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123rf.com

# Moral issues

## Poll asks religious groups what is morally acceptable

By Martha Simmons  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

What does the average American think about major moral issues these days? To some extent it depends on what church or synagogue you attend — or whether you are religious at all.

Each May since 2001, the annual Gallup Values and Beliefs Poll measures attitudes of nonreligious individuals and the nation's four largest religious groups — Jews, Catholics, Protestants and Mormons — with regard to moral issues. Gallup recently released cumulative poll results for the past 15 years representing telephone interviews with more than 16,700 adults. In the poll Gallup asks respondents whether each of 16 practices or concepts is morally acceptable.

In its most recent poll Gallup reported that the widest disparity among these groups is on the issues of abortion, doctor-assisted suicide, cloning animals, gay-lesbian relations and having a baby outside of marriage.

### No religious preferences

“Jews and those with no religious preferences have virtually identical views on the morality of abortion, doctor-assisted suicide, gay-lesbian relations and cloning animals,” Gallup’s Jeffrey M. Jones wrote in announcing the poll results. A majority of Jews and the nonreligious view all of the aforementioned as morally acceptable except for cloning animals, an issue on which both groups were split 50-50.

“Mormons, Protestants and Catholics believe that abortion, doctor-assisted suicide and cloning animals

are not morally acceptable practices,” Jones wrote. “Mormons are more conservative than Protestants and Catholics on abortion, gay-lesbian relations, doctor-assisted suicide and out-of-wedlock births, but not on cloning animals.”

Poll results sometimes indicate a marked difference between a religious group’s opinion and respective church doctrine, Gallup reported.

All five groups generally agree that divorce, the death penalty, wearing clothing made of animal fur and medical testing on animals are morally acceptable. They also agree that suicide, cloning humans, polygamy and extramarital affairs are morally unacceptable.

Mormons diverged most from the other groups of respondents on the issues of gambling, premarital sex and stem cell research, with Mormons  
(See ‘Evangelicals,’ page 3)



## Bentley to propose state lottery vote in special session

By Maggie Walsh  
The Alabama Baptist

Gov. Robert Bentley confirmed July 27 that he will be bringing a statewide lottery proposal to the special session that will begin Aug. 15.

The goal of the session is to find funding for the \$85 million Medicaid shortage and Bentley’s announcement comes as no surprise.

“Montgomery doesn’t have all the answers. Let’s hear from the people from this great state on whether the time has come to approve a statewide lottery,” he said.

In his announcement, Bentley promised to present “clean and simple legislation” that does not allow for any other form of gambling.

### Any game of chance

The problem with Bentley’s promise, however, is the fact that under Alabama law a lottery is defined as any game of chance. And that, according to Birmingham lawyer Eric Johnston, can open the floodgates.

“If we pass a law (legalizing a state lottery), that means the Legislature can have any kind of gambling,” said Johnston, who also represents the Alabama Policy Institute and Alabama Citizen’s Action Program (ALCAP).

“The exact wording of the bills is very deceptive, very subtle,” he said. Blackjack, Roulette, any game of chance  
(See ‘Nothing,’ page 19)

Coming next week: **BACK2 CAMPUS** Fall 2016

# COMMENT

## Ushering Out Christian Morality

**T**his is a strange time in American culture. It is a time of contradiction and confusion. A study by Barna released May 25 found that 8 out of 10 American adults are concerned about the nation's moral condition. Unfortunately there was little agreement on what constituted morality in the first place.

Barna reported for example that 59 percent of American adults agreed or strongly agreed that the Bible provides moral truths which are the same for all people in all situations without exception. Thankfully the percentage of practicing Christians affirming the statement was much higher — 83 percent. Another interesting finding was that 53 percent of those practicing non-Christian religions also agreed.

At the same time, two-thirds of respondents also said moral truth is relative to circumstances or had not given the question much thought. Among practicing Christians, 42 percent fell into this category as did 62 percent of those practicing non-Christian religions.

### 'Attempting to fill the void'

It is difficult to see how nearly 6 out of 10 adults could affirm the moral code of the Bible as absolute and then two-thirds of the same respondents say morality is based on circumstance or they had not thought about the issue.

David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group, explained it this way: "Christian morality is being ushered out of American social structures ... leaving a vacuum in its place. The broader culture is attempting to fill the void."

Tragically this trend is not limited to Americans in general. It is impacting practicing Christians as well.

Right and wrong for the majority (57 percent) of American adults is a matter of personal experience according to this most recent study. Barna asked respondents to react to the statement "Whatever is right for your life or works best for you is the only truth you can know." Less than half of elders and boomers supported the statement but 59 percent of Gen-Xers (born between 1975 and 1983) and 74 percent of millennials



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

(born between 1984 and 2002) agreed or strongly agreed.

Forty-one percent of practicing Christians also affirmed the statement.

When asked to react to the statement, "Every culture must determine what is acceptable morality for its people," 65 percent of adults agreed or strongly agreed. Again the younger age groups offered the most support although every age group affirmed the statement.

Forty-seven percent of practicing Christians agreed.

When each culture must determine its own morality and when truth is what works best for the individual can anarchy be far behind?

Kinnaman added, "The highest good, according to our society, is 'finding yourself' and then living by 'what is right for you.'"

It is hard to reconcile that cultural value with concern about some of the issues making news today.

Symbols of the Confederacy are coming down from southern State Houses to the National Cathedral in Washington. Their connections with slavery is their ruin. But if each society must determine its own moral norms what justifies the outrage against a society that embraced slavery?

Please understand, this is not an attempt to justify slavery or the display of Confederate symbols. It is only an effort to point out the dilemma created when moral norms are based on what works best for an individual or cultural preferences.

These dilemmas are not imagery. They impact real-life situations.

Racism is a current issue in America. Racism is a form of idolatry from a biblical perspective. It elevates part of God's creation while denigrating the image of God in others. Yet when right and wrong are based solely on what an individual judges best for him or her, where is the moral ground to condemn this evil?

Barna posed other issues to respondents. Eighty-nine percent said people should not criticize someone else's life choices. Eighty-six per-

cent said to be fulfilled in life you should pursue the things you desire most. Practicing Christians agreed with the statements 76 percent and 72 percent respectively.

How do these individual values relate to the widespread abuse — physical, mental and sexual — plaguing society? Where is moral authority when the determinant is personal desire or life choices?

How do these values inform the experience of individual greed? For centuries greed was labeled 1 of the 7 deadly sins. Is it now a virtue despite its impact on others?

In the mid-1970s the Khmer Rouge slaughtered more than 2 million people in Cambodia as the Pol Pot regime attempted to establish an agrarian utopia. Intellectuals had no place in that society so in some cases people were executed because they wore glasses, making them look intellectual.

Thirty years earlier the Germans killed more than twice that number of Jews, Gypsies and others in the Holocaust because a society without these people was the choice of the country's leaders.

If there are no absolute norms — if right and wrong, good and evil are based on personal choice and desire and every society sets its own values — then where is the moral ground to condemn these horrific acts?

Kinnaman is correct when he illustrates the rising tide of secularism and the tremendous amount of individualism in today's society

through this most recent study. It appears the world is descending into a dark time.

But this is no time to curse the darkness. It is time for the Church to embrace the moral code of the Bible in word and deed. The Bible is clear that we are "to prefer one another in love" (Rom. 12:10). Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another" (John 13:34).

### Following Jesus' example

When Jesus announced His ministry in Luke 4, He described it in terms of helping the poor, the prisoner, the blind and the oppressed.

In Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that Christians care for those who are hungry, naked, sick, imprisoned or strangers.

Christianity is not a "me-centered religion." It is a faith that calls the followers of Christ to pour themselves out in service to God and others as Jesus poured Himself out for us.

Only when Christians unapologetically embrace these Christian values and demonstrate them in their lifestyles can the darkness of selfish me-ism be pushed back and the Way of the Cross become the light of the world. ✠

***"It is time for the Church to embrace the moral code of the Bible in word and deed."***

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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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# Morality of being male or female

## Changing genders isn't morally wrong, majority of Americans say

**M**ost Americans see nothing morally wrong with gender change, a study released July 14 shows.

Six in 10 Americans don't think it's wrong for people to identify with a gender different from their birth sex, according to a recent LifeWay Research survey.

And more than half don't think it's wrong to switch genders by taking hormones or having surgery.

The findings indicate most Americans don't see moral significance in being born male or female, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

"A majority of Americans reject the view of a Creator giving them a gender that shouldn't be changed," he said.

Questions of morality have surfaced as politicians debate restroom access, employment protection, insurance coverage and military service for transgender people.

Is it morally permissible for a doctor to remove healthy organs? Is it acceptable to give puberty-delaying drugs to children who feel gender conflict? Many Americans say gender simply isn't a moral issue.

LifeWay Research asked 1,000 Americans whether they agree or disagree that changing one's gender or identifying with a different gender is morally wrong. Respondents also had the option to select "it's not a moral issue."

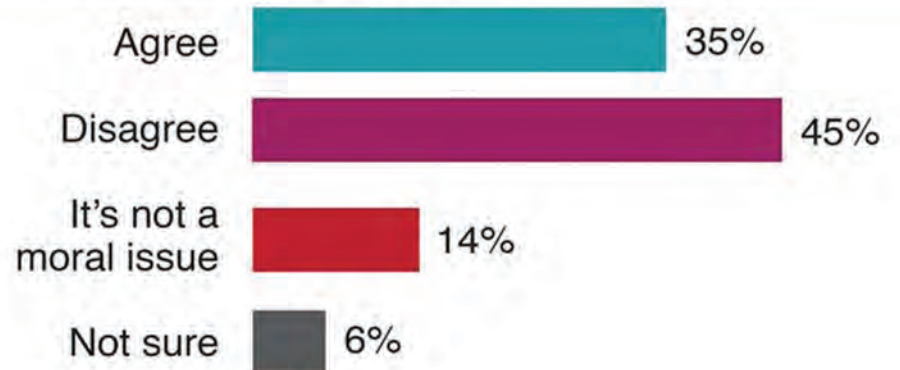
About one-third of Americans (35 percent) say it's wrong for people to identify with a gender different from their birth sex, while 45 percent disagree. As for changing gender, 42 percent say it's morally wrong and 43 percent disagree.

An additional 14 percent of Americans say identifying with a different gender isn't a matter of morality, and nearly as many (11 percent) say it isn't a moral issue to alter one's gender through hormones or surgery.

"A growing percentage of Americans don't

Among Americans:

**It is morally wrong for an individual to identify with a gender different than the sex they were born.**



LifeWayResearch.com

believe in right and wrong," McConnell said. "They don't believe there's absolute truth — and if there's no absolute truth, then they're reluctant to talk about morality."

Evangelical believers are dramatically more likely than other Americans to voice moral concerns about gender change, the survey shows.

### Evangelical issue

More than half of people with evangelical beliefs (54 percent) say it's wrong to identify with a different gender. Only about one-quarter of Catholics (26 percent), one-third of those in non-Christian faiths such as Judaism or Islam (35 percent) and one-fifth of the nonreligious (20 percent) share that view.

Americans are slightly more concerned about altering gender through surgery or hormones, but it remains mostly an evangelical issue.

Evangelical believers are almost twice as

likely (61 percent) as non-evangelical Americans (32 percent) to say using surgery or hormones to change birth gender is morally wrong.

Among the 71 percent of Americans who say they have no transgender acquaintances, 48 percent say it is wrong to change genders using surgery or hormones, and 39 percent say it is wrong to identify with another gender.

Those numbers drop by more than one-third among the 27 percent of Americans who say they know a transgendered person. Twenty-eight percent say changing gender by medical means is wrong, and 25 percent say identifying with a different gender is wrong.

Young adults, 18–24 years old, are most likely to report knowing a transgender person and less likely than others to consider gender change immoral. In that age group, 41 percent have a transgender acquaintance, and 31 percent say it's wrong to alter gender through surgery or hormones. (BP)

## 'Evangelicals feel the pull of the precepts they read in Scripture'

(continued from page 1)

being the only group to consider all three unacceptable, according to the poll. "Jews and nonreligious Americans are more liberal than Protestants and Catholics on these three issues. A solid majority of Catholics believe each is morally acceptable, while at or slightly more than half of Protestants agree," Jones reported.

Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, questioned putting all Protestants under the same umbrella.

"Evangelical Christians appear to be lumped in with all other American Protestants even though our moral convictions are often

very different from those of liberal mainline Protestants," Anderson said. "My guess is that evangelical moral attitudes are closer to the attitudes of Mormons than to those of the other religious groups polled."

### Practicing religion

Anderson also noted that there's a big difference between people who merely identify with a certain religion and those who actually practice it. "Keep in mind that each group probably has a significant divide between those who regularly attend their church or synagogue and those who rarely or never attend," he said.

Gallup suggested that Americans are becoming less religious and more liberal over time, but Anderson said the data indicate that some things appear to actually be settling down. "The research is interesting and mostly predictable," Anderson said. "One noticeable result is that views on moral issues haven't changed in this-year-to-last-year comparisons. After past years of shift there is a current stability."

Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, agreed that evangelicals tend to be much more conservative than mainline Protestants. "Among the two lists of moral issues where

Gallup found differences, we would expect evangelicals to differ significantly from other religious groups as well. Our studies at LifeWay Research of evangelicals that have addressed a couple of these topics have shown that evangelicals tend to be much less permissive."

McConnell said that evangelicals consult the Bible as their moral authority. "Culturally, evangelicals find themselves surrounded by many who have a completely different moral compass," he said. "Evangelicals feel the pull of the precepts they read in Scripture while many others feel a stronger pull toward what they personally feel is right." ☞



123rf.com

## Alabama Baptist pastor addresses voting in upcoming election

By Pastor Chip Thornton  
FBC Springville

A young voter asked me recently, “Who are you voting for in November?” Apparently a famous Christian rapper said he would not vote because there were no acceptable candidates. That concerned me. Christians should seek to significantly influence (not withdraw) from politics. Let me support that statement through several questions.

### ► Shall the atheists win?

William Buckley Jr. published a book in 1951, “God and Man at Yale.”

It opened my eyes to some startling revelations. Buckley was a recent graduate of Yale where he served as editor of the student paper. The heart of his assertion was this: “[T]he duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world ... and the struggle between individualism and collectivism is the same struggle on another level.”

He documented how that duel is playing out in politics. He named professors who were eradicating any notion of Christ from the classroom. He traced the textbooks used to atheistic communist sources. This concerted effort — beginning at institutions of higher learning (which churn out lawyers, politicians, judges, media, etc.) — was designed to banish God from politics and then replace God and His standards with man and his standards. Such is the duel between Christianity and communism in politics. To withdraw is to concede defeat to the atheists.

### ► But is America even a Christian nation anymore?

It all depends on what you mean by “Christian nation.” Wayne Grudem, author of “Politics According to the Bible,” asks several pertinent questions:

*Is Christian teaching the primary religious system that influenced the founding of the U.S.?* Yes.

*Were the majority of our nation’s Founding Fathers Christians who generally believed in the truth of the Bible?* Yes, generally, they were.

*Are a majority of people in the U.S. Bible-believing, evangelical, born-again Christians?* No. A 2005 Gallup poll indicates only about 22 percent of America is truly born again (Albert L. Winseman, “U.S. Evangelicals: How many Walk the Walk?”).

*Is belief in Christian values the dominant perspective promoted by the U.S. government?* No.

*Does the U.S. government promote Christianity as the national religion?* No.

*So, is America a Christian nation?* Yes and no. Confusing right?

One thing we all can agree to is this: America progressively has been becoming “less” Christian since its founding. If so, how are Christians to respond? Romans 13 indicates we shouldn’t run from government, but influence it (do good, pay taxes, show honor, show respect).

### Obeying God

► *Should we ever disobey the government?*

Yes, on rare occasions we should. Generally speaking, though, we should obey even imperfect governments. Even Jesus paid taxes to the government that executed Him (Mark 12:17). The exception is when the government demands we disobey God. In Acts 4:18 the governing authority told the early apostles not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John determined: We must obey God rather than man on this point (Acts 4:19).

► *So who should I vote for in November?*

I cannot tell you for whom to vote.

However, here is a guiding principle from Grudem: “Christians should seek to significantly influence government in accordance with biblical principles.” That doesn’t mean we have to vote for the “perfect” candidate — or even the “Christian” one. There is nothing wrong with voting for a non-Christian who, in God’s providence, happens to embrace policies that align with Scripture.

### Narrowing your choice

► *I understand but can you be more specific?*

Sure. Here are some questions that might help narrow your choice:

*Who will protect our freedom of speech (to declare the gospel)?*

*Who will protect our freedom of religion (to worship as I choose)?*

*Who will appoint judges that rule according to the original framers’ intent?*

*Who will protect the civil rights of unborn citizens?*

*Who will protect God’s earth from environmental factors damaging it?*

*Who will protect our country from attack (which might weaken our efforts to declare the gospel)?*

*Who will protect Israel, for whom God yet has glorious plans (Rom. 11)?*

*Whose economic policies will impact Kingdom work?* By this, I mean: taxes, inflation, interest rates, job growth, etc. All have economic impact on the Church. Pragmatically: The better our economy, the more Christians tithe, which provides more resources to reach the world for Christ.

These are some (not all) questions to consider. More important than “who” to vote for is this: Don’t withdraw from the political process. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven” (Matt 5:14–16). To withdraw is to neglect our Christian responsibility to be salt and light where God has placed us. ✠



THORNTON

## Southern Baptist Convention 2016 resolution on voting

WHEREAS, God has ordained government to reward good and to punish evil (Rom. 13:1–5, 1 Pet. 2:13–14); and

WHEREAS, Jesus described His followers as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matt. 5:13–16), indicating the Lord’s desire for believers to exercise a beneficent influence on their surrounding society; and

WHEREAS, Believers in the United States enjoy a constitutionally granted opportunity to influence not only the nation, but also states, regions and communities by voting for those seeking the country’s highest office and for other elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the Baptist Faith and Message affirms that “all Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society” and that “every Christian should seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 14–15, 2016, give thanks to God that He has placed us in a nation with freedom of expression and opportunity to influence government, a freedom secured at a high price, even with shed blood on the battlefield; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists and all followers of Jesus Christ in the United States to participate in the democratic process by voting; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we remind Southern Baptists and all followers of Jesus Christ in the United States that the nation’s hope ultimately is not in political processes or governmental power, but in God alone; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we prayerfully urge all candidates for political office to endorse the biblical values upon which society should rest; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commit ourselves to pray earnestly for God to bring spiritual, moral, ethical and cultural renewal to our nation. ✠

Steve Hutton, author of 'Pride Aside,' shares his journey with other fathers about his son's drug addiction and how there is hope at the end of the struggle.

# 'Pride Aside'



Photo courtesy of Steve Hutton

## Christian father survives family tragedy, shares hope to encourage others in journey

By Grace Thornton  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Steve Hutton's family was the "typical cute Southern Baptist yuppie family, even with a real-live white picket fence in the backyard." And he and his wife, Joni, raised their two boys — Ben and Michael — to be in church every Sunday and Wednesday.

"Occasionally we'd even sneak up there for visitation on Tuesdays and for basketball on Fridays and Saturdays," he joked.

But he's quick to say that none of that kept his oldest son's life from falling apart.

Ben was a 4.0 GPA student and an exceptional athlete, said Hutton, a PGA professional golfer himself.

"He ran in 27 races his senior year and won all of them," Hutton said of his son.

But after Ben went to play college football, Hutton and his wife began to notice that things didn't quite add up with his finances, grades and attitude.

"After investigating and questioning him, we realized that he was involved in drug use, and we didn't know how far back that went," he said.

Ben was addicted primarily to Xanax, but he would do anything, anytime, anywhere, Hutton said.

The couple spent the next five years and \$250,000 just keeping their son breathing. Ben went in cycles of rehab, recovery and giving life another try, only to spiral out of control again.

### 'Helpless feeling'

"Addiction is so complicated, and trying to figure out how to help is so frustrating for families," Hutton said. "It's a very helpless feeling for a parent to finally understand that there's absolutely nothing you can do other than continue to pray and be there when they're ready to be well. You just want to fix it so badly for your child."

That was the feeling Hutton was battling when he hugged Ben goodbye at a Teen Challenge facility in Brookings, South Dakota, in May 2014.

"When we drove out of the parking lot, both my wife and I felt like that was the last time we would ever see him alive," he said. "He didn't want to live at that point. He'd been trying to stop and falling back into an even deeper addiction and depression."

But while Ben was in South Dakota, he had an encounter with God that he hadn't had before, and it changed everything.

"He still struggles daily, but he's been sober now for a couple of years," Hutton said. "He has to think consciously about his time and what he's doing, but he knows who he is and Whose he is. And he

has a bright future ahead of him."

But Hutton says his son's journey was one that changed him as a father — and it changed the way he related to other fathers.

"My story matches most men's stories from a pain and suffering standpoint," he said. "Their story might be different but equally as painful, whether it's hurt in their marriage, stress on their finances, loss of a job or just confusion from the world."

And Hutton just wants to reach out to them and tell them they are not alone. That's why he wrote the book "Pride Aside," the story of a father's journey through his son's addiction. And that's why he'll be sharing his story at Man Church at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, on Aug. 28 (see story, this page).

"I can unequivocally say that I have never seen men under as much pressure as they are today," Hutton said. "There are some things you can do to get through it. God doesn't want you to live under pressure — He wants you to live a fulfilled life."

To combat the pressure, men first have to be in God's Word.

"You can't hear a word from God if you aren't in His Word," Hutton said.

Second, you have to be with those who care about you.

### Easily relatable

"That means your church too, and you need to be there and be involved and teachable," he said.

Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist, has been one of the ones walking alongside the Hutton family for a long time.

"I was Steve and Joni's pastor in Ruston, Louisiana, in the 1990s, and they were the model family," he said. "Ben's struggle is a reminder that no family is immune to the temptations of alcohol and drug addictions."

Any father who has walked alongside a child struggling with an addiction will easily relate to Hutton's story, Wood said.

And for those men who are not in this situation, "it is imperative they attend to learn the warning signals of addiction and what to do and what not to do," he said. †

For more information about Hutton's ministry, visit [prideaside.org](http://prideaside.org).

## Man Church gets men involved in 'every aspect'

By Grace Thornton  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It may be porn. Or pride. Or ruling your family like a tyrant.

But all of those things are just symptoms — the real disease is a lack of discipleship, said Rick Burgess, host of the Rick & Bubba Show and founder of Man Church at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills.

"As I would travel, I started asking pastors across the country about their church," Burgess said. "We'd talk about their women's ministry, and they'd get excited. I'd ask them about their children, and they'd feel like it was doing great. I'd ask about the youth, and they would always say they had some that were sold out and serious about their faith."

But then he would ask about the men. "And their eyes and face would drop down, dejected, and they'd say, 'We can't get them involved.'"

As Burgess talked with these pastors he said he began to get the sense that, even subconsciously, church had fallen into

the routine of crafting itself to cater to women and children with the idea that the men would follow their families.

So Burgess — feeling convicted that he hadn't been as involved as he should've in his own church's men's ministry — began to develop a vision for Man Church, a once-a-quarter service for the men of Shades Mountain Baptist.

### Men-style Bible studies

"If you're already at a men's ministry at another church, this isn't designed to bring you in. We want to deal with the things going on in our own body."

The quarterly service kicks off six to eight weeks of Bible study that men can plug into. Before the next Man Church, there will be breaks taken at man-appropriate times, Burgess said.

"Men don't need to do one Bible study all year, they'll fade on you. ... We understand it's hunting season. We understand it's football season. We want to minister to the men in the way

men receive ministry," he said.

The men who attend Man Church but don't get involved in the ongoing Bible study fall away from church involvement almost every time, he said. But the ones who do get involved are now "sold-out men who are beginning to duplicate discipleship in their families," Burgess said. "We're beginning to get the men of the church rolling into every aspect of the church."

Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist, agreed.

"We are seeing men going deeper in the Word of God, building accountability with other men and becoming better husbands and dads," Wood said.

The fourth Man Church is set for Aug. 28, and while the purpose isn't to draw in men from other churches, Burgess said anyone is welcome to come check it out and see if something similar could work at their own church.

For questions about how to start a Man Church for your congregation, email Burgess at [rick@rickandbubba.com](mailto:rick@rickandbubba.com). †

Hip-hop artist Flame turned the fairly quiet FBC Trussville sanctuary into a bouncing, high-energy room during the Youth Evangelism Conference on July 22.

# 'SPEAK' boldly



YEC challenges students to speak boldly, honestly about their relationship with Christ



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

By Grace Thornton  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Clayton King says his story is probably one a lot of people can relate to.

He loses his phone sometimes. Then he loses his mind trying to find it.

And then — at least on one occasion — he's realized that the phone has been in his hand the whole time.

## 'Our Jesus story'

"Now that's my phone story, but I think for a lot of us that's our Jesus story," King told the crowd of more than 775 gath-

ered at the Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) at First Baptist Church, Trussville, on July 23. The conference, which centered around the theme "Speak," challenged youth to speak out boldly and honestly about their relationship with Christ.

For King, a youth evangelist from Anderson, South Carolina, that begins with taking an honest look at whether or not you really know Him.

He told students that he was in church his whole life — Sunday School, Royal Ambassadors, Training Union, Mission Friends and everything else.

"I went to a Christian school where by the time I went to junior high, I had memo-

rized more than 500 Bible verses," he said. "I had Jesus in my head, but I didn't have Him in my heart. You need your eyes opened in order to see — really see — Him."

## Professions of faith

Several dozen came forward to profess faith in Christ for the first time after King's message.

And students reacted with applause and hugs in person and encouragement on social media too.

"Happy for my friend, Drake, for getting saved," student Seth Davidson posted on Twitter soon after the altar call.

Scooter Kellum, youth ministry strate-

gist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said there was an energy in the room during the conference that he hadn't seen in a long time.

"We saw the Lord work in a lot of different ways," he said, noting that the "Speak" theme of this year was a transition to it being rolled out as the rebranded name of the Youth Evangelism Conference next year.

As part of the theme, 16-year-old Shantrice Coleman delivered several spoken-word presentations. Students also interacted on social media using the hashtag #speak16.

"So thankful for everyone coming out

## Breakout sessions address students, leaders

Living for Jesus isn't always easy — but He's worth it.

That's what Sharie King told the girls at the Youth Evangelism Conference breakout session July 23 while her husband, youth evangelist Clayton King of Anderson, South Carolina, spoke to the boys.

"They talked about 'The True Love Project' and purity, and it went really well," said Scooter Kellum, youth ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Sexual purity shouldn't be an idol or pursued out of legalism, but teens should also guard themselves from falling into sin, Sharie King said.

At the core, the choices they make should

be made out of love for God, she said. "Sometimes you have to choose — will I refuse God or will I refuse this boy?"

While the youth were in their breakout sessions, adult leaders heard from Acton Bowen, an evangelist and author from Alabama.

## 'Church as a revolution'

Kellum said, "He spoke about the church as a revolution not an institution, that we should really go and be for the gospel no matter what that looks like, that we should be willing to give of ourselves to make that happen. I think it was a very encouraging message for our student leaders." (TAB)



Photo by Doug Rogers

Clayton King and his wife, Sharie, (above) each addressed sexual purity during breakout sessions at the Youth Evangelism Conference on July 23.

to put on the strong event for everyone to show us the true wisdom in Jesus,” Mandy D tweeted. “Shiloh Baptist Hamilton is loving it.”

Atlanta-based band The Museum led worship for the event, and hip-hop artist Flame turned the fairly quiet sanctuary into a bouncing, high-energy room July 22.

Before the concert that night, Walt Barnes kicked off the conference in the same way King started Saturday morning — going straight to the heart of who Jesus is.

## Merciful God

During his message, Barnes pulled apart Revelation 1:10–18 verse by verse to explain the truth about Jesus found in the apocalyptic writing.

Revelation was originally written as a letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor who were nervous and expecting judgment, said Barnes, assistant Baptist Student Union director at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Jefferson Davis campus in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Jesus is described to the churches using poetic language, he said — He’s described as all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present and eternal.

But instead of judgment, God shows mercy on the churches, Barnes said.

“Why? Because He’s the hero of the Church. It’s like He’s saying, ‘Fear not Church. You got a hero. Don’t fear anything this world can throw at you. Don’t even fear death. Go and speak the truth in love.’”

If Christians today believed that God is their hero, Barnes said, maybe they’d look a little more like Lois Lane — doing crazy and daring things but knowing they had a hero to save them.

“Maybe we’d do things we need to do even if it means we were to die. Maybe if we believed our King is who He says He is we’d look a little more like the Church. We would speak the truth because we couldn’t be quiet.”

To close the conference Saturday afternoon, Chad Poe, teaching pastor at Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, also challenged students to be bold in speaking up about Christ.

## Stepping up

Preaching from Micah 6, he asked students if they were willing to step up and be who God called them to be.

“You look at God’s story for Israel and see that His major concern for them, His major interaction with them was about the fact that they had taken for granted all that He had done and had continued to simply exist,” Poe said.

“So they had an experience with God and saw that God did miraculous things, yet when they walk out the doors of their worship gatherings those things did not affect their everyday lives.”

He challenged students to take God with them into their normal lives and speak of Him in everyday conversation.

“If you have a story of God being present with you and faithful to you when you needed Him to be, could you raise your hand? Could you speak up? Do you prop up the story of Jesus for others with what God has done for you?” (Neisha Roberts contributed) ✠

# God-given talents



## Mix Music Camp focuses on importance of student music ministry

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**A**s hundreds of students filled the chapel at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega for the closing worship session of Mix Music Camp on July 15, the future of music and worship in Alabama churches sounded dynamic.

Held annually at Shocco in July since 2007, Mix Music Camp focuses on one main objective — to identify and train the next generation of worship leaders.

“I get calls every day from churches looking for music ministers, worship leaders and musicians,” said Keith Hibbs, director of the office of worship leadership and church music at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), which sponsors and plans the camp. “It’s important for church leaders to realize the importance of student music ministry. It takes a long time to bring leaders to the spot where they are ready to lead.”

### New and challenging

Mix, for children in grades 3–5, and ReMix, for students in grades 6–10, encourages students and their leaders to persevere in pursuing their talents and gifts, said ReMix director Connie Hale.

“One of the important things about this camp is that it provides a place where these students see that they fit right now,” she said. “During this time in their lives, they deserve the chance to try new and challenging things.”

One of the challenges is learning new music, said Ed Cleveland, camp choral director and associate minister of music at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association. For this year’s ReMix campers, Cleveland chose four anthems, including one in Swahili and English. Such selections challenge the students on multiple levels, Cleveland said.

“Choosing a song that’s unfamiliar



Photo by Andrew Swindle

Mix, for children in grades 3–5, and ReMix, for students in grades 6–10, encourage students and their leaders to persevere in pursuing their talents and gifts. The annual event is held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center.

makes students focus more on what they’re singing. It works both sides of their brains,” he said.

Discipleship is another important goal of both Mix Music Camp and music ministry at all levels, Hibbs said.

“Music programs are not about performance but about worship and growing disciples. The goal of a church music program is to work together to learn Scripture through music and working together to worship,” Hibbs said.

For that reason, worship and discipleship are connected to everything that happens at camp. This year’s theme, “Trailhead,” based on Psalm 119:54, helped campers focus on their need for God to guide them, said camp pastor Mark McLendon, minister of youth at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association.

“We often want to gain knowledge to make our own way, but this week we had many reminders that life is not about us but about trusting Him,” McLendon said.

Even recreation was geared toward discipleship, said recreation leader Jesse Strickland, a member of Lakeview Baptist

Church, Auburn, in Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association.

“We play games with a purpose, with the goal of teaching scriptural principles in a different way,” he said.

Beth Nowell, children’s music director and music assistant at First Baptist Church, Dothan, in Columbia Baptist Association, and a first-time Mix Music Camp chaperone, brought three students to Mix for the first time this year. She plans to come back next year with more students.

“I got loads of ideas to take home and use with children’s choirs,” Nowell said.

Not only that, Nowell saw the development of leadership skills in her students during the week at camp, skills they will use as they move into youth choir.

### Participation at church

Many of the students who attend Mix Music Camp also participate in music ministry at the local church and in state-wide music ministry programs, including Children’s Honor Choir, OneVoice honor choir for students in grades 7–12 and RockSolid, a Christian cover band for students in grades 9–12.

Whether they sing in a choir or just for fun, camp prepares them to use their love of music to be on mission wherever they are, Hale said.

“We want each of them to be comfortable in the mind, body and soul God has created in them and to use the skills God has gifted them with to be leaders in their churches and schools in worship and discipleship,” she said. ✠



Photo by Andrew Swindle

“Music programs are not about performance but about worship and growing disciples,” Keith Hibbs says.

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BALDWIN

► **Michael Watts** is the new pastor of **Pleasant View Church, Foley**. He previously served as pastor of Cedar Hill Church, East Brewton. He also served at Center Church, Webb; Northside Church, Calera; and in campus ministry at Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton. Watts and his wife, Devyon, have three children.



WATTS

## BIBB

► **Matt Pope** is the new pastor of **First Church, West Blocton**. He previously served as associate and youth pastor for The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla. He also served at West Highland Church, Bessemer. He holds a bachelor's degree from



POPE

Leavell College in New Orleans and is pursuing a master's degree from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Kayla, have two children.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, will hold a Praise Sing on Aug. 10, 6:30 p.m. An ice cream social will follow the singing. The church also will host missionaries Danny and Denise Tesseneer on Aug. 24 and evangelist Andrew Brock on Aug. 31 in special 6:30 p.m. services. Child care will be provided for each event. For more information call the church at 205-608-0889. Allen Davis is pastor.

## CHEROKEE

► **First Church, Centre**, will host the Cherokee Association evangelism rally Aug. 10, 6:30 p.m. Robert Smith Jr., the Charles T. Carter Chair of Divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, will speak. The Heirborn Quartet will perform. Eddie Nation is pastor. Wendell Dutton is director of missions.

## CLARKE

► **Ulcanush Church, Coffeeville**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 7, 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. The church also will hold revival

services Aug. 8-10, 7 nightly. Larry Cox will speak each night. Jesse Griffith is pastor.

## FAYETTE

► **Pilgrim Rest Church, Fayette**, will hold revival services Aug. 7-10. Services will be at 5 p.m. on Sunday night and 7 p.m. Monday-Wednesday. Keith Box will speak Aug. 7, Kevin Morrison will speak Aug. 8 and David Wilson will speak Aug. 9-10. There will be special music each night. Randy Anderson is pastor.

## GENEVA

► **First Church, Geneva**, will hold Sanctified Sunday Night Revivals every Sunday night in August at 6 p.m. Jeffrey Singletary will speak Aug. 7, Mike Orr will speak Aug. 14, Ed Litton will speak Aug. 21 and Ted Traylor will speak Aug. 28. A special children's service will be held nightly. Edwin Scott is pastor.

## MORGAN

► **Lebanon Church, Falkville**, will hold revival services Aug. 14-17. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday services will be at 7 nightly. Michael Mason will speak. Paul Shutt will lead music. Randy Ashley is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Grace Church, Montevallo**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 21, 10:30 a.m. Howard Brasher will speak. Intermission will provide special music. Lunch will follow the service. Tim Driskell is pastor.

## SIPSEY

► **Mount Hebron Church, Northport**, will hold revival services Aug. 8-11, 7 nightly. Yancy Windham will speak Aug. 8, Kevin Hamm will speak Aug. 9, Junior Hill will speak Aug. 10 and Tim Tindle will speak Aug. 11. Steve Kelley is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR

► **Corinth Church, Trussville**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 7, 11 a.m. Joe Joyner will speak. Crystal River will perform special music. Lunch will follow the service. Joe Karr is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Steve Dunaway** is the new associate pastor of **Carrolls Creek Church, Northport**. He holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master's degree from Birmingham Southern College. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children and five grandchildren. †

# in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

## Frances Dew Hamilton

### First female entity head in state dies at 79

Frances Dew Hamilton, former executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC) and the first female Baptist entity head in the state, died July 25. She was 79.

Hamilton received her education from Judson College in Marion and the University of Georgia in Athens.

A lifelong historian, she taught history at Samford University in Birmingham for 34 years before becoming the first woman to head an Alabama Baptist State Convention entity in 1994. She led ABHC for 12 years, until 2006.

She also was a trustee for Judson and co-author of "Daughters of the Dream," a history of her alma mater written with Elizabeth Wells. Hamilton also wrote and contributed to numerous historical articles and papers. She was the pianist for First Baptist Church, Trussville, for more than 25 years.

Lonette Berg, current ABHC executive director, knew Hamilton as more than simply her predecessor. Lovingly called "boss" by Berg, Hamilton was a good friend and mentor who taught Berg how to lead with passion and grace.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, remembers Hamilton as "an effective and faithful leader" of ABHC thanks to her love of history and love for Alabama Baptists.

"During her tenure at the commission, I learned to admire her as a leader of others and a servant of the Lord," Lance said. "She made herself accessible to our churches and to church leaders throughout her ministry at the commission and for that I am extremely grateful."

Hamilton was preceded in death by her husband, Royer. She is survived by one son and three grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)



HAMILTON

## Billy Rogers Wallace

### Cahaba and Hale DOM dies at 81

Billy "Bill" Rogers Wallace, director of missions (DOM) for Cahaba and Hale Baptist associations, died July 19. He was 81.

An Alabama native, Wallace served as DOM for Cahaba Association for 19 years and Hale Association for eight years. He also served as a member of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and as a pastor for 37 years.

His first pastorate was at Ephesus Baptist Church, Marion, where he was a member at the time of his death. He also served as pastor of Lisman Baptist Church; First Baptist Church, Reform; Cuba Baptist Church; Beatrice Baptist Church; New Salem Baptist Church, Clanton; Indian Springs Baptist Church, Union Springs; and Hillcrest Baptist Church, Maplesville.

He received a bachelor's and master's degree from Livingston University (now the University of West Alabama) and another master's degree from the University of Alabama.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, Patti. He is survived by three children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. (Hannah Muñoz)



WALLACE

## REFLECTIONS

"PASTOR ED IS SO SMART, HE CAN SENSE BOREDOM IN PEOPLE!"

"BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THE HITTITES! DID YOU SEE WHAT THAT GUY SAID ON THE LATE SHOW LAST NIGHT?"



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Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**

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**ONE MISSION**

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

# STUDENTS REACHING STUDENTS

As students head back to school and campus this fall, they find the world a bit different than when they left. A summer of violence, discord, partisan politics and bitter rhetoric causes even the most positive among us to become jaded and discouraged.

But in spite of all that, there may be no more hopeful place in our country than today's high school or college campus. Our future is there. The students on those campuses are all about making a difference in their world—and they're not waiting on graduation to get started.

From high school freshmen to college grad students, these folks are busy investing in the

future by working to reach their fellow students with the Gospel: openly sharing their faith in Jesus Christ with fellow athletes, cheerleaders, lab partners and dorm roommates.

They are committed to and invested in their local church, in Baptist campus ministries discipleship groups, Bible studies and mission teams.

One of our state missionary/campus ministers recently observed that many students see their campus as a mission field – and they're discovering that the best strategy for reaching students on this mission field is one student reaching another student.

How can you join this hope-filled effort? Here are some practical suggestions:

By Mike Nuss  
*State Missionary*



~ **PRAY** for the almost one million Alabama middle, high school and college students along with their teachers, professors and administrators heading back to school this month.

~ **INVEST** in your church's ministry to students by volunteering to lead a group, mentor a student, prepare food, teach.

~ **GIVE** through your church's Cooperative Program offering which makes ministry possible on the college campus mission field across our state and helps train and resource youth ministers.

Students reaching students—gives me hope for the church, for our world and for the future.

*State Missionary Mike Nuss serves as director of the Collegiate & Student Ministries Office. He may be contacted at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 276, or (334) 613-2276.*

**Visit [BCMLink.org](http://BCMLink.org) for more info and resources.**



AT THE BAPTIST BUILDING, 2001 E. SOUTH BLVD. IN MONTGOMERY

**Thursday, September 8, 10 am - 3:30 pm » 9:30 - 10 – Check-in and refreshments**

Meet your state missionaries » Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission » Tour the Baptist Building » Spouses welcome » Lunch provided

**Ideal for** pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their position, or who have never attended a Get Acquainted Day  
Register by calling or emailing Sheila Rikerd, **1-800-264-1225**, ext. 249, or **(334) 613-2249**, **[srikerd@alsbom.org](mailto:srikerd@alsbom.org)**, or go online to **[alsbom.org/gad](http://alsbom.org/gad)**.



# Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

STATE GOAL: \$750,000

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

Your gifts help support:

**ALABAMA WMU**

**DISASTER RELIEF**

**CHURCH PLANTING**

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Alabama Baptist Convention  
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Visit **Myers-Mallory.org** to  
order or download videos,  
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# WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

## I was called to ministry in a Southern Baptist church.

1. I finished college at Oklahoma Baptist University, and it was made affordable to me because of the Cooperative Program.
2. I graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Seminaries from groups other than Southern Baptists are very expensive. My seminary degree probably cost 50 percent because of the Cooperative Program.
3. I believe in the Cooperative Program because of LifeWay Christian Resources, which itself does not receive CP funds. However, LifeWay's materials are second to none, in large part because most are authored by



those who have been trained in one of the six seminaries supported by gifts through the Cooperative Program.

4. I believe in the program because of the great work done by Alabama Baptists. No other denomination in the history of the world has the capability or capacity as that of the Southern Baptist Convention.

When more than 40,000 churches work together, the synergy for Kingdom impact is amazing.

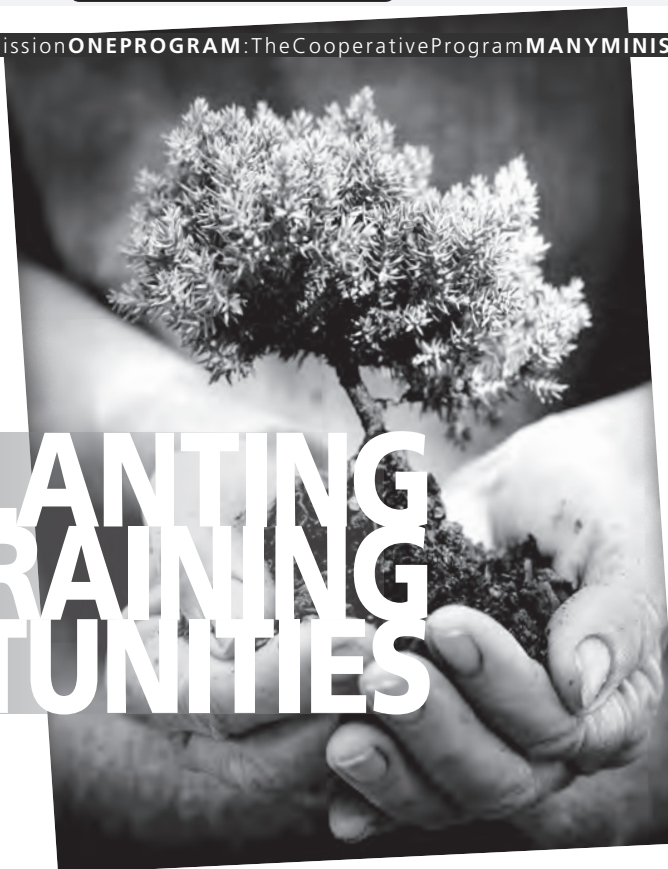
— **Terry Herald**, executive pastor, Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville



HERALD

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

**Alabama Church Planting Basics, Thursday-Saturday, September 22-24, 2016, at West Mobile Baptist Church, 7501 Airport Blvd., Mobile:** the "nuts and bolts" or ABCs of what it takes to plant a church from the planter and the core group/leadership/launch team's perspective.



## CHURCH PLANTING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage every planter to attend and bring as many of his team as possible. When the participants walk away, they will have in hand the structure on which to hang their vision, values, focus group, strategy, etc.

This training has proven to be helpful to established church pastors as well. Sessions will begin at noon Thursday and conclude at 4:30 p.m. Saturday. The cost for the three-day training is \$25 (\$100 for non-Alabama Baptist churches). Registration is required.

**Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner, Sunday, November 13, 2016, Eastern Hills Baptist Church, 3604 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Montgomery:**

Church planters and wives or anyone interested in church planting are invited to this event.

Speaker Jeff Christopherson has a passion to see a Kingdom-centered church planting movement happen in North America. He has seen firsthand what can happen when a church gives itself away through rapid multiplication. Jeff serves as vice president of the North American Mission Board for the Send Network. He is author of *Kingdom Matrix: Designing a Church for*

By Lamar Duke  
*State Missionary*



*the Kingdom of God and Kingdom First: Starting Churches That Shape Movements.* Jeff and his wife, Laura, live in Alpharetta, Ga., and have two children.

The first 200 planters/pastors who register will receive a copy of *Kingdom First*, Jeff's latest book.

**Full schedule as follows:** 4:30 p.m., registration and fellowship time; 6 p.m., dinner; 6:30 p.m., worship led by Ingrid Brown; 6:45 p.m., inspirational message by Jeff Christopherson; 7:15 p.m., wives session, Susan Lovett, and planters session, Jeff Christopherson; 8:30 p.m., adjourn and pick up children.

**The cost is \$25 per couple or \$15 per person.**

*To register or for more information about these events, please visit [plantalabama.org/events](http://plantalabama.org/events).*

Church planting is supported by Alabama Baptists' generous gifts through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

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

## WHY I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR STATE MISSIONS AND THE MYERS-MALLORY STATE MISSIONS OFFERING

As president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, it is my joy and privilege to commend to you the new Week of Prayer for State Missions and the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.



I hope you will join me as we share in this new opportunity for missions in our state. God will honor as we partner together! - **Travis Coleman**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Prattville

We're absolutely behind the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and I hope you're part of it as well. We need to reach the people of Alabama with the love of Jesus Christ and one great way we can do that is by giving to this offering and participating in the week of prayer. - **Tim Milner**, lead pastor, Essential Church, Huntsville



We have been immeasurably blessed to receive the light of Christ and we are called to share His life-giving light with our world. You can count on your partners at First Baptist Church of Montgomery to be all in, to pray for state missions and to give a generous and sacrificial offering so the people of Alabama can see the light of Jesus Christ. - **Jay Wolf**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Montgomery



# REGIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL & DISCIPLESHIP LEADERSHIP TRAINING

On Mission with the Great Commission

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

At each location, there are three one-hour conference times with multiple topics for each age group. Go online to the web pages listed for more information or

to register. Registration is \$5 per person before the early registration deadline, \$10 per person after the deadline.

### METRO

**First Baptist Church, Trussville**  
**Saturday, August 13**  
 EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Thursday, August 11  
[alsbom.org/metro](http://alsbom.org/metro)

### SOUTH

**Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile**  
**Saturday, August 13**  
 EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Thursday, August 11  
[alsbom.org/south](http://alsbom.org/south)

### NORTH

**Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens**  
**Saturday, August 27**  
 EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Thursday, August 25  
[alsbom.org/north](http://alsbom.org/north)

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



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

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

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

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

**ONE DAY  
TRAINING FOR:**

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

# ONE Day Training

**Cost:**  
\$10 per  
person

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

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 20  
9 a.m.-Noon**

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd.,  
Montgomery

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

# PASTOR, DEACON/ SPOUSE RETREAT



**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 23-24  
SHOCCO SPRINGS**

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

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**  
Chuck & Rhonda Kelley

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

**ONLINE INFO:**  
[alsbom.org/pastordeaconspouseretreat](http://alsbom.org/pastordeaconspouseretreat)

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

**Tuesday, September 13, 2016**

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

THEME: **Lead Like Jesus**

GUEST SPEAKER: **Jay Vineyard**

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

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

LEADERconnect

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

To register visit [alsbom.org/leaderconnect](http://alsbom.org/leaderconnect).

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

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



# Senior Adult Singin

SEPTEMBER 13, 2016:  
WEST END BAPTIST CHURCH, CLANTON

SEPTEMBER 15, 2016:  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, RUSSELLVILLE

10 a.m.-12 noon

Cost: \$10 per person (includes lunch)

*Psalm 96:1-2 says, "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day" (NIV).*

Join Frank Jones as he leads senior adults from churches all over Alabama in four different locations to sing hymns to the Lord! You may have been singing

the hymns since you were a child, but each time you sing them, your praise to God is new again.

To register or learn more, visit [alsbom.org/senioradultsingin](http://alsbom.org/senioradultsingin).

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

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Awards will be given to those individuals who have demonstrated evidence of leadership that has advanced the church in four key areas: kingdom growth, ministry advancement, missions involvement and numerical growth.

The recipients will be from three categories – New Work (church less than ten years old), Established Work (church older than ten years), and Bivocational (church where pastor holds dual employment).

Nominations may be made by visiting [alsbom.org/TLMLeadershipawards](http://alsbom.org/TLMLeadershipawards). Or you may contact our office for a copy (see contact info below).

Send your nomination form to ≈ Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions ≈ Office of LeaderCare & Church Health ≈ Attn: Debbie Dickey ≈ 2001 East South Blvd. ≈ Montgomery, AL 36116

**The deadline for receiving nominations is September 21, 2016.**

For more information call or email Debbie Dickey, ministry assistant, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218 or [ddickey@alsbom.org](mailto:ddickey@alsbom.org).

Leadership Awards



# Fall Senior Adult Retreat

## October 10-12, Shocco Springs

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

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

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

**COST/RESERVATIONS: 1-800-280-1105**  
or go online to [shocco.org](http://shocco.org)

**ONLINE INFO:**  
[alsbom.org/senioradultretreat](http://alsbom.org/senioradultretreat)

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

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR OUTSTANDING 2016 MISSION VOLUNTEER

*The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2016 Mission Volunteer. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.*

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

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

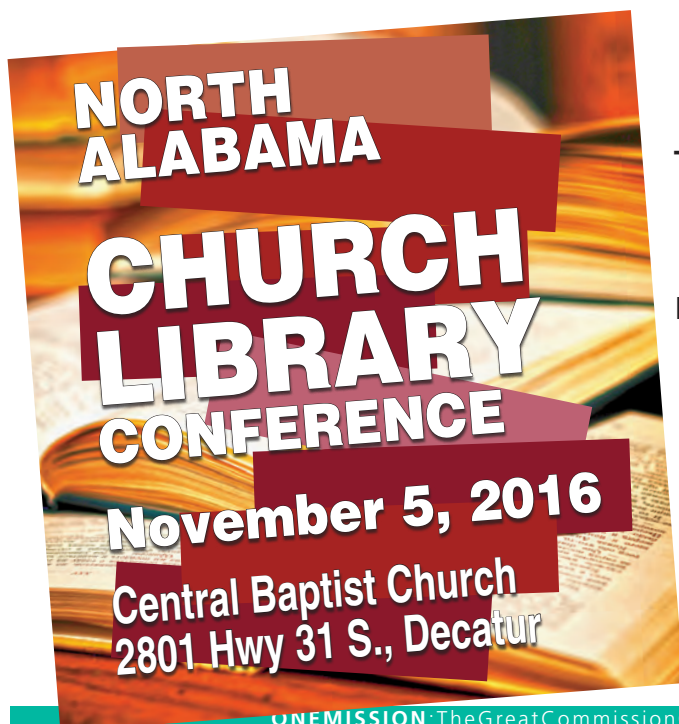
1. The name, address and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name, address and phone number of the nominee's pastor, the church to which he/she/they belong and their association.
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost where he/she/they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

**To access an Information Sheet and Nomination Application, go online to [a18c.org/volunteeroftheyear](http://a18c.org/volunteeroftheyear).**

If you do not have web access, request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application by contacting Ministry Assistant Angie Williams at **1-800-264-1225, ext. 373, or (334) 613-2373, [awilliams@alsbom.org](mailto:awilliams@alsbom.org)**.

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

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



**NORTH ALABAMA**  
**CHURCH LIBRARY CONFERENCE**  
**November 5, 2016**  
Central Baptist Church  
2801 Hwy 31 S., Decatur

## READ, WHITE & BLUE

This is the 16th annual training event for North Alabama librarians and others who wish to attend. There is no cost to attend, but registration is necessary.

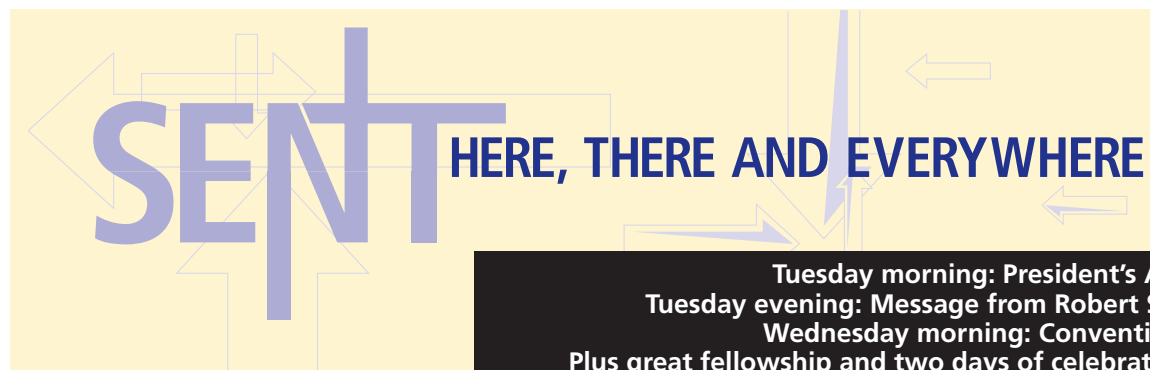
Conferences will cover all areas of library work plus church history, card making for ministry, and training in both Concourse and Atrium. Lunch will be provided at which time an author will be guest speaker.

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

**Online info:** [alsbom.org/churchlibrary](http://alsbom.org/churchlibrary)

To register or for other information, please contact Eva Nell Hunter at (church) (256) 353-5912, (cell) (256) 303-7739, [eva\\_hunter@att.net](mailto:eva_hunter@att.net) or [library@cbcdecatur.org](mailto:library@cbcdecatur.org).

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



**SENT** HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

### 2016 Alabama Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting

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

**Tuesday morning: President's Address from Travis Coleman**  
**Tuesday evening: Message from Robert Smith, Jr., and music from 3 on a String**  
**Wednesday morning: Convention Address from Greg Corbin**  
**Plus great fellowship and two days of celebrating all God is doing in Alabama and beyond!**

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

#### HOST HOTEL:

##### Drury Inn & Suites

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

**334-273-1101**

Free hot breakfast (Belgian waffles, scrambled eggs, biscuits & gravy, sausage and more); free hot food and cold beverages daily, 5:30-7 p.m.; and soda/popcorn in lobby daily, 3-10 p.m.; free Wi-Fi ➔ **Rate: \$109** (king or 2 queens) Reservations: 1-800-325-0720 or visit [druryhotels.com](http://druryhotels.com) ➔ **Rate Code:** Group # 2268369 **Deadline:** Wednesday, October 12, 2016

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

##### Doubletree by Hilton, Downtown Montgomery

120 Madison Avenue, 36104

**334-245-2320**

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

##### Hampton Inn, Downtown

100 Commerce Street, 36104

**334-265-1010**

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

**I-85, exit 4**

##### Hilton Garden Inn Montgomery East

1600 Interstate Park Drive, 36109

**334-272-2225**

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

##### Homewood Suites by Hilton

1800 Interstate Park Drive, 36109

**334-272-3010**

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

**I-85, exit 6 (East Blvd.)**

##### Holiday Inn Express

5135 Carmichael Road, 36106

**334-270-9199**

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

**I-85, exits 9 and 11 (EastChase)**

##### Hampton Inn & Suites - EastChase

7651 EastChase Parkway, 36117

**334-277-1818**

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

##### Holiday Inn Express - EastChase

9250 Boyd Cooper Parkway, 36117

**334-271-5516**

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

**Deadline:** Sunday, October 30, 2016

##### Staybridge Suites - EastChase

7800 EastChase Parkway, 36117

**334-277-9383**

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

**I-65, exit 164 (Hope Hull)**

##### Fairfield Inn and Suites Montgomery Airport South

7560 Mobile Highway, 36106

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

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

##### Hampton Inn, Airport South

60 Wasden Road, 36043

**334-280-9592**

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

For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention).



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Last Things

# The Reality of Hell

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

Throughout its pages the Bible assumes the reality of hell. Psalm 9:17 declares: “The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.” Jesus did not mince words in speaking about hell.

In the Sermon on the Mount, He invoked the reality of hell in His warning against His followers giving in to anger without any legitimate cause: “I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother ‘Raca’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says ‘You fool’ shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:22).

Later in His ministry Jesus warned His followers against the sin of offending others and causing them to sin by saying, “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.” In His next breath, Jesus added, “And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire” (Matt. 18:8-9). Jesus was consistently straightforward in making repeated references to hell.

## Vivid descriptions

In order to describe something of the horrors of hell, the Bible uses a variety of vivid expressions. Hell is variously referred to as a lake of fire, perdition, outer darkness, a bottomless pit, a place burning with fire and brimstone, a place prepared for the devil and his angels, a place of torment and anguish, a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth and a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Not only is hell horrible because of the kind of existence it presents, it is all the more horrible because of its kind of inhabitants. While prepared as a place for the devil and his angels, according to the last reference to hell given in the

Bible, its population will ultimately include the “cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars” (Rev. 21:8). In hell, no one loves Jesus or reflects His likeness.

As if the horrors described and the inhabitants characterized are not enough, the ultimate fearful features of hell are that our loving Lord is not there and it lasts forever. We are quick to grasp the frequent mention of salvations as being everlasting. Christians commonly hold that heaven lasts eternally. The Bible assigns the same duration to hell. Jesus termed it “everlasting fire” (Matt. 18:8; 25:41), “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46) and “eternal sin” (Mark 3:29). Other passages speak of “everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9), “eternal judgment” (Heb. 6:2) and “the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7).

## Hope in Christ

When as Christians we ponder the blessedness of heaven with all its glories, our hope in Christ becomes all the more precious. In a similar but negative way, when we ponder hell’s horrors and the assurance that as children of God we will escape it and be forever established in the Father’s house, our Christian hope becomes even dearer. To know that we have a place reserved in heaven for eternal fellowship with our Lord and that we have no risk of an eternity in company with the devil and his angels — what more can be said about a hope that misses hell and gains heaven? ☩

*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.*



# ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

## Fenton to retire after 45 years in ministry

When Gary Fenton felt called to preach as a junior in high school, his father, a bivocational pastor in rural Missouri, told him, “A call to preach is not about a call to how you make your living. A call to preach is how you make your life.”

And those words have held true in Fenton’s life as he marks 45 years in ministry, more than 25 years as pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, and his upcoming retirement Aug. 28.

An active Alabama Baptist for more than two decades, Fenton currently serves on the Samford University board of trustees, the Birmingham Salvation Army advisory board, the Addiction Prevention Coalition advisory board and served for 18 years on *The Alabama Baptist’s* board of directors.

Prior to taking the helm at Dawson Memorial Baptist, Fenton served as pastor of churches in Tyler, Texas; Stillwater, Oklahoma; Windsor, Missouri; and Branson, Missouri.

He earned a bachelor’s degree from Bethany Nazarene University (now Southern Nazarene University) in Bethany, Oklahoma; a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and a doctor of ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Fenton said he’s seen “one continual process” in his life of ministry — conversion. First he was converted to Christ. Then converted to become a pastor. Then converted to church, he said.

“We are called to be community and to live in community as the body of Christ. ... That’s where redemption and conversion

takes place, which requires us to be in relationship with God and with others.”

In retirement Fenton plans to remain in Birmingham and entertain speaking and writing engagements. He also plans to be involved in local ministries.

He and his wife, Alta Faye, have three children and five grandchildren. (Neisha Roberts)



FENTON

## ABCH calls new VP for administration

Lifelong Alabama Baptist Chip Colee has been called as vice president for administration for the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), effective Sept. 6.

Colee currently serves as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, a position he has held for 12 years. Prior to that, he served as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Decatur, for nearly 10 years.

He received his education from Samford University in Birmingham and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Colee also earned a doctorate in leadership from Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga.

Of the direction change in his ministry, Colee said, “My calling has not changed, but my current assignment is in transition. God has clearly directed me to the ABCH and I am really excited to be part of this ministry.”

“I want to use my skills and experience to help build on the rich history and incredible foundation of the ABCH, doing my part to ensure it is even stronger and even more effective in the future.”

Colee and his wife, Christy, have two children. (Maggie Walsh)



COLEE

## Alabamian wins youth category of National Bible Drill

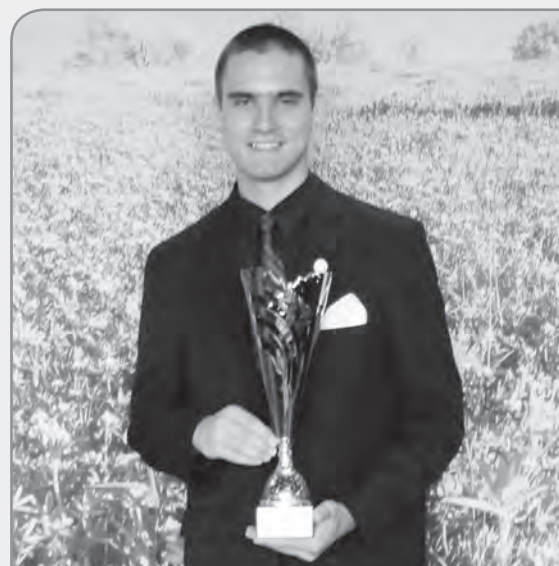


Photo by Doug Rogers

Alabamian Michael Hopkins was named youth winner of the National Invitational Tournament for Bible Drill and Speakers held June 16-17 at First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas. Hopkins is a member of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association. Hopkins won first place in Alabama’s youth Bible drill April 23 held at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

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# ‘Nothing more than a Band-Aid’

## Alabama Baptist leaders oppose potential lottery ‘fix’

*(continued from page 1)*  
 technically falls under Alabama’s legal definition of “lottery.”  
 “We need to understand exactly what we’re voting on. ... It’s not just going to the convenience store and buying a ticket. It can be that and then going down the street to the casino,” Johnston said.

The *Alabama Baptist* reported in the July 28 issue that a state lottery is 1 of 4 possible solutions to the budget shortfall, and if Bentley’s proposal is approved in the special session then lawmakers will have to move fast, completing the session by Aug. 24, to get the measure on the November ballot.

Bentley has previously said he doesn’t believe a lottery is the best way to fund a state government. In a July 28 op-ed for the *Montgomery Advertiser*, he likens a lottery to an out-of-fashion leisure suit — it was very popular at one time, but now it has “lost its luster.”

### Other options exhausted

Bentley believes all other options have been exhausted, however, making a lottery “the best leisure suit we’ve got.”

According to Bentley, a state lottery is expected to generate \$225 million annually.

That total is an estimate based on the historical experience of lotteries in other states similar in size

to Alabama, according to Yasamie August, Bentley’s press secretary and National Governor’s Association coordinator.

Three physician groups — the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians — came together in a statement to applaud the lottery proposal, but

expressed concern that no solution was presented to address the short-term issue of the budget shortfall.

If citizens were to vote in favor of a state lottery in November, it could take a year or more to be implemented.

Joe Godfrey, executive director of ALCAP, believes if a lottery is voted in, casinos won’t be far behind.

“I think the ultimate goal is to get casinos. They’ll come back and say, ‘The lottery revenue is not coming in like we thought it would.’ ... It’ll be a constant battle from now on,” he said.

“Our budget situation is bad but it’d be worse if we had a lottery.”

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance noted the moral implica-

tions of opening the state up to gambling.

“Historically, Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists have opposed gambling on biblical, moral and ethical grounds. Gambling fosters greed and covetousness, as Proverbs 13:11 states,” he said in a blog post at ricklance.com.

“It harms the most disadvantaged people among us, disproportionately to the rest of

the population. Gambling leads to bankruptcies, disruption of homes and dissolution of families,” he said.

Even some lottery proponents are against creating a state lottery to fund Medicaid. House of Representatives Minority Leader Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, said, “A lottery will do nothing for this year’s Medicaid shortfall, and at best will be nothing more than a Band-Aid for the General Fund.”

Lance and Godfrey encouraged Alabama Baptists to contact state legislators and urge them to stand against the lottery proposal.

Lance said, “In a day of rapidly changing culture Alabama Baptists must be among those ... striving to make a positive difference in our day.”

**To contact your representative or senator, visit [capwiz.com/state-al/home/](http://capwiz.com/state-al/home/).**

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### East Centre Baptist’s children give sacrificially to ABCH



**Piggy bank offering**

Photo courtesy of Chip Smith

During Vacation Bible School at East Centre Baptist Church, Centre, the children took up an offering for the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH). By the third night the approximately 30 children had raised more than \$310, largely consisting of money from their own piggy banks. A check was presented to Steve Sellers (center, front row), ABCH church relations officer, on July 24. Chip Smith is pastor.

# Trusting amid tragedy

## Fire destroys Valley Grove BC

**W**e look to the Lord.” Pastor Jeff Logan’s response to the fire that consumed Valley Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Remlap, in the early morning hours of July 26 was simple, but it embodied the spirit of the 111-year-old church.

“We’re one big family. We’re there for one another when trials and tragedies come,” Logan said. “We lost a church building but I do know the church itself, we’ve got a strong body, a strong congregation. We’ll bounce back. The Lord will help us through this.”

Thankfully the church was unoccupied when the fire began, the cause of which was still under investigation at press time.

### Churches reaching out

The outpouring of love and offers of support from the community and area churches, specifically from within Blount Baptist Association, has been greater than Logan ever imagined, he said.

“The list of people and churches that have offered to help would go all the way to Decatur and back. ... We couldn’t name them all.”

Offers have even come from fellow pastors in Georgia and Mississippi, Logan said.

At press time, church leaders were trying to determine the best setup for Sunday and Wednesday services. Logan was considering using a church building that was offered to the congregation near Locust Fork, not far from Valley Grove Baptist’s former building. The Blount Association building also was an option for the displaced congregation.

Wherever they wind up meeting, Logan is encouraged by knowing that God will “take a tragedy or a trial and He’ll build a blessing out of it.”

“We may have lost a building, but we haven’t lost the church.”

For those looking for ways to assist Valley Grove, call Logan at 205-237-4629. (Maggie Walsh)



google.com/maps screenshot

The fire that destroyed Valley Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Remlap, began in the early morning hours of July 26. At press time, the cause of the fire was under investigation. ‘We may have lost a building, but we haven’t lost the church,’ Pastor Jeff Logan said.



Photo by Jeff Logan



(augmented reality)

## Follow these instructions

- 1** Download the Aurasma app from your app store.
- 2** Choose the “ALBaptist” profile under channel and tap “Follow.” You will only have to do this one time. (Any ALBaptist options will allow you to follow *The Alabama Baptist*.)
- 3** Tap the [ ] icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 4** You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull’s-eye. The bull’s-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.
- 5** Hold your device over a page or image in *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life.
- 6** If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.
- 7** Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:MacedoniaBaptist-MaplesvilleAL@gmail.com).

#### 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@mycbcc.org](mailto:drsam@mycbcc.org).

#### MINISTER OF MUSIC

Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Kentucky, is accepting resumé for a full-time minister of music. Email: [musicsearchteam@southsidebaptist.com](mailto:musicsearchteam@southsidebaptist.com) or mail:

Southside Baptist, ATTN: Music Search, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445.

#### BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

Turnerville Baptist Church — Mobile County. Contact Bro. Jason Meaux at [jmeaux@turnervillebaptist.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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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### Best-selling author, pastor LaHaye dies at age 90

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Tim F. LaHaye, international best-selling author and prominent evangelical leader, died July 25. He was 90.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, on April 27, 1926, LaHaye is perhaps most noted for his blockbuster best-selling book series “Left Behind,” which he co-authored with Jerry B. Jenkins.

Over seven decades LaHaye, an Air Force veteran, influenced others from the pulpit, in books, the political arena and at home.

Early in his ministerial career LaHaye served as pastor of churches in South Carolina and Minnesota before moving his family to California. They settled in San Diego County, where he took the reigns of Scott Memorial Baptist Church, San Diego. Under his 25-year leadership, the congregation expanded to three locations, including what is now Shadow Mountain Community Church, El Cajon, California.

LaHaye also founded two accredited Christian high schools, a school system of 10 Christian schools and what is now San Diego Christian College (formerly Christian Heritage College). In 1972 he co-founded the Institute for Creation Research with the late Henry Morris.

As a couple, LaHaye and his wife, Beverly, hosted a radio show, and later a TV program, called “The LaHayes on Family Life.”

In addition to the “Left Behind” series, LaHaye was a prolific nonfiction author, penning 60 different titles that sold 14 million copies in as many as 32 languages.

LaHaye is survived by his wife of 69 years, four children, nine grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. (Evangelical Press Association)



LAHAYE

### Court deals blow to Christian law school

ONTARIO, Canada — The Ontario Court of Appeal on June 29 ruled that a provincial accrediting body can legally refuse to recognize Trinity Western University’s (TWU) proposed law school based solely on the school’s marriage views.

“This isn’t just a loss for TWU,” said university spokesperson Amy Robertson. “This is a loss for all Canadians. Freedom of conscience and religion is the first of the fundamental freedoms mentioned in the Charter [of Rights and Freedoms].”

In April 2014 the Law Society of Upper Canada announced it would not accept graduates of TWU’s proposed program, because it deemed discriminatory the school’s community covenant that requires students to abstain from sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman. After TWU appealed the decision, a three-judge panel ruled against the school in 2015, even though the judges agreed a religious freedom violation had occurred.

The Ontario Court of Appeal also found the law society’s decision violates TWU’s religious freedom, but it too said the law society is within its rights to do so.

Earl Phillips, executive director of TWU’s proposed law school, said, “We are most disappointed that the court found the infringement to be justifiable.”

TWU also has appeals pending in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, where law societies said they would not recognize graduates of the proposed law school. Several other provincial law societies have agreed to abide by the Federal Law Society of Canada’s 2013 decision to approve the school.

Phillips said, “After we make our case in Canada’s Supreme Court, I look forward to seeing the difference that graduates of TWU’s School of Law will make.”

Many religious freedom advocates see TWU’s case as a bellwether for religious freedom in North America. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an intervener in support of TWU, said it was “deeply disappointed” in the decision that it said didn’t recognize the “significant contributions” faith-based institutions make to the public good. (BP)

## Church’s postcard places Vietnamese couple on path to faith in Christ

Tri Phan and his wife, MyDung, knew little about Christianity when he began his Ph.D. studies in 2004 in environmental engineering at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

They had just arrived from Vietnam and only Tri spoke English.

After living in Norman for nearly a year, MyDung told her husband she wanted to find a class where she and their daughter, Annie, could learn English. A few days later a postcard arrived from Bethel Baptist Church, Norman, announcing an open house for its new children’s building.

“When I received the postcard I decided to see if this church had any programs that would help my

wife and daughter learn English,” Tri said.

Tri took his wife and daughter to the open house. “Even though my wife couldn’t understand the words they spoke, she liked the way they treated our daughter, so we decided to come back.”

That Sunday after dropping Annie in the preschool department, Tri and MyDung were taken to a Bible study class for young adults that was studying the book of Daniel in the Old Testament.

“This was the first time my wife and I had ever been in a church,” Tri said, “and I’ll always remember my very first lesson from the Bible was [about] Daniel’s vision of the four beasts.”

Tri said the verses made him even more curious about Christianity, and he and his family began attending Bible study and worship services at Bethel.

### Lessons in Romans

The Bible study on Daniel ended within a few weeks; after that, the teacher began a series of lessons on the apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans in the New Testament. “These PowerPoint studies on the Roman Road made the gospel much clearer to me, but it wasn’t until much later that I really understood what faith in Christ really meant,” Tri recounted.

After he began attending church, Tri told his school adviser, David Sabatini, about his desire to know more about Christianity. Sabatini began meeting with Tri every Monday in order to study the Book of John together.

Two months later, encouraged by members of her Sunday School class, MyDung enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) course offered by Bethel. Not only did she start learning English, she and her daughter soon began making friends.

In May 2006, a year after being introduced to the gospel for the first time, Tri gave his heart to Christ and was baptized. “I came to faith in Christ through the realization that Christ was the missing part in my life.

“I finally understood the Scriptures I had studied in Romans. I knew I was a sinner [Rom. 3:23] and I knew I deserved to pay for my sin [Rom. 6:23], but when I took the final step of asking for forgiveness and confessing my sins [Rom. 10:13], that was the moment I became a believer.”

### Journey of faith

MyDung’s journey of faith proceeded at a slower pace, especially since she found it difficult to learn English and had to leave her friends at Bethel in 2009 after Tri received his Ph.D. The family moved to Houston, Texas.

Soon after purchasing a home, Tri and his family became involved in a Vietnamese church in the area and Tri began teaching a Sunday School class.

Not long after the birth of their second child, MyDung also received Christ as her Savior. Instead of being baptized in the Vietnamese church, she decided to return to Oklahoma so she could be baptized at Bethel.

Tri said, “Looking back now, I realize the way God brought me and my family to Him is truly amazing.” (BP)

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 7

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

### BLINDED 1 Samuel 22:6-17

#### Pursued By Saul (6-10)

After fleeing Gath, David escapes to the cave of Adullam. It is interesting to note that the outcasts of society — the distressed, the debtors and the embittered — sought out David in hiding and made him their head. This is quite the motley crew.

We must remember that Jesus, like David, gathers those who are broken and distressed and makes Himself their leader. And if we have not yet realized, we are all outcasts who must flock to Jesus — for it is only through His blood that we have access to God (Eph. 2:11-22).

When Saul discovers David's whereabouts, he pursues him with an army. Saul receives information about David's movements by playing on the emotions of his servants: "None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son [Jonathan] has stirred up my servant [David] against me, to lie in wait, as at this day" (v. 8). So Saul turns to Doeg the Edomite, who willingly confesses that David went to Ahimelech.

#### Guilt By Association (11-15)

Saul summons Ahimelech the priest and accuses him of conspiring against Saul by providing food and a sword. Ahimelech responds by posing the following rhetorical question that underscores that if anyone deserved help it was David: "And who among your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard and honored in your house?" (v. 14).

Ahimelech then admits to helping David as he had done on many previous occasions. He had no reason to refuse David. Any other priest would have likely done the same thing.

But when someone has gone mad, no reasonable explanation will suffice. Saul

will stop at nothing, even if it means falsely accusing the righteous, until he kills David.

#### Desperate Measures (16-17)

Saul then calls for the death of the priests because he perceived them as being loyal to David. When the order was given, the king's servants refused to strike down the priests. Doing so would have meant they would be guilty of shedding innocent blood.

But Saul would get his wish: that day Doug the Edomite would slay 85 priests.

As king, Saul was supposed to rule righteously. He was supposed to protect the innocent and pursue the wicked. Instead he turns to the wicked to kill the innocent priests, those who are to offer sacrifices for the people, to atone for their sins.

As Ahimelech served Israel as priest, the author of Hebrews affirms that Jesus now serves as our High Priest, offering Himself as our final sacrifice (Heb. 7:27). Likewise, Peter contends: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18).

The priests under the Old Covenant could never make possible eternal access before the presence of God. The sacrifices they offered had to be repeated often, pointing forward to the day when offerings would cease and God's people would finally be reconciled to their Maker. That day has now come in Christ.

Ahimelech and the other innocent priests indeed suffered at the hands of the unrighteous. But we must remember that Jesus too was blameless and suffered unrighteous judgment. And it is now through His death in our place that we have forgiveness and eternal access before the presence of a holy God.

This is great news. Thanks be to Jesus, our faithful High Priest forever. †

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

### MANAGE MONEY DILIGENTLY Proverbs 31:13-21

This whole section is a wisdom hymn in praise of a capable woman/wife. Proverbs commends people who give evidence of wise competence and vigor in a variety of tasks, living their lives in the "fear of the Lord" with a humble dependence on God and seeking to honor Him in all their attitudes and actions.

The focus of these verses is on wise and energetic activity in daily living, and so ordinary words used in Hebrew for doing and making, working and acting are used on five occasions. Is it significant that following Proverbs, a book that speaks positively about the piety of godly women, we have the story of Ruth.

#### Be enterprising with your assets. (13-15)

Cloth, clothing and cloth goods are symbols of industry, intelligence and beauty throughout the poem. The emphasis is on activity, the creative management of resources and ensuring that everything is used to its full potential.

The images that the writer uses are not confined to a household but encompass land and sea, bringing goods from near and far, engaging in commercial activity for the benefit of her own household and those who are working for her. Her activity takes place at all times of the day and also during the night and involves both acquisition and provision.

In a patriarchal society, Proverbs recognizes the way in which a godly business woman can create opportunities for others in society to prosper.

#### Evaluate your purchases. (16-17)

This businesswoman is astute in calculating opportunities and evaluating the cost of property to buy as an investment. Israelite women did not normally own fields and

the verb used "to take" probably suggests some form of conquest. However, she comes to obtain the property.

She is seen as transforming the plot of land into a vineyard, a task which involved much work and patient waiting. The phrases the chapter uses indicate hard work and intense effort. This is no lazy individual. It is all accomplished on rocky, hilly ground. The work of the Creator, in whom she has placed her trust and confidence, along with hard work, accomplishes benefits for her, the family and her workforce.

#### Be industrious. (18-21)

Her industry works itself out into generosity. As the famous saying states: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

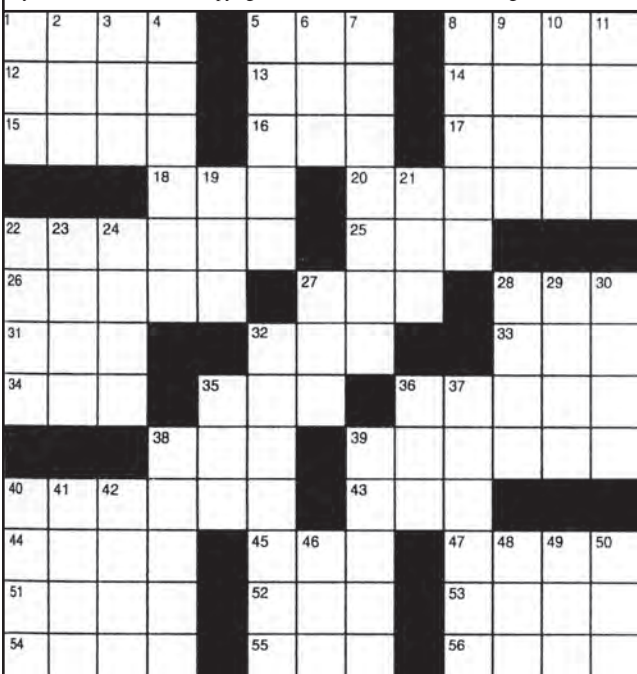
In terms of what we give, the question is not related to how much we give or what proportion we donate but how much we keep and what we spend it on. This woman is generous to those in need: "She opens her arms to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy" (v. 20).

Generosity to others is sometimes criticized as being thoughtless, not giving attention to putting money away for difficult times. The final verse of this section suggests something slightly different. We read that "she is not afraid for her household when it snows" (v. 21). Snow for the people of Israel was rare. There were fewer snow days than we might experience in Alabama.

She has made provision for her family and the needs of others and she will not be put to shame. Her generosity is linked with thoughtful provision, and both attitudes and actions were part and parcel of her godly lifestyle. †

## Christian Crossword

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



### Across

- They took them wives of the women of \_\_\_\_\_. (Ruth 1:4)
- Expression of disgust.
- We have seen his \_\_\_\_\_ in the east. (Matt. 2:2)
- Domed projection of a church.
- Because there was no room for them in the \_\_\_\_\_, (Luke 2:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ and see the works of God. (Ps. 66:5)
- Doth the eagle ... make her \_\_\_\_\_ on high? (Job 39:27)
- There is a cup, and the wine is \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 75:8)
- Curved moldings.
- Leaders. (abbr.)
- From his shoulders and \_\_\_\_\_ he was higher. (1 Sam. 9:2)
- Let us go ... three day's journey into the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ex. 5:3)
- Belonging to an Egyptian sun god.
- And \_\_\_\_\_ thine heart to understanding. (Prov. 2:2)
- My tongue is the \_\_\_\_\_ of a ready writer. (Ps. 45:1)
- Bore his \_\_\_\_\_ through with a thorn? (Job 41:2)
- Tumeric.

### Down

- Why is thy spirit so \_\_\_\_\_? (1 Kings 21:5)
- In the manner of.
- Evening. (poetic)
- Make lace.
- The children of ... \_\_\_\_\_. (Neh. 7:47)
- Machine part.
- But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his \_\_\_\_\_. (Dan. 11:7)
- And the cart came into the field of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 6:14)
- Insect egg.
- Route. (abbr.)
- He ... saw others standing \_\_\_\_\_ in the marketplace. (Matt. 20:3)
- And have the keys of \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 1:18)
- \_\_\_\_\_ he that liveth, and was dead. (Rev. 1:18; 2 words)
- Whither have ye made a \_\_\_\_\_ to day? (1 Sam. 27:10)
- Preowned.
- Is \_\_\_\_\_ merry? Let him sing. (Jam. 5:13)
- Even unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of the year. (Deut. 11:12; plural)
- \_\_\_\_\_ riding upon an \_\_\_\_\_. (Zech 9:9)
- \_\_\_\_\_ but the name of that city was called Luz. (Gen. 28:19)
- But seek ye \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God. (Matt. 6:33)
- Chemical suffix.
- Who for the joy that was set before him \_\_\_\_\_ the cross. (Heb. 12:2)
- Flat-bottomed boats.
- Roman attire.
- Of U.S. origin. (abbr.)
- A crown ... upon his head, and a \_\_\_\_\_ in his right hand. (Matt. 27:29)
- And will make Ninevah ... \_\_\_\_\_ like a wilderness. (Zeph. 2:13)
- Temple vessel: fire \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 2:28)
- For a good man some would even \_\_\_\_\_ to die. (Rom. 5:7)
- Fencing sword.
- Meted out heaven with the \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 40:12)
- Butter serving unit.
- And the sons of Onam were, Shammai, and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 2:28)
- Large quantity. (2 words)
- Opposite of "wax."
- Then Philip went down to the city of \_\_\_\_\_, and preached Christ unto them. (Acts 8:5)
- Greek T.
- Greek letter.
- Clothing.
- Unto us a \_\_\_\_\_ is born. (Isa. 9:6)
- Because mine \_\_\_\_\_ doth not triumph over me. (Ps. 41:11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ the Antiochite. (1 Chron. 12:3)
- Corrida cheers.
- Smote Job ... from the \_\_\_\_\_ of his foot. (Job 2:7)
- Sunbathe.
- Put on.
- Boy.
- Eight kings of England.



# TOP 10

downloaded songs from iTunes  
at press time

## CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL



- 1. Eye of the Storm (feat. GabeReal)**  
By Ryan Stevenson  
(Fresh Start)



- 2. Good Good Father**  
By Chris Tomlin  
(Good Good Father)



- 3. Trust In You**  
By Lauren Daigle  
(How Can It Be)



- 4. Priceless**  
By for KING & COUNTRY  
(Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.)



- 5. Move (Keep Walkin')**  
By tobyMac  
(This Is Not A Test)



- 6. Dear Younger Me**  
By MercyMe  
(Welcome To The New)



- 7. Tell Your Heart to Beat Again**  
By Danny Gokey  
(Hope In Front Of Me)



- 8. Jesus**  
By Chris Tomlin  
(Jesus)



- 9. The God I Know**  
By Love & The Outcome  
(The God I Know)



- 10. Breathe**  
By Jonny Diaz  
(Everything Is Changing)



Photo courtesy of Lovell/Fairchild Communications

Director Michael William Gordon (left) talks with actors John Major Davis (center) and Mike Taylor (right) while filming 'The Fight Within,' a faith film with Alabama roots.

## 'Universal' struggle

### Former pastor creates faith film on MMA backdrop

**Y**ou don't often hear of mixed martial arts (MMA) being a backdrop for a faith story, but that's exactly the construction of "The Fight Within," a faith film set to release nationwide in select theaters Aug. 12.

The combination of faith, fighting and romance aims to attract a wide audience, even those who claim no religious affiliation.

"Faith films tend to draw faith audiences," said Jim Davis, the film's executive producer and screenwriter. "(But) this movie should also engage people with no sense of faith because inner struggle is universal.

"A bare-knuckled mixed martial arts action film is not a traditional faith-based film, but we hope to engage a more diverse audience and share a message of hope and salvation through our story."

In the film Logan Chandler is a rising star in the MMA world, but the death of his father, also an MMA champion, rocks his world and makes him question his own identity. Through his pain and searching, Chandler finds faith. But his newfound

faith is tested when a rival forces him back into the cage.

Filmed largely in Tuscaloosa, "The Fight Within" sought to ensure realistic fight scenes while telling the story of the struggle every Christian knows firsthand — the struggle to know and embrace who you are and whose you are.

And that, Davis says, is the beauty of the film.

"A cage and a fight are spot-on metaphors to show a young man coming to terms with who he is and what life brings," Davis said.

Add in a romance with a girl with strong faith and you have all the elements to capture the whole family's attention.

"The Fight Within" features acting by Alabama boys John Major Davis, a Tuscaloosa native, and Matt Leddo,

a University of Alabama graduate. Davis, a former youth minister, college minister and pastor, also is a resident of Tuscaloosa where he runs a digital marketing firm for various Christian ministries. (TAB)



**'The Fight Within' will premiere Aug. 12 at Cobb Hollywood 16 Cinemas in Tuscaloosa. For more information, visit [cobbtheatres.com](http://cobbtheatres.com).**



BP photo

Faith for Life Church, led by church planter Branden Rogers (center), meets in a rented classroom at Castleton University in Vermont, helping the church connect with collegians in the area.

# Gospel momentum

## Church plants make difference across New England

**M**oving to New England had never crossed Branden Rogers' mind when he returned to his Mississippi hometown as a pastor after attending seminary.

Then his brother moved to Burlington, Vermont, for a short-term assignment as a nurse.

Shocked at the difficulty his brother had in finding a Bible-believing evangelical church, Rogers' first-hand awareness of the lostness that exists outside the Bible Belt became a life-changing experience.

"God planted a seed in our hearts to come to New England and begin planting a church in New England," Rogers said.

By any measure, the six states that comprise New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) have some of the lowest percentages of religious believers — including Southern Baptists, evangelical Christians and people who adhere to any religion — in the United States.

While these statistics may seem discouraging, a surge in church planting is beginning to make a difference for individuals who are hearing the gospel as well as for the Baptist Convention of New England (BCNE). More than 115 of New England's Southern Baptist churches have been planted since 2010 — a full one-third of the total Southern Baptist churches in the region — and many more planters are in the process of initiating church plants.

### A surprising appointment

Alex Vargas, a full-time head custodian at a school, never intended to become a church planter. He already had his hands full in prison ministry and teaching Sunday School at Iglesia Bautista Emanuel, West Hartford, Connecticut. But when Vargas was approached by North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planting catalyst Greg Torres about leading a Bible study for Quechuan immigrants from Ecuador in the nearby town of Waterbury, he agreed to take on this additional role in 2011.

The group began meeting in a church basement and faced many initial challenges, including language differences (the Quechua are an indigenous people group who speak Spanish as a second language) as well as cultural differences (Vargas is originally from Puerto Rico) and religious context (most of the immigrants came from a nominal Catholic background).

Vargas went through highs and lows, particularly in the first year, but continued to believe that God works in people's hearts "when you teach the gospel ... that Christ is the only one."

### 'Patiently teach the Word'

Little by little as Vargas communicated biblical truth, people either committed their lives to Christ or left the group. Before long, Iglesia Cristiana Bautista Jesus de Nazaret was organized, which now runs around 75 in Saturday evening church services, including about 20 children and 15 young adults.

"Patiently teach the Word," Vargas noted, "and the Word will ... bring us to the light of Christ."

Rogers also has seen the importance of relationships in sharing the gospel, particularly in New England. After moving to Castleton, Vermont, as a NAMB church planter in May 2014, Rogers and his wife, Hanna, connected with members of Foundation Church, a two-year-old church plant in a nearby town, to organize a backyard Bible club as one of their early initiatives. Thirteen children attended the first sessions.

Relationships developed and Faith for Life Church began holding official services in October 2014 and has grown to a steady congregation of 40 in less than two years, baptizing 10 people in 2015 alone.

"I really believe that what God has done is all through relational disciple-making," Rogers said.

A desire to reach local communities, a common thread in most church plants, is making a difference across New England. Churches planted since 2010 baptized more than 700 people in 2015 alone — nearly 40 percent of the total for BCNE. (BP)

## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Attacks leave Christian man dead, many wounded

TAHANA EL-GABAL, Egypt — One Christian is dead, several others have been wounded and a fire gutted a church building after Muslims across Egypt waged a weekend of violence against Copts.

In Tahana El-Gabal village in Minya Governorate, Fam Mary Khalaf, 27, was overpowered by a group of Muslims on July 17 who stabbed him repeatedly in the chest. One of the knife stabs went directly into his heart, killing him instantly, according to a statement from the local parish.

Three others were seriously injured in the attack: Nagib Hanna, the father of a local Coptic priest; Malak Aziz, the brother of another local priest; and Azza Jouma, a Christian neighbor of the other three victims.

The attack started when four Muslims began harassing Hanna's primary school-age grandson as his grandfather was looking after the boy outside his home. The men threatened to run the boy over, witnesses told human rights activists investigating the incident.

The assault was one of numerous cases of violence against Copts in Minya Governorate over the past few months, including an attack in May in which an elderly Coptic woman was stripped, beaten and paraded naked through her village streets because of a rumor, later shown to be false, that her son was having a romantic relationship with a Muslim woman. (MS)

### Baptists in Kazakhstan fined for religious beliefs

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — In what appears to be a new development, three members of Council of Churches Baptist congregations in Kazakhstan have been fined by police officers without a court hearing for meeting for worship without state permission. Prosecutors subsequently annulled one of the fines.

Baptists and human rights defenders are concerned that the new state tactic of summary police fines to punish the exercise of freedom of religion or belief without state permission might be used more widely.

"Such summary police fines haven't been used against us before," said one Baptist who has himself been fined and given short-term prison terms through the courts in earlier years. "No one explained to us why they've suddenly started doing this." Baptists state that such summary police fines without a court hearing have not been used against them previously.

The Baptist source added that in 1 of the 3 cases, a police officer simply stated that he imposed the fine as he had been told by his superiors that he had this power.

The power to impose summary fines without initial due process was first given to police under the latest 2015 revision of the Code of Administrative Offences. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has ordered even harsher revisions of the religion law and other laws to be prepared by mid-August. (F18)

### Pastor's hand partially cut off by Muslim Fulani in Nigeria

KEFFI, Nigeria — Two days after a slain pastor in one part of Nasarawa state, Nigeria, was buried, a Muslim Fulani herdsman in another part of the state cut off part of the hand of another pastor working on his farm.

Hamza Alkali, 66, had to have the rest of his hand and his wrist amputated. He said he managed to tackle the assailant and wrestle the knife away from him or he would have been killed in the attack in Sabon Gida village, near Keffi, on July 7, two days after Muslim Fulani herdsmen with machetes killed the Zakariya Joseph Kurah at his farm near Lafia, about 75 miles away.

Affiliated with the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Alkali said the Fulani herdsman pulled out his knife and attacked Alkali. Alkali was later taken to the Sabon Gida police station, where he pastors a congregation of 80 people, and then was taken to the hospital.

Alkali said he has never had any conflicts with the assailant, whom he had never met before, or any other Fulani herdsman, so he was surprised that he was attacked for no apparent reason except that he was a Christian pastor. (MS)