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Nurse Debra King (right) checks the blood pressure of a clinic patient in Cerrito, Paraguay, during a medical missions trip that Samford University alumni went on in June.

Photo by Mark Thomas

# MEDICAL MINISTRIES

## Baptist medical university in Paraguay, Samford see opportunities in new partnership

By Neisha Roberts  
The Alabama Baptist

**W**hen missionaries arrived in Paraguay in 1947 it didn't take long for them to recognize the immediate need for medical ministries in that part of South America.

The Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) sent missionary Franklin Fowler and his family to Paraguay in 1949 to start

such a ministry and by 1952 the Baptist Hospital (Hospital Bautista) opened in Paraguay's capital and largest city of Asunción.

Since that time more than 7 million patients have received care. But that's just the start.

### Points of progress

Among the milestones that have blossomed from the hospital are the creation of the Central Medical Baptist University (Universidad Centro Médico Bautista — UCMB); an ownership transfer to Paraguayan Baptists; a medical ministry to Maka Indians; the creation of a vision program, diagnostic unit, obstetrics and gynecology unit, heart institute; the expansion of the intensive care unit and pediatric specialties; and the formation of the Paraguay Baptist Medical Center Foundation (PBMCF)

to provide assistance to the hospital (which receives no outside support and exists in an economy where the average per capita income is \$334 a month).

Notable points of progress are numerous.

Marlin Harris, a member of Wadsworth Baptist Church, Deatsville, and former missionary to Paraguay for 11 years, was able to see this advancement firsthand as the hospital's administrator. He arrived at the hospital just as the school of nursing was opening with only four or five students, he said. Today the school, which offers bachelor's degrees in various fields, sees more than 1,000 students graduate each semester.

One of Harris' main tasks as administrator was to facilitate the transfer of ownership from the Foreign Mission Board to Paraguayan Bap-

tists. And the transition was highly successful, he said.

After retiring, Harris, a Samford University alumnus, founded PBMCF in 1999 and served as its president until 2015 when he became president emeritus.

To Harris there was a clear connection between the ministry growth happening in Paraguay and the progress being made at the recently established College of Health Sciences at Samford, and he could not let that connection go overlooked.

### College of Health Sciences

He met with Samford President Andrew Westmoreland and College of Health Sciences vice provost Nena Sanders and proposed a partnership between the Birmingham school and UCMB in Paraguay.

(See 'Compassion,' page 3)

# COMMENT

## Funding Missions and Ministries in Alabama

**B**udget discussion was brief during the Aug. 12 meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega. After all, the budget goal for 2017 will be the same as the current year — \$40 million.

For the first seven months of this budget year receipts are running at about 98 percent of the goal so it is touch and go about whether Alabama Baptists' 2016 Cooperative Program (CP) budget goal will be met.

Even though the budget goal for 2017 is the same, the internal structure is significantly different. Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) causes will receive \$19,191,762 or 48 percent of the budget. That is up \$400,000 over the current year.

That change was made possible when Samford University in Birmingham offered to reduce its CP funding by \$400,000 in order to increase funding to SBC. A similar reduction is anticipated for the 2018 budget as Alabama moves toward the goal of evenly dividing all CP receipts between SBC causes and Alabama Baptist missions and ministries.

The SBC portion of CP receipts from Alabama Baptist churches has been steadily rising for the past few years — up from 43 percent a few years ago. That change has not come without a cost. For example SBOM staff has been reduced from a high of 121 to its current 67.

### Adjusting to declining budgets

SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance said some of that reduction was purposeful and planned. Other reductions were the result of raising gifts to SBC causes during a period of declining budgets.

Even those staff members who remain have paid a price. Associate Executive Director Bobby DuBois told SBOM members this will be the fifth time in seven years staff members received no raises of any kind. The two times raises were given amounted to 2 percent each time.

In addition, benefits have been reduced. Staff members now have higher copays on medical insurance and higher deductibles.

"It is hard to budget partnership money for church planting and other ministries" in that kind of financial environment, DuBois said in an interview.

That is why the new Myers-Mallory State



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Missions Offering is vital to the future of funding missions and ministries in Alabama.

Until 2016 the state missions offering has supported the work of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). The offering provides about half of WMU's annual budget.

### Offering to expand

Now the offering will expand from a WMU-sponsored offering to a statewide offering adding Disaster Relief (DR), church planting, church revitalization and global partnership missions to the causes it supports. The previous February offering for DR has been rolled into this new state missions offering and the 2016 goal is \$750,000.

The offering will go first to Alabama WMU (\$550,000), then to DR (\$200,000) and anything above those amounts would be divided among the other three areas based on needs at the time.

None of the SBOM portion will go for salaries or benefits. All of the funds will be earmarked for missions and ministries.

It appears Alabama Baptists will increasingly rely on the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering to help fund missions and ministries in the state.

The 2017 goal for the offering approved at the Aug. 12 meeting is \$1 million — a 25 percent increase in the goal.

SBOM has an aggressive church planting program that is producing encouraging results. But it is hard to find money for training church planters given the declining resources, DuBois explained. And money for partnerships in church planting is difficult to find.

When it comes to funding for DR, SBOM is not able to carry money forward as a DR reserve for emergencies, DuBois said. These funds would allow quick responses when disasters happen.

SBOM leaders are approaching the new offering cautiously; not in promotion but in spending the money. No training events are set with the expectation that Myers-Mallory funds will pay for them.

Instead Lance and others are widely sharing the needs and opportunities for funding missions and ministries in Alabama through the offering.

CP remains the primary channel for funding missions and ministries. Funds channeled through CP support all Baptists do together on a state, national and international level.

Some Baptists want to make additional offerings to special needs. That is why Southern Baptists have special missions offerings.

Special offerings for international missions

and missions in North America are well established and annually promoted in most cooperating Baptist churches.

For the first time Alabama Baptists have a state missions offering that will only grow in importance for funding SBOM's missions and ministries.

Just as Baptists in the state have three missions boards — the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions —

we now have three special missions offerings.

### Over and above

Giving to a special missions offering is designed to be over and above what one gives through CP. That is why it is called a "special" missions offering.

For those moved by God's Holy Spirit to go beyond their regular level of giving and to make special offerings for work in Alabama, the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering is a new and exciting opportunity.

The Week of Prayer for State Missions is Sept. 11–18. Pray and then respond as the Lord leads concerning funds for missions and ministries in Alabama. ☩

Myers-Mallory  
State Missions Offering

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE  
NEW STATE MISSIONS OFFERING,  
*visit [myers-mallory.org](http://myers-mallory.org).*

Follow Bob Terry  
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# 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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# 'COMPASSION FOR THE WORLD'

## 'The hand of the Lord was very evident in preparing the way,' volunteer says

(continued from page 1)

That initial meeting took place in April 2015 and by June 2016 the partnership was formalized during a missions trip to Asunción led by Michael Crouch, dean of Samford's College of Health Sciences.

"Paraguay and the people of UCMB in particular were so incredibly warm and welcoming," Crouch said of the June 18-25 trip.

The team of 22 (which included PBMCF board members; nurses; Samford fac-

ulty members in the fields of pharmacy, social work, public health and nursing; and others) participated in five daily clinics in the cities of Yeguarizo, Cerrito, Julián Augusto Saldívar and Luque.

Crouch also participated in UCMB's commencement services and signed documents as part of the formal launch of the partnership.

Mark Thomas, a 1988 Samford grad and PBMCF board member, also was on the June missions trip.

"We believe this partnership will provide many wonderful opportunities for students and faculty members of (both universities)," Thomas said. "The Lord's leadership has been very evident in this partnership proposal, as we have found such a warm and encouraging response from the beginning."

Both universities will participate in faculty/student exchanges through conferences, research projects and student practicums as part of the new partnership. Another aspect in the

works is a weeklong camp for special needs children in Paraguay. Faculty from both universities will lead educational conferences for health care professionals in both locations. Samford and UCMB also will seek to develop ways for UCMB students to participate in seminars and distance learning in graduate level courses conducted at Samford.

For Harris the partnership captures a part of his heart for the ministry in Paraguay, a place he knew the Lord had called him to serve.

He said he is "so grateful to the Lord" for the new bond between UCMB and Samford and foresees "new dimensions of learning" for faculty and students at both institutions.

He also hopes the new partnership will "bring each school's faculty and students closer to Him and help form a strong bond between the two schools and their students."

Thomas, a doctor in pediatric medicine in Tuscaloosa and a member of Woodland Forest Church, Tuscaloosa, said he witnessed the start of that strong bond during the June trip.

"I was struck by the personal warmth and dedication to the teaching mission of both (universities). ... The hand of the Lord was very evident in preparing the way for the partnership to be initiated and in guiding the mutual visions for collaboration of the two groups."

Thomas also said he was amazed at the eagerness of the Paraguayan students to learn.



Photo courtesy of Mark Thomas  
A 93-year-old patient (right) receives an eye examination at a clinic in Paraguay.

## SBOM trustees approve \$40 million CP budget for 2017

Trustees of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) approved a \$40 million Cooperative Program (CP) budget for 2017 during their meeting at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega on Aug. 12.

The budget proposal will go to convention messengers in November for final approval.

While the dollar amount is the same as what was set for 2016, the breakdown between Alabama Baptist ministries and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ministries changed by 1 percent.

The proposed percentages for 2017 are 52 percent for Alabama Baptist causes and 48 percent for SBC causes. The percentage for 2016 was 53/47.

The 1 percent adjustment remains in line with Alabama Baptists' "parity plan" publicized

in 2015, said SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance.

"We are moving more and more to the point of parity by 2020 with the Southern Baptist Convention," Lance told state convention messengers in November 2015. He also noted that the effort to move in that direction actually started in 2010 with specific staffing and budgeting goals.

SBOM staff has been granted two 2 percent salary increases since 2010 while the SBC percentage has increased each year. No salary increase is anticipated for 2017.

#### 67 full-time employees

SBOM staff has decreased in size from 121 in the late 1990s to the current 67 full-time employees, or a decrease of 45.5 percent.

Since 2012, Alabama Baptists have adopted budgets that increase

the SBC allocation by an average of 1 percent annually and will continue until parity with SBC is reached.

All allocations proposed for 2017 remain the same for state convention entities and SBOM's ministry efforts with the exception of Samford University in Birmingham. The largest of the three Alabama Baptist schools will give up \$400,000 of CP funding.

"All of that is going toward the SBC parity," Lance said.

And all gifts coming in above the \$40 million goal will go directly to SBC causes.

SBOM trustees also approved 2017 special offering goals of \$22,200,000:

► Lottie Moon Christmas Offering — \$11,600,000  
► Annie Armstrong Easter Offering — \$6,100,000

## PBMCF forms Harris scholarship fund

To honor Marlin Harris and his years of leadership at Baptist Hospital (Hospital Bautista) in Asunción, Paraguay, the Marlin Harris Scholarship Fund was recently formed by the Paraguay Baptist Medical Center Foundation (PBMCF), which Harris founded in 1999 and now serves as president emeritus.

The scholarship fund, which was voted into place Aug. 8, will provide opportunities for Universidad Centro Médico Bautista students to travel to Samford University in Birmingham as part of the new partnership formed between the two schools (see story, page 1).

For more information on the fund, visit thepbmcf.org. (TAB)

"They treated certain Samford professors like rock stars," he said.

Jane Jones, a former missionary who worked alongside Harris at the hospital in Paraguay and who served as the missions trip liaison and interpreter, wrote in the latest PBMCF newsletter that the "passion, dedication and knowledge demonstrated by both of the groups" bodes well for the future of the partnership.

"But more than that, I was reminded once again of the beauty of the body of believers who are joined in by Christ in mutual love, service and compassion for the world. What more can we ask of a collaboration?" ✠

► Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries — \$2,700,000

► World Hunger Offering — \$800,000

► Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering — \$1,000,000

Bobby DuBois, SBOM associate executive director, assured trustees that those working in SBOM ministries recognize their dependence on the churches to do their work.

"On Jan. 1 of every year we go to zero of what we know we are going to receive from churches," DuBois said. "This works because of the missions spirit and commitment of our churches. We are grateful for that and thankful for that and always try to be good stewards of what you send us."

"We promise to do the very best we can to stretch these dollars as far as we can," he said. (TAB)

Participants in the annual Equip Conference, held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega on July 22–23, hold signs promoting the inaugural Week of Prayer for State Missions and Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

# Passion for missions education



Photo by Carrie Brown McWhorter

## Annual Equip conference encourages, trains missions leaders at Shocco Springs

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Friends of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) gathered July 22–23 at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega to celebrate the launch of a state missions offering, introduce an updated history book and renew their commitment to missions at home and around the world.

Alabama WMU President Anna Speir welcomed more than 350 registered participants to Equip, the organization's annual training workshop. Participants included associational and church WMU leaders, church level missions teachers, missionaries and others who have a passion for missions education.

### Younger generations

Linda Cooper, president of national WMU, addressed conference participants during worship celebrations on Friday and Saturday. Cooper encouraged participants to teach younger generations about the sacrifice and selfless service of mis-

sions leaders who have paved the way. "We are thankful for their contribution, but now it's our turn to reach the lost 'by all means,'" Cooper said, referring to this year's WMU theme taken from 1 Corinthians 9:22.

"The vast lostness in our world can be overwhelming, but we are to be involved in God's mission of making His name known to all the world," Cooper said. "We are listening to the One who is leading us where He wants us to go. All He asks is that we be available and faithful to go."

Throughout the two-day conference there were plenty of opportunities for leaders to get new ideas to energize their missions education programs and to "create a culture of missions in our local churches," said Pat Ingram, Alabama WMU missions and ministry consultant. Children's and preschool leaders heard

about plans for Fall Missions Festival for Children in October, Children's Ministry Day and Children's Missions Explosion, both scheduled for February 2017, and

new ideas for teaching missions-focused programs like Girls in Action (GAs), Royal Ambassadors (RAs), Children in Action and Mission Friends.

Student leaders learned about Student Missions Weekend, a co-ed program held each January at World-Song Missions Place in Cook Springs for students in grades 7–12 that focuses on Bible study, worship and local missions projects.

Adult leaders heard about upcoming state WMU events and resources to aid in planning for the year. Laura Harper, national WMU ministry consultant, reminded adult leaders of the increasing importance of reaching those of other cultures in our communities.

"I am constantly reminded how much God loves people of other cultures and how much He trusts us to love them," Harper said. "In Alabama, God is preparing people to be our partners in sharing the gospel."

More than 100 languages are represented in Alabama, according to Kristy Kennedy, a State Board of Missions associate who leads community ministry efforts including English as a Second Language (ESL) and literacy training.

"Everyone here probably has ESL needs in your community," Kennedy said. "It's a tremendous opportunity."

### Breakout sessions

In addition to leadership training, participants could attend breakout sessions throughout the weekend covering a range of topics including personal ministry, ministering in crisis, effective community ministry and supporting missionary kids and their families.

Missionaries who serve South Asian people groups internationally and in North America spoke of how much they value

their partnerships with Alabama WMU, urging participants to continue to pray for the workers and the people they serve.

"Prayer is not just one component of our strategy," one missionary said. "Prayer is essential."

"Prayer is the work, prayer is the connector," said another. "Satan attacks our families and our children, so pray for our families. Continue praying and watch to see what the Lord is going to do in South Asia."

### Engaging the local church

Participants also heard about opportunities to engage the local church in missions through state initiatives.

Bill Barker, director of Appalachian Regional Ministry and Mississippi River Ministry for the North American Mission Board, thanked Alabama Baptists for their participation in Christmas Backpacks, a ministry to provide school supplies and basic necessities to poor children in his region. Barker said children often write in to say thank you. The No. 1 item they are grateful for is the food, since many of them may not have anything else to eat during the Christmas school break.

In 2015 more than 46,000 backpacks were filled by Southern Baptists and distributed to needy children. Barker said more than 1,300 children had come to faith as a result of the backpack ministry.

Alabama Baptists packed more than 3,000 backpacks in 2015. This year's state goal is 5,000, Ingram said.

On July 22 participants enjoyed a carnival-style State Missions Fair, complete with games and prizes. They also had the opportunity to thank outgoing national WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee for her 16 years of service at a reception in her honor.

Also recognized at the conference were summer staffers at WorldSong and the 17 members of the 2016 class of the Emerging Leaders Forum. Emerging Leaders are teenage girls from around the state who are nominated by their church leaders because they display servant leadership and are actively growing in their walk with the Lord. ✠



Photo by Carrie Brown McWhorter

Candace McIntosh (left), executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), recognizes Wanda Lee (right) for her years of leadership at national WMU.

# 'Part of something historic'



## Inaugural Week of Prayer, Myers-Mallory offering set for September

The inaugural Week of Prayer for State Missions has been set for Sept. 11–18, and churches across Alabama are preparing for the historic launch.

"We've been really impressed with how well the idea has taken hold," said Rick Lance, state missionary and executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "Our churches realize the great need for God to move in our state, and the momentum is growing to make this Week of Prayer a real landmark occasion for the state of Alabama and for our Alabama Baptist churches."

### 'Get excited'

Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Executive Director Candace McIntosh feels the same. "When I think about the thousands of Alabama Baptists who will be agreeing together in prayer, I can't help but get excited about how the Lord will respond to our petitions," she said.

Every pastor in the state received a mailer about the Week of Prayer that coincides with the inaugural Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, and the requests for promotional material and education pieces began to arrive soon after the mailing.

"The staff of Alabama WMU and SBOM joined together to fill hundreds of orders for promotional materials in early August, and the second batch is on its way now," McIntosh said. "We will be mailing out prayer guides, posters and offering envelopes right up to the Week of Prayer and even beyond because some churches choose to observe it at a different date."

Although the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering coincides with the Week of Prayer, funds are received for the state missions offering throughout the year. Each day of the Week of Prayer guide focuses on one of the Great Commission Ministries that stands to benefit from the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

In addition to a daily prayer guide that can be inserted into worship bulletins, churches also have access to five videos, including a short promotional video, a

feature about the Myers-Mallory offering namesakes and three features about some of the people and ministries introduced in the prayer guide.

Doug Rogers, state missionary and SBOM communications director, said, "The Week

of Prayer videos make perfect companions to the prayer guide, whether viewed personally or in a worship service or prayer gathering.

The power of video to make stories come alive will allow Alabama Baptists to see and hear from several people who lead ministries which directly benefit from their prayers and offering gifts."

Lance noted, "We will never have another opportunity to observe the first-ever Week of Prayer for State Missions and Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. That's why it's so exciting to see it taking root and really permeating our churches. We are truly part of something historic in the life of Alabama Baptists. I hope every single church will get involved and really commit to praying fervently for these Great Commission Ministries during the Week of Prayer for State Missions." (SBOM)



**To download promotional materials for the Week of Prayer or Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, visit [myers-mallory.org](http://myers-mallory.org) or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or 334-613-2226.**

## Excitement builds for new missions offering

For some Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) leaders in the state, the upcoming Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering (see story, this page) is filled with excitement.

Maggie Walker, WMU director at Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, Trussville, in St. Clair Baptist Association, said enthusiasm for the offering is building at her church.

### Investing in the future

"I'm excited that it's going to provide funds for Alabama WMU and other ministries to help invest in our future and to provide training and leadership to individuals, teenagers and children," Walker said.

Robyn Rooks, Acteens leader at First Baptist Church, Ashville, also in St. Clair Association, said she has always taught about Kathleen Mallory and how she worked with Alabama Baptists. Adding Martha Myers will add an international perspective for her teens.

"They love to hear stories about international work," she said. "This is a great opportunity to educate them about the women who came before us and the importance of missions giving. In 50 years they could be one of those missions heroes we're talking about." (Carrie Brown McWhorter)

## Women you should know from Alabama WMU history

### Jessie Davis Stakely

During her term as president (1908–1920), Stakely challenged Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) members to fund a hospital for women in Laichowfu, China, to honor Kathleen Mallory. Pledges of \$3,000 got the project started and the main structure was finished in 1917.

### Mrs. W.H. Simpson

Elected in 1912 as Alabama WMU's first missions study chairman, Simpson established a circulating library of missions books to support missions education throughout the state. By 1930 there were 356 books in the circulating library.

### Mary Pool Marshall

Appointed in 1940 she was the first Alabama WMU administrator to be called "executive secretary." The title was

changed to "executive director" in 1984 when Beverly Miller was hired to head the organization.

### Katherine Samford Smith

A leader and benefactor of Alabama WMU, Smith (president, 1957–1963) was the first woman to represent Alabama on the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board). The former Smith Camp at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, named in her honor, was home to Girls in Action camps for 25 years.

### Mary Essie Stephens

As Alabama WMU executive director (1954–1984), Stephens traveled internationally to partner with WMU women in other countries for training and fellowship, the first director to do so.

## New offering to support, supplement

Why have a state missions offering?" asked Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, in a recent video about the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering (see story, this page).

The offering would both support vital ministries — such as Alabama WMU, Disaster Relief, church planting and revitalization — and supplement what is already being done through the Cooperative Program.

"Let's joyfully look forward to a time in which we can celebrate ... what God is going to be doing through the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering." (TAB)



LANCE

*These and many more stories of the women who have guided missions education and giving in Alabama are told in "Declaring His Glory: 125 Years of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union," available in print and Kindle format at Amazon.com.*

# 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.

## CHILTON

► **West End Church, Clanton**, will hold Celebration Sunday to celebrate its 67th anniversary and dedicate the new sanctuary Sept. 25, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. To RSVP call the church office at 205-755-0625 or email [jan.fike@webconline.org](mailto:jan.fike@webconline.org). Mike Shaw is interim pastor.

## COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **Highland Park Church, Muscle Shoals**, will host the Colbert-Lauderdale Association fall evangelism kick off Sept. 25. Tailgating in the parking lot will begin at 4 p.m. and the kick off will follow at 6 p.m. Kevin Hamm, pastor of First Church, Gardendale, will speak. Area football coaches will share testimonies. Natalie Askew will perform special music. Brett Pitman is pastor. Eddy Garner is director of missions.

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Pleasant Valley No. 2 Church, Collinsville**, will hold revival services Sept. 11-17. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday services will be at 6:30 nightly. Speakers will be Gregory Johnson, Sunday morning; Lynn Darnell, Sun-

day night; Tex Martin, Monday; Wayne White, Tuesday; Glenn Bruce, Wednesday; Chris Watkins, Thursday; Nick Davis, Friday; and Mark Erion, Saturday. Jerry Darnell is pastor.

## WEST CULLMAN

► **Mack "Mackey" Watts** is the new pastor of **Mount Hope Church, Crane Hill**.



WATTS

He previously served as associate pastor for First Church, Addison. He also served at Walnut Grove Church, Decatur, and Sardis Church, Addison. He holds an associate's degree and is pursuing a bachelor's degree from Andersonville Seminary in Camilla, Georgia. He and his wife, Candy, have one child.

## MOBILE

► **First Church, Irvington**, will celebrate Ole South Day on Sept. 24, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Festivities will include period music, basket making, a blacksmith, arts

and crafts and more. Ron Griffin is pastor. ► **Lafitte Church, Saraland**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sept. 23-25. Friday and Saturday services will be at 6:30 p.m. Sunday service will be at 10:30 a.m. Darrel Jenning will create chalk art and The Kendricks will perform special music Friday. Former staff and former members making up various ensembles and the adult choir will perform special music Saturday. Former pastor Grant Barber will preach Sunday with additional guest speakers David Atchison, J. Clement Casey, Ted Mashburn, Charles "Chip" Travis, Jonathan Hill and Tammy Anderson. Lunch will follow. Billy Kendrick is pastor.

## RUSSELL

► **Golden Acres Church, Phenix City**, will host a simulcast of Living Proof with Beth Moore on Sept. 17, 10:15 a.m.-5:15 p.m. Child care will be available. For individual registration visit [www.gabpc.com](http://www.gabpc.com). For group registration contact Jenna Carrick at 706-718-6301 or [jennamcarrick@gmail.com](mailto:jennamcarrick@gmail.com). Ray Cummings is pastor.

## SELMA

► **Plantersville Church** will celebrate homecoming Sept. 11. The Revelators will perform special music at 9:45 a.m. in lieu of Sunday School. Worship will be at 10:45 a.m. Former pastor Mike Golson will speak. Lunch will follow. Don Stephens is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR

► **Cropwell Church, Pell City**, will hold the women's conference "Faith to Overcome" on Sept. 24, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Sherri Burgess, author of "Bronner: A Journey to Understand" and wife of Rick Burgess of the Rick & Bubba Show, will speak. Doors will open at 8:15 a.m. For tickets and more information call the church office at 205-338-7995. Also **Phillip Burden** resigned as pastor of Cropwell Church after eight years. He will serve as pastor of First Church, Ozark, Missouri.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Flatwoods Church, Northport**, will celebrate its 125th anniversary Aug. 28, 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. A time of fellowship will begin after lunch with activities for kids and adults. To RSVP call the church office at 205-339-3111 or email [flatwoodsanniversary@gmail.com](mailto:flatwoodsanniversary@gmail.com). Geoff Elrod is pastor. ☩

# ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

## Paint Rock Baptist Pastor King to retire

Charles "Charlie" King, pastor of Paint Rock Missionary Baptist Church, will retire Aug. 28 with a special service of baptisms and an ordination.

King began serving as pastor of Paint Rock Missionary Baptist on Jan. 1, 2002, after retiring from Computer Industry Digital Equipment Corporation and serving in pulpit supply for several other churches. He also served as director of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary North Alabama Extension Center in Huntsville.

He established Four Soils Ministry Bible School, a free Internet Bible school for the purpose of supplying worldwide Bible instruction at no charge to students. King later founded Wicket Gate Bible College as an additional Internet training that provides free resources for students to gain the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in Bible studies.

King holds a bachelor's degree from Florence State University (now the University of North Alabama), a master's degree from Georgia State University in Atlanta and another from Southeastern Institute of Technology in Huntsville and a doctorate from Covington Theological Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

During a retirement dinner held Aug. 6 at the church, several people announced they would like to be baptized by King on his last Sunday. One man also said he would like to be ordained into the ministry.

The Tennessee River Baptist Association church, which will celebrate its 110th anniversary this year, also built a family life center during King's tenure.

King and his wife of 48 years, Patricia, have two children and 10 grandchildren. (Hannah Muñoz)



KING

## New Faith Baptist founding pastor retires

Ted Blalock, founding pastor of New Faith Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, retired as pastor July 10. He started New Faith Baptist in August 1993 and served as pastor until his retirement. He now serves as pastor emeritus.

Blalock was ordained at Main Street Baptist Church, Brighton, in April 1972 and began serving as pastor. He then served as pastor of Chulafinnee Baptist Church, Heflin, in 1975 before returning to lead Main Street Baptist from 1989 to 1993.

While serving as pastor, Blalock also worked for McDonald's as a supervisor and trainer from 1964 to 1988. He later worked at Hired Hand and GSI Group, a designer and manufacturer of agricultural equipment in Bremen. He retired as the safety director in August.

He and his wife of 52 years, Claudine, started Dorsey Creek Community Mission Church, Bremen, in August 2011. Blalock previously served as director and will now begin serving as pastor, moving into his 45th year of ministry.

The couple has two living children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Their son, Teddie Jr., died Oct. 11, 2014. (Hannah Muñoz)



BLALOCK

## REFLECTIONS



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# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## The Person of Christ

# Humility and Meekness

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

**T**his week we begin looking at the person of Christ in terms of His personality traits. To be sure, the distinctive characteristics or qualities that Christ manifested during His incarnate days are many.

One that stands out is humility. His coming in human flesh was itself prime evidence of humility.

Such is the thrust of the oft-quoted message of Philippians 2:6-8, that Christ “who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Both the incarnation and crucifixion bear testimony to the humility of Christ.

### Christ’s humility

Christ’s humility can be seen in His unpretentiousness. He did not put on airs or play to the gallery, as we might say. He did not conform Himself to many of the common expectations of His religious contemporaries. He gladly kept company with sinners and outcasts.

At the climax of His earthly ministry, He entered Jerusalem on a lowly donkey. Nothing about His words or deeds leaves the impression that He sought to enhance His reputation in order to gain recognition and applause. In fact, He made Himself of no reputation, as attested in the verses from Philippians cited above.

He chose for His closest companions and fellow ministers men from common occupations, fishermen and a tax collector, instead of men of noble birth. He felt no compulsion to surround Himself with people from the higher rungs on the social ladder.

### Divine right laid aside

Humility also is detected in His self-forgetfulness for the sake of others. When He took the role of a servant in washing the disciples’ feet the night before the cross, He not only laid aside

His robe but also His divine right as the Son of God and Lord of Lords.

### ‘Lowly in heart’

Christ’s meekness was the handmaiden of His humility. His testimony in Matthew 11:29 was, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem was couched in an image of lowliness. With echoes of Zechariah 9:9, the Bible says the implicit message that day was, “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, gentle and riding on a donkey.’”

Both in that time and in ours, the term “meekness” suggests weakness. However, the idea is better understood as great strength being kept under control. It is the refusal to be self-assertive even though one might possess the right and power to be assertive.

What Christ demonstrated in His earthly life at the point of lowliness and meekness is what the Bible commands for His followers. First Peter 5:5b-6 tells us, “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble,” before commanding, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.”

### Powerful example

Indeed Christ presents to us a powerful example of what humility and lowliness looked like in sandaled feet. In a society that promotes pride and assertiveness, people need to see what it looks like today in shoe leather.

Remember that Jesus promised, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). ✠

*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.*



# Learn how to heal from shame at upcoming conference in state

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

**S**hame is a feeling often associated with guilt, but psychiatrist Curt Thompson argues that shame comes from a much deeper place inside each of us — the soul.

Thompson will be in Birmingham on Sept. 30 to lead “The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves,” a one-day conference based on his book of the same title. The conference is presented by Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), with special support from the Department of Social Work at Samford University in Birmingham and *The Alabama Baptist*.

“Shame is one of the top underlying issues we see in counseling,” said Lisa Keane, clinical director for Pathways. “Shame is something we experience early in our lives and those false messages become the templates from which we operate in life and cloud how we see different circumstances in life.” The impact of shame is evident in marriage and post-trauma counseling, as well as in counseling with teens and small children, Keane said. Christian therapists seek to help clients identify the false messages of shame and replace them with healthier messages about what God says about us.

“As believers we often misconstrue shame versus guilt. We need a very honest, open conversation about how to address this topic theologically as well as psychologically,” Keane said. “The Lord has blessed Dr. Thompson to beautifully address this topic with a humble, authentic heart that desires to help others find healing.”

### ‘Emotional weapon’

In his books and presentations, Thompson helps counselors and others understand the significance of shame from a Christian perspective. In “The Soul of Shame,” Thompson argues that since the Garden of Eden shame has been an “emotional weapon that evil uses to corrupt our relationships with God and each other.” The result of shame is that believers are prevented from effectively using their God-given gifts of “vocational vision and creativity,” Thompson writes, preventing them from daily shining the light of Jesus in their jobs, their homes and their families.

“Evil is a real thing and it is intent to starve us of beauty and goodness. And shame is the tool that it wields more effec-

tively than any other,” Thompson writes.

The good news is that Jesus is no stranger to shame, he said.

“God knows all about shame, and not just as an abstract idea from which He has been immune to experience,” Thompson writes. “It is something that He knows all too well because He has been to its very center — and has lived to tell about it.”

God desires to tell a very different story, one about “healing our shame, changing our brains and setting us free to create as we never have before,” Thompson writes.

### Healing process

During the conference Thompson will address the role of storytelling in the healing process and how healing from shame can liberate individuals and communities to realize broader vocational possibilities.

Rod Marshall, ABCH president, said counselors who understand the role of shame in the human experience are better equipped to help those who struggle to tell their stories and find healing. Conference participants will appreciate Thompson’s thoughtful examination of shame as a universal struggle of the human race as they learn practical ways to help patients resolve conflicts directly related to the effect of shame, including how to better incorporate spiritual practices into the counseling process, he said.

**‘The Soul of Shame’ conference will be held Sept. 30 at Pathways Professional Counseling, 2681 Rocky Ridge Lane, Birmingham. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the conference begins at 8:30. Opportunity to earn continuing education credits is available. Seating is limited, so pre-registration is recommended. For more information or to register for the conference, visit [www.pathwaysprofessional.org](http://www.pathwaysprofessional.org) or call 205-945-0037.**

“Professional counselors, pastors and interested lay leaders will leave this conference enlightened, challenged and motivated to better understand the shame-based struggles faced every day by their fellow sojourners,” Marshall said. “Dr. Thompson is a bold pioneer into the intersection of Christian spirituality and neurobiology, yet he does an excellent job of translating his findings into challenging, yet accessible terms.”

In addition to his private practice Thompson is the founder of Being Known, an organization that develops resources to educate and train leaders about the intersection between interpersonal neurobiology, Christian spiritual formation and vocational creativity. He also is the author of “Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices That Can Transform Your Life and Relationships,” which looks at the connection between brain science and spiritual practices.

Thompson’s focus of clinical and research interest has been the integration of psychiatry, its associated disciplines and Christian spirituality. ✠

# Expanding missions

## WorldSong Missions Place offers summer camp, missions training year-round

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Another successful summer of camping fun at WorldSong Missions Place in Cook Springs is complete, and more missions education opportunities are planned for fall.

WorldSong welcomed 639 campers and 25 camp staff members in June and July during eight camp sessions. Girls in grades 2–12 experienced Missions Adventure Camp (MAC), while younger girls had the opportunity to bring their moms along for Mom & Me camps. During MAC for Children, girls and boys completing grades 2–6 shared in the fun.

Every week of summer 2016 was guided by the theme “Following and Forging,” inspired by Isaiah 52:7: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”

### ‘Where our feet are’

“Each week campers learned that our mission begins right where our feet are,” said camp director Hope Stephens. “There are lots of different ways we can be on mission, and we can follow the example of missionaries such as Paul, Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Dr. Martha Myers who have come before us.”

Campers also heard what a life on mission might look like from resident camp missionaries Tim and Charlotte Cearley of Montgomery. The Cearleys retired from the International Mission Board in 2015 after 33 years on the missions field. During their service they lived in five countries in Africa and learned four languages to further their work. The 10 years the Cearleys spent in Mozambique, the focal country of MAC 2016, provided an opportunity to talk to young Alabamians about the need for missionaries to continue the work of starting churches in Africa to reach people groups across the continent.

To emphasize missions in Africa, WorldSong campers were challenged to raise \$4,000 to build a new well in a village in Mozambique.

“Our campers blew that goal out of the water, raising more than \$4,100,” Stephens said. “This will pay to build a new well and also

provide funds to make necessary maintenance and repairs on several other wells.”

Campers also were encouraged to forge ahead and make paths of their own, a mission reinforced by the various Camper’s Choice activities offered during each week of camp. Campers exercised their creative energies in activities like arts and crafts, dance, flags and Rhythm & Beats and their physical energies in activities that included canoeing, archery, hiking, outdoor cooking, rock climbing and other sports, as well as swimming and a ropes course.

Kaley Stephens, MAC program and activities director, said the skills campers learn in Camper’s Choice activities help them see their interests in light of the gospel.

“We are each a messenger with beautiful feet because we carry the good news of Christ. We may carry it to our friend or neighbor, or we may carry it around the world to Africa or Asia, but either way,

our beautiful feet carry a beautiful heart full of the beautiful good news of salvation through Jesus,” Kaley Stephens said.

The example of the missionaries and the counselors will be one of the lasting memories of camp, according to Virginia, a 15-year-old camper.


“I enjoyed the passion for Christ that the counselors shared with us through everything they did,” she said. “Whether they were teaching us to dance or simply speaking with us at mealtimes, they influenced me immensely, and I really appreciate that.”

Worship is another unforgettable part of camp, as parents and leaders learned at each camp’s closing worship rally. The enthusiastic singing and dancing to praise music that campers enjoyed throughout their week at WorldSong still echoes in the chapel in the final moments of each camp.

Twelve-year-old Klaire said her Camper’s Choice dance class was



Photo courtesy of WorldSong



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her favorite thing about camp.

“It was just really fun to worship without having to be quiet,” she said.

In contrast, nightly Vespers worship is quiet, reflective and powerful, said Sarah Catherine, 13.

As program director for the past three years, Kaley Stephens said she continues to be amazed by what God does at WorldSong each summer.

### Personal growth


“It is so encouraging to see campers and staff grow throughout the summer. WorldSong is being used as a platform to expand missions,” she said.

That platform will continue into the fall and winter, though not quite at the same pace as summer.

WorldSong will host two sessions each of the Fall Missions Festival for Children on Oct. 7–8 and Oct. 14–15 and the Adults Falls Missions Festival on Oct. 18 and Oct. 20. Student Missions Weekend will be held Jan. 20–21, 2017. The events will focus on

Norway, the subject of the 2016 national Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) International Mission Study and will include food, customs, crafts and other activities related to living out the Great Commission in Norway. In April 2017, WorldSong will hold Mom & Me Spring Fling for girls in grades K–3 and their moms, and then in June 2017 summer camps will start once again. For the summer 2017 camp schedule and information about upcoming events at WorldSong, visit [www.alabamawmu.org/camp](http://www.alabamawmu.org/camp) or contact Alabama WMU at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325.

WorldSong facilities also are available for one-day and overnight retreats from January to May and August to December. Recreation options, including team-building adventure rec and ropes course programs, are available. For more information about these programs, as well as facility rentals and lodging options and rates, visit [www.alabamawmu.org/worldsongbooking](http://www.alabamawmu.org/worldsongbooking).



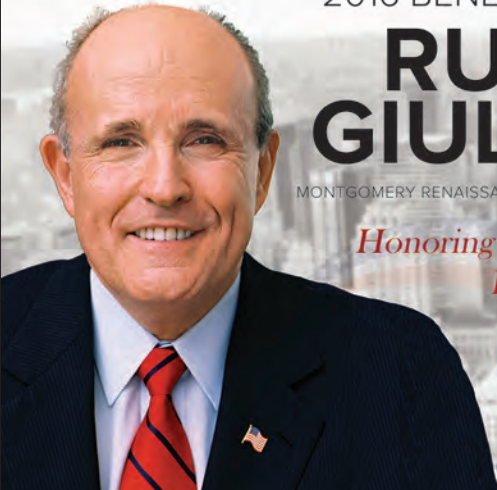
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# GuideStone restructures staff, 59 take voluntary retirement

GuideStone Financial Resources has realigned certain job responsibilities and restructured its workforce as part of its effort to identify and implement new ways to become more efficient. It also announced in July three new executive of-

ficers promoted from within the organization.

The restructuring dovetails GuideStone's update to its long-range plan, GuideStone 100, and flows from the 2015 theme, "Year of Efficiency," when the Southern Baptist Convention entity

sought new efficiencies in people, processes and policies. And the changes come as the entity looks to carry the ministry to its centennial in 2018, and beyond 2020.

"These steps we have taken will enable us to further enhance our ministry as we prepare to enter the

second century of our service to Southern Baptists, while maintaining optimum staffing levels going forward," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said in an Aug. 15 news release.

In the spring GuideStone offered an early voluntary retire-

ment option to qualified employees 55 years of age or older. Fifty-nine individuals — about half those eligible and about 10 percent of GuideStone employees — chose the early retirement package.

Nine employees were unable to be accommodated in open positions and were offered severance packages. Many positions were combined or redeployed, and many other employees were reassigned to open positions.

Staff restructuring was not complete until early August, according to Roy Hayhurst, department head of denominational and public relations services at GuideStone.

"Only after (restructuring was complete) did we feel free to communicate the scope of this (with those outside of GuideStone)," Hayhurst told *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB).

GuideStone now has 427 employees after restructuring, where the previous number was 495, Hayhurst told TAB.

GuideStone previously reduced its headcount in 2008–2009 through a combination of attrition and a similar voluntary retirement program, but Hayhurst said he did not have the employee count prior to this reduction.

Hawkins said of the transitions, "The balance between ministry and God-honoring business practices is what we deal with every day. In maintaining this balance we are guided by our mission statement, drawn from Psalm 78:72, that reminds us we are 'serving those who serve the Lord with the integrity of our hearts and the skillfulness of our hands.'"

As GuideStone participants have indicated a desire for a more self-serve, Internet-based operation, internal reviews found ways of reducing the workforce without adversely impacting services.

## Three positions added

Several department responsibilities shifted during the restructuring, including the Customer Service Center, which was merged with the retirement and insurance areas to provide continued excellent service.

The addition of three new executive officers from within GuideStone ranks, announced during the entity's July 25–26 trustee meeting, was part of the restructuring.

Mark Borchardt was named chief services and operations officer; Harry Nelson, who joined GuideStone in 2013, was named chief strategic investment officer; and Harold Loftin, also with the entity since 2013, was named chief legal officer and general counsel. (BP, TAB)



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July 31, 2016

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The theme selected by *The Alabama Baptist* is "*The Alabama Baptist* — making a difference." With this in mind, you will be able to stay apprised of information about missions in Alabama, in North America, and around the world. The comprehensive coverage of the recent mission involvement by Alabama Baptists in various places represents a unique service on the part of *The Alabama Baptist*.

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As long-time readers and supporters of *The Alabama Baptist*, we highly recommend it to you as a valuable resource of information and inspiration. Thank you for all you do for the cause of Christ and also for your support of Great Commission Ministries through the Cooperative Program. God bless you and yours.

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## Polish skills in 8-week stints

Samford University's Ministry Training Institute (MTI) in Birmingham has added three new online programs as well as five additional extension locations. And there's still time to sign up for the current term if you act this week.

The new extension sites are located in Huntsville, Albertville, Gadsden, Heflin and Trussville. That brings the total number of teaching locations to 26.

MTI also offers online training and certificates. Three new online certificates launched this fall cover global missions, worship leadership and ministry communication.

*The Alabama Baptist* is partnering with Samford to offer the certificate in ministry communication.

MTI also offers certificate programs in pastoral leadership and student ministry.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/mticlasses](http://tinyurl.com/mticlasses). (Rachel Williams)

# Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



### 50 Years Ago August 1966

An article in an August issue of *The Alabama Baptist* features a photo of Corporal Ted Barnett and his bride, the former Sheryl Standridge, holding a Bible after their wedding ceremony. The Bible, lost in Vietnam by the Marine, found its way to Birmingham in time for the couple's wedding.

Barnett, a Southern Baptist, was wounded in combat and was evacuated to a hospital where he discovered he had lost his Bible, which was a gift from his fiancée. Barnett had received the Bible a year earlier and carried it throughout his tour of Vietnam. He sent a friend to look for the Bible while he was recovering in the hospital, but it was not found. Barnett was transferred back to the United States where he had little hope of ever seeing the Bible again.

Finally a crew chief on a helicopter found Barnett's Bible in his chopper and gave it to the Southern Baptist chaplain for Marine Aircraft Group 36. The Bible

arrived in Birmingham three days before Barnett's wedding.

### 100 Years Ago August 1916

The church-to-church Sunday School campaign of Tuskegee Baptist Association came to a close Aug. 31. Workers were divided into two teams that covered the entire association, which was comprised of churches in Macon, Lee, Russell and Tallapoosa counties. Lessons were given in Sunday School pedagogy and teacher training in an aim to better the association's Sunday Schools.

### 150 Years Ago August 1866

The paper provided dates and

locations for associational meetings in Tuskegee, Eufaula and Bethlehem associations. One of the reasons this was made readily available was because messengers were appointed by the state convention to visit most if not all of the associations in the state, and these brethren needed to have availability of the times and places of the meetings so that they could make arrangements to attend them.

A lecture was given in a Baptist house of worship by Dr. Samson on the subjects of Palestine and Jerusalem. The proceeds of his lecture were to go to the replenishment of three Sunday School libraries in the town's churches. †

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

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**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR**  
Springdale Baptist Church, Tarrant, Alabama, is searching for bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 101 Springdale Rd., Tarrant, AL 35217.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR**  
Hopewell Baptist Church, Hanceville, Ala. accepting resúmes for bivocational pastor. Mail to: 1827 1st Avenue N., Apt. 704, Birmingham, AL 35203. Email to: [HopewellPSC@gmail.com](mailto:HopewellPSC@gmail.com). Deadline: September 30, 2016.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR**  
Antioch Baptist Church, Bynum, is looking for a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Antioch Baptist Church, P.O. Box 702, Bynum, AL 36253.

### BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

### BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH

Montevallo First Baptist Church is receiving applicants for a part-time, bivocational minister of youth. Resúmes and inquiries may be sent to: [mfbcbellsouth.net](mailto:mfbcbellsouth.net).

### STUDENT MINISTER

The Baptist Church at McAdory in McCalla, Alabama. Minister to students grades 7-12. Send resúmes to: Personnel Committee, 4954 Eastern Valley Rd., McCalla, AL 35111.

### DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Columbia Baptist Association, Dothan, Ala., is accepting resúmes for the position of director of missions. Resúmes may be submitted to Search Team Chairman Allen Singley at [broadlen@gbcdothan.org](mailto:broadlen@gbcdothan.org) or mail to 2400 Forrester Road Dothan, AL 36301.

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### MISCELLANEOUS

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**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.

# Rashional THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

## SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

### When news reporters get it wrong

The print version of the article hit the newsstands the day after the interview. The digital version was live only hours after the reporter wrapped up her questions.

My kind of reporting — immediate. But with that kind of turnaround also comes the potential for mistakes.

I knew the potential so I carefully pointed out the misunderstandings made by other reporters earlier in the day, but she made other errors.

And I will admit it was frustrating to see my name in print as having said something I did not say and having described something in words I would never use.

Plus everyone personally acquainted with the story knew what was incorrect in the article, so my pride kicked in because I feared they wouldn't know it was a reporting error and would think it was my mistake.

I had a decision to make. Would I contact the reporter and yell at her or would I think about the situation calmly and be part of the solution rather than create more havoc?

Being a journalist and knowing what it is like to be on the other side of the situation, I decided to be part of the solution.

Yes, she made mistakes in the reporting, so she needed to correct the information.

That's where I started.

### Correcting the facts

I emailed her to thank her for covering the story and turning it around so quickly. I also noted that I understand the difficulty of trying to grasp every angle of a story in a matter of about 30 minutes, then write a story on it in less than two hours.

It is similar to being assigned a research topic in school — something you are not personally familiar with — and having to crank out a summary of the most important points of the topic in a few hours.

Yes, those who carry the reporter title have (or should have) been trained to do the job and are more versatile than most to know which parts of the story are vital and which can be left out. But it is still a tremendous amount of pressure to reconcile in your own mind what exactly the story is and then to relay all the points with perfect factual accuracy.

### Focusing on the facts

And you also have the challenge of knowing for sure who the expert is on the subject and who isn't as well as working to keep the source on topic so you don't get distracted with unnecessary pieces of information.

Print journalists have an advantage over broadcast journalists because they have a little more time to verify the facts of the story and work to gain a better understanding, but in all news reporting cases, time is extremely limited.

My recent personal experience with being misquoted reminded me of how grateful I am when those we report on in Baptist life take the time to provide information for us in advance so we have a better chance of reporting accurately. It also helps to have the basic who, what, when, where, why and how spelled out in a fact sheet or news release of some sort to save us time chasing down those basic bits of information.

I also realize how all of us can improve our communication in general by remembering that those outside our bubbles cannot understand the parts of the stories we are living at the same level we do. Using slang terms makes for insider language others might misinterpret. Leaving out important details or making assumptions also causes confusion.

Telling our stories clearly and succinctly — and showing a bit of grace — goes a long way for the greater good. ☞

# RASHIONAL Extras ...



## The 5 marks of authentic leadership

### Influence matters, but it's not the whole package

By Michael Hyatt  
www.michaelhyatt.com

#### 1. Authentic leaders have insight.

Sometimes we refer to this as vision, but that usually has exclusive reference to the future. While leaders must have vision, they need more.

In one passage, the Bible talks about the soldiers in King David's army. About the men of Issachar, it says they "understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chron. 12:32). This is what I mean by insight.

Leaders need wisdom and discernment for the present. They need to be able to look at complex situations, gain clarity and determine a course of action.

#### 2. Authentic leaders demonstrate initiative.

Leaders go first. They don't sit on the sidelines. They don't ask others to do what they are unwilling to do themselves. Instead, they lead by example. This is what distinguishes leaders from theoreticians and armchair quarterbacks.

This kind of initiative is indispensable because it instills confidence and courage and communicates the kind of dedication that earns trust.

#### 3. Authentic leaders exert influence.

It's no coincidence that influence and influenza come from the same root word. Real leaders are contagious. People "catch" what they have.

People are drawn to their vision

and their values. They are able to gather a following and move people to act.

#### 4. Authentic leaders have impact.

The measure of leadership cannot be found in the leader. It's found in the impact the leader has on his or her followers.

At the end of the day, leaders make a difference. They're either instrumental in creating real and lasting change or they're not leaders. They're just entertainers.

#### 5. Authentic leaders exercise integrity.

Not every leader is benevolent. We can all think of leaders in business, politics or ministry that have insight, initiative, influence and impact. But when we look at their lives and legacies, we can see something is still missing — something big.

What is it? Their lives are not integrated with the highest values. Integrity — or the lack thereof — ultimately determines the quality of a person's impact. In a sense, this is the foundation of authentic leadership.

Leaders must be deliberate and intentional if they are to be successful.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Excerpt from author and virtual mentor Michael Hyatt's July 20 blog post on [www.michaelhyatt.com](http://www.michaelhyatt.com). Hyatt is former chairman and CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers and now focuses on helping "high achievers win at work and succeed at life." ☞

"I know that there are so many people who are walking through what seems like hopeless circumstances. That's why I really want to take the opportunity during concerts to speak life, offer hope and just to encourage people to hang in there. ... The Lord is able to work all this for your good, and He is wanting to take you to a deeper place with Him and the only way to do that is to walk through the trenches. It's during this training period and refining season when the Lord is able to shape us, strengthen us and sustain us as we fully rely on Him and lean into His Word daily."

**Meredith Andrews**  
Singer/songwriter

@LDukeAL

Only when you are dissatisfied with the way things are will you make deep changes.

In response to your June 2 "Rashional Thoughts," I like the closet idea with turning hangers.

What I did this past year to remove stress from my life and clutter from my mind was remove every piece of clothing in my closet that didn't fit. Throw away all those sizes I once was and think I will be again — they just remind me every time I enter my closet that I am not what I want to be size-wise.

If you think about it, that means every morning starts by coming face-to-face with your failures and disappointments. How hard that makes it to start the day with a positive attitude.

Do away with all of it, knowing that someone else can use it. The cleaned-out closet may not have

that many clothes in it, but what is in there will fit and you will feel better about yourself.

Then when you do start losing weight, it is such a great feeling to donate that pair of pants that has gotten way too big.

Same process goes for shoes that hurt your feet.

Also give yourself permission to do things well, while realizing that isn't the same as doing things perfectly. My dad instilled in me the idea that you should give 110 percent to everything you do. It took a long time of frustration with myself, from trying to be the 110-percenter in every facet of my life all the time, that I realized that wasn't feasible. Sometimes you have to real-

ize there is just one 110 percent of you to go around and pick the things that can be done at, say, 70 percent and still be satisfactory.

**Kathy Dean**  
University of Mobile

Follow me on Twitter  
@RashionalThts or  
email me at [jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org).

# Gov. Bentley's lottery bill passes Senate; Aug. 24 deadline to make November ballot

Gov. Robert Bentley's lottery bill (SB 3), sponsored by Sen. Jim McClendon, R-Springville, passed the Alabama Senate 21-12 late in the day Aug. 19.

The bill is Bentley's attempt to address the \$85 million Medicaid shortfall, even though he claimed last year gambling was not the answer.

The bill, which garnered lots of attention from senators attempting to edit it with their own amendments, would create a statewide and Powerball lottery as well as a commission to oversee and regulate the gambling system.

Sen. Greg Reed, R-Jasper, was successful in getting 10 percent of lottery proceeds set aside for education.

An amendment by Sen. Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville, prevents lottery revenue from being used in advertising for the lottery, and an amendment by Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, keeps legislators and their families from working for the lottery.

## Down to wire

At press time the bill was set to be debated in the House of Representatives on Aug. 23.

For a proposal to make it on the Nov. 8 ballot for Alabamians to vote on, it would have to pass through both houses by Aug. 24. McClendon's other lottery bill

was just one vote shy of passing earlier in the week, with 20 in favor and 11 against. Four senators abstained from voting.

If that bill, which Sen. Bill Holtzclaw, R-Madison, called a "train wreck," had passed it would have allowed the placement of electronic gambling machines in VictoryLand in Shorter, Greenetrack in Eutaw, the Birmingham Race Course, the Mobile Greyhound Park and in Houston and Lowndes counties. It

also would have allowed a gambling compact with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

In a statement issued Aug. 16, Attorney General Luther Strange said he is "personally opposed" to a lottery, but "if [Bentley's bill] passes as proposed and is followed by responsible enabling legislation, my legal team believes it will create a limited lottery without the kinds of loopholes that will lead to casino gambling." (TAB)

# Latest ruling against illegal gambling 'significant victory'

The gambling machines and more than \$191,000 in cash seized from Frontier Bingo in Knoxville during a raid in 2014 will remain with the state, Greene County Circuit Court ruled Aug. 15.

The confiscated cash will be transferred to the state's General Fund and the illegal electronic bingo machines will be destroyed.

The court's siding with the State of Alabama is "a significant victory for the rule of law in Greene County," Attorney General Luther Strange said.

"Electronic bingo is unlawful within the State of Alabama and today's ruling is further evidence that the law is being enforced."

In other news, a miscommuni-

cation between Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford and Macon County Racing Commission Chairman Luther Curry prompted reports of a Sept. 6 opening for VictoryLand in Shorter. A firm opening date for the casino has not been set, however, according to VictoryLand owner Milton McGregor.

Although the Alabama Supreme Court ruled against VictoryLand in its March 31 ruling concerning the legality of the casino's electronic bingo machines, McGregor has continued to move forward with plans to get the gambling facility's doors reopened. For the full story, visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) and search "Final court ruling against VictoryLand." (Maggie Walsh)



## Jerry Dykes

### Retired FBC Sylacauga minister dies at 74

Jerry Dykes, retired minister at First Baptist Church, Sylacauga, died July 3. He was 74.

Dykes began his ministry at First, Sylacauga, in 1971 as minister of youth and music. During his 36 years of ministry, he served in many other capacities at the church including administration, senior adult ministry and leading various choirs and ensembles before retiring in 2007. Through First, Sylacauga, Dykes led several missions trips with different choirs from the church.



DYKES

He also was a founding member of the Alabama Singing Men and received the Paul Stewart Music Award. He was a member of the Alabama Baptist Convention Education and Music Association.

Dykes held a bachelor's degree from Troy University and was pursuing a master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, when he enlisted in the United States Army. He was honorably discharged after serving in the Vietnam War. He then taught at Jefferson Davis Junior College in Brewton.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Dinah; two children; and two grandchildren. (Hannah Muñoz)

## VOICE YOUR OPINION

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### Remember to:

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

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— NOT SOLD IN STORES —

# Alabama Baptist DR deploys to Louisiana

By Neisha Roberts  
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) has answered the request from Louisiana for assistance after recent flooding impacted more than 40,000 homes, with about 75 percent of them being deemed a "total loss." At least 13 people were reported dead as of Aug. 19 and President Barack Obama declared the historic flooding a major disaster.

Alabama DR sent two shower units to Baton Rouge from the DR relief center in Prattville on Aug. 19.

Columbia and Baldwin Baptist association mud-out crews made their way south Aug. 21 as did Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association's mud-out crew Aug. 22. A laundry unit from Washington Baptist Association was on stand-by at press time.

But Alabama DR is not the only group going to the trenches, literally, to help those impacted by the torrential rains.

Four kitchen units (each with a



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Two shower units from the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief relief center in Prattville were deployed to Louisiana on Aug. 19.

capacity of 10,000 meals per day) sent by Southern Baptist DR were operational by Aug. 18 and staffed by volunteers from Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. At press time, Texas Baptist Men were scheduled to

help in the Lake Arthur area.

According to David Melber, vice president for Send Relief of the North American Mission Board, "The four key meal preparation areas will be located at Baptist churches (in Baton Rouge, Hammond, Lafayette and Walker). Additionally we have 16 other Baptist churches set up as defined worksites."

*The Baptist Message* reported that local Baptist churches also stepped up to assist the communities affected. Some, like The Bayou Church, Lafayette, Louisiana, hosted training events dealing with flooding (led by Louisiana Baptist Convention's DR) where volunteers learned how to properly and safely assist flood relief efforts in homes.

Additional mud-out trainings were scheduled through Aug. 23 for local volunteers. Churches in Baton Rouge, New Iberia, Jennings and Lafayette hosted the trainings.

To give to the DR fund, visit [sbdor.org/louisianafloodrelief/](http://sbdor.org/louisianafloodrelief/).

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82016EP

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I can always be contacted at (334) 394-2025 or by email at [rbledsoe@tbfa.org](mailto:rbledsoe@tbfa.org).

J. Rodney Bledsoe, J.D.  
Chief Development Officer



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 28

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

### VICTORY

#### 1 Samuel 30:6-8, 18-25

##### Decision Time (6-8)

Upon arriving at Ziklag, David and his men were faced with a tragic reality: The Amalekites had burned the city and had taken captive their wives and all who were in the city. David's men were so upset over losing their wives and children that they sought to stone him. David did not panic nor shrink in fear. Instead he grew strong in his trust in the Lord.

Rather than letting the mob dictate his next course of action, David turns to God for direction, inquiring as to whether to pursue those who raided the city. In response God directs him to follow the perpetrators and assures him of victory.

##### Recovered (18-20)

After David catches up with the raiders, he strikes "them down from twilight until the evening of the next day and not a man of them escaped, except for 400 young men who mounted camels and escaped" (1 Sam. 30:17). God then restores to David all that had been seized including his family.

##### Victory for All (21-25)

Some men were too exhausted to accompany David on the journey. Consequently "the wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David" wanted to deprive these soldiers of any spoils they seized from the Amalekites, except that they should receive back their wives and children (vv. 21-22). David, however, acknowledged that the spoils had come from God. Thus he instituted a law that every member of his army would receive an equal portion of what was collected.

David was correct in realizing that his men had merited nothing. Everything they possessed had come from God. Thus they had neither claim nor boast on anything.

In speaking to the Corinthians, Paul

makes a similar point: "For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). The Corinthians also had nothing that did not come from God. Instead of boasting, they were to thank God for their blessings.

Christians must consider that, in accordance with His will, God gives us all good things. In fact, God loves us so much that He gave us the greatest possible gift — His Son. Romans 8:32 states: "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?"

Those who have trusted in Jesus, God's Son, whom the Father handed over to suffer for our sins, bearing the wrath that we deserve, will graciously receive everything that has been promised to the Son. Paul calls believers "fellow-heirs" with Christ who will share in what has been promised to Him (Rom. 8:17; cf. Gal. 3:15-4:7). What exactly will we share? In Romans 4:13, Paul says believers will inherit the world. That's right — the world belongs to Christians. But not the present, sinful one; the world that is to come, the one that will be recreated into a new Eden (Rom. 8:14-25).

As David's men merited nothing that they received, we too merit nothing. Jesus' death and resurrection gains for us what we could never earn — life with Him in the new creation where we will all share in the glory that the Son of God bestows on His brothers and sisters. Unlike David's "worthless men," we must not be so prideful as to think that we have a right to dictate who shares in what we will receive. Rather, Jesus will give an equal portion to all who have placed their trust in Him. It gets no better than this — spending eternity with our unworthy brothers and sisters, upon whom God has richly lavished eternal life through His only Son. †

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

### LOVE GETS INVOLVED

#### Luke 10:25-37

The parable of the Good Samaritan is so familiar that the impact of its message is cliché. We fail to understand how radical Jesus' teaching was because we have never known a Jewish attitude toward the Samaritans.

Samaritans were those Jews who didn't go into exile because of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions but rather intermarried non-Jews. They became self-sufficient, building their own temple, having their own form of the Pentateuch. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans in the first century was fierce. Two of Jesus' own disciples wanted to call down the fire of God's judgment on some Samaritans. The word "good" and the word "Samaritan" did not go together in Jesus' day. So when Jesus talks about a Samaritan being a better illustration of the love of God than any Jewish leader it was a bit like speaking about a member of the Islamic State or al-Qaida group who, instead of planting improvised bombs where people walked, decided to save someone by the roadside. It'd be shocking and scandalous.

##### We can't love God without loving others. (25-28)

Jesus uses this dramatic parable to remind us that loving God does not only have vertical dimensions but also reaches out horizontally to others around us. And this love is demonstrated in having an equal concern for the spiritual, as well as physical and emotional, needs of people. In 1975 the Lausanne Covenant, a motion promoted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, was an agreement by more than 2,000 leaders from the evangelical world. It affirmed: "We should share His concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the

liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. ... We express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive ... [and] we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty." True love reaches out to the whole of human need.

##### We fail to love God when we don't take action. (29-32)

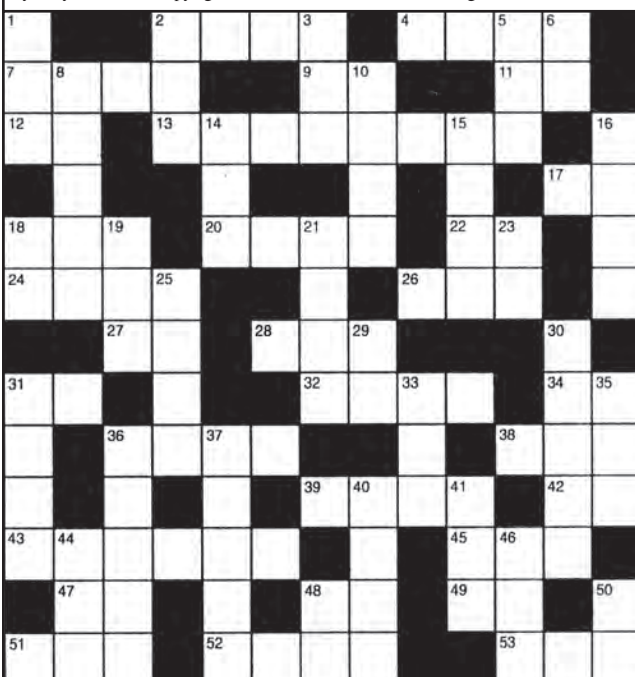
This love is not merely sentimental. Neither should it be locked in committees. It should be practiced. Jesus Himself practiced what He preached in His care for Samaritans. The land of Samaria was situated between the regions of Galilee in the north of Israel and Judea in the south. Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea would take the longer, six-day journey along the Jordan River valley rather than taking a shorter, more direct route through Samaria. But Jesus went out of His way on one occasion to go and meet a woman who lived in Samaria who had been ostracized by her community to meet her moral and spiritual need and let her know that she was loved.

##### We are commanded to love no matter what. (33-37)

Love is costly. It cost our Savior His life on Calvary. It cost the Father the pain of watching His Son die. Love is costly. But costly love always reaches out and pays the price. It pays the price of being misunderstood by people who think we are wasting our time caring for people's material need when it is obvious that their spiritual needs are more important. It is costly in terms of our own physical and emotional energy as we take time to meet people, to get to know them, to stoop by the side of the road and take time to care for them just where they are. True love reaches out to our neighbors within the Church, but the Church is called to reach out to those on the outside. †

## Christian Crossword

By Judy Ellis Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

2. She \_\_\_ me of the tree, and I did eat. (Gen. 3:12)
4. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 11:13)
7. He that sacrificeth unto any god, save \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord only. (Ex. 22:20)
9. \_\_\_\_\_, let that night be solitary. (Job 3:7)
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Saul also among the prophets? (1 Sam. 10:12)
12. They that received tribute money came \_\_\_\_\_ Peter. (Matt. 17:24)
13. The Lord will lighten my \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Sam. 22:29)
17. The God of my mercy shall prevent \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 59:10)
18. Love worketh no \_\_\_\_\_ to his neighbor. (Rom. 13:10)
20. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 2:25)
22. Where there is \_\_\_\_\_ vision, the people perish. (Prov. 29:18)
24. Thou shalt not \_\_\_\_\_ false witness against thy neighbor. (Ex. 20:16)
26. He planteth an \_\_\_\_\_, and the rain doth nourish it. (Isa. 44:14)
27. Ma's companion.
28. Upon the great \_\_\_\_\_ of his right foot. (Lev. 8:23)

### Down

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm." (Acts 16:28)
2. And we know that we are of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 5:19)
3. Moose.
5. That he might be revealed in \_\_\_\_\_ time. (2 Thess. 2:6)
6. Nova Scotia. (abbr.)
8. We accept it ... most \_\_\_\_\_ Felix. (Acts 24:3)
10. And they cried out all at \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 23:18)
14. Then \_\_\_\_\_ those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (Matt. 25:7)
15. Therefore ye \_\_\_\_\_ of Jacob are not consumed. (Mal. 3:6)
16. If I \_\_\_\_\_ witness of myself, my witness is not true. (John 5:31)
18. In the same place. (abbr.)
19. The lot is cast into the \_\_\_\_\_. (Prov. 16:33)
21. And he reigned over all the kings \_\_\_\_\_ the river. (2 Chron. 9:26)
23. \_\_\_\_\_ that my people had hearkened unto me. (Ps. 81:13)
25. Whosoever shall say to his brother, \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 5:22)
29. Each. (abbr.)
30. Their \_\_\_\_\_ and strength unto the beast. (Rev. 17:13)
31. And Tychicus have I \_\_\_\_\_ to Ephesus. (2 Tim. 4:12)
33. For they know \_\_\_\_\_ the way of the Lord. (Jer. 5:4)
35. When they that \_\_\_\_\_ them saw what was done, they fled. (Luke 8:34)
36. And the city had no need of the sun ... to. (Rev. 21:23)
37. For I through the law, am dead to the law, that I \_\_\_\_\_ live unto God. (Gal. 2:19)
40. If ye shall ask any thing in my \_\_\_\_\_, I will do it. (John 14:14)
41. Why do we and the Pharisees fast \_\_\_\_\_? (Matt. 9:14)
44. Shade.
46. Lod, and \_\_\_\_\_, the valley of craftsmen. (Neh. 11:35)
48. Gold. (symbol)
50. For do I now persuade men, \_\_\_\_\_ God? (Gal. 1:10)



# WHAT ARE YOU READING?



## Alabama Baptists share about what they are currently reading

### WANDA BERGERON

*The Alabama Baptist*

“The Bait of Satan” by John Bevere

I read this book while going through a Bible study that correlated to it. I had recently been offended by a family member and the Bible study could not have come at a better time for healing. I loved this book and think every Christian leader should read it.

The book is about offense, holding on to unforgiveness for the way others have treated us, and how Satan uses this to divide the Church and stop Christians from producing fruit. It’s an important topic in the Church and in the world and God certainly used this book to speak to me. Satan is sneaky and creeps in a little crack and starts with self-talk and self-pity. He wants to get us isolated like a sheep away from the flock as easy prey. We destroy ourselves by feeling sorry for ourselves and not moving into forgiveness and restoration.

I related to how the author used King David as an example when he was hunted by Saul. David, however, when given the opportunity did not kill Saul but just sliced off a piece of his robe. I did not quite agree with the author’s viewpoint on not being able to forgive. Bevere said if one cannot forgive it means a believer is not truly saved. We are saved by grace and faith and not by works or deeds. Once we are saved then we can read God’s Word, learn, grow and change. But salvation is a gift from God, not by anything we do or don’t do. Other than that I think this is a good book that can help many Christians that have been offended. We don’t have the right to hold bitterness in our hearts, no matter how much we’ve been wronged. We have all been offended at some time in our lives. It is important that we know how to handle offense and be free from it.

### FRANKLIN L. KIRKSEY

*Pastor, First Baptist Church, Spanish Fort*

“Beyond Far” by Robert Martin

In a day when many treat fact like fiction and fiction like fact, I must confess I am not a fan of fiction. Then one day Eva Jane Martin gave me an autographed copy of her husband’s first novel, “Beyond Far.” Since I have known this couple for many years, I read it out of respect and curiosity, but I found it interesting and intriguing and could not put it down. “Beyond Far” is insightful, instructive and inspirational. Robert Martin skillfully weaves the thread of faith through the pages of the book. You will be blessed by reading this book. I highly recommend it. #

**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.**



Photo courtesy of Centricity Music

Contemporary Christian artists Lauren Daigle (left) and Chris Tomlin (below) are among those nominated for Songwriter of the Year at the 47th annual Dove Awards. Award winners will be announced Oct. 11 in Nashville.



Photo courtesy of The Media Collective



## Daigle tops list of 2016 Dove nominees

Lauren Daigle, named New Artist of the Year at the 2015 Dove Awards, tops the list of the 2016 artist nominees with six nominations. Worship artists Hillsong UNITED and Chris Tomlin each received five.

The Dove Awards are sponsored by the Gospel Music Association (GMA) to honor the best in all genres of Christian music, and winners are determined by the votes of GMA members. The 2016 awards show will be Oct. 11 at Lipscomb University’s Allen Arena in Nashville.

Songwriter Jason Ingram garnered the most nominations with seven, including Song of the Year for the song “First,” a song he co-wrote with Daigle and others for Daigle’s breakout album “How Can It Be.” The title track for that album was the 2015 Song of the Year Dove winner, and the album itself, co-produced by Ingram, is up for Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year for 2016. Artists Anthony Brown, Bill Gaither, Danny Gokey, Jonathan McReynolds, Kirk Franklin, Matthew West and Tasha Cobbs received four nominations apiece.

In addition to a nod for Album of the Year and two for Song of the Year (one each for songs “First” and “Trust in You”), Daigle also is nominated for Songwriter of the Year, Contemporary Christian Artist of the Year and Artist of the Year, a category she shares with for KING & COUNTRY, Hillsong UNITED, To-

byMac and Lecrae, who won the honor in 2015.

Other songs nominated for song of the year include “Brother,” “Flawless,” “Good, Good Father,” “Just Be Held,” “No Longer Slaves,” “The River,” “Touch the Sky” and “Worth.”

Tomlin is nominated for Songwriter of the Year as well as Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year for “Good, Good Father.” Hillsong UNITED is up for Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year and others.

GMA Executive Director Jackie Patillo said, “Our theme this year is ‘Love. Amplified.’ [It’s] a phrase we believe encompasses the collective power and impact of our music. At a time when so much of the world is divided and hostility is in the air, we will turn up the volume of love and the hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ.”

### ‘Standard for excellence’

Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) will televise the awards. TBN chairman Matt Crouch said, “The Dove Awards set the standard for excellence in the field of gospel and Christian music. ... TBN is excited to share with our global audience this incredible evening honoring those who create the music that brings hope and changes lives.”

New Artist of the Year nominees are Hollyn, Jordan Feliz, Stars go Dim, Travis Greene and We Are Messengers. (BP)

**For more information including a complete list of nominees, visit [doveawards.com/2016-nominees](http://doveawards.com/2016-nominees).**

# Putting God first

## God's presence gives Bradford sense of calm

**T**he minute you start to think that you're first and your plans matter more than God's is the minute your life starts to go the wrong way."

That's the motto that Sam Bradford, Philadelphia Eagles quarterback, keeps in his mind every day as he takes to the field.

Bradford, 28, former starting quarterback for Oklahoma University in Norman, said in an "I Am Second" video that he faced a lot of pressure to play well during college and put a lot of pressure on himself to play well.

"I am a perfectionist and I try to make everything perfect, whether it's on the field or in the classroom, I expect to win."

But, he said, "I realize that (every time I go out on the field) I'm not doing it myself. I know that the Lord is out there with me and has given me all the talent I have and without Him there's no way I would even step out on a football field."

He said having the assurance that God is always with him brings him calm during a game and in everyday life.

### Spending time with the Lord

"To have a relationship with the Lord and be able to spend time with Him ... is something that lets me get away from everything else. I stop thinking about football. ... I stop thinking about any of the problems that are going on in my life," Bradford said.

"I know having a relationship with Him gives me strength and gives me a sense of comfort."

Bradford was the second college sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy and played for the Sooners from 2006 to 2009.

He was drafted by the St. Louis Rams first overall in 2010 and set the record for the most completions by a rookie in NFL history during his first season. He was then awarded the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year award and the Carroll Rosenbloom Memorial Award. He signed with the Eagles in 2015. In his first



Sam Bradford

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game with the Eagles, Bradford completed 36 out of 52 passes for a touchdown and two interceptions and went 7-7 as a starter in his first season with the team.

As Bradford looks to God every day, he said he also looks to the future.

"The reward of knowing Him is eternal life in heaven. ... I know that everything He wants you to do is the right thing to do. That's how I try to live my life." (TAB)

## Olympic athlete relies on Lord in midst of grief

**N**athan Schrimsher fulfilled a dream when he competed in the modern pentathlon event at the 2016 Olympics. He's been working toward this goal for years, and his training and journey to the pinnacle of his athletic achievement has been a family affair.

That's why, despite the excitement, the experience was mingled with sorrow. Schrimsher's dad, Keith, died unexpectedly in 2015 and he's the one who was on Schrimsher's mind during the competition.

"The Lord gives and takes away, and that was the day He took away," Schrimsher said of his father's death. "Nothing is guaranteed except for our faith in the Lord."

Schrimsher owes a lot to his dad, who was described in his obituary as "a believer and follower of Jesus Christ. ... His faith assures that he is no longer suffering the trials of this world but is re-

joicing in the arms of his Lord and Savior."

The Christian home that Keith Schrimsher established and the commitment to always having his family in church led to Nathan Schrimsher's conversion as a child.

Nathan Schrimsher's competition began Aug. 18. He said he missed sharing the joy with his dad. He said he'd gladly give the Olympics away if it meant having more time with his father. But he can only trust in the Lord's goodness as he continues to mourn.

"Sometimes you don't understand everything at the moment, but I'm trying to walk by faith and trust in the Lord,"

Nathan Schrimsher said. "He's in control of all things even though I can't see or can't understand at the time.

"I just keep putting one step in front of the other," he said. "I can't do that on my own, but just pray and trust that I rely on the Lord for that." (BP)



SCHRIMSHER

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Nearly half of 2016 refugees to US are Muslim

WASHINGTON — According to a recent Pew Research Center analysis of data from the State Department's Refugee Processing Center, of the more than 63,000 refugees who have entered the United States this fiscal year, nearly half (46 percent) were Muslim — the highest amount of Muslim refugees admitted in any year since 2002.

Just two countries, Syria and Somalia, were the source of more than half of the 28,957 Muslim refugees admitted this year, according to Pew. The remaining refugees are from Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan and other countries.

Christians are the second-largest group of refugees admitted, totaling 27,556. A far larger number of Christian refugees than Muslim have been admitted to the U.S. since fiscal year 2002. The U.S. has admitted 389,712 Christian refugees and 269,395 Muslim refugees in the last 15 years.

Of the refugees who have entered the country so far this fiscal year, more than 2,500 belong to Buddhist traditions while about another 1,500 are Hindu, Pew reported.

The Obama administration set a goal to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees this year. So far about 86 percent of that goal has been met with 8,569 admitted by mid-August. (TAB)

### US sees continuous decline in heavy smokers

WASHINGTON — There's less lighting up in the United States as people who smoke a pack a day or more of cigarettes has declined over the past decade, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Following a seven-decade trend, the 26 percent that do still smoke a pack a day or more is considered an all-time low (30 percent smoked heavily in 2012 and that number routinely exceeded 50 percent in the 1990s).

The poll, conducted mid-July, found a continuous decline "in the percentage of heavy smokers over the years — with a particularly sharp drop since the late 1990s, when public smoking bans were implemented in many states and municipalities," Gallup reported. Most smokers (74 percent) say they would like to give up the habit, and many of those say they have made attempts to do so. According to a poll in 2013 and the most recent poll, 6 in 10 former smokers said they were able to stop smoking in one or two attempts. (TAB)

### Marine court-martialed; refused to remove Scripture

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — In a decision likely to influence how the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) applies to military service members, the military's highest court upheld the conviction of a U.S. Marine court-martialed for disobeying an order to remove three Bible passages she posted around her workplace.

In an opinion released Aug. 10 the five civilian judges on the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF) decided 4 to 1 to uphold a lower court ruling against Lance Cpl. Monifa J. Sterling. The lower court found Sterling failed to inform her superiors that the posting of the signs was "religiously motivated" and failed "to establish that the orders to remove the signs constituted a substantial burden on her exercise of religion" under RFRA. The signs, a personalization of Isaiah 54:17, read, "No weapon formed against me shall prosper." Religious liberty law firm First Liberty plans to appeal the case directly to the Supreme Court. (BP)

### 'No currently approved medical use' for marijuana

WASHINGTON — Despite medical marijuana's legality in most states and the District of Columbia, the Obama administration announced Aug. 11 the drug will continue to be classified by the federal government as having "no currently approved medical use" and "a high potential for abuse."

Kim Jones, a pharmacy professor at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, said the decision is "not surprising" from a scientific standpoint. The Drug Enforcement Administration "made its decision because there still has yet to be any firm, scientific evidence validating the therapeutic effectiveness of marijuana." (BP)