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'Secret worshippers' advise churches from perspective of first-time guests

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Main: Volunteers at Mountain Brook Baptist Church gather food to send to Liberia during the Ebola crisis.

Top left: Bessemer Baptist Association chainsaw teams work to help a community after it was hit by a tornado. **Center left:** Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, hosts an after school program.

Bottom left: Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston, volunteers sew blankets to donate as part of Angel Mission Ministry.



Photos by Neisha Roberts

What's it worth?

New study finds religion in US makes \$1.2 trillion impact on economy

Religion is big bucks — worth \$1.2 trillion annually to the American economy, according to the first comprehensive study to tabulate such a figure.

“In perspective, that would make religion the 15th largest national economy in the world, ahead of 180 other countries in terms of value,” said Georgetown University’s Brian Grim, the study’s author.

“That would also make Ameri-

can religion larger than the global revenues of the top 10 tech companies, including Apple, Amazon and Google,” he continued. “It would also make it 50 percent larger than the six largest American oil companies’ revenue on an annual basis.”

344,000 congregations

To put a value on the work of the nation’s 344,000 religious congregations — representing all faiths — Grim looked at the schools the churches run, the soup kitchens, the addiction recovery programs and their impact on local economies. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship mostly spend locally — employing hundreds of thousands of people and buying everything from flowers to computers to snow removal services.

Grim came up with three estimates

and settled on the middle one — the \$1.2 trillion — as what he called a “conservative” appraisal of the work of religious organizations in American society annually.

Why crunch these numbers? Grim, an associate scholar at Georgetown’s Religious Freedom Project, said it’s good to know where religion stands. By one of his colleague’s estimates, that \$1.2 trillion equates to about 7 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product.

But Grim also wants congregations and clergy — and the society that benefits from the charitable work — to appreciate this generosity. In a culture in which people often hear much more about the evils committed by religious people — from sex abuse scandals to genocide — it’s time for some “balance,” Grim said.

Grim noted a recent Pew Research

Center study that showed the religious are more likely to volunteer to help others and give more to charity on average than the nonreligious.

Without the charitable work of religiously motivated people, “I don’t think we would see all the good of society disappearing,” Grim said. “But I think it would be significantly less.”

Helpful programs

Grim’s study notes that congregations and religiously oriented charity groups are responsible for:

- ▶ 130,000 alcohol and drug abuse recovery programs.
- ▶ 94,000 programs to support veterans and their families.
- ▶ 26,000 programs to prevent HIV/AIDS and to support people living with the disease.
- ▶ 121,000 programs to train and support the unemployed. (RNS)

COMMENT

Mocking the Alabama Supreme Court

If there was ever a business that thumbed its nose at the unanimous rulings of the Alabama Supreme Court it is Milton McGregor's VictoryLand gambling hall in Macon County. Unfortunately, McGregor is likely to get away with his contemptuous actions because of a shameless executive order by Gov. Robert Bentley.

In March the Alabama Supreme Court ruled against McGregor and VictoryLand in a case involving state custody of more than 1,600 electronic bingo gambling machines seized in an earlier raid. The Court wrote, "This decision is the latest and hopefully the last chapter in the more than six years' worth of attempts (by McGregor and VictoryLand) to defy the Alabama Constitution's ban on lotteries.

"It is the latest and hopefully the last chapter in the ongoing saga of attempts to defy the clear and repeated holdings of this Court beginning in 2009 that electronic machines like those at issue here are not the 'bingo' reference in local bingo amendments.

"All that is left is for the law of this State to be enforced," the Court declared.

In an earlier case the state Supreme Court was as clear as possible about electronic gambling machines and bingo. The Court found, "The game traditionally known as bingo is not one played by or with an electronic or computerized machine, terminal or server but is one played outside of machines and electronic circuitry."

Making good on promise

Less than a week after the Court issued its ruling McGregor showed his disdain for the Court and Alabama law when he announced he would reopen VictoryLand by late summer. On Sept. 13 he made good on his promise, personally greeting gamblers who came to play the 500 slot machine-like terminals with names such as Bustin' Vegas, Wild Billy Jackpot and Paydirt.

To no one's surprise Macon County Sheriff Andre Brunson seems to be protecting McGregor. Brunson, whom McGregor called "the



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

only person on this earth that can establish the rules and regulations of electronic bingo in Macon County," earlier said, "Any person seeking to interfere with the operation of bingo games in this county will have a legal issue to deal with from my office," according to the *Montgomery Advertiser*.

Long-held position

Apparently the Macon County sheriff, who has approved McGregor's new video gambling machines, can thumb his nose at the Alabama Supreme Court too.

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange issued a statement following McGregor's reopening. Strange restated his long-held position that electronic bingo is illegal in the state. A year ago Strange might have acted to stop this illegal gambling. Now his hands are tied.

When he and Bentley were first elected, Bentley authorized Strange to lead state efforts to stop illegal gambling. Strange responded with methodical legal actions that resulted in clear legal decisions outlawing electronic gambling.

Based on those decisions he acted to close down VictoryLand, Greenetrack in Greene County and other illegal gambling sites.

Just as victory against illegal gambling seemed within reach, Bentley issued an executive order that resulted in mid-September's disgraceful scene of McGregor flaunting the unanimous decisions by the Alabama Supreme Court. Likely others will follow McGregor's lead.

In November 2015, Bentley unexpectedly removed Strange from leading state efforts against illegal gambling. Bentley said state law enforcement would only respond to "requests of local officials." With the stroke of a pen, Bentley gave victory to the gamblers.

In some counties in Alabama there has been an elaborate legal dance going on for years. County officials — sheriffs, district attorneys and some judges — side with the gamblers. They purposely impede state efforts to close down gambling sites — even brag in print about the obstacles they create.

Then it is the attorney general's turn. He works around the impediments, often appealing local rulings all the way to the state Supreme Court. There he wins and takes action. Then the dance starts over again.

This complicated dance is well known. That is what makes Bentley's ruling so shameful. It has all the trappings of a deliberate decision to side with the illegal gambling crowd. No one would have ever thought this former Baptist deacon and Bible teacher would make such a decision but he did.

Now Strange can only say, "If local officials are ... facilitating illegal activity then I expect the governor to take action. I stand ready to work with the governor and the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to stop illegal gambling and other crimes."

This is exactly the situation we predicted almost a year ago when Bentley issued his unfortunate directive.

The governor has once again found himself in a dilemma of his own making. He must either retract his 2015 directive removing Strange from enforcing the state's illegal gambling laws or he must take responsibility for allowing the unanimous decisions of the Alabama Supreme Court to be mocked by the self-serving interests of McGregor and company.

This issue is bigger than illegal gambling. It strikes at the core of a lawful society. If McGregor and other illegal gamblers are allowed to mock the Alabama Supreme Court and issues of settled law, what will happen next? Where will this downward spiral end?

'All that is left'
Even if Bentley favors illegal gambling he must act in the interest of supporting a law-abiding society.

Surely the governor of the state of Alabama will not become a part of publicly flaunting the decisions of the Alabama Supreme Court. Surely Bentley is a better man than that.

As the Supreme Court said, "All that is left is for the law of the State to be enforced." ¶

"This issue is bigger than illegal gambling. It strikes at the core of a lawful society. If McGregor and other illegal gamblers are allowed to mock the Alabama Supreme Court and issues of settled law, what will happen next?"

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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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Meeting BIRMINGHAM'S needs

Serving You, WorkFaith Birmingham partner to find solution to poverty

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

John Gibson says he's become fully acquainted with two kinds of burdens in the past seven years.

He's seen the burden of physical need that many families in the Birmingham area are carrying.

And he's felt a growing burden to help them in the best way possible, and with more than just a short-term solution.

Gibson, executive director of Serving You Ministries, said those burdens are working themselves out through a partnership with another area ministry, WorkFaith Birmingham, which addresses poverty by helping people become employable.

Continues to grow

"The original goal of Serving You was to be a benevolence arm for local churches," said Gibson of the ministry started by NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, in partnership with about two dozen area churches. "But it's grown to be so much more than that."

Since its founding in 2009, when churches would refer someone in need to Serving You, ministry staff would interview them, learn their story and help meet their needs for food or financial assistance as best they could, Gibson said.

"Some would be in crisis situations but others would be in a more chronic state of need where they needed more income coming into their household," he said.

For the past few years WorkFaith Birmingham has been able to come alongside them and help with the next step — career development and financial education.

"The second month that someone came to us for help we would refer them to WorkFaith, and we would give them a two-week supply of food to get them through WorkFaith's nine-day work development course," Gibson said.

Serving You also would give them financial assistance after they graduated from the course to help them until they got their first paycheck from work, he said.

Sharing space

And over time it became clear that it would be good for the two organizations to share space under the same roof — not to mention the fact that Serving You's two bases in Trussville and Pelham were quite a reach from inner-city Birmingham, which had the greatest need, he said.



Photo courtesy of Serving You Ministries

Volunteers with Church of the Highlands help renovate the new downtown shared offices of Serving You Ministries and WorkFaith Birmingham. With the new location the two ministries will be better able to serve inner-city Birmingham.

So in mid-August, Serving You and WorkFaith moved into a new office building at 6523 First Avenue North in Birmingham, a space provided free of charge by Church of the Highlands.

"It's just another example of how people in the area are really starting to come together and work together to meet the city's needs," Gibson said.

'Win-win'

Keith Stanley, president of WorkFaith and local missions pastor at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, said the two being in the same building was "going to be a win-win for a lot of reasons."

"In what WorkFaith does, we often struggle to get people to come into

the class for two weeks because that would mean two weeks with no food, no resources, no money," Stanley said.

"Serving You is able to incentivize our students and able to help us on the front end with discerning who needs the help we can offer."

Together the two can offer a well-rounded ministry to those in poverty, he said.

"There are needs of relief and needs of development," Stanley said. "We want to help



Photo courtesy of Serving You Ministries

Birmingham's Oliver Elementary School students receive clothes during Serving You Ministries' recent 'Love Oliver' event.

those who need relief but also help them use the resources God has given them to help themselves and serve others."

As Christians, he said, "we are called to do both." ¶

For more information about Serving You Ministries, visit servingyou.org.

For more information about WorkFaith Birmingham, visit workfaithbhm.org.

Spiritual development

Experience of worship with parents foundational for young children

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

At what age should children attend worship with their parents? Decades ago, the answer would have been simple. In most Alabama Baptist churches, everyone from babies to senior adults would have attended the Sunday morning service, the Sunday evening service and the Wednesday night service together.

That changed in the latter half of the 20th century, as churches began to focus outreach efforts on young families, and children's ministry beyond the traditional Sunday School program began to take shape. In many churches, that included taking children out of the worship service for "children's church," a child-friendly alternative to all or a portion of the traditional service, a program common in churches of all sizes today.

A child-focused worship time has benefits for both children and their parents, according to Ashley Milner, assistant professor of education at the University of Mobile.

"For most children ages 3–6, their attention span is only about 15–20 minutes," Milner said. "Realistically after that they're not going to hear what's being said, and they may not be able to sit still, which can be very frustrating to their parents."

That is not to say that children should not attend worship at all.

"From a professional standpoint and from the standpoint of a parent, I prefer a blended approach that allows children to be exposed to worship as a family, as well as to the structure of worship at an early age," Milner said. "In a blended program, children come into the service with their families and share in the singing, prayers and offering. But during the sermon, children receive instruction on their level, often relative to the topic of the sermon that day, to make it relevant to them."

"Churches need to underscore the importance of the role of the parent in Bible teaching and worship."

**Daniel Edmonds
director of SBOM's office of
Sunday School & discipleship**

A blended approach is how many Alabama Baptist churches, including Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, approach ministering to children during the worship hour.

Nancy Glover, minister to children at Pleasant Ridge Baptist, said children ages 4 through 3rd grade worship with their families until the sermon begins. At that point, they are dismissed to "Jesus and Me" or "Kids in Him,"

programs that further their worship experience on an age-appropriate level, Glover said.

As a retired educator, Glover recognizes that attention spans have gotten shorter and says today's children expect a faster pace than previous generations.

"We cannot keep things the same as they used to be," Glover said. "We have got to get their attention and change activities



iStock photo

often. That's the way their brains are developing now."

Though many parents would love for older children to be included in the children's worship program, Glover said that by 4th grade, most children can read well enough to follow along in their Bible, pay attention to the sermon and jot down questions to ask their parents later.

Start to finish

"They need to be in church and have that experience," she said.

The experience of worship also is foundational to advocates of including young children in the worship time from start to finish. Robbie Castleman, author of "Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Your Children into the Joy of Worship," agrees that teaching a child to worship is challenging.

"Worship can be one of the times when we parents would like to pay attention to something other than our children. Kids can be distracting, aggravating and embarrassing in church," Castleman writes. "It's hard to pay attention to God and children at the same time."

Teaching children to worship is more than simply teaching them to be quiet during a sermon, Castleman argues. When parents worship with their children, they get to experience worship through their children's eyes.

For Castleman, the mother of two boys, memories of worshipping with her children are precious. "I was with them when they first understood a gospel illustration. I answered their questions about a five-syllable word used in a sermon. I sat next to Robert and Scott the first time they held the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood in their hands. I paid attention. These moments of grace and worship are remembered. And treasured."

Castleman's illustration highlights an important principle — the Church and parents are partners in raising children, said Daniel Edmonds, director of the office of Sunday School & discipleship at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"Churches need to underscore the importance of the role of the parent in Bible teaching and worship," Edmonds said. "One of the finer biblical truths (Deut. 6 and

beyond) is that passing on the faith is the responsibility of the parent."

At First Baptist Church, Huntsville, children join their parents for the entire worship service beginning at age four. Joy Moore, minister of preschool at First, Huntsville, said it takes effort on the part of staff members and volunteers to make children feel welcome in the service and to allow them to take part.

To help parents better prepare for their role in helping children worship, Moore holds a worship skills class for parents and their children each year prior to the 4-year-olds' transition to the worship service. Nancy Akins, minister of preschool and children at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, holds a similar class each year for the first graders who will join their parents for the full worship hour.

"Children are active and are active learners, so we talk to them and their parents about worship," Akins said. "We talk about how we worship in different ways, including when we pray, when we listen and when we sing. Worship is a lot of movement, but it's also being still."

Akins said she has heard people talk about worship with young children as "adventure worship," but she calls it a "holy adventure."

Coming together as family

"Many aspects of life both in and out of church are age-segmented. Worship is the place we can come together as a family," Akins said.

Ultimately, the long-term spiritual development of each child should be the focus of children's ministry programs. Family worship is one important element, which is why Edmonds suggests churches with children's church programs set aside a few Sundays each year for children to worship with their parents.

"It puts some strain on staff to conduct worship in a 'child-friendly' manner, but it is important in the faith development of a child," Edmonds said. "It will positively impact the child's view of their parents as faith leaders, the pastor as their pastor and of themselves as part of the church." ✠

Resources

▶ "Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Your Children into the Joy of Worship" by Robbie Castleman

▶ "Teaching Kids Authentic Worship: How to Keep Them Close to God for Life" by Kathleen Chapman

▶ "Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: How the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids" by Robert J. Keeley

▶ "Opening Your Child's Spiritual Windows: Ideas to Nurture Your Child's Relationship with God" by Cheri Fuller

▶ "Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice, Third Edition (Chapter 13: Children in Worship)" by Randall Bradley and Franklin M. Segler

▶ "Worship for Life: Kids Curriculum"

(All available at LifeWay Stores and LifeWay.com)

Special needs *church setting*

Churches need to minister to families of special needs children with grace, care

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

Whether 50 or 5,000 are gathered for worship, there are going to be distractions — sounds and movements that draw attention. Someone will get up to go to the bathroom. A cell phone will ring. And when children are present in worship, the likelihood of a commotion, even a slight one, rises significantly. Ironically even a parent's efforts to keep a child quiet can be distracting.

"Parents are trying to make them sit still, listen and be quiet, and parents can easily reach a point of frustration themselves," said Ashley Milner, assistant professor of education at the University of Mobile.

Wiggling children

Those seated near a child often get frustrated too and children's ministers say complaints and eye rolling are not uncommon responses. Neither are they biblical responses, said Joy Moore, minister of preschool at First Baptist Church, Huntsville. At First, Huntsville, children ages 4 and older attend the worship service. In every pew, a note reminds congregants who might find wiggling children a distraction or annoyance that children are not only the future of the church, they are welcomed by Jesus and should be welcomed by other adults too.

For ministry leaders, creating a contemplative worship environment free of distractions is challenging.

Eric Geiger, vice president of LifeWay Christian Resources' church resources division and pastor of ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin, Tennessee, writes, "Distractions do not merely impact the one speaking. They also pull people's attention away from the message at a critical moment and may disrupt the focus on the

Word. Because it takes time for attention to be regained, even small distractions are not a small matter."

As a young mother, Vickey Weathers, administrative assistant for Cleburne Baptist Association, was embarrassed when she was asked to take her infant daughter out of a worship service on their first visit to a church. The church did not have a nursery, and the baby began to cry as the praise band's volume increased. The worship leader, who also was the pastor, stood up and asked that anyone with a crying baby wait in the vestibule because he was "trying to usher (the congregation) into the presence of God."

A second visit to the church resulted in the same announcement and instead of waiting, Weathers left, irritated in part because she realized loud music and infants were never going to be a good fit and the attitude of the pastor seemed set.

Many churches have established policies that require children under a certain age to be cared for outside the sanctuary during worship, providing nurseries or viewing rooms so that parents can hear the sermon. Churches that don't have such facilities but also don't welcome infants probably will not have families with young children, Milner said.

Skilled assistance needed

Though every context is different, Geiger emphasizes that distractions like crying babies must be "handled gently and with love by graceful and caring people."

Another group that needs that same grace is families of children with special needs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 5 percent of children ages 5 to 17 have some kind of disability. Many of these children require special accommodations and skilled assistance to attend worship.

"There's a definite need of parents and

children with special needs for a setting for them to attend," Milner said. "It's a struggle for parents. People sitting around you do not understand, and it may be impossible to keep a child from disrupting."

Mark and Val know how challenging it can be to attend worship with an older child with special needs. The couple visited a local church because they had heard good things about the new pastor. The pastor was just settling in to his new position, eager to make a good impression on the congregation he was now leading.

The couple brought their son, who has Autism, knowing it would be necessary for him to sit with them during worship. The noises he made were distracting to others around him, and as it turned out, to the pastor.

After the service, a staff member, at the pastor's request, asked the parents to take their son to the nursery next time instead of bringing him to the worship service. The couple felt like their son was not welcome and never returned to the church.

Stories like this are common among parents of children with special needs. Though they want to be part of a church, parents often find that churches are ill-equipped to care for the physical, emotional and social needs of children who do not fit neatly into traditional categories.

While taking the child to nursery care might seem like a solution, nursery workers are not necessarily trained to care for the needs of an older child. Parents often

feel better caring for their child themselves.

Nancy Glover, minister to children at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, says it is up to leaders to provide education to the congregation and gently guide them to accept those who are different. She gave the example of a child in their congregation with Autism.

Reaching the entire family

"Sometimes people who sit near a child with special needs think the parents are not doing anything to manage their behavior," Glover said. "When necessary, and as nicely as I can, I remind those in the pews near the family that they have just as much right to

be in worship as anyone else. The family always sits in the same spot, and there are always other seats available if someone is uncomfortable or distracted."

Ministering to children with special needs is really a ministry to the entire family, writes Amy Fenton Lee, author of "Leading a Special Needs Ministry."

The first concern is creating an atmosphere where the child can have fun at church and experience Christ-like love, Lee writes. A close

second is "creating venues to encourage parents and foster their spiritual growth."

"To many kids with special needs, their church relationships will correlate with their understanding of Jesus' love for them. Jesus loves us exactly as we are and He wants a relationship with us regardless of our performance," Lee writes. "It is so important that we model that kind of relationship for participants with special needs." ✠

"To many kids with special needs, their church relationships will correlate with their understanding of Jesus' love for them."

Amy Fenton Lee
author, 'Leading a Special Needs Ministry'

Ministry Tips



LEARNING TO THINK LIKE A NEWCOMER

By **Chip Warren**
Minister of education, FBC Albertville

Have you ever put yourself in the place of a newcomer to your church? A newcomer is a guest or a new member. If we want guests to return and new members to stick around, then we must learn to think like them.

Tip 1: In all forms of communication, use language that is understood by newcomers. Baptists are known for using initials for programs and even our facilities. Newcomers to the faith or our church don't know what WMU, GAs, RAs or VBS is, or what the meeting location of an FLC, ROC or MMF is, much less where it is. Communicate to the entire church as if

they were all newcomers. It may surprise you how this practice will help those who are not so new.

Tip 2: Don't assume that newcomers know anything about your church. I cannot tell you how many newcomers have asked me the cost for their child to attend Vacation Bible School. Communicate that it is free.

Tip 3: A newcomer's class is an absolute must. Not only can you communicate the basics of the Christian life, but anything and everything about your church ministries, practices, schedules and building.

For more information, contact chipwarren@bellsouth.net. ✠

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

BETHEL

► **First Church, Demopolis**, will hold a "Spiritual Awakening Conference" on Sept. 25-28. On Sunday, Don Graham will speak at 11 a.m. and Sammy Gilbreath will speak at 6 p.m. Kevin Hamm will speak Monday at 6:30 p.m. Dan Lanier will speak Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Ted Traylor will speak Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Carl Williams is pastor. ► **Sweet Water Church** will celebrate its 100th anniversary Oct. 9, 10 a.m. A luncheon will follow the service. Robert Baker is pastor.

CENTRAL

► **Weogufka Second Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 9, 10 a.m. Former pastor and retired International Mission Board missionaries John and Pat Gordy will speak. Lunch will follow. Brandon Baird is pastor.

DEKALB

► **Minvale Church, Fort Payne**, will host Bill King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Association, in a special service Oct. 2, 11 a.m. He will return as comedian Billy Bob Bohannon at 6 p.m. John Keefe is pastor.

MORGAN

► **East Highland Church, Hartselle**, will celebrate homecoming and its 46th anniversary Oct. 2. Sunday School will be at 9:15 a.m. and worship will be at 10:30 a.m. A lunch will follow the morning worship. Walter Blackman is pastor.

CONECUH

► **Bower Memorial Church, Evergreen**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m. There will be no Sunday School. Worship leader Gene Lasley will speak. Jim Griffin is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Liberty Church, Morris**, will celebrate its 125th anniversary Sept. 25, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. Steve Loggins, North Jefferson Association director of missions, will speak. Willard Davis is pastor.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Joyce Ann Cagle Houser**, longtime Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) director of Lookout Mountain Association, died Aug. 23. She was 74. Houser was a member of New Bethel Church, Collinsville, at the time of her death. She served as a volunteer for VBS, associational missions trips and disaster relief. She also served as a member of the Alabama WMU executive leadership team for 17 years. She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Earl; two children; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.



HOUSER

► **Pepperell Church, Opelika**, will celebrate homecoming and its 90th anniversary Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m. Tommy Rush will speak. Jamie Baker will lead special music. A covered dish lunch will follow the service. Mike Newman is pastor. ✠

RUSSELL

► **Crawford Church, Phenix City**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m. EST. Lamar Duke, church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, will speak. Jim Hilderbrand, of Columbus, Georgia, will perform special music. There will be a special recognition of local first responders and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission will recognize the church. For more information call 334-298-4587 or email info@ladoniabaptist.org. Greg Hyche is pastor.

► **Charles Woodfin** is the new senior adult pastor of **First Church, Centre**. He previously served as pastor of Vernon Church, Collinsville. He is married to Joyce. Eddie Nation is pastor.

CHEROKEE

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WOODFIN

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ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Columbia Association DOM Grandstaff to retire

After serving as director of missions for Columbia Baptist Association for 20 years, Jerry Grandstaff has announced his upcoming retirement effective Dec. 31.

A Florida native, Grandstaff earned degrees from Kentucky Christian Bible College in Ashland and Covington Theological Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

He surrendered to the ministry call in May 1971 and soon after served as pastor of churches in his home state. He also served as pastor of several Alabama Baptist churches including Pleasant Home Baptist Church, Andalusia; Bayou Sara Baptist Church, Saraland; and Southside Baptist Church, Dothan.

While he enjoyed serving in a pastoral role for many years, Grandstaff said he will "never forget the hour God placed in my heart the calling of associational missions."

"These past 20 years ... have been, no doubt, some of the most rewarding and fulfilling of my ministry," he said. "I will forever be grateful to the churches of the Columbia Baptist Association for entrusting me with this glorious opportunity."

During his ministry, Grandstaff also has served as a trustee of LifeWay Christian Resources and the University of Mobile, second vice president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and associational representative for the State Board of Missions.

When looking at retirement, Grandstaff said he "just wants to continue being useful in whatever capacity God deems best," but his time will certainly include time with family and riding with F.A.I.T.H. Riders Motorcycle Ministry, he said.

He and his wife, Rhonda, have two children and five grandchildren.

To contact Grandstaff for pulpit supply or other ministry needs, call 334-596-5098. (TAB)



GRANDSTAFF

Buhl Baptist shreds mortgage on new sanctuary from 2000



Photo courtesy of Buhl Baptist Church

Buhl Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association recently shredded the mortgage document from the building of its new sanctuary, which began in 2000, after paying it off in full this year. Pastor Alfred Banks (center) begins to shred the mortgage with deacons (l to r): Robb Burns, Glenn Hicks, Danny Barringer, James Southern, Donald Wheat and James Roy Skelton.

REFLECTIONS

"I'VE HEARD CHURCH PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IT ALL MY LIFE— BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS ABOUT WALKING THE ISLE."





Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Person of Christ

Open and Approachable

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

Theology 101 continues to look at selected aspects of Christ's personality as the incarnate Son of God. In doing so, we find ourselves looking at a model for us who would bear His likeness and be His followers.

When we consider Christ's personal characteristics, we stand in awe of His appeal to a variety of human personality types. Something about Him appealed to an impulsive personality like Simon Peter, as well as a visionary like John, the beloved disciple. Jesus drew to Himself a practical doubter such as Thomas, as well as a volatile pair like James and John, the sons of Thunder.

A part of the magnetism of Christ was His openness and approachability. Apparently people felt themselves welcomed into His presence. He seemed to radiate magnetism and winsomeness.

In a day when children were not accorded much status and on an occasion when the disciples sought to keep them from bothering their Master, Jesus welcomed the children, saying, "Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14).

Welcoming to others

On another occasion, Jesus displayed His openness. The disciples had taken exception to a man who was performing good deeds but was not one of the avowed followers of Christ. Apparently, somewhat proud of their intervention, they told Jesus they had taken exception to that person's activities because he was not one of their number. For their efforts, Jesus corrected them, saying, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side" (Mark 9:39-40).

Jesus seemed welcoming to people whom others would ignore. He loved those often left unloved by welcoming them into His presence and taking Himself into their presence, even sharing mealtimes with them. For such actions, Christ's religious critics pointed at Him,

saying, "Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Matt. 11:19).

Christ's openness to sinners, to be sure, was motivated by His desire to save them from their sins. His motto was, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matt. 9:12). Jesus did not keep company with sinners because He was Himself a sinner or enjoyed being in the presence of sin. He moved among an assortment of sinners because He had come to be their Savior.

Ultimate Healer

If we visit our medical doctor at his or her office, we discover a waiting room populated by sick people. The doctor seems to be spending his day in the company of sick people, one after another. Doctors keep company with sick people, not because they are themselves sick, but because they are trained as healers. Jesus visited with sinners, not because He was like them Himself, but because He came as the Healer of human maladies.

To this end, Christ was open and approachable by people who were burdened with problems and hurts. His heart was open to many whom others scorned or avoided — tax collectors, religious hypocrites, beggars, people with diseases, the physically afflicted, Samaritans and Gentiles. While many religiously devout persons drew their robes tightly about them so as not to come into contact those deemed ceremonially unclean, Jesus welcomed those that others sought to avoid.

As Christ's representatives in the world, how open are we to people who need His touch and our love? †

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.



He, she, ze 'pronoun etiquette' addressed at university level

Vanderbilt University's campaign to support transgender individuals by encouraging use of proper "pronoun etiquette" has been characterized by a law professor at the Nashville university as the latest manifestation of an intolerant, secularist agenda prevalent in higher education.

"Political correctness, multiculturalism and the redefinition of the pronouns are a form of cultural Marxism," said Carol Swain, professor of political science and law at Vanderbilt. "It's part of an aggressive agenda to destroy Western traditions, values and norms. Across America and on the Vanderbilt campus, a small minority wields enormous power when it comes to implementing their agendas for societal change.

"The only acceptable religions" at universities like Vanderbilt "are ones that pose no threat to the godless secularism the university advances as enlightened truth."

'What should I call you?'

As students returned this fall, the private university's Faculty Senate Gender Inclusivity Task Force placed posters on campus with the heading "What should I call you?" They urged faculty and students to share with one another in personal introductions and email signatures whether their preferred pronouns are he/him/his, she/her/hers or a gender-neutral option like ze/zir/zirs, according to an image of the posters posted online by the conservative publication *The Daily Caller*.

A 5,000-word blog post by Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching cites "the need to establish

university-wide best practices for respecting gender identity and expression" and includes a link to a "pronoun etiquette sheet." The post references "long-standing misconceptions of gender as a binary construct" and states, "Biological sex is assigned at birth by a medical practitioner."

The university suggests professors give students an opportunity to state their preferred pronouns on the first day of class and urges instructors to correct pronoun misuse during class sessions.

UA harassment policy

At the University of Alabama (UA), some policies are in place that include explicit language to protect transgender individuals, according to *The Crimson White*, the school's newspaper. UA's harassment policy says it protects against "illegal harassment based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status" and was recently updated to include the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression."

According to Campus Pride Trans Policy

Clearinghouse, nearly 1,000 colleges and universities have adopted nondiscrimination policies that include gender identity and gender expression.

In Fall 2015, UA faculty and staff participated in a two-day conference held at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) campus focused on cultural competency, according to UAB director of student health and wellness Jacob Baggot.

Social, medical support

The training focused on social and medical support for transgender students but also touched on guidelines for referring to a student by their chosen name and pronoun, according to Baggot.

At Auburn University, the latest published nondiscrimination policy from September 2014 includes the words "race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability" but does not include the term "gender identity."

Vanderbilt's Swain said the university "is advancing a dangerous political agenda that creates an unhealthy learning and teaching environment for students and faculty who disagree with its new direction.

"It is an unhealthy agenda because it seeks to squelch free speech and any ideas that run counter to its worldview. The indoctrination process for students begins as soon as they set foot on the campus," she said.

While the use of pronouns to advance a pro-transgender agenda is relatively new — the University of Vermont in Burlington established a chosen-pronoun option in its database in 2009 — the debate over gender-neutral pronouns is not.

A blog post by Oxford University Press stated, "Wordsmiths have been coining gender-neutral pronouns for a century and a half, all to no avail. Coiners of these new words insist that the gender-neutral pronoun is indispensable, but users of English stalwartly reject, ridicule or just ignore their proposals."

Paul Smith, associate professor of Old Testament studies at the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Gateway Seminary in Mill Valley, California, suggested the original Hebrew language of the Old Testament as an instructive parallel for those wondering whether a gender-neutral pronoun is needed in English.

"Pronouns in Hebrew are only masculine or feminine with no other options," Smith said. "Gender identity and gender roles are part of God's plan for creation, not a result of the fall," said Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church, Chandler, Arizona, and vice president of the SBC Pastors Conference. "Any deviation from this plan is a result of the fall and therefore a violation of God's design and order." (BP, TAB)

"Pronouns in Hebrew are only masculine or feminine with no other options. Gender identity and gender roles are part of God's plan for creation."

**Paul Smith
associate professor of Old Testament, Gateway Seminary**

'Secret worshippers' advise churches from perspective of first-time guests

Greg Atkinson is one of those guests who give churches the chills. Whenever he visits a congregation for the first time, he loiters around the parking lots and restrooms, sizes up ushers and security and lurks around the nursery and children's Sunday School spaces. If he can get away with it, he will secretly photograph the kids too.

Almost arrested

In some cases he's been followed around and even detained by concerned church members. One time he was threatened with a Taser and nearly arrested.

And for all of that and more, Atkinson is well paid by the church and usually praised by its ministers.

"The churches I work with, especially the larger churches, really love it," he said.

The former Southern Baptist pastor is a secret shopper — or secret worshipper — who is hired to scrutinize every component of a Sunday morning experience that can positively or negatively influence a first-time guest's decision to return.

During a recent FaithSoaring Churches conference call, Atkinson said he examines a congregation's online footprint, from the clarity and usefulness of its website to its social media presence.

On Sunday mornings he zeroes in on the parking lot experience, from space availability to friendliness and competence of the attendants.

He notes how well signage and greeters direct him to guest services, restrooms, children's check-

in and the auditorium. He checks to see if children's classrooms are safe and he tests security elsewhere in the building.

"People want to feel secure," Atkinson said during the call hosted by The Columbia Partnership.

The professional secret visitor said he also takes notes on the sermon and the overall worship service.

In his reports he provides praise for things that work and constructive criticism, with proposed solutions, for things that don't.

He recalled a Baptist church where the Scripture wasn't being projected on the screen. The pastor later explained it was to encourage members to bring their Bibles.

He told the minister that most newcomers, especially if they are first-time churchgoers or returning after years away, don't arrive with Bibles.

Atkinson said he and some churches are criticized for placing too much emphasis on welcoming ministries and making good first impressions on guests.

But that focus has a firm grounding in Scripture because the Bible emphasizes welcoming the stranger and making disciples.

'Thoroughly biblical'

"It's thoroughly biblical," Atkinson said. "God takes that very seriously."

In order for churches to make disciples, guests have to return af-

ter their first visits, he added.

That's why it matters so much that ushers do more than just open doors for people or provide bulletins, he said. Long lines to drop off children should be prevented and security should be visible, coordinated and competent.

These and other practices communicate that the church cares about its guests, he said.

It's critical because most churches have at least one visitor on any given Sunday. And most of them form their impressions about a church in the first 10 minutes.

Suspicious activity

When Atkinson is brought in, usually only the lead pastors know he is on campus.

"It's totally secret" and that has led to run-ins with church security and other members suspicious of his activities.

Atkinson said he has written a book, due out this fall, titled "Secrets of a Secret Shopper." It offers practical hints for the smaller churches that cannot afford to hire him.

One of those tips is to use the question "may I help you?" with anyone who looks lost or suspicious.

If a visitor is up to no good, it will usually deter them. If they are confused about where to go or what to do next, it provides an opportunity to be welcoming.

"Those four words are key," he said. (BNG)

**"God takes
[welcoming visitors]
very seriously."**

**Greg Atkinson
secret worshipper**

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Americans favor atheists over Muslims, according to new study

Maybe atheists should just embrace it as a slogan: "Atheists: The group Americans love to hate."

About 40 percent of Americans say atheists "do not at all agree" with their vision of America, according to a new study from sociologists at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis who

compared Americans' perceptions of minority faith and racial groups.

Grim milestone

But the study marks a grimmer milestone — Americans' disapproval of Muslims has jumped to 45.5 percent from just over 26 percent 10 years ago, the last time the question was asked. And "nones"

— those who say they have no religious affiliation, but also may have spiritual or religious beliefs — are unpopular as well. This is significant because "nones" now make up one-third of the U.S. population.

The study found:

▶ Almost half of those surveyed (48.9 percent) said they would disapprove of their child marrying

a Muslim, up from 33.5 percent in 2006.

▶ The spiritual but not religious are mistrusted by 12 percent of Americans, while almost 40 percent of Americans say the rise of the "nones" is "not a good thing."

▶ Disapproval rates for several minority groups have grown — Jews, Asian-Americans and Lati-

nos experienced 10-point jumps in disapproval, while recent immigrants, conservative Christians and African-Americans grew about 13 percent each.

The study was written from data collected in 2014 from 2,500 participants. The previous study was published in 2006 by three of the same authors. (RNS)



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— Pastor Max Buttram
FBC Oak Grove, Sylacauga, Alabama

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Correction

In the Sept. 15 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, Steve Clouse was incorrectly identified as a senator. He is a member of the House of Representatives from the 93rd district.

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Samford, UM earn top rankings in recent report

Two Alabama Baptist universities ranked among top schools in the South for their programs for veterans. The University of Mobile (UM) ranked 3rd in the South for Best Colleges for Veterans in the 2017 *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings released Sept. 13. Samford University in Birmingham ranked 4th in the South for Best Universities for Veterans in the report. But that wasn't the only top ranking for either school.

Samford University garnered the No. 4 spot for regional universities in the South. Samford also is ranked 3rd in the South for Best Undergraduate Teaching.

UM earned the No. 8 spot among Best Regional Colleges in the South.

Judging criteria

The rankings assess such criteria as academic reputation, graduation and retention rates, class size and faculty/student ratios.

For students looking at various colleges to attend, the following factors also should be considered: location and feel of campus life; range of academic offerings, activities and sports; and the cost plus availability of financial aid, according to the report.

For the complete list of rankings, visit www.usnews.com/education. (TAB)

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders

Eugene Rollen Thomason Longtime pastor dies at 87

Eugene Rollen Thomason, a former Alabama Baptist pastor of several churches, died Sept. 8. He was 87.

Thomason served in the U.S. Air Force and began preaching while stationed in Korea. He later earned a degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1961.

He served in ministry for 59 years and served several churches as pastor including Skinnerton Baptist Church, Evergreen; Jones Chapel Baptist Church, Evergreen; Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Sylacauga; Jacks Gap Baptist Church; Lafayette Heights Baptist Church, Lafayette; Northside Baptist Church, Troy; Markeeta Baptist Church, Leeds; Browns Chapel Baptist Church, Sylacauga; and Seddon Baptist Church, Pell City. He also served as pastor of Pine Level Baptist Church, Jay, Florida.



THOMASON

He was a member of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Pell City, at the time of his death. Thomason served in many capacities at the church and in the community, spending his time in pulpit supply, teaching, choir and serving on several church committees.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Faye, and daughter, Alice. He is survived by three children, four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. (TAB)

James Marlin Cox Retired Asheville pastor dies at 68

James Marlin Cox, retired Alabama Baptist pastor, died Aug. 24. He was 68.

The Asheville resident was a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham and served in the U.S. Air Force from 1968 to 1972.

He served as pastor of Klein Baptist Church, Harpersville, for six years and pastor of Greensport Baptist Church, Asheville, for 23 years before retiring in 2014. In addition to his role as pastor, Cox worked for Barber Dairy Company for 23 years and Riteway Services for 10 years.

He is survived by his wife, Jamie; two children; and eight grandchildren. (TAB)



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CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Springdale Baptist Church, Tarrant, Alabama, is searching for a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 101 Springdale Road, Tarrant, AL 35217.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mt. High Baptist Church, Warrior, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resúmes to: Pastor Search Committee, Mt. High Baptist Church, 50 Oscar Bradford Road, Warrior, AL 35180. Email to: MtHighPSC@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP

Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama, is accepting resúmes for a full-time minister of worship. Email: search@chapelhillbc.org or mail to: Chapel Hill Baptist Church, 8790 Highway 43 N., Northport, AL

35473 ATTN: Search Committee.

WORSHIP PASTOR

Worship is priority. Bellview Baptist in McCalla is continuing to grow in worship. Desiring a dedicated follower of Christ, called to ministry by God as full-time worship pastor; leading, organizing and administrating all aspects of worship ministry. Submit resumé: office@bellviewbc.org.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

BIVOCATIONAL CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

The First Baptist Church of Saks, Anniston, Alabama, is searching for a bivocational children's director. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church of Saks, 4723 Saks Road, An-

niston, AL 36206. Or email to CathyBain@cableone.net.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Columbia Baptist Association, Dothan, Alabama, is accepting resúmes for the position of director of missions. Resúmes may be submitted to search team chairman Allen Singley at broadlen@gbcdothan.org or mail to 2400 Forrester Road, Dothan, AL 36301.

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- 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.



Providence No. 1 Baptist commemorates 175 years

After the sanctuary of Providence No. 1 Baptist Church, Montevallo, burned down at the hands of an arsonist in 2008, church members grieved. But through their grief, they rebuilt. And because of that determination to move forward the church celebrated its 175th anniversary July 24.

The morning celebration services were filled with special guests, performances and additional special features. Sid Sample, an 83-year-old Arkansas pastor who grew up attending Providence No. 1 Baptist, brought the message and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Mavis Gates presented a commemorative plaque.

Solos were sung by Yvonne Johnson and minister of music Mark Tilley. The choir also sang special music.

Additional special guests included Jim Swedenburg, director of the office of Cooperative Program and stewardship development for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and Larry Felkins, director of missions for Chilton Baptist Association. The service also featured a video presentation of historic photos and a quilt sewn by women of the church.

Lunch concluded the celebration. Pastor Allen Foster said it was "an outstanding celebration of God's faithfulness through the years."

FBC Littleville celebrates 150th anniversary

After months of planning, First Baptist Church, Littleville, in Russellville, celebrated its 150th anniversary June 12.

Former pastor Steve Amos was the guest speaker during the 10:30 a.m. service and Clint Grinnell led worship and provided special music.

Also during the morning service, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Jerry Armor presented a certificate to the church honoring its years of service.

Pastor Jeremy Sanderson also read a letter of congratulations from Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association Director of Missions Eddy Garner.

After a video detailing the church's history was shown, participants gathered for a fellowship lunch. An afternoon singing featuring southern gospel group The Woodalls concluded the anniversary celebration.



Hanceville's Midway Baptist marks 50th anniversary

Midway Baptist Church, Hanceville, has come a long way since its first meeting in 1966, which was held in a chicken house. And the church got to celebrate its growth — which includes holding services in a church building — during its 50th anniversary service Aug. 7.

The 11 a.m. service featured two speakers: former pastor Doug Pitts and current pastor Lonnie Goodwin. Special presentations were made by Johnie Sentell, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, and Randy Makemson, director of missions for East Cullman Baptist Association. Also, Dorothy Culwell, the church's oldest member, was recognized and the youth choir sang.

A special aspect of the celebration was the section of the bulletin where Culwell shared her memories of the church, which include the generosity of Charlie Johns. Johns both owned the chicken house that hosted the first meeting and donated the land where current church building sits.

After lunch participants once again gathered for an afternoon singing featuring Living Faith Singers of Cullman.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University Announces 8th Consecutive Enrollment Record:** Samford University in Birmingham is continuing a growth pattern that began eight years ago, setting multiple records with the Fall 2016 enrollment. Samford officials announced a record of 5,471 students as of Sept. 12.

In addition to the record total, the fall enrollment figures include a record 916 first-year full-time students, exceeding the record set in 2015 of 826. Included in the totals are 3,341 undergraduate and 2,130 graduate/professional students, both records, representing 47 states and 29 other countries.

► **Samford University Dedicates New College of Health Sciences Facilities:** Samford University in Birmingham dedicated the largest teaching and learning facility in the school's 175-year history Sept. 9. The new College of Health Sciences is an innovative learning environment designed to foster collaboration in more than 30 health sciences programs.

The new facilities span more than 223,000 square feet and include more than 30 clinical and research labs. The facility also has a 22,000-square-foot experiential learning and simulation center.

► **Samford University Quartet to Perform at Carnegie Hall:** Samford Arts will be featured on one of the world's most famous arts stages when the Samford String Quartet performs Oct. 24 in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall at 7:30 p.m.

School of the Arts Dean Joseph Hopkins has invited Samford Arts friends, faculty, alumni and students to join the festivities. In addition to the Carnegie Hall event,

Hopkins will host the group for a tour of the city, a cast talk-back after a performance of the musical "Aladdin" featuring Samford alumni and a post-performance reception.

For trip and ticket information, visit alumni.samford.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile to Host Annual Project Serve Sept. 23:** The University of Mobile (UM) will hold its sixth annual Project Serve campus-wide day of volunteer service Sept. 23.

After a 7:30 a.m. rally on campus, approximately 1,300 UM volunteers will spread out to 60 locations in Mobile and Baldwin counties to volunteer however they are needed.

UM is using #ProjectServe16 and #BeKnown to share experiences and photographs of the day through social media. For more information, visit umobile.edu/projectserve.

► **University of Mobile Hosts Steinway Society Music Competition:** The second annual Gulf Coast Steinway Society Music Competition for piano and voice will be Oct. 15 at the University of Mobile. A total of \$7,225 in cash prizes will be awarded, plus three scholarships to a summer performing arts program in Germany.

A master class will be held Oct. 14 at noon and a guest artist recital will be held at 5 p.m. featuring Manuel Matarrita, a two-time winner of the National Music Award in Costa Rica. The Oct. 14 recital at 5 p.m. with Matarrita and the Oct. 15 student competition from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. are open to the public.

► **University of Mobile Visit**

Day Set for Oct. 10: The University of Mobile (UM) will welcome prospective students and their families to campus for UM Visit Day on Sept. 16. Students who attend a Visit Day and later enroll may earn a \$2,000 scholarship.

For more information, visit www.umobile.edu/visit.

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Hosts Horse Whisperer Event:** Judson College in Marion hosted Chance Hill, horse trainer of SPURS Ministries, on Sept. 21. In his presentation, Hill drew connections between the horse-trainer relationship and the relationship between humans and God.

The event took place under the covered riding arena at Judson's Piper Equine Center. It was co-sponsored by the Cahaba Baptist Association in memory of former director of missions Bill Wallace.

► **Judson College Alum Inducted to Healthcare Hall of Fame:** An alumna of two Alabama Baptist institutions, Frances Ford was recently inducted into

the Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame. Ford, a graduate of Judson College in Marion and the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing at Samford University in

Birmingham, serves as executive director of Sowing Seeds of Hope.

Ford has devoted her career to serving the Black Belt region of Alabama in areas of health care reform and innovation. †



FORD

Alabama Baptist GIVING

Year to date through August 31, 2016

AUGUST	
CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,333,333.33
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$3,447,474.00
Over Goal for Month.....	\$114,140.67
YEAR TO DATE	
CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$26,666,666.67
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$26,291,048.00
Under Goal for Year.....	\$375,618.67

The monthly and year-to-date totals include CP base, CP state causes and SBC causes.



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GASTROENTEROLOGY



Omair Atiq, M.D.



Pranav Patel, M.D.

RHEUMATOLOGY



Carlos Gadea, M.D.



Matthew Mullen, M.D.



Ximena Ruiz, M.D.

ENDOCRINOLOGY



Manisha Garg, M.D.



Rajasree Nambron, M.D.

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services



NCAA pulls 7 sporting events from state over bathroom laws

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — North Carolina's pro-family leaders are decrying the NCAA's decision to pull seven championship athletic events from the state during the 2016-17 academic year in response to a state law requiring individuals at public agencies to use restrooms corresponding to their biological sex.

"There is an expectation of privacy when women and children go into the shower or locker room, and it's more than an expectation — it's a right," said Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the North Carolina Values Coalition. "The NCAA is punishing the state of North Carolina because it dares to stand up for the common sense notion that everyone has a right to privacy, decency and safety in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms."

The law also institutes a statewide nondiscrimination law that does not include protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression — another provision criticized by the NCAA. The most high-profile events affected by the NCAA's announcement are first- and second-round Division I Men's Basketball Championship games set for March 2017 in Greensboro. (BP)

Flagpole prayer events set for Sept. 28

The 26th annual See You at the Pole (SYATP) is set for Sept. 28, and First Priority Greater Birmingham is ready to help students make this year another success.

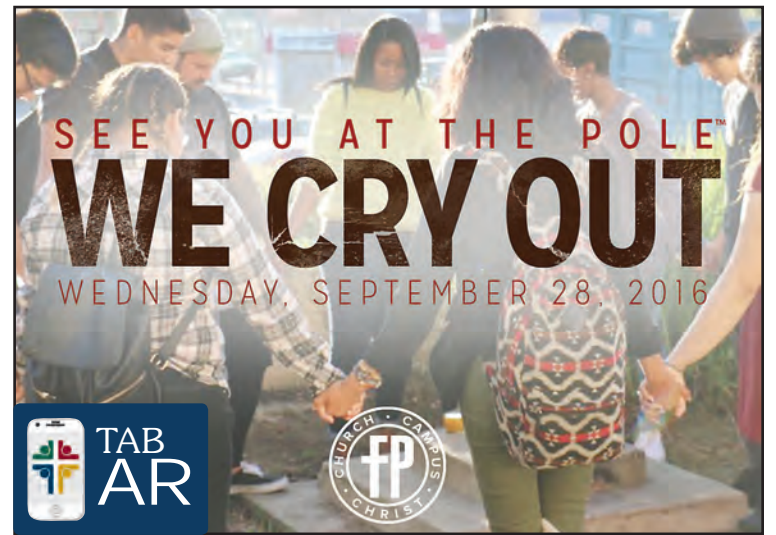
SYATP is a student-led prayer event, but it's not just in Alabama, or just in the United States for that matter. SYATP involves more than 2 million students in more than 20 countries.

Global week of prayer

The event is in the midst of the Global Week of Student Prayer, which is from Sept. 25 through Oct. 1.

Most Alabama students involved in the 2016 SYATP will gather at their school's flagpole around 7 a.m. to pray for their friends, family, school, community and nation.

With the theme "We Cry Out," students will be encouraged "to seek God, seek His face and cry out to Him," according to First Priority Greater Birmingham President Greg Davis. Based on



Graphic courtesy of First Priority Greater Birmingham

Psalm 24:3-6, the theme fits right along with the "current state of our country," Davis said.

Prayer rallies will be held the night of Sept. 28 at Corner High School football field, 6:30 p.m.; Garywood Assembly of God, Hueytown; 6:30 p.m.; Gardendale Mount Vernon United Methodist Church, 6:30 p.m.; First

United Methodist Beacon, Pell City, 6:15-8 p.m.; First Baptist Church, Leeds, 6:30 p.m.; and Southeastern Bible College, Birmingham, 6:45-8 p.m.

For more information about Greater Birmingham SYATP events, call 205-871-8886, visit syatp.com or email info@firstpriorityal.com. (TAB)

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Shepherd's Fold to feature football star

The annual fall banquet of Shepherd's Fold ministries will feature Sherman Williams as special guest speaker Oct. 20.

A native of Prichard, Williams is a former University of Alabama (UA) and Dallas Cowboys running back who spent 15 years in prison for drug charges. Since his release in 2014, Williams has teamed up with former UA teammate David Palmer to found the Palmer-Williams Group to serve youth both academically and athletically. Because of his experiences, he has a passion for ministries like Shepherd's Fold.

Shepherd's Fold — which is supported by several Alabama Baptist churches and ministries — is a faith-based transitional program for homeless men and women who have been incarcerated that seeks to transform lives and make productive citizens.

Jack Hausen, executive director of Shepherd's Fold, said, "Sherman Williams has a story that reflects the behavior of many of the residents of the Fold. ... [It] provides meaningful discussion on how and why a person needs to make changes in their institutional thinking and hearts to effect positive change."

The banquet will be held at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, at 6 p.m. For tickets or more information, call 205-780-6211 or email Dedra@sfalabama.org. (TAB)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 25

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

LIVING AS STRANGERS 1 Peter 2:11-20

In Culture (11-12)

What's down in the well comes up in the bucket. If Christ has saved you and is in the process of transforming you into His likeness, your life will change. No one ever meets Jesus and stays the same. We are different because God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are different so God can send us back to the darkness to proclaim His excellencies.

Jesus followers must pursue personal holiness. We must say no to "the passions of the flesh." The call to Christ is a call to battle our flesh. Commands like this are always grounded in the redemptive work of Christ already accomplished for believers. We don't fight for victory; we fight from victory. We resist the passions of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This verse helps us understand that even people indwelt by the Holy Spirit are not exempt from fleshly desires. The depth of the struggle is explained by the words "which wage war against your soul" (v. 11). The desires of the flesh are quite strong and must be resisted and conquered.

The goal is for unbelievers to come to saving faith. As Jesus followers live Holy Spirit-empowered lives God is glorified and some unbelievers see a difference in their lives and repent and trust in Christ. Peter was confident that some unbelievers will be saved when they notice the godliness of believers. The unbelievers may revile Christians, but as they notice the goodness in Christians' lives, some will repent and be saved and as a result of their salvation God will be glorified.

Toward Officials and Leaders (13-17)

Christians are to be subject to every civil authority (see also Rom. 13:1-7). God has

granted rulers the authority to punish those who do evil. "To punish" includes not just deterring evil but carrying out retribution against those who do evil. Rulers also are to praise or reward those who do good in order to encourage more good behavior.

It is the will of God that we submit to our leaders. Lives that reflect Christ to people around them put to silence any false charges raised against them. When Christians submit to government, they demonstrate they are good citizens, not anarchists. By God's grace we are free to do what is right, not free to sin.

Verse 17 concludes with four commands. Jesus followers are to "honor everyone." We are to treat every person with dignity and respect since all human beings are created in God's image. We are to "love the brotherhood." This command indicates a special bond between believers that is characterized by sacrificial love for other Christians.

We are to "fear God." Only God is to be feared because He is the supreme authority over all people and things. We are to "honor the emperor." We are to respect and obey the emperor.

But what if the government's laws contradict God's laws? The Christian is to obey the laws of God. We are to engage in civil disobedience in a Christ-honoring way. We find examples of this in Daniel (Chapters 3 and 6) as well as in Acts (Chapters 3 and 4).

Through Your Work (18-20)

Believers should represent Jesus well at work. Is God glorified by your work ethic, your attitude or the words you speak? We spend more time on the job than practically anywhere else. We are to proclaim Christ, in appropriate ways, through our lives and with our lips. We should not lag, nag or sag at work. That's being a bad witness. †

Bible Studies for Life By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

ONE GREAT SAVIOR Romans 5:6-11

On a particular plot of ground on the Florida coast lies a plaque emblazoned with the following words: "ad astra per aspera," which means "a rough road leads to the stars." This plaque marks the site of one of the worst accidents in the history of manned space flight. One month shy of their planned launch date in 1967 the astronauts of the Apollo I mission perished in a devastating cabin fire at Cape Kennedy. Set to take the next step in humanity's attempt to reach the moon, three men — Virgil Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee — instead became victims of a terrible training accident. And yet, despite the deaths of these three astronauts, the space program continued pushing forward, charging ahead despite incredible risks and reaching the moon just two years later.

Planted deep within the human heart is an irrepressible spirit of adventure and exploration that longs to break out. We are drawn almost irresistibly to venture out into the unknown, to push forward into the mysterious. Faced with the challenge of reaching new heights, pushing our boundaries, stretching beyond our limits, we muster the courage and endurance to face and overcome almost any difficulty.

But even the most battle-hardened soul can reach a point where endurance begins to fail. When we push long enough and hard enough, our strength begins to give out. What is true of our physical limits is equally true of our souls. At times, a walk of faith feels more like a grinding slog up seemingly endless peaks. Our spiritual legs feel they are about to give out. Our souls are buffeted by one blow after another. And we reach a point where we worry we might just give up altogether.

In Romans 5 the apostle Paul reaches out

to a group in just this situation, offering his readers these words of encouragement: "We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope" (vv. 3-4).

Jesus died for us. (6-8)

The ultimate source of Paul's confidence is his conviction that in every situation, no matter how difficult, God's love continues to reach out to His people.

Why? Because God had already proved His love. When He let His son die on the cross, He demonstrated once and for all the heights and depths of His great love for humanity. Paul knew God loved humanity because he was convinced God's Son had died for humanity.

Jesus saves us. (9)

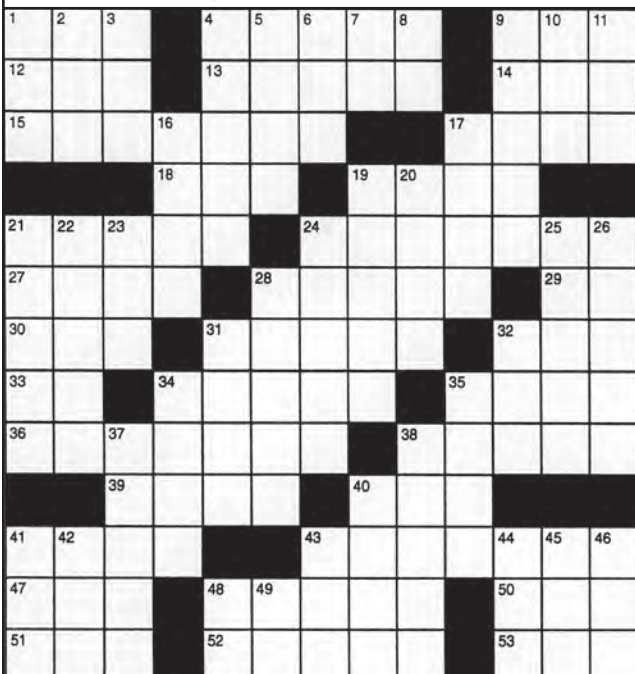
But Paul's theological reasoning moves beyond the mere fact that Jesus had died for humanity. Paul knew Jesus' death for His people had profound implications for the relationship between God and humanity. The Father's acceptance of Jesus' death on the cross was the most vivid symbol he could give that the wrath that once separated God and humanity had now been removed. Through Jesus' death, Paul knew we had been spared from God's wrath.

Jesus reconciles us to God. (10-11)

Going one step further, though, Paul offers a message much more hopeful than just the removal of the specter of God's wrath hanging over us. Paul goes on to say Jesus' death has fully reconciled us to God. To be sure, we are no longer God's enemies. But the real message of hope is that we are now God's friends. Christ died for us. Through His death, God demonstrated His love for us. And now He has brought us once more into His loving embrace as His very own sons and daughters. We press on, renewing our endurance, because we know the love God has for us. †

Christian Crossword

By Evelyn Boyington Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Whether it be ___ or ewe, ye shall not kill it. (Lev. 22:28)
- A strong ___ from the enemy. (Ps. 61:3)
- Thy god, O ___, liveth. (Amos 8:14)
- Stand in ___, and sin not. (Ps. 4:4)
- Representative.
- The wheat and the ___ were not smitten. (Ex. 9:32)
- ___ is the man that trusteth in Him. (Ps. 34:8)
- No man ___d for my soul. (Ps. 142:4)
- Piece out.
- Led him unto the ___ of the hill. (Luke 4:29)
- Jonah was gone down into the ___ of the ship. (Jonah 1:5)
- I sat down and wept, and ___. (Neh. 1:4)
- In the beginning was the ___. (John 1:1)
- And Jacob ___ a vow. (Gen. 42:11)
- Thy servants are ___ spies. (Gen. 42:11)
- Not willing that ___ should perish. (2 Pet. 3:9)
- All thy house shall be ___. (Acts 11:14)
- I took the little book ... and

Down

- ___ it up. (Rev. 10:10)
- Greek letter.
- What ___ thee, O thou sea? (Ps. 114:5)
- Poems.
- The whirlwind shall ___ them. (Isa. 41:16)
- Sound of contempt.
- Bring forth the ___ robe. (Luke 15:22)
- Given to hospitality, ___ to teach. (1 Tim. 3:2)
- When thou wentest out of ___. (Judg. 5:4)
- Fed.
- Giants dwelt therein in ___ time. (Deut. 2:20)
- Cast him into ___ darkness. (Matt. 22:13)
- Unrefined mineral.
- A time to be born, and a time to ___. (Eccles. 3:2)
- If I come again, I will not ___. (2 Cor. 13:2)
- And I saw a ___ heaven. (Rev. 21:1)
- Molding.
- Married.
- ___ passport. (French)
- Direction. (abbr.)
- He is ___ away of his own lust. (James 1:14)
- The birds of the ___ have nests. (Matt. 8:20)
- Born.
- Thy ___ shall be great. (Job 5:25)
- Ever the silver ___ be loosed. (Eccles. 12:6)
- They ___ the knee before him. (Matt. 27:29)
- Regretted.
- Trades.
- Pertaining to a charged particle.
- I will ___ up thy rivers. (Isa. 44:27)
- A pestilient fellow, and a ___ of sedition. (Acts 24:5)
- ___ into His gates with thanksgiving. (Ps. 100:4)
- What ___ thou here, Elijah? (1 Kings 19:9)
- Manservant.
- Perches.
- Why make ye this ___, and weep? (Mark 5:39)
- The children of ___ of Hezekiah. (Neh. 7:21)
- He goeth ___ meet the armed men. (Job 39:21;

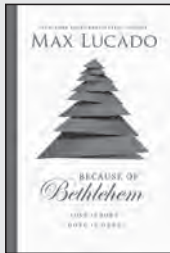
2 words)

- Who can ___ in the fierceness of His anger? (Nah. 1:6)
- Seed.
- Clown.
- And Jacob ___ pottage. (Gen. 25:29)
- Samuel ministered unto the Lord before ___. (1 Sam. 3:1)
- Depot. (abbr.)
- Not. (prefix)
- How long will it be ___ thou be quiet? (Jer. 47:6)
- Like a cloud of ___ in the heat of harvest. (Isa. 18:4)
- Bone. (prefix)
- The thorns grew ___, and choked it. (Mark 4:7)

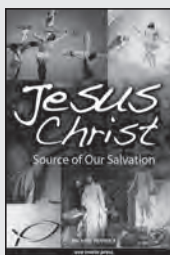
TOP 10

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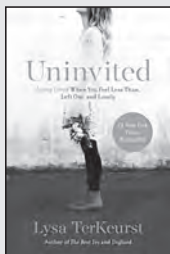
RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY



1. Because of Bethlehem
By Max Lucado
(Thomas Nelson)



2. Jesus Christ: Source of Our Salvation
By Michael Pennock
(Ave Maria Press)

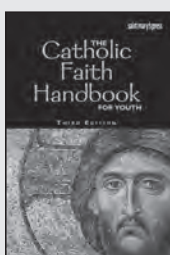


3. Uninvited
By Lysa TerKeurst
(Thomas Nelson)

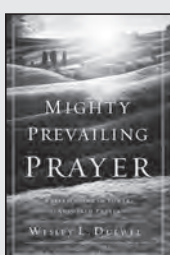
4. Present Over Perfect
By Shauna Niequist
(Zondervan)



5. The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth
By Brian Singer-Towns
(Saint Mary's Press)



6. Mighty Prevailing Prayer
By Wesley L. Duewel
(Zondervan)



7. Seize the Day
By Joyce Meyer
(FaithWords)

8. Written on Our Hearts
By Mary Reed Newland
(Saint Mary's Press)

9. Embracing Your Second Calling
By Dale Hanson Bourke
(Thomas Nelson)

10. Finding Your Voice
By Natalie Grant
(Zondervan)

Source: iTunes at press time

Media reviews



BOOKS

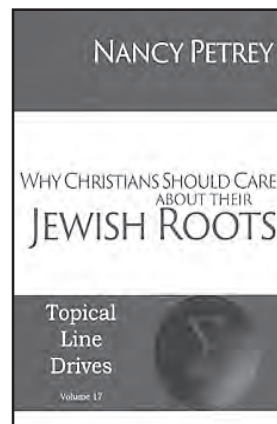
By Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D.

Why Christians Should Care About Their Jewish Roots

Nancy Petrey. Gonzalez, Florida: Energion Publications, 2015. 38 pp. (Paperback).

Author Nancy Petrey takes the position that Christians generally do not care about, and are largely unaware of, their Jewish heritage; I am not sure I agree. It seems to me that there has been a renewed interest in our Jewish roots, with Seder meals and other traditional Jewish observances found in many of our Baptist churches.

But for the sake of argument, let's assume Petrey is right. So why should Christians care about their Jewish roots? Petrey lays out an impassioned argument, beginning with the fact that the earthly Jesus was Jewish. Petrey decries the "anglicization" of Jesus in art, using Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper as her primary example. Another argument is that the early Church was composed of Jews; she maintains that of the 3,000 new converts at Pentecost, "every one was Jewish." Hmmm. Maybe. Probably. But do we actually know that? Isn't it possible that there was a random visitor who happened by, listened to Peter's sermon and was transformed



by the news of Christ. Nit-picky, maybe, but it lends insight to the dogged determination of the author to make her case.

The author made thought-provoking arguments, but too often made definitive claims about issues that scholars disagree on, such as the language Jesus spoke (she took the position that Jesus spoke Hebrew — something even the Pope and the Prime Minister of Israel had a public disagreement on). This little 38-page book had me stopping several times on each page to check out the assertions made. In the end, some of her statements proved factually correct (and I learned something), while others remain murky (and I learned something).

All in all, the book was a bit too dogmatic for my taste, but it was well written and interesting — and I learned something.

The Beatitudes Bible Study

Marlin Harris. Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press, 2016. 139 pp. (Large paperback) and other materials.

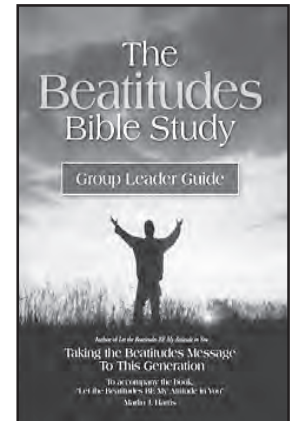
I have engaged in and taught quite a few Bible studies in my life, but I don't think I have ever seen one any more material-rich than this one. It includes participant and leader guides, a narrative text, a music CD, YouTube videos, music videos, a promise of extra help at a Dropbox link, a website/blog and slides to support the material. There is even a map of the Land of the Beatitudes.

For this study, Marlin Harris has taken a topic that we are all familiar with and plumbed its depths. The study came about because Harris memorized and meditated on the Beatitudes in conjunction with "The Mind of Christ," another study many of us are familiar with. He was inspired to look more carefully into the pronouncements of blessing Jesus

shared as a prelude to the Sermon on the Mount, and has managed to add richness and depth to these familiar declarations with this study.

The study is well designed and well thought out. All of the materials appear to link together seamlessly, complementing each other and enriching the overall study. I looked through the printed materials and liked the study. Then I opened the PowerPoint slides and loved the study. Harris has done an incredible job of developing this study of the "precious gems" from Jesus' first sermon. This would be an excellent addition to any church's Bible study program.

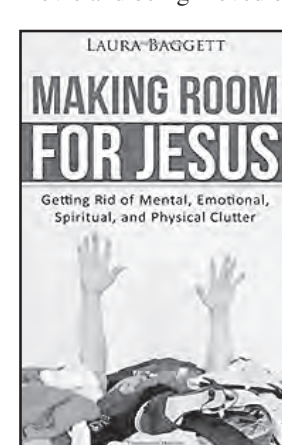
Harris lives in Marbury and is now retired after serving as a hospital administrator and missionary in Costa Rica, Bangladesh and Paraguay. The participant guide is co-authored by Ray Cureton.



Making Room for Jesus: Getting Rid of Mental, Emotional, Spiritual and Physical Clutter

Laura Baggett. Rome, Georgia: Laura Baggett, 2016. 45 pp. (e-book).

I wonder how many closets got cleaned out after the movie "War Room" came out. I have spoken with several people who set up their own prayer closets after seeing the movie and being moved by the power of fervent prayer.



According to author Laura Baggett, like many others, she decided to clean out a closet to establish her own War Room, which led to a quest to declutter her entire home, which led her to a popular book on decluttering and eventually led to this book.

But what does throwing out things that fail to "spark joy" have to do with our spiritual lives? Pearson admits that having too many sweaters, for example, is probably not "a moral failing." Instead, she says, "It's about trusting in God's provision so that our blessings don't turn into burdens."

The short e-book is full of wisdom that goes beyond the simple act of decluttering — in a sense, it adds what the original decluttering manifesto by Marie Kondo left out — the connection between what we own and who we are in Christ. Pearson also has developed a companion Bible study guide on this topic.

Pearson is an Alabama native, having grown up in First Baptist Church, Hartselle, in Morgan Baptist Association. She currently lives in Rome, Georgia. †

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



Jackson Generals pitcher Brett Ash's 94 mph fastball is one of the strengths he brings to every game.

Photo by Cody Cunningham courtesy of the Jackson Generals

'In the WORD'

Generals pitcher Ash seeks to make God priority

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Brett Ash's need for speed goes beyond his 94 mph fastball.

Growing up drag racing with his father, Ted Ash, he drove his 1961 Corvette up to speeds of 150 mph.

"The car goes quite a bit faster than my fastball," said Brett Ash, a right-handed Southern League all-star pitcher with the Jackson Generals.

"I have been blessed with a great family and great friends, people who have influenced me along the way. I don't take it lightly. That is one of the things I cherish the most."

Brett's parents are his role models.

"They have been incredible through ups and downs. They have been a rock for my sister and myself. I could not have been more blessed," said Ash, whose father continues to drag race.

Before he began playing professional baseball, Brett and his father would spend the summer racing throughout the Midwest.

"That was very memorable for me," said Ash, 25. "It was an incredible upbringing. It was something my dad and I could both relate to and definitely something that kept me out of trouble in the summer. It made a very strong father-son relationship."

'Be prepared, work hard'

Ash's favorite pitch is the fastball that he consistently fires in the 90-plus mph range.

"I have a lot of confidence in my fastball. That is one of my strengths. I try to be as mentally strong as I can. I try to be very prepared and work hard."

Through August, Brett Ash was tied for the most wins in the Southern League. He had a 4.52 ERA, 12-8 record and 58 strikeouts. His victories helped the Generals, Seattle's Double-A affiliate, win the

first-half North Division title, their first since 2012. They set a franchise record for most first-half wins going 46-24 and were the first minor league team to secure a playoff berth.

Jackson second baseman Tim Lopes said of Ash, "Besides being a great player and a great pitcher, he is a great friend and a great brother in Christ. We go to Bible study together and encourage each other. We are in the Word and in the Lord. You can tell he loves the Lord."

Staying on track

Through Young Life at Washburn Rural High School in Topeka, Kansas, Ash accepted Christ as Savior. Ash stays on track spiritually by making Bible reading a priority and fostering godly relationships.

"I always surround myself with good people, a good group of friends who have a strong faith that can hold me accountable. That has helped strengthen my relationship with God. My fiancée has a very strong faith too and she has helped in that area."

Fellow players also speak highly of Ash's skills.

Former Jackson pitcher and roommate, Dan Altavilla, who bypassed Tacoma to the Mariners in August, said of Ash, "You know what you are going to get out of Brett every night. ... He is a guy you trust. Every time he gets the ball he is looking for a win."

But his time with God is something he always makes time for.

"I knew He was always there for me. I always felt like I had someone looking out for me. The past three years, I have felt I needed Him, that I was called to have Him in my life. I have been blessed my entire life. It is one of those things where I realized I can't take anything for granted. I need to be grateful. I think God has a calling in my life to help spread the gospel," he said. ✠

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Evangelist, radio personality Butt Jr. dies at 89

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Howard E. Butt Jr., the Texas evangelist and radio personality who was expected to take over his family's successful grocery business but instead devoted his life to Christian causes, has died.

The cause was complications from Parkinson's disease. Butt died Sept. 11 at his San Antonio home. He was 89.

Butt was the former head of the H.E. Butt Foundation, which takes as its mission "the renewal of the Church," and runs retreat programs and a Christian camp for children.

He was perhaps best known, though, as the fatherly voice of one-minute radio spots, called "The High Calling of Our Daily Work," in which he gently preached that people should make Christianity the cornerstone of their life's work.

With evangelist Billy Graham he created the Layman's Leadership Institute, which coached businesspeople to speak on how faith can influence leadership. Butt also served on the board of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Butt's parents had expected him to run the family business, the H-E-B chain of grocery stores that is now valued at about \$11 billion. But Butt, rising in the ranks of the company, found his true calling in ministry. In the 1940s, he became a lay leader and began speaking at revivals across the nation.

His younger brother, Charles Butt, took over the business named for their father, Howard E. Butt Sr.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of my brother, Howard," Charles Butt said in a statement. "His decades of inspired leadership, philanthropy and humanitarian efforts will forever be missed by our family and those he impacted across the U.S." (RNS)

'The Insanity of God' docudrama scores at box office

NASHVILLE — Ticket sales for an encore showing of "The Insanity of God" in theaters Sept. 13 pushed box office receipts to \$1.1 million.

Trey Reynolds, manager of LifeWay Films, said, "Due to the success of the film's two one-night theater showings we are planning a church simulcast for the film the first or second week of November, with a consumer DVD and church license DVD to be released Nov. 21."

The feature documentary film produced by the International Mission Board and Cooke Pictures and distributed by LifeWay

Films tells the story of missionaries Nik and Ruth Ripken. After the death of their son, the couple traveled to 72 countries, into the depths of the persecuted Church, to find out if God actually makes a difference in difficult places.

The film is based on a best-selling book of the same name from B&H Publishing Group, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources.

"Whether an individual or local church watches this film — at a large event in their church or in the comfort of their homes — we believe God will use the testimonies to turn hearts and minds of believers to Him," Reynolds said.

LifeWay also has released a six-session Bible study based on the documentary and Ripken's book. "The Insanity of Obedience Bible Study Book" presents Ripken sharing true stories of people who are suffering for the name of Jesus.

To watch a trailer of the film, visit insanityofgodmovie.com. (BP)



BUTT

