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Religious liberty attacked in 'moral revolution'

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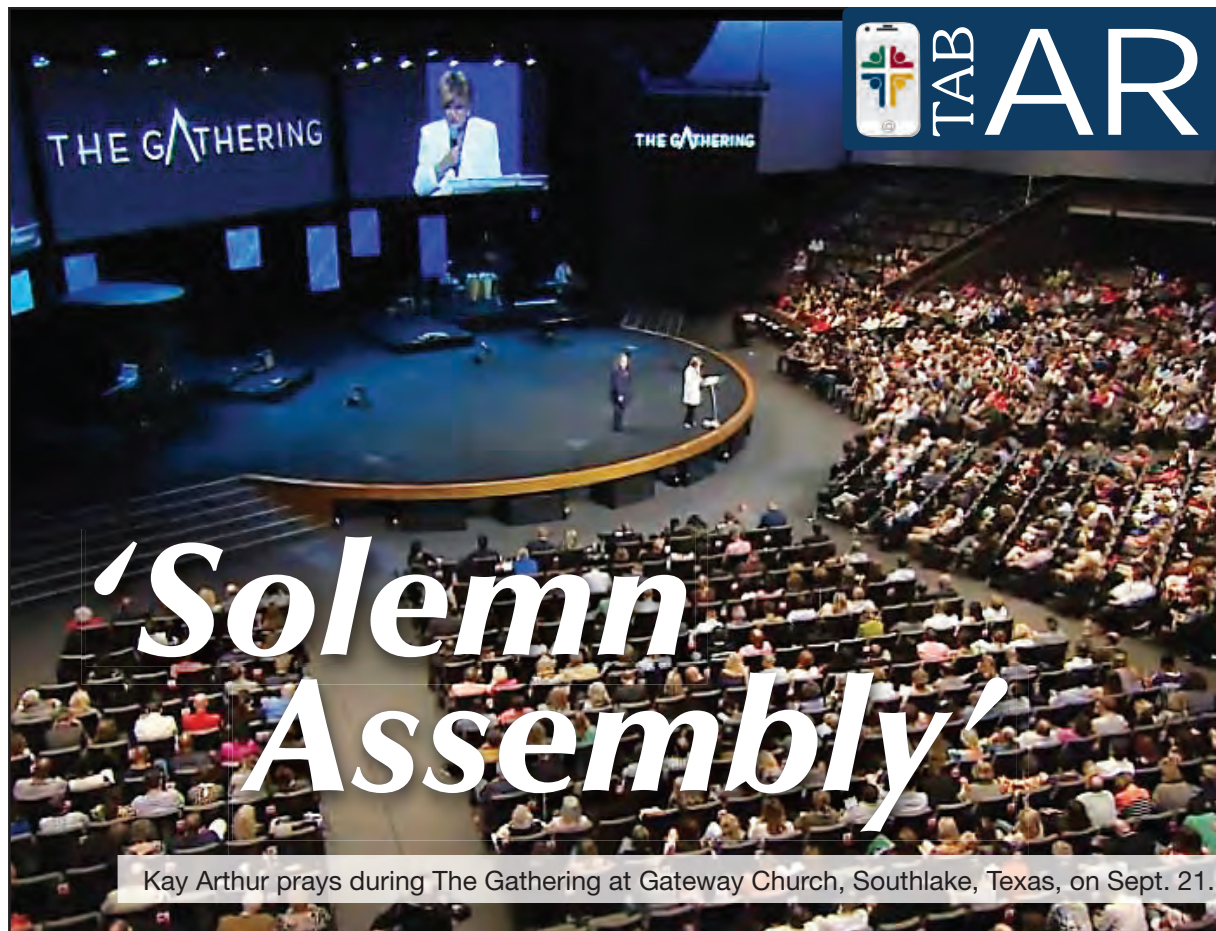
FlashPoint Disciple-Making Conference set for January 2017

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Writers' motivation must come from within whether self-publishing, traditional publishing

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'Solemn Assembly'

Kay Arthur prays during The Gathering at Gateway Church, Southlake, Texas, on Sept. 21.

Screen grab/The Gathering

The Gathering seeks to 'unite body of Christ in America'

It had the concept of an old-fashioned tent revival but with the contemporary flare of a simulcast, more than 40 well-known speakers and no tents.

The Gathering: A National Solemn Assembly, held Sept. 21 had one purpose: "to unite the body of Christ in America — all believers, regardless of race, age or denomination — in prayer for forgiveness, wisdom and provision for our nation," according to its website.

Religious leaders

Hosted by Gateway Church, Southlake, Texas, The Gathering featured speakers Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and former Southern Baptist Convention president; Priscilla Shirer, author and leader of Going Beyond Ministries; Jack

Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas; Kay Arthur, Bible teacher, author and co-founder of Precept Ministries International; Les Steckel, president and CEO of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes; Anne Graham Lotz, author and evangelist; and many others.

According to Floyd, America won't be saved by a "political awakening."

"Many of us, as believers, at times if we're not careful, we're more committed to some kind of political awakening," he said.

"That's not the answer to this nation. The answer to the nation is the next great awakening with the Holy Spirit of God. And He wakes up the Church and He shakes the Church."

Personal repentance

Thousands of believers gathered to pray for personal repentance, their marriages, families, communities and for Christians who are per-

secuted throughout the world, The Christian Post reported.

National awakening

According to The Gathering's website, "Whenever a solemn assembly or sacred gathering has been called in Scripture, it has



The Gathering graphic

usually been called by those in leadership — whether that be a priest, prophet or king — and it has usually been called for leadership first. Even in America, our historical records verify that prior to every national awakening, the spiritual leadership of the day has placed a heavy emphasis on gathering in small groups for fasting and prayer which then led to larger gatherings and greater change."

The Gathering also held a session specifically for pastors and church leaders, where participants gathered to intercede for individuals, families and the nation.

(See 'Immune,' page 7)

Political trust in America hits new lows

Trust is at an all-time low in America right now — in both political leaders and the American public at large.

A recent Gallup poll revealed that trust in both groups are down about 20 percentage points since 2004. Fifty-six percent of those surveyed trust in the American people to make democratic decisions while only 42 percent have a "great deal" or "fair amount" of trust in political leaders.

14-point gap

The 14-point gap in trust between the American people and political leaders is typical, Gallup says, and matches the trend that began during the Watergate era.

Along party lines, democrats are more likely than republicans to say they trust political leaders. Democrats are leading trust levels at 61 percent with republicans trailing at 37 percent. Independents are the least trusting of the major political groups (30 percent).

And while the American people trust their political leaders less, the same is true for the trust political leaders have in the American people. All three major party groups have "significantly less trust in the American people today than in the mid-2000s" with trust levels ranging from 53 to 58 percent, Gallup reported.

The study — which is conducted annually in September — also showed that trust in the mass media has continued its decline while trust in the three branches of federal government and in state and local governments has improved.

At no point in the last four decades have Americans expressed less trust than they do today in U.S. political leaders or in the American people who voted those leaders into office, according to Gallup. (TAB)

COMMENT

The Importance of Being ‘An Association of Brethren’

Before there was such a thing as the Cooperative Program, An Association of Brethren demonstrated the value of people working together to build up the kingdom of God. Here is the story.

The Alabama Territory had been open to settlers less than a decade in 1808 and people rushed to buy land auctioned off by the government for \$2 an acre. On Oct. 2 of that year John Nicholson, a Baptist minister who had recently come to the territory, organized the first Baptist church in the area — Flint River Baptist Church located on the Flint River just north of Huntsville.

So quickly did Baptists and other settlers flood into the territory after the Indian wars and the War of 1812 that one observer wrote, “Never before or since has a country been so rapidly peopled.”

By 1825 historians counted 128 Baptist churches with more than 5,000 members in what was now the state of Alabama.

Baptists were a people but they were not a denomination. Varying understandings about theology and how to do church were among the baggage Baptists carried with them as they migrated westward to Alabama. And soon a major controversy — the anti-missionary movement — engulfed all the churches.

Responding to the call

Minutes of the Alabama Baptist State Convention — organized in 1823 — show leaders making numerous calls for a Baptist newspaper that could help unite the Baptists and through which the churches could communicate with one another.

Baptist entrepreneurs responded. William Wood, of Jacksonville, started the *Southwestern Baptist Pioneer*, the first Baptist paper in the state, but it was short-lived because of financial reasons. Tuscaloosa businessman John Davenport proposed the *Southern Religious Intelligencer* but no record exists if the paper was ever published.

Mobile’s George Felix Heard was more successful. He published the *Mobile Monitor* in 1837 but a year later the paper was moved to Natchez,



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Mississippi, and shortly after Heard headed for Texas.

In Wetumpka, John Williams, a Baptist minister, tried again to found a Baptist paper — *The Family Visitor*. That paper also was short lived and soon Williams was pleading through the *Wetumpka Argus* for payment of unpaid subscriptions for his paper, which had ceased publication.

In Marion a group of businessmen and educators recognized Alabama Baptists’ desperate need for a communications channel and agreed to try again. This time the paper would not depend on an individual. This group of prominent Baptists agreed to work together to finance, edit and publish *The Alabama Baptist*.

On a Saturday — Feb. 4, 1843 — the first issue of *The Alabama Baptist* was published. Its owner, editor and publisher was “An Association of Brethren.”

Ironically, not all the “Brethren” were men. Included in the founding group was Julia T. Barron, a prominent Marion citizen who played a critical role in founding Judson Female Institute (now Judson College) in 1839.

Others in the group included Milo Jewett, president of Judson; General Edwin D. King; James H. DeVotie, pastor of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, one of the leading congregations in the state; and others.

When the state convention met later that year the messengers adopted a resolution saying “we warmly commend the energy and liberality of the brethren who have established and sustained *The Alabama Baptist*.”

In an earlier report, it was noted, “Several spirited brethren in Marion agree to meet any deficiency which might arise for the want of a sufficient number of subscribers during the first year of its (*The Alabama Baptist*) publication.”

The report added, “These brethren will be obliged to advance each a considerable sum at

the close of the present volume. Notwithstanding this, they have made arrangements to continue the paper on a plan which they believe will give it permanent existence.”

Two years later the convention received a report rejoicing that the paper had “purchased a building in which to publish the paper, a new press, type and everything connected with such an establishment.”

The report said the Association of Brethren “are determined to spare no pains in rendering it (*The Alabama Baptist*) worthy of the confidence and support of the entire denomination in the state.” That statement proved providential for the next six years as the Association of Brethren edited the paper, promoted its circulation and provided its financial stability.

Where individual efforts had failed, *The Alabama Baptist* did indeed become a “permanent existence” because a group of men and women decided to work together to establish a needed ministry among Alabama Baptists.

From its founding, *The Alabama Baptist* was “employed by the officers of the convention as the organ through which they shall confer with the churches connected with this body.” The paper was called “an instrument of great power in promotion of the best interest of the denomination and in advancing the cause of Christ at large.”

After 76 years of private ownership, the paper was purchased by the Alabama Baptist State Convention in January 1919. Today *The Alabama Baptist* operates under an elected board of directors and is the largest state Baptist paper in the Southern Baptist Convention.

‘Great power in promotion’

Every week for nearly 175 years *The Alabama Baptist* has informed Baptists for understanding and perspective. It has inspired Baptists for growth as Christian disciples. The publication has connected Baptists in missions and ministry. The state Baptist paper has indeed been “a great power in promotion of the best interest of the denomination and in advancing the cause of Christ at large.”

And all of this happened because a group of Baptists decided to work together to bring into existence a ministry that none of them could have ever done alone.

Dear God, in our day please bless us with men and women with a passion for Your kingdom who will work together like those Baptists who formed An Association of Brethren. ✠

“All of this happened because a group of Baptists decided to work together to bring into existence a ministry that none of them could have ever done alone.”

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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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Affiliation, attendance & practice

State of the Church 2016 report tracks change in American believers

Although 73 percent of Americans self-identify as Christian, a much smaller number actually practice their faith. That is one insight found in Barna Group’s recently released report, “The State of the Church 2016.”

For the study, more than 5,000 interviews were conducted from January to April among a sample of U.S. adults over the age of 18.

Twenty percent of U.S. adults claim no faith and only 6 percent identify with Islam, Buddhism, Judaism or Hinduism, with 1 percent unsure of their religious identification.

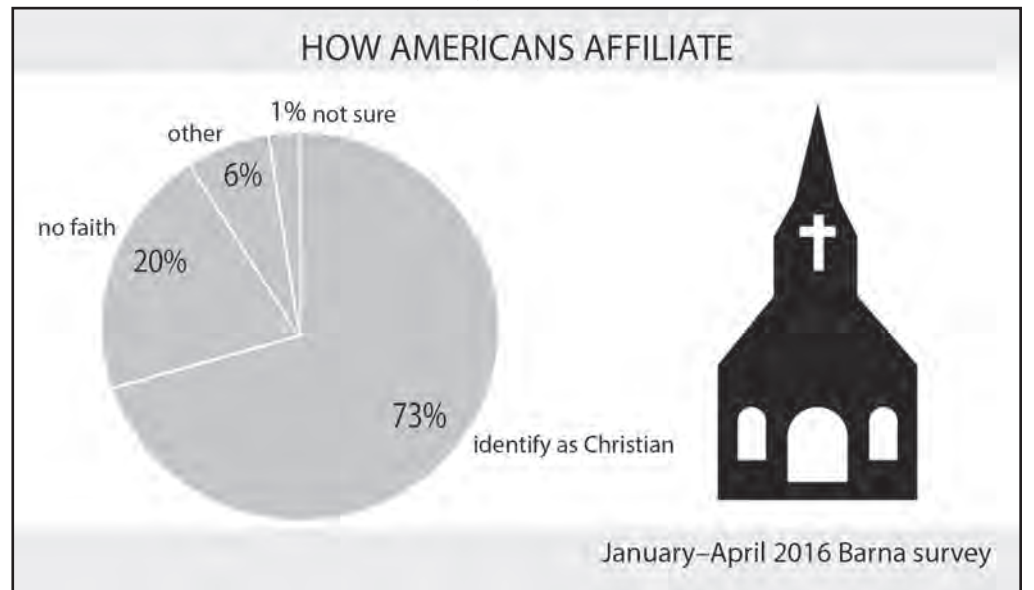
Majority to minority

When church attendance was added as a variable to the research, Barna found that the majority becomes a minority. If a self-identified Christian attends a religious service at least once a month and says his or her faith is important in his or her life, Barna considers that person a “practicing Christian.”

When looking at the combination of self-identification, affiliation and practice, Barna found only 1 in 3 adults are “practicing Christians.” The group believes that statistic represents the reality of the nation more clearly than the 73 percent that identify as Christian.

Despite the 31 percent of “practicing Christians,” more Americans are “churched” than “unchurched,” according to the research. Churched adults are those who have attended a church service with varying frequency within the last six months, excluding special events. Unchurched adults are those who have not attended a service in the last six months. Fifty-five percent, then, are considered churched and 45 percent are considered unchurched.

Of those who attend church, the largest group of churchgoers attend small- to medium-sized churches. Forty-six percent attend a church of 100 attendees or less, Barna found, and 37 percent attend a midsize church of more than 100, but less than 499. Eight percent attend a large



Graphic by Neisha Roberts/Vecteezy.com church symbol

church that has more than 1,000 attendees.

Another variable Barna looked at in the report was how Americans express their faith. The most common expression is through prayer, the research found.

Three-quarters of Americans claim to have prayed to God in the last week. Following prayer, attending a church service is the next most common way of expressing one’s faith, with 35 percent having attended a worship service in the last seven days.

Compared to previous results

When comparing these results with The State of the Church report from 2011, Barna research found then that 47 percent of those surveyed attended church at least once in the last week. That means within five years this statistic has dropped 12 percent.

This year’s research found that 34 percent claim to have read the Bible on their own and about 1 in 5 (19 percent) said they have volunteered at a nonprofit or church in the last

week. In 2011, 22 percent said they had volunteered in the last week and 46 percent said they had read their Bible on their own (outside of a church service).

Responsibility to share

When those surveyed this year were asked whether they think they have a responsibility to tell others about their faith, 54 percent did not think they need to tell others and 46 percent think they do have that responsibility.

When it comes to good works and going to heaven, 55 percent agree with the statement, “Good works result in going to heaven,” and 42 percent “disagree somewhat” or “strongly disagree” with the statement.

From a list of options for ways to describe God, 57 percent of those surveyed chose that God is all-powerful, all-knowing and a perfect Creator who rules the world today. Thirty-three percent had other views about God and 10 percent chose, “There is no such thing as God.” (Barna, Neisha Roberts)

Ministry Tips



LOVE, PRAY FOR, ENCOURAGE PASTORS

By Pastor Greg Hyche
Ladonia Baptist Church, Phenix City

A church’s pastor and his family are the only ones, outside of Jesus, who truly understand the unique challenges facing every pastor and his home. It is far more important to

love and encourage a fellow minister who is struggling than to be critical.

Wounded warrior

No pastor should ever leave a fellow pastor, or wounded warrior, on the battlefield of ministry.

It should be our longing, as pastors and ministers, to care for those who have experienced ministry setbacks and the heartaches of ministry. Pray for them, love them, be there for them, encourage them and help them get back on the field. ☩



123rf.com

‘Inner conviction’

Writers’ motivation must come from within whether self-publishing, traditional publishing

So you’ve got that idea burning in your mind, that story itching in your fingers.

It’s a book — and you believe it needs to be written and read.

So what do you do first to get it published, other than start writing?

1. Decide whether you want to go for a traditional publisher or self-publish.

There are pros and cons to both, many industry professionals say. In the tradi-

tional publishing route, you would pitch your book to a traditional publisher in hopes they would offer you a contract. In the self-publishing world, you would pay to have your book published.

It’s important to keep a realistic view of which would be better for your book, said Jane Friedman, a long-time publishing industry professional who advises would-be authors at her website, janefriedman.com.

To get nonfiction books accepted by a traditional publisher — like a self-help book or book on a topic of faith — you have to have a strong hook and author platform, meaning you have to already

have a proven reach to a target audience, she writes.

It is not something you create overnight, she said. And it is not something you can buy. It’s not a one-time event or your authority or qualifications. It’s not about being active on social media or blogging, though those are an important part of it.

“It is more about putting in consistent effort over the course of a career and making incremental improvements in extending your network,” Friedman wrote. “It’s about making waves that attract other people to you — not about begging others to pay attention.”

It’s a long-term process of connecting with quality readers and extending your reach gradually by partnering with others, she said.

If you don’t have a platform and are not wanting to take the time to build it before approaching a publisher, you might want to look into the self-publishing route.

“There are many mid-size houses, independent publishers, small presses, university presses, regional presses and digital-only publishers who might be thrilled to have your work,” Friedman wrote. “You

just need to find them.”

And the benefits of self-publishing are that you retain all the rights to your book, get all the proceeds and have total control of the process, according to the “Getting

Your Book Published for Dummies” website.

The downside is that you’re still going to need that author platform to some degree, otherwise you might never get your book out into the public domain. But you can go this route, enter writing contests and find other ways to get exposure for your book so you’ll potentially have greater success in approaching a traditional publisher, according to dummies.com.

2. Determine if you need an agent.

If you’re interested in going the traditional publishing route, you will likely need an agent, as most New York publish-

ers don’t accept many, if any, unagented submissions, Friedman writes.

She said the best place to research agents is PublishersMarketplace.com.

Another place to start looking for an agent is at writers.net, according to dummies.com.

Publishers in Alabama

Riddle Creek Publishing

Haleyville

Specializes in biblically based classroom curriculum
riddlecreekpublishing.com
205-486-9086

River City Publishing

Montgomery

Publishes Southern literary fiction and nonfiction
rivercitypublishing.com
334-265-6753

Apologetics Press

Montgomery

Publishes texts dedicated to the defense of New Testament Christianity
apologeticspress.org
334-272-8558

OnStage Publishing

Madison

Specializes in children’s literature
onstagepublishing.com
256-542-3213

Source: publishersarchive.com/Alabama

And another good place to explore your options is at events like the Southern Christian Writers Conference, held yearly in Tuscaloosa. There you can interact with industry professionals and get advice on where to start.

At conferences like these “you will meet agents and editors and start to see them as real people,” Friedman writes. “If you have an appointment or consultation with a publishing professional, it will shorten your path to publication. You can get the reasons, immediately, that an agent or editor may not be responding favorably to your work.”

3. *Keep writing.*

With book publishing, 99 percent of the time there’s no reason to get in a hurry, Friedman writes.

When the time comes to submit a manuscript, “be confident that you’re submitting your best work,” Friedman writes. “One of the biggest mistakes new writers make is rushing to get published.”

If your book is a novel or memoir, she said to finish the project and make it the best it can possibly be before giving it to an agent or a traditional publisher for consideration.

“Seek out a writing critique group or mentor who can offer you constructive feedback, then revise your story,” Friedman writes. It’s almost never a good idea, she said, to show them the manuscript at an early stage.

For nonfiction books other than memoirs, the best plan is to submit a well-written proposal rather than a full manuscript, she said. A proposal is basically a business plan meant to convince a publisher to want your book, and it’s important that it be in the best shape it can be before it hits a publisher’s desk.

“Read in your genre, practice your craft and polish your work,” she said. “Repeat this cycle endlessly. It’s not likely your first attempt will get published. Your writing gets better with practice and time. You mature and develop.”

Huffington Post offered the same advice as part of its 11 tips on getting a book published — “Write well. Given how many people talk about writing a book when they have the time or after they retire, it’s easy to forget that writing is a real job. But it is. To do it well, you need time, practice and talent.”

Hiring a freelance editor or writing coach to give you feedback might not be a bad idea either, Friedman writes, noting that it’s hard to improve without a mentor.

In every case, make sure your validation comes from outside your closest family and friends and from people in the publishing industry instead, she said.

But, she said, “your motivation to write has to come from within. Don’t write (only) because you were given validation or permission by someone close to you. What you really need (require) is your own inner conviction.” (TAB)

The Southern Christian Writers Conference is a popular Alabama event — scwconference.com.

‘Why ministers must write’

Author encourages ministers to write, publish for eternal purpose

By Denise George
Special to The Alabama Baptist

When you, as a minister and/or church leader, write books and articles, the gospel message extends far beyond the walls of your brick and mortar church. While your Sunday morning sermon or Bible study might reach hundreds or even thousands of listeners within your congregation, a book and/or article can reach millions of readers across the planet.

Whether you choose to write nonfiction books or novels, know that as a writing minister, you will bring God’s truth and soul-saving message to those who may never enter a church building.

In today’s world, like never before, people need to hear what evangelical ministers have to say.

Both nonfiction and fiction bring Christ’s message to a confused and hurting populace who need instruction, wisdom, encouragement and hope. Published books and articles have lasting power, and they enable you to continue bearing rich fruit for Christ long after your time on earth has passed. How fortunate Christians are to have the published words of ministers like Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Oswald Chambers and many others. Had they chosen not to write-to-publish, the world would be poorer.

If you, as a minister, want to step into a writing-to-publish ministry, know that writing a book and/or article takes much prayer, research, time, hard work and deep contemplation. Before you write your first sentence, here are six things you must know:

1. *Know thy audience.*

Pinpoint exactly who your primary reader will be. For example if you are writing a book titled “Teach Your Children to Pray,” your primary audience would be Christian parents with children. Choose a secondary audience to expand your readership. The book on teach-

ing children to pray also might appeal to pastors, children’s ministry workers, grandparents, Sunday School teachers and others who work with children. Editors want writers to pinpoint a specific audience. They also want to reach a wide readership.

2. *Know thy readers’ “felt needs.”*

What are those urgent needs people today deal with and need guidance on? Fear? Finances? Marriage? Parenting? Put pen to paper and address those needs from a biblical perspective in book and/or article form.

3. *Know thy message.*

Decide exactly what you want to say to your chosen readers and use a “keyhole” technique. For instance: If you want to write about prayer — which is too broad a topic for a single book or article — narrow your focus to one aspect of prayer, perhaps “Praying Wordless Prayers from the Heart” or “How to Pray With Your Spouse,” etc.

4. *Know thy format.*

It’s tempting for a minister to want to publish a Sunday morning sermon straight from the pulpit, but most editors won’t publish articles or books in sermon form, fearing the format might sound “preachy.”

Take the same material and choose a format that will teach the reader. Think about how C.S. Lewis used great storytelling techniques in his “Narnia” series to engage the reader and teach them about Christ, the Lion. Or think about the amazing success of Tim LaHaye’s and Jerry Jenkins’ story-formatted books “Left Behind.”

It is no wonder that Jesus used narrative to teach His listeners. Choose a format that will be most conducive to spreading your idea and message to a vast audience.

5. *Know thy marketplace.*

Before you write a book, go to online

bookstores, such as amazon.com or christianbook.com, type in your working title and topic/idea and see what has already been published in that genre or topic.

Has someone already written and published your book? If so, choose another slant on the topic or choose another topic.

Publishers want unique ideas or age-old truths written with a fresh new slant. If writing an article, then check the past three years of articles that a particular magazine has already published to make sure they haven’t recently published a similar article.

6. *Know thy publisher.*

Research and choose your book publisher and magazine editor carefully. Each has specific readers they address. Some may want nonfiction books while others may need fiction. Study the publishers’ needs, matching your idea and message with the readers they serve.

Find out if the publisher is connected with a denomination and if so make sure you understand and agree with their beliefs.

The annual Writer’s Market guide lists book and magazine publishers, defines their needs, pinpoints their specific audiences and gives you all the information you need to contact them with your ideas. You also can find this information on publisher websites under writer guidelines.

Become a minister and/or church leader who preaches, proclaims and publishes the good news of Christ — and reach out to a hurting world.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Denise George is author of 30 books. Her last three books, including “Behind Nazi Lines” and “Orchestra of Exiles,” were published with Penguin Random House. She is married to Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham. For more information, visit www.denisegeorge.org.

“In today’s world, like never before, people need to hear what evangelical ministers have to say. ... Published books and articles have lasting power and they enable you to continue bearing rich fruit for Christ long after your time on earth has passed.”

Denise George, author

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.

BESSEMER

► **Grace Life Church, McCalla**, will host a pumpkin patch event at Shadow Lake in McCalla on Oct. 15-16 and 22-23. On Oct. 15 and 22 it will be open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 16 and 23 it will be open 1-5 p.m. There will be hayrides, face painting, inflatables, a petting zoo, crafts, train rides, story time and a maze. For more information visit yourgracelife.com/pumpkinpatch. Joel Frederick is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Malvern Church** will hold a gospel sing Oct. 8, 6 p.m. God's Messengers and The Stricklands from Dothan will perform special music. Refreshments will follow the service. Hosea Parker is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **CrossPoint Church, Gadsden**, recently changed its name to **The Church at Wills Creek**. Jason Ellen is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host the 39er's CLUB on Oct. 11, 11 a.m.-noon. If you have previously been

involved in the 39er's CLUB, contact your table hostess by Oct. 4 to make or cancel your reservation. If you would like to be a part of the 39er's CLUB but have never been, call the church office at 334-684-9617 by Oct. 4. Steve Wegmann is pastor.

MARION

► **Harmony Grove Church, Winfield**, will hold Super Tuesdays revival services every Tuesday evening in October at 7 p.m. Randal Trimm, pastor of Bevan Chapel Church, Berry, will speak Oct. 4. Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Church, will speak Oct. 11. Keith Box, director of missions for Marion Association, will speak Oct. 18. Joel Frederick, pastor of Grace Life Church, McCalla, will speak Oct. 25. Steven Stamps is pastor of Harmony Grove.

MORGAN

► **Shady Grove Church, Danville**, will celebrate homecoming and a Celebration Sunday on Oct. 16. The church will honor Pastor Tom Campbell and his wife, Connie, for their 25 years of ministry. A fellowship meal will follow. For more information call Betty Boyd at 256-773-5648.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Mount Zion Church, Warrior**, will honor Pastor Sammie Reid for 50 years of ministry Oct. 2, 1:30 p.m. The church will celebrate and express appreciation for Reid's love and dedication over the past 50 years.

ST. CLAIR

► **First Church, Moody**, will collect manual wheelchairs, footrests, aluminum walkers, crutches and canes Oct. 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. for Joni and Friends' "Wheels for the World." For more information call 205-901-3384. To donate at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Hoover, call 205-281-1467. To donate at Alabama Wheelchair Specialist in Birmingham call 205-540-6028. To donate at Burton's Food Store in Springville call 205-467-6686. Brad Moseley is pastor of First, Moody.

OTHER

► **Mount Moriah Fellowship Church** will hold "Second Sunday" on Oct. 9. The church is located on the Butler and Wilcox county line. David J. Seamon, director of missional engagement at Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, will speak in the 11 a.m. service. Yeldell Yellers Gospel and Bluegrass band from Mount Moriah Fellowship will perform after the service. Dinner on the grounds will be at noon. The steering committee will meet at 1:15 p.m. and the trustees of the JGD Trust nonprofit will meet at 1:45 p.m. For more information contact Harold Grimes at 251-746-2520 or Mary Alice Carmichael at 205-879-7849 or maryalice@carmichael1.com. ☛



Castleberry's Cedar Creek Baptist celebrates 150 years

Reminiscing on the past and celebrating the present marked the 150th anniversary of Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Castleberry, as a "wonderful" day, said Pastor Casey Jones.

During the 10:30 a.m. service deacon David Castleberry presented a history of the church and Dalton Campbell, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented a framed certificate to the church. A special aspect of the service was when former pastors shared memories from their days at Cedar Creek Baptist. Ernest Sadler, Bob Godbee and Thomas



Photo by Dalton Campbell

White each shared during that time. Jones brought the morning message and Keith Pate sang special music, with former pastor David Johnson closing the morning service with prayer.

After lunch, Lookin' Up, a quartet from Milton, Florida, led the congregation in an afternoon singing.

Banks' Loflin Baptist marks 125-year anniversary

There was a "sweet spirit" to the celebration service of Loflin Baptist Church, Banks, said Debbie McWhorter, wife of Pastor Wiley McWhorter.

The Bullock Centennial Baptist Association church marked its 125th anniversary in a joint service with its annual homecoming festivities Aug. 7. Wiley McWhorter brought the message during the 11 a.m. service and Lennie Trawick performed special music. Calvin Milford, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented a plaque to honor Loflin Baptist's years of dedicated service.

The celebration also served as the kickoff for a week of revival services. According to Debbie McWhorter, it was the best homecoming in years.

Tarrant church members reconnect at 50th anniversary

The 50th anniversary celebration of Welcome Missionary Baptist Church No. 2, Tarrant, was a day to rekindle and reconnect old friendships.

Several former pastors, including Darwin Cardwell, Bill Parkins and Johnny Allred, returned to their once pastorate July 17 for the service that also marked its annual homecoming. Former pastor G. Elrod preached during the 11 a.m. service and current Pastor Tommy Riggs presented a commemorative certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

A special feature of the morning service was Robbie McCoy, daughter of founding member Kathleen Lumpkin, presenting a story of the church's early days.

Following lunch, participants gathered for an afternoon singing.

Geneva Assoc. church marks 125 years of ministry

Participants were able to get a glimpse of the past during the 125th anniversary celebration of New Home Baptist Church, Samson, on July 17.

With photos displayed and a history of the church in each bulletin, participants marked both the milestone anniversary and homecoming during the joint 11 a.m. service. Southern gospel group Blest from Coffee County sang special music and Randy Walker was the guest speaker. Walker is a retired military chaplain and a former interim pastor of New Home Baptist.

Also during the morning service, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Ellen Dewberry presented a certificate, and a full book on the history of the church written by late member Kathryn Brewer was displayed. Gary Dunn is pastor.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB

REFLECTIONS



Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Nehemiah 8:10b



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Person of Christ

Patient and Longsuffering

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

In Mark 4:41 the question that arose among the disciples when Jesus had stilled the storm on the sea was “What manner of man is this?” Although dealing with a totally different context, that is the question being addressed by Theology 101 in this series of studies about the Person of Christ.

The series will continue to look at Christ as He was in the flesh. To this point, we have looked upon Him as a person of humility and meekness, one who was compassionate and caring, as well as being faithful and true. This week we behold Him as a person who was patient and longsuffering.

The Bible speaks to us of the “Divine longsuffering” that waited in the days of Noah (1 Pet. 3:20), when “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

Human sinfulness

The Lord’s patience and longsuffering with human sinfulness is not a matter of His indifference or indulgence, but a matter of mercy in that He “is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). God’s patience with human frailty and failings found expression also in His Son.

As God came in the flesh, Christ embodied the same divine qualities expressed as patience and longsuffering. In the opening verses of Revelation, reference is made to the “patience of Jesus Christ” (1:9). What follows in Chapters 2 and 3 is the inspired witness to His patience with seven imperfect churches. Rather than indulging and overlooking the imperfections, Christ’s patience was with view to exhorting them to repentance. He is still longsuffering toward imperfect churches.

One evidence of Christ’s patience and longsuffering was His relationship with His earliest followers. For example Christ expressed exasperation mingled with loving concern in His gentle rebuke to Cleopas and his companion from Em-

maus, saying to them, “O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken, ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

Saving mission

The patient Christ then carefully began with Moses and all the prophets, “expounding to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25–27). Just as they proved to be slow of heart in their dullness “to get the message” about His saving mission in the world, so we often demonstrate similar slowness in grasping and living out the message of the gospel. And equally so, our Lord is patient with our slowness to grasp His truth and order our lives according to it.

Since God’s master plan calls for all believers to be conformed to the image of Christ, we are called to demonstrate patience and longsuffering.

It is no surprise to find in the apostolic prayer in Colossians 1:9–11 the plea that those in Colossae, as well as the rest of us, might “be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” so that we might “walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.”

“Patience and longsuffering with joy” contribute to Christlikeness in all God’s children. The exaltation of love in 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that “love suffers long” (v. 4).✠

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.



‘Immune system’

The Gathering emboldens believers in US

(continued from page 1)

Author and speaker Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas, described the Church as “an immune system” to help fight the ills of society.



Screen grab/The Gathering

Pastor and author Tony Evans tells those at The Gathering that the Church immune system is ‘not up to snuff.’

‘Divine repellent’

“The Church is ... designed to keep cultural colds from becoming societal pneumonia,” said Evans, who served as the main organizer of The Gathering. “So if you’re seeing our nation succumb to pneumonia, it’s because the immune system of the Church is not up to snuff. It’s not acting as the divine repellent.”

Evans said the hope for a long-term outcome from The Gathering is that Christians would no longer be “secret” and that believers would work together as churches doing good works so the world will see what the Church is all about.

Other Christian leaders known by Alabama Baptists who participated in the event included Southern Evangelical Seminary

President Richard Land; pastor and author Max Lucado; National Association of Evangelicals President Leith Anderson; pastor and author Greg Laurie of Harvest America; and Cokiesha Bailey Robinson, a graduate of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham. (The Christian Post, Neisha Roberts)

Linden BC continues tradition of building community by feeding area football teams

Linden Baptist Church has been proactive in finding ways to reach its community, and one way it’s done that is through feeding people — specifically with baked chicken, green beans, mashed potatoes and “lot and lots of Gatorade,” according to William Faircloth, associate pastor and minister to students since January.

The Bethel Baptist Association church continued its tradition of feeding the area high school football teams lunch prior to each school’s first home game. This year student athletes from Marengo Academy (on Sept. 2) and Linden High School (on Aug. 26) piled into the church’s fellowship hall for a meal to get them ready for each game and heard words of encouragement from church leaders.

Faircloth, who participated in this out-

reach for the first time, said, “It’s just awesome to interact with the community like that, with people that you might not always see or interact with.”

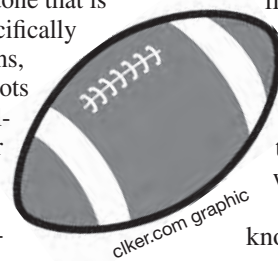
“The main point is to build the aspect of community with them,” Faircloth said. “We wanted them to know that we are there for them and that they know our doors are open and they can come to us for anything.”

Opening the door

Since community is something that’s “been lost a bit with our younger generations,” Faircloth said he thinks this is a great way to rebuild that in Linden.

“And hopefully through building community it will open the door for the gospel to be shared in the future,” he said.

Billy Harris is pastor. (Neisha Roberts)



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Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Willis B. Kelly

First Baptist Church, Albertville
Marshall Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: Jeremiah 33:3

FAVORITE HYMN: "More About Jesus Would I Know"

HOBBIES: Hunting, fishing and watching University of Alabama football

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Mary Lois; sons, David, Jonathan and Samuel; daughter, Miriam; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren



KELLY

Willis B. Kelly, of Albertville, believes a minister should be busy in ministry. At 88, he fills in for pastors and in the past 20 years has been interim pastor for 16 churches in three associations. Earlier in his ministry he was a full-time pastor at three churches. Kelly served on boards and committees for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and the Alabama State Baptist Convention and holds responsibilities with Marshall Baptist Association.

Q: What influences in your life pointed you to Christ at the beginning of your faith journey?

A: I grew up in a Christian home. My grandfather, Will Kelly, was a Baptist preacher for 45 years. My grandfather, Sam Lindsey, donated land twice to build churches. I accepted Christ at 12 years of age at a revival meeting.

Q: When and how were you led into your ministry?

A: That was when I was 21 years of age, driving a bus to church. I was a junior deacon and Sunday School superintendent. But I sensed God wanted me to do something more.

Q: What does your ministry demand?

A: It meant that, if you were going to preach and serve the Lord, giving your best every day of the week and being faithful to the calling the Lord commissioned you to do.

Q: What do you get from your ministry?

A: You get the satisfaction

and joy of knowing you are involved in the greatest work on earth — that's helping to build God's kingdom. It is an eternal ministry you are part of.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: They support us and always have — 100 percent. All of our children were present Jan. 17 for the 62-year celebration (of my ministry) at First Baptist Church, Albertville.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in this in the future?

A: I don't want to live any longer than I can be useful in God's kingdom. Whatever time I have left on this earth, I hope to stay active and busy with so many things you can do. If we don't win people to Christ, we're going to miss our calling.

Q: What difference will this ministry make for you in the future?

A: I hope this ministry will allow me to say when I am ready to depart this life that whatever I have contributed brings me joy, and after I'm gone somebody will know I lived. I hope my ministry will leave a legacy to say to young preachers, "When the days are tough, that the tough get going."

Q: What difference has Jesus Christ made in your life?

A: He has made all the difference. He has been with me in the local church, all the way to Korea and back and all these churches we have served these 60 years. If anything good happened in our ministry, God did it. To Him is all the honor and glory and praise. ✠

If you know of a person who should be featured as "Someone You Should Know," send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to: *Someone You Should Know*, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209 or news@thealabamabaptist.org.

'Under guise of tolerance'

Religious liberty attacked in 'moral revolution'

Something near and dear to Baptist history — religious liberty — "is being sorely tried today," said Mark DeVine, associate professor of divinity history and doctrine at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

Early Baptist leader Thomas Helwys became the first person in history in 1612 to call for "radical religious liberty, extending even to atheists" and for his views Helwys was arrested, tried, convicted and jailed, DeVine told *The Alabama Baptist*.

Yet religious liberty as Baptists and Americans in general have known it throughout history will suffer a critical setback if a new U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) report is followed.

Civil rights guarantees

In the Sept. 7 report, USCCR declared nondiscrimination protections "are of preeminent importance in American jurisprudence" and religious exemptions from safeguards for such classifications as sexual orientation and gender identity "significantly infringe upon" those civil rights guarantees.

USCCR Chairman Martin Castro wrote in a statement included in the report, "The phrases 'religious liberty' and 'religious freedom' will stand for nothing except hypocrisy so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance."

With such language, USCCR and Castro indicated the rights of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people should prevail when they clash with the rights of Americans who have religious conscience objections.

The legal and legislative advances of the LGBT and same-sex "marriage" movements have prompted debate for at least the last decade on how the conflict between religious liberty and what has become known as sexual liberty should be resolved. USCCR is now on record favoring sexual liberty.

Relating the history of the U.S. Constitution to the report and Castro's comments "must shock anyone familiar with the views and intentions of the framers of the Constitution ... who believed religious liberty was essential to provide a moral anchor and guide for the United States," DeVine said.

"Under the guise of tolerance, a new intolerance for religious belief is gaining strength in the land of liberty," he said.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), called the USCCR language on religious freedom a "logical, moral and political disaster."

"For this administration to argue that religious liberty is merely a euphemism for unlawful discrimination demonstrates how deeply entrenched our federal government is in a culture war mentality against religious dissidents," Moore told Baptist Press in written comments.

"Freedom of conscience isn't privilege or luxury; it

is the first freedom, without which no other freedom can exist," Moore said. "This hostile attitude toward tens of millions of law-abiding Americans is tragic, and my prayer is that it would quickly give way to a recognition that soul freedom is worth defending for all."

Tom Fuller, a Beeson professor, said of Castro's comments, "While there certainly have been ... those who appropriate the principle of religious liberty to justify actions that do not bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ, the categorical dismissal of a First Amendment protection belies a prejudice and discrimination of another sort."

In the report titled, "Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles With Civil Liberties," the commission endorsed briefing panelists' statements in support of other findings undoubtedly of concern to religious freedom defenders, including:

▶ A doctrine that distinguishes between beliefs (which should be protected) and conduct (which should conform to the law) is fairer and easier to apply;

▶ Third parties, such as employees, should not be forced to live under the religious doctrines of their employers [unless the employer is allowed to impose such constraints by virtue of the ministerial exception];

▶ A basic [civil] right as important as the freedom to marry should not be subject to religious beliefs;

▶ Even a widely accepted doctrine such as the ministerial exemption should be subject to review as to whether church employees have religious duties.

In addition to its findings, USCCR made recommendations narrowing religious liberty protections. It said courts, legislators and policy-makers "must

tailor religious exceptions to civil liberties and civil rights protections as narrowly as applicable law requires."

Two USCCR commissioners contributed statements to the report that disagreed with the majority.

Relating back to the work of Baptists in history, Fuller said, "[Baptists] have fiercely advanced the cause of religious liberty and freedom of conscience for all Americans in days past, and we should continue to do so in this new and challenging time. But we must do so in a Christlike spirit of humble confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ."

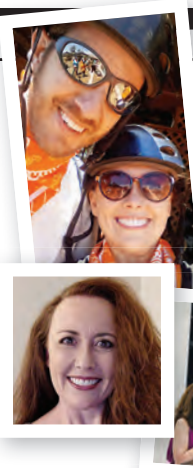
No compromise

Fuller also said, "We should be equally passionate about defending religious liberty for all without compromising the essentials of our own faith. Ultimately our security is not grounded in legislative preferences but in the sufficiency of Christ's finished work."

USCCR, established in 1957 as a nonpartisan entity, consists of eight members, four appointed by the president and four by Congress. The president names the chairman and vice chairman of the panel. (BP, Neisha Roberts)

"Freedom of conscience isn't privilege or luxury; it is the first freedom, without which no other freedom can exist."

**Russell Moore
president, Ethics & Religious
Liberty Commission**



Rashional THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

Facing the fact we do have limits

The books needed a purpose again. They had been boxed up for too many months and either needed to find residence on a shelf in my office or find a new owner. They weren't doing anyone any good hidden away from the world.

I don't remember what motivated me that particular day to clean out my books and slice open the tape on the box, but that's what I did. I organized the books by categories and determined to start reading through them one at a time, then pass them along to others.

But where to start? I settled on the leadership category, the discipleship category and the relationship category — all areas that continuously need polishing in my life.

As I glanced over the titles, my eyes noticed a handful of books focused on balancing life and creating margin.

Margin — the space between ourselves and our limits.

I remember understanding that word for the first time about 10 years ago when a colleague pointed out I had none. He wasn't the first nor the last to note this about me, but he was the first I remember using this particular word.

I didn't really worry about it at the time, but life — as life tends to do — exposed my true deficit of margin and recently I've landed in a season where margin is vital.

Toothpick world

When we leave no space in the area between ourselves and our limits, then every day can feel like it is out of control and the more we try to gain control of our lives, the more we lose the battle.

And don't even get me started on how the toothpick world in which we live comes crumbling down the minute one thing doesn't line up in order.

As I reflected on my personal battle with margin that day, I focused on the titles trying to

decide which book to pull off the shelf.

When I saw one simply titled "Margin," that seemed like the best place to start. I pulled it out of the lineup, laid it on top of the other books and within minutes forgot about it.

Reading, learning

But that book wouldn't be invisible for long.

A few weeks later in a conversation with a group of friends attempting to navigate their own margin struggles, at least three people suggested I read Richard A. Swenson's book, "Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives."

I made a note to get the book and even started looking up where to buy it when it hit me — there was a book with the title "Margin" already pulled out on my shelf ready to read. Sure enough, it was the same book.

And when I thought through why I had the book but had never read it before, I realized I had actually purchased the book in the mid-1990s right out of college.

I don't remember exactly why I purchased it, but it made me realize that despite many years of ignoring the need for margin my quest for it has been a 20-year journey.

Swenson says most people don't realize their need for margin nor the fact they have eliminated it in their lives. We are working through pain, overload, stress and frustration, not realizing we are furthering the difficulties the longer we fail to create space. And we are hurting our relationships to self, others and God in the process.

Problems one at a time are perhaps manageable, he says, but "they just won't stand in line. Instead they grow from problem pile into problem mountain and then all fall on us at the same time." 🌈

RASHIONAL Extras ...



Balancing work, life

By Michael Hyatt

Balance is not the same as rest. If we think that attaining balance means finally getting a much-needed break, then we're missing something important. It's not about rest, though it does include it.

Balance is about distributing demands so we can stay on track. And sometimes that takes a lot of work. If that's where you're at right now, don't be discouraged. It's just part of the challenge.

Balance is dynamic. "Life is like riding a bicycle," Albert Einstein said. "In order to keep your balance, you must keep moving."

We've all experienced this. The slower you go, the more trouble it is to keep your bike up.

Momentum helps us stay on course. It's the same for corrections and adjustments we make along the way.

Balance requires tweaking our schedule, task lists and more. If you have it right one week, it still requires attention the next week.

Balance is intentional. Our bodies are programmed to stay upright, but it takes a bit more focus when it comes to the complex responsibilities and relationships that make up our lives.

We have to make purposeful decisions and actions if we want balance. It's not accidental. Those decisions and actions will look different for each of us, but they're essential for all of us just the same.

Balance isn't easy, fast or always fun. It requires constant movement, constant attention.

Excerpt from "What No One Ever Told You About Work-Life Balance: How We Get It Wrong and What to Do About It" at www.michaelhyatt.com

Overload vs. margin

Overload is not having time to finish the book you're reading on stress.

Margin is having time to read it twice.

Overload is fatigue.
Margin is energy.

Overload is red ink.
Margin is black ink.

Overload is hurry.
Margin is calm.

Overload is anxiety.
Margin is security.

Overload is the disease.
Margin is the cure.

An excerpt from the book "Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserves To Overloaded Lives" by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.

I like missionary martyr Jim Elliot's quote "Wherever you are, be all there."

Stephen Hall
Associate pastor
NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville

Dealing with busyness, clutter

Busyness and clutter are both potential distractions in my life at any given time.

I've worked to create a lot of margin by eliminating too much busyness. Scaling back on many of the commitments I had helps me focus on "being" rather than "doing."

A part of obtaining more margin also means eliminating clutter, specifically stuff in my house.

Be it hobbies I've tried, junk I'm holding on to or even books I'll never read again; it's important

to create margin by eliminating material temptations.

Part of creating margin has been a spiritual walk with the Lord. It's been spiritual in that I'm not able to do what He leads me to do if I don't make room for Him. He's called me to remove things that were keeping me busy — things that prevented me from hearing His voice because I was afraid to let go of these idols and hear Him deal with my deepest hurts.

Chaplain Mike Chitwood
Montgomery, Ala.

"It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from all your natural fussings and frettings; coming in out of the wind."

C.S. Lewis
"Mere Christianity"

prioritized — all things become new and balanced.

To know Him is to know life in perfect balance. When Christ is truly known, all things are instantly prioritized, and, from an eternal perspective, take on their true value.

Excerpt from "The Myth of a Balanced Christian Life" by Michael Clark and George Davis (www.awildernessvoice.com/Balanced.html)



Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 years Ago September 1966

Twelve laymen, 13 musicians and four preachers from across the Southern Baptist Convention, including Alabama, began a month-long Baptist evangelistic crusade in Japan on Sept. 27. Collaborating with other preachers from Japanese Baptists and missionaries in the country, they formed and sent 13 evangelistic teams.

Each evangelical team spent time working in four churches devoting a week to each stop. The daily schedule included planned visitation, personal witnessing and an evening of worship service during which a layman gave a testimony of his Christian experience.

The laymen participating in the missions trip represented various vocations such as medicine, construction, engineering, law, insurance, real estate and sales. During business hours they would contact men of similar vocations to share the reason for their trip — Christian witness.

100 years Ago September 1916

William H. Smith returned to his native state of Alabama to become the educational secretary. This appointment brought Judson College and Howard College to the forefront of Alabama Baptists' minds as Smith was campaigning strongly in their interests. Smith was believed to be well equipped for secretarial service because of the many quality years he spent serving the Foreign Mission Board.

In other news, everyone in Avondale, irrespective of creed, was rejoicing with Pastor John W. Inzer and his church over the fact they would soon be worshipping in one of the most handsome and best-equipped churches, according to modern methods, in the city. The church was modern and its organization, the work of its young people, the WMU and the Sunday School were of the best.

150 years Ago September 1866

A superintendent of a south-

ern Sunday School was recently in some of the northern cities and made it his business to inquire of three large publishing houses whether any Sunday School books could be acquired free from the taint of "sectional animosity" and was informed by one that no such books could be furnished and by the other two that they could but would not do it. Clearly, Southerners had no

alternative but to provide Sunday School literature for themselves. "We must rally to our own Sunday School Board and furnish it with the means of publishing books for ourselves." It was believed this was a duty to the children that could not be overlooked. Southern Baptists did not want literature that included caricatures of southern history and civilization. †

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fax it to 205-879-6026 or call 1-800-803-5201, ext. 112. Church
announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information about placing a classified ad, contact the advertising department of The Alabama Baptist at 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or ads@thealabamabaptist.org. Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Immanuel Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg, TN, is accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. The candidate selected will have 5 years senior pastor experience, seminary training, expository preaching style and be able to attract and appeal to all age groups. We currently have an elderly congregation and no other ministerial staff. We have underused, debt-free, excellent facilities and a good location. Candidates with the above qualifications can email resumés to immanuel38464@bellsouth.net. Our website is myimmanuel.net. Please include current sermons on websites or send DVDs to the church office, Attn: search committee.

BIVOCATIONAL/FULL-TIME PASTOR

Providence Baptist Church, Rockford, Alabama, is searching for a pastor. Please send resumés to John Harris at 8973 US-HWY 231, Rockford, AL 35136 or email at laurah2465@charter.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Johntown Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, Johntown Baptist Church, 5201 Vance Rd, West Blocton, AL 35184.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH

Fairview Baptist Church is receiving applications for a part-time minister of youth. Resumés and inquiries may be sent to: 600 River Road, Valley, AL 36854 or to fairviewbaptistch@gmail.com.

YOUTH/CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, KY, is accepting resumés for a full-time youth/children's minister. Bachelor's degree, seminary training and experi-

ence is preferred. Email: youth-searchteam@southsidebaptist.com or mail: Southside Baptist Attn: Youth Search, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

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

SECRETARY

Secretary position at Hepzibah Baptist Church, McCalla, AL. 3 days a week M, W & TH, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Email inquiries & resumés to hbcsecretary1@bellsouth.net.

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(augmented reality)

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

SBC Pastors Conference seeking speakers

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Ninety-five percent of Southern Baptist churches run 400 or less on Sunday mornings — that’s a stat that Dave Miller said made him want to try something different.

Miller, president of the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors Conference, announced in September that conference leaders are looking for “the right 12 men” who lead churches that run roughly 500 or fewer on Sundays to preach at the 2017 conference.

“When you go to these (national) conferences, what you see represented on the stage is the small number of megachurches.

Most of the churches in the SBC are never heard from,” said Miller, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church, Sioux City, Iowa, which averages around 200 on Sundays. “We have nothing against megachurches at all, and we don’t really plan to do this more than once. We just wanted to try something different and showcase the ministry that goes on at such a large number of the SBC’s churches.”

Preaching Philippians

The 12 men selected will preach through Philippians in an expositional fashion, and “we think that the Word of God is all the draw we’ll need” for the event, Miller said. “We think people will be blessed even if

there’s not a single big name on stage. You may not know their names ahead of time, but you’ll get to hear the Word of God powerfully preached.”

At the helm

It’s an idea Miller and his friends have been battling around for years, and it’s the platform that earned him the spot at the helm of the conference.

He said he’s excited to

have the chance to try it.

And as an added bonus for the concept, the Caskey Center for Church Excellence at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) is partnering with the conference.

Caskey Center

Mark Tolbert, director of the Caskey Center, told Baptist Press, “The Caskey Center

was asked to partner with the SBC Pastors Conference because we are one of the only entities in the SBC completely devoted to smaller-membership and bivocational ministry. The Caskey Center serves as a champion for our smaller churches throughout

the convention. We look forward to sharing research, highlighting best practices and celebrating the significant work of our smaller churches.”

Working as a team

The 12 preachers also will gather at NOBTS in early 2017 for a seminar that will help them get on the same page as a team rather than as individual speakers for the Pastors Conference.

Miller said he hopes the Pastors Conference — with the theme “Above Every Name” from Philippians 2:9 — will showcase the fact that “there’s a lot of good ministry, a lot of good preachers out

there” in the convention’s smaller churches.

Already Pastors Conference officers have received more than

100 nominations, but Miller said he didn’t have many from Alabama yet.

“We’d love to get more nominations in from there,” he said.

The Pastors Conference will be held in June 2017 in Phoenix. The soft deadline for submissions is Sept. 30, but nominations received soon after may still be considered until the lineup is full, Miller said. †



MILLER

Myers-Mallory service held Sept. 13 in honor of ‘two spiritual giants’

On Sept. 13, more than 90 Alabama Baptists gathered at Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, to celebrate the life and ministry of missionaries Martha Myers and Kathleen Mallory.

Dalraida Baptist was Myers’ home church.

The special service included testimonies from friends of Myers and a time of prayer, worship and a message from retired missionary to Sub-Saharan Africa Charlotte Cearley (right).

Missionary work

Participants also heard from missionary Sarah McCrory; Spain/local Women on Mission facilitator Karen Quimby; Montgomery Baptist Association’s director of community ministries Lisa Chilson Rose; and others.

There also was a display set up for participants to view that described aspects of Myers’ life and ministry (below). (TAB)



Photos by Doug Rogers



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Alabama 'giving ministry' expands to help ministers' families worldwide pay for funerals

For more than 100 years, one longstanding society of pastors in Alabama has sent money instead of flowers to the families of deceased ministers and their wives.

It isn't an insurance policy — it's a "giving ministry" designed to help families pay for funeral expenses, said Mike McLemore, executive director/treasurer of the Alabama Baptist Ministers Benefit Society.

And as of Aug. 11, the society has broadened its reach to include any Southern Baptist worldwide who qualifies for membership, he said.

"We discovered that as far as we know no other state conven-

tion is offering this kind of benefit program for Southern Baptists in ministry," McLemore said.

The society, founded in 1904, was designed in early years to help rural and bivocational pastors with a gift of love from their fellow pastors. The society would collect \$1 per member and then send the total amount collected to the family of the deceased to help offset funeral expenses.

Who is eligible?

Today the ministry has been expanded to include all of those who are called to Christian ministry. This would include pastors and their spouses, church staff members and their spouses, church support staff, denominational employees and custodians who work for ministries.

The payout amount is determined by the number of members in the society at the time of the death of a loved one. For instance

the current membership is at 1,300, so a check in the amount of \$1,300 would be sent to the family of the deceased.

When there are multiple deaths, a notice is sent out to the members letting them know who has passed away. Each member will then send back a \$1 donation for each family.

"The ministry is kept simple in the way it operates, so ... the money collected goes directly to the families," McLemore said.

"It truly is a way for all of us to honor the ministries of those fellow Christians who have served faithfully in carrying the gospel light to a very dark world."

For more information, visit alabamabaptistbenefits.org. The society also will have a booth at the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference and Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 14-16 at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery. (TAB)

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

Target restroom policy receives criticism in Texas

AUSTIN, Texas — In a second incident a man was caught recording women undressing in the restroom at a Target store in Texas. The occurrence prompted Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to urge Target to re-examine its controversial transgender restroom policies, according to The Christian Post.

"After this latest incident, I hope Target finally recognizes the importance of protecting its customers, especially in environments where they can be at their most vulnerable," he said in a message to Target in mid-September. The first incident took place in May at a Target in Abrams, Texas. (TAB)

New Presbyterian group growing in membership

GOLETA, Calif. — A new conservative Presbyterian denomination has reached a milestone of 300 member congregations, The Christian Post reported.

The Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians was formed in response to the growing acceptance of homosexuality in the larger Presbyterian denomination. (TAB)

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Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

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Missouri Foundation loses trustee case

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The Missouri Baptist Foundation lost its final appeal Sept. 20 in the legal action filed against it by the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) 14 years ago. As a result, current trustees will be required to surrender governance to MBC-elected trustees.

The state Supreme Court denied the Foundation's application to transfer its appeal of a judgment issued by the Circuit Court of Cole County, Missouri, in October 2014.

"The judgment held the Foundation in 2001 acted contrary to law when it amended its articles to provide for a self-perpetuating board of trustees," according to a Foundation news release. "The judgment ordered the current board of trustees to step aside and be replaced by other trustees elected in accord with corporate articles of incorporation which were in effect prior to the amendments made in 2001."

MBC originally filed suit in 2012 against the Foundation and four other entities that had taken action to self-elect their trustees rather than to accept trustees elected by messengers to the MBC annual meeting. The circuit court ruled in favor of Windermere in 2008, a decision the appeals court upheld in 2009. MBC voluntarily withdrew its claims against *Word & Way* a year later. Cases against The Baptist Home and Missouri Baptist University are pending. (*Word & Way*)

Send Relief: Louisiana Flood begins Oct. 1

BATON ROUGE, La. — Alabama Baptists have another way to continue assisting recovery efforts taking place in Louisiana. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) initiative, Send Relief: Louisiana Flood, begins Oct. 1.

"We're developing a recovery plan to help Louisiana residents, pastors, churches and other buildings damaged by extreme flooding," said Mickey Caison, NAMB's Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) executive director. "The Send Relief plan includes a facility to house 300 volunteers as they aid those in crisis. Another part of what's in the works concerning this year-long project [is] collegiate opportunities during students' Christmas and spring breaks to help serve and rebuild Louisiana."

The initiative will entail a recovery and rebuild process similar to those NAMB facilitated in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Katrina, Detroit flooding and the Colorado floods and wildfires. While mud-outs, clean-ups and feedings are ongoing now, the one-year recovery plan will move into the rebuild stage.

To be part of the effort, churches, groups and individuals can visit namb.net and click on the Louisiana Flood icon. From there they will be able to schedule the dates for their visit. While housing and meals are provided onsite, there is a fee for each participant. (BP)

Kentucky Baptists fight human trafficking

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Human trafficking continues to be an issue in Alabama and every state, and many groups are working to eradicate the industry.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) is the latest Baptist group to make a stand.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood announced Sept. 21 that convention officials will not do business with hotels that fail to train employees to recognize and report human trafficking.

Chitwood set forth the convention's position in a letter to potential vendors and listed several resources for free training.

The Kentucky convention intends for its internal policy to encourage corporate partners to provide employees with human trafficking awareness education. Advocacy groups say human trafficking is a \$32 billion industry that ensnares about 27 million people worldwide.

"Going forward, our intention is that we will forego business with hotels that don't participate in this training," he said.

In November messengers to the KBC annual meeting are slated to vote on a human trafficking resolution. (BP)



Equip & encourage

FlashPoint Disciple-Making Conference set for 2017

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's easy for pastors to get discouraged when they feel like they go to a conference, get handed a magic bullet for evangelism and then go back to their church to try it — and nothing happens.

"Sometimes someone will say, 'go back and do this,' like there's magic dust or something that you're going to sprinkle on your congregation from the pulpit and everything is going to change all at once," said Daniel Edmonds, director of the office of Sunday School and discipleship for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "But there's no magic dust for that."

No quick fixes

That's why he's got different hopes for the FlashPoint Disciple-Making Conference set for Jan. 13-14, 2017, at Samford Univer-

sity's Wright Center in Birmingham — hopes that don't involve any quick fixes.

The conference, he said, is a journey back to how Jesus made disciples — investing in a small group of people and expecting growth that happens over time, Edmonds said.

"There are several Christian leaders in this country who are feeling this burden that we need to ignite a disciple-making movement," he said.

Those leaders — including FlashPoint founder Craig Etheredge, pastor of First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas — will offer tools and resources at FlashPoint in hopes that it will equip and encourage believers to model their outreach after Jesus Himself.

"In attending FlashPoint, you will get a renewed vision for disciple making and be encouraged to really start making disciples who make disciples in the local church," Etheredge said.

During the conference, Etheredge will walk participants through what Jesus did and how they can do it too in their own contexts.

Other speakers will include:

► Robby Gally, pastor, Longhollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee.

► David Fedeble, children's pastor, First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas.

► Ken Adams, pastor, Crossroads Church, Newnan, Georgia.

A variety of breakout sessions also will offer information specific to men's, women's, children's and other types of ministry.

"Ken Adams likes to say simply this — 'Jesus started the Church the way He wanted it and now He wants the Church the way He started it,'" Edmonds said. "The conference is encouraging, it's inspirational, it's very focused. You walk away knowing, 'That's why I'm here, that's who I'm supposed to be and I can live life like that and lead my church to make disciples.'"

To make the conference possible, SBOM is partnering with Samford's Ministry Training Institute, something its executive director, Kevin Blackwell, said he's excited about.

"It is an honor for Samford to host the conference," he said. "I had the opportunity to attend a Disciple-Making Conference last April and I was blown away by the experience. I wish this conference would have been available to me as I began my pastoral work years ago."

Blackwell said if a pastor can only attend one workshop this year, this should be the one he chooses.

"It truly is more than just a conference — it is a movement of disciple making that has the potential to transform our culture," he said.

Registration is now open and seating is limited. For more information or to register, visit <http://birmingham.flashpointconference.com>.

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

Clyta Verne Agee McAtee Gentry Former Alabama Baptist active at state level dies

Clyta Verne Agee McAtee Gentry, who served in a variety of state-level positions as well as alongside her husband at Alabama Baptist churches, died Sept. 9. She was 96.

A native of Arkansas, Gentry graduated from Texas Woman's University in Denton in 1943 and earned her master's degree from Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi.

She served as corresponding secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention Minister's Wives Conference and recording secretary for the Alabama Baptist Minister's Wives Conference as well as secretary for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union. She also served on the administrative committee (now executive committee) of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Gentry married Delbert Chappell McAtee in 1945. He served as pastor of Central Baptist Church, Phenix City; First Baptist Church, Lanett; Lakewood Baptist Church, Birmingham; and churches in Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma. After his death in 1995, she was married to William Roland Gentry Jr. from 1999 until his death in 2006.

She is survived by one daughter, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (TAB)



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South Shelby Baptist holds note burning



Photo courtesy of Lora Gowers

South Shelby Baptist Church, Shelby, recently held a note burning service. The church that grew from 39 members 15 years ago to now more than 300 paid off a \$500,000 debt for its church building. Jim Osborn (left) and Tom Minor (right) were church treasurer and pastor, respectively, at the time the note was made. David Warren is pastor.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 2

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

LIVING IN RELATIONSHIP 1 Peter 3:1-12

For the Wife (1-6)

While this command is quite controversial today, it is important for believers to understand every Christian is under authority. God ordained a hierarchy of authority for our good. When we submit to Him and obey His rules, life works best. We all must be under if we ever hope to be over. Submission is not just for wives, but for every Jesus follower.

For a Christian wife to have a different religion than her husband was astonishing for that culture. In "Advice to the Bride and Groom," the Greek historian Plutarch said: "A wife should not acquire her own friends, but should make her husband's friends her own. The gods are the first and most significant friends. For this reason, it is proper for a wife to recognize only those gods whom her husband worships." Even though Peter commands wives to submit to their husbands, it was a different submission than was common in that culture. The wives' devotion was first and foremost to Christ.

If a wife has an unbelieving husband who is not obedient to the gospel, she should not try to pressure him or nag him into the Kingdom. Rather, her Christ-like living in the home will testify without a word to the truth of the gospel.

It is very important to define submission biblically. Submission is the divine calling of the wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts. Submission is a matter of order, not of value (1 Cor. 11:3). Submission of the wife is a voluntary act (Eph. 5:22). The husband is never granted the authority to make his wife submit to his leadership. Submission has its limits (v. 6). If the husband orders his wife to disobey a command of Scripture, then she

is to obey God rather than her husband.

For the Husband (7)

While the wife should submit herself to her husband, the husband should serve his wife. Headship is the divine calling of the husband to take primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection and provision in the home. To "live with your wives in an understanding way" focuses on living in accord with God's will, which includes understanding the needs of your wife.

Typically, men are stronger than women and may be tempted to threaten their wives through physical or verbal abuse. Men and women share equal destiny as "heirs ... of the grace of life." Peter does not think women are inferior to men, for both are equally made in God's image. If husbands do not treat their wives in a godly way, the Lord will not answer their prayers.

For All Believers (8-12)

The gospel transforms relationships. In these verses Peter provides a list of godly virtues that all Jesus followers are called to exemplify at all times. Believers should get along with others for the sake of Christ, care deeply about the needs and sorrows of others, love one another as a family, be sensitive to the needs of others and consider others as more important.

In verses 10-12, Peter utilizes Psalm 34:12-16 to drive home his point. This psalm focuses on suffering and the Lord's deliverance of the righteous and His judgment of the wicked. Peter is not promising good days in this world since persecution and troubles are to be expected. God is working out His plan in your life, but it rarely works out the way you imagined it. To love life and see good days is the result of the "blessing" of God in one's life. The ultimate "blessing" the righteous long for will be realized only in the future in the presence of Christ. †

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

ONE GREAT COMMITMENT Romans 10:1-3, 8b-13

One of the most vexing questions faced by Jesus' first followers was one which sounds quite odd to us today: Can Gentiles be Christians? Perhaps the question might make more sense if we rephrase it a bit: Can Gentiles become Christians as Gentiles?

As the gospel begins to spread in the Book of Acts, it initially does so solely among Jews. By the time we reach Acts 8, some Samaritans and an Ethiopian eunuch respond, but even these characters are considered to be already part of "Greater Judaism." It is not until Acts 10 that we find the fascinating story of the first true Gentile to become a Christian. That Gentile was a man named Cornelius. Cornelius was apparently quite a man. In Acts 10:2, we read, "He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly." But if Cornelius (and many other Gentiles like Cornelius) was such a good man, why hadn't he already converted to Judaism? One issue loomed larger than any other in this sort of situation: circumcision.

God had been quite explicit in instructing Abraham that any man who wanted to be part of His family had to be circumcised (Gen. 17:12-13; cf. Ex. 12:48). For an eight-day-old boy, this was not much of an issue. But for an adult male, this was another matter entirely. However much a Gentile man might have believed that the one God of Israel was the true God, however attractive he might have found the orderly and sober lifestyle of the Jews, going through circumcision was just a bridge too far for most.

If being saved hinged on getting circumcised, the practical reality was that very few Gentiles were ever going to get saved. Thankfully, as more and more Gentiles

started embracing the message of Jesus, the early Jewish believers gathered in Jerusalem and came to the decision that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised after all (see Acts 15). While the Law had indeed ordered circumcision, the coming of Jesus had signaled a new era in which God was reaching out to the Gentiles, and this outreach was so important that a stipulation like circumcision could not stand in its way.

Christ is the only way to salvation. We cannot earn our salvation. (1-3)

It is just this background that the apostle Paul has in mind when he writes his letter to the Christians in Rome. Here he urges his fellow Jews not to think of a relationship with God as a kind of "membership" defined by specific markers like circumcision, keeping kosher and observing the Sabbath. Those are just the fruits that were to come from the more important step, placing one's faith and trust in God.

We are saved when we confess and believe Jesus is Lord. (8b-10)

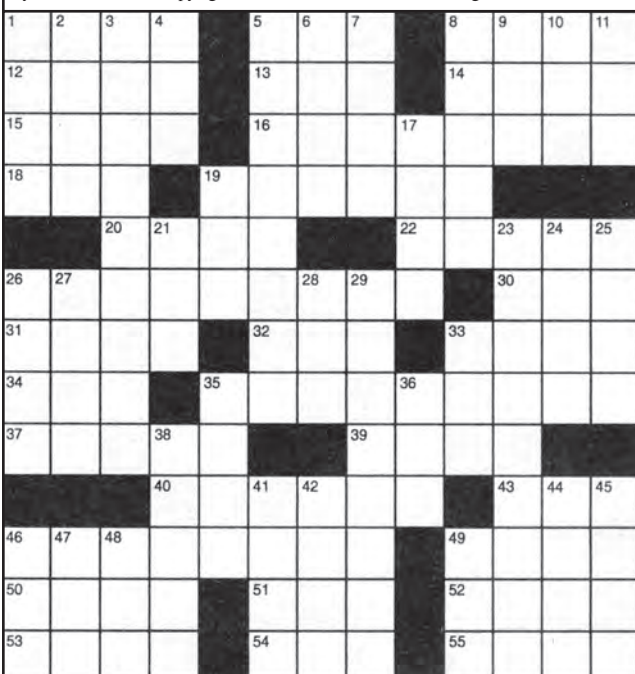
And how does one express this faith and trust in God? By responding to God's Son. Paul reminds his readers that being saved does not depend on having the right membership markers. On the contrary, a person is saved by embracing Jesus as their risen Savior and Lord. God had already drawn near to humanity in the person of His Son. Now it falls to humanity to recognize that Son as Lord.

Salvation is available to all who call on Jesus. (11-13)

For Gentiles, this should be especially welcome news. God has now signified His willingness to accept Gentiles as Gentiles. The difficult hurdle of circumcision is one Gentiles no longer need to clear. The Lord who is Lord of all, both Jew and Gentile, will accept and bless all, both Jew and Gentile, who call on Him. †

Christian Crossword

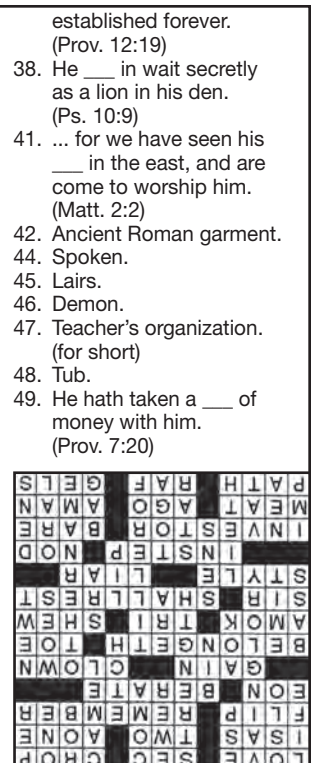
By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- There is no fear in _____. (1 John 4:18)
- 1/60 of a minute. (abbr.)
- Ripe harvest.
- ... the number of whom _____ the sand of the sea. (Rev. 20:8; two words)
- No man can serve _____ masters. (Matt. 6:24)
- Top-notch.
- Somersault.
- Lord, _____ me when thou comest into thy kingdom. (Luke 23:42)
- Eternity.
- Degrade.
- But what things were _____ to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (Phil. 3:7)
- Silly fellow.
- Salvation _____ unto the Lord. (Ps. 3:8)
- Digit.
- In a frenzy. (var.)
- Three. (prefix)
- Study to _____ thyself approved unto God. (2 Tim. 2:15)
- Title of address.
- My flesh also _____ in

- hope. (Ps. 16:9; two words)
- Fashion.
- Let God be true, but every man a _____. (Rom. 3:4)
- Arch.
- Land of _____. (Cain's home)
- One who plays the market.
- John _____ witness of him. (John 1:15)
- For I was an "hungred," and ye gave me _____. (Matt. 25:35, KJV)
- In time past.
- Will _____ rob God? (Mal. 3:8; two words)
- Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain _____. (Ps. 27:11)
- British flyers. (for short)
- Becomes semisolid.
- Down**
- For whosoever will save his _____ shall lose it. (Matt. 16:25)
- Norwegian city.
- Let nothing be done through strife or _____. (Phil. 2:3)
- Sixth sense. (for short)
- ... the _____ of sin is the law. (1 Cor. 15:56)
- Pitcher.
- Unconscious state.
- It is easier for a _____ to go through the eye of a needle ... (Matt. 19:24)
- Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither _____ him. (Lev. 19:13)
- The Lord our God is _____ Lord. (Deut. 6:4)
- For each.
- Engrave.
- Container.
- First rate.
- ... for there is none _____ ... Whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12; two words)
- Troubles.
- Salamander.
- Singing part.
- Send forth.
- Time period.
- ... but Cain was a _____ the ground. (Gen. 4:2; two words)
- Spanish Mrs. (for short)
- Congressmen. (abbr.)
- The _____ of truth shall be



TOP 10

downloaded albums from iTunes

CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL



1. The Very Next Thing
By Casting Crowns



2. Of Dirt and Grace (Live from the Land)
By Hillsong UNITED



3. How Can It Be
By Lauren Daigle



4. Here As in Heaven
By Elevation Worship



5. Hillsong: Let Hope Rise (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)
By Various Artists



6. Poets & Saints
By All Sons & Daughters

7. Glory & Wonder
By Mosaic MSC

8. King of Glory
By Anthony Trimble

9. Have It All (Live)
By Bethel Music

10. One Way
By Tamela Mann



Christian rock group Tenth Avenue North consists of (l to r) Jeff Owen, Brendon Shirley, Mike Donehey, Ruben Juarez and Jason Jamison.

Photo courtesy of Merge PR

'Connect to the Savior'

Tenth Avenue North urges audiences to pursue Christ daily

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

With the songs on their current album, "Followers," the Dove Award-winning group Tenth Avenue North hopes to encourage believers to actively engage in God's transforming love and desire to walk in obedience wherever He leads.

"Our hope is that as people encounter the truth of the gospel through these songs, they would be moved and changed as they desire to live for Christ," said lead singer Mike Donehey. "We want to lead people into the presence of the Lord and help people to know Christ as their Savior, Lord and treasure."

In addition to Donehey the group is made up of drummer Jason Jamison, guitarist Jeff Owen, bass player Ruben Juarez and keyboard player Brendon Shirley.

With songs such as "Love Is Here," "By Your Side," "You Are More" and "Healing Begins" influencing audiences around the country, their insightful lyrics resonate deeply with listeners by connecting them to life-changing truths.

This fall the group plans to continue challenging audiences to go deeper in their relationship with Christ on the "What You Want Tour" with special guests Hawk Nelson and Dan Bremnes.

Dig in together

Through their music and message, Tenth Avenue North emphasizes the importance of connecting with other believers for accountability, encouragement and digging into God's Word together.

Jamison said, "During our concerts it's an opportunity for us to further explain these songs so people can connect to the truth of the gospel. Our hope is that the record will come to life in a sense

and people will walk away being encouraged."

Donehey often relates the account of his own near-death experience to help audiences put things into perspective and inspire them to live for what matters most.

At age 18, Donehey broke his back in two places after being thrown out of a car in an almost fatal accident. Convinced God had spared him for a reason, Donehey committed himself to being used for God's glory.

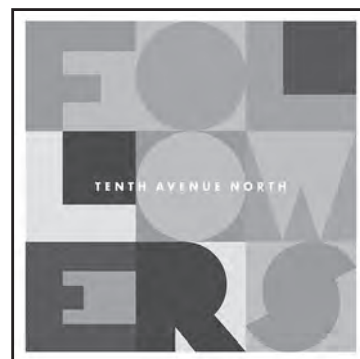
"It was the first time in my life that I actually slowed down and spent time reflecting on things," Donehey said. "This experience definitely made me take inventory of my life and forced me to evaluate what was important and what was not."

After he recovered, Donehey attended Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, and met Jamison and Owen.

From the start, band members committed themselves to sharing messages about God's grace that would challenge young audiences to a deeper walk of faith.

"Whether you're a pastor or plumber or lawyer, anything you do can be re-imagined as ministry if you do it to serve others and glorify God," Donehey said. "The dwelling place of God isn't a building; it's the people. Wherever we go throughout the day — whether it's at Starbucks, school or the supermarket — there is not a place on earth that is not His, and there is not a place we can go where He is not."

"As more people are hearing the songs, it provides greater opportunities to let them know about the grace and love offered to them through Jesus. When people listen to these songs I hope that they will realize they are not alone in their struggles. They can connect to a Savior who loves them unconditionally and is with them every step of the way." †



Source: iTunes at press time



Nolan Sanburn

Photo courtesy of Kamp Fender/Birmingham Barons

'Jesus means more'

Barons pitcher relies on God on, off mound

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Nolan Sanburn knows the beginning of his faith is based in John 3:16.

It is his favorite verse, and Sanburn, a right-handed pitcher for the Birmingham Barons, said, "I think that is the most important one, knowing at the end of the day, He has already saved the world and you can be saved by asking Him into your heart."

The 25-year-old Sanburn — a member of Crossroads Community Church, a nondenominational church in his hometown of Kokomo, Indiana — did that when he was young.

"I became a Christian when I was a kid but I did not start taking it seriously until later in my life. Once I got to high school and college, I realized that I can't do everything by myself. I need God to be there and to step in and to lead my life. I am not as strong as what I should be and need to be but at the same time, I know where my abilities and talents come from.

"God still loves me no matter if I strike out the side or give up a couple of hits. I know that I am always going to have God to fall back on. He is going to be there for me."

Playing in 34 games with Barons, the Double-A affiliate of the Chicago White Sox in the Southern League, Sanburn, a reliever, had a 1-5 record with a 3.89 ERA. He had five saves. Sanburn gave up 71 hits, 33 runs and had 58 strikeouts.

Journey to Birmingham

Sanburn was drafted out of the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville after his sophomore season by Oakland in 2012 (74th overall) and traded to the White Sox in 2014. He pitched for High-A Stockton and pitched in Birmingham in 2015.

His fastball has been clocked at 96 mph and he's consistently thrown in the 93 to 94 mph range.

Sanburn, who is 6 feet 1 inch tall and weighs 205

pounds, brings energy and competitiveness, said Barons teammate Peter Tago, also a right-handed pitcher.

"He has a great attitude toward the game. I have known him about a year now. I played with him last year in Birmingham and I played against him in 2014 in the California League. He was a dagger then. He is just a great guy to have in the clubhouse," Tago said.

Barons right fielder Keenyn Walker said, "He is definitely one of those fiery guys and one of the guys you want on your team. He throws the ball well. He throws a lot of strikes."

He had 30 strikeouts in 30 innings last season for the Barons with a 0-2 record and 6.60 ERA.

Tago said, "Deep down, he knows what he has got and what he brings to the table." Tago attends baseball chapel with Sanburn and Walker.

Staying grounded

Sanburn said, "Going to baseball chapel on Sundays during the season has been key. Every Sunday we are at chapel which is awesome. Going to a couple of Bible studies with the players, those are big events that help you and keep you grounded on where your faith is."

Tago added, "[Sanburn] is a very good Christian, a very good man. I would trust him with my kids. He holds me accountable. If I feel like I am getting off track in my faith, I can go to [him] and he has my back in faith."

Sanburn's parents and grandparents have been spiritual role models for him throughout his life.

"[My father] has done the most incredible job in leading me to Christ," Sanburn said.

Sanburn's faith helps him stay on top of his game professionally and spiritually.

"Jesus means more than one thing. The No. 1 thing, I know that He loves me when I mess up. I sin pretty often just like everybody else. It is encouraging when I do mess up, He is always going to take me back." ✠

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Muslim militants attack, kill 26 in Christian community

NDOMETE, Central African Republic — Muslim militants slaughtered 26 civilians in a predominantly Christian village in the Central African Republic on Sept. 16, the worst violence in the embattled country in months, sources said.

Rebels from the former Seleka group attacked the village of Ndomete, about 220 miles north of the capital city of Bangui, in the evening and went door-to-door killing Christians, said a source in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

Fighting between Seleka, which officially disbanded in 2013, and Christian "anti-Balaka" militias has increased in the past year, but government and United Nations officials said the attack targeted civilians. Violence between Muslim and Christian militias hit nearby Kaga-Bandoro, where the Central African Republic's U.N. peacekeeping mission reportedly quelled the violence recently, but an area Christian leader cast doubt on the country's ability to bring order.

"If the government is not going to beef up the security, then we are going to defend ourselves," he said. "We shall not keep quiet as our brothers are dying." (MS)

Ethiopian woman beaten by husband for converting

BOKULU BOMA, Ethiopia — A woman in Ethiopia had been a Christian for six weeks when her husband found out and beat her for leaving Islam, sources said.

Habiba Ibrahim, a 34-year-old mother of three in Bokulu Boma, Ethiopia, received hospital treatment for three days after the assault earlier in September by her husband, Ibrahim Dido, the sources said. She had put her faith in Christ on Aug. 2 in Bokulu Boma, about 31 miles from the Moyale on the border between Ethiopia and Kenya.

Ibrahim Dido's anger flared after Sept. 10 morning prayers at a nearby mosque where he had confirmed rumors that his wife had left Islam.

"He locked me in the house and began beating me with sticks and immediately neighbors arrived and rescued me from my husband's wrath," Habiba Ibrahim said.

She had a gash on her forehead and several bruises on her left hand and elbow.

She and her three children, ages 8, 6 and 3, have taken refuge in another village. (MS)

Christian school taken over in South Sudan by police

MADANI, South Sudan — Authorities in southeastern Sudan arrested the headmaster of a Christian school in mid-September and took over the school's property, sources said.

Armed police and officials from the National Intelligence and Security Services on Sept. 5 arrested Samuel Suliman and 12 teachers at the school in Madani, capital of Al Jazirah state.

The Christians were accused of supporting the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North, a rebel group fighting government forces farther south.

Strongly denying the charge after the accused were released on bail following eight hours in jail, Suliman said officers presented an official letter from the National Ministry of Guidance and Endowments, addressed to the State Ministry of Social Welfare, ordering the handover of Evangelical Basic School to the government.

The school serves more than 1,000 students ages 3-18 and belongs to the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. (MS)

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