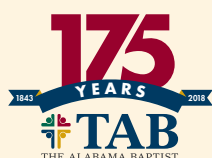


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Faith and Family

How to listen, how to talk

Jake and Michelle have been married for 18 years. Though they have had occasional arguments, most have been resolved quickly — until recently. Their son, Matt, wants an extension on his curfew. Jake has no problem with Matt's request, but Michelle is uncertain.

Jake believes Michelle is trying to keep Matt from growing up. Michelle worries Matt will face increased temptation with fewer restrictions.

Every time the issue comes up, Jake and Michelle end up arguing about more than driving and curfews. The strain is beginning to show in their household, but neither is willing to budge. What can they do to break the impasse?



Coping with conflicting opinions

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Conflict inevitable; communication key when dealing with differences

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. Unrealistic expectations, fears, competing desires, ambition, unmet needs and jealousy are just a few factors that often lead to conflict within relationships. When strong opinions and emotions are at odds, effective communication strategies are perhaps the most essential element in resolving the issue in a healthy way. According to Gary Chapman, author of "The 5 Love Languages" series of marriage and family books, conflict is more than a difference

of opinion or preference. Chapman defines conflict as a disagreement in which both parties "feel strongly and their differing opinions affect their behavior, causing disharmony in the relationship."

Especially harmful

Within the family, conflict can be especially harmful because the individuals have a strong emotional attachment and interact frequently. But even within an organization like the church or in interactions with friends and coworkers, there is still a high level of emotion and regular contact that can make a difference of opinion evolve into a full-scale conflict.

When a disagreement simmers into a boiling battle, anger, frustration and hurt feelings often result, which may take days or weeks to heal. In too many situations, relationships are never restored.

It doesn't have to be that way, writes Ken Sande, author of "The

Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict."

"Conflict is an opportunity to solve common problems in a way that honors God and offers benefits to those involved," Sande writes.

Depending on the situation, the individuals in conflict may never agree. However, they can find common ground, Sande says. Listening is essential.

"When you are talking with another person, first listen for the truth, resisting the temptation to defend yourself, blame others or focus on points of disagreement. Ask yourself, 'Is there any truth in what he or she is saying?' If your answer is 'yes,' acknowledge what is true and identify your

common ground before moving to your differences. Doing so is a sign of wisdom and spiritual maturity," Sande writes.

Careful listening acknowledges the value of those involved in the conflict, writes Deborah Smith Pegues, author of "Confronting Without Offending: Positive and Practical Steps to Resolving Conflict."

"By listening, we create a context or environment where people feel they

have been heard and their thoughts or feelings have been validated. This is half the battle in resolving any conflict," she writes.

Listening is not a passive activity, (See 'Friendly,' page 6)

"Good listeners do not 'turn off' what they do not want to hear and 'turn up' what they do like to hear."

Kenneth Gangel
author

COMMENT

Not in the Barn

A barn is an important part of every farm. It is a storehouse, a shelter, a work area. But a barn is not the prime focus of a farm. The focus is the crop — plant or animal. The success of any farm is tied to the crop, not the barn.

The focus of the Church is people, not buildings or structures. Jesus made that point in Matthew 9:38 when He called for laborers to go into the harvest field.

The setting for the statement is important. Jesus had been preaching in the synagogues of the towns and villages in Galilee according to Matthew 9:35.

Interestingly some critics used that statement as an attack on the veracity of the Bible because synagogues had only been found in big cities. But in mid-August came the announcement of the discovery of a first century synagogue near Mount Tabor — Tel Rekhesh. It is the first synagogue found in a rural area.

Moved with compassion

The Times of Israel wrote, “The find could lend weight to the New Testament narrative that Jesus visited villages in the area to preach.”

Jesus was moved with compassion by the plight of the people He met. The King James Version of the Bible describes the people with the words “fainted” and “scattered.” The New International Version uses the words “harassed” and “helpless.”

The Greek gives further understanding. The first word means “plundered;” the second, “exhausted by wounds.” The description is of a people oppressed, spiritually exhausted, destitute and neglected.

Jesus’ response was to meet the people where they were. He preached the good news of the Kingdom and He dealt with their physical needs by healing “every disease and sickness” (v. 35).

Many forms

Through all of the Gospels, our Lord’s compassion is expressed in many forms. He preaches. He teaches. He heals. He counsels. He raises the dead.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

The words Jesus read from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue at Nazareth were lived out in His brief years that followed.

Compassion seeks action to alleviate need. If one can turn away uncaringly or unchanged by the encounter then it is only sympathy or pity. Jesus taught that lesson again beginning in Luke 9:12 when He told the disciples to feed the hungry 5,000 with what they had available.

In Matthew 9, Jesus challenges the disciples to compassion as they are sent into the fields for harvest. Today, He calls for a similar response from His followers.

Answering the call

Unfortunately today’s response to that call is sometimes different.

Many churches emphasize the barn. They stress the resources or beauty of their facilities. They highlight their programs. Occasionally, they promote what they do for members. In short, churches practice attractional evangelism. People are invited to come to the church but the Church often does not go into the harvest fields.

To be sure, the “barn” is important. Following Christ is not like checking a box that one believes in Jesus. Believing in Jesus means making Christ the organizing experience of one’s life, becoming a lifelong follower of Jesus.

That means the Church — with its buildings, its programs, its fellowship — is important. It is impossible to be a mature Christian disciple outside the nurture and care of a church. But emphasizing the “barn” will not make a church successful.

Others offer a truncated response. They stress one part of ministry but not the balanced, holistic approach demonstrated by Jesus.

As Baptists we are strong on preaching and

teaching. For the last century we have not been as strong on demonstrating compassion by meeting physical needs. Other Christian groups have been at the forefront of addressing felt needs of people but have sometimes stopped short of presenting a clear gospel message that salvation only comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Here Jesus calls for compassion that incorporates both the humanity of people as well as their spiritual needs. After all, in Jewish thought the body and spirit are united in one whole. It was the Greeks who separated the physical from the spiritual.

Relevant evangelism

One observer described secular society today as a group that “finds truth to be subjective, is ruled by feeling and inclination, comes from dysfunctional families, has experienced much personal pain, is drifting on a sea of malaise” and loves themselves supremely.

Such people sound just as lost and confused as the people whom Jesus met in Matthew 9.

These kinds of people, the observer writes, do not typically respond to the gospel when it is presented as an experience of the mind — one theological point built on top of another theological point. He calls for evangelism that begins with meeting physical needs of people in relevant ways.

Only then, he argues, will secular individuals invite Christians into their social world. That opens the opportunity for dialogue and discussion of faith issues.

Similarly he urges Christians to use their normal social structures to build witnessing relationships. That can be as simple as a blessing over a shared meal that could lead to deeper discussions. The point is to take the gospel witness into all the areas a believer regularly touches — a witness expressed in words and deeds.

Going into the harvest

It sounds simple enough. Christians who have been filled by the love of God through Jesus Christ share the love of God in word and deed as they live each day. Christians become the compassion-filled workers going into the harvest.

We are not to focus on what happens in the barn. We are destined for the fields that urgently need to be harvested. ☿

“The point is to take the gospel witness into all the areas a believer regularly touches. ... Christians who have been filled by the love of God through Jesus Christ share the love of God in word and deed as they live each day.”

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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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Yearlong celebration

The Alabama Baptist prepares to celebrate 175-year anniversary

Plans for a yearlong celebration of the 175th anniversary of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper were approved during the Oct. 7-8 meeting of the ministry's board of directors in Birmingham.

The Alabama Baptist was first published on Feb. 4, 1843, in Marion and has been in continuous circulation since that time.

Directors approved three major events as part of the celebration along with other regular emphases.

Plans call for the first history of *The Alabama Baptist* to be published in 2017. The book's working title is "*The Alabama Baptist: 175 years of Informing, Inspiring and Connecting Baptists*." It will be available beginning Sept. 1, 2017.

On Feb. 6, 2018, *The Alabama Baptist* will return to its founding site in Marion for an official birthday party.

A month later, March 2, 2018, the impact of the paper's ministry on Baptist life and beyond will be the subject of a symposium jointly sponsored by Samford University in Birmingham, the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and *The Alabama Baptist*.

In addition monthly articles in the publication will highlight issues and events in Alabama Baptist life and the publication's impact on those concerns.

Weekly feature

Historical photographs also will be released each week through social media. The goal will be to stimulate interest in Baptist history and the paper's continued chronicling of that history.

A 10-minute historical presentation also is

being developed to be shared with Baptist associations in 2017.

Editor Bob Terry told board members it was surprising the history of the ministry had never been written. Numerous articles cap-
sulate the history, Terry said, and academic papers have been written about chapters in the paper's history and about some of the colorful personalities who served as editor. But the upcoming book will be the first to tell the captivating story of the publication and its impact on Baptists for 175 years, he said.

Judson College and Siloam Baptist Church, both in Marion, will host the birthday party for *The Alabama Baptist* on Feb. 6, 2018. Milo Jewett, the first president of Judson, was a co-founder of the state Baptist paper. Judson also houses the building in which *The Alabama Baptist* was first published.

Siloam Baptist will host a community-wide event that day featuring Elizabeth Wells, veteran historian and author of the upcoming history of *The Alabama Baptist*, who will talk about the role of the Marion community in the founding of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Samford will be the site of the March 2 symposium. Four papers are scheduled for presentation. "The Journalism of *The Alabama Baptist*" will be the topic of Steve Stewart who teaches journalism at Troy University. Stewart formerly owned and pub-

lished the *Monroe Journal* in Monroeville and served on the board of directors of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Timothy George, founding dean of Samford's Beeson Divinity School, will consider "*The Alabama Baptist* and Controversy," highlighting ways the paper reported and

contributed to various controversies across the years.

Considering "The Impact of *The Alabama Baptist* on Alabama and Beyond" will be Mark Baggett, profes-

sor of law and professor of English at Samford. Baggett is the son of former editor Hudson Baggett

and served as managing editor of the paper for a number of years.

Samford President Andrew Westmoreland will

discuss "The Need for *The Alabama Baptist*" as Baptist life continues to evolve in the future.

The monthly articles highlighting various chapters of the ministry's life will begin in February 2017 and will be written by Wells, retired archivist for Samford who managed the Special Collection department.

Terry said, "Being associated with such a historical and valuable ministry as *The Alabama Baptist* is a privilege. Hopefully Baptists across the state will be a part of this anniversary celebration."

More details on the anniversary celebration will be shared in future issues. (TAB)



Bethlehem Association celebrates 200th anniversary

Bethlehem Baptist Association — consisting of 25 churches in Monroe County — celebrated its 200th anniversary Oct. 16 at First Baptist Church, Monroeville, during the association's annual meeting.

The association was founded in 1816 as Bigby Association and was the first association organized in Alabama. Its name changed to Beckbe Association in 1822 and then to Bethlehem Association in 1826.

Anniversary publicity committee member George Jones noted that along with being the oldest association, the county which it covers has the largest number of Baptists in the state. In fact, 56 percent of Monroe County residents are members of a Baptist church, according to the Association of Religion Data as reported by al.com in August 2015.

The event featured former directors of missions, state leaders and the Historical Commission. DOM John Marks and his wife, Maarah, were honored for 10 years of service. (TAB)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

God works to refine & mold

Examine own heart when family conflict arises, professor says

By Kathryn A. Steele, Ph.D., MFT, LPC
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Opinions, values and behaviors can vary greatly from family member to family member, often resulting in disagreement and arguments. Conflict within a family is especially painful and can cause families to avoid loving one another.

How do we maintain peace while also maintaining integrity? A primary key to managing conflict in a healthy way is to recognize that God can use it to refine and mold His character into us so we become more like Christ. Therefore when conflict arises, we must first examine our hearts. Remember, you are not the Convictor. That job belongs to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, avoid:

Defensiveness. Maintain a clean slate with family members. We are responsible for offenses in either direction. If a brother sins against us, go to him and show him his fault (Matt. 18:15–17), speaking the truth in love. If we have sinned against a brother, go to him and be reconciled (Matt. 5:23–24). This protects us from defensiveness.

Hypocrisy. The attitude or behavior that bothers us the most is one we struggle with in some form (Matt. 7:1–5). All of us have sin in our lives — none of us can point a finger at another since we are all guilty (Rom. 3:23).

Selfishness. Cravings for approval, control, comfort and/or safety can become barriers to loving a family member with God's love (James 4:1). When sensing these negative emotions, ask "Why am I feeling this?" and deal with the underlying cause first.

Philippians 2:4 cautions us to "look not only to (our) own interests, but also to the interests of others," which is why we must avoid unwise strategies for resolving conflict.

Healthy disagreement

Healthy disagreement is not:

Appeasement. When individuals say things they don't mean or agree to do things they don't want to do, the result is often resentment and bitterness. Paul exhorts us to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15, 25).

Avoidance. This response may include sharing or not sharing an opinion, then refusing to dialog about the issue. Ignoring is the opposite of understanding, as Matthew 13:15 states: "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their



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eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them." Healing begins with understanding and understanding begins with hearing and seeing.

Winning. A disagreement between family members is not a battle in which one person ought to prevail. Individuals with a strong desire to "win" in a conflict are usually skilled in persuading and intimidating, often introducing emotions such as anger or fear into the conflict. This is the opposite of Philippians 2:4.

God's strategies

Scripture is clear that when conflict arises, those involved should speak the truth in love. God does not ignore the problem, walk away or destroy in anger. He speaks to us openly about our sin and His desire to restore the relationship. We should do the same with those with whom we disagree.

Timing is important, however. Proverbs 15:23 reminds us "how good is a timely word." There is a time to give advice and a time to listen. Don't immediately trouble-shoot, analyze, offer explanations or suggest a different course of action.

Instead, affirm God's love. Seeing others through God's eyes enables us to invite them to change by helping them be aware of their identity in Christ.

Engage in discussion to let your family member know you want to understand. Ask honest questions, but don't interrogate. Put what you hear into words to verify your understanding. Show that you care by responding compassionately to what you hear.

Speaking the truth "in love:"

- ▶ does not tear down the other person (Eph. 4:29).

- ▶ does not include exaggerations such as "always" and "never."

- ▶ does not include calling the other person names. Names are about identity. Our identity is in Christ. We attack the work of the gospel in the person's life when we call names.

- ▶ does not include mind reading. Mind reading is impossible and assumes they will always repeat their past errors, denying the power of God to change them.

- ▶ does not include shaming. Shame is believing we are unacceptable and unlovable. God declared us acceptable because of His work in us through Jesus. Do not attack the work of the gospel in another person's life.

Remember how patient God is with us. He does not confront us every time we sin. Overlook minor offenses that may be out of character for your loved one and consider the circumstances that may be affecting their response. Proverbs 20:3 declares: "It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel."

If submission to the preference of another will not cause harm, love that person by surrendering for their benefit what you may be entitled to have (1 Cor. 10:23).

EDITOR'S NOTE — Kathryn A. Steele is a professor of psychology and counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Steele occupies the James H. and Susan E. Brown Christian Counseling Chair and is director of clinical training.

9 tips for working through conflict

1) *Pray for God's wisdom*, God's will to be done (even if it's not your way) and for Him to be honored in the process (1 Thess. 5:17).

2) *Choose a time to discuss the differences of opinion*. Avoiding conflict or denying a problem exists will not make it go away. Trying to resolve differences in a hurry usually leads to saying something you later regret.

3) *Avoid the mentality: "I'm going to win this argument."* You might eventually win the argument and get your way, but this mentality undermines and hurts the relationship with the other person involved (Phil. 2:3–4).

4) *Avoid beginning a sentence with "Why did you ... ?"* This immediately puts the other person on the defensive. Instead, take responsibility for yourself by saying, "I feel ____ when ____ happens," or "I think ..."

5) *Do your very best to listen to the other party's perspective (James 1:19), instead of thinking of your next point or comeback.* Ask yourself, "What do I hear them saying?" or "What is different about their approach to this conflict?"

6) *Keep the amount of people involved in the conflict as few as possible.* We sometimes pull people in to support "our side." The more people involved, the higher the chance of a greater rift. If a third party is required to make a decision, seek a neutral, unbiased source.

7) *Be willing to compromise.* Often the approach and outcome of a situation isn't as important as the person with whom we have the disagreement (Rom. 12:18). Our unity reflects Jesus' lordship (John 17:21), and the love we have for the other person is intended to reflect who we are as disciples of Christ (John 13:35).

8) *Keep the important things important.* Does the resolution of this situation have eternal significance?

9) *If a solution or an agreement cannot be reached, or if the matter is resolved contrary to your opinion, do not speak ill of the other person (James 3:5–10; 5:11).* Words are like toothpaste — once they are out they cannot be put back in or be "unsaid."

Source: Stephanie Harrison, LPC
Pathways Professional Counseling

Two paths to **take**

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Conflict doesn't have to mean catastrophe, according to counselor

By **Stephanie Harrison, LPC**
Pathways Professional Counseling

On day six of creation, Scripture records God creating the first family: Adam and Eve. They were created in His image for perfect fellowship with Him and with each other. Unfortunately, with the first sin came the devastation and death of separation from God, and with it, conflict (Gen. 3:11–12).

Throughout the Bible, conflict abounds in families, among friends and even in the early Church. Abraham, Joseph, David, Paul and even the 12 apostles in the presence of Jesus Himself all experienced conflict. Even today, from politics to the pew, bedrooms to boardrooms, conflict is inevitable because sin abounds.

According to Ken Sande in his book, “The Peacemaker,” conflict can be defined as “a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone’s goals or desires.” He proposes the four primary causes of conflict are:

- 1) *misunderstandings resulting from poor communication.*
- 2) *differences in values, goals, gifts, callings, priorities, expectations, interests or opinions.*
- 3) *competition over limited resources.*
- 4) *sinful attitudes and habits.*

Conflict doesn’t have to mean catastrophe in our relationships, however.

In an article titled “Differences Between Destructive and Constructive Conflict,” business writer Colette Meehan defines constructive conflict as “conflict in which benefits exceed the cost. It generates productive, mutually beneficial, shared decisions ... and the process becomes as important as the end result. Individuals come together to redefine or strengthen their relationship for the greater good of the parties involved.”

The upside? Conflict can actually be helpful if handled constructively.

There are two main approaches we can take when conflict arises. The first approach is probably the more “natural way.” That path typically is defensive and focused on “I.” We ask, “What do I want?” or “What do I think about this?” We start explaining why we did what we did, shifting the blame to someone else or defending why our solution is the “best” solution. We refuse to hear what the other person is expressing or experiencing, thinking instead of our next comeback or point.

Usually this path leads to one or both parties seeking to win the argument, parties withdrawing from the relationship or people agreeing to something they don’t support just to avoid conflict at any cost. This path, while probably more “natural,” is not helpful. The outcomes include loss of unity, lack of intimacy or closeness with the other party, power struggles, lack of joy and rifts in relationships.

Choosing your response path

The second approach is one of being nondefensive, open and willing to learn about the other person, our Maker and ourselves. The focus here is on “us” and God. Taking this path is a conscious, willful, deliberate choice.

When approaching conflict from this view, we are open to hearing what the other person is experiencing. We are willing to accept personal responsibility for any hurt we have caused and are open to a solution that might not be our first choice. We can ask ourselves, “What can I learn about this person, about God or about myself in this situation?”

On the path of learning, we choose to allow the other person’s point of view and

their experiences to have an impact on us.

In a fallen world, disagreements or differences of opinion are going to happen. We are not always going to see a problem or the solution to a problem in the same light as someone else. We have different brains, different personalities, different ways of problem solving and different life experiences, all of which affect the way we approach a situation or problem.

When conflict arises it is helpful to remember our God is a creative God. Just look at the different seasons and the variety of animals and plants in creation.

Additionally, the person we have a conflict with also is part of God’s creative work. Some of us are more logical or efficient in our way of

thinking. Others are more emotional or relational. In His perfect completeness, God is all of the above — logical, efficient, emotional and relational. No one trait is better than another. Each is simply different.

To help illustrate the validity of different perspectives, think about a Rubik’s Cube. If you had never seen one before and a person asked, “What color is a Rubik’s Cube?” you might answer “red”

because that is the side facing you and the only side you can see.

The person standing opposite you would say “orange” because that is what they see. In reality, each person is right and wrong at the same time. Each is right because the answer reflects their perspective. They are accurately stating what they see. However, each person’s perspective and experience is limited because they are seeing only one side of a six-sided puzzle.

Living in reality

Life is full of puzzles that are multi-sided. Applying this analogy to conflict, we can recognize we are possibly not seeing all sides of the situation. We also become open to seeing what others might be seeing and experiencing from their point of view.

Jesus is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). We are instructed in Scripture to “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). What is the mind of Christ? The mind of Christ is about dying to yourself. It is giving up what you want and what you think you are owed in order to glorify God in action and deed.

Christ gave up everything, humbling Himself to become a man and dying on a cross to save us. He gave us the gift of righteousness that we did not deserve. As believers, we are called to do the same for one another for His glory. 🌈



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Helpful resources

- ▶ “Conflict Resolution: Solving Your People Problems” by June Hunt
- ▶ “The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict” by Ken Sande
- ▶ “Everybody Wins: The Chapman Guide to Solving Conflicts With-

out Arguing” by Gary Chapman

▶ “Character: The Pulse of a Disciple’s Heart” by Norman C. Blackaby and Gene Wilkes

▶ “Confronting Without Offending: Positive and Practical Steps to Resolving Conflict” by Deborah Smith Pegues

Seeing another's perspective

'Friendly dialogue' vital to overcome conflict

(continued from page 1)

however. It begins with preparing oneself to listen. Physically, this includes sitting face-to-face with arms to the side (not crossed), removing distractions like music or television, taking deep relaxing breaths and making eye contact as the other person is talking. It also means keeping an open mind as the other person talks.

"Good listeners do not 'turn off' what they do not want to hear and 'turn up' what they do like to hear," writes Kenneth Gangel, author of "Communication and Conflict Management in Churches and Christian Organizations."

"Good listeners understand what speakers say from the speaker's perspective, not just their own."

Validating others

Validating the other person's concerns also is a helpful strategy, according to Lisa Keane, clinical director of marriage and family for Pathways Professional Counseling. Even if a solution seems far away, a sincere and respectful expression of appreciation in the form of statements like "I really appreciate that we are talking about this issue" or "I am glad we are trying to figure this out" can convey a powerful message, she said.

When it is your turn to speak, avoid sarcasm, which is especially damaging in difficult conversations between individuals with an emotional connection, such as spouses or parents and children.

Dale and Jenna Forehand of Stained Glass Ministries say, "Sarcasm is much like a bee sting. When a bee stings, the direct hit of poison causes immediate pain and inflammation. Sarcasm does the same thing."

"Sometimes we use sarcasm to



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voice harsh words we otherwise would not say, often intentionally hurting others. Once the pain is inflicted, however, we retreat, saying, 'Oh, I was just kidding.' But the sting of our words hurts so much that those we have injured withdraw. Our words don't feel like jokes at all."

Psychologist and marriage counselor Susan Heitler writing at PsychologyToday.com cites research that suggests sarcasm directed toward a spouse is a leading predictor of divorce.

"A dismissive tone ... may be what some folks want to listen to on TV, but it is rarely appealing to friends or a spouse," Heitler writes.

To avoid escalating the emotional intensity of an exchange of differing opinions, Heitler suggests that individuals keep tone in check as well.

Tone matters

"Friendly dialogue proceeds in gentle voice tones. As folks get increasingly adversarial, their voices get louder and the words flow faster. Unpleasant volumes and high-risk speeds make continuation of the discussion, and

maybe even of the relationship, feel unsafe," she writes.

Instead she advises using questions to keep a conversation moving in a positive direction. For example in conversations about political candidates, questions that begin with "how" or "what," such as "What is most important to you as you pick whom to vote for as president?" give people an opportunity to explain their concerns.

Begins with desire

"In addition, understanding their concerns enables you to focus your comments on the information that might make a difference to them," she writes.

Ultimately conflict always begins with some kind of desire, Sande writes. Though desires like vengeance, lust or greed are inherently wrong, other desires, such as peace and quiet, respectful children or a loving spouse, are good.

"If someone is standing in the way of a good desire, it is appropriate to talk together about it," he says. "As you talk, you may discover ways that both of you can grow and benefit each other." ❖

"Sarcasm is much like a bee sting. When a bee stings, the direct hit of poison causes immediate pain and inflammation. Sarcasm does the same thing."

Dale and Jenna Forehand
Stained Glass Ministries



Beech Grove rededicates church to Christ

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who built it," read Pastor Alan Compton to the congregation at Beech Grove Baptist Church, Haleyville. "Believing that the hand of God led in the organization and building of this church, let all people most solemnly unite in offering it again unto Him for His glory and honor."

And the church all said, "We rededicate this house."

The Vows of Rededication were part of the church's 100th anniversary service held Sept. 11. Also during the three-hour service, the congregation saw a slideshow of photos from throughout the years, heard from a music trio and choirs and watched a historical skit put on by church youth.

Elizabeth Hill presented the church with a plaque on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Don Smith, director of missions for Winston Baptist Association, presented the church with a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Northport's Flatwoods celebrates 125 years

It was with a spirit of celebration for generations of ministry that Flatwoods Baptist Church, Northport, marked its 125th anniversary Aug. 28.

Eryn Davis — who grew up in the church — led the congregation out in song. Memorabilia from years of Girls in Action (GAs) and Royal Ambassadors groups showed off the impact the church has had on generations of young people.

And Northport Mayor Bobby Herndon provided a proclamation, which was read by GA leader Jenny Goddard while she stood surrounded by the church's GAs.

During the celebration, Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, also presented a plaque to the Tuscaloosa Baptist Association church for its years of service. And Pastor Geoff Elrod preached a message challenging the church to keep its focus on Christ as it moves into the future.

Noah Baptist remembers past, looks forward

Every Bible at Noah Baptist Church, Centre, had a commemorative bookmark in it at the close of the church's 75th anniversary service Sept. 11 — a gift intended to help church members remember where they have been and where they are headed.

As part of the anniversary celebration, guest speaker Douglas New, who grew up in the church and served as a pastor in Georgia, brought the message. One Touch Quartet, a southern gospel group from Cartersville, Georgia, provided special music.

And Wendell Dutton, director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association, presented the church with a plaque on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Jeff Chambers is pastor of Noah Baptist.



Photo courtesy of Noah Baptist Church

Members return to Happy Home for anniversary

The name of Happy Home Baptist Church, Leeds, was especially appropriate Sept. 18 as former members returned home for the church's 75th anniversary celebration.

Jacky Connell, who grew up in Happy Home Baptist, was the guest speaker for the service. Exodus, a southern gospel group from Gadsden, sang special music for the "packed-out crowd," said Pastor Geoff Lowe, and also sang after lunch.

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Gerald Glenn presented a commemorative plaque to the St. Clair Baptist Association church.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB

TAB
AR

Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Person of Christ

Calm and Composed

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

Why should God's people, as followers of Christ, invest time pondering the kind of person Christ was during His earthly sojourn? One way of responding to such a question is to take to heart the promise of 2 Corinthians 3:18: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Those who kept company with Christ in the days of His flesh testified that they beheld glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). As we look upon the glorious person of Christ, we will transform into His likeness over time. So we continue this week to behold the person of Christ as One who was calm and composed.

Sea of Galilee

When thinking about Christ's calmness amid a stressful time, our thoughts might well migrate to a storm on the Sea of Galilee. While the boat was tossed by wind and waves and while the disciples were rightfully fearful for their lives, Christ slept soundly onboard. His calmness in the midst of the storm was soon joined by the calmness of the sea and wind in response to His charge, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39).

Many other occasions demonstrate how Christ moved through His days on earth with remarkable calmness and composure. Upon revisiting His hometown of Nazareth in company with His disciples, Christ faced a wrathful synagogue crowd. His response was simply to pass through the crowd and proceed calmly on His way (Luke 4:28-30). Amid repeated controversies raised by religious leaders, Christ seemed never to have lost His cool.

His opponents assailed Him over Sabbath observance, eating with sinners, ceremonial washings, exercising authority in the Temple and numerous other confrontations. His responses were measured, never out of control. Throughout His earthly sojourn, Christ seems never to

have been frantic or in a frenzied hurry. He doesn't appear ever to have been at a loss for words.

Christ never caved in to the tide of public opinion or the pressure brought by His detractors. He appeared always in control of the pace of His life and the purpose for which He was in the world.

Because He knew from where He came and where He was going, He lived and ministered with calmness and self-control. When others rallied against him, He did not rail in return.

In uncanny calmness, Christ paid His last visit to Jerusalem, having repeatedly announced to the disciple that He would suffer and die in the Holy City. In utter self-composure, He looked into the bitter cup, saw what awaited Him at the hands of His enemies, and then calmly chose to drink the cup. He did with consistency what He taught others to do when He said, "By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19).

By His self-possession, Christ never allowed Himself to be pushed to hasty, premature actions or thoughtless conclusions. Rather, He simply asserted in such would-be times, "My hour is not yet come" (John 2:4).

Though fully human and tempted in all points like as we are, Christ kept His focus on His Father in heaven, which enabled Him to live through opposition, insults, suffering and ultimately face death with calm assurance. The conviction that Isaiah had toward God served our Lord well and will serve us well: "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3). ¶

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.



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BETHLEHEM

► **Oak Grove Church, Frisco City**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 6, 10:30 a.m. Grady Milstead will speak. Lunch will follow the service. Billy Hodges is pastor.

BULLOCK-CENTENNIAL

► **Bullock-Centennial Association** messengers voted unanimously to change the name of the association to **Bullock Association** at the annual meeting at Loflin Church, Banks. Curtis Rich is director of missions.

RANDOLPH

► **Fred Cooke** is the new director of missions (DOM) for **Randolph Association**. He previously served as interim DOM. He also serves as pastor of Shiloh Church, Graham, until Oct. 30. He previously served several churches in Georgia. He holds a degree in theology from Antioch Baptist Bible College in Marietta, Georgia. He and his wife, Ruth, have two children and five grandchildren.



COOKE

ST. CLAIR

► **The Woman's Missionary Union of St. Clair Association** will observe Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer on Nov. 7, 9:45 a.m. at the association office. Chris Crain is director of missions.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold Thanksgiving revival services Nov. 20-22, 6:30 nightly. Evangelist Scott Dawson will speak Sunday. Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will speak Monday. Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the State Board of Missions, will speak Tuesday. The Celebration Choir and Circlewood Singers will perform special music. Dinner will be served Nov. 20, 5 p.m. Children's fellowship will be Nov. 21, 5:30 p.m. and youth fellowship will follow the service that night. Herb Thomas is pastor.

WALKER

► **First Church, Cordova**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 6, 10:30 a.m. Pastor Robert Blankenship will speak. Unity 4, of Iuka, Mississippi, will perform special music. Lunch will be served at noon. A time of singing will be at 1:15 p.m. ¶

Tennessee River Assoc. churches host tent revival



Photo courtesy of Tennessee River Baptist Association

Three Tennessee River Baptist Association churches (Mount Nebo Baptist Church, Hollytree; Halls Chapel Baptist Church, Estillfork; and Freedom Baptist Church, Estillfork) held the Paint Rock Valley Tent Revival on Sept. 26-28. The chuck wagon team of Cowboy Church of Marshall County, Boaz, a Marshall Baptist Association church, served an old-fashioned chuck wagon meal and Jimmy Garner, former pastor of Skyland Boulevard Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, was the evangelist. Director of Missions Dwight Everett said the revival saw several gospel seeds planted and was encouraged by the outcome of the event, which saw more than 100 participants each night. "We want to reach this valley for Christ," Everett said, pictured here (right) introducing Garner before he speaks.

Pastor suggests Christian response to nation's changing political climate

By Pastor Joshua Pendergrass
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The 2016 election cycle has been one of the wildest ever. I have been watching and observing politics since grade school. I have worked on campaigns all the way from school board to Congress. From my perspective this election is one for the history books.

How should we respond to what has proven to be an unpredictable and never-before-seen election? How should we react to our changing political climate?

Answering these questions is as an important a quest for Christians as is determining which candidate is worthy of our support. There are six main ways as Christians generally, and we as evangelicals specifically, ought to respond.

1. With conviction

As the world, and thus politics, grows increasingly hostile to our faith, we must resolve to stick to our convictions. We must not succumb to the temptation to change what we believe. Nor should we avoid allowing our religious convictions to come to bear on our political decisions.

Exchanging the truth for human favor is wrong.

The Bible speaks to many of the social and moral issues we face today. For those issues that the Bible is not so clear on, we can draw out certain principles from Scripture which can be applied. The test for us is not finding what the Bible says on something (most evangelicals know that), the true test comes for us in whether we live out what the Bible says.

We must use our convictions to change the world, not let the world change our convictions.

2. With grace and love

As Christians, while we must adhere to the truth of our convictions, we must temper our convictions with grace and love.

Certainly we may condemn a political candidate's personal actions or disagree with certain policies. But we must be clear that those same actions or policies, though not in accord with the will of God, are not unforgivable.

As Christians it is easy for us to remember that we are made in the image of God Himself. At times it is a lot harder for us to remember that those who don't believe like us — even politicians

— also are made in His image.

We can disagree with a candidate. We can pledge not to vote for him or her. But the moment we fail to offer grace and love is the moment we become hypocrites and lose any chance of nonbelievers seeing that we take our faith seriously.

3. With humility

I am thankful God has given us the gift of His special revelation through Scripture. I also am thankful those same words teach us that human beings don't and can't know everything. We are finite creatures and there are some things we cannot understand. We should avoid acting as if we know everything and that if everyone would just

listen to us all would be better. Yes what we believe comes from God. But if we fail to act out of humility we will make the situation worse and we might actually be pushing people away from God.

4. With submission to authority

In less than two weeks this election will be over. Unless Christ returns before then, the sun will go down Nov. 8 and it will rise again Nov. 9. No matter who wins the election, unless God decides otherwise, life will go on.

No matter who wins, Christians will be faced with political and social policies that do not align with our values. If anything, this election makes clear that the age of casual Christianity is over. Being a Christian in America is only going to get harder.

If we act foolish and become angry because our candidate didn't win, that doesn't reflect well on God. The same is true if our candidate wins and we lord that over those on the other side.

We should never fail to advocate for policies that reflect a Christian worldview, but when we lose the argument we must accept it and ask for God's help in doing so. The best way to silence those who don't agree with us is to do what is good (1 Pet. 2:15).

5. With prayer

Now, more than ever, we must cry out to God. We need to beseech our Heavenly Father to raise up a new generation of leaders who are more committed to doing what is right than to doing what feels right.

We need to ask God to stir in the hearts of our countrymen a

desire to seek Him and to retreat from the course we have embarked on of making sin the norm and righteous living the exception. We must, with sincerity and passion, cry out to God to return our nation to the God-fearing land it once was. And, once a new president is elected, we must commit daily to praying for him or her.

6. With hope

No matter who wakes up Nov. 9 as the president-elect of the United States, there will still be problems in our nation because there will still be sin.

No matter who wins the presidency, they will ultimately make mistakes and, in one way or another, disappoint the American people. This realization must cause us to hope in the Lord, not a candidate or party.

I suspect that in the years to come there will be much investment in chronicling what exactly happened as the American people chose their 45th president. My prayer is that reflections made about how the Church of Jesus Christ responded would simply be that it did what it was supposed to do — be the Church.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Joshua Pendergrass is an attorney and pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Crane Hill. He blogs at www.JoshPendergrass.com.



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Meeting & spiritual physical needs

Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers provides homes, other necessities to 200 seniors

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For LaJuana Holloway to feed her household, it takes a little more than most people.

She has 50 living there, and all of them can't always afford to eat.

"We have extremely low and very low income residents based on the county median income," said Holloway, manager of Knollwood Retirement Community in Roanoke.

It's not a hardship for Holloway to help them put food on the table — it's exactly the way she wants it. Knollwood, one of several residences run by Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC), is intended as a ministry to members of the state's elderly population who may find themselves in a place of financial struggle, she said.

Helping people

"We are all about helping people," Holloway said. "We want to have a facility that reaches out."

She's not alone in that thought.

Other Baptists in the area have taken on Knollwood as a way to assist those who need a little

extra help. Randolph Baptist Association — with food pantry director Elaine Bedinfield leading the way — has stepped up for the past two years to supply more than 30 residents with a bag of groceries each month.

Charlotte Crane, director of financial services for ABRC, said the assistance is very much appreciated.

Associational partnerships

"We are so grateful for this partnership with the Randolph Baptist Association," she said. "The monthly food provision fills a great need in this rural community."

And in addition to that, local farmers provide more than 3,700 pounds of food each month, Holloway said. "We are also able to get assistance from the World Hunger Fund."

It's a great help to a retirement center whose residents sometimes move in with very little to support themselves, she said.

"I have tenants who move in with no furniture, absolutely nothing, and they can go up to the Baptist association and get vouchers for their stores. Then they can go and get a bed or other



Photo courtesy of LaJuana Holloway

Lanell Ogletree (left) of Knollwood Retirement Community checks residents off the list as they pick up groceries from volunteer Calvin Worthey (center). The food is donated monthly by Randolph Baptist Association. Knollwood is one of several residencies run by Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers.

things that they need," Holloway said. "We are so blessed with people here who in a little town do their part to help."

Meeting physical needs also has opened the door to meet spiritual ones, Holloway said. A

while back, Bedinfield and her husband, James, started a Sunday School class at Knollwood after Holloway mentioned at the associational meeting that it was a need at the center.

"We have a wonderful class now thanks to them," Holloway said.

Crane said similar ministries also are taking place at ABRC's other centers.

"Like at Knollwood, at our other locations, area churches and associations meet spiritual and physical needs by conducting Vacation Bible School, concerts, Bible studies and various social activities," Crane said. "There are many ministry opportunities at each of our facilities, and we welcome your church to get involved."

Income-based rent

ABRC owns and operates Baptist Village Hutto Towers and Townhouses in Dothan and Eastview in Montgomery as well as Knollwood, she said.

With the exception of the Townhouses in Dothan, rent is based on the resident's income, thereby providing an affordable home. This ministry has met the

needs of a few who would have otherwise been homeless, Crane said.

'Loving care'

"We provide a safe, affordable home for 200 senior adults or handicapped individuals," she said. "Perhaps the greatest thing that sets us apart from similar facilities is the loving care and personal touch provided by our managers."

Crane said she's learned over her years at ABRC that they "really are a well-kept secret among Baptist life, and we'd love to see that change."

ABRC's mission is to minister to the elderly in three ways:

► Directly on its campuses.
► Indirectly by helping churches and associations like the ones in Roanoke establish and strengthen the ministry of the retirement facilities.

► Educationally as they seek to serve as advocates for the needs of the elderly in the state.

"The number of senior adults is growing exponentially as baby boomers reach retirement age," Crane said. "Therefore, at Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers we feel our ministry exists for such a time as this." ☼

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- Should be evaluated right away by a doctor/healthcare professional
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www.ChildrensAL.org/concussion

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Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago October 1966

"Reaching Forward for Christ Through State Missions" was the theme of State Missions Day in Alabama on Oct. 30. Alabama Baptists were given the chance "as never before" to see the contribution that state missions has made and desires to make in "the overall picture of Southern Baptist world missions." One million lost people in Alabama were the "prime responsibility of Alabama Baptists."

R.B. Culbreath, pastor of Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, was 1 of 5 American clergymen selected by the Air Force to go on a preaching mission in the Far East. Culbreath was the only member of the group from the South and the only Baptist.

100 Years Ago October 1916

The Alabama Baptist brought

attention to Chas T. Lacy, of Ryland, a "worthy young man" who lost his eyesight. Lacy had a wife and a baby to support but because of his disability was left with no income and needed help. He had begun to work in magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and Baptists were encouraged to support the "unfortunate but worthy Christian gentleman" by giving their subscription business to him. The article reminded readers that what was done for people in need was in turn done for the Master.

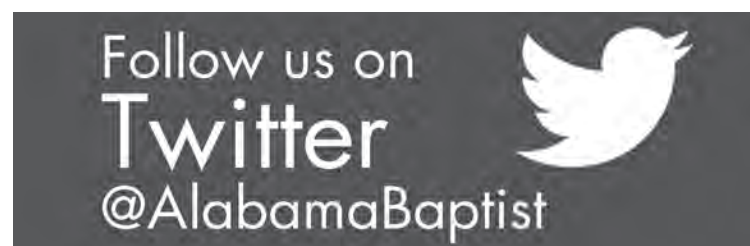
Trinity Baptist Church called on Baptists of Alabama to help in the rebuilding of their church. The congregation had just celebrated completing their new church when a storm came through and swept away their building and crops. They had taxed themselves to the limit in building their much-

needed church and were scarcely equipped to do the rebuild because they were small in number.

150 Years Ago October 1866

The 12th session of Eufaula Association was held at Mount Zion Baptist Church. The amount of money gathered for missions exceeded \$1,300. Expressions of sympathy were shared for Howard College in Birmingham still recovering from the war and also to support some young men at the college that were going into the ministry. Other associations

and churches were encouraged to do the same. It was noted that Eufaula Association had taken unique initiative in electing a layman — W.W. Battle — for their presiding officer, and it was thought that other associations would do well to imitate this action. There was desire for more laymen to attend state convention meeting. A book on church architecture with plans and drawings, "simple and cheap," was needed because of a wish to enlarge Sunday School rooms and to improve pulpits, seats and children's accommodations.✱



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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Bayside Baptist Church in Lillian, AL, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 533, Lillian, AL 36549 or tbobharris@gmail.com.

MUSIC MINISTER

Ezra Baptist Church in Western Jefferson County is seeking a bivocational music minister. Send resumé to: Ezra Baptist, Attn: Music Committee, 1512 Toadvine Road, Bessemer, AL 35023.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is eagerly seeking a part-time minister of music. Contact Pastor Steve Potts (phone: 205-514-5077, email: steve.potts@wbclive.com).

STUDENT MINISTER

Union Hill Baptist, Oneonta, is seeking a full-time student minister (grades 1-12) for a growing fellowship with two Sunday morning services. Experience should include leadership in evangelism, missions, small group ministry and discipleship for children and youth. Please submit resumé to: 2919 Co. Hwy. 39, Oneonta, AL 35121. 205-274-9232. bbarnett@otelco.net.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS

Mount Vernon Baptist Church is currently seeking a full-time minister of students. Please send resumé to: Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Attn: David Martin 2650 Pine Street, Albertville, AL 35950.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

East McFarland Baptist Church is in search of a bivocational youth pastor. Interested parties please send resumé to: 6007 McFarland Blvd. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35405. No phone calls please.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Maytown Baptist Church is searching for a part-time youth minister. Please send resumé to: gboyd@maytownbaptist.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Oak Bowery Baptist Church in Calhoun County, AL, is seeking a children's ministry director. Resumé may be mailed to: Oak Bowery Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 3300 AL Highway 144, Ohatchee, AL 36271 or oakbowerybaptist@att.net.

CHILD CARE POSITIONS

North Shelby Baptist Church is looking for two paid child care

positions for Sunday nights, Wednesday nights and special events. Please contact Julie Donovan at Julie@northshelbybaptist.org for more information.

NURSERY WORKERS

East McFarland Baptist Church is in search of hourly paid nursery workers for Sunday worship services and special events. Interested parties please send resumé to: Attn: Nursery Worker, EMBC, 6007 McFarland Blvd. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35405, or email to: embcoffice@comcast.net. No phone calls please.

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MISCELLANEOUS

JUDGMENT DAY 2016

Evangelistic drama. Cottage Hill Baptist, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 26-27 — 6-9 p.m. Oct. 28 — no presentation. Oct. 29 — 6-10 p.m. Oct 30-31 — 6-9 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521.



(augmented reality)

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

Rashional THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

Acknowledging rough spots

The distance and coldness slapped me in the face. I knew my friend had a lot on her mind so I didn't worry about it — at first.

When it happened again, I asked if she was OK because she seemed upset about something. She said she was and didn't offer any explanation.

After a few days of the same experience, I investigated because she obviously wasn't OK. I thought back to what might have happened and realized I was what happened.

In a pressure-filled, deadline-crunched, sleep-deprived moment, I had barked at her about a project we were both working on. In the moment, I didn't realize I had been hurtful.

My words were not meant to target her. I was actually frustrated with myself because I had not prepared as thoroughly as I thought I had.

As soon as my aha moment came, I ran to my friend to apologize. She appreciated the acknowledgement and eventually warmed up to me — but it wasn't immediate. She kept me at a slight distance for months.

It hurts me deeply when I hurt another person and yet I'm extremely capable of doing it.

I don't tend to panic nor react frantically in tense situations. I'm the person who stays calm, assesses every side of the situation and determines the plan of action. But with this calmness under pressure comes a laser focus and sharp directness that can easily stomp on another's feelings.

While I'm continuously working to improve in this area, I've also learned to show others grace when the situation is reversed. I try to give them the benefit of the doubt that they aren't targeting me, that they are merely under a lot of pressure at the moment.

Many friends have modeled that same grace for me through the years.

In fact, another friend of

mine and I had a rough season once when we were misreading each other's emotions as being upset with the other. Once we realized what we were doing, we made a pact that we would always tell the other if something was wrong in our relationship rather than forcing each other to guess.

The experience was so freeing that I challenged myself to move quickly to resolve any conflict that might arise in all my relationships.

My goal is to stop myself the second I realize I'm being unfair or hurtful, take responsibility and apologize, then regroup in a way to have a calm and mutually respectful conversation. I'm learning to truly validate the other person's feelings and decipher the facts of the situation while trying to avoid emotional responses. I'm also learning I don't have to always be right — yes, that might have been the hardest one for me to swallow.

When I'm on the other side, I'm trying to calmly alert the person right away that what he or she did or said was hurtful to me. From there, my goal is to be kind, forgive and not leave any awkward feelings between us. It is really hard to tell another person when he or she has hurt or frustrated you, so I'm also working hard to not react defensively when someone is bold enough to share.

And currently I'm digesting the helpful tips offered on dealing with conflict in the Faith and Family package on pages 1, 4, 5 and 6 of this issue.

Some days merely attempting to live in relationship with the vast number of people in our lives can stretch our abilities, but I'll be the first to say it is worth all the effort. I can't imagine my life without all the amazing people who make it so rich, joyful and fulfilling. I'm just thankful they choose to love me despite my many shortcomings.✝

RASHIONAL Extras ...

"Yet I Will Praise You"

*I will praise You Lord my God
Even in my brokenness
I will praise You Lord
I will praise You Lord my God
Even in my desperation
I will praise You Lord*

*I will trust You Lord my God
Even in my loneliness
I will trust You Lord
I will trust You Lord my God
Even when I cannot hear You
I will trust You Lord*

*And I can't understand
All that You allow
I just can't see the reason
But my life is in Your hands
And though I cannot see You
I choose to trust You*

*And I will not forget
That You hung on a cross
Lord You bled and died for me
And if I have to suffer
I know that You've been there
And I know that You're here now*

*Even when my heart is torn I
will praise You Lord
Even when I feel deserted I will
praise You Lord
Even in my darkest valley I will
praise You Lord
And when my world is shattered
and it seems all hope is gone
Yet I will praise You Lord*

From Vineyard music, singer
Melissa Boraski with music and
lyrics by Andy Park



By Jay Robertson, Ph.D.
University of Mobile

Being new in Christ means daily walking away from the old life of sin and daily walking in the new life we have in Him. Everything that is true about us positionally in Christ, God is working out in our lives practically.

The imminent return of Christ ought to motivate Jesus' followers to glorify God in everything they do. Jesus' return should create within us a sense of urgency that should characterize every aspect of our lives. In light of Christ's return, believers need to use good judgment and stay calm in a spirit of prayer. Don't lose your head and act irrationally. Think clearly and pray about everything.

Stay fervent in love for one another. The word fervent means "strained." We should stretch our love for one another to the limit. Believers also should be hospitable toward one another. Love opens the door of your heart and your home. As we expect Jesus to return, we should keep busy serving one another for the glory of God.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Excerpt from the Oct. 16 Explore the Bible Sunday School lesson commentary in the Oct. 13 issue of The Alabama Baptist.

A servant is someone who gets excited about making someone else successful.

Author Beverly LaHaye

From LinkedIn:

Tongue Fast

By Jenny Reese Clark
Christian author and testimonial
speaker

"A legitimate complaint can only be resolved if you direct it to the one who can change your situation. Only a few people who are dissatisfied, annoyed or upset by an experience actually take steps to officially complain about it. They prefer to waste time soliciting others to commiserate with them. What an exercise in futility. Not only could their input to the right person improve things for them but for others as well.

"Because complaining is contagious, this is a hard mouth malady to cure. Someone once said, 'To murmur is wicked for it takes God's promises in vain.' How true."

Unless we approach productivity strategically, we'll never get out of reactive mode. We'll get more done, but we won't get the right things done.

Michael Hyatt
Author and productivity
expert

@deaninserra

Marriage conversations need to be 10xs more about self-denial and discipleship than "you need to go on a weekly date night." Get real.

@edstetzer

Without love and the Golden Rule, people and arguments are demoted to caricatures, and that gets us nowhere.

Your real values are not revealed by your words but by how you use your time, passion and energy.

Gary Fenton
Characterpath.com

Follow me on Twitter
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email me at jrash@
thealabamabaptist.org.

Soon-to-be launched *TAB* website features more resources than ever

The soon-to-be launched new web presence for *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*) offers more resources than ever before.

But it's also a lot easier to navigate.

Across the menu bar at the top of the homepage, two main categories and a drop-down menu can direct you to the most recent content of *TAB*.

The first, Latest News, is current news — it takes you to the paper's daily news feed. Breaking news items will scroll across the top of the site.

The second tab — Archives/Past Issues — holds all the content that has been printed in *TAB* in the past 16 years. That section is a great tool for immediate access to past articles, said Jennifer Davis Rash, *TAB*'s editor-elect.

"Whether someone is looking to do research on a topic, church or ministry, they will have all the content we have published since the year 2000 at their fingertips," Rash said. "It's also a great way for a reader to pull up past articles



TAB screen shot

he or she liked and wants to share with others."

And readers wanting to find articles older than the year 2000 are able to research those articles through Samford University's Special Collection department.

It has long been a "great resource" with its 175-year archive of the paper and also will offer a new aspect with direct links to the articles on *TAB*'s website, Rash said.

To access *TAB*'s articles through Samford's Special Collection, visit [http://library.sam-](http://library.samford.edu/about/sc/collections/alabamabaptists.html)

ford.edu/about/sc/collections/alabamabaptists.html or call 205-726-2749.

And along with the latest news and archive options on www.thealabamabaptist.org, a drop-down menu — the three horizontal lines in the top right corner — will take you to dozens of links to the latest columns and resources, from Sunday School lessons to ministry tips to past editorials written by Editor Bob Terry.

Subscribers to either the digital or print edition of *TAB* can easily access this section at no cost by creating a login and password with their account information. Visitors who don't have a subscription will have the opportunity to subscribe or pay a small fee per article viewed.

Need help navigating any of the content? You can get in touch with *TAB* staff quickly and easily using the "Contact Us" tab or the social media tabs in the top right corner.

Be watching for the launch of the mobile-responsive and user friendly www.thealabamabaptist.org. (*TAB*)



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Tuscaloosa, AL

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HEALTH ALERT!

Does Hearing Loss Increase your Risk of Falling?

New studies by researchers at Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging suggests that hearing loss significantly increases your risk of falling.

A Public Health Problem

Among older adults (age 65 or greater), falls are a serious health problem and are the leading cause of injury death in the U.S. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in 2009 nearly 20,000 older adults died from unintentional fall injuries, and 2.2 million nonfatal injuries were treated in emergency rooms. Direct medical costs resulting from falls are estimated at approximately \$30 billion dollars per year.

Research Proves It

To make the connection between hearing loss and fall risk, researchers analyzed data from more than 2,000 people between the ages of 40 and 69,

from 2001 to 2004, as part of the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. As part of the survey, the participants had their hearing tested and underwent vestibular testing (an examination of the balance mechanism of the inner ear), in addition to answering demographic and other health-related questions.

The Risk Is Real

Despite accounting for multiple factors related to fall risk (age, gender, medical condition, etc.), researchers determined that even a "mild" degree of hearing loss nearly triples the risk of falling.

For every additional 10 decibels of hearing loss, the risk of falling was increased by an additional 140%!*



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*Hearing aid benchmark tests conducted by Delta SenseLab, an independent testing laboratory. Cannot be combined with other offers, coupons or insurance plans. Previous purchases excluded. Participation may vary. See location for details. Benefits of hearing aids vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noise environment, accuracy of hearing evaluation and proper fit. Beltone Hearing Care Centers are independently owned and operated. © 2016 Beltone

Built-in pressure of the pulpit

Ranks of ex-pastors grow as some join 'nones,' 'dones'

Between the notoriously long hours, the unrealistic expectations and the severe stress on health and family, church ministry often becomes too much for many — in fact most — ministers to handle.

For some it results in being fired, quitting or trudging through a miserable life.

"Some pastors are just absolutely crushed," said Greg Atkinson, executive director of ExPastors.com, an online resource for clergy experiencing the spiritual, mental and physical symptoms of burnout while in, or out, of ministry.

Stressed-out situations

ExPastors.com is aimed at ministers experiencing a variety of stressed-out situations. It offers tools to prevent burnout and to bring about its end. Its clients are former pastors and those about to abandon their callings.

The organization conducted a 2015 survey that found 60 percent of pastors consider themselves overworked and 81 percent feel unable to meet the

demands of their jobs, Atkinson said during an Oct. 13 FaithSoaring Churches conference call sponsored by The Columbia Partnership.

Unrealistic demands

The survey said 82 percent feel they are burdened with unrealistic demands or that they and their families are expected to meet unwritten expectations.

"Eighty-five percent consider leaving ministry [and] 77 percent consider themselves having experienced burnout," Atkinson said.

But awareness is only part of the solution. Acceptance and action also are needed — and not only by churches but also by their beleaguered leaders, as well.

Atkinson shared some well-known statistics that contribute to the stress of pastors. They include declining or plateauing attendance in most congregations and the closure of up to 4,000 American churches annually.

Many church leaders take those kinds of trends to heart, which only adds to the built-in pressures that come with the pulpit.

Ministers often respond to in-

ternal and external stressors by falling into an isolation which makes them vulnerable to addictions such as alcohol, drugs and pornography. They in turn speed the process toward mental illness, burnout, termination, quitting ministry and even suicide, he said.

Those who leave the church are doing so at an increasing pace, he added.

Atkinson said he spoke to a pastor who complained about preaching funerals Friday through Monday and being expected by his church to handle all hospital visits.

He told Atkinson, "I don't need this. I have an MBA. I can go teach." Other former pastors he knows are selling insurance and real estate to support their families.

Some are there because they were unjustly fired from ministry positions. Others were released because of budget cuts and abandoned ministry because a spouse demanded it, he said.

In some cases, those who leave ministry also leave the church altogether.

"I got an email from a pastor who became an atheist," he said. And a friend was so hurt he didn't want anything to do with organized Christianity.

Assessing their situation and attitude is an important step for a pastor. But so is taking the appropriate actions, Atkinson said.

Ministers experiencing stress, isolation and an urge to quit should seek counseling and mentor relationships.

Healthy ministry

Those arrangements provide contexts in which ministers can air feelings and thoughts that cannot be safely shared with colleagues, congregants and members of their own families, he said.

Exercise and a healthy diet also are musts to providing healthy ministry in challenging environments.

Those behaviors — seeking counseling, eating better, getting exercise — also are vital for those who have left the church.

"If you don't get healthy, you won't return to ministry," Atkinson said. (BNG)

Do income, religion correlate?

While it's long been known that education and income go together, it's not nearly as easy a task to correlate wealth and religious designation in the United States, according to a Pew Research report released Oct. 11.

"What we can say is that members of some religious groups — not to mention atheists and agnostics — on average have a higher household income than others and those in the richest religious groups also tend, on average, to be better educated than most Americans," wrote David Masci, senior writer/editor for Pew.

Jewish, Hindus

The nation's Jewish population topped the list — 44 percent had a household \$100,000 or more.

But trailing them next in line were Hindus at 36 percent, followed by Episcopalians at 35 percent.

"Again, these groups also have high levels of educational attainment. For instance, nearly half of Hindu adults and almost one-third of Jewish adults hold postgraduate degrees," Masci wrote. "Indeed, in addition to education, other factors, such as age, race and ethnicity also are correlated with both religion and income."

High incomes

Three other mainline Protestant denominations — the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Methodist Church — also had high household income, as did atheists and agnostics.

Southern Baptists fell 20th on the list, outranked by a variety of designations including Mormons, Muslims, "nothing in particular" and the numbers for all U.S. adults as a whole.

Only 16 percent of Southern Baptist households had an income of \$100,000 or more. (TAB)



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 30

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

ALERT LIVING

1 Peter 5:1–11

Responsible Shepherds (1–4)

Peter encourages the elders because as leaders of the church they may face the brunt of the persecution first. The term “elders” is used interchangeably with pastors and overseers in the New Testament. Every piece of evidence we have shows that elders were widespread in the early church. Luke, Paul, Peter and James all mention elders. It also is likely that elders functioned as a plurality in the churches since the term is always plural.

Peter identified himself as a “fellow elder,” a “witness of the sufferings of Christ” and as a “partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.” The reference to Christ’s suffering is obviously intentional, for as the epistle has made clear, suffering is the pathway to glory. Jesus Christ Himself traveled the same road, and Jesus’ followers should not be surprised they are called to do the same. “The glory that is going to be revealed” refers to the Second Coming. Peter endures present suffering because he knows better days are coming when Christ returns.

Elders (pastors) are entrusted with the responsibility to “shepherd the flock.” To shepherd the flock means to tend to the sheep. The shepherd is to guard, guide and provide for the sheep. Elders also are entrusted with “exercising oversight,” which is the verb form of the noun “overseer,” which is another title for those who serve as elders. The terms “shepherd” and “exercising oversight” emphasize the function of elders, while the title “elder” focuses on the office.

Peter gave three exhortations to elders as to how they were to carry out their responsibilities. Elders were to shepherd the church gladly or willingly, in accord with God's will, instead of doing it out of a sense of compulsion. They were to do the work

eagerly and not out of greed or for shameful gain. They were to serve as examples to the congregation and not use their place of leadership as a means to be domineering. The chief Shepherd is Jesus Christ. When He returns He will reward with glory every pastor who has served faithfully.

Trusting Sheep (5–7)

“You who are younger” probably refers to younger members of the congregation, who are more likely to act rebelliously. They are to submit themselves to the leadership of the elders. All members of the congregation, the young and everyone else, need to relate with humility toward one another. Peter cited Proverbs 3:34 to remind the readers that God is against the proud but will pour out His favor upon the humble.

Jesus' followers are to humble themselves and trust God even in the suffering. All suffering we encounter in this life is only for a season. This truth does not lessen the pain now, but it does remind us that one day "the mighty hand of God" will bring it to a close. And while we suffer in this Genesis 3 world, we practice humility by casting our worries on God. When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in His mighty hand, acknowledging that He is Lord and Sovereign over all of life.

The Need for Alertness (8–11)

Christians need to be spiritually vigilant, watching for attacks from the devil. Peter used graphic language describing Satan as a lion. He prowls around seeking someone to devour, hoping that believers will be terrified in their suffering, or that they will be deceived and fall into sin. Though the devil may threaten to devour Christians, they have the assurance they will be guarded by God's power (1 Pet. 1:5).

Resist Satan. Stand firm in the faith by trusting in the God of grace. God, who called you by His grace, will strengthen you with His grace.✠

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

UNSTOPPABLE LOVE

Acts 2:41–47

Almost everyone has had that terrible experience when a friend (soon to be ex-friend) has accidentally given away the ending of a movie. When we know a movie's ending, we feel robbed of the thrill of trying to figure things out for ourselves. We have a terrible time recovering the innocence and naiveté needed to enjoy the story as it unfolds one step at a time.

What is true for a spoiled movie ending also can be true for us as we read biblical texts. Because we know how the story ends, it is difficult for us to dread each step Abraham takes on his journey with Isaac to Moriah, to feel the pang of terror in his heart as Isaac asks, "Where is the lamb?" to turn away in horror when Abraham raises his knife to kill his son. Worse, knowing the endings ourselves, we often fail to remember that a story's characters did not. We subtly imagine Abraham must have known he would not really have to kill his son, that Isaac must have known his father wasn't really going to go through with the sacrifice. Robbed of a surprise ending ourselves, we go on to rob the story's characters of the same surprise and thereby minimize both the suffering of the story's beginning and the rejoicing of its end.

The same can be said for our understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus. Because we know so well the record of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, we often forget just how devastated the disciples were when their Master was brutally taken away from them. The disciples seem to have believed He would live as their teacher until He began to live as their king. They never imagined their Master could come to the terrible end He faced on the cross. Yet it is only from this valley of despair that we can fully appreciate the sense of joy

and excitement that pervades the first few chapters of Acts. No longer dead but risen, no longer defeated but victorious, Jesus now energizes His Church with a power that surpasses anything they could have imagined just a few days before.

**Unstoppable love meets
spiritual needs. (41–42)**

As we reach the end of Acts 2, the unstoppable power of the Holy Spirit permeates every action of the early Christian community. At Pentecost, the few dozen followers of Jesus are joined by 3,000 new believers. Though hailing from various backgrounds, these believers remain unified as they devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, to one another and to God Himself.

Unstoppable love meets physical needs. (43–45)

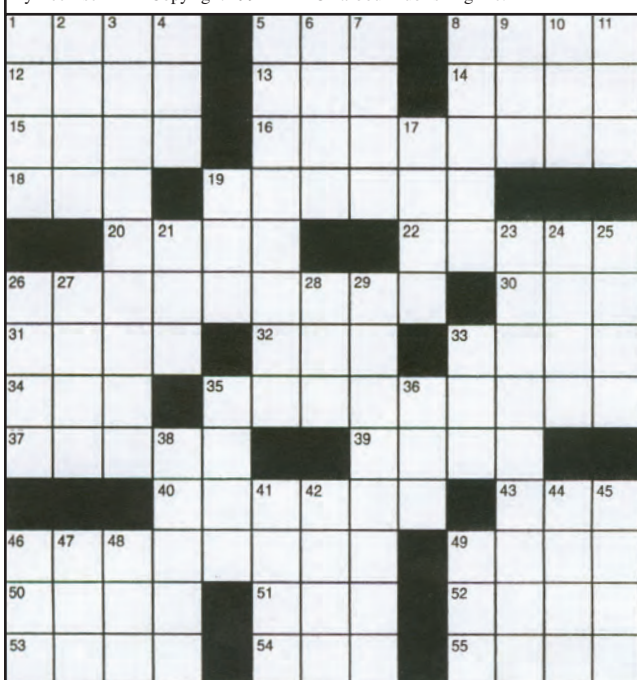
The sense of joy and expectation in this early Christian community was so palpable that they naturally believed Jesus' return would take place any day. In their exuberance, these Christians went so far as to sell their property and possessions to care for the needy among them. Perhaps they got ahead of themselves in so doing, but how can one fault their hearts in this moment? Seeing a need, they did whatever it took to help one another however they could.

Unstoppable love creates opportunities to share. (46–47)

Acts 2 records the result of the early Church's commitment to God and to one another as one of nearly endless opportunities to share God's love with others. With joy in their hearts and deep commitment toward one another, these early Christians saw one soul after another accept the gospel message. Perhaps it has always been the case that wherever Christians have so thoroughly lived out the gospel, the spread of the gospel message could not be far behind. ✠

Christian Crossword

By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. And now abideth faith, _____, charity.
(1 Cor. 13:13)
5. He is _____ the God of the dead. (Mark 12:27)
8. Jesus attended a wedding here.
12. So be it.
13. Physician's group.
(abbr.)
14. And he took one of his _____. (Gen. 2:21)
15. Behold, I _____ you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. (Matt. 10:16)
16. The wife of Moses.
18. High explosive.
(for short)
19. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the _____. (Gen. 1:2)
20. Pitcher.
22. Bone. (prefix)
26. He came to Jesus by night.
30. The sixth captain ... was _____.
(1 Chron. 27:9)
31. Having their conscience seared with a hot _____.
(1 Tim. 4:2)

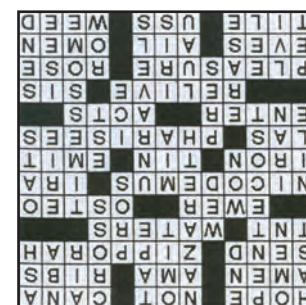
32. ___ Pan Alley.
33. Send out.
34. ___ Cruces, New Mexico.
35. Religious sect of Jesus' day.
37. ___ ye in at the strait gate. (Matt. 7:13)
39. Praise him for his mighty ___. (Ps. 150:2)
40. Experience again.
43. Female sibling. (for short)
46. It is your Father's good ___ to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)
49. For if we believe that Jesus died and ___ again. (1 Thess. 4:14)
50. Belonging to Adam's wife.
51. Feel ill.
52. Prophetic sign.
53. Floor covering.
54. Uncle Sam's sailing vessel. (abbr.)
55. Undesirable plant.

Down

1. Thou ____ the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

2. Sign.
3. The apostles received the Holy Ghost on this day.
4. For Christ is the ____ of the law. (Rom. 10:4)
5. Jesus' hometown.
6. Leave out.
7. Record.
8. For the preaching of the ____ is to them that perish foolishness. (1 Cor. 1:18)
9. Foxes have holes, and birds of the ____ have nests. (Luke 9:58)
10. National Basketball Association.
11. Common tree.
17. Aces. (for short)
19. Marry.
21. Was victorious.
23. In the latter ____ shall depart from the faith. (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 words)
24. A Great Lake.
25. Cereal grass. (pl.)
26. Egyptian river.
27. It borders Iraq.
28. Soldier unaccounted for.
29. Solves a mystery.
33. Founded. (abbr.)

35. Company overseer.
(abbr.)
36. He casteth forth his
___ like morsels.
(Ps. 147:17)
38. Expunge.
41. Hawaiian feast.
42. Eye part.
44. ___ men as trees,
walking. (Mark 8:24)
45. Here I am; ___ me.
(Isa. 6:8)
46. House cat.
47. 56. (Roman numeral)
48. Scaleless fish.
49. Propel a boat manually.



BOOK REVIEW

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Discerning Your Call to Ministry

Jason K. Allen. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016. 153 pp. (Hard-back).

A lot of people question what God's will is for their life. And many of them wrestle with whether or not His will is for them to be in the ministry.

What do you do with that wrestling? How do you know if you're supposed to dedicate your whole life to a ministerial role in a church? How do you know if your calling is to a job with a ministerial component — but not a pastoral position? What if you love Christ

and His Church, but you're meant to simply be a Christian who dynamically lives out his faith among his coworkers in a secular job?

Jason

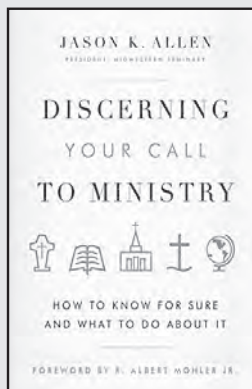
Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, decided to tackle those questions in this book, a compact look at 10 questions meant to help the reader put his life up against Scripture and see which role God may have in mind for him.

Allen says none of those callings make a Christian a second-class citizen, but he does want to help believers know exactly what it means to "surrender to the ministry" — and whether or not it's for them.

'Outsider' experience

From the beginning, Allen makes clear his view that pastoral roles are reserved for men, so for me, reading this book as a woman was more of an "outsider looking in" experience.

But I very much enjoyed the process of self-evaluation against Scripture and felt like it equipped me to help a friend wrestling with the question. And many respected evangelical leaders endorsed the book with an excited "where has this book been all my life" tone. So men, if you're asking yourself the question of to pastor or not to pastor, Allen's book may very well be a good tool to help with seeking God's guidance. ☞



TAB AR



'I'm Not Ashamed' tells the story of Rachel Joy Scott, a 17-year-old who was murdered for her faith during the worst high school shooting in history at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in 1999. The film hit theaters Oct. 21.

Screen grab courtesy of Icon Media Group

Recently released film seeks to prompt youth movement for Christ

Columbine. Say that one word anywhere in the United States and people know what you're talking about.

The shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, was the worst high school shooting in history, wounding more than 20 people and killing 13, including Rachel Joy Scott.

When two fellow classmates approached Scott on the lawn of Columbine High School and questioned her belief in Jesus, she affirmed her faith and was shot to death at point-blank range.

The story of her martyrdom has been told perhaps countless times in books, sermons and interviews in the past nearly 20 years, but Pure Flix Entertainment hopes its film of Scott's 17 years on earth inspires students nationally to accept and boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior. The film, "I'm Not Ashamed," opened in theaters Oct. 21 and stars Masey McLain, Ben Davies, Sadie Robertson, Korie Robertson, Jaci Velasquez and Jennifer O'Neill.

Faith struggle

The movie portrays the faith struggle of Scott, who was among 12 students and a teacher murdered by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. Harris and Klebold also planted bombs that did not detonate and committed suicide.

"[Scott] grew up in a fatherless home. Even though she grew up in church, her choices as a teenager were not the best choices," said Franklin Santagate, Pure Flix vice president of global strategic alliances. "She ended up struggling with the

party scene [etc.] — drinking, smoking. But was caught by her mom, and then sent away for the summer to ... her aunt Bea.

At that point she accepts Christ but comes back not knowing what quite to do with it, even though she's connected now to a small group."

Scott experiences betrayal, depression, suicidal tendencies, heartbreak and other ills before finally sharing her faith with others.

"All these struggles are exactly what many, many teens go through. At all our screenings, we hear that over and over from the

teenagers. 'Man, this is exactly what we face,'" Santagate said. "We see it on the screening cards. 'We're so glad you show the reality of trying to be a Christian as a teenager facing these temptations.'"

Students who've screened the movie are inspired to impact their schools with the gospel, Santagate said, adding that the film is intended to start a youth-driven, multi-denominational movement for Christ.

"The common denominator will be young men and women who want to do something in their schools and in their communities for Jesus Christ and for one another," Santagate said.

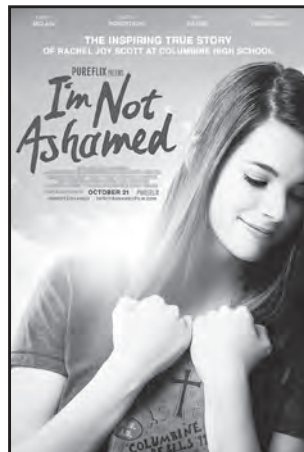
The Pure Flix Faith and Family Alliance — including First Priority, a network of 2,600 school-based Christian youth groups, and See You At the Pole, an international student-led prayer outreach — kicked off the national six-week "I Am Hope" evangelistic and discipleship movement targeting students in mid-September to lead up to the film's release.

Designed to engage

The four-week "I Am Hope" curriculum was designed to engage youth and provide outreach to the 23 million unchurched teens in the U.S., according to the "I Am Hope" website.

The fifth week of the program prompted participants to purchase a movie ticket for themselves, another for someone they know who's lost and a third to give to a fatherless or inner city youth.

For more information about the film or "I Am Hope," visit imnotashamedfilm.com. (BP, TAB)



Screen grab courtesy of Icon Media Group

Masey McLain (center) plays Rachel Joy Scott, who was murdered for her faith during the Columbine High School shooting, in 'I'm Not Ashamed.'

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



Growing Young photo

‘Warm is the new cool’

Co-author Powell shares 6 ways to reach young people

There’s no way around it: The Church is shrinking, and it’s aging. And with the growing number of unchurched young people, churches may be inclined to think reaching them is a losing battle.

But it’s not so, said Kara Powell, Fuller Youth Institute executive director.

Churches are, in fact, doing it successfully, she said — and there are common reasons as to how and why.

She and co-authors Jake Mulder and Brad Griffin researched more than 250 congregations to write their recently released book, “Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church.”

“When we spoke to more than 1,300 young churchgoers, ages 15 to 29, they told us what they want: authenticity and connection. In a word: warmth,” the three wrote in a joint column in *The Washington Post*. “[I]t turns out cool isn’t what young people want. Forget the rock-band vibe and the flashing lights. Warm is the new cool.”

Outlined strategies

During a recent interview with *The Christian Post*, Powell discussed the six strategies outlined in “Growing Young”:

1. Senior leadership that values and raises up young leaders will thrive.

Young people want to be led and learn how to lead, and if given the chance they will rise to the occasion, Powell said, according to *The Christian Post*.

2. Empathize with young people.

Successful congregations don’t fall into the trap of disparaging young adults as lazy or entitled, she said. What they do instead is walk alongside them as they find their purpose and along the way find that they are interested in a deeper faith.

3. Focusing on Jesus’ message is central.

“In an era of so much cultural shame and fear,” Powell told *The Christian Post* that churches that resonate with the young “were ruthless in preach-

ing the love and grace of Jesus and helping young people live radically, motivated by the grace of Christ.”

4. Churches as “warm” communities.

Many a church spends time, effort and money on flashy services when what young people really want is a sense of authenticity and family, Powell and her co-authors wrote in *The Washington Post*.

‘Stronger variable’

“When we analyzed the terms that young adults used to describe the churches or parishes that they chose, we noticed repeated words: welcoming, accepting, belonging, authentic, hospitable and caring. We began to call this the ‘warmth cluster,’” they wrote in *The Washington Post*. “Across the board in statistical analyses, this warmth cluster emerged as a stronger variable than any ministry program. Ironically, it is possible that your church might be working against warmth by offering myriad programs. Busyness doesn’t equal warmth.”

And nice doesn’t cut it either, they wrote — young people want to feel like they’re part of a family.

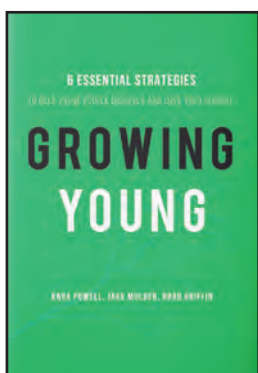
5. Churches that are successful at reaching young people prioritize them everywhere.

The young people in any church aren’t the only people there, but it pays to be intentional about remembering to plug them in, Powell told *The Christian Post*. With any event, it helps to ask the question, “How does [activity xyz] relate to what God is doing in our young people?”

6. Churches that succeed with young people “neighbor” well.

Churches that are deeply committed to social justice are more effective with young people worldwide, Powell said. Those churches aren’t afraid to have conversations about the tough issues, like sexuality and race relations. They actively work to love their neighbors, she said.

For more information, visit churchesgrowing-young.com. (TAB)



Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

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Annie Armstrong 2016 giving 2nd highest ever

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The nearly \$59 million given to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in 2016 ranks second highest in the offering’s history, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) announced Oct. 12.

Southern Baptists gave \$58,860,553 in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30 to the offering named for noted missionary Annie Armstrong, second only to the \$59,463,281 given in 2007, NAMB said.

North Carolina and Alabama Baptists gave the largest amounts this year, collecting \$6,058,574 and \$5,878,970, respectively, NAMB said. “We are so grateful for the pastors, state leaders and all Southern Baptists who gave so generously in these states,” NAMB President Kevin Ezell wrote in a thank you column to Southern Baptists.

“This is extraordinary in a year when so many of our churches gave above and beyond in response to the special call from our International Mission Board,” Ezell said. “We are humbled by how God has moved once again through Southern Baptists and excited about what this means for our missionaries who serve throughout the United States and Canada.” (NAMB)

SBC ends fiscal year \$9.23 million over goal

NASHVILLE — The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ended its fiscal year \$9.23 million over its 2015–2016 budgeted goal and \$6.57 million over the previous year’s Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget gifts, according to Frank S. Page, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee.

SBC received \$195,730,508.04 in CP Allocation gifts for the year. This amount is \$6,570,276.63, or 3.47 percent, more than it received during the last fiscal year, and is \$9,230,508.04, or 4.95 percent, more than its budgeted goal of \$186.5 million.

In designated giving, the fiscal year’s total of \$204,671,725.92 is 4.95 percent above the previous year’s \$195,013,412.58. Of this designated amount, \$204,135,367.21 was disbursed to the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board through the seasonal missions offerings and Global Hunger Relief. Combined designated gifts to SBC causes and CP Allocation Budget gifts showed a 4.22 percent increase over the same time last year.

September gifts through CP totaled \$16,569,490.69, while designated gifts were \$4,681,908. (BP)

Baptists ask for prayer for Ethiopian unrest

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Baptists in Ethiopia are asking for prayer after more than two months of unrest have cost the nation hundreds of lives.

Anti-government demonstrations aimed at protesting human rights abuses, unfair distribution of wealth, political marginalization and land seizure by government have often had deadly endings. Reports describe hundreds of extra-judicial killings by police, as well as thousands of arrests.

“I am sending you this mail to request all Baptist families to join us in prayer about Ethiopia,” wrote Jima Dilbo, president of the Emmanuel Baptist Church of Ethiopia. “The situation here in our country is getting worse. Opposition against the incumbent government is increasing from time to time and the way government is responding so far is not constructive.”

“Please present our country and the situation we are in before the Almighty God, so that peace prevails in this difficult situation in Ethiopia,” Dilbo wrote. (BWA)

Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

Email your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org; fax it to 205-879-6026 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

