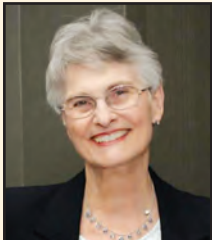




INSIDE



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**Proposal to move SBOM office from Montgomery to Prattville with 'exchange of keys' passes first hurdle**

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# CYBER hospitality

**A look at live streaming church services**

## Churches see compelling uses of technology

By Grace Thornton  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For Chad Summers, the reasons for a church to live stream its services are compelling.

For one, it's cheap, he said. "Television is such an expensive medium and very few can afford it."

But even more importantly streaming through the Internet is often the quickest, easiest way to connect the viewer with the church, he said.

"The live stream is often just a shorter path to us for the viewer from where they are," said Summers, director of media and communication for First Baptist Church, Trussville. It offers the "convenience of the audience to connect and engage through a myriad of mobile devices," he said.

With that in mind, why wouldn't a church try it? Joseph Hooper, media and graphics/lighting director for Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, said investment is minimal and return can be big.

"Live streaming is a much more affordable solution than the televised services. Instead of spending thousands of dollars for broadcasting equipment, you can stream your service for as little as a few hundred for equipment and an Internet connection utilizing one of several free streaming services," Hooper said.



123rf.com, graphic by Lauren C. Grim

Also, he said, most televised services, "unless you're a huge megachurch," only reach the local audiences, but a live stream can have a global reach.

"It has the potential to reach anyone with an active Internet connection," Hooper said.

### Worldwide viewers

Daniel Beard, media director of Clements Baptist Church, Athens, said they've seen that happen at their church.

"Our pastor does a lot of ministry

around the world, and because of that we've had viewers from Argentina, Haiti, South Africa, Canada and other places," Beard said.

Clements Baptist sees its live stream as a way to engage viewers from anywhere in the service in the best way possible, he said.

"We are working to add more things to our live stream that would make it more interactive for our viewers, but right now it's definitely a mindset thing for us," Beard said. "As we're filming and switching cameras, we like to give the view

that best makes viewers feel like they are there participating in the service."

Summers said his church is working to personalize the experience for the online audience too.

"This has become the new frontier in communication," he said. "You have a service going on in the room that is designed for the audience there with you. But how do you separate the experience, catering it to the home viewer?"

Pastor Buddy Champion at First, (See 'Live,' page 4)

**"[Live streaming] has the potential to reach anyone with an active Internet connection."**

**Joseph Hooper**  
media and graphics/lighting director, Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

# COMMENT

## Fighting the Negative Stereotype

Alabama was international news the first week of August. Unfortunately it was for all the wrong reasons. Whatever happened (see Aug. 11 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*), the story reported internationally was that a white church in rural Alabama unanimously fired its pastor because he wanted to invite African-American children to Vacation Bible School.

That story reinforced all the negative stereotypical images of Alabama that have been ingrained in minds worldwide by events related to the "Movement" for civil rights that took place here in the 1960s.

Because the church in the news story was a Baptist church, Alabama Baptists also took a hit.

The event became another nail holding up the image of Alabama as a racist state and Baptists, the largest religious group in Alabama, as a racist people.

Recruiters for business and educational institutions in Alabama often say their biggest problem is getting someone on a plane to visit Alabama. People who come to this fair state are often favorably surprised by the people, the culture, the quality of life, the opportunities, the accomplishments.

Alabama, they find, is not always like the historical stereotypes that form their images of the state.

That is not to say Alabama does not continue to struggle with the sin of racism. It does. Thankfully the loudest voices in our state are sharp and clear that racism is a form of idolatry. Racism worships creation rather than the Creator. Racism denies the image of God in all human beings and sees it only in some.

That other states and metropolitan areas struggle with the same problem is of little comfort. Wherever racial prejudice and racism surface they are sins and must be resisted.

### Overcoming evils

Thankfully Alabama Baptists are among those struggling to overcome these evils.

Birmingham was the epicenter of racial struggle in the 1960s. Today 33 of the 130 member churches of the Birmingham Baptist Association



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

are predominately African-American. The current associational moderator is Rosevelt Morris Sr., associate pastor of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham, a historic African-American congregation. Two of the 5 ministerial staff members of the association are African-Americans.

The association's weekly meeting for ministers always includes African-Americans and African-American pastors frequently serve as president of the group.

Birmingham is not alone. Many of the Baptist associations in the state have predominately African-American churches as members. Both Mobile and Montgomery associations report 11 African-American churches as members. Bessemer Association has nine and Madison Association in the Huntsville area counts seven such churches among its members.

In Shelby Baptist Association, CrossWay Christian Fellowship, Pelham, is a fairly new church plant with about an equal number of Anglo and African-American members. The pastor is Fred Muse, an African-American. Other predominately Anglo churches have African-American staff members.

Efforts for black and white Baptists to work together are not limited to metropolitan areas. Pine Barren Baptist Association in Wilcox County

elected an African-American pastor as moderator, a position in which he served from 2009 to 2011.

African-Americans serve on the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and as SBOM staff. They serve as members of statewide committees and on institutional boards.

Certainly there is more to do but Alabama Baptists are purposefully trying to be inclusive not only of African-Americans but of Hispanics, Koreans and other ethnic groups.

But serving in positions of leadership is not the place that prejudice and racism are overcome. That will only happen as people of different ethnic groups worship together and get to know one another in local churches.

### Normal inclusion

Recently I spoke at the 160th anniversary service of First Baptist Church, Montevallo. African-Americans were there as greeters. They were part of the praise team leading worship. African-Americans were in the choir and families sat in various parts of the auditorium.

As one visits Baptist churches across Alabama, it is not unusual to see African-Americans in the congregation and in leadership roles.

In the church where my wife, Pat, and I are members (Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham), for example, African-Americans are members of our Sunday School class, our choirs and our leadership. An African-American has served as our chairman of deacons.

Few, if any, think anything about this inclusiveness. It is the way things are supposed to be in

the kingdom of God. It is normal.

Again Alabama and Alabama Baptists have a long way to go in regards to racial prejudice and racism but this is not the Alabama of the 1960s. Baptists understand that those who cling to racial prejudice and racism are on the wrong side of theology and the losing side of history.

At our best, Baptists proclaim a "whosoever will" gospel. All are invited to God through faith in Jesus Christ because "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). In that same spirit, Baptists invite all who know Jesus as personal Savior and Lord into the fellowship of the Church.

There will be other "bumps in the road" and other sad stories about failures like the one that went viral earlier this month. Hopefully that will not discourage us from continuing to work together to overcome racial prejudice and racism. We must never become weary in well-doing. ☩

***"Baptists understand that those who cling to racial prejudice and racism are on the wrong side of theology and the losing side of history."***

## LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

### LETTERS TO PRISONERS

MAC D Ministries wants to thank all the readers of *The Alabama Baptist* who have helped us with Christmas and Easter cards for Limestone and other correctional facilities in Alabama. It has been a joy to have your help over the years. Together we have brought love and hope to many

inmates. Thank you for your care and help.

This year we will not be able to continue this ministry. It has been a hard decision but with family health issues, it seems like the right decision. Many of you may have experienced this. Anyway, let us not forget the inmates here in Alabama. Keep

them in your prayers and continue to hope for better rehabilitation services. Keep us in your prayers too.

Look around the area where you  
(See 'Letters,' page 7)





## STATE LOTTERY PROPOSAL

**TAB**  
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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# 'Lottery no way to finance Medicaid'

## Medical needs of poor require solutions, Alabama pediatrician says

By **Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP**  
Member of First Baptist Church, Brewton

**S**hame on us. The lottery is no way to finance the Medicaid program that provides health insurance for more than a million Alabamians — with more than half of them children. Our legislators adjourned last spring after approving a budget that shortchanged the Medicaid program by \$85 million dollars along with a loss of approximately \$160 million additional Federal matching dollars. Cuts to the program started Aug. 1 with our pediatricians and family practice doctors the first to bear the brunt of the inadequate budget. Office visits now pay about 60 percent of the Medicare rate. The payment for vaccines dropped a whopping 60 percent, now paying only \$8 per vaccine which is 31 percent of the Medicare rate. By the way, who thinks it is easier to give an adult a shot than it is to give one to a child with anxious parents?



**RAULERSON**

The doctors who care for more than 550,000 of our children have had to cut staff, cut their hours, curtail efforts to attract more primary care doctors to our state and give up the vaccine program that is vital to public health. Some are planning to close their practice and move to another state. Hit especially hard are physicians serving families in our rural areas where it is not unusual for 70 percent of their patients to have Medicaid insurance. They can no longer afford to keep their doors open.

### Benefitting from Medicaid

Who in our state will suffer from this loss of health care? Everyone. Both of our children's hospitals depend on Medicaid funding as do all of our rural hospitals. Even when you have the very best private insurance, if the closest hospital is 90 miles away will you survive an acute serious illness or accidental injury? If a family member has a premature baby, will the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) have adequate funding for the state-of-the-art care we have now? If we lose primary care doctors

to other states who will be there for you? Most of us have benefitted from Medicaid without realizing it — an elderly family member in a nursing home; a family member with a premature newborn graduate of the NICU; a cousin who received maternity care with Medicaid; an employee who couldn't afford family insurance whose children have Medicaid; children of our hairdresser, housekeeper, dry cleaner, lawn service provider; the waitress in our favorite restaurant; the lady in our Sunday School class whose grandchildren have Medicaid insurance — even family members of our elected officials.

Alabama already had a bare-bones Medicaid program that provides vital services to our seniors in nursing homes, more than half of our pregnant women, the disabled and a majority of our children. We had made steady progress in reducing the number of uninsured children to about 4 percent — the result has been a decrease in the child death rate, a

very low rate of unvaccinated children at risk for serious diseases, better birth outcomes with fewer low-birth weight babies, a decrease in teen pregnancy and a drop in hospitalizations for children.

My Medicaid patients include a young woman who was valedictorian of her class and headed to Auburn University with a full scholarship to become a pediatrician; two adorable little boys with Autism whose mom had to quit her job to care for them; a high school student with sickle cell disease who has suffered serious complications but is doing well and wants to own his own business; a toddler born with cancer who is disease-free after intensive care at USA Women's and Children's Hospital; two precious sisters whose mom is in prison now living with grandparents; a child born to a family with private insurance who had a major illness requiring intermittent intensive care for two years with that care paid for by Medicaid; a college graduate and former homecoming queen who had major surgery as a newborn and received care through Medic-

aid until recently (she now has a good job and private insurance); twins whose mom works full time at a child care center but has no insurance; a child with cerebral palsy cared for by his great-grandmother; a teenager with Type 2 diabetes who has worked hard to successfully control her weight; three children who live with their grandmother after their mom died in a car crash on her way to work; a bright young boy who weighed 2 pounds at birth, spent 6 months in the NICU — paid for by Medicaid — but whose mom has finished college and now works for the Department of Human Resources and has private insurance; and a 13-year-old in foster care who suffered severe child abuse.

### The future of our children

So why the shortfall? Many of our elected officials ran campaigns on "no new taxes." They are concerned about being re-elected if they vote for any tax. It is time for Christians in Alabama to let the legislators know that they will still vote for them if a new tax funds health care. A lottery is not the lesser of two evils — increased gambling won't give our state a healthier future for our children.

Gov. Robert Bentley and the Alabama Legislature should use this special session to look at other alternative revenue raising opportunities to ensure stable Medicaid funding including new taxes. After all you have only one chance to get it right — you have only one childhood.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Dr. Marsha Raulerson has practiced pediatrics in Brewton since 1981. She has been president of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Voices for Alabama's Children. She is a board member for the Children's First Foundation.*

## Special session addresses 2 lottery proposals

By **Maggie Walsh**  
The Alabama Baptist

**L**egislators convened the special session Aug. 15 that will determine whether or not a lottery will be on the Nov. 8 ballot for Alabamians to vote on.

To find funding for the \$85 million Medicaid budget shortage, Gov. Robert Bentley called the special session to propose a state lottery — but his isn't the only proposal. Sen. Jim McClendon, R-Springville, announced Aug. 9 that he plans to bring a second lottery proposal to the special session.

Both proposals are constitutional amendments that would create a state-wide and Powerball lottery as well as a commission to oversee and regulate the gambling system.

But McClendon's proposal expands the  
(See 'McClendon's,' page 7)

## Alabama Baptist leaders speak out

**A**labama Baptist leaders have gone on record expressing opposition to the latest attempt to legalize a lottery in the state. The opposition was made through a joint statement released Aug. 12 by Alabama Baptist State Convention President Travis Coleman Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, and State Missionary Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

"Alabama Baptists have gone on record of being opposed to gambling of any form and what it does to the poorest of the poor," Lance told SBOM trustees meeting Aug. 12.

The statement says in part: "Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists have opposed gambling on biblical, moral and ethical grounds.

Gambling fosters greed and covetousness, as Proverbs 13:11 states. Furthermore, gambling has proven to be very addictive, creating all kinds of personal and societal issues.

"With the acceptance of gambling as a way of supporting government, society will inevitably and increasingly deal with the personal difficulties of people caught in the spiderweb of destruction from involvement in such heinous practices. The lottery has been well called 'the crack cocaine of legalized gambling.'

"We respectfully call upon Alabama Baptists to contact their state legislators and let them know of our disagreement with any lottery proposal."

To read more of the statement, visit [www.ricklance.com](http://www.ricklance.com). (TAB)



# TAB AR To STREAM or not to stream?

123rf.com

## Things to consider when choosing between TV broadcasting, live streaming

By **Brian Harris**  
Harris Media Solutions, LLC

**D**oes your church have a vision to make your worship services available to even those who couldn't make it? It's a great thought and there are so many ways to make it happen.

I first set up the church I was working at back in 2008 to live stream their services using UStream.tv. It was a free service with ad-based support and is still available. Our goal was simple — use our existing setup that was built for TV broadcasting to also

live stream our service cheaply.

Our setup included four cameras and a switcher. Because of this setup we were able to send out multiple feeds — basically a different mix of our cameras and words for the screens in the live streaming.

### Checklist

In our case it was a simple thing to set up streaming. Let's assume though that you aren't already recording your service. Let's talk about some of the things you need and some options you should check out instead of live streaming.

**1. Capturing Video** — You'll need at least one camera. If you have more than one camera, you'll need a video switcher. I highly suggest recording your services too. Check out Blackmagic Hyperdeck digital recorders.

Depending on the amount of volunteers you have ready to work on this project, you may want to check out remote cameras. One operator can control multiple cameras plus they don't stand out in a worship center like a guy standing up the entire service in the middle. I've used Sony's BRCZ-330 on three installs now (<http://pro.sony.com/bbcs/ssr/cat-broadcastcameras/cat-broadcastcamerapantilt-zoom/product-BRCZ330/>).

As for camera placement, these are my personal recommendations.

One camera — place it in the center.

Two cameras — place both in the center, one for close shots, other for wide.

Three cameras — one on the left, one in center, one on the right.

Anything more than three adds a lot of flexibility in placement.

Do you need a camera for crowd shots (never put close-ups of people attending on the IMAG screen, which is the screen the congregation sees during the live service, but they could be used for streaming), maybe something on the stage for close shots, or way in the back for really wide shots? A fourth camera opens up a world of possibilities — may-

be you could even move it around.

**2. Bandwidth** — Make sure your church has the bandwidth to support video.

While on the network you will be streaming, go to SpeedTest.net and run a test. This will tell you what you have right now for upload speed. Download speed is great for the users in your church, but your upload speed is the important thing.

I'm going to assume you'll be streaming in high definition (HD), so with that in mind you're looking for 3–4.5 mb/s for a 720p stream. Stream in full HD at 1080p and you'll need 5–9 mb/s to support the stream.

**3. Streaming Services** — There are a lot of choices for streaming. For the biggest social media reach, I suggest YouTube. UStream is another option I recommend, but go

*“There are a lot of choices for streaming. For the biggest social media reach, I suggest YouTube.”*

**Brian Harris**  
Harris Media Solutions, LLC

## Live streaming allows churches to go beyond their walls

(continued from page 1)

Trussville, and others who speak will often engage and acknowledge the viewer directly, Summers said.

“But we hope to soon split our feed so that the viewer only sees portions of the service that make sense to them rather than elements that may not translate well at home,” he said.

First, Trussville, also provides downloadable versions of its worship guide and an interactive listening guide viewers can fill out online.

“We've also had some success with online chat forums during the message,” he said.

Hooper said currently most of Eastmont Baptist's viewers are older homebound members, so generally they treat it more like the televised services they're used to — more of a one-way conversation.

But they are looking for ways to implement more interactive tools to engage with viewers, he said.

Many churches are doing the same, even going to great lengths

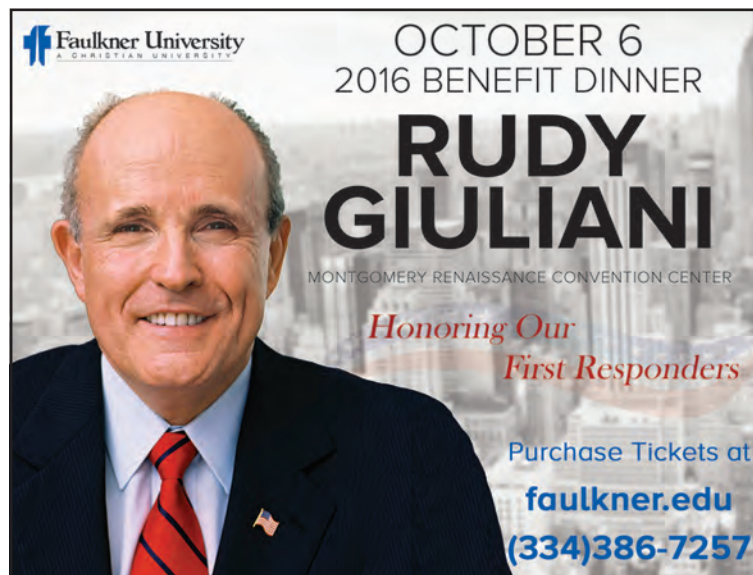
to find ways to use that “new frontier.”

According to Baptist News Global, Madison Avenue Baptist Church, New York City, is using a \$5,000 grant through Union Theological Seminary and Lilly Endowment Inc. to find ways to enhance the experience of its online members.

Summers said for all churches, engaging with viewers through

live streaming is a great opportunity for outreach and there's no way to anticipate how far that reach may go.

“Live streaming enables us to speak to those beyond our walls, reaching those in our congregation who can't be with us as well as those not a part of our fellowship who may never step inside the walls of our — or any — church,” he said.✝



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**“If you choose an option that isn’t live, make a goal to get the message online quickly. Be consistent and set a realistic expectation of when the video will be available each Sunday and meet it.”**

**Brian Harris**  
Harris Media Solutions, LLC

with the paid option to avoid the ads (from experience). There are more out there. Start with the free options and as your audience grows, you’ll want to get rid of the ads, I guarantee.

**4. Copyright Issues** — If you don’t take copyrights seriously, wait until you get your first infraction, or better yet a letter from the copyright owner’s attorney.

**Streaming license**

Thankfully I’ve never received a letter, but you definitely will want to purchase a license to stream, especially if you plan to include your music. A copyright to stream your services is sold by CCLI — <http://us.ccli.com/licenses-and-services/stream/#benefits>.

Costs are dependent on the size of your church. This doesn’t cover all music. You’ll still need to ensure that the songs you sing and play are covered by CCLI. This does not cover pre-recorded music at all. Do a Google search for stock music and buy the rights to a few songs to play before service.

**5. Convertors** — If you need a switcher because you have multiple cameras or video sources you want to show on the stream, buy a video switcher. From there you will need to convert the output signal of the switcher to a computer. Blackmagic (<https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/>) sells an excellent convertor to USB 3.0 that runs around \$400. If you bought the Blackmagic Hyperdeck I mentioned earlier, it has a thunderbolt output, which would mean you could skip the convertor.

Here are a few common issues to think about before streaming:

▶ **Audio** — The audio needs of live streaming will mean you will need to think about a second audio board and remixing your service just for your online audience.

The audio you hear in your worship center might sound great in the room because it’s mixed for the room. Mixing for the live stream sounds different. You can use the same audio feed, but the quality of your stream will be affected.

▶ **Loss of Community** — If someone is watching your stream instead of attending, they are not connecting to others in your church. They are not getting the deeper education that a Bible study affords either and they aren’t being developed into becoming a future leader. If you decide to stream, you have to think about how you are going to get the people watching at home into your church or plugged into another church in their local area.

▶ **Record and playback later** — If you can’t stream your service live because of restrictions on audio or bandwidth, record the service and then upload it after remixing the audio.

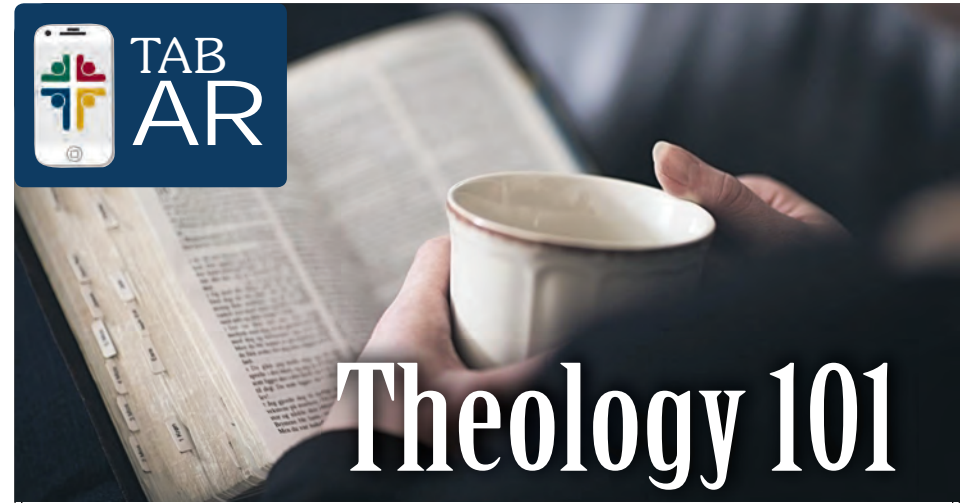
▶ **Axe the music** — If you don’t want to pay the license for music or the music audio can’t be mixed separately, record the service and edit out the music.

**Post it online**

If you choose an option that isn’t live, make a goal to get the message online quickly. Be consistent and set a realistic expectation of when the video will be available each Sunday and meet it.

Overall there are a lot of ways to get your message out there and where you begin depends on where you are, right? Figure out that part and then get to work.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Brian Harris serves as the web, social media and email marketing strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.* ✝



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

**The Person of Christ**

## Personal Characteristics

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

In previous installments of Theology 101 we have thought about our three-in-one God who is omnipotent (possessing all power and authority), omniscient (possessing all knowledge and wisdom), omnipresent (being everywhere present) and immutable (unchanging; ever the same). We looked at these and other truths about God under the theme of “Theology” as the formal study of God.

In prior sessions we also have looked at the personhood of Christ in terms of His distinctive and essential qualities as the Son of God whom God’s love sent into the world for the salvation of sinners. The formal study of these qualities is commonly a part of the consideration of “Christology” as the formal study of His person and work.

**Christ’s work**

When we speak about Christ’s work, we have in view both His ministry and His message. His ministry is one of redemption for sinners. His redemptive work spans from His incarnation to His resurrection, glorification and future return.

The focus of His ministry was, and is, the salvation of sinners — their justification, sanctification and glorification. As for His message, it was that which He announced at the outset of His public ministry, namely, the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14). The kingdom of God refers to how God is working to set up His divine rule in human hearts and ultimately over His entire creation.

**Christ’s various natures**

In addition to the work of Christ, a study of Christology includes thinking about the person of Christ. Here the concern usually is to focus on His essential nature, such as His eternal being; divine nature; His role as a member of the divine trinity; and His incarnate human nature. Such studies likely also include a consideration of the sinlessness of His earthly life and

His exaltation that followed.

In the upcoming consideration of Christology, Theology 101 intends to narrow the focus to just the person of Christ and the personal qualities or characteristics He displayed during the days of His flesh. In these sessions the intent is to go beyond thinking of the person of Christ in terms of the essential qualities of His nature to thinking about some of the distinctive personal qualities or characteristics of His person.

**What was Jesus like?**

When the disciples witnessed Jesus’ power to command the wind and waves they exclaimed aloud, “What manner of man is this?” (Matt. 8:27). Theology 101 will suggest some answers to the disciples’ question.

What manner of man was Christ? What was He like personally when He walked among first century citizens in Judea and Galilee? What was He like in the circumstances, relationships and experiences of His earthly sojourn across that third of a century that He spent on the earth?

At the outset, we might ask ourselves, “Why focus on His personal characteristics as opposed to His essential nature or being?” Part of the answer would simply be, “Because He is the perfect pattern of what God’s redemptive plan envisions for all of His children.” Christ mirrored in His earthly sojourn the kind of personal qualities God desires to develop in all of us. Christ’s personal qualities set the standard to which all God’s children are to aspire now and attain later. ✝

*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.*



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CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$2,757,545.00
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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.

### AUTAUGA

► **Autauga Association** will hold a missions trip to Coatepeque, Guatemala, March 17–25, 2017. The trip is for students grades 10–12 who are members of an Autauga Association church. Students will do children's ministry, outreach and nursing home ministry. To apply for the missions trip call the association office at 334-365-7802. The deadline to return a completed application is Aug. 24. Mel Johnson is director of missions.

### BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its third Sunday night singing Aug. 21, 6 p.m. The Singing Ambassadors will perform special music. For more information call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-4468. Randy Burtram is pastor.

### CHEROKEE

► **Gary Hardin** is the new associate pastor for **First Church, Centre**. He previously served as pastor of Enon Grove Church, Cedar Bluff, and other churches in the state. He also served as design editor of the Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources). Hardin is the author of Hope Discovered blog and is a correspondent for *The Alabama Baptist*. He and his wife, Linda, have three children and four grandchildren.



HARDIN

### CLEBURNE

► **Brent Thompson** is the new pastor of **Heflin Church**. He previously served as pastor of Spring Creek Church, Rome, Georgia. He also served at Center West Church, Delta. He holds a bachelor's degree from Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga. He and his wife, Angie, have two children.

### GENEVA

► **New Hinson Church, Slocomb**, will host the Geneva Association's annual senior adult revival Sept. 1, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. Jerry Batson, former associate dean of Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham and *TAB's* Theology 101 columnist, will speak. BLEST will perform special music. Bryan Klobe is pastor. Dicky McAllister is director of missions.

### MONTGOMERY

► **D. Neal Hughes** is the new director of missions for **Montgomery Association**, effective Sept. 1. He will be leaving the North American Mission Board where he



HUGHES

most recently served as regional mobilizer for pastor relations. He also formerly served as executive director of Project Hope in Montgomery as well as pastor of McGehee Road Church, Montgomery; Pike Avenue Church, Birmingham; Enon Church, Centreville; and as interim pastor at several churches in Georgia. He holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Mary, have three children. ► **First Church, Montgomery**, will hold its annual missions team leaders' training Aug. 24, 6:45–8 p.m. Topics will include 2017 missions opportunities, tips for leading a missions trip and how to help with Global Impact Celebration 2017. For more information contact minister of missions Brian Gay at 334-241-5131 or [briang@montgomeryfbc.org](mailto:briang@montgomeryfbc.org). Jay Wolf is pastor.

### MORGAN

► **Central Park Church, Decatur**, will celebrate Marie Hammon Day on Aug. 28, 10:30 a.m. honoring Hammon for her 44 years of service as church secretary from 1960 to 2004. She will be named secretary emeritus. Jackie Kay is pastor.

### RUSSELL

► **Beaver Creek Church, Phenix City**, will host Russell Association's "Senior Adults Matter" on Sept. 22, 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Participants are asked to bring vegetables and salad. The Amen choir of Lakewood Church, Phenix City, will perform special music. Harold Barrow of Concord Church, Salem, will lead congregational music. John Rigby, pastor of North Phenix Church, Phenix City, will speak. Email pictures of senior adults serving in ministry to [jcarrellccm@bellsouth.net](mailto:jcarrellccm@bellsouth.net) to be shown at the meeting. Lynn McManiouns is pastor of Beaver Creek Church. Wayne Burns is director of missions.

### ST. CLAIR

► **North Valley Church, Odenville**, will celebrate its 10th anniversary Aug. 21, 9:10 and 10:30 a.m. Chris Crain will preach his last message as pastor.

### SHELBY

► **Larry Roberts** is the new pastor of **First Church, Harpersville**. He previously served as the church's interim pastor. He also served at Raleigh Avenue Church, Homewood; Bethel Church, Newton; Union Springs Church, Newville; Balkum Church, Headland; and Kelley Church, Daleville.



ROBERTS

He holds a certificate in pastoral ministries from Samford University's Ministry Training Institute in Birmingham. He and his wife, Melanie, have one child and two grandchildren.

### TUSCALOOSA

► **Jon Wiggins** is the new pastor of **Skyland Boulevard Church, Tuscaloosa**. He previously



WIGGINS

served as the church's student minister. He also served at Eastern Hills Church, Tuscaloosa, and as the youth director and student ministries director for Tuscaloosa Association. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Mobile and a master's degree from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Sommer, have three children. **Alex Cowan** is the new student minister for **Skyland Boulevard**. He previously served as youth ministry assistant for the church. He is currently enrolled at the Tuscaloosa extension of Leavell College. He and his wife, Mary Beth, have one child. ☛



COWAN

## Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

### New LifeWay student event immerses in urban contexts

NASHVILLE — Infusion, a new summer event from LifeWay Students, launches in 2017 and will immerse participants in ministry within urban contexts.

The six-day event will be educational and include missions experiences, said Dave MacNeill of LifeWay Students.

As awareness of social justice issues increases many millennials and members of Generation Z are trending away from traditional missions trips, according to MacNeill. Infusion seeks to connect evangelism with meeting the needs of individuals.

Social justice ministries often work to establish long-term local relationships and confront issues like poverty, racism and lack of education and health care, MacNeill said. Teams will choose from six different events in three cities: Atlanta, Memphis and Philadelphia. During the events students will have the opportunity to live, eat, worship and minister outside their everyday context.

He also said students will learn to share the gospel in the social justice context and will develop a heart of humility toward communities that are different from their own.

For more information, visit [InfusionMissions.com](http://InfusionMissions.com). (LifeWay)

### CP 5.28% above year-to-date projection

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) are 5.28 percent above the year-to-date SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget projection, and are 2.99 percent above contributions received during the same timeframe in 2015, according to a news release from Frank S. Page, EC president and CEO.

As of July 31, gifts received by EC for distribution through the first nine months of the convention's fiscal year (October to September) totaled \$163,617,265.19. This total is \$8,200,598.52 above the \$155,416,666.67 year-to-date budgeted projection and is \$4,757,746.81 more than the \$158,859,518.38 received through the end of July 2015. (BP)

### Conference encourages 'one evangelical voice'

FORT-DE-FRANCE, Martinique — Participants of the fourth "Jesus Christ, Bread of Life" Mission and Evangelism Training Conference — organized by Baptist World Alliance (BWA) — were encouraged to "come together to present one evangelical voice" to the lost in the area, one participant said.

The conference had two events, June 19–22 in Fort-de-France, Martinique, and June 22–26 in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

Presenters included Lionel Charles, writer and a pastor in the Evangelical Church in France, and Renaud Dumont, a founder of the Federation of the Guadeloupe Baptist Churches and a former host of a Baptist radio broadcast in Guadeloupe and Martinique. (BWA)

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# A Certain Trumpet

Sermons by Alabama Baptists

## Biblical Character Series

### Dangerous Discipleship — Acts 9:10–18

**H**ave you ever heard it said that “the safest place to be is in God’s will”? I don’t presume to know the intent of the person who first said that or of all who have repeated it since, but I do believe that many people use it to communicate something that isn’t necessarily true.

While there is ultimate and eternal security in following the Lord, personal safety might not be part of the plan. In fact, Christianity should be presented with a warning that it may be hazardous to your health. And as Christians we must embrace the biblical concept of dangerous discipleship.

One of the many Bible passages in which we see this is Acts 9. We know it as the story of Saul/Paul’s conversion but I am bringing it up because of the other character in the narrative, Ananias. His part in the events is an example of what I mean by dangerous discipleship. We learn from Ananias that it is both dangerous to be a disciple and to make disciples.

#### It is dangerous to be a disciple.

Ananias was among the disciples in Damascus, the same place to which Saul was traveling to arrest and imprison followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is likely that Ananias was a leader among the Christians there and therefore a specific target of Saul’s mission. He was among the persecuted, and in that he serves as a lesson that it is dangerous to be a disciple. If discipleship isn’t dangerous at all it brings into serious question the validity of one’s being a disciple.

Most of us aren’t personally familiar with the type of danger that was involved for the church at Damascus but we have brothers and sisters around the world who are. Countless numbers of our spiritual ancestors have been in danger throughout Church history. It’s not hard to imagine a future where we might be as well. So the idea of it being dangerous to be a believer should not be foreign to us.

Scripture repeatedly warns the people of God of this danger. In John 15, Jesus said the world hated and persecuted Him and would do the same to us. Second Timothy 3:12 says,

#### By Micah Gandy

*Micah Gandy has served as pastor of four churches in Alabama, including First Baptist Church, Monroeville, where he has served since 2009. He and his wife, Cheryl, have four children.*



“All those who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” In Matthew 5:44, Jesus told us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us because we would be persecuted by enemies. In Psalm 119:157 the author stated that his “persecutors and foes are many.” This is true for all of us who are turning from our sins and trusting on Jesus to save us. Our primary foe is Satan, who is “prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour,” according to 1 Peter 5:8.

I literally could go on and on referencing verses that make the point that following Christ is a hazard, but I trust that the truth is now crystal clear, both from the example of Ananias and the rest of Scripture. It is dangerous to be a disciple.

#### It is dangerous to make disciples.

How would you respond if God told you to go to a leader of the Islamic State and disciple him? This is a rough equivalent of what God told Ananias to do in Acts 9. Saul had been threatening and murdering Christians (v. 1). Verses 13–14 indicate that Ananias was aware of this, just as he was of the fact that Saul had been on his way to Damascus to arrest believers there. But Ananias was unaware of the details of God’s arresting Saul. Still Ananias obeyed. It is dangerous to make disciples.

We are commanded to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:19). The essence of being a disciple is making disciples. Obedience to this command involves danger of many kinds so we must expect and accept it. It is physically dangerous to make disciples. Fellow Christians and our missionaries in certain parts of the world put their

lives on the line every time they share their faith or gather for the teaching of God’s Word. Our taking the gospel to a particular country or even a neighborhood here might put our lives at risk. It also is mentally dangerous to make disciples as it subjects one to being rejected, mocked, slandered and maybe un-friended. It could be financially dangerous to make disciples in that it might cost you your job. It is dangerous to make disciples.

But danger should not keep us from making disciples. Obedience isn’t what God requires as long as it is safe; obedience is what He requires. Period. But beyond obedience, we should make disciples because of the results. Disciples are made and then they go on to make more disciples. We never know the plan God has for those we disciple. Ananias ministered to Saul and he became Paul and ministered to the world — literally (see v. 15). Who knows what the Lord will do through those you disciple?

God made Saul a disciple so that he would make disciples. And if any Christian’s life has ever born testimony to the danger of making disciples, it is Paul’s. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–27. Paul wrote that he had been imprisoned, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, sleepless, cold, hungry, thirsty and in constant danger, all because of his obedience to the Lord. It is dangerous to make disciples.

One of my favorite books is J.I. Packer’s classic, “Knowing God.” In the last chapter he wrote that the “thought of ‘safety first’ was not a drag” on the work of New Testament Christians as it is on ours. He goes on to say that “by being exuberant, unconventional and uninhibited in living by the gospel they turned the world upside down.” Then Packer asks from where did “the nervous, dithery, take-no-risks mood that mars so much of our discipleship” come?

#### Respond to the challenge.

I am challenged by these thoughts, just as I am challenged by the example of Ananias and the words of Scripture. I expect you are as well. We should be. God help us to respond to the challenge and embrace the concept of dangerous discipleship. ✠

## McClendon’s proposal stretches gambling further

(continued from page 3)

lottery by allowing electronic lottery terminals — machines resembling slot machines but considered Class II gambling like electronic bingo — at VictoryLand, Greentrack, the Birmingham Race Course and the Mobile Greyhound Park. It also would allow the state to negotiate a gambling compact with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

McClendon claims his proposal would raise about \$427 million, sending \$327 million to the General Fund and \$100 million toward education. His plan also would create a bond issue paid off with gambling revenue. The bonds would be used to pay the Medicaid shortfall. Bentley’s proposal — said to generate \$225 million — would send all proceeds to the General Fund.

Bentley and McClendon both promised their proposals do not open the door for casino gambling in the state, but the broad definition of “lottery” as any game of chance makes those promises unlikely to be kept.

#### Return of horse racing

Birmingham Race Course officials, for example, have already made clear their intentions to attempt to bring horse racing back to Birmingham. The course could restore live horse racing using revenue from video lottery terminals which could be made legal under McClendon’s proposal, the *Birmingham Business Journal* reported.

For the lottery to make it on the November ballot for voters, one of the proposed amendments would have to be approved by three-fifths of legislators by Aug. 24.

Rep. Chris Blackshear, R-Phenix City; Rep. Barry Moore, R-Enterprise; and Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, are among those who have publicly opposed the creation of a lottery, each calling it a “Band-Aid” for the wounded General Fund.

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

## LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

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Scarlett M. Dunnam  
MAC D Ministries ✠

“And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?” 1 Cor. 14:8

# Clergy wages, working conditions show improvements

**W**ages are getting better for men and women of the cloth.

Non-Catholic clergy have experienced significant increases in income even as their workweeks declined by more than 15 percent in recent decades, according to a major new study of clergy compensation.

Overall, in inflation-adjusted wages, non-Catholic clergy made \$4.37 more per hour in 2013 than they did in 1983. That figure is more than double the wage increase of the average worker with a college degree.

However, clergy are continuing to fall financially behind other elite professions such as doctors and lawyers, the study found.

But the price of their calling is declining along with the wage gap that separates them from other college-educated Americans, according to the study following Current Population Survey data from 1976 to 2013.

## Faster than most

Just how much? The study found clergy are gaining ground financially faster than more than 9 in 10 Americans with college degrees.

The study is believed to be the first to address what had been a particular difficulty in comparing wages of clergy by taking into account the benefits they receive in the form of housing allow-

ances or living in parsonages.

But not everyone is better off.

There are vast differences in the situations of individual clergy, from those serving small rural or urban churches that often work for low wages without benefits to the high-end salaries of some prominent megachurch pastors. Catholic priests are by far on the low end of the scale, earning about half as much as other clergy.

**There also are the less tangible benefits such as the joy [clergy] receive from doing work they are passionate about.**

## Researchers

national minimum salaries, the trend toward housing allowances rather than manses and improved benefits packages all have contributed to improved clergy compensation in recent decades," the researchers noted.

Other studies reflect similar findings. For example, according to a Barna Group survey conducted in 2001, the compensation package (a mix of salary and benefits) of the typical clergy member exceeded \$38,000 — nearly a 9 percent increase over 1999 compensation levels.

Another study on compensation for full-time Southern Baptist pastors in 2006 found that compensa-

tion increased more than \$3,400 since 2004.

Conducted by Don Spencer, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department, the study included responses from 17,350 pastors and church staff members. The average salary and housing allowance for full-time Southern Baptist pastors in 2006 was \$49,952, an increase of 7.4 percent over 2004.

## Need for balance

Among United Methodist pastors in the United States, average salaries increased steadily by about 2 percent per year, according to the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The average salary for a full-time pastor not living in a parsonage was \$55,000 in 2008, compared to \$45,300 in 1998.

According to the Schleifer and Chaves study, there also is an increasing recognition by clergy and their employers of the need to have a healthy balance between work and home, just as is happening in the larger society.

Sociologist Cynthia Woolever agreed, saying, "(Clergy) are not motivated by money, but they are motivated to take care of their family."

The study also found that clergy working as chaplains, teachers or administrators or in other non-church settings make 19 percent more than their peers working in congregations.

It appears easier for clergy

working for larger organizations such as schools and hospitals to receive more competitive salaries than clergy in individual congregations.

So are clergy underpaid? It is a difficult question to answer, researchers noted.

Clergy salaries are still lower than the pay of many college-educated Americans. But wages and working conditions overall are improving. There also are the less tangible benefits such as the joy received from doing work they are passionate about, researchers said.

More than 6 in 10 clergy say

they are "very happy" in their work; just 32 percent of other Americans express similar satisfaction, according to General Social Survey data from 1972 to 2010.

## 'Super happy'

"Compared to other people," Schleifer said, "they're super happy folk."

All things considered, Schleifer and Chaves report, it is difficult to conclude "clergy are underpaid relative to other workers." (Association of Religion Data Archives, TAB contributed)

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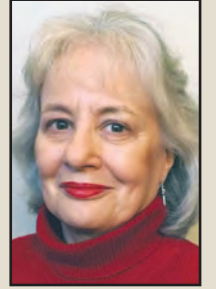
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Famous Christians from previous centuries

# Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



## American hymn writer Lathbury born 175 years ago

**M**ary Artemisia Lathbury (1841–1913), the “Poet Laureate of Chautauqua,” was a noted American writer of hymns, including the well-known “Break Thou the Bread of Life.”

She also was an artist and illustrator and founded the Look-Up Legion club. She also wrote for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

This year is the 175th anniversary of her birth.

She was born in Manchester, New York, on Aug. 10, 1841. Her father was a Methodist minister, as were her two brothers.

### Artistic ability

As a child she used her artistic abilities to draw pictures of children.

One day, she claimed she heard a voice from God telling her: “Remember, my child, that you have a gift of weaving fancies into verse and a gift with the pencil of producing visions that come to

your heart; consecrate these to Me as thoroughly as you do your inmost spirit.”

She dedicated her life to the Lord and consecrated her talents to Him.

### Gaining notoriety

After studying art in Worcester, Massachusetts, she taught art and French in Vermont and New York.

She was then hired as associate editor for the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School publications. She became well known when her poems and illustrations were included in magazines, newspapers and books of poetry.

Lathbury is best known for her hymn writing at summer assemblies at Lake Chautauqua, New York.

Two Methodist leaders started the Chautauqua Movement in 1874 as a summer retreat to train Sunday School teachers. Chautauqua was so popular that it soon included academic subjects, music, art and physical education. It became known as the

center for adult education in America.

Co-founder John Vincent asked Lathbury to become his secretary at Lake Chautauqua. He appreciated her artistic talent and often asked her to write hymns for Bible studies or for vesper (evening) services.

When seeking inspiration, she would find a quiet spot overlooking the lake. One day in 1877, while praying for guidance to write a hymn, she thought of Christ feeding the 5,000 by the Sea of Galilee. From this reflection came the widely known hymn “Break Thou the Bread of Life.” She wrote it to honor Jesus as the “Bread of Life” and the “Living Word.”

Today the song is found in Baptist hymnals as well as Methodist and Lutheran ones. It is often used as a Communion hymn.

*Break thou the bread of life,  
Dear Lord, to me,*



LATHBURY

*As Thou didst break the loaves  
Beside the sea;  
Beyond the sacred page  
I seek thee, Lord;  
My spirit pants for Thee,  
O Living Word.*

She wrote other hymns for Vincent, including the popular hymn “Day is Dying in the West.”

### Look-Up Legion

The Look-Up Legion, a club that brought thousands of boys and girls to Christ, was another part of Lathbury's ministry. The club's rules were: “Look up and not down; look forward and not back; look out and not in; and lend a hand.”

Lathbury also co-wrote a book with temperance reformer Frances Elizabeth Willard about the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Lathbury died Oct. 20, 1913, in East Orange, New Jersey, and is buried there in Rosedale Cemetery.✝

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## Prayer urged as students go back to school

**A**s summer ends, sending students back into the hallways of elementary, middle and high schools means facing a whole host of challenges.

“Each day students are subjected to literally thousands of offensive images and words. They also face an enormous amount of peer pressure to become part of what is considered normal by the world's standards,” according to First Priority, a Christian non-profit that seeks to prepare and strengthen students to share the hope of Christ with those in their school.

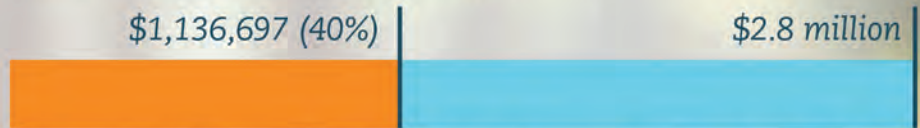
To “stand against the insurmountable odds,” students need committed prayer from their fellow Christians — prayers for boldness, strength and so much more. For a prayer guide with 24 biblical virtues to pray over students, visit [firstpriorityal.com/blog/](http://firstpriorityal.com/blog/). (TAB)

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- Criswell, Lance, Spanish Fort: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
- Garvin, Grover C., Gantt: Rusty Andrews
- Gibson, Beth, Butler: Sarah A. Gibson
- Gibson, S.G., Gilbertown: Sarah A. Gibson
- Glass, Berta Janelle, Linden: Bethlehem BC of Linden

- Goodwin, Jerry, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
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- Howell, Bill, Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson
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- 7** Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.

# Proposal to move State Board office from Montgomery to Prattville with 'exchange of keys' passes first hurdle

Trustees of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) have voted unanimously to recommend a proposal for what is being called an "exchange of keys" with Baptist Health.

If approved in November by messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention, SBOM ministry offices and staff would complete relocation by Jan. 1, 2018 — without any indebtedness — to a new building in Prattville to be built for SBOM by Baptist Health. Included would be just under four acres of land at the new location.

Once construction of the new SBOM facility is complete, the two Baptist organizations would essentially exchange keys.

The proposal for the relocation includes Baptist Health taking possession of the current SBOM facility, located at the corner of Narrow Lane Road and East South Boulevard in Montgomery — immediately next door to Baptist Medical Center South.

"The exchange of keys and property would happen so that no funds are exchanged," according to Bobby DuBois, SBOM's chief financial officer and associate executive director. "Since 2008 the SBOM has been debt-free and is committed to remaining as such for the future."

SBOM leaders have been reviewing ways to move the Baptist Building to the Prattville area for almost a decade.

State convention messengers approved the first steps toward that end in 2007, and several ideas have been considered through the years.

As recent discussions developed, it was learned that Baptist Health owned acreage facing Alabama Highway 14, just off Interstate 65, exit 181, in Prattville.

SBOM and Baptist Health officials agreed that Baptist Health would construct a building to SBOM specifications on part of the acreage.

SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance said, "The proposal would position missions personnel and resources closer to the geographic center of the state. This would provide more accessibility for Alabama Baptists to utilize their State Board of Missions facility as a Great Commission Ministries Resource Center."

The size of the new SBOM building would be 39,900 square feet versus the present Baptist Building's 87,500 square feet.

DuBois said, "This is in line with the right-sizing of our staff that has been underway since the

arrival in 1998 of Dr. Lance as our executive director. After Dr. Lance joined the staff, our full-time employee count was 121. Today we have 67 full-time employees."

SBOM leaders also noted in the original requests to seek to move that the current building is in a declining neighborhood and security had become a matter of concern.

A new facility would likely have fewer maintenance issues and lower utility costs, DuBois added.

DuBois also noted that the value of the proposed building and acreage is in line with the appraised value — \$7.6 million —

of the current Baptist Building.

The Baptist Health Board recently approved the proposal after several weeks of meetings to develop details, DuBois said.

Prior to the affirmation of the proposal by SBOM trustees, it also was recommended by the executive committee and properties sub-committee.

The proposal will be presented for consideration to state convention messengers Nov. 15–16 at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery. If messengers approve, construction on the new SBOM facility would begin by Nov. 30. (SBOM, TAB)



Photo by Doug Rogers

State Board of Missions trustees (right to left) Carl Williams, John Nicholson and Tim Cox take a closer look at plans for the proposed Great Commission Ministries Resource Center in Prattville.

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Catoma Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Catoma Baptist Church, 4300 Old Selma Rd., Montgomery, AL 36108.

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#### BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

Turnerville Baptist Church — Mobile County. Contact Bro. Jason Meaux at [jmeaux@turnervillebaptist.org](mailto:jmeaux@turnervillebaptist.org).

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# CAMPUS News



## JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Hosts Preview Day for Prospective Students:** Judson College in Marion will host a Preview & Scholarship Day on Sept. 17. Prospective students will have the opportunity to tour the campus with a Judson Student Ambassador, learn about academic and student life programs and meet faculty, staff and students.

Prospective students also will be able to test for academic scholarships; audition for piano, organ, voice and theatre scholar-

ships; and try out for the basketball or softball teams. For more information or to register, visit [judson.edu/event/september-preview-day/](http://judson.edu/event/september-preview-day/).

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **Fairhope Couple Donates Steinway Piano to University of Mobile:** A Steinway grand piano built in 1924 has a new home at the University of Mobile (UM) thanks to a donation from a couple in Fairhope.

Melinda and Louis Mapp donated his grandparents' 6-foot-2-

inch Model A Steinway to UM's "All Steinway, All Together" campaign. The university is close to its goal of raising \$518,000 to replace all of its pianos with Steinways and earning the designation of "All-Steinway School."

For information about the All Steinway, All Together campaign, visit [www.umobile.edu/steinway](http://www.umobile.edu/steinway).

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University Student Earns Congressional Internship:** Samford University political science major and University Fellows honor student Fernanda Herrera, of Ohatchee, is taking part in The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), the nation's premier Hispanic youth leadership development and educational organization.

Herrera is 1 of 38 CHCI interns chosen out of hundreds of applicants from across the country to work in the nation's capital for eight weeks. She will work in the office of Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Arizona. ✠

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 21

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

### RESPECT

1 Samuel 26:7-12, 21-25

#### Opportunity Knocks (7-8)

Saul thought the time had finally come to kill David. The Ziphites had come to him and reported that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. So he took 3,000 of his men to find David and kill him.

Unbeknownst to Saul, David was aware of the movement of the enemy troops, sending out spies who reported their whereabouts.

Now the tables had turned. David knew exactly where Saul was located. The text states that "David saw the place where Saul was laying, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army" (1 Sam. 26:5). David had the opportunity to kill Saul and his military commander, both of whom were sleeping.

Abishai, one of David's mighty men, wants to seize the moment. He petitions David to allow him "to pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear" (v. 8). Would David take advantage of this opportunity? Would he finally be rid of Saul forever?

#### Godly Respect (9-12)

David denied Abishai's request, refusing to take matters into his own hands. Only God has the power to remove a ruler and raise up someone in his place. David understands this and does not take matters into his own hands. At the appointed time David would one day be the king of Israel — and not until then.

Yet before leaving David takes the spear and jar of water that lay near Saul's head. No one detected David because the Lord had caused a deep sleep to fall upon his enemies.

#### Remorse (21)

When he is at a far enough distance, David calls to Abner and shows him Saul's

spear and jar, showing that he had the opportunity to kill Saul. When Saul discovers that David withheld his hand from him, he confesses his sin and promises to do David no more harm.

#### Trust in God (22-25)

David returns the spear to Saul and calls for God to be the judge between them. Before parting ways, David affirms to Saul that he would not strike the Lord's anointed.

If anyone was going to remove Saul and lift up David, it would have to be God Himself. David would not do it. David understands that at the appointed time God would bring His promise to pass.

Indeed at the appointed time God would remove Saul and raise up David to be king (1 Sam. 1:31-2 Sam. 2). Continuing this trajectory into the New Testament, we see that Paul contends that at the fullness of time — the divinely appointed time in history — God sent Jesus into the world to redeem a people for Himself (Gal. 4:4-5).

If you recall, Jesus is the promised Davidic king, the one promised to rule over God's people forever (2 Sam. 7). Through His substitutionary death, Jesus takes those who were once in slavery to sin, and He frees them to dwell in His eternal kingdom forever. Simply put, at the appointed time in salvation history, God made this all possible by sending His Messiah to the earth.

Those who place their faith in Jesus no longer live in slavery, but are called sons of the living God.

That God chose to raise up David at the appointed time points forward to the greatest moment in history — the sending of Jesus Christ.

May we be those who trust in King Jesus, that we might not be laid low but raised to dwell in the Kingdom. †

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

### GIVE MONEY GENEROUSLY Proverbs 11:23-29

There are many wonderful passages of Scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments which teach us about stewardship. Yet it ought to concern us that the thinking of many people about stewardship, especially as it relates to giving money, often is motivated more by law than grace, by a sense of duty with little sense of what Paul suggests as "cheerfulness."

We must balance Scripture with Scripture, not taking verses out of context to suit our own viewpoint but allowing God to teach us and lead us into generous giving, not for our sake, but for the sake of people in need and for the glory of God.

#### Be generous with what you have. (23-26)

Verse 22 sets the context for this section by speaking of people who have "good sense." It comes down to desires and expectations which are directed by correct attitudes and actions, sacrificial rather than selfish concerns.

One of my academic mentors at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, James Torrance, often spoke to me about the way in which Christians and churches viewed their relationship with God more as a "contract" than a "covenant."

We are not brought into a contract with God that is based upon "do this and you will live," but rather we are in a relationship with God, whose love is unconditional.

Therefore we develop trust, freedom, love and worship that leads us to express our devotion in gratitude and gladness. We give not to receive. Rather we are given much in order to be generous to others. When Scripture says that generous giving will be blessed, it doesn't necessarily imply financial success but being blessed

spiritually in seeing others who are helped.

I sometimes wonder if our giving would be less if it wasn't tax deductible. Do we give on the basis of saving tax or do we give because it is simply the right thing to do?

#### Honor God and seek to do good with your money. (27-29)

"Favor" is an ambiguous term, but it refers to what pleases God and the people we can help in life. Sometimes in giving we develop goodwill with others, but ultimately it is God whom we seek to honor in our giving.

Riches and wealth are not to be sought in and for themselves. Proverbs warns us that "those who trust in their riches will wither, but the righteous will flourish like green leaves" (v. 28).

To make riches something that we depend upon and thinking of our personal achievements as a source of security is to fall into an abstract reality. The only thing that matters is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Ultimate security and blessing are found in a relationship with God.

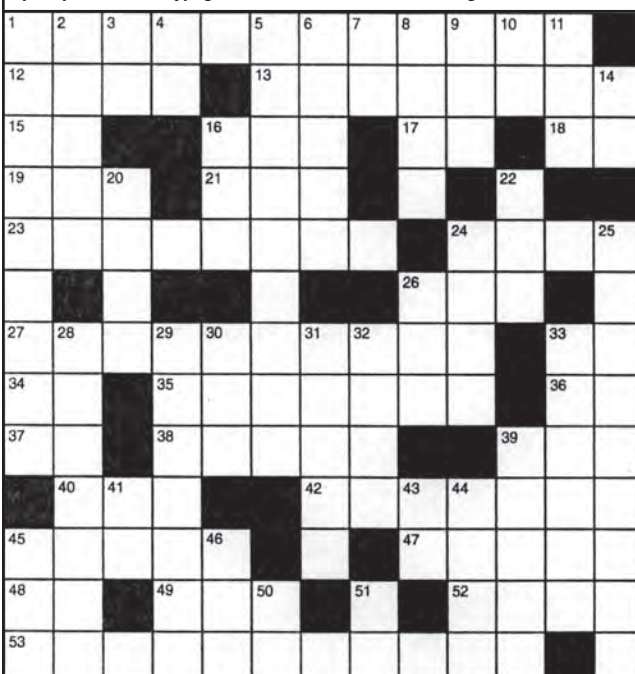
If the blessing of God and His favor come upon our lives, then we are called to be generous with what we possess.

If, however, we focus on accumulating things for our own advancement then Scripture gives us a warning: "Those who trouble their households will inherit the wind" (v. 29). The interpretation of this verse is not clear, but in the context it seems to refer to people who focus on their own concerns who will only inherit the "wind." Their efforts will come to nothing and frustration will characterize their lives.

As Martin Luther reminds us, a human being "seeks his or her own advantage and their own way, their own honor rather than that of their neighbor." †

## Christian Crossword

By Judy Ellis Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- Old Testament book.
- A son of Shobal. (1 Chron. 1:40)
- And a hundred sheep, beside harts, and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Kings 4:23)
- Veterans' Administration. (abbr.)
- Sailor.
- Route. (abbr.)
- 12 months. (abbr.)
- Son of Amoz. (abbr.) (2 Kings 19:20)
- Little island.
- And Eshton begat ... (1 Chron. 4:12)
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Dumah and Eshean. (Josh. 15:52)
- Direction.
- Old Testament book. (2 parts)
- Branch office. (abbr.)
- United Artists. (abbr.)
- Yet he cheweth not the cud; he is \_\_\_\_\_. (Lev. 11:7)
- And he said, \_\_\_\_\_, it is yet high day. (Gen. 29:7)
- Zacchaeus climbed up into a \_\_\_\_\_ camore tree.

(Luke 19:4)

- And Ashur the father of \_\_\_\_\_ had two wives. (1 Chron. 4:5)
- The throne of \_\_\_\_\_ and of the Lamb. (Rev. 22:3)
- Women's Army Corp. (abbr.)
- One who swears to an affidavit.
- And \_\_\_\_\_ the daughter of Leah. (Gen. 34:1)
- Crass.
- The children of \_\_\_\_\_, and Hushim, the sons of Aher. (1 Chron. 7:12)
- And if any man will \_\_\_\_\_ thee at the law. (Matt. 5:40)
- Sweet drinks made from limes or lemons.
- Fifth Old Testament book.

### Down

- Third Old Testament book.
- Every one that is proud, and \_\_\_\_\_ him. (Job 40:11)
- Pa's mate.
- Elevated railroad.
- Illness on Amtrak.
- Great trunk that carries blood.
- Tellurium. (symbol)
- Son of Merari. (1 Chron. 24:27)
- Seven angels came \_\_\_\_\_ of the temple. (Rev. 15:6)
- Raleigh is the capital. (abbr.)
- Fair weather: for the \_\_\_\_\_ is red. (Matt. 16:2)
- "Mr." in Spanish. (abbr.)
- Light brown.
- Hushim was his son. (1 Chron. 7:12)
- Sir, come down \_\_\_\_\_ my child die. (John 4:49)
- Association. (abbr.)
- Blood analysis. (2 words)
- And I saw as it were a \_\_\_\_\_ of glass. (Rev. 15:2)
- Out of order.
- Because they called thee an \_\_\_\_\_, saying, This is Zion. (Jer. 30:17)
- Direction.
- As free, and not using your liberty for a \_\_\_\_\_ of maliciousness. (1 Pet. 2:16, modern sp.)

- For ye shall be as an oak whose \_\_\_\_\_ fadeth. (Isa. 1:30)
- Son of Merari. (1 Chron. 24:27)
- Flashy.
- Behold, I send \_\_\_\_\_ Angel before thee. (Ex. 23:20)
- Fire control. (abbr.)
- Duke Magdiel, duke \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Chron. 1:54)
- Alexander the coppersmith \_\_\_\_\_ me much evil. (2 Tim. 4:14)
- Shade.
- Son of Judah. (Gen. 39:6)
- Called to be \_\_\_\_\_ apostle. (Rom. 1:1)



# WHAT ARE YOU READING?



## Alabama Baptists share about what they are currently reading

### RACHEL McRAE

*LifeWay Christian Resources, blog.lifeway/shelflife*

**“Uninvited: Living Loved When You Feel Less Than, Left Out and Lonely”** by Lysa TerKeurst

The enemy wants us to feel rejected ... left out, lonely and less than. When we allow him to speak lies through our rejection, he pickpockets our purpose. Cripples our courage. Dismantles our dreams. And blinds us to the beauty of Christ’s powerful love.

In “Uninvited,” Lysa shares her own deeply personal experiences with rejection — from the incredibly painful childhood abandonment by her father to the perceived judgment of the perfectly toned woman one elliptical over.

With biblical depth, gut-honest vulnerability and refreshing wit, she helps readers: release the desire to fall apart or control the actions of others by embracing God-honoring ways to process their hurt; know exactly what to pray for the next 10 days to steady their soul and restore their confidence; overcome the two core fears that feed insecurities by understanding the secret of belonging; stop feeling left out and start believing that “set apart” does not mean “set aside;” and end the cycle of perceived rejection by refusing to turn a small incident into a full-blown issue.

This stuff doesn’t just go away. You have to invite Jesus into it.

### WANDA BERGERON

*The Alabama Baptist*

**“Behind the Mask”** by Amy Lynne

This book was written by a friend of mine who was able, through the grace of God, to remove the mask she had been hiding behind for many years. At age 18, Amy chose to have an abortion. The guilt and shame caused her to withdraw from family and friends. She felt no one could ever love someone who had killed her child and she was having a hard time loving herself.

After many years of living in shame and hiding behind her mask a Christian friend helped her confess her past by loving her at an abortion recovery ministry. By lifting her mask and letting in the forgiveness of Christ, Amy was able to forgive herself and remove the mask. Amy was free at last. She now has her own ministry that helps others going through the same thing. This is an inspirational true story of sin, redemption, faith, forgiveness and love. If you know someone going through the same fear of living behind a mask, this book is a must read. It will make you cry, laugh and, at the end, feel the love of our forgiving Father. †

**Tell us what you are reading, a quick summary of what it is about and your response to it so far. Email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org) or send us a message on Facebook. You may also mail your information to 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.**



Casting Crowns will be in concert in Birmingham on Nov. 25 for ‘The Very Next Thing’ Tour.

Photo courtesy of Merge PR

# ‘Seeking our whole heart’

## Casting Crowns wants audiences to take next step

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Despite the awards and accolades the contemporary group Casting Crowns has accumulated through the years, their first priority remains encouraging and equipping the student ministry at Eagles Landing First Baptist Church, McDonough, Georgia.

Following the release of their album, “A Live Worship Experience,” which was recorded at their home church where lead singer Mark Hall has

served as the full-time youth pastor for more than 20 years, the multi-platinum selling and Grammy Award-winning group will release their eighth studio project in September, “The Very Next Thing.”

The songs on this album are designed to inspire audiences to take the next step in their faith journey and go deeper in their daily walk with the Lord.

This fall the group plans to share the stories behind the songs on a 39-city tour across the country, which also will help raise awareness for Compassion International and Museum of the Bible. As a result of the group’s desire to challenge audiences to respond by taking action and being the hands and feet of Christ, more than 85,000 children have been sponsored during their concerts.

### ‘Discipleship set to music’

“Because I’ve been a youth pastor for half of my life, music has been a way of discipling students and their families,” Hall said. “Our songs have always been discipleship set to music. These songs are our prayers and a way of reminding us that God is worthy of all of our worship, the breath in my

lungs and that God is seeking our whole heart to worship Him.”

In addition to Hall, the group is made up of Brian Scoggin, Josh Mix, Megan Garrett, Juan Devevo, Melodee Devevo and Chris Huffman.

Because of a health crisis in 2015, Hall was forced to take four months off from touring following the successful removal of a cancerous growth on his right kidney.

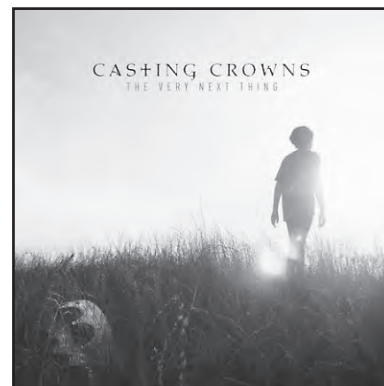
“It’s amazing how busy you think you are until you have a medical situation,” Hall said. “I remember wondering what it would be like if I just had a day where I didn’t have a meeting scheduled. It’s almost like God said, ‘OK, how about a four-month break?’ I think God was showing me that maybe my priorities were a little out of whack and I needed to get back to my family and be more present at home. My kids travel with me on the road, but you can be present and not be engaged.”

After being released to resume his touring schedule, Hall returned to performing with an increased desire to influence families through the band’s uplifting music and message.

“When we meet with people after concerts we often see a husband trembling with tears in his eyes and straining to choose his words, with his wife standing next to him and seeing the joy in her eyes, hearing him say that these songs have strengthened their marriage,” Hall said. “That’s been so encouraging for us.”

Although Hall acknowledges that his schedule remains a constant balancing act, reaching as many people as possible for Christ provides the driving force for all he does.

“If God can use me, He can use anyone.” †



RIO 2016

# 'MY IDENTITY IS *rooted in Christ*'



## American diving duo speaks out about faith, gives all glory to God at Olympics

**S**teele Johnson almost died on the diving platform. In 2009 at age 12 he was practicing his favorite dive, a triple reverse somersault in a tuck position when he cracked his skull on a concrete platform, sliced open his scalp and fell 33 feet into the pool.

His coach pulled him out and held his head together all the way to the hospital. Today he still has some memory loss.

But Johnson, a Christian, has spoken of how his faith helped him recover and placed him in medal contention in Rio de Janeiro.

"I wanted to be the kid that had the big injury and came back from it and made the Olympics and all that stuff," Johnson said in June. "So it's kind of embarrassing. But now I've kind of realized that God had His hand over all of it to help me come to the realization, like, that's not why at all.

"He gave me this ability to dive," Johnson said.

"God kept me alive and He is still giving me the ability to do what I do."

At the Rio Olympics, he competed in the 10-meter men's synchronized platform diving with David Boudia, a three-time Olympian and a fellow Christian. On Aug. 8 they captured the silver.

In July when the pair qualified for the Olympics — Johnson's first and Boudia's third — Johnson was so overwhelmed he

doubled over with emotion before getting out of the pool.

"It's cool because this is exciting, this is fun, but this is not what my identity will be for the rest of my life," a dripping Johnson said. "Yeah, I'm Steele Johnson the Olympian, but at the same time I'm here to love and serve Christ. My identity is rooted in Christ, not in the flips we're doing."

Boudia, who is six years older than Johnson, also said his diving is driven by his faith.

### 'To God be the glory'

"We can't take credit for this," Boudia said. "To God be the glory."

Of the pair, Boudia has the most experience in talking publicly about the connection between his faith and his sport. He has written an entire book about the subject, "Greater Than Gold: From Olympic Heartbreak to Ultimate Redemption," that hit stores a few days before the Olympics began.

In it, he tells how he went from a not particularly observant Catholic upbringing to evangelical Christian through the help of his Perdue University diving coach, Adam Soldati.

Soldati said in a talk he gave at his church just after the close of the 2012 London Olympics, where Boudia won a gold medal, "I am not a diving coach who happens to be



Steele Johnson and David Boudia dive together in synchronized men 10-meter platform (shown here in June). The duo won silver at the Rio Olympics on Aug. 8.

RNS photo

a Christian. But rather I am a Christian, a follower of Christ who happens to be a diving coach."

In his book, Boudia talks about how he was engaged in "a destructive lifestyle" at Perdue and sought his coach's guidance. He

credits his gold medal to his conversion to evangelical Christianity.

"Whatever happens at the end of this Olympic Games is completely out of my control," Boudia said in 2012. "God is totally sovereign over everything." (RNS)

## Christian pop tunes top Douglas' workout playlist



RNS photo

Gabby Douglas competes on the beam during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. At press time, she had won one gold medal in women's team all-around.

**W**hen Olympic gymnast Gabby Douglas listens to her workout playlist, chart-topping songs by Christian music acts are among the ones she hears most.

Douglas, 20, listed "This Is Living" by Hillsong Young and Free and rapper Lecrae when asked by Billboard about her top songs. In a "Self" magazine interview, she cited Building 429's "We Won't Be Shaken" and Veridia's "We Are the Brave."

After Veridia tweeted their thanks, she responded: "Ekkkkkkkk!!! OHHH EMM GEE!! I love you guys! Thanks for making such GREAT uplifting music!!!!!!"

But Douglas, who in 2012 was the first U.S. gymnast to receive both the all-around gold medal and the team gold in a single Olympic Games, also has connections to Judaism.

"My faith is very important to me. I love spinning the dreidel during the holidays," she said in a recent *Teen Vogue* video highlighting her 18 favorite things.

She spoke of her eclectic religious life after returning from the London Olympics four years ago.

"Faith plays a very big role in my life," she said. "I don't know where I would be without it today. I've always been praying for everything. And my mom always exposed me and my siblings to being a Christian and the Bible. I was watching back and looking at the Olympics and my mouth is moving — and that's me praying."

### Varied faith background

She wrote about attending a Pentecostal megachurch in her hometown of Virginia Beach, Virginia, in her book, "Grace, Gold & Glory: My Leap of Faith." She also recalled how in 2004 her mother took an interest in Judaism, observing Shabbat on Friday evenings and driving her and her siblings to a Conservative synagogue.

Douglas said she embraces parts of Jewish culture.

"I really love matzo ball soup and I just had matzo ball soup recently and it's just one of my favorite Jewish meals," she said. (RNS)