apartment there and took on tangible ministry helping with schoolwork and English classes," he said. (See story on the Cagles' work with the Mixtec people in the May 31 issue.)

In Tuscaloosa a group has started reaching out to an apartment complex with 900 immigrants from Guatemala, Cross said.

And he and others are praying about sending a church planter to the Huntsville and Madison area, where about 15,000 Hispanics live with no Baptist church of their own to serve them.

"It's just journeying alongside people and finding out how we can love them," Cross said.

The project is in its initial stages, he said, noting that at the moment they are just trying to "look at these pockets of people" and get a handle on what's already happening around the state.

It's just conceptual for the moment, but Global Impact Alabama is hoping to harness a lot of resources for the sake of the gospel among the state's immigrant population — like partner with churches already running English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, or connect with International Mission Board missionaries returning from overseas.

Kristy Kennedy, state missionary who leads ESL ministry efforts for SBOM, said, "We want to find the ministries and churches that are already doing it really well and be able to connect other churches with them to learn how they're doing it. A lot of exciting things are happening and people are coming to know Christ. We have a lot of good stories

already and we just want to see it grow."

Gift from God

Kennedy said it's a gift from God that these immigrants have come to our state, and Cross agreed.

"We should be going toward people instead of running away from them," Cross said. "As Christians that's what we should be about." ☛

**For more information or
to share about ministries
happening in your area,
email Kristy Kennedy at
kkennedy@alsbom.org.**

Randolph, Morgan associations combine efforts to deliver water

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

When residents in Morgan and Lawrence counties were told in mid-June that they couldn't drink water coming from their own faucets because of contamination, area stores quickly sold out of bottled water. There was limited or no water access for miles.

Clayton Scott, retired director of missions for Randolph Baptist Association, read an article about the need for water in the area and knew he needed to do something about it. He'd lived through many weeks in Vietnam while in the military with only two canteens of water to last him throughout the "103-degree days and nights," he explained to *The Alabama Baptist*.

"Water is essential absolutely," Scott said. "Their need in Morgan County struck a deep part of myself (from having my military background) that these people needed help."

Together Scott and Jane Stroud, who serves as director of the association's two service centers and food pantry, began collecting gallons

of water from area churches to send to Morgan County.

A nondenominational tent revival was taking place in Randolph County on June 13-17 and Scott was allowed to announce during the revival the need for water donations. All total, 398 gallons of water was given to Randolph Association, along with \$250 in monetary donations. The Roanoke Wal-Mart also donated \$100 toward the association's purchase of water.

Perfectly timed delivery

As Stroud and Scott set out to deliver the 1.5 tons of water to the United Methodist Disaster Warehouse in Decatur, where the water would be stored until its distribution, they received a call from the warehouse saying there was a Baptist church plant in Morgan County that was in severe need. The church needed 300 gallons of water to distribute the next morning.

Stroud and Scott were delayed in their trip but arrived at the warehouse just as the Baptist church's truck pulled up.

Stroud said, "It was great timing. We met at

the warehouse and literally loaded the water off our trailer and onto (the Baptist church's) trailer."

Baptist churches in Morgan County were then responsible for distributing the water from the Methodist warehouse to churches and homes across the county. That means that not only were associations working together in the ministry but also two denominations were making one combined effort.

Scott said of the cooperation, "That's what we are supposed to do. To me it's just business as usual. You minister wherever you are needed. It doesn't matter who they are or where they are. If they need something and you have it, you must share it with them."

At press time, Johnny Cantrell of the Lawrence County Emergency Management Agency said the water contamination was cleared the first week of July and residents are able to drink the water again.

"Lots of organizations and individuals donated water and they worked together at donation sites," Cantrell said. "They should be commended." ☛

Healing from shame & guilt

Guilt comes from 'sinful choices'; shame a result of 'attack' on self worth

By Larry Daniels, MAMFC, LMFT,
LPC, RPT

Pathways Professional Counseling

I often play tennis with my good friend, Joe. He wins most of our matches though they are usually close. In the early days, I would often tell Joe "good try" after winning a point. After listening to my "encouragement" for a few weeks, he asked me to stop praising his effort. Though my words were meant to be positive, the message he was hearing was "good try, but not good enough." I was guilty of shaming Joe with my words.

Guilt and shame are closely related but very different. Sinful choices can bring guilt. We know we have failed to live up to God's standard and feel remorseful. Shame is much more subtle and cunning.

Shame leaves us with a persistent sense that not only our efforts but our very selves are not adequate.

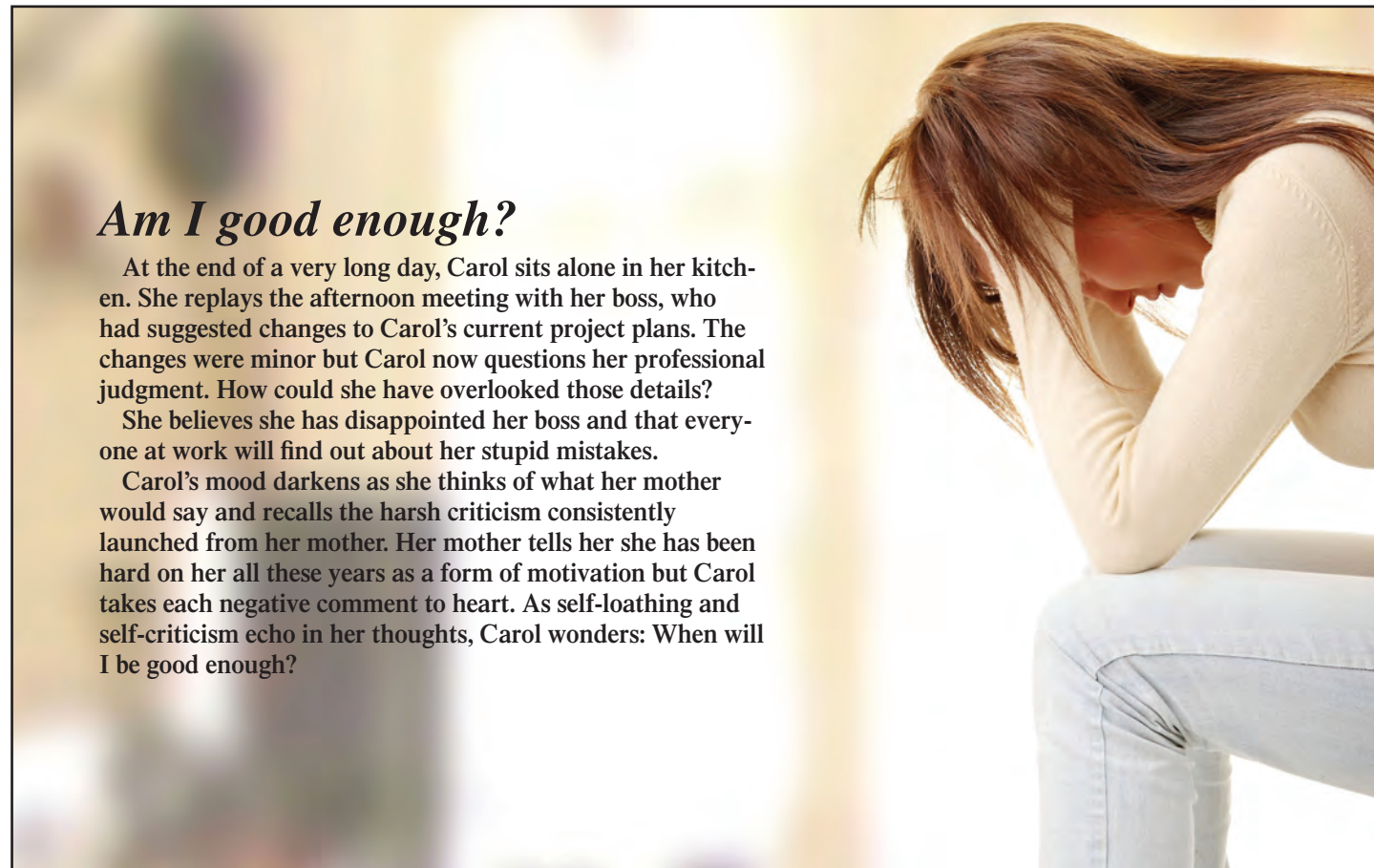
Shame was ushered into our world quite early. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were "naked and felt no shame" (Gen. 2:25). In describing the perfection of Eden, the writer could have used many possible words to go with naked, such as "naked and happy," "naked and strong" or even "naked and fearless." But the words "felt no shame" are what God wanted and needed us to hear and understand. Those must be important words.

Soon after the description of how good everything is in God's wonderful new creation, God's adversary, Satan, enters, attempting to disrupt such goodness. Eve and Adam respond to Satan's temptation with sinful, disobedient choices. In the aftermath of their failure, Adam and Eve attempt to hide from God, tentatively leaving them disconnected from God in their guilt.

God's yearning

However, God does not respond with a shaming tone. In fact we hear God's yearning for the former relationship with His creation, a relationship that is now broken, ruptured and separated. This is confirmed when God asks, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9). God is immediately seeking restoration and healing. God's response provides the example for us to follow.

Sometimes we are quick to make statements that reverberate with judgment. We enter a child's messy room and ask, "What in the world happened in here?" We watch our child at home plate swing and miss the fastball and we shout out, "Good try." Judgment is not the point or message we are trying to send with our words. In spite of our intention, however, shame rises in the person who hears our words and feels them as



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Am I good enough?

At the end of a very long day, Carol sits alone in her kitchen. She replays the afternoon meeting with her boss, who had suggested changes to Carol's current project plans. The changes were minor but Carol now questions her professional judgment. How could she have overlooked those details?

She believes she has disappointed her boss and that everyone at work will find out about her stupid mistakes.

Carol's mood darkens as she thinks of what her mother would say and recalls the harsh criticism consistently launched from her mother. Her mother tells her she has been hard on her all these years as a form of motivation but Carol takes each negative comment to heart. As self-loathing and self-criticism echo in her thoughts, Carol wonders: When will I be good enough?

an attack on their effort or their self-worth.

There are other situations where unintended perceptions of shame easily arise. While telling his wife that he just lost his job, a husband can interpret his wife's frown as fear and sadness. He may internalize her facial expression as implying "you are a failure." A young mother may hear an older woman's suggestion as a criticism of her parenting. The comments said in passing by the older woman may haunt the thoughts of the younger woman for days and feed her feelings of inadequacy.

Sometimes the shaming voice comes from inside. Sadly, shame does not need another person or even an event to bring judgment upon us. Curt Thompson, author of "The Soul of Shame," says we all have a "shame attendant" waiting to offer us criticism, saying such things as "Wow, you didn't get enough sleep" or "What were you thinking?" As we move past our bathroom mirror to take a shower, the shame attendant in our mind might exclaim, "Looks like you put on more weight." Such judg-

ment is often subtle — images, thoughts and feelings haunting our minds almost without notice, yet undermining our self-respect and nurturing painful thoughts that

we do not measure up to some standard.

So how do we combat shame? Thompson offers three key directives for combating shame: vulnerability, exposure and relationship.

To be vulnerable is "to feel, as did Eve and Adam after their fruit fest, naked and ashamed, ... to recognize that we

are at the mercy of those whose intentions we cannot guarantee and who can leave us alone," Thompson writes.

A child who has stolen does not want to admit that sin to his or her parents. A cheating spouse does not want to confess the affair. A drug addict attempting to turn from a life of substance abuse does not want to confront the family, friends and community members who have been hurt because of that addiction.

When we sin, intentionally or not, it hurts those we love. In our shame, the very

thing we do not want to do is expose ourselves. However, vulnerability and exposure are the very lifelines that can bring our healing. Shame resides in the broken areas of our lives. In becoming vulnerable and connecting ourselves to another safe person or persons, we can be loved and forgiven. Healing can occur in the face of our ruptured, broken selves. As Thompson states, "To be fully loved — and to fully love — requires that we are fully known."

Help from others

When we are surrounded by a community of trustworthy believers including family, friends and spiritual mentors, the isolation that shame feeds on can be broken. We can run with perseverance and no longer be entangled by sin and the guilt that results from our sinful choices.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Larry Daniels is a counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries that helps individuals and families seek solutions to their problems through professional, affordable counseling from a Christian perspective. Larry serves offices in the Mobile and Baldwin county areas. ✠



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“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” — Hebrews 12:1-2

‘Fix our eyes’ on **Jesus**

Shame functions by drawing one’s attention away from God’s voice

By Curt Thompson, MD
Special to The Alabama Baptist

In the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, we are provided with a model for how to effectively approach shame: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2).

The imagery of a “great cloud of witnesses” refers to those just named in Hebrews 11 (those who have gone before us) and to those who are with us now, emphasizing that we are not alone on our journey. It requires great effort to keep before us this vision of being part of a great gathering of people cheering us on, telling us “well done” as we move through life. However, this is one of the first and most helpful steps in combating shame. It entails creating communities around us that are reminding us of the same thing Jesus heard at His baptism.

At the moment of His baptism Jesus heard His Father telling Him, “You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased,” which is what God is telling all of His sons and daughters at all times (though not to the exclusion of other things He also is saying). What set Jesus apart was that He heard it and acted on it.

Immediately following His baptism, Jesus was “led by the Spirit

into the wilderness” (Luke 4) and tempted by Satan. In all three instances of temptation, Jesus confronted the parts of His mind that evil tried to use to distract Him. “If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread. ... Jump off the temple. ... Worship me and I will give you authority over the world.” In each case, Satan wants to convey that what Jesus planned to do was not going to be enough (thus the other options), that Jesus was not enough.

But Jesus counters this by saying over and over, “It is written,” which is shorthand for “God says.” It is the tagline that draws Jesus’ attention to God’s voice. Everything He reminds Himself of pays attention to His relationship with His Father who loves Him, is pleased with Him, will be faithful to meet His deepest longing and will bring Jesus’ creative calling to its climax. As He listens to His Father’s voice reminding Him who His is, Jesus remains intimately connected to His Father. It is imperative that we do the same.

The phrase “the sin that so easily entangles” (Heb. 12:1) is translated by other ancient authorities as the sin that so easily “distracts.” This is helpful because so much sin begins as a function of attention. Shame functions first, as Satan did with Eve, by drawing our attention, even in minute moments, away from our focus on God’s voice telling us that we are loved and that He is pleased with us.

We are to “fix our eyes”— our attention — on Jesus. To do so means watching Him and doing what He did. It is to intentionally seek out our shame, expose it and reframe it in light of our Father

telling us that we are His daughters and sons in whom He is well-pleased.

Reorient your attention

Consider the reinstatement of Peter in John 21:15-17. Jesus did not ignore Peter’s denials. He did not minimize the depth of the wound Peter inflicted. Instead Jesus ferrets out Peter’s shame and reorients his attention toward Jesus and to the work that Jesus was calling him to do.

With perseverance Hebrews 12:2 says we will experience joy just as Jesus did. Joy, in this sense,

is the outcome of Jesus’ awareness of His Father’s absolute delight in Him. His joy in Jesus’ presence, not just Jesus’ behavior.

Furthermore this joy culminates in Jesus’ eventual movement to carry out the vision for His place in the world: to be its Lord. In the same way, as we turn our attention to our Father’s delight and do those things that facilitate our belief that this is the story we live in, we further create the proper space to discover domains of creativity, “good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10).

EDITOR’S NOTE — Curt Thompson is a psychiatrist in private practice whose main focus of clinical and research interest has been the integration of psychiatry, its associated disciplines and Christian spiritual formation. He speaks frequently on the topic at workshops, conferences and retreats.

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Soul of Shame conference

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GUILT vs SHAME

1 Is about actions and our behaviors

2 Guilt focuses on behaviors and values

3 The natural and healthy response we feel when we do something that we should not have done

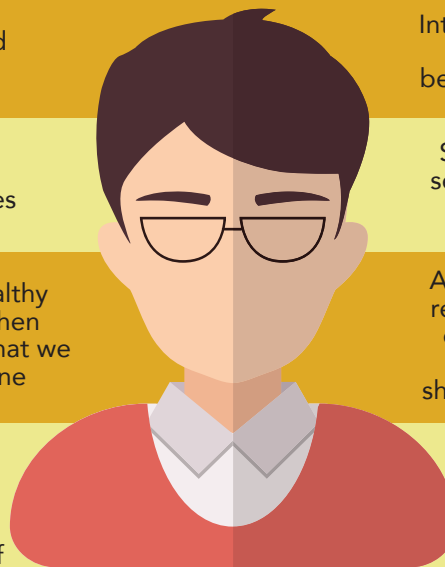
4 You can feel bad about the behaviors, but still respect yourself

Intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed

Shame focuses on our self-worth and feelings of being unloveable

An unhealthy, personal response to feeling we did not do something right or in the way it should have been done

You lose self-respect and allow shame to define who you are as a person



3 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SHAME



We all have it. Shame is universal and one of the most primitive human emotions that we experience.



We're afraid to talk about it. Being vulnerable invites people closer in and allows a stronger connection.



The less we talk about shame, the more control it has over our lives.

SOURCES: *Shame and Grace* by Lewis B. Smedes (1992), *Shame and Guilt* by June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing (2002), TEDTalk “The Power of Vulnerability,” Dr. Brené Brown (2010)

Designed by Nicole Walker

Parenting:

A look at shame vs. grace-based styles

Parents should seek to live out the gospel while raising children, give grace

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

Children make messes and mistakes. They get angry and say things without thinking. They forget our instructions and do things that cause us to shake our heads in bewilderment.

In their book, *Boundaries with Kids*, psychologists Henry Cloud and John Townsend put it bluntly.

“As a rule, children don’t know what they are doing. They have little idea how to handle life so that it works right. That’s why God gave them parents — to love them, give them structure and guide them into maturity.”

At home, at school and in the community, children should have clearly communicated, age-appropriate rules that guide their behavior. When those rules are broken, the results are guilt and consequences.

By common definition, guilt is the awareness of one’s failure to meet a standard. A healthy level of guilt teaches a child to handle their mistakes well, according to Heather Davis Nelson, author of “Unashamed: Healing Our Brokenness and Finding Freedom from Shame.”

“Guilt leads your child to want to make it right through owning up to a sinful act or attitude and asking forgiveness from the wronged party,” Nelson writes. “It doesn’t linger; it’s a temporary state that can be rectified with actions of forgiveness.”

As the child experiences the natural con-



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sequences of the sin through discipline, such as loss of possessions or missed enjoyment, these “reality consequences” can effect true change in behavior for the long-term, according to Cloud and Townsend.

Attacking self-worth

Shame-based discipline takes a different approach. Instead of allowing consequences to occur naturally, parents who employ shame often respond relationally. They get angry, lash out, nag, withdraw from the child or use other emotional ploys in an

attempt to influence the child’s behavior. Intentionally or not, a shame-based response attacks the self-worth of the offender rather than the sin. Shame closely connects the wrong act with the person who committed it, as in the case of Sammy, Nelson writes.

“Consider the difference in the following: ‘Sammy, coloring on the sofa is not OK, and you are going to have consequences for that.’ Or, ‘Sammy, why are you so bad and mischievous all the time? You always get into trouble and do what you’re not supposed to do.’”

The first response points out that the decision was wrong and therefore there will be punishment. The second communicates a much more negative message, that something is wrong with the child, Nelson says. Regularly employed, such shame-laden words create “a pervasive sense of ‘I am bad, and there’s no way I can fix what’s wrong’ or ... lies such as, ‘I can never do anything right,’ and ‘I am unworthy of love.’”

“Shame causes a child to withdraw from relationship or to blame those around him because the anticipated disapproval or rejection feels like too much to bear. Guilt may also motivate a child to hide or blame, but once the wrong is out in the open, restoration occurs and the child expects to draw close to her parent again,” Nelson writes.

With teenagers, parents may attempt to use logic to explain why they should not participate in certain activities. While that may seem like a healthy approach, often the teen only hears the parent belittling their personal judgment. Tim Kimmel, author of “Grace-Based Parenting,” calls this “image-control parenting.”

“Image-control parenting assumes that

people will know you are a good Christian parent raising nice Christian offspring by your church attendance, the way you dress (or don’t dress), ... the words and expressions you use (or don’t use), the schools you attend (or don’t attend), the movies you see (or don’t see), the amount of Scripture you can quote (and) the version of the Bible you read,” Kimmel writes.

Parents who take this approach are often more concerned about how they are viewed as parents in the eyes of others than they are in trusting God to lead them, Kimmel argues. Vickey, mom to two adult daughters, sees her concern about others’ judgments of her parenting as one of her greatest failings.

Modeling God’s grace

“I worried far too much more about how I would be perceived as a parent by my fellow church members than I did about being a parent that modeled God’s grace,” she said. “I often squelched their feelings and refused to listen to their perspective. My ‘teaching moments’ were more about the way I wanted them, and even more so me, to be perceived. Though scripturally speaking I was accurate, I was more like a Pharisee than Christ. Grace was sorely lacking.”

Nelson advises parents to look for opportunities to praise a child’s obedience and to trust Jesus to convict his or her heart.

“We use shame in our parenting because we have forgotten that it’s not shame of our sin that leads us to repentance, but it’s God’s kindness that leads us to repentance. ‘While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Rom. 5:8) is crucial to remember as parents seeking to live out the gospel that has rescued us as we raise our children.” †

SHAME-LADEN WORDS	SHAME-RESILIENT WORDS
“You make me so angry.”	“I feel angry that you ...”
“Why do you <i>always</i> leave your dirty clothes on the floor?” or “You <i>never</i> listen to me.”	Instead of an absolute statement, point out the specific behavior. “It looks like you left your dirty clothes on the floor again” or “It seems you’re having a hard time listening to me lately.”
Anything sarcastic	Be truthful about how you feel about what they did or say nothing.
“I can’t believe you broke curfew again.”	“This is the second time this month that you’ve broken curfew. What’s going on?”
“Don’t you know better?”	“It’s frustrating to me that you keep doing what I’ve asked you not to do. Why do you think that is?”
“Don’t act like a baby.”	Bite your tongue and say nothing at all.
“You are a mess.”	“You made a mess. Will you help me clean it up?”

Taken from “Unashamed: Healing Our Brokenness and Finding Freedom from Shame” by Heather Davis Nelson, © 2016, pp. 140. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.

Resources

► *Grace That Breaks the Chains* by Neil T. Anderson, Rich Miller, Paul Travis

► *Unashamed: Drop the Baggage, Pick up Your Freedom, Fulfill Your Destiny* by Christine Caine

► *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* by Edward T. Welch

► *Unashamed: Healing Our Brokenness and Finding Freedom from Shame* by Heather Davis Nelson

► *Families Where Grace Is in Place* by Jeff VanVonderen

Compiled by Carrie Brown McWhorter



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Last Things

Judgment of Nonbelievers

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

All human beings have two future appointments that none of us can cancel. Hebrews 9:27 clearly sets forth both appointments. The first appointment is with death. The second appointment is for judgment. Related to this second appointment, Romans 14:12 declares: "Each of us shall give account of himself to God." Last week the focus was upon the judgment of believers as to eternal rewards. This week the focus is on the judgment of nonbelievers as to their eternal fate.

Future accountability

A prophetic word in Daniel 12:2 puts it like this: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." The Bible clearly and often envisions a judgment for the lost just as it does for a judgment of believers. Since no single Bible passage outlines the sequence of all last time events, some view divine judgment in terms of a general judgment that embraces both groups at the same time.

Others believe these two judgments do not occur at the same time but will be separated by intervening events. Theology 101 is not concerned at this point with attempting to settle the issue of a general judgment versus separate judgments. Rather we will seek to affirm that both believers and nonbelievers must live in awareness of future accountability to God and ultimately stand before Him in judgment at the last day.

Embodied eternity

The most vivid presentation of judgment for nonbelievers is Revelation 20:11-15. These verses attest to the bodily resurrection of the lost. Just as blessedness of Christians in eternity is to be an embodied future, so the future of the lost will be an embodied eternity of agony. One way of understanding the portrayal of this judgment is to see a double verification of the fate of the lost.

First their works witness against them, as the passage states: "The books were opened ... and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (v. 12).

Second since those who are saved have their names written in "the Book of Life" by virtue of having trusting Jesus as the one Way, Truth and Life, the Book of Life is checked to verify that the unsaved are not enrolled in it. Thus the accurate record of the deeds of unforgiven sinners is double checked against the accurate record of those who became believers in Jesus.

The result of the double verification is the doom of nonbelievers. The outcome will be an eternity in "the lake of fire" (v. 15). This vivid presentation of judgment for nonbelievers serves to amplify the warning given in Hebrews 10:31, which carries its own powerful impact for nonbelievers as it declares: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Motivation to share Christ

The reality and certainty of future judgment for nonbelievers becomes a significant part of the impetus for the Church collectively to give its best effort to cooperate as workers with God in the ministry of missions and evangelism. Likewise, a clear vision of the judgment awaiting those who die without Christ should motivate each Christian to give the maximum effort to living in the world as consistent lights shining in a dark place, seeking to bring the unsaved to faith in the Savior. †

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.



'Ministering to Ministers Foundation'

Wellness Retreat refreshes hurting pastors

Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Alabama native Charles Chandler experienced involuntary termination at his church in Virginia he wrestled with the fact he was 58 years old and "less marketable" as a prospect for another pulpit. He found few resources to help him deal with these issues and began to dream of an organization that would offer help to ministers in crisis. That's the motivation that helped him create Ministering to Ministers Foundation (MTM), and through that, the Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreat.

The 131st retreat was held at Samford University in Birmingham in early July.

Chandler said his dream was latent for many years. As president of the Illinois Baptist Convention he received many calls from pastors in difficulty who needed advice, and later in Richmond, Virginia, he partnered with a director of missions to visit congregations in turmoil and offer mediation.

"I developed empathy for hurting pastors many years ago," Chandler said, "so I suppose God planted the seed for a new ministry long before I needed it myself."

Chandler said a number of things have changed in his 22 years at the helm of MTM.

"Early on I'd search for pastors who needed help and phone them with invitations to our retreats," he said. "Now the Internet has revolutionized this process and we also get many referrals from others who've benefited from this ministry."

The basic format of the five-day retreat has remained the same, with some minor changes, Chandler explained. The core group is limited to 12-15 participants who share their crisis stories and engage in intensive individual and group therapy. Participants hear from numerous experts including an attorney, a job counselor, a physical fitness instructor and spiritual leaders. Clinical psychologist Dr. Beverley Buston served as resident therapist at this year's event.

Control issues, people skills

Chandler said the two most oft-cited reasons for pastor-church conflict have remained the same for many years: control issues and people skills. And he believes in many ways these issues are currently more pronounced than ever before.

"We find a corporate mentality in many churches," he said. "The pastor is expected to function like a CEO. He runs the organi-

zational machinery and grows the organization. If either doesn't materialize, the pastor can be expendable. But most pastors aren't trained to be CEOs and they find themselves very frustrated.

"If a pastor provides leadership, he is a change agent and change brings conflict. But there's conflict also if the pastor doesn't provide leadership. I've always believed the pastor is to cast a vision, but he must ask the people to help him shape and carry (it) out."

Lack of direction

A participant at the recent retreat, Bill, said he moved his family from Florida to Virginia to begin a new ministry in 2015. His position, however, was terminated 11 months later. Several influential members of his congregation complained to the general superintendent who, in Bill's denomination, has the authority to fire pastors.

"The search group told me 'all we need is a leader,' and I believed them," he said. "But my leadership created some issues. I really don't think my key leaders wanted to try anything new in order to grow the church."

He said the retreat offered him encouragement.

"It's the 'camaraderie of the terminated,'" he said with a smile. "We find we're not alone. I needed someone to talk to. And the leaders helped me learn that I could've handled things much better than I did."

Chandler said retreat participants, like Bill, make new friends and many stay in contact as a support group.

"This is one reason we've found a five-day event away from home is good for ministers and spouses," Chandler said.

He said MTM surveys find that about two-thirds of retreat participants go back into full-time vocational ministry. Others move to a nonministry vocation where many have opportunity to do part-time ministry. Chandler is in the latter group having served as bi-vocational pastor during his tenure at MTM.

Chandler grew up in a pastor's home and has deep roots in Alabama. In addition to his father serving churches in Centre, Gadsden, Jacksonville and Bessemer, his great-great grandfather, Philip Sieber, founded Calhoun Baptist Association in 1834 and served as its first director of missions. And Chandler's brother, Harold, served as director of missions for Calhoun and Madison Baptist associations before his retirement.

For more information on MTM, visit mtmfoundation.org. †



CHANDLER

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.

ALABAMA-CRENSHAW

► **Brantley Church and Mount Zion Church, Brantley**, will hold a community-wide block party at Brantley Church on Aug. 13, 4-7 p.m. Wesley Hatcher is pastor of Brantley Church. Timothy Davis is pastor of Mount Zion Church.

AUTAUGA

► **Autaugaville Church** will hold Church Health and Renewal Sunday on Aug. 7, 1 p.m. This is a unique opportunity to focus attention on specifically seeking God's desire, design and direction individually and as the church family. Edwin Jenkins, interim director of missions for Morgan Association, will speak. A church-wide luncheon will be at 12:15 p.m. Garner Clark is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Mark Gainey** is the new pastor of **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**. He previously served

as pastor of Lake Martin Church, Dadeville. He also served at Mayberry Church, Montevallo; Perimeter Pointe Church, Pelham; and Valleydale

Church, Birmingham. He holds a bachelor's degree from Troy University, a master's degree from Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham and is pursuing a doctorate from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Tasha, have four children. ► **Jason Dees** has resigned from his role as pastor of **Valleydale Church, Birmingham**. He and his wife, Paige, and their two children will relocate to Atlanta to serve with the North American Mission Board as church planters. Dees previously served as pastor of First Church, Covington.

COLUMBIA

► **Mount Enon Church, Dothan**, ordained Tim Wheeler to the gospel ministry June 26. Pastor Jerry Hood and Jeff Ross, director of church/community ministries for Columbia Association, spoke. Mount Enon Church also recently celebrated its 128th anniversary. Former pastor Don Moore spoke. Former District Attorney Tom Sorrells led the church in worship and gave a special presentation. The choir and several church members performed special music.

ST. CLAIR

► **Chris Crain** is the new director of missions for **St. Clair Association**, effective Aug. 15.

He is leaving his role as founding pastor of North Valley Church, Margaret. He previously served as pastor of South Roebuck Church, Birmingham,

and led the multisite expansion of South Roebuck. He currently serves on the board of governors for Judson College in Marion and the University of Mobile as well as a member of the State Board of Missions. He holds a master's degree and a doctorate from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Carol, have three children.



CRAIN

them to attend church. George Cagle is Water of Life director. Lloyd Borden is director of missions.

SHELBY

► **Klein Church, Harpersville**, will honor Pastor Joe Stone and his wife, Terry, for 50 years of ministry July 31, 10 a.m. He also has served at First Church, Florence; Red Bluff Church, Folsom, Louisiana; Valdosta Church, Tuscumbia; and Antioch Church, Columbiana. The couple has two children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Chad Palmer** is the new pastor of **East McFarland Church, Tuscaloosa**. He previously served as associate pastor



PALMER

for East McFarland. He also served at Macedonia Church, Hale, and Stone Memorial Church, Tuscaloosa. He holds a master's degree from Leavell College in New Orleans. He and his wife, Joy, have three children. ✝

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Lookout Mountain Association** will hold the annual Water of Life outreach Aug. 4-6 along the route of the World's Longest Yard Sale. The associational churches will hand out tracts and water to visitors in the area and will seek to engage visitors about their relationship with Christ and invite

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Skyland Boulevard pastor Garner to retire

When Jimmy Garner stands before his congregation Aug. 7, he'll be delivering his last sermon as pastor of Skyland Boulevard Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa. And although the day concludes a 27-year ministry with the church, it will not be Garner's last time preaching God's Word, he says.

Garner began preaching in 1978 after leaving a career in sales. Despite being just two years shy of retiring, he knew God was calling him to be a pastor and that was "the only thing that mattered."

An Army veteran, Garner served as pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Section; Hollywood Baptist Church; and Open Acres Baptist Church, Montgomery. He also served as minister of education and evangelism at a Mississippi church before settling in at Skyland Boulevard Baptist.

Garner, a Fackler native, earned his education from Northeast State Junior College in Rainsville, the Southern Baptist Center for Biblical Studies in Jacksonville, Florida, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Extension Program at Winston Baptist Association in Louisville, Mississippi. He also has served on various committees and boards within the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Garner and his wife of almost 58 years, Carolyn, have one child and one grandchild. The church will hold a reception in the couple's honor in its family life center Aug. 7, 2-5 p.m. (Maggie Walsh)



GARNER

Fayette Association DOM Barnes to retire

After serving as director of missions (DOM) for Fayette Baptist Association for 18 years, Larry Barnes will retire Oct. 31.

Barnes earned a bachelor's degree from the University of West Florida in Pensacola and a master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tennessee.

He served churches in leadership roles for 28 years prior to becoming DOM for Fayette Association in 1998. He served as pastor of churches in Florida and Arkansas and as pastor of First Baptist Church, Florida.

Barnes spent nine years serving as a pastoral consultant for bivocational and rural ministries through the then-Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence of Samford University in Birmingham and currently serves as interim executive director of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network. He served for six years on the executive committee of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

He and his wife, Jane, have two children and three grandchildren. The couple will move to Missouri in retirement to be closer to family. Barnes said he plans to be in ministry and "find the Lord's place of service" in his new location. (Neisha Roberts)



BARNES

REFLECTIONS



Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

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



FBC Montgomery has grown into a missions-minded culture over time, according to Brian Gay, minister of missions at the church. Here members are on a missions trip to Cuba, one of many partnerships the church has formed.

'Productive factory'

How FBC Montgomery became a missions-mobilizing powerhouse

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's a church that historically has been really good at writing checks — but it was time they put their hand to the plow.

Brian Gay didn't love having to say it quite that way. But it's true, he said. And Gay, minister of missions at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, wasn't the first one to say it.

It's been the mantra of the church for more than a couple of decades now, around the time Jay Wolf came on board as pastor and Harold Hancock came on board as missions pastor. The two saw the potential human resources the church could leverage for missions, and they squared that with the fact that they weren't doing as much as they could.

And that's when everything began to change and stay changed, Gay said.

Now the 187-year-old downtown church has a thriving missions ministry with partnerships across the world and thousands who have been sent out.

But how did they get from where they were to where they are now?

The full story of how their missions strategy developed is told in "Christ's Last Command Is Our First Priority: How an Old Downtown Church Became a Global Missions Center" (see story, this page).

Wolf said things started changing in 1994 when he was in the midst of working with church leadership to build a long-range plan for the church.

More than a fort

"As I tried to articulate our goal to be Great Commission oriented, God gave me this simple yet profound thought: So many churches become forts," Wolf wrote in the first chapter of the book. "It is easy for a congregation to descend into the mentality of being a spiritual fortress that protects its history, traditions and membership."

The church builds "invisible walls and develops an inward focus," he said, but God called the Church to be a "productive factory," not a "protective fort."

It was with that realization that Wolf began to lead First, Montgomery, to step forward aggressively into what God had called the church to do. They began assisting people with needs and sharing the gos-

pel with people who needed it, both at home and overseas.

Gay, who joined the church staff in 2007, said, "It's amazing to see how God has blessed the church during that time."

Financial growth

"There was numerical growth but also financial growth. That year the church had an average of their budget for the very first time and decided to take a portion and put it toward missions causes. And from there, things have just continued to grow more and more."

It's a culture that's grown organically over time, he said, but one of the main ways they've facilitated that growth is through missions teams leaders.

"By recruiting team leaders and training them, our goal is to send out 52 teams a year," Gay said. "We train them up to have a passion for missions and instill that passion in others."

It's happened with a good number of people in the church, he said — people like Beau Cooper.



Photo courtesy of Brian Gay

"Beau has been all over the world, but he's our champion for Cuba," Gay said. "He's developed such a passion for that country that he's been there about 20 times, led teams there and trained others to lead teams there too. He's very much passed on his passion to others."

That's exactly what church leadership wants to happen, Gay said.

Because of that culture more than 700 church members participated in special missions projects in 2015 that were not part of the church's regular, ongoing ministry. More than 200 of those went on international trips.

Gay holds two team leader meetings per year and invites anyone who's interested to come check it out. But the main way people get there is because other team leaders invite them to come, or they invite them to come on one of their trips with the intention of seeing if they might like to lead it the next year.

"It's very much a 'come with me, let me show you' kind of recruiting and it's worked

really well over the years," Gay said.

It's also worked for getting people to step more and more out of their comfort zone and into pockets of need, he said.

"A lot of times people will go on a trip overseas and they come back and find their passion and need to make disciples right here across the street," he said. "They see the need of the world and how people can truly be hurting especially in Third World countries, and they think, 'If I can do that there, why can't I do it here as well?'"

'Part of our DNA'

As a result the church's community ministries — such as its conversational English as a Second Language classes and multi-housing complex outreach efforts — are booming, he said. "Really it is built into our DNA at this point. Missions is part of our DNA."

Wolf has done an amazing job of setting the tone for the church and staying the course, Gay said. "He has led the way not only verbally but with his life. That's really key. It starts with the pulpit."✠

FBC Montgomery hopes to share inspiration through book

If an old downtown church can see God create a far-reaching missions movement, then anyone can do it."

That was the thought behind the book

"Christ's Last Command Is Our First Priority," a nearly 300-page chronicle of the journey of First Baptist Church, Montgomery. The church decided a couple of decades ago to change its course, and in the years since, it's gone from being a "fort" to a missions strategy center (see story, this page).

And now, if it can be an encouragement to others, they'd like to share what they've learned, said Harold Hancock, former minister of missions at First, Montgomery.

"The first purpose of the book was to give a historical overview of missions activities at First Baptist Church since

1991," which was the year Pastor Jay Wolf came on board and moved Hancock into the missions minister position from another staff role, he said. "But the second purpose was to share inspiration."

And now church leadership is trying to get the book in the hands of people who need it.

"It's meant to encourage any size church to become active in missions," Hancock said. "We're hoping that it will inspire a pastor, a lay missions leader or whomever, that they would become more missional in their thinking and going to do missions."

Brian Gay, current minister of missions at First, Montgomery, agreed.

"As we were writing and the book came together, it became clear to us that God had a larger purpose in mind for this book," he said.

The project was edited by Hancock and

his wife, Helen. They were helped by a 10-person steering team, including Wolf and Gay. Wolf wrote in the first chapter of the book: "It is our prayer and great hope that sharing these stories, representing just some of the work of the First Baptist missions factory, will both be inspiring and instructive."

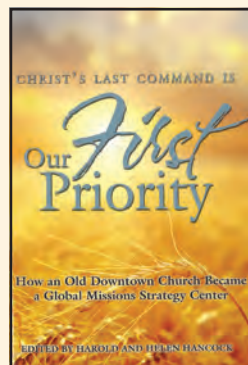
Inspiring others

"We want to inspire other churches to become world missions strategy centers that entrepreneurially develop missions endeavors across the street and around the world."

And the portraits painted in the chapters can be used as clear models for developing partnerships and tackling other projects, he said.

Gay agreed, noting that "it's amazing to see what God has done and read it all as one cohesive story."

Visit www.ourfirstpriority.com for more information. (Grace Thornton)



Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago July 1966

Ground was broken by the president of the Baptist World Alliance and Yugoslavian Baptist leaders for the new seminary and Baptist church in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. Urban renewal in Novi Sad required that the present seminary and Baptist church be torn down to make room for high-rise dwellings. The new Baptist center brought together the church and seminary in connected buildings on the same plot of land. One of the first groups to

use the church as a meeting center was to be the fifth Yugoslavian Youth Conference.

100 Years Ago July 1916

Despite many obstacles, a Baptist Young Peoples Union teacher training at Pelham Heights was a success. At least 2,500 students from 69 Baptist schools received some teacher training recognition in the past year. Alabama schools made a good showing at the training, with seven of the schools co-

operating and receiving 325 teacher training awards. There were approximately 20,000 students in Southern Baptist schools across the South at the time.

150 Years Ago July 1866

Fifteen or 20 years before, the Baptist church in the Mount Meigs area had as large, influential and wealthy a membership as any country church in the area. In comparison, the Methodist church in Mount Meigs also had a thriving membership. However,

the village was now almost depopulated, the Methodist church was no longer in existence and there were few white persons in the Baptist church remaining. However, one of the largest, most orderly and efficient African-American churches in the country had evolved in Mount Meigs. The black population of the church was rising rapidly. The pastor was baptizing no less than 30-40 at each meeting. On the last Sabbath the pastor had baptized 75 leaving 15 standing and expected to baptize 30 more soon. †

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

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 resumé to: 2919 Co. Hwy. 39, Oneonta, AL 35121. 205-274-9232. bbarnett@otelco.net.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & DISCIPLESHIP

Tannehill Valley Baptist, McCalla, Alabama, is receiving applicants for a full-time minister of music & discipleship. Applicant must be able to lead a full music ministry that includes choir, band and praise team in a blended worship setting. For information on the discipleship position or to submit resumé, please email: jon@tannehillvalley.org.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/ SENIOR ADULTS

Covenant Baptist Church, a traditional Southern Baptist church in Collierville, Tennessee, seeks a full-time minister of music/ senior adults. Send a cover letter and resumé, along with a link to a video or DVD of a recent worship service which you have led,

to: Personnel Committee, Covenant Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027-1165, or to: drsam@mycbbc.org.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Kentucky, is accepting resumé for a full-time minister of music. Email: musicsearchteam@southsidebaptist.com or mail: Southside Baptist, ATTN: Music Search, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Parkview Baptist Church of Lake City, Florida, is searching for a full-time minister of music with choir experience. Submit questions and resumé to: parkviewbc@bellsouth.net.

WORSHIP PASTOR

Bethel Baptist Church in Moody, Alabama, seeks a full-time worship pastor. More information is available at www.bethelnet.com. Resumé and inquiries may be sent to: JBurnham@bethelnet.com.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is eagerly seeking a part-time minister of music. Contact Pastor Steve Potts (phone: 205-514-5077, email: steve.potts@wbclive.com).

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

MINISTER TO CHILDREN

First Baptist Church of Dothan. Working with children grades

1-6 and their families. Send resumé to: Mike Golson at mike@fbcdothan.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Crosshaven Baptist Church, Cullman, Alabama, is seeking a part-time children's minister (K-5th grade). Recommendations and resumé may be sent to: pastor@crosshavenchurch.org.

OTHER POSITIONS

CHURCH SECRETARY

FBC Moody is taking resumé for the position of full-time church secretary. Please send resumé to: Max Bryant, 902 Church St., Moody, AL 35004. Resumé will not be accepted after Aug. 19.

BIVOCATIONAL FINANCIAL SECRETARY

FBC Moody is taking resumé for the position of bivocational financial secretary. Please send resumé to: Max Bryant, 902 Church Street, Moody, AL 35004. Resumé will not be accepted after Aug. 19.

BUSINESS

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

Looking for funding

State lottery 1 of 4 possible solutions for health care system

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

Gov. Robert Bentley announced July 19 that he is planning to call a special session of the Alabama Legislature in late summer or early fall to find funding for Medicaid, according to the *Montgomery Advertiser*. A possible solution to the \$85 million Medicaid shortage is a state lottery.

Medicaid recently announced it would cut payments to doctors beginning Aug. 1, which would make up about \$15 million of the shortfall.

But a state lottery is just 1 of 4 possible solutions for the state's health care system. Other options include:

- ▶ Splitting the BP settlement for the 2010 Gulf oil spill.
- ▶ Transferring money from the state's Education Trust Fund to the General Fund (this would be the second transfer of its kind, the first taking place in 2015 with \$80 million).
- ▶ Creating new tax revenues, such as sales taxes and revenue transfers.

At press time, Bentley had not announced what options would be on the table during the special session, and simply said that proposals he's made before — like those mentioned above — could be reconsidered, according to al.com.

Yasamie August, Bentley's press secretary and National Governor's Association coordinator, said in mid-July that the governor "is considering every possible option to alleviate the funding problems," the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported.

In 2015 when the Legislature was considering a gambling compact with Poarch Band of Creek Indians to alleviate the General Fund shortfalls, Bentley shared with *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB), "I just don't think we ought to fund government with gambling." However, at the time he said that while he's "totally opposed" to expanding gambling in the state, he believed an agreement with the Poarch Creeks might help the state budget and keep gambling

Seized 'bingo' machines 'stayed'

The state of Alabama will keep the more than 800 seized electronic bingo gambling machines it has a little while longer.

The machines were taken from Greentrack Bingo and Racing in Greene County in a 2010 raid of the complex because they are illegal.

Greentrack has been fighting to prove the machines are legal and former Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Houston Brown ruled in June that the state had 30 days from June 22 to return the 825 gambling machines.

But Attorney General Luther Strange is appealing the ruling, so he filed a motion with the state Supreme Court on July 7 asking the Court to "stay the Circuit Court's order so that it continues to have jurisdiction to adjudicate (make a judgment on) the state's appeal."

The state's highest court granted the stay July 20.

While various sources report that Greentrack's lawyers are requesting the Supreme Court reconsider its decision, Brown's ruling remains questionable.

It seems to go against the Supreme Court's ruling in March that allowed the state to destroy more than 1,200 electronic bingo gambling machines it confiscated from VictoryLand in Macon County.

The Court said in its March 31 decision: "(This decision) is ... hopefully the last chapter in the ongoing saga of attempts to defy the clear and repeated holdings of this Court beginning in 2009 that electronic machines like those at issue here are not the 'bingo' referenced in local bingo amendments."

Policing the state's gambling laws are left up to local law enforcement. Even though electronic bingo gambling is illegal in Greene County — and all of Alabama — Greentrack continues to offer it. (TAB)

at its current levels in the state. Much like now, Bentley called a special session to address the state budget and the proposed agreement with the Poarch Creeks died in that session.

If a state lottery is, in fact, Bentley's current solution to Medicaid's struggling budget, it would require state legislators to move fast. They would have to pass a constitutional amendment through both the House of Representatives and the Senate by Aug. 24 in order to get the measure on the November ballot.

If the measure were to pass in November, it could take a year or more to implement a lottery. And, as TAB previously reported, the revenue generated would not be nearly what gambling proponents claim (visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search "Numbers in state legislation to form lottery, legalize casinos not adding up").

A state lottery also could open

up the floodgates for establishing casinos throughout the state. Although the Alabama Supreme Court has ruled time after time against electronic bingo gambling, a vote by Alabama's citizens could change all of that.

Strange had no comment on the subject.

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizen's Action Program (ALCAP), believes action on citizens' parts is vital to remaining a gambling-free state.

Take action

"If pastors and church members do not contact their [representatives and senators] now and urge them to oppose all pro-gambling bills during the anticipated special session, we will be facing a lottery referendum this November," he said.

ALCAP has a documentary available for churches about the ineffectiveness of state-sponsored gambling, titled "Out of Luck," and Godfrey is available for speaking engagements on the subject. For more information, contact Godfrey at jgodfrey@alcap.com or 205-985-9062. †



Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Carrying the weight of the world

It may feel like you are the only one with all the weight of the world on your shoulders, but that feeling is shared by more people than you think.

People everywhere — in various types of jobs, ministries and life situations — are expected to do more with less, no matter what other loads they are carrying at the moment.

We are all putting more and more pressure on ourselves and each other by nature of tight financial times, a resistance to draw boundaries and the mind-boggling speed at which technology increases daily.

And social media has created a new form of anxiety — FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) — which piles on another layer of pressure.

So here we all are trying our absolute best to manage our families, spend quality time with our families and friends, do more than any one human could possibly do in a day at our jobs, be super involved in countless church activities, volunteer with a specific ministry or charity, participate in our communities, keep our homes and cars in decent order, make sure our children are part of every possible activity available to them and maybe find a few minutes to exercise. Oh, and try to be available to everyone at all times while attempting to find moments here and there to spend time in God's Word and clear our minds long enough to pray (for real, not just say some words) — and maybe, if we are lucky, get more than four hours sleep a night.

Whew, I'm exhausted just writing that paragraph, but I'm guessing more than a few of you can relate.

Do you ever want to pause everyone and everything so you can catch up?

Have you ever secretly wished you would end up with a temporary but serious illness, maybe something that would hospitalize you, so you would

have a good excuse to drop everything for a few weeks?

Does it feel like everyone you know is pouring guilt on you and/or you are continuously disappointing every person in your life?

Have you ever felt overly frustrated when others don't do what you want them to do?

If any of these scenarios sound familiar, then you are likely overwhelmed with life right now. If you aren't aware of that fact or if you aren't working toward finding balance, then you aren't only hurting yourself, you are most likely negatively affecting those around you as well.

I know when I'm at my most stressed-out points, I impose unrealistic and unfair expectations on others. I convince myself that my responsibility list is more important than everyone else's. Frustration sets in when others don't cooperate.

And if two of us in the same circle are overwhelmed at the same time, then a collision is almost guaranteed. Emotions are usually raw and overreactions happen easily. Hurtful words may be spoken and unfortunate decisions may be made in the process.

The answer has multiple layers and will have to be customized to some degree to the person's specific situation. But things all of us can do to prevent spreading the problem are:

1. Commit to stop piling pressure on those around us. Avoid the temptation to pass our issues on to others.
2. For one project or one day, help a fellow struggler by doing exactly what they ask (assuming it is nothing harmful) so you are the one person in their life not resisting them. It encourages both parties because we know from experience how much it means for someone to help without resistance. It also opens the door for a conversation about how we can help each other in the struggle. †

'Let me get out of the way so You can be God in my life'

(continued from page 1)

Though the crowd included many Millennials near the stage, there also were families and senior citizens.

"My husband has been praying for a revival in this nation," Herbertson said of her spouse, Bill, adding he had written to congressmen and evangelist Billy Graham. "He wanted to see us all get together and pray. So when we heard about this one ... we wanted to come."

Some of the prayers from the stage were tied to pleas for improved family and race relations.

Gospel artist Kirk Franklin prayed, "Let me die for my home, let me die for my community, let me die for a white man, let me die for a black man, let me die for a Hispanic man, let me die for an Asian man. Let me get out of the way so You can be God in my life."

The event follows many other religion-related gatherings — both of believers and nonbelievers — on what is known as the nation's front lawn. Together 2016 was planned in ways similar to Promise Keepers' 1997 "sacred assembly" for evangelical Christian men — but this time including women too.



PULSE photo

Christian artist Lecrae takes the stage at Together 2016.

The program, which included a high number of women speakers, featured Voskamp and poet Amena Brown in a spoken-word segment that featured calls for forgiveness and reconciliation related to racism and privilege.

"We will not be the people who turn a blind eye to injustice," Voskamp cried.

A call for change

Brown replied, "We will use our voices, our time, our resources to effect change."

As the event drew to a close, many pledged to pray more and

study the Bible. Charlene Atkins, 49, who attends a mostly black Bible church in Dallas, said she hopes to encourage greater work across racial lines in her church community.

"One of the things that we talked about while out there was helping people who are Christians understand what it means to be one body in Christ," she said. "How do we look more like Christ and less like ourselves? I think that would help a lot in the issues that our nation is facing if the Church would start to look more like the Church." (RNS)

State Women's Hall of Fame seeks nominations for 2017

The board of directors of the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame is soliciting nominations until Aug. 15 for the 2017 induction.

The Alabama Women's Hall of Fame is housed in Asa Howard Bean Hall, previously Carnegie Library, at Judson College in Marion and has honored the accomplishments of Alabama women since its first induction program in 1971. Women such as Helen Adams Keller, Lurleen Burns Wallace, Julia Strudwick Tutwiler, Amelia Gayle Gorgas and Tallulah Bankhead have been inducted. With the induction of Sarah Haynsworth Gayle and Anne Mae Beddow in March 2016, 88 women have been honored by membership in the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame.

Influencers

The board invites nominations of distinguished women of Alabama who have influenced the lives of fellow citizens and who have made significant contributions through their personal or professional lives on a state, national or international level. Only those who have been deceased

for two years or longer may be considered. From those nominated by the general public, the board may choose up to two for installation each year.

Nomination forms may be downloaded from the organiza-

tion's web site, www.awhf.org. For more information or to request a nomination form, email Bill Mathews, executive secretary of the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame, at bmathews@judson.edu or call 334-683-5167. (UM)



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Knowing the answers

FBC Decatur member teaches youth linear, logical argument for Christ

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Cathryn Buse thought she was armed with the tools she needed when she went to study engineering at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

She had a brain. And she had a Christian upbringing.

“I grew up in church in Alabama and I became a Christian at a young age,” Buse said. “But when I got to college the questions were a lot different than anything I had been prepared for.”

Her professors and fellow students questioned her belief in God. And even if they didn’t question that, they questioned, “Why Jesus?”

Personal research

“They said Jesus wasn’t really what He claimed to be,” Buse said. “And I thought, wow, I really have no idea how to answer their questions.”

So she started a personal research journey, not only to be able to meet their challenges but also to make her faith her own.

“I wanted to know not just for their sake but for myself,” Buse said. “People asked, ‘If you had been raised by Hindu parents, would you have been Hindu?’ And I had to know that answer for myself, that it wasn’t just because of my parents and where I was born — it’s because Jesus is the truth. I needed to know why I was choosing Him over nothing and over anything else.”

So she started poring over books by well-known apologists like Ravi Zacharias and Lee Strobel. She found herself taking notes and making outlines almost as if she was preparing to teach a class on the topic.

And she also found that she didn’t just want to be able to answer random questions like “what about the dinosaurs?” — she wanted to be able to build a logical, linear argument from no belief at all to a total faith in Christ.

“It’s about trying to open their hearts to the truth that’s found

in Jesus,” Buse said. “It’s OK to have questions. We just want to be able to provide answers from a biblical source.”

First, she said, you have to establish that God does exist.

“That’s the biggest challenge right now because we are faced with so much atheistic thought,” she said.

Unique offering

Once you draw people to figure out that something does exist, it’s critical you figure out what that something is, Buse said.

“There’s something unique about what Christianity offers,” she said. “Every religion can’t be right.”

Once her own extensive research brought her straight back to Christ, Buse — a member of First Baptist Church, Decatur —

found she had a stack of research and a passion to share it with others.

At the same time — roughly eight years ago — Larry Hyche, then youth minister at First, Decatur, was looking for a way to take the youth a little deeper.

“Many of our students dealt with atheists at school and didn’t know many scientific or philosophical facts and figures to be able to discuss Christ with classmates who challenged their faith outside of Scripture,” Hyche said.

“In a culture that is increasingly ... hostile and intolerant to Christianity, students need to be prepared to lovingly and intelligently defend their faith.”

Apologetics resource

And Buse had the perfect idea — she said she really felt the need to teach what she had



BUSE



Photo courtesy of Cathryn Buse

Cathryn Buse teaches lessons at FBC Decatur from her book, ‘Teaching Others to Defend Christianity.’ Buse researched the material for the book after being confronted about her faith in college.

learned to the next generation of students heading off to college.

“There are so many wonderful apologetics resources out there, but it had taken me so long to do my own research and pull it all together into a linear form that you could pick up and teach,” she said.

“I just wanted to be able to offer that to others, wanted to put it in the hands of other people who wanted it. You don’t have to have a seminary education or be a pastor to be able to defend your Christianity or to teach others to do it.”

So she began to share those lessons with the youth.

Hyche said, “Cathryn’s teaching proved to be valuable and continues to do so. College students continue to ask her about previous lessons that addressed recent conversations they’ve had on their campuses.”

“Many of the students loved her ‘engineering’ approach to

Scripture which led to more of a focus on apologetics.”

It wasn’t long before other groups, other churches and other denominations began to ask her to come share with them too.

And as she developed her materials into lessons, she also crafted those lessons into a book to help others teach the same materials to their family, friends and churches.

Called “Teaching Others to Defend Christianity,” it’s aimed at equipping Christians to draw others down that linear argument from nonbelief to Christ.

Not a ‘blind faith’

Buse said, “It’s something that retired doctors, stay-at-home moms and middle schoolers all want to know.

“Our faith is not just a blind faith. It’s important that we know why we believe what we believe. That’s what I have a passion for passing on.”

Blake Kersey, pastor of First, Decatur, said it’s been “exciting to see how the Lord has used her to strengthen believers with the knowledge they need to defend their faith.”

She’s a gifted teacher, presenter and author, he said.

“Her intellect is off the charts but it is matched by her desire for all people to understand God’s love for them,” Kersey said.

For more information, visit defendthefaithministry.com.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 31

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

FAITHFUL

1 Samuel 18:1-5; 20:35-42

True Friends (18:1-5)

During his time in the court of Saul, David found a faithful friend in Jonathan. That Jonathan was the son of Saul should have made him hate David. But the text says Jonathan loved David "as his own soul" (v. 3). So faithful was Jonathan that he presented David with his royal robe and his items of war, such as his sword and bow.

David and Jonathan's relationship would thrive even during the time when Saul persecuted David. Jonathan would remain a faithful friend, in spite of his father's hatred of God's anointed king in waiting.

Tested Friends (20:35-40)

Later in 1 Samuel, Saul is seated at the table with Jonathan. Here, Saul expresses his desire to kill David. Hearing this, Jonathan comes to David's defense: "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" (1 Sam. 20:32). Saul proceeds to hurl a spear at Jonathan. This frightful scene lets Jonathan know that his father will not rest until he kills David.

The two friends devised a plan to keep David safe. Jonathan uses arrows to signal to David that his life was in danger. As a faithful friend, Jonathan would never allow David to suffer at the hands of the

unrighteous — even if that happens to be his father. David knows he must now flee from Saul's presence and away from the city in which he will soon reign.

But David would not be exiled forever. God would keep His promise to make him king over Israel.

Timeless Friends (20:41-42)

Before parting ways, Jonathan reminds David of the pact they had made: "The Lord is witness between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring forever" (v. 42). In spite of his father, Jonathan and David's friendship will last for eternity.

As we think of this friendship, we are reminded that Jesus now calls His followers friends (John 15:12-17). But it was not always this way. We were not always friends of Jesus.

Romans 5:10 states that we were formerly God's enemies. We hated God. We wanted nothing to do with Him. In spite of this enmity, at the right time Jesus, God in the flesh, laid down His life for us. Jesus now calls those who have trusted in His substitutionary death His friends and fellow heirs of the Kingdom (Rom. 8:17). How thankful we should be that we have all the rights and privileges of friendship with Jesus for eternity.

The historical picture of David and Jonathan serves as a reminder that Jesus and His friends will be bound forever. As Jonathan clung to David, believers cling to Christ. Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us. He will not allow the enemy to have the last say over our lives. Instead, when Jesus Christ returns He will usher us into His glorious kingdom.

What a day this will be — when our relationship with Jesus will reach its climax; when our faith becomes sight and we dwell with Him forever. May we wait anxiously for that day. †

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

EARN MONEY PRODUCTIVELY Proverbs 6:6-11

All my paternal grandparents and great-grandparents were coal miners in Scotland. They were hardworking and engaged in difficult and dangerous work. They were never wealthy. They worked from week to week, paycheck to paycheck, committed to providing for their family. And many of them were involved in the life of the church. One of my favorite photographs is of my grandfather, John Roxburgh, with a group of about 20 other miners going to evangelize the local villages of Ayrshire in Scotland.

Be productive in your daily work. (6-8)

Each summer we have to ward off ants as they invade our kitchen. Yet the lowly ant serves as a moral example. It is almost a humorous analogy, but it comes with a stern warning.

In Hebrew the word "ant" is grammatically feminine and singular, a fact obscured by many translations. Proverbs uses many female symbols for godliness and piety. The singular also is important because our individual decisions affect how we live.

We cannot blame society for all the ills that we encounter. Each ant does its work, although they appear to work together. They serve as models of behavior to human beings and often are in better harmony with the world of creation than we are.

The church in Thessalonica thought it was living so near the end of the world that they could abandon their jobs and either enjoy life, or perhaps even engage in church work. Paul rebukes them for forgetting that work is an important aspect of Christian living.

God provides for our needs through honest employment and He tells those

who are basically lazy: "If someone will not work then don't let them eat" (2 Thess. 3:10).

Laziness will drain you until nothing is left. (9-11)

Proverbs suggests laziness is the opposite of true virtue. If ants are examples of productive activity then the "sluggard" is the enemy of godly labor. The sin of sloth is "deadly" because it undermines the activity of God who "worked" at bringing the universe into being. After six "days" of work, He rested.

Of course for millions of people throughout the world, work is nothing more than a deadening routine with little room to express individual creativity, and thus leading to little sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Every job has moments of tedium and frustration, but hopefully as we see our work as a part of our vocation and calling to serve God, then we also will know times of laughter and enjoyment in and through daily work. In the words of Ecclesiastes, humankind needs to "find enjoyment in his toil" (5:19).

The first description of God that we discover within the Hebrew Scriptures is that of Creator, who makes human beings "in His image" and calls them as free and responsible beings to be co-workers in the care of the earth and its creatures, preserving the integrity of nature and encouraging a life of community.

Like Joseph, we realize that a wise administration of our resources when work is plentiful will help us in times when employment is lean.

The final warning is not forbidding anyone to take rest and to sleep. However, laziness appears to be endemic within our sinful inclinations and we need to "come to ourselves" like the prodigal and set our lives in a right direction. †

VOICE YOUR OPINION

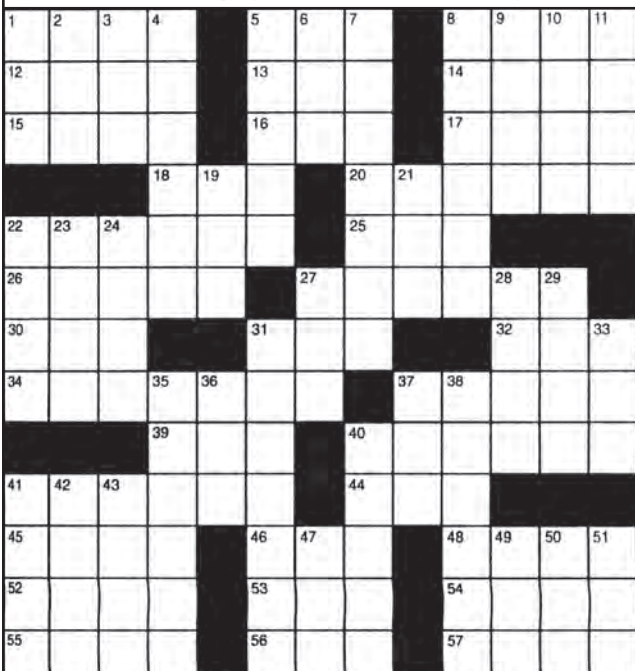
SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

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

Christian Crossword

By Janet W. Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Trademark.
- Roman household god.
- They put on him a purple _____. (John 19:2)
- Jezebel said to _____, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth. (1 Kings 21:15)
- Indian tribe.
- Toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and _____. (Josh. 15:21)
- He shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door _____. (Ex. 21:6)
- Machine part.
- Chinese Communist leader.
- Is not _____ on the Levite thy brother? (Ex. 4:14)
- Put forth too much effort.
- A wrathful man stirreth up _____. (Prov. 15:18)
- Contend.
- Places where David himself and his men were wont to _____. (1 Sam. 30:31)
- There sat women weeping for _____. (Ezek. 8:14)
- Alas.
- One book of a series. (abbr.)
- Type of grass. (Biblical sp.)
- And let all the angels of

- God ____ him. (Heb. 1:6)
- Therefore have I set my face like a _____. (Isa. 50:7)
- European Economic Community.
- As men enter into a city wherein is made a _____. (Ezek. 26:10)
- There shall be no more thence an ____ of days. (Isa. 65:20)
- Same sort as "i" and "u."
- "Do," third person.
- Mouth.
- Use not ____ repetitions. (Matt. 6:7)
- Holy Roman Emperor (962-973).
- Mrs. Jimmy Carter.
- To be. (French)
- Yet will they ____ upon the Lord. (Micah 3:11)
- When there were ____ three months to the harvest. (Amos 4:7)
- Know that it is _____, even at the doors. (Matt. 24:33)

Down

- Separate those who ____ the water ... like a dog. (Judg. 7:5)
- Interjection.
- Fuel.
- So run, that ye may _____. (1 Cor. 9:24)
- Not greedy of filthy _____. (1 Tim. 3:8)
- Indonesian.
- Taking away.
- That he might ____ us from all iniquity. (Titus 2:14)
- River to the Baltic Sea.
- And they ____ their tongues like their bow for lies. (Jer. 9:3)
- Therefore.
- Stern of a ship.
- Zest.
- Study to ____ thyself approved. (2 Tim. 2:15; modern sp.)
- Mexican food.
- The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the ____ to the bottom. (Matt. 27:51)
- And when ____ h was come unto him, David demanded of him. (2 Sam. 11:17)
- White metal.
- Them that had gotten the ____ over the beast. (Rev. 15:2)
- Biblical suffix.
- They should rest yet for a little _____. (Rev. 6:11)

- As a ____ gathereth her chickens. (Matt. 23:37)
- Is a vanity tossed to and _____. (Prov. 21:6)
- Beware of the ____ of the Pharisees. (Matt. 16:6)
- Set him on his own _____. (Luke 10:34)
- The golden calf.
- Short letter.
- Type of cheese.
- Deliver thyself as a ____ from the hand of the hunter. (Prov. 6:5)
- Did eat.
- ____ the Ithrite. (1 Chron. 11:40)
- And ____ begat Kish. (1 Chron. 8:33)





CHRISTIAN CINEMA

Christian Cinema releases its first Apple TV streaming app

The world's largest library of Christian and family film — the booming movie category — now is a single click away with ChristianCinema.com's release of the first-ever Apple TV streaming app for families of faith.

"Curated from top Christian filmmakers, all these titles in one place is a cinema rarity," said Bobby Downes, founder and CEO of Christian Cinema, which weekly adds the latest dramas, documentaries, short films, educational videos and more. "For a big swath of consumers, this is very big news."

Consumers of Christian Cinema's Apple TV app may:

- ▶ Choose to own or rent high-quality movies.
- ▶ Watch a preview, rate and try before buying.
- ▶ Assemble and access a personal movie library across multiple devices to watch anywhere, anytime.

'Trusted name'

Christian Cinema vice president Jared Geesey said, "Since Christian Cinema was formed in 1999 to connect audiences with top faith-based movies, it's become the trusted name for families of faith. Movie fans can build personal libraries in the Cloud and access at will from any device through our growing suite of apps."

Apple's newest streaming app arrives as TVs become

Apple's next hardware success story. In a Fall 2015 note to investors, J.P. Morgan analyst Rod Hall predicted sales of 24 million next-gen Apple TVs in 2016. With graphics capability and an app store, Apple TV can disrupt existing console players, Hall wrote.

Sales increase

Parks Associates' data of 2015 HDTV streaming video player unit sales spurred AppleInsider to write: "Apple saw a big boost in market share thanks to the launch of the fourth-generation Apple TV with Siri remote. Of the four largest manufacturers (Apple, Roku, Amazon and Google), Apple saw the greatest unit sales increase year over year, and its share of sales in 2015 was 50 percent higher than in 2014."

Parks Associates predicts 86 million streaming media players sold globally in 2019. Not incidentally, in November 2015, Christian Cinema launched an app on the popular Roku line, currently the No. 1 streaming video player by market share.

"Movie watching just got social again," Downes said. "The Apple TV and Roku apps bring faith-and-family content to the big screen to share as a family. And we're talking newest and latest releases before they go to subscription platforms." (Evangelical Press Association)

"Since Christian Cinema was formed in 1999 to connect audiences with top faith-based movies, it's become the trusted name for families of faith. Movie fans can build personal libraries in the Cloud and access at will from any device through our growing suite of apps."

Jared Geesey
vice president, Christian Cinema

Media reviews



BOOKS

By Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D.

The Prayers: Troubles

Mark Mirza. Atlanta: CTM Publishing, Inc., 2016. 372 pp. (Paperback).

Founder of Common Thread Ministries Mark Mirza wrote "The Prayers: Troubles," the first of a trilogy, because he wanted to teach people about prayer through a novel. I'm all in favor of teaching through stories, so I was happy to review this book.

The book does a good job of drawing out and highlighting biblical teachings about prayer via a good story with supporting Scripture references tucked away at the bottom of the pages. The book uses the examples of three historical figures; one from the early Church, one from the Civil War era and one from modern times.

Readers will be reminded of Frank E. Peretti's spiritual warfare books from the 1980s; Mirza uses a similar motif of providing glimpses into the spirit world, showing possible conversations among demons and angels, which adds significantly to the stories. These too are tied to Scripture. Anyone who has not read Peretti's books will be especially impacted by the "behind the scenes" vignettes.

One problem that arose for me in those references is the refusal by the author to capitalize the names of demons. I understand his reasoning, but a name is a name, whether it is Adolph Hitler or Mother Teresa. At the beginning, I found it distracting to see odd clumps of letters without a capital letter to signal that it was a name. Ease of reading is important and a small item such as this can make a large difference in a reader's enjoyment — and perseverance.

There are two more books coming in the series.

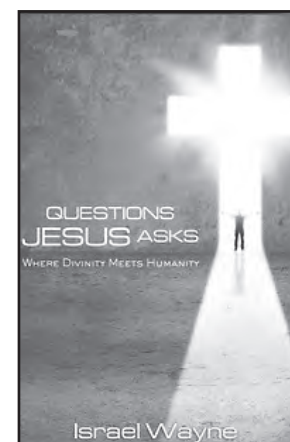
Questions Jesus Asks: Where Divinity Meets Humanity

Israel Wayne. Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 2015. 188 pp. (Paperback).

I often use a quote with my doctoral students about the quality of our data depending on the quality of our questions. Until I read this book, I hadn't thought about the questions Jesus asked while here on earth and the impact they have on the hearers/readers.

Author Israel Wayne contends that Jesus "isn't asking the questions for His own personal benefit but ... on behalf of the person being asked. His questions penetrate the heart and probe our deepest motives."

None of the questions should be unfamiliar to readers of *The Alabama Baptist*. Given some time, most of us could generate a significant portion of the list of 20 questions. But that, the author notes, is not the object.



If you accept that Jesus knew the hearts and the motives of those He encountered, you must agree — the questions are for us to answer as we examine ourselves.

While a thump on the side of the head and a list of questions with instructions to meditate on them would have been helpful for some of us (well, for me, anyway), the author has gone a step further and provided context from the

Bible, illustrations and food for further thought.

I somehow missed the earlier book, "Questions God Asks," but I imagine it would be equally helpful.

Freed from Captivity: My Journey Out of Darkness

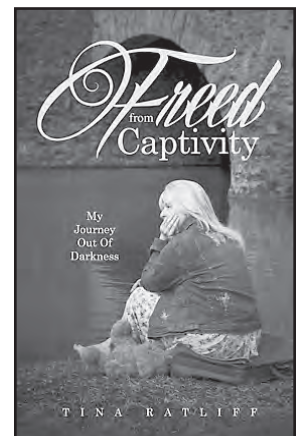
Tina Ratliff. Mustang, Oklahoma: Tate Publishing, 2015. 101 pp. (Paperback).

The author tells a harrowing story of a difficult childhood that put her on the path of bad choices, writing candidly of multiple marriages and boyfriends, drug abuse, poverty and demons that harassed and tormented her. Amazingly, she was delivered from that life and set out to lead others to wholeness.

The bulk of the book details her life story, from an early experience that she believes to be demonic, to the death of her mother in a car accident, to her own twisted path as an adult. The turning point came as a result of an urge to attend church, which she was sure would cause hell to freeze over — her words, not mine.

It didn't freeze over, and she was eventually led to a ministry that helped lead her into healing and deliverance.

This book is a potential life changer. I have read several books like this, but few have had the impact this one does; it is a story told with no added drama or emotional effects. The author simply relates what happened to her and lets the work done in her life speak for itself. †



If you have a book you would like reviewed, mail a copy to: P.O. Box 1504, Hartselle, AL 35640.



MS photo
Converts from Islam sit in a classroom at Faith Purification Center in Ulu Yam (Batul Iman), Selangor state in Malaysia.

Religious 'rehabilitation'

Sharia judges detain, 're-educate' converts from Islam

In Malaysia, converting to Christianity from Islam can be a costly choice. Some new believers are arbitrarily arrested and sent to "Faith Purification Centers" for more than three months, or simply sent to prison.

According to Mohd Al Adib Samuri of the National University of Malaysia, detention centers are "slowly gaining preference" among Sharia (or Islamic law) judges in Malaysia.

It is difficult to find descriptions of life in the centers, but one former detainee's account describes how she was taken from her workplace, interrogated and then placed in one of the religious rehabilitation centers — all on the same day and without legal representation or court proceedings. The young woman reported that when she asked for a lawyer, authorities told her she didn't need one.

Supposedly there to be "re-educated," she was surprised to find nothing was actually taught, according to her account in "Pearls of Great Price" by R. Hunt.

The warden and staff quickly discovered that she knew more about Islam than they did, and instead of teaching anything, they tried to entice her back to Islam with the "charm approach," the author notes.

"Folk Islam, with its attendant black magic, was in play here," Hunt wrote.

Genuinely placing faith in Christ

Though the center was filled with male drug addicts, she was an obedient and respectful prisoner. After many months the warden told her to write a description of her conversion to Christianity, instructing her to blame Christians for fraudulently or forcibly converting her. Instead, she wrote the truth of genuinely placing her faith in Christ. The warden tore it up and caned her.

Several weeks later she miraculously escaped during a rainstorm that knocked out the electricity.

In his academic paper on the centers, Samuri changes the translation of the Malay words for "Faith

Purification" to "Islamic Rehabilitation." Of the three centers, two are in peninsular Malaysia and one in Sabah, East Malaysia, which shares an island with Indonesia.

Samuri summarizes the rehabilitation centers as a place that requires Quran recitation classes, guidance sessions, congregational prayers, group counseling, community service, aerobics on Saturdays, cooking workshops and gardening/farming workshops. Lectures are given on Islamic special days about their importance in Islam. A monthly prayer and personal development workshop are part of the program.

Growing concern

As Islam grows, some say it will mean more cases of violation of Islamic law, more power for Sharia courts and more use of the re-education centers.

The number of detainees in the Islamic rehabilitation centers also is kept secret, though there are estimates. The largest center, in Ulu Yam (Batul Iman), Selangor state, has been expanded to house 100 people, up from 50. It now has separate men's and women's facilities. The Jelebu facility, in Negri Sembilan state, appears to be somewhat smaller.

According to Malay news sources, 863 people have applied to leave Islam from 2000 to 2010. During that time, 168 had been allowed to do so by the Malay government.

Many of those requesting to leave Islam are not ethnic Malays but others, including persons who converted for marriage or other such reasons. The low rate of approval undoubtedly influences the application rate, which is extremely low for a country of 30 million people. About 50 percent of the population is ethnic Malay, and the rest are ethnic Chinese, Indian and indigenous tribes.

Most of Malaysia's states have enacted their own versions of Sharia, and in 10 of them leaving Islam is a crime. All states have anti-apostasy laws except Sarawak. (MS)

United Methodist Council elects female, lesbian bishop

The head of the United Methodist Church's Council of Bishops said the recent election of its first openly lesbian bishop "raises significant concerns and questions of church polity and unity."

Bishop Bruce Ough, president of the Council of Bishops, said the executive committee of the bishops' council "is monitoring this situation very closely." The bishops gathered July 19–20 in Chicago as part of the commission on sexuality called for by the General Conference.

On July 15, Karen Oliveto, pastor of Glide Memorial Church, San Francisco, California, was elected bishop by the Western Jurisdictional Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, and consecrated the following day.

The election comes despite the denomination's ban on the ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals."

At its quadrennial General Conference in May, the United Methodist Church had decided not to take up contentious issues regarding the full inclusion of its LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) members. The denomination agreed instead to create a commission to discuss the conflict over sexuality that could lead to a special session of the global conference in 2018 or 2019.

For advocates of full inclusion of LGBT United Methodists, the recent election was historic.

"I think at this moment I have a glimpse of the realm of God," Oliveto said after her election, according to reports by United Methodist News Service (UMNS).

Sharply divided

Oliveto's election was met warmly by delegates at the conference, according to UMNS, but reaction from United Methodist groups around the country has been sharply divided.

The Reconciling Ministries Network released a statement from its executive director, Matt Berryman, celebrating it as "an historic moment in the movement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons for spiritual and civil equality both in the church and

the public square.

"Officially barred from so many churches and positions of spiritual leadership, queer persons may now see themselves as leaders of the body of Christ in the largest mainline Protestant denomination in the United States," Berryman said.

Meanwhile, Rob Renfroe — president of Good News, which describes itself as an "orthodox" and "evangelical" movement within the denomination — was quoted in an article on its website calling the move in spite of decisions made at this spring's global General Conference "deplorable."

'Brink of schism'

"If the Western Jurisdiction wanted to push the church to the brink of schism, they could not have found a more certain way of doing so," Renfroe said.

Ough released a statement after Oliveto's election that read in part: "There are those in the church who will

view this election as a violation of church law and a significant step toward a split, while there are others who will celebrate the election as a milestone toward being a more inclusive church. Others will no doubt have questions as we find ourselves in a place where we have never been."

More than 100 clergy and clergy candidates came out as openly LGBT before the General Conference, and the conference's decision not to decide hasn't stopped its U.S. conferences from making decisions on their own.

Two U.S. jurisdictions had considered a total of three openly gay candidates for 15 open bishop positions. The South Central Jurisdictional Conference later requested a declaratory decision from the denomination's Judicial Council on whether the election and consecration of an openly LGBT bishop is lawful.

The 56 regional annual conferences that make up those jurisdictions also have passed a mix of resolutions regarding the full inclusion of the denomination's LGBT members.

Oliveto, 58, has been a delegate to the General Conference twice and to the Jurisdictional Conference five times. (RNS)

