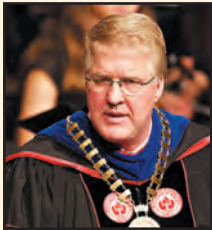


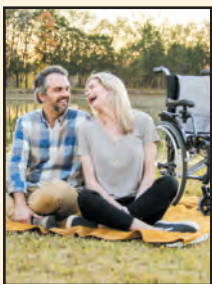


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unsplash.com

READING

God's Word

Are Christians making Bible reading a priority in their lives?

By Martha Simmons  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**T**he Bible: We memorize passages, we argue over its meaning, we take oaths on it, we lug it to church on Sunday. But how many of us are actually reading it regularly — and why?

A recent study conducted in partnership with the American Bible Society by Barna Group, a research organization focused on the intersection of religion and culture, found that more than half of Americans — 57 percent — read Scripture because it draws them closer to God.

Nevertheless more than 6 in 10 Americans feel they aren't studying the Bible enough.

Wanting more

Demographics drive the numbers. Wanting to do more Bible reading were:

- ▶ Females (68 percent compared to 54 percent of males)
  - ▶ Baby boomers (68 percent compared to 55 percent of Millennials)
  - ▶ Nonwhite Americans (67 percent compared to 58 percent of white Americans)
  - ▶ Those with no more than a high school education (67 percent compared to 56 percent of college graduates)
  - ▶ Southerners (70 percent compared to 55 percent of both Westerners and Northeasterners)
- Not surprisingly, born-again and practicing Christians (85 percent and 84 percent, respectively) are

the most likely to desire more Bible reading in their day-to-day lives, Barna reported.

In general the groups desiring to do more Bible reading have followed up on their goal, Barna said, but Scripture study across all demographic groups has remained relatively stable over the past five years. Two-thirds — 66 percent — of Barna's telephone and online survey respondents in 2016 reported that their Bible reading had neither increased nor decreased.

Greater engagement

Respondents cited these reasons for greater engagement in Scriptural study:

- ▶ Realization that the Scriptures are an important part of one's faith journey (67 percent)
- ▶ Been through a difficult experience causing a search for answers (26 percent)

(See 'One,' page 4)

Scholarships available to attend Pastors Conference

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors Conference has announced it will provide \$1,000 travel scholarships to pastors of "average-sized churches" who cannot otherwise afford to participate in the Pastors Conference and SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, in June.

In keeping with the focus of Pastors Conference 2017 on pastors of small and mid-sized congregations, an estimated 5 to 20 scholarships will be available beginning April 10 on a "first-come basis."

There could be more scholarships available because they are being funded by donations from larger churches and the number will be determined by how much money is received, the Pastors Conference leadership team announced March 30 on the SBC Voices blog.

Conference details

The Pastors Conference will feature preaching, worship and prayer to undergird the ministry of pastors and their wives. The sessions at the Phoenix Convention Center will be held June 11–12, prior to the SBC's June 13–14 annual meeting there. The 12 conference preachers lead churches with worship attendance between 60 to 500.

Pastors Conference President Dave Miller said larger churches traditionally have helped fund the event. However, this year's conference costs have been covered by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Caskey Center for Church Excellence and other sponsors, freeing the conference's traditional sponsors to help in a new way.

Churches that contribute to the scholarships will be recognized at the Pastors Conference and in the event program.

Pastors can apply for the (See 'Apply,' page 4)

# COMMENT

## Religious Schools Don't Have to Give In

**G**eorgetown University in Washington recently found itself the victim of false rumors and accusations. The way the school responded illustrates that religiously affiliated colleges and universities not only can but also continue to legally resist some “politically correct” positions on social issues that violate basic tenants of the school’s religious commitments.

Georgetown is the nation’s oldest Catholic institution of higher learning. Early Roman Catholic religious leader John Carroll bought land for the school in 1789 but it was not until after the First Amendment of the United States Constitution was adopted Dec. 15, 1791, that the school actually opened.

The opening words of the First Amendment declare, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The university’s website says when the nation’s laws “allowed for free religious practices” the school opened its doors in 1792.

Today one of the major challenges of religiously affiliated institutions of higher education is whether or not the nation’s laws will continue to allow “for free religious practices” as the First Amendment assures.

### Pro-abortion student group

Recently some pro-life news outlets reported that Georgetown had given official approval to a pro-abortion student group called Medical Students for Choice. Not surprisingly the story spread quickly on social media. Pro-life groups began asking, “Why does Georgetown med school have a pro-abortion club?”

A pro-abortion club officially approved by the administration of this renowned Catholic university would be big news. Roman Catholic theology teaches life begins at conception and that abortion at any stage of pregnancy is the equivalent of murder.

Furthermore the school declares that education at Georgetown will be consistent with “the ideals and practices that have characterized Jesuit education.” The Jesuits (the Society of Jesus) is the religious order that founded the institution.

To have an officially approved pro-abortion



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

student group on the Georgetown campus would be a direct contradiction to centuries of Catholic theology and practice and contrary to Jesuit teachings.

As is frequently the case with rumors and innuendos, the charge was based on partial information.

A Georgetown spokesman told new outlets that Medical Students for Choice had accidentally been listed on a website as an approved student organization, adding that as soon as the mistake was discovered the group was removed from the list. Unfortunately once a charge is publically made it is hard to take back.

The spokesman said the student group had received no funding or support from the university and was not eligible to receive funding and support.

G. Kevin Donovan, director of Georgetown’s Center for Clinical Bioethics, went further. He said, “Medical Students for Choice is not and never has been and never will be an approved student organization at Georgetown.”

### Social media presence

The organization has only a Facebook presence, which the university cannot control, he added.

Important to this story is that Georgetown does have a Medical Students for Life club and a Law Students for Life club as well as a Right to Life club. All are active on campus, officially approved by the school and receive university support.

Having pro-life groups on campus is consistent

with the historic Catholic theology which guides the institution. And just because pro-life groups are officially approved is no justification for having pro-abortion groups on campus, the institution explained.

One group is consistent with Catholic theology. The other is a violation of Catholic theology.

Because the U.S. Constitution guarantees “free religious practices,” Georgetown was legally able to support student groups on the pro-life side of the national debate about abortion and to ban student groups on the pro-abortion side of the debate.

The university could take this stand even though abortion is legal in the U.S. in practically all circumstances. But the deciding principle was not whether an act was legal or socially acceptable. The deciding principle was the school’s faithfulness to Catholic theology concerning life and abortion.

### Cultural issues

Baptist colleges and universities face similar issues. In addition to abortion, questions abound over the makeup of a family, homosexual activity and gender identity to mention only some of the major issues. As with abortion, legal rulings have brought once dark behaviors into the light of social acceptance.

Some argue that if a behavior is legal then Baptist colleges, churches and other religious ministries should accept the behavior even if it violates traditional Baptist understanding of Scripture. Some wrap the charge of discrimination around what was once considered “deviant behavior” in an effort to make politically correct behaviors condemned by the Bible.

Thankfully the First Amendment still allows religiously affiliated institutions to remain faithful to the religious tenants of their faith. The incident at Georgetown illustrates that just because a behavior is legal or socially acceptable it does not have to be approved or supported by a religious entity.

No institution and no law can stop private behaviors. Georgetown may have medical students who are pro-abortion but the university is not responsible for individual actions. Everyone recognizes there is a difference between private behaviors and behaviors that are officially recognized, endorsed or supported by an entity.

And there is the issue. Can a religious college or university be forced to accept, through official recognition and support, behaviors that violate the school’s basic theological commitments? That is not just an academic issue. It is a question faced by every religious entity.

The recent Georgetown incident answers “no.” Schools may be true to their religious convictions. That should be encouraging to Baptists everywhere. ✠

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### ‘POLITICS AND THE PULPIT’

After reading the Feb. 16 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, which had an article titled “Politics and the pulpit” on the front page, I thought about how I have often wondered about this issue.

Should we push for the candidate we think is best or should we leave that topic silent? I’m conservative and

I know the majority of church members where I worship feel the same.

However, on a recent Sunday in church we had sitting next to us an African-American lady whom my wife and I have ministered to. As our pastor spoke about Russia and the danger of government sanctions against people openly sharing the gospel our friend uttered something about

the “president.” I assume she meant President Donald Trump, as if she saw him potentially preventing Christians from speaking openly.

If my church openly supported  
(See ‘Letters,’ page 20)



# 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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# 'A New Day, A New Journey'

## Smith inaugurated as 4th president of University of Mobile

**W**ith the theme "A New Day, A New Journey," University of Mobile (UM) inaugurated Timothy L. Smith as its fourth president during a formal ceremony March 24 at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile.

In his inaugural address Smith said the purpose of Christian higher education is to equip men and women in preparation for the Great Commission, the biblical charge in Matthew 28:19 to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

"This is a calling for us inside the walls of this 800-acre campus of University of Mobile and in every Christian university throughout this country. We are called to mentor students within their discipline in equipping the student intellectually and spiritually in fulfilling the Great Commission calling in becoming a disciple of Christ in the home, church and workplace in leading others to seek Him," Smith said.

He related the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, found in Acts 8:26-35, in which Philip explained Scripture and told of Jesus Christ, a conversation that led to the eunuch's conversion to Christianity. "This is exactly the mission of University of Mobile — we are here to teach and preach about Jesus as a Christ-centered academic community providing liberal arts and professional programs to renew minds through intellectual and spiritual development for the fulfilling of one's professional calling," Smith said.

He said the vision he will strive to bring forward as the fourth president of UM is that Jesus Christ continues to be strengthened as the theological core of a university that is built on biblical premises, where academic rigor is integrated with intellectual development and intentional spiritual enrichment.

"How is this achieved? It begins with the establishment of a biblical worldview that we as administrators, faculty, staff and students attest to in the classrooms, offices, dining halls and on the athletic fields," Smith said.

He cited Proverbs 9:10, Genesis 1:26 and Romans 12:20.

"As students undergo this transformational process that is theologically focused on Christ while theoretically balanced with a rich intellectual and spiritual educational process; a caring, mentoring and expansive co-curricular



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

Timothy L. Smith delivers the inaugural address during a ceremony March 24 at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile. Smith is University of Mobile's fourth president.

environment that enhances the student's walk in Christ; and a partnership with the churches and community that continue to shape the minds and hearts of the students, the goal that God has called us to will be achieved," Smith said.

UM's board of trustees unanimously selected Smith as president April 11, 2016.

Under his leadership innovative programs have been launched, such as the College of Health Professions that includes the School of Nursing, the newly developed School of Health and Sports Science, and the newly created School of Allied Health. The Center of Excellence for Healthcare Practice has opened, providing augmented reality technology, high-tech simulation labs for obstetrics and adult health, health assessment and sports science and skills development.

A new organizational structure established the

framework for further growth and increased visibility for academic areas such as the new Alabama School of the Arts and Alabama College for Online Studies. New degree programs are being added in health care, education, music and the arts.

The inauguration ceremony began with a formal procession of delegates, dignitaries, faculty and trustees. Dignitaries bringing greetings included Bobby Dubois, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions associate executive director; Frank Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Saraland Mayor Harold Rubenstein; and Patrick Jacobs, president of UM Faculty Council.

### God's providence

Inaugural speaker Michael Wilder of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, said the inauguration is a celebration of God and His providence.

"In our gathering, we publicly pronounce our confidence that the selection and installation of President Smith is not by accident or by luck but it is the result of the very hand of God," Wilder said.

The ceremony was the highlight of four days of inaugural celebration festivities including a prayer and worship service, faculty and staff picnic, dinner under the stars for dignitaries and inaugural gala. (UM)



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

UM President Timothy L. Smith (right) greets Mobile businessman Tom Bramlett following the inauguration ceremony.

**To read the full inaugural  
address, visit [umobile.edu/  
inauguralspeech](http://umobile.edu/inauguralspeech).**

**For more information about  
Smith, visit [umobile.edu/  
newpresident](http://umobile.edu/newpresident).**

# 'One must commit to the time to be still and read God's Word,' pastor says

(continued from page 1)

- ▶ A significant change such as marriage or the birth of a child (20 percent)
  - ▶ Downloaded the Bible onto smartphone or tablet (18 percent)
  - ▶ Seeing how the Bible changed someone else for the better (14 percent)
  - ▶ Going to a church where the Bible became more accessible to them (12 percent)
  - ▶ Having someone they know ask to read the Bible together (10 percent)
  - ▶ Media conversations around religion and spirituality (5 percent)
- "Those who are seeing the biggest decrease in Bible reading in the last year include Millennials (11 percent), atheists and agnostics (10 percent), those who are much less active church attenders (16 percent) and again, black Americans (11 percent), who appear to be existing more on the extremes of usage," Barna reported.
- Americans' crowded schedules were cited as the No. 1 cause for reduced or stagnant levels of Bible reading.
- Other factors cited for less time reading the Bible included:
- ▶ Becoming atheist or agnostic (17 percent)
  - ▶ Deciding to leave the Church altogether (17 percent)

- ▶ Going through a difficult experience that caused them to doubt their faith, God or the Bible (12 percent)
  - ▶ Experiencing a significant change such as a job loss or death in the family (8 percent)
  - ▶ Seeing how reading the Bible made very little difference in the life of someone they know (6 percent)
  - ▶ Being converted to another faith (5 percent)
- Roxanne Stone, editor-in-chief of Barna Group, said, "We have consistently seen in our research that, even with skepticism on the rise, Americans still hold the Bible in high regard. After all, two-thirds of Americans (66 percent) agree that the Bible contains everything you need to know to live a meaningful life."
- However, Scripture reading is often an "aspirational goal," Stone said, "that for most people probably doesn't feel necessary to survival and so can easily get

swamped by the day-to-day demands of a busy life."

But Stone said, "When people go from feeling they should read the Bible more to needing to read the Bible, they find the time.

**"Set a goal of one week and pray for God to enable you to keep the commitment."**

**Pastor Chip Starnes  
FBC Bay Minette**

For pastors and spiritual leaders this means ... cultivating an environment where Scripture reading feels central to a spiritual life."

At First Baptist Church, Bay Minette, members can find support for Bible study in a number of ways, according to Pastor Chip Starnes.

"We encourage Bible readings by offering daily Bible reading plans to our congregation and by connecting them to apps and daily devotions electronically," he said.

Ultimately though it's up to the individual to take the next steps. "The biggest obstacle is the commitment it takes to make the time. One must commit to the time to be still and read God's Word," Starnes said.

Making Bible study a regular part of one's day is key, he suggested.

"Commit to a time. Either waking earlier, before bed, during lunch hour or whatever works for you," Starnes said. ✝

## Apply online for scholarship to conference

(continued from page 1)

scholarships at [SBCVoices.com](http://SBCVoices.com) beginning April 10 at 11 a.m. Eastern Time.

To qualify for a scholarship applicants must lead churches with average worship attendance of less than 200 people and the congregations they lead must be "either unable or unwilling to fund expenses" for Pastors Conference participation.

The scholarship money may be used for travel, hotel, meals, book purchases and any other convention-related resources. Scholarship recipients must agree to participate in all sessions of the Pastors Conference and SBC annual meeting. Recipients who end up not traveling to Phoenix must return the full \$1,000 award, according to SBC Voices. (BP)

## Erwin receives Salt & Light Award



Photo courtesy of ALCAP

Former state senator Hank Erwin (left) was awarded the fifth annual Alabama Citizen's Action Program (ALCAP) Dan Ireland Salt & Light Award during ALCAP's board meeting March 7 in Montgomery. Erwin, who currently serves as an ALCAP board member, was chosen for the award 'for the way he has lived out Christ's call for His followers to be salt and light in a decaying and dark world,' according to Joe Godfrey (right), ALCAP executive director. Erwin is a 'champion for the pro-family and pro-life' movement, Godfrey said.

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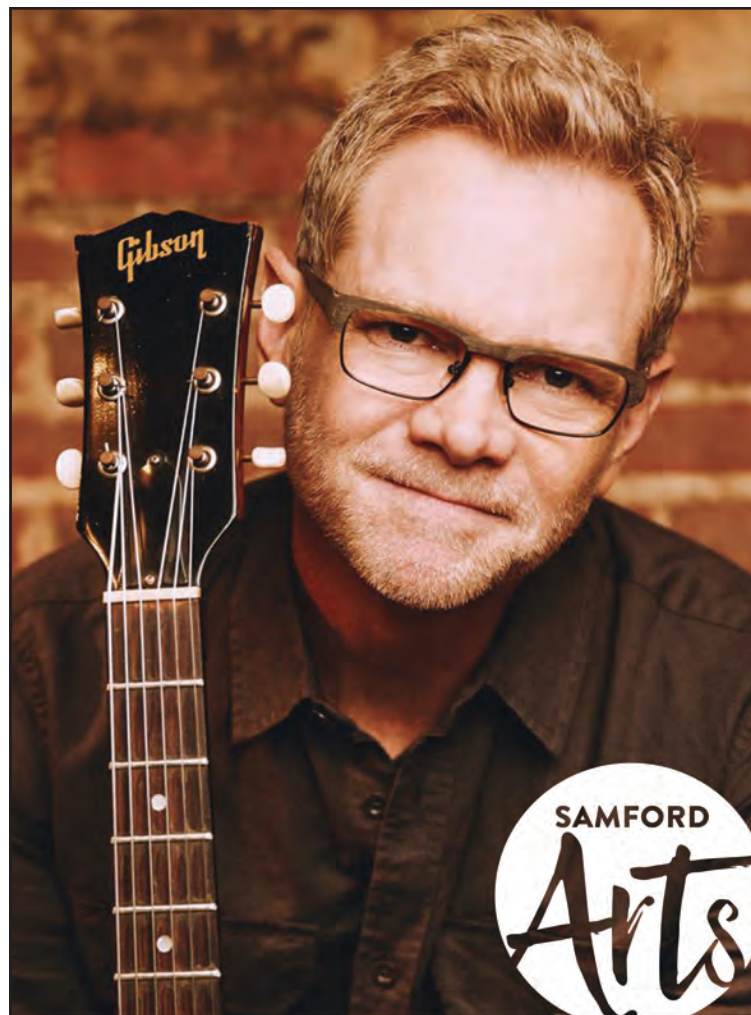
### ERLC releases Bible study on religious liberty

NASHVILLE — Two Southern Baptist entities have combined efforts to produce a small group study on religious liberty at a time when fundamental freedom appears to be both threatened and misunderstood in the United States.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and LifeWay Christian Resources announced the release of the study, "Religious Liberty: How the Gospel Shapes Our First Freedom," on March 7. The curriculum's goal "is to equip churches to see religious liberty as it is — grounded in the gospel," said ERLC President Russell Moore.

"In an age when religious liberty is increasingly imperiled we all need to be reminded that religious liberty isn't a partisan political idea," Moore said. "It's a fundamental part of being made in the image of God and being created with a conscience that is answerable ultimately to Christ, not Caesar."

Each of the six lessons consists of a 60-minute group session, plus individual study, journaling and an article by a religious liberty expert. Each group session includes 15 to 20 minutes of video featuring pastors, scholars and other leaders commenting on religious freedom. (BP)



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Jay &amp; Katherine Wolf

## 'HE'S WITH THEM IN THEIR NIGHTMARE'

Photo by Alex Wolf

For more information  
about the camp, visit  
[hopehealscamp.org](http://hopehealscamp.org).

For more information about  
the Wolfs' story and ministry,  
visit [hopeheals.com](http://hopeheals.com).

# Camp to offer hope, community to families living with disabilities

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**E**ight and a half years ago Katherine Wolf was a healthy 26-year-old, pregnant with her first child, pursuing her career dreams in California with a bright future ahead.

And then she had a stroke that nearly killed her and changed everything.

"I wanted to tell a story of miraculous healing, of how things are coming up roses — but that's not my story," she said. "I'm still in the wheelchair. But I love testifying to the goodness of God in the midst of that."

And she and her husband, Jay, both Samford University graduates, say they love giving a voice to the voiceless — the 1 billion people living with disabilities worldwide.

Jay Wolf — whose father, also named Jay, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery — said, "It's the worst of the worst experiences in humanity, to live in a world that's not made for you. You feel so isolated and alone."

But God has given the couple so much grace, hope and community to bolster them up that they just want to give that back, he said. "We want people to know it's not the end of their story."

That's why they are launching Hope Heals Camp in June in Alabama — to "hope it forward," as they call it.

"We chose Alabama because my hometown is here and our college network is here but we also chose it because there is a huge need here," Jay Wolf said.

While 25 percent of the U.S. population has some sort of disability, Alabama came in higher at 32 percent, putting it in the top five states per capita, he said.

"It's heartbreaking to think that those with

disabilities have sort of an invisible quality," he said. "You're in the highest likelihood for unemployment, suicide, homelessness and abuse if you're in that segment of the population. We wanted to offer something unique for them."

Katherine Wolf agreed. "We want people to feel less alone and more loved by the Father. God is not giving up on them. He's with them in their nightmare."

At Hope Heals Camp people living with disabilities and their family members will be paired with companion families who can walk alongside them in their struggles, she said.

### 'Holding the hurts'

"We want them to have the deep privilege of being known and cared for, to have community surrounding them, lifting them up, encouraging them, holding the hurts that they feel," she said. "It's a deep communal feeling of, 'We're with you, we get it, it's isolating.'"

The idea for the camp grew out of the stories from the people Katherine Wolf met

as she has been in and out of hospitals and the way others have connected with her own story, she said.

"My eyes were opened to the reality of what severe disability on the outside of the body looks like and it's horrible," she said.

In her low moments she wondered if God had made a mistake keeping her alive.

"I wondered if things would be better if Jay could remarry or James could have a new mommy and things eventually wouldn't be so sad all the time and they would move on," she said. "But God spoke into that mess and God really told me through the power of His Word that He doesn't make mistakes ever."

And now the Wolfs are using their story to help others find comfort and purpose in their suffering. It has grown into a ministry and a book called "Hope Heals" that has sold more than 40,000 copies, and now it is expanding into Hope Heals Camp, which will be offered in two sessions (see sidebar, this page).

The opportunity for community is offered for both those with disabilities and

those without, Jay Wolf explained. Just as they invite people with disabilities and their families to come and be encouraged, they also need companion families to come to the camp as an opportunity to serve those who are suffering.

### 'A profound experience'

"For those with disabilities, there's the offer of companionship. For those who don't have a disability, there's the chance to learn from someone who has been through intense suffering and draw closer to Christ in a powerful way," he said. "It's a unique opportunity to volunteer and come alongside another family. It will be a profound experience."

The Wolfs also are seeking people willing to scholarship camp participants for the sessions, he said.

Volunteers from Samford's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing in Birmingham also will be on hand for both camp sessions to speak to the medical concerns of campers.

It's a much-needed ministry, Jay Wolf's father said.

"Ministry to disabled people is one of the most overlooked areas in the Church today," Pastor Jay Wolf said. "The reality is, disability ministry probably wouldn't be on Jay and Katherine's radar if she had never suffered this stroke and become a recipient of disability ministry."

The Gospels show "stunning example after example" of Jesus engaging people who are lost, hurt and forgotten, he said.

"Jay and Katherine now belong to that unseen population and have decided to follow Jesus' example in helping the hopeless. We pray that this camp is a conduit of Christ-created community, hope, peace and healing that lives far beyond the five days of the event." ¶

**Nearly 32 percent of Alabama's population is living with some sort of disability. That's why there's Hope Heals Camp.**

### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ▶ While the two June camps are full, there is still a need for companions to serve the families who will be participating.

**June 19–23**  
Camp ASCCA (near Montgomery)  
With musical guest Sara Groves

**June 26–30**  
Camp McDowell (near Birmingham)  
With musical guest Sandra McCracken

- ▶ Other opportunities include serving as a companion family or providing a scholarship for someone to participate in a future camp.

(Compiled by Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Strong Tower

# EVERY tribe, tongue and nation

## Montgomery-area church wants ‘people to feel there’s beauty in diversity’

By Neisha Roberts  
The Alabama Baptist

**W**e shop in diverse places. We live in diverse neighborhoods. We work in diverse places.” It’s because of these circumstances that Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, thinks it’s actually “harder for Christians to be segregated than it is to be together.”

But on Sunday morning “we somehow find ourselves ... in a place where everybody looks like us and lives like us,” Jones said. “We kind of have to cut off all of our connections in our lives” to go to a church like that.

That’s why the Montgomery-area church Jones helped plant was founded on the fact that the blood of Christ on the cross tore down the dividing walls of hostility (see Eph. 2:11–12). From the beginning, Strong Tower leadership didn’t “see ‘multicultural’ as a thing to be manufactured but saw it as an outworking of what Jesus did on the cross,” Jones said. “It takes the pressure off of trying to engineer it. We wholeheartedly believe that Christ died for a group of people to be family — from every tribe, tongue and nation.”

Strong Tower, which was voted into the Montgomery Baptist Association in 2015, now sees about 150 gather every Sunday morning with about 45 percent African-American, 45 percent white and 10 percent Latino.

However, to be multicultural does take intentionality, Jones said. The team that planted Strong Tower was diverse at every level, which then funneled into the congregation, he said.

The music and culture of worship also has to be inclusive, Jones said.

“You cannot say you want to be multicultural and all your music is white or all your music is black. We intentionally sing hymns, gospel and contemporary because we want people to feel that there’s beauty in diversity. There’s something beautiful from every culture.”

But being multicultural is not the only “unique” thing about Strong Tower.

Washington Park, an area just south of the intersection of Interstates 65 and 85, is unique in that the neighborhood itself is considered 70 percent unreached, according to Jones. Its residents see a median income of \$10,000 and 39 percent of residents over age 18 do not have a high school diploma.

“All those things can create an atmosphere of chaos and a different culture of how they deal with problems,” said

Jones, noting that problems are often addressed through violence and drugs to “cope with the hopelessness.”

A man was murdered in Washington Park the very weekend that Jones and his wife were on their first vision trip there. They’d traveled from California to see if Washington Park was where God was leading.

“As we were praying about what to do we realized, ‘Why would we not come here to help? There is such a huge need,’” Jones said. Soon after that trip Jones and his wife and five children moved to Washington Park.

That was five years ago.

Growing from 25 to 150, Strong Tower has seen an explosion of growth in the last 18 months. And it’s not because the church building is aesthetically pleasing, Jones said. Strong Tower meets in a partially finished gym owned by the ministry Common

Ground Montgomery.

“We don’t have a fancy building but we do preach the Bible.”

In November 2016, nine people were baptized at Strong Tower and since then there have been two or three new believers trusting in their Savior every month, Jones said.

### Making outreach a priority

When it comes to missions, Strong Tower makes outreach a priority. Members of the church have taken three missions trips to Thailand, as well as serving in Africa, Haiti, Ecuador, New York and Clarkston, Georgia.

Locally the church has what they call “missional com-

munities” — small group Bible studies held in a member’s home. Sunday School classes also started in early March.

On April 29 the church will host a free medical clinic with a North American Mission Board mobile clinic offering several health screenings onsite.

“We’re always trying to figure out ways to serve our community. I think people appreciate the church because we’re very active.”

State missionary Lamar Duke, who works closely with church planters for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said, “It’s pretty exciting to watch what God is doing in a community that needed the Lord.”

Duke, who’s visited Strong Tower a few times, described the church service as a “heavenly experience.”

“In Revelations it talks about every tribe, tongue and nation so Strong Tower is kind of like heaven practice,” said Duke, noting that the way Jones leads the congregation is exemplary. “He has a lot of people doing a lot of different things and lets others take ownership and responsibility for their acts of service.”

### ‘A great leader’

Jones, who went through SBOM’s church planting assessment process, three-day church planting boot camp and coaching for a year, is “a great leader,” Duke said. And all SBOM resources made available to church planters like Jones are made possible “by gifts from Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.”

As Jones and church leadership look to the future, they see loads of possibilities and have a robust five-year plan in place for Strong Tower that includes:

- ▶ Building a multipurpose facility on 13 acres of land they purchased (with help from an SBOM grant).
- ▶ Hosting an extension site of a job-training program already in place at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.
- ▶ Beginning an after-school program to reach the 2,000 kids in a three-mile radius around the property.
- ▶ Planting a church.

Jones said, “We see the budding in all of these things. Someone in our church has already said they want to be a church planter.”

So what has produced all this growth and progress at Strong Tower, the first church Jones has ever served as pastor?

That’s simple, Jones said. “I think the Lord is just blessing it ... and has His hand on it.”



Photo courtesy of Strong Tower

Pastor Terrence Jones of Strong Tower at Washington Park speaks to the congregation.



# Publishing a paper

## Costs, quality and efficiency consistent challenge for *TAB*

By Elizabeth Wells  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Any newspaper or periodical, including *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*), is concerned with presentation, size and costs. And since the early days of publishing there has been a constant tension between sticking with the current equipment and moving to the latest technology.

When is acceptable quality not good enough? When is it time to evaluate the options? When does efficiency not only compete with tradition but win out? And from where does the money come?

Until 1919, *TAB* was independently owned and operated. Editors were totally responsible for content, finances and printing the paper. As editors and circumstances changed through the years so did *TAB*'s name and the companies that printed it.

When the paper was launched in 1843, Love and Dykous, printers of the *Marion Herald*, published the four-page *TAB* "on imperial sheet of the best quality with fair



123rf.com

type." However, citing editorial differences, the owners soon moved to *The Marion Telegraph*.

In January 1850 editor A.W. Chambliss announced his new printer had New York printing materials, making the *Alabama Baptist Advocate* "equal to any religious periodical in the nation." With circulation expansion to additional states, he purchased a second publication and combined the two to launch *The South Western Baptist* in July.

In 1852 a stock company

bought the paper, named Samuel Henderson editor and moved the printing to J.J. and T.F. Martin in Montgomery. Martin improved his press and requested more money, but the stock company purchased its own press and moved operations to Tuskegee.

While *TAB* survived the Civil War only to be closed by federal troops, Henderson would not let the newspaper die. He moved it temporarily to Atlanta, home of the Franklin Printing House, one of the South's most extensive publishing houses. On Jan. 6, 1866, the *Christian Index* and *South Western Baptist* appeared noting Henderson as Alabama editor. Eventually returning to Marion, the four-page *Alabama Baptist*, edited by Winkler and Renfro, came out March 17, 1874.

Jon West, pastor and owner of Jon. L. West & Co. Publishers in Selma, bought the paper in 1877. Even though the building was destroyed by fire Dec. 1 of that year, West was determined.

He reported: "Monday morning after its destruction on Saturday, we took charge of its ashes — without money, without a subscription list, without a type or a lead or a column rule, determined if possible to save it for the denomination.

"We immediately purchased for it a new outfit of type and everything necessary for its publication. Within a month we issued it in its dress from Selma. We assumed

and bore all the loss incident to the fire."

For seven years West published the newspaper which had its own type presses and materials but any profits came from other printing and binding jobs. He reported to the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC), "I need the denomination to extend patronage to enable me a reasonable support for me and my family."

In the July 30, 1884, issue, readers learned that Major John G. Harris of Livingston had bought the paper. Through the years, Harris, senior editor and owner, had many associates — C.W. Hare, James C. Pope and J.M. Dewberry — who served as editors, business managers and also owned Alabama Printing Company. When they mutually terminated the printing agreement, Harris moved the paper to Montgomery.

And readers got a surprise in January 1901 when they received the *Alabama Baptist* printed on singed paper.

Harris explained that "on Dec. 24, fire broke out in the adjoining building and in spite of the efforts of the fire department, much property was destroyed. We are figuring a new outfit and hope the paper will soon appear in an entirely new dress."

On Jan. 17, 1902, subscribers received *The Southern and Alabama Baptist*, a 16-page paper edited by Frank Willis Barnett and printed in Birmingham.

The front page noted Barnett had purchased and merged three newspapers: *Alabama Baptist*, *Baptist Evangel* (Birmingham) and *Baptist Herald* (Florida).

In March 1902 the paper had new Birmingham offices and was being printed by Leslie Printing and Publishing Company.

By 1905, Barnett contracted with Advance Publishing com-

pany, the "most up-to-date printing plant in Alabama." The new type, press and paper with "brand new dress" cost about \$10,000 and "well worth the money," he said. It enabled him to increase content without adding pages or cost.

Additionally the 9,000-name subscription list required 1,000 pounds of lead to set 110 columns of type. Not available in Birmingham, the lead order was shipped from Philadelphia and took the machine men two weeks to set up the type, checking each subscription label for correct expiration information.

When circulation reached 10,000, Barnett contracted with Agricola and Crouch, the only exclusive newspaper publishing plant in Alabama. The change insured Tuesday printing and more prompt mail delivery. As-

suming the business manager's job, Barnett used those funds to order additional illustrations.

Barnett sold the paper to ABSC in 1918. In his farewell Jan. 23, 1919, Barnett, like his predecessors, answered the question, "How do you publish *The Alabama Baptist*?"

"It seems funny that I am no longer the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, for having given 17 of the best years of my life to it. I had grown to feel that it was a part of me. For years its columns and my pen and voice were at the call of my people without money and without price. Holding it as a sacred trust I felt that the hour had come for me to step aside and give others a chance to make it more useful."

P.S., Barnett wrote, "The first thing I did after selling the paper was to fork over \$5 for a three-year subscription. No one ought to get it free but every head of a Baptist family ought to take it and pay for it." ✠

**"The first thing I did after selling the paper was to fork over \$5 for a three-year subscription."**

**Frank Willis Barnett  
TAB owner, 1902-1918**



**Retired Pastor Max Youngblood recommends**

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Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

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# Education & RELIGION

## Region, religion matter when it comes to level of education, according to Pew survey

By **Martha Simmons**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**N**early 1 in 5 adults worldwide has no formal schooling, according to a recent Pew Research Center study. What does that have to do with religion? Plenty.

The global demographic study explored educational attainment levels and their relationship to major religious groups and reported in December 2016 that “Jews are more highly educated than any other major religious group around the world, while Muslims and Hindus tend to have the fewest years of formal schooling.”

At 13.4 years, Jews’ level of formal schooling is nearly double that of 7.7 years achieved by the average adult worldwide. Christians around the globe average 9.3 years, religiously unaffiliated 8.8 years, Buddhists 7.9 years, Muslims and Hindus 5.6 years.

“These gaps in educational attainment are partly a function of where religious groups are concentrated throughout the world,” Pew researchers said. “For instance the vast majority of the world’s Jews live

in the United States and Israel — two economically developed countries with high levels of education overall. And low levels of attainment among Hindus reflect the fact that 98 percent of Hindu adults live in the developing countries of India, Nepal and Bangladesh.”

### Marked differences

Pew researchers noted, however, that there also are marked differences in educational attainment among religious groups living in some regions or countries. “In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Christians generally have higher average levels of education than Muslims,” researchers found. “Some social scientists have attributed this gap primarily to historical factors, including missionary activity during colonial times.”

In the U.S. religious minorities are more likely to have college degrees than the Christian majority, researchers said. Pew reports these percentages of U.S. groups who possess a higher education:

- Hindus — 96 percent
- Jews — 75 percent
- Muslims — 54 percent
- Buddhists — 53 percent
- Religiously unaffiliated — 44 percent
- Christians — 36 percent

Baptist educator Chris McCaghren cautioned against viewing such statistics in iso-

lation without contemplating all the factors related to achievement.

“It’s a false narrative to say that one group in the U.S. is less educated than other groups,” said McCaghren, vice president of academic affairs at the University of Mobile (UM).

It is not surprising that a comparatively much smaller number of people in minority religious groups, accustomed to overcoming financial, logistical and other barriers, might achieve education at a higher rate than the much larger population of U.S. Christians, McCaghren suggested. “There are always going to be confounding variables” not reflected in the data, he said.

Still there is much to celebrate in the achievement numbers reported by Pew.

“It is a blessing to see the gender gap is closing worldwide,” McCaghren said. Women’s advances in higher education in the U.S. is particularly reflected in enrollment numbers at UM, where women outnumber men at a rate of 65 percent to 35 percent.

According to Pew’s study, drawing on census and survey data from 151 countries, large gender gaps in educational attainment remain within some major world religions. “For example Muslim women around the globe have an average of 4.9 years of schooling, compared with 6.4 years among Muslim men. And formal education is especially low among Hindu women, who have 4.2 years of schooling on average, compared with 6.9 years among Hindu men.”

But even those gender gaps are narrowing over time, Pew reports, and Jews, Christians and religiously unaffiliated adults have seen reversals in the gender gap in many areas throughout the world with women equal to or outpacing men in college enrollment.

Both religion and region matter when it comes to schooling, Pew researchers reported.

“Christians have remained fairly stable at the global level in their overall educational attainment over three generations. But their attainment varies considerably by region. As the largest of the world’s major religious groups (numbering about 2.2 billion overall

including children as of 2010), Christians also are the most widely dispersed faith group with hundreds of millions of adherents in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Christians in Europe and North America tend to be much more highly educated than those in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, although African Christians are making rapid educational

gains across generations.”

McCaghren sees these statistics as a call to action.

“If we think of higher education as a missions field, there’s a lot of global opportunity,” McCaghren said. “Education, at least in my study of Baptist history, has always been integral to developing an infrastructure for the spreading of the gospel.

“We do the very same thing today that they did at Harvard in 1636, we just

have a broader emphasis,” he said. “Part of our mission here at University of Mobile, part of the mission at Samford University, part of the mission at Judson College, is to train folks up and to prepare them for Kingdom work, whether that be in the pulpit, on the missions field, leading worship on Sunday mornings or working with youth.”

### Heart knowledge

“We talk a lot about head transformation and heart transformation,” McCaghren said. “So we want to give them the knowledge to succeed in any variety of careers that they choose, but it’s that heart knowledge, that gospel transformation that we really look at as our most important task here at University of Mobile. We take that calling very seriously.

“In terms of preparing folks to go out and reach the four corners of the globe,” he said, “we will begin to have an increased emphasis on international programs, a chance for students to interact with some of these groups and cultures that are mentioned in their studies and more emphasis on that kind of cultural engagement in our curriculum as well.

“Education is ingrained in who we are as Baptists,” McCaghren said. “And it has been throughout our entire history.”



Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**Focus  
on

ONE MISSION

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist  
State Board of Missions | (800) 264-1224 | alsbom.org

# IS REVIVAL OUTDATED?

Revival – personal revival – is needed in our lives so that we can be obedient to our Lord.

When we use the word “revival,” we have in the past thought of a series of worship services focusing on spiritual growth and outreach. That is an appropriate usage of the word revival, but it is not the exclusive one.

Recently, Jamie Baldwin, a state missionary, brought to my attention an article I wrote while serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa. The focus of the



By Rick Lance  
State Missionary

piece was upon personal revival which can, of course, lead to a corporate one.

In this feature, I simply outlined five ways we can better come to a place of revival in our personal lives as followers of Christ.

- ❶ **Acknowledge Your Spiritual Need.** “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8 (NKJV)
- ❷ **Confess Your Sins and Accept God’s Pardon.** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

- ❸ **Spend Time Daily in God’s Word.** “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11 (NKJV)



- ❹ **Communicate with the Lord in Prayer.** “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)
- ❺ **Submit to the Lord and Resist Temptation.** “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” James 4:7 (NKJV)

These words may have been written 30 years ago, but they are not out of date. Revival – personal revival – is needed in our lives so that we can be obedient to our Lord and, therefore, become

faithful followers who take the Word of God seriously. My prayer is for personal revival! I need to be revived in spirit more than ever.

My prayer also is that Alabama Baptists will experience a true revival which will be contagious and go viral for the glory of God!

This article was originally published online at [RickLance.com](http://RickLance.com).

Matthew 16:24



STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS, 2001 E. SOUTH BLVD. IN MONTGOMERY

**Tuesday, May 2, 10 am - 3:30 pm** » 9:30 - 10 – Check-in and refreshments

Meet your state missionaries » Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission

» Spouses welcome » Lunch provided

**Ideal for** pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their position, or who have never attended a Get Acquainted Day

Register by calling or emailing Sheila Rikerd, **1-800-264-1225, ext. 249**, or **(334) 613-2249**, [srikerd@alsbom.org](mailto:srikerd@alsbom.org), or go online to [alsbom.org/gad](http://alsbom.org/gad).



## Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

# THANK YOU, ALABAMA BAPTISTS!

The inaugural  
Myers-Mallory  
State Missions Offering  
resulted in more than  
\$956,000 given for  
Great Commission  
Ministries!

*Be watching for 2017  
materials, available this  
June.*



Myers-Mallory.org

## Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



MORRISON

As a baby boomer, I had the privilege of experiencing childhood and adolescence in the Bible Belt. Circlewood Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa played a massive role in providing a good foundation in faith and service.



My parents, Luther and Mattie, modeled the Christian life for their family, served in the church and gave of their time, treasures and talents. They believed in giving and continue to do so today. They taught me to do the same.

The value of the Cooperative Program was emphasized at Circlewood because our church could not send international or North American missionaries, train ministers in six seminaries, provide college education

at three state colleges and minister through our state convention as a single church. The cooperative efforts with thousands of sister churches provided the most effective avenue for our single church to accomplish those ministries and battle the darkness.

During my 36 years in ministry, I have been blessed to serve in churches that support the Cooperative Program and teach the value of cooperating with sister Southern Baptist churches. I have benefited from a seminary education; training through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; networking with our state, international and North American missionaries; and serving as a conference presenter in a variety of state-sponsored training events.

The Cooperative Program does all of this and more. There is no better plan for cooperative ministry and Kingdom work. The Cooperative Program allows Southern Baptists to fulfill the Great Commission and impact lives just as my life was impacted by my family, my home church and the ministries provided through the Cooperative Program.

Every church should teach and model the value of the Cooperative Program in the church culture of today.

**Larry Morrison,**  
*minister of education  
and administration at  
First Baptist Church of  
Sylacauga, serves as a  
trustee for the Alabama  
Baptist State Board of  
Missions.*

## North Regional Sunday School & Discipleship Leader Training

↔  
↓  
Saturday, August 26, 2017  
8 a.m.-noon  
Lindsay Lane Baptist Church  
1300 Lindsay Lane South, Athens

Age-graded leadership training for teachers and workers in Sunday School and Discipleship, as well as training for staff members, Sunday School/Discipleship directors and general leaders will be available. Each leader will have the opportunity to attend as many as three conferences with multiple topics from which to choose.

### Registration:

alsbom.org/north  
You will also find a complete list of speakers, topics and schedules on this web page at least six weeks prior to the event.

### Price:

Early registration is \$5 per person if registered by August 24. Registration received after August 24 will be \$10 per person.

### For more information,

please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, [jbaldwin@alsbom.org](mailto:jbaldwin@alsbom.org).



## FOCUS on One Mission



### ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IN CHURCH PLANTING IS THAT WE HAVE NUMEROUS "MOTHERLESS" DAUGHTER CHURCHES OUT THERE.

We have all heard the stories of abandoned babies on the doorsteps of fire departments, hospitals or even churches. We know what abandonment does for a child.

New church starts need the nurturing of a "mother church" to grow as healthy as possible in their formative years.

Churches Planting Churches Training is designed to examine the

values underlying the rationale for becoming a sending/mother church.

The six steps necessary to make this a reality will be taught in detail. This training is designed for a church that is seeking to learn how to start a new church or churches from the "sending" church perspective.

Many people are fearful of the whole idea of planting a church because they have no idea as to how they would go about it. Information dispels anxiety.

The next opportunity to take advantage of this training is Friday and Saturday, **April 28-29, 2017**, at First Baptist Church, 1203 W. Pushmataha St., Butler, in Choctaw Association in west Alabama.

Sessions will begin on

Friday, 6-8:30 p.m. and conclude on Saturday, 8-4 p.m. The cost for the two-day training is \$25.

Registration is required. Register at: [plantalabama.org/event/churches-planting-churches-training-butler/](http://plantalabama.org/event/churches-planting-churches-training-butler/)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist, at **1-800-264-1225, ext. 332**, or **(334) 613-2332**, [lduke@alsbom.org](mailto:lduke@alsbom.org)

By Lamar Duke  
State Missionary



ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

## LEGAL ISSUES FOR CHURCHES

**Tuesday, April 18, 2017** ☞ 9:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

State Board of Missions, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

Churches are exposed to the risk of being sued. Various requirements are imposed on us by the state and federal governments, and churches sometimes fail to comply. Churches have been hit with judgments — some multi-million dollar judgments. Churches have been subjected to government intrusion into their internal dealings. The main reason this happens is that church leaders were operating with no knowledge of the legal requirements. This conference deals directly with what can be done to protect ourselves.

**COST INCLUDING LUNCH AND MATERIALS:** \$15 (\$25 after April 11)

**LEADER:** Jim Swedenburg

**REGISTRATION:** [alsbom.org/event/legal-issues-for-churches/](http://alsbom.org/event/legal-issues-for-churches/)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg at **1-800-264-1225, ext. 283**, or **(334) 613-2283**, [jswedenburg@alsbom.org](mailto:jswedenburg@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

# SPRING

**Saturday  
May 20, 2017**

First Baptist Church, 305 S. Perry St.,  
Montgomery

## CELEBRATION

**SpringRing** is a handbell gathering workshop. We meet, greet and ring together with handbell favorites of the groups participating. Each leader of the group (can appoint a leader) will conduct the piece that you choose for the whole group. We will learn new music, perfect it together and then end our day with a Worship Ring Celebration.

**REGISTER ONLINE AT [ALSBOM.ORG/SPRINGRING](http://ALSBOM.ORG/SPRINGRING)**

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland, **1.800.264.1225, ext. 279**, or **(334) 613.2279**, [scleveland@alsbom.org](mailto:scleveland@alsbom.org).

**JULY 7-8, 2017  
SHOCCO SPRINGS**

An  
*Interactive  
Leadership  
Conference*



**Cost:** \$125 per person (3-4 people per room), \$20 deposit per person due at registration.

**BEST PRICE DEADLINE:** MAY 11

**Registration:** [alsbom.org/children-summit](http://alsbom.org/children-summit)

**A training event for children's choir leaders:**

- Experience the fun of teaching music to any age preschooler or child.
- Discover new ways to make choir or music time a favorite for kids.
- Watch the love for worship come alive.
- Mingle with others in similar situations.
- Learn to use games and toys to add more excitement in your music time.
- Hands-on learning and fun in children's choirs.
- Great conference for day care workers.
- Can be used for CEU credits!



**Cost includes** interactive sessions from top-notch clinicians, breakout times to interact with other choir workers, lodging, three meals, "munch & mingle" fellowship, Pine Lake Music vendor to purchase whatever needs you might have in your choir, and much more.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, [scleveland@alsbom.org](mailto:scleveland@alsbom.org).



**A CHURCH REVITALIZATION  
Event with Johnny Hunt**

**Tuesday, May 9, 2017,  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.**

Lindsay Lane Baptist Church,  
1300 Lindsay Lane South,  
Athens

**Speaker:** Johnny Hunt

**Cost:** \$20

**Registration:** [alsbom.org/revitalizationevent](http://alsbom.org/revitalizationevent)

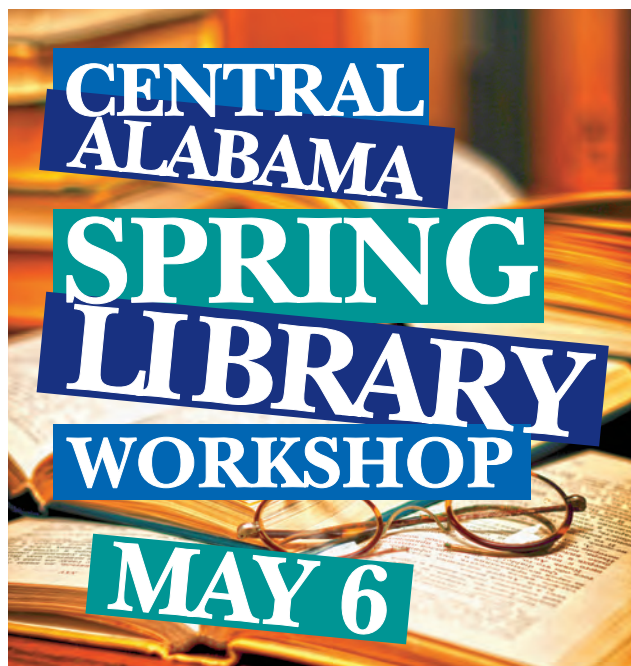
A one-day event on church revitalization under the leadership of Johnny Hunt. The objective is to see each church striving toward becoming the best and most it can be. THERE WILL BE TWO



BREAKOUT SESSIONS: "Moving Beyond the Walls" and "Leadership That Lasts."

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Mike Jackson, ext. 210, or (334) 613-2210, or Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218, [ddickey@alsbom.org](mailto:ddickey@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



**EASTMONT BAPTIST CHURCH,  
4505 ATLANTA HWY., MONTGOMERY**

**Theme:** Building Blocks for Ministry

Classes will be offered in all areas of library work. Anyone who is involved in any type of library work is invited. This includes church, Christian school, public school or private school and even public library. The information provided will help your library grow.

**The cost will be** \$5 per person to help with the cost of the noon meal. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the workshop ends at 3:30 p.m. Swap table will be available.

To register or for other information, please contact Marty Woodall at (334) 569-3854 or [martybooks1@juno.com](mailto:martybooks1@juno.com).

## SPEAK: VOICE OF INFLUENCE

**SPEAK** (formerly the Youth Evangelism Conference) is an annual event for youth ministries across Alabama. The church has a voice. Will you use it?

**MESSAGES:** Acton Bowen, Rick Burgess, Josh Holland

**WORSHIP:** Rush of Fools

**SPOKEN WORD:** Shantrice Coleman

**COST:** \$30 per person (includes a t-shirt if you register by 4/30)

**ONLINE INFO:** [speak.ymlink.org](http://speak.ymlink.org)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Scooter Kellum at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 280, or (334) 613-2280, [skellum@alsbom.org](mailto:skellum@alsbom.org).



**JULY 21-22**  
VAUGHN FOREST CHURCH  
8660 VAUGHN RD.,  
MONTGOMERY

# speak

Voice of Influence

# Senior Adult Evangelism Conference

First Baptist Church, 2209 Lakeshore Dr., Birmingham  
Monday • May 1, 2017 • 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
*No registration or admission charge (lunch is on your own).*

Speakers



Dan Garland

Junior Hill



Junior Hill

Mike Shaw



Mike Shaw

For further information, please contact Ministry Assistant Lori McGough at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 245, or (334) 613-2245, [lmcgough@alsbom.org](mailto:lmcgough@alsbom.org)

Worship



Squire Parsons

Alabama Baptist State Convention  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS  
*This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program*

# Missions Adventure Camp at WorldSong

## WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs

Open to girls completing grades K-12 and boys completing grades 2-6.

DON'T MISS OUT ON MISSIONS ADVENTURE CAMP (MAC) THIS SUMMER AT WORLDSONG! IT'S A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE ROLLED IN WITH A WHOLE LOT OF FUN!

**Online:** [WorldSongRetreat.com](http://WorldSongRetreat.com)  
For more information, please contact Crystal Akers at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, [cakers@alsbom.org](mailto:cakers@alsbom.org).

**MAC FOR GIRLS**  
(girls completing grades 2-6)  
Early Bird Rate: \$220/person  
After **May 1:** \$240/person  
**June 19-23, June 26-30, July 17-21**

**MAC FOR TEEN GIRLS**  
(girls completing grades 7-12)  
Early Bird Rate: \$220/person  
After **May 1:** \$240/person  
**June 19-23, July 17-21**

**EXTREME MAC FOR TEEN GIRLS**  
(girls completing grades 7-12)  
Early Bird Rate: \$120/person  
After **May 1:** \$140/person  
**June 12-14**

**MAC FOR CITs\***  
(girls completing grades 9-12)  
Early Bird Rate: \$220/person  
After **May 1:** \$240/person  
**June 26-30**

**MINI MAC FOR GIRLS**  
(girls completing grades 2-6)  
Early Bird Rate: \$120/person  
After **May 1:** \$140/person  
**June 12-14**

**MAC FOR GIRLS & BOYS**  
(coeds completing grades 2-6)  
Early Bird Rate: \$220/person  
After **May 1:** \$240/person  
**June 5-9, July 10-14**

**MOM & ME**  
(girls completing grades 2-6)  
Early Bird Rate: \$120/person  
After **May 1:** \$140/person  
**June 15-17**

**MOM & ME LITTLE**  
(girls completing grades K-3)  
Early Bird Rate: \$65/person  
After **May 1:** \$75/person  
**June 23-24**

\*CITs are Cabin leaders In Training. Space is limited in this program.



# INTER link

Interlink Youth Ministers Retreat ☞ April 27-29, 2017, GULF SHORES BEACH RETREAT

Come and worship with us in a distraction-free environment. Learn from other men and women serving in youth ministry. Leave healthier, energized and more driven to make disciples in ministry.

**Cost:** \$50 (includes two nights' lodging and all meals) ☞ **Online Info:** [ymlink.org](http://ymlink.org)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Scooter Kellum at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 280, or (334) 613-2280, [skellum@alsbom.org](mailto:skellum@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

## TRAINING FOR CHURCH LEADERS

### THE SUMMIT

**Shocco Springs**  
**August 4-5, 2017**  
**Register online:**  
**[shoccosprings.org](http://shoccosprings.org) or**  
**call 1.800.280.1105**

Maybe you have been teaching Sunday School, facilitating a discipleship class, leading a missions study, or working with a men's, women's, singles, seniors, children's, preschool or other group in your church for years.

Maybe you are a long-time pastor or have served on a church staff for quite a while. Maybe you feel like

there's nothing new to learn. Really?

Well, several people who came to **The Summit: For Church Leaders at Shocco Springs** in August 2016 told us that so much training is offered at this event that they couldn't take in all the sessions in which they would like to participate. That's a great problem to have!

Here are some of the

comments participants wrote on their evaluation forms:

- "The course selection was so diverse and informative. Fantastic opportunity for any staff or lay person."
- "As a leader, I can always learn more to become a better leader. When I attend The Summit, I am always encouraged and challenged."

- "I always learn new concepts, and I am always reminded of proven and valuable concepts I have neglected. Excellent!"
- "The only problem was having to choose from so many good conferences."

There are always new things to learn, so whether you have extensive experience as a church leader or none, begin

making plans now to come to **The Summit: For Church Leaders at Shocco Springs, Friday and Saturday, August 4-5, 2017.**

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, [jbaldwin@alsbom.org](mailto:jbaldwin@alsbom.org).

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REGISTRATION/OTHER INFO: [mixmusiccamp.org](http://mixmusiccamp.org)

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, [cparrish@alsbom.org](mailto:cparrish@alsbom.org).

Watch our new promo video at [mixmusiccamp.org](http://mixmusiccamp.org)



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 BE WITH YOU**

**REQUIRED ONLINE REGISTRATION:  
 ALSBOM.ORG/BIBLEDRILL**

**2017 REGIONAL BIBLE DRILLS**

**North:**

East Highland Baptist Church, Hartselle,  
 April 20 ~ Sign-in begins at 3:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 4 p.m.

**South East:**

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan,  
 April 20 ~ Sign-in begins at 3:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 4 p.m.

**North Central:**

Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham,  
 April 23 ~ Sign-in begins at 1:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 2 p.m.

**South Central:**

Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery,  
 April 23 ~ Sign-in begins at 1:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 2 p.m.

**South West:**

College Park Baptist Church, Mobile,  
 April 24 ~ Sign-in begins at 3:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 4 p.m.

**West Central:**

First Baptist Church, Livingston, April 24  
 Sign-in begins at 3:30 p.m.; drills begin  
 at 4 p.m.

**North East:**

Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Alexandria,  
 April 25 ~ Sign-in begins at 3:30 p.m.;  
 drills begin at 4 p.m.

**2017 STATE BIBLE DRILL AND SPEAKERS  
 TOURNAMENT**

First Baptist Church, Montgomery, April 29  
 Sign-in begins at 12:30 p.m.; drills begin  
 at 1 p.m.

*For more information, please contact Ministry  
 Assistant Julie Smith at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 255,  
 or (334) 613-2255, jsmith@alsbom.org.*



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**Northwest Alabama-Florence** ~~~~~  
 Earle Trent Assembly

July 17-19, 3rd-6th grade Boys Camp (\$100 per person)  
 July 17-19, 1st-3rd grade Boys & Dad Camp (\$150 per pair)

**Northeast Alabama-Guntersville** ~~~~~  
 Marshall Baptist Retreat Center

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 July 20-22, 1st-3rd grade Boys & Dad Camp (\$150 per pair)

**Central Alabama-Cook Springs** ~~~~~  
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 July 24-26, 7th-12th grade Boys Camp (\$100 per person)  
 July 27-29, 1st-3rd grade Boys & Dad or Mom Camp  
 (\$150 per pair)

*For more information go to [alsbom.org/boyscamp](http://alsbom.org/boyscamp) or contact  
 Ministry Assistant Monica Thompson at (334) 613-2227,  
 mthompson@alsbom.org.*

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**Rick Lance**

*Executive Director*

*Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions*

Visit [alsbom.org/ministrysafe](http://alsbom.org/ministrysafe) for updated information and to register.

Questions? Contact Ministry Assistant Nancy Cornett at 334-613-2208 or [ncornett@alsbom.org](mailto:ncornett@alsbom.org).



The MinistrySafe Workshop will equip you with an awareness, understanding, tools and strategies needed to help protect children from sexual abuse in churches and protect churches through policy and procedure development.

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as you go



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Soteriology

# Salvation as Redemption

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

Referring to Christ, Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood.” In a similar way, 1 Peter 1:18–19 speaks to believers as God’s children to remind us “that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Christ.”

Salvation as redemption was promised by God through the prophet Isaiah, saying, “The Redeemer will come to Zion” (Isa. 59:20). Hebrews 9:12 expresses the fulfillment of that promise by saying of Christ, “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” When the Bible speaks to us of salvation in terms of a Redeemer who wrought our redemption by His sacrifice, it presupposes a spiritual plight of bondage or slavery from which condition emancipation must take place.

## Sin’s bondage

This spiritual bondage is presented to us in the Bible as enslavement both to sin and to Satan. As to sin’s bondage, Jesus put it this way, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (John 8:34). Romans 6 refers to slavery of sin in several ways. First, the newness of life that Christ brings has one effect: “that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (v. 6). Then we read that God’s saving grace has as one goal that “sin shall not have dominion over you” (v. 14). Finally gratitude for salvation is expressed in these words, “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin” now having obeyed the gospel, we have “been set free from sin” (v. 17, 18). With a change in terminology 2 Peter 2:19 sets forth the same idea about bondage to sin when referring to false teachers who speak about liberty while being “slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him

also he is brought into bondage.”

Not only is spiritual bondage spoken of as slavery to sin and corruption, it also is termed as captivity to Satan. According to 2 Timothy 2:26, persons standing in need of repentance need to “come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” In a similar way, 1 John 5:19 declares, “The whole world is under the control of the evil one.” One rationale for and result of Christ coming in the flesh is declared to be “that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage” (Heb. 2:14–15).

## Payment of ransom

The analogy of salvation as redemption from bondage suggests the idea of a ransom being paid. Jesus spoke of His purpose in dying in terms of a ransom paid, saying, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). As a result of the ransom, God’s word to His children is, “You are no longer a slave but a son” (Gal. 4:7).

At this point a word of caution is needed. The analogy of salvation as redemption cannot be pressed to identify to whom this divinely provided ransom was paid. The gospel simply leaves the truth of redemption with the idea that the necessary price was paid without pressing the analogy to the point of identifying a recipient for the payment. †

*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.*



# Youth Evangelism Conference reworking focus, has new name

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

In 2016, as 16-year-old Shantrice Coleman walked up to the microphone during the third session of the Youth Evangelism Conference, she got an unprompted standing ovation.

The theme of the conference was SPEAK, and Coleman had been delivering spoken-word challenges to the students throughout the weekend.

Those words connected with the audience, Scooter Kellum said.

“What she shared was her passion and her heartbeat, and the students bought into that,” said Kellum, youth ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of

Missions (SBOM). “What we want to do this year is encourage students to do exactly what she did — to use their gifts and talents to give the gospel a voice in their lives.”

In fact, Kellum and his team at SBOM are so passionate about it that they’re changing the whole name of the conference to SPEAK. In doing so they’re moving away from the idea of coming to a conference to get evangelized and moving toward the idea of mobilizing students to share the gospel in their everyday lives, Kellum said.

“We want to proclaim the gospel for the students who are there who don’t believe, but we also want to teach and train the students who come to have a voice for the gospel,” he said.

The theme of the 2017 SPEAK conference, set for July 21–22 at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, is “Voice of Influence,” and the speakers are: Acton Bowen, a Gadsden-based speaker and author; Rick Burgess, co-host of the na-

tionally syndicated Rick & Bubba Show, based in Birmingham; and Josh Holland, a church planter serving in New Orleans.

Bowen will be the opening speaker and will preach the gospel, but he also has a unique perspective as a political analyst, Kellum said.

Burgess also has a unique perspective as a well-known entertainer and radio host who has been given some unusual platforms to speak truth, Kellum said.

Burgess’ young son, Bronner, died in an accident in 2008, and his young adult daughter Brandi came out as bisexual earlier this year. Burgess is “one who tries to not lose focus of what his voice is — and that’s the truth of the

Word,” Kellum said.

And, Kellum said, he “can’t wait” to hear from Holland during the conference.

“He’s a practitioner,” he said. “You would be walking with him somewhere, and he’d disappear, and he’d be back sharing the gospel.”

## Living for God daily

Rush of Fools, a musical group from Alabama, will lead worship for the conference, and Coleman, who hails from New Orleans, will be back again this year with her trademark spoken word.

Mike Nuss, director of SBOM’s office of collegiate and student ministries, said that at the heart of SPEAK is a desire for students to come to faith in Christ and understand how to live for Him daily.

“Today’s students have an amazing ability and opportunity to be an influence in their world,” he said. “We hope SPEAK conference will serve as a catalyst for that kind of change.” †

**For more information  
or to register,  
visit [speak.ymlink.org](http://speak.ymlink.org).**

## Randolph Baptist Association builders



Photos courtesy of Randolph Baptist Association

Randolph Baptist Association applauds its team of dedicated, Spirit-led gentlemen who build ramps for those in need. The team consists of (l to r): James Kendrick, Tommy Bishop, Jack Gross, Arnold Rollins and Bernie McKeone.

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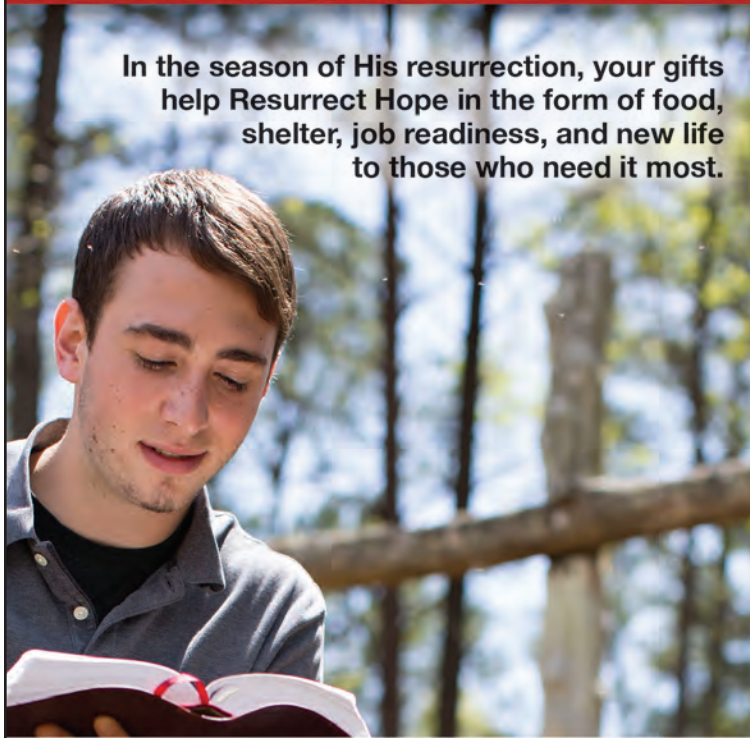
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## More energy needed in single adult ministry, study finds

Churches may want to take a hard look at what they're offering young, single adults — and then boost it.

"Many churches are built around a family model," said Roxanne Stone, editor and chief of the Barna Group, in remarks published with a survey about romance and relationships.

"(Churches) are most comfortable ministering to families and have developed an infrastructure to support couples and children," she said.

But research shows that a lot more energy needs to be expended on single adults.

### Increase in singles

While the percentage of people who are married or divorced has remained steady since 2000, singles have increased in that time by 27 percent to 30 percent of adults, Barna said in a study titled "The Trends Redefining Romance Today."

"This uptick is the big story here and it only gets more pronounced when looking closely at the trends within the different age groups," Barna said in a summary

of its research published online.

Marriage and divorce rates have remained somewhat steady since 2000. The percentage of adults who are married has remained at 52 percent. Those currently divorced hovers around 10 percent.

"Because of the reality of remarriage, the currently divorced rate does not take into account past divorce, which, when accounted for, brings the proportion of American adults who have ever been divorced to one-quarter," which is also steady since 2000, Barna said.

The trends are similar in some ways among people of faith — though there are some differences.

"The difference — and it is a significant one — is that practicing Christians and evangelicals are much more likely to be married than the average American," Barna reported.

Nearly 59 percent of practicing Christians are married — a ratio that has remained steady since 2000.

"This is even more pronounced among evangelicals, 67 percent of whom are married, 15 percent higher than the general population," researchers found.

But there is at least one significant statistic that both practicing Christians and evangelicals share with other Americans, Barna found.

"Both groups equal the rate of divorce (both historically and currently) of the general adult population."

### Waiting to marry

Along with these trends people are waiting longer to get married.

"A full 30 percent of Millennials aren't so sure about marriage at all — they express doubt as to whether or not they even believe in the conventional form of marriage," Stone said.

That can be a problem for congregations whose focus is on married couples and young families, she said. If "young adults are waiting longer to get married, the Church can't afford to simply hope they'll come back once they get married and settle down," she said.

"People's 20s are a critical part of their formation — people shape identity, habits and beliefs during those years. They are important years to be part of a church community." (BNG)

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## LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

Trump I doubt she'd ever come back and our ministry to her would either end or be severely curtailed. As I thought about that I realized the answer is not "politics" from the pulpit but "principles."

If we teach God's Word, the truth about issues such as abortion and the sanctity and char-

acter of marriage will be apparent. People who love God and know His Word should make their decisions accordingly. That's the goal I believe we should have for our churches.

Robert L. Van Elsberg  
Enterprise, Ala. ✠



## Crossover volunteers needed for evangelism crusade in June

The goal of Crossover 2017 is to "Engage Phoenix with the Gospel" through a partnership with Harvest America.

And North American Mission Board and Arizona Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders need the help of 4,000–6,000 Southern Baptists. Crossover efforts will take place prior to the June 13–14 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona.

Activities will center around a June 11 Harvest Crusade led by Greg Laurie.

Volunteers are needed to help churches conduct door-to-door visitation across Phoenix, engaging residents in gospel conversations and extending personal invitations to participate in the crusade.

For information, visit [harvest-america.com/crossover-events](http://harvest-america.com/crossover-events). (BP)

## 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](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org). Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### PASTOR

Saraland Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumés to: P.O. Box 749, Saraland, AL 36571 or contact Autrey Key at 251-675-6681.

#### PASTOR

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

#### PASTOR

Southside Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 1101 Cherry St., Talladega, AL 35160 ([www.southsidetalladega.org](http://www.southsidetalladega.org)).

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Hepzibah Baptist Church is seeking a full-time student pastor to join us in our mission of connecting people to God, to each other, to ministry and to the world. Please send resumés to: [hbcjobapp@gmail.com](mailto:hbcjobapp@gmail.com).

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama. Accepting resumés for full-time student pastor. Send to: [jnichols@chapelhillbc.org](mailto:jnichols@chapelhillbc.org) or to: Student Pastor Search Committee, 8790 Highway 43 N., Northport, AL 35473.

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Calera Baptist Church, Calera,

Alabama, is seeking a part-time student minister to lead/grow our student ministry of 45+ students. Email resumés to: [info@calerabaptist.org](mailto:info@calerabaptist.org).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

West Weaver Baptist Church, Weaver, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumés and inquiries to: [macj11@att.net](mailto:macj11@att.net).

#### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Silver Run Baptist Church, Seale, Alabama. Submit resumés to: Cheryl Boutwell at [justshert@gmail.com](mailto:justshert@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Community Baptist Church in Maylene, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational music minister/worship leader. Please send a resumé to: [CBSearchComm@gmail.com](mailto:CBSearchComm@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

County Line Baptist seeking bivocational music minister for Sunday worship and adult choir. Send resumé to: 1000 HWY 92, Enterprise, AL 36330. Contact [lodie@roadrunner.com](mailto:lodie@roadrunner.com). Call 334-389-0409.

#### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP MINISTER

Mineral Springs Baptist Church, located at 8316 Co. Rd. 51, Clanton, is currently searching for God's candidate to lead our worship ministry. The position is bivocational, with the expectation of weekly preparing a choir to assist in leading Sunday morning worship and the ability to lead both traditional and contemporary styles of music during truly blended worship services. The ideal candidate would have the ability to also play one or multiple instruments. The candidate must be a team player with a heart for service and ministry, maintaining a consistent personal walk with the Lord. Experience preferred. No calls please.

Candidates should email their resumés to: [pastorjasongreen@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorjasongreen@yahoo.com). Please type "worship minister position" in the subject line.

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### ASSOCIATION MISSIONARY

Rural West Alabama association seeking associational missionary. Send resumés by May 1, 2017, to Pickets Baptist Association, P.O. Box 206, Carrollton, AL 35447 or [pbassn@centurytel.net](mailto:pbassn@centurytel.net).

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Shelby Baptist Association, Columbiana, Alabama, is seeking an administrative assistant. A current job description and an application can be found at [www.shelbybaptist.org](http://www.shelbybaptist.org). Applications and resumés may be sent to: [sbavaccancy@gmail.com](mailto:sbavaccancy@gmail.com) or to the attention of Dr. Hugh Richardson, Shelby Baptist Association, P.O. Box 888, Columbiana, AL, 35051. Office — 205-669-7858. Applications must be received by April 14, 2017.

#### DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER

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For online classifieds, visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org), scroll down to the bottom of the page, click on "Classified Ads" and select any category.



(augmented reality)

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**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.

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**ALABAMA'S** Associations

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

**CENTRAL**

► **Central Association** will hold a Passover Seder Last Supper re-enactment April 13, 6:30 p.m. at Weogufka Center for Arts. Each table will be set with traditional elements found on the Passover table. There will be a drama depicting how Jesus and His disciples shared the Last Supper in the upper room. To register call Jan Morris at 256-487-6170 or the association office at 256-377-2411 by April 7. Wayne Henderson is director of missions.

**CLARKE**

► **Andy Goode** is the new pastor of **Stave Creek Church, Jackson**. Goode earned a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia; a master's degree from New Orleans Seminary; and a doctorate from Master's International University of Divinity in Evansville, Indiana. He previously served as member care pastor of the College Avenue campus of Cross Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. He and his wife, Patty, have four children.

**DEKALB**

► **First Church, Rainsville**, will host special Easter weekend events with guest evangelist Jay Lowder of Wichita Falls, Texas.

Student night will be held April 14, 7 p.m. featuring a concert with The Whosoovers. A men's wild game supper and hunting/fishing expo will be held April 15, 4-7:30 p.m. with a meal at 6 p.m. April 16 morning services will be at 10:15 a.m. For more information call the church at 256-638-3141 or visit rainsvillefirst.com. David Cofield is pastor.

**ELMORE**

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Eclectic**, will host homecoming services April 9, 10:30 a.m. George Smith is pastor.

**SAND MOUNTAIN**

► **Craig White** is the new pastor of **Pisgah Church**. He previously served as minister of youth at First Church, Rainsville. He also served at Mount Hermon Church, Rainsville. He holds a degree from Anderson Seminary in Camilla, Georgia. He and his wife, Melinda, have one child.

**SHELBY**

► **North Shelby Church, Birmingham**, and the Alabama Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments will hold a beeping Easter egg hunt at Triple S Farms in Wilsonville on April 8, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Visually impaired children and siblings will be

able to participate in the egg hunt. There will be several activities and lunch will be served. For more information and to register contact Denise Mays at 256-503-5568 or dvmays@gmail.com. Allan Murphy is pastor. ► **Gardner Fish** is the new interim student pastor of **Siluria Church, Alabaster**. He is currently pursuing a degree from New Orleans Seminary's Birmingham extension center. Michael J. Brooks is pastor.

**ST. CLAIR**

► The F.A.I.T.H. Riders motorcycle ministry of **Cedar Grove Church, Leeds**, will hold its sixth annual Lyla Ride on April 15. Registration will begin at 7 a.m. and the ride will begin at 9 a.m. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Ronald McDonald House. For more information and to register call Ronny Bureson at 205-229-2136. Billy Abrams is pastor.

**WEST CULLMAN**

► **Fairview West Church, Hanceville**, will hold revival services April 9-12. Jeremy Rolls will speak Sunday at 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Mark Long will speak Monday; Dale Banks will speak Tuesday; and Scott Guthery will speak Wednesday. Randall Waldrep is pastor. ☠

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 9

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

### OFFERED TO ALL? Matthew 22:1-14

#### The Invited (1-7)

Continuing to discuss the kingdom of heaven, Jesus tells a parable similar to the one with the wicked tenants. In this story Jesus uses the metaphor of a king throwing a wedding feast. The king sent his servants to go alert those who were invited that his son's wedding feast was ready. However, those who were invited refused to come. Again he sent more servants who then were mistreated by the invitees.

In this parable Jesus is telling the Pharisees the wedding feast represents God's eternal kingdom. God sent prophets to alert the Jews and turn their hearts to Him.

The nation of Israel was chosen by God, however, they turned toward other gods and disobeyed God. The Pharisees were in line with these rebellious Jews of the Old Testament.

They had the law and the prophets to instruct them yet they missed the point which was supposed to lead to love of God and of neighbor.

#### The Gathered (8-10)

In this parable, after the Jews reject the wedding invitation, the king sends out invitations to anyone the servants can find. This represents the gospel being spread to the Gentiles. In the Gospels the Jews often did not like the idea of Jesus interacting with Gentiles but the gospel is for all people — Jew and Gentile alike. All who hear the message of Christ and respond to it are welcomed into God's eternal kingdom.

This should motivate us to preach and teach the gospel to all people regardless of race, class or nationality.

The gospel is the only thing that saves people. No other religion will suffice.

Some people believe that other religions ultimately lead to God but only through Christ can we experience salvation.

This is why Christians must go forth with the gospel of Christ — to reveal to everyone the glory of God made known to us in Christ.

#### The Unprepared (11-14)

Many guests from the kingdom came to the wedding feast but one man was not wearing the proper garments. There are several possible meanings for this but the main point is that this man did not have what was needed to be at the feast.

Many scholars believe that in these days a king would provide garments for the guests to wear. This man refused to wear the garment and instead believed he was good enough the way he was. As a result he was thrown out.

Just as this man needed the right clothes to be allowed into the wedding feast, we also need to have Christ's righteousness in order to be allowed into God's kingdom. Salvation is found in Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

If we try to get into God's kingdom on our own merits, we will be thrown into hell. We need to be clothed with Christ's righteousness, not our own, because our own righteousness is akin to filthy rags.

Have you trusted in Christ's righteousness for your salvation or are you trying to be good enough on your own? †

## Bible Studies for Life By James Riley Strange, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Religion, Samford University

### VICTORY SHARED Luke 24:44-49

The distinctive story of the resurrected Jesus in Luke includes the famous "Emmaus Road" incident, in which two disciples (we learn the name only of Cleopas) walk and talk with Jesus but do not recognize Him until He breaks bread, blesses it and serves it to them.

In today's passage Jesus has just appeared to the 11 disciples back in Jerusalem. With some differences, the end of Luke overlaps the beginning of Acts.

#### The whole of Scripture points to the truth of Jesus. (44-45)

Jesus repeats what He told the two on the road (v. 27). His phrase, "the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms," refers to the divisions of the Jewish Scriptures: Law, Prophets and Writings. There was not yet a New Testament. Notice that, just as "their eyes were opened" (by the Holy Spirit) to recognize Jesus in verse 31, so Jesus "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Jesus' first followers needed divine help to interpret the Bible. In just a minute Jesus will remind them of God's promise that the Spirit will empower them to preach.

#### The cross and empty tomb are central to the gospel of Jesus. (46-47)

Why did they need Jesus' help? Jesus' claim that Scripture predicts the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection provides the key. No verse of the Old Testament explicitly says this and Luke does not tell us what verses Jesus used. He might have referred to Psalm 22, Hosea 6:2 and Isaiah 53 (see Acts 8:32-35). This suggests that, before Jesus, few people understood these passages to be about the Messiah, but about someone else, maybe even about all ancient Israelites. Hence the 11 did not

know their Scripture predicted the Messiah would suffer, die and rise again in order to cause people to repent. Today's disciples have their own challenges in understanding Scripture but we have the same help available to us as Jesus' first disciples did.

But understanding is not enough. The 11 must proclaim "repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name." To whom? "To all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (see Acts 1:8). In the Bible "nations" often refers to gentiles. As with the "Great Commission" of Matthew 28, Jesus is inaugurating the mission to the Gentiles we will see begin to unfold in Acts. Jesus' followers make the cross and empty tomb the center of their proclamation with the hope that people will turn to God as a result.

#### We are to share the message about Jesus. (48-49)

Jesus reminds the 11, "You are witnesses of these things." But in Acts a new group of people who are not witnesses take up this task, among them Stephen, Barnabas, Silas and most famously, Saul of Tarsus. All of these become prophets "mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (v. 19), modeling their mission on Jesus' ministry.

We are like those new followers in Acts. We also did not witness Jesus' death and resurrection. Like them we bear witness to the power of the risen Lord and to the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised, and whom helps our brothers and sisters around the globe to proclaim Jesus "boldly and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31). We too "have been clothed with power from on high" so that we might, as Albert Schweitzer said, accomplish "the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time."

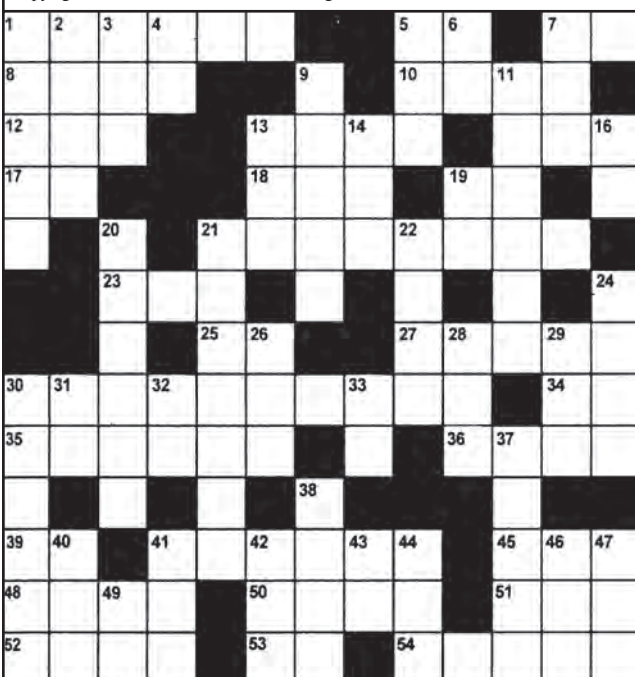
Like the first disciples and the new believers in Acts, we have God's help to see Jesus, to understand our Bible and to do what God tells us to do. Thanks be to God. †

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## Christian Crossword

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### Across

1. Hannah's son. (1 Sam. 1:20)
5. For \_\_\_ persecuted they the prophets. (Matt. 5:12)
7. Spirit of the Lord came up \_\_\_ David. (1 Sam. 16:13)
8. John also was baptizing in \_\_\_ near to Salim. (John 3:23)
10. The promise is ... to all that are \_\_\_ off. (Acts 2:39)
12. An explosive.
13. The \_\_\_ of God. (Ps. 46:4)
17. Whose son is \_\_\_? (Matt. 22:42)
18. How long is it \_\_\_ since this came unto him? (Mark 9:21)
19. Either/ \_\_\_.
21. Hated.
23. A little bear.
25. \_\_\_ it not written? (Mark 11:17)
27. I have never \_\_\_ any

### Down

30. That they might have life more \_\_\_. (John 10:10)
34. To be a certain place.
35. The director \_\_\_ the play.
36. A carnivore \_\_\_ meat.
39. Printer's measure.
41. Call for the elders of the \_\_\_. (James 5:14)
45. A torn-up piece of material.
48. The Thin Man's wife. (Nick and \_\_\_)
50. In \_\_\_ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
51. Poetic for "before."
52. Walked.
53. I am (contraction).
54. \_\_\_ them that love us in the faith. (Titus 3:15)
5. Take no thought ... what ye shall \_\_\_. (Luke 12:11)
6. A man \_\_\_ God.
7. Metal from mining.
9. He that is \_\_\_ days old. (Gen. 17:12)
11. To capture a lawbreaker.
13. A yellow car in NYC.
14. Also.
16. Authority to \_\_\_ these things. (Mark 11:28)
19. Firstlings of thy herds \_\_\_ of thy flock. (Deut. 12:17)
20. \_\_\_ not a servant unto his master. (Prov. 30:10)
21. Now \_\_\_ faith, hope, charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)
22. A spool of film.
24. Industrious insects.
26. He was \_\_\_ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
28. Yes. (nautical)
29. Sat down to \_\_\_ and to drink. (Ex. 32:6)
30. Slight variation in speech patterns.
31. Sheep's sound.

32. New Testament. (abbr.)
33. \_\_\_ have and \_\_\_ hold.
37. \_\_\_ with thine adversary quickly. (Matt. 5:25)
38. Type of train.
40. Neither/\_\_\_.
41. A heel.
42. Bezaleel the son of \_\_\_. (Ex. 38:22)
43. 900 in Roman numerals.
44. A witch is an old \_\_\_.
46. He is, they \_\_\_.
47. And so \_\_\_ them up out of the land. (Ex. 1:10)
49. Rosemary. (nickname)



# WHAT ARE YOU READING?



## Alabama Baptists share about what they are currently reading

### CARRIE BROWN MCWHORTER

*The Alabama Baptist*

**“The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways” by Meredith Gould**

In “The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways,” Meredith Gould explores how different generations respond to various social media platforms and how learning styles and personality types can affect one’s comfort with online information.

In the ever-changing and growing world of social media, churches and ministry organizations have to know how to best use resources like social media and other online tools. Gould’s book is a thought-provoking and readable guide for this purpose.

Gould — described as a digital strategist and advocate for using online tools for ministry — notes that virtual or online interactions have great potential to connect those in the Church with those outside the Church (whether nonbelievers or unchurched believers or seekers), using digital tools to create and nurture online communities that can grow face-to-face communities.

She looks at platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter and others and addresses the pros and cons of each.

And she discusses how to develop a social media strategy for your ministry, including how to manage time online and how to deal with conflict.

### NEISHA ROBERTS

*The Alabama Baptist*

**“Hinds’ Feet on High Places” by Hannah Hurnard**

It’s a “classic” and one I’ve overheard my mother speak highly of about a thousand times but I’d just never read it. “Hinds’ Feet on High Places” is an allegory and as I read a few snippets online, I thought I wouldn’t enjoy it very much. But my friend raved about it and sent me a copy for my birthday.

As I read the intro and the first few chapters I immediately saw why it’s a “classic.” If you’re a human and a Christian, you can relate to this book. The main character, Much-Afraid, faces some of the same things most people face in life — fear, pride, doubt, pain and more.

As Much-Afraid climbs the steep mountains to get to the High Places to be with the King she’s given two helpers, Sorrow and Suffering. Without these two guides she will not be able to climb to the High Places, the Shepherd tells her.

I’ve only read four chapters so far so I don’t know the final outcome, but I’m anxious to learn the honest and basic insights from this book and Much-Afraid’s journey to find joy, peace and love. †

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

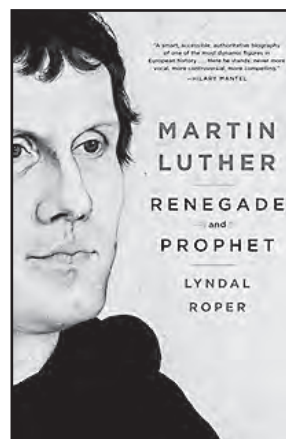


# Media reviews

## Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet

Lyndal Roper. New York: Random House, 2017. 576 pages. (Hardback).

**M**artin Luther: Renegade and Prophet” was written to coincide with the 500th anniversary of Luther’s famous act of nailing his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.



I started the book eagerly, excited to read more about the man who led the charge against Catholic teachings and practices in 1517. It didn’t take me long to slow down like a child’s toy that has been wound up and set on the floor to run itself out. There is a lot of book here — 576 pages, to be exact — and every page is packed with information.

I had never read this kind of detail about Luther’s life and found it fascinating to trace the development of the ideas that brought about the split with the Catholic Church that eventually resulted in Protestantism. While it is not lively and entertaining in the manner of a Terri Blackstock novel, the subject and the writing style were enough to keep me reading, if a bit slower than in the beginning.

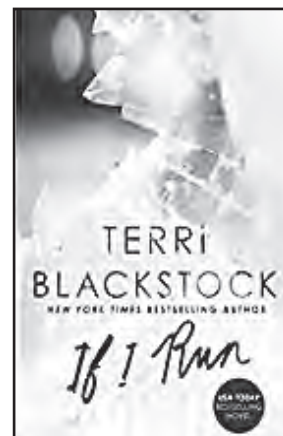
My guess is that devotees of Luther and/or Church history will love the book; the rest of us will like it. We will all profit from learning about the struggle for truth that impacted the world.

## If I Run

Terri Blackstock. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016. 318 pages. (Paperback).

**W**ow! It has been a while since I read a Terri Blackstock mystery and I’m not sure whether this one was the best yet, or I just forgot how good she is. And this one was good. I have read many, many mysteries in my lifetime (it’s my favorite genre), but “If I Run” kept me guessing through the entire book. I don’t want to diminish your enjoyment of the book if you decide to read it so I will tread carefully here.

I was intrigued from the opening sentences: “There’s blood on the bottom of my shoes. I rinse the soles, knowing the police will trace the impression of the rubber pattern and determine that they’re Skechers. They’ll find the charge for the



shoe store on my credit card, proving they’re mine.” How can you put the book down after that? You have to know whose blood it was and why she can’t just call the police to report whatever has just happened. But no — she can’t.

And the book keeps the reader off balance and needing to know to the very end. The Very End.

Blackstock is a prolific Christian writer who just keeps hitting home runs with book after book. I hear she’s just come out with another one. Guess who’ll be reading it as soon as I get my hands on it?

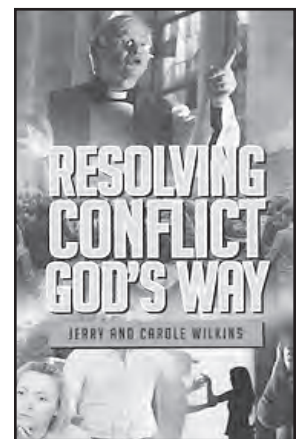
## Resolving Conflict God’s Way

Jerry and Carole Wilkins. New York: Page Publishing, Inc., 2015. 86 pages. (Paperback).

**C**onflict is inevitable.” The first words of “Resolving Conflict God’s Way” ring true, pretty much whatever the setting may be. In this book, Jerry and Carole Wilkins contend that there is a biblical way to address personal conflict in its various forms — marriage, church, friendships, work.

Presented in a Bible study format, the authors begin each section with Scriptures, then add a commentary on the Scripture and end with a list of pointed, sometimes intense, questions for the reader to consider. Each chapter begins with “God Says.” One chapter example is “God Says Disagreeing in the Christian Way.” I know — I raised an eyebrow at this too. But the authors listed eight verses that clearly describe how Christians should conduct themselves during a disagreement, then convincingly applied the verses to you. I mean, me — us. The questions at the end, if seriously and honestly considered, serve to shine a light on our motives and behavior. Ouch.

The Wilkinses write with authority and for good reason. Jerry Wilkins is a former pastor and denominational leader, and Carole Wilkins is a trained lay counselor. They live in the Tuscaloosa area. †



## Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for The Alabama Baptist. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.



[BookReviews@charter.net](mailto:BookReviews@charter.net)



NAMB photo by Susan Whitley

Jessica Dahl (standing with bowl) leads game play at home. Having fun comes with the job description of a collegiate church planter. Coaching, mentoring and counseling also come with the job.

# Man on a mission

## College pastor finds 'fresh foundation' on campus

**D**uring Jacob Dahl's senior year at Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman, Washington, the civil engineering major had a "sitting-in-the-mud moment," much like the prodigal son. Though the Washington native grew up in church, he had somehow "missed the heart of the gospel."

Dahl crawled out of the mud and into Resonate Church, a Southern Baptist campus church at WSU, where he professed faith in Christ and was baptized.

"I had my life flipped upside down," Dahl said of his salvation.

With a degree in hand, Dahl promptly moved home to his parents' basement in Bellingham, Washington, a six-hour drive from WSU. The economy had tanked and there were few jobs for civil engineering graduates.

He eventually returned to Pullman for an internship with Resonate Church, where leadership was hesitant to hire him because he had no ministry experience and was a new believer.

But Resonate took a chance on Dahl and sent him and one other person to the nearby University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, to assist with a new church plant Resonate had started there. Unfortunately things did not work out for Dahl.

"I failed to see a lot of breakthrough on campus and burned out," Dahl said. "I didn't think ministry was for me. It crushed my soul."

Dahl focused his efforts on his engineering career for the next two years, working at a WSU sports science laboratory.

"It was during those two years that I felt unrest and

eventually experienced a foundational call to ministry," said Dahl, who now understood what God was asking Him to do. It was time to try again.

With his new bride, Jessica, and a team of 14 others, he moved to rural Ellensburg, Washington, to be the first Resonate site pastor at Central Washington University (CWU). By September 2014, Resonate Church at CWU launched.

Within the first year, 36 students professed faith in Christ and 41 were baptized.

College students are one of the least reached people groups in the nation, Dahl said. That phenomenon is more so in the Northwest.

Dahl finds that modern students have virtually no knowledge of the gospel or biblical stories. At their fall retreat, there were students who didn't know about sin. Others could not believe that Christ's resurrection was real. While that lack of knowledge presents challenges, Dahl also sees opportunity.

"People coming to Christ have no preconceived ideas of who God is," Dahl said. "It's a fresh foundation."

Besides worship and small groups, Dahl's team spends many hours hanging out with the students. Somewhere in that mix, a sense of family emerges.

Resonate is a network of college churches in the Northwest begun by Keith Wieser of Texas. Wieser moved to the Northwest in 2000 for seminary training through an extension of Gateway Seminary. In 2004 he moved to Pullman to begin a nontraditional campus ministry at WSU, from which Resonate Church emerged. He is now a North American Mission Board collegiate church planting catalyst. (BP)

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Anti-abortion activists fighting felony charges

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Secret investigators who uncovered Planned Parenthood's latest scandal are now fighting felony charges.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced 15 felony counts March 28 against David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt, charging them with illegally recording or conspiring to record confidential communications.

The undercover investigators with the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) secretly recorded videos of Planned Parenthood executives discussing their sale of fetal parts as well as their willingness to manipulate the abortion procedure to preserve organs for sale and use.

The investigators also clandestinely recorded conversations with officials of fetal tissue procurement businesses that work with Planned Parenthood.

It is not the first time Daleiden and Merritt have faced charges after posing as representatives of a biologics firm to record the conversations.

Harris County dropped charges against the pair in July 2016 stemming from their undercover work at a Planned Parenthood center in Houston.

A day after the California charges were announced, CMP released its latest undercover video, which showed a former Planned Parenthood medical director explaining late-term abortions to procure body parts.

Her description seemed to imply some babies were delivered alive in the abortion process but died outside the womb. (BP)

### Circuit court allows prayer at monthly meeting

HALTOM CITY, Texas — A circuit court in Texas has upheld a school district's right to allow student-led prayers at their monthly board meetings, according to The Christian Post.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled March 20 against a lawsuit filed by an atheist group that wanted to end the prayers at the Birdville Independence School District's board meetings. The American Humanist Association (AHA) had filed the suit in 2015 on behalf of former student Isaiah Smith.

"Smith claims that the prayers made him feel unwelcome at the public meetings and that the school board endorsed Christianity," AHA stated. "Students and teachers also regularly attend the meetings."

Judge Jerry E. Smith authored the circuit court's opinion, which affirmed a lower court's decision to continue allowing the prayers, the Post reported.

"Because the practice falls more nearly within the recently reaffirmed legislative-prayer exception to the Supreme Court's Establishment Clause jurisprudence, we affirm the summary judgment in favor of the school district," Judge Smith wrote. "Although it is possible to imagine a school-board student-expression practice that offends the Establishment Clause, this one, under its specific facts, does not." (TAB)

### Student claims his privacy rights were violated

BOYERTOWN, Penn. — A high school student and his parents are suing a local Pennsylvania school district after a locker-room incident that he said violated his privacy rights.

The lawsuit against the Boyertown Area School District, filed March 21 in federal court on behalf of anonymous student "Joel Doe," claims he found himself partially dressed in the same locker room as a female student wearing a bra.

The female student, who identifies as transgender, recently began the process of transitioning from female to male, according to The Christian Post.

The male student who is the plaintiff in the lawsuit experienced "embarrassment and humiliation" from the incident and "now avoids using the restroom during the school day because of the ongoing risk of having his privacy violated," the lawsuit states. (TAB)