

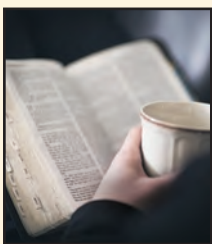


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Crisis pregnancy centers in Alabama remain vital part of pro-life advocacy in state

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New Home Baptist builds outdoor Bible camp to reach community

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Main photo: Members of Alabama Campers on Mission hand out doughnuts and coffee to carnival workers at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan.
Small photos: Volunteers work on sewing and construction projects throughout the year.



Photos courtesy of Alabama Campers on Mission

'A time to refresh & revive'

Alabama Campers on Mission to host national rally in Dothan

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

No matter the season it's not unusual to see RVs crisscrossing Alabama highways, but this summer expect to see a few more than normal.

Members of Alabama Campers on Mission (COM) will host the National Campers on Mission Rally at the National Peanut Festival Fairgrounds in Dothan on June 20–22. The rally will bring hundreds of campers and their rigs to Alabama for a time of fellowship, training and fun.

"It's a time to refresh and revive these volunteer missionaries to continue serving 'as they go,'" said Jerry McGovern, who along with his wife, Renee, serves as a national coordinator of Campers on Mission.

The national organization has at least 24 chapters representing around 30 states. The groups share a common mission: to look for opportunities to share their faith and the love of Jesus through their participation in missions activities while camping. Hundreds of campers throughout the country spend weeks and even months at a time serving in projects all over the country, obeying the Great Commission in the way God has called them.

All COM members, regional representatives and coordinators are self-supporting volunteer missionaries. They receive no compensation for fuel, expenses or the labor they provide. Their reward is in the work, said Bill Foster, president of Alabama COM.

"It's so fulfilling to be able to do something like this," Foster said. "When we go to a location and help them, they often say, 'what a blessing you all were to

us.' But the blessing is what we get — how blessed we are to help them so they can minister to the people God has called them to minister to."

An added benefit is seeing and experiencing new places. Foster, a retired airline pilot, saw the country

from 30,000 feet in the air for years. When he retired, he traded his wings for an RV. As a camping "newbie," Foster had a lot to learn. Fortunately he had good friends who camped with him and his wife, Angela, and taught them the basics. They soon found a second family in COM.

Relationship building

"I probably have closer friends in COM than in my home community," he said. "They are always there to help. We play together and we pray together."

The missions projects COM undertakes might not sound like play to most people but campers enjoy the hard work and the camaraderie. They have worked on construction projects for the New Mexico Baptist Children's Home in Portales, Oneida Baptist Institute in Kentucky, and at several camps and (See 'Christ-like' page 3)

For more information on Alabama Campers on Mission, including the national rally details, go to www.alabamacom.org.

COMMENT

Pastor — What You Say Is Important

There is a lot of information that could make a pastor and other church members believe that what the pastor preaches on Sunday morning is unimportant.

For example, a study by LifeWay Christian Resources found that 90 percent of new church members first attended the church they later joined because someone invited them. There is little connection between an invitation from a friend and the Sunday morning sermon.

The friendliness of a church is often cited when one talks about joining a church. About half the people who join according to one study indicated the friendliness of the congregation was a deciding factor.

Programs for children and teens is another frequently mentioned reason for choosing a church. A recent Gallup study said 64 percent of respondents who regularly attend church mentioned spiritual programs geared toward children and teens as a reason for choosing a church.

Each of these is important but to concentrate on these factors alone is to miss what practically all studies find the most important factor that appeals to churchgoers — the pastor and what he preaches.

This is not to promote the pastor as a “superstar” on which all else rises or falls. But it is to emphasize the importance of what the pastor preaches Sunday after Sunday.

Why attend church?

When adults who attend church at least monthly were asked “What is the most important reason you attend church” most of the answers related to spiritual reasons.

- ▶ 23 percent said “for spiritual guidance.”
- ▶ 20 percent said “worship keeps me grounded/inspired.”
- ▶ 15 percent said “it is my faith.”
- ▶ 15 percent said “to worship God.”

Obviously a lot of other good things happen at church ranging from fellowship to service but the primary reason people attend worship is to better relate to God.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

It should not come as a surprise that when Gallup, in a poll released in April, asked churchgoers to identify major factors in why they attend their particular place of worship, 3 out of 4 identified sermons that either teach about the Bible or help people connect religion to their own lives.

Specifically, 76 percent identified “sermons that teach you more about Scripture” and 75 percent said “sermons that help you connect religion to your own life.”

Gallup’s finding is consistent with earlier LifeWay research which reported the primary reason unchurched people chose a church is the pastor and the preaching followed closely by the church’s beliefs. A Barna study reversed the two with a church’s beliefs ahead of the quality of sermons preached.

Researchers found neither churchgoers nor the unchurched sought a captivating orator. Rather they sought a pastor who helped them understand the teachings of the Bible and how to live out the implications of biblical teachings in their daily lives.

It was much more important to have positive, sound, understandable biblical teachings week in and week out than it was to have occasional brilliance from the pulpit, responders indicated.

Only 38 percent referenced a good choir or praise band as important for why they attended a particular church and less than half mentioned friendliness of members in the LifeWay study.

Research about why people leave a particular church also indicates the importance of what a pastor preaches. About half the people who leave a church do so because of life changes most studies conclude. People move. Illness strikes. Lifestyle changes.

The LifeWay study found about 20 percent of those who left “did not feel engaged or involved in meaningful church work.”

Most of the other moves away from a church related to the pastor. One of the chief indictments was the “pastor was judgmental of others.” Some mentioned negative comments from the pulpit where the pastor seemed to always be “whipping the pews” about the problems of the church. Some mentioned negative attitudes conveyed when members did not agree with the pastor.

Another major indictment was the “pastor was not a good preacher.”

This is a more subjective accusation since what is good preaching to one may not be to another. Also important is what other responsibilities the pastor had that might have prevented proper preparation. The church as well as the pastor has to prioritize preparation if the goal is good preaching.

Also important is the recognition that what is good preaching for one audience may not be good preaching for another. Just as no church is the ideal church for everyone, no pastor is the ideal pastor for every church. That is

not a negative against a church or a pastor. It simply recognizes that different churches demand different gifts for leaders just as pastors have different gifts from one another.

Not being a perfect fit in one church does not mean a pastor will not be a good fit in another.

Still one must see the connection between the negative criticisms sometimes leveled against a pastor and the importance of what the pastor preaches.

Most people who come to church feel the need to worship the true and living God. God made us that way. When

the pastor responds to that need with clear teaching about what the Bible says and how to connect that teaching to one’s own life the results are usually positive.

‘With great patience’

When the pastor responds with negativity or ambivalent teachings problems usually follow. That is just the way it is according to experience — which is documented by research.

In 2 Timothy 4:2 the apostle Paul urged young preacher Timothy to “preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

That is still good advice, especially when the pastor must reprove or rebuke. Then it is especially important to do it “with great patience and instruction” because what the pastor says is important. †

When the pastor responds to people’s need to worship the true and living God with clear teaching about what the Bible says and how to connect that teaching to one’s own life the results are usually positive.

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† TAB

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
John 8:31-32

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'Christ-like spirit and missions focus'

Campers on Mission's only requirement is willingness to serve

(continued from page 1)

churches in Alabama, including Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

Buster Taylor, executive director of Shocco, said, "Campers on Mission teams have been partnering with Shocco Springs for almost 25 years, providing help with construction, campus upgrades and serving guests through various departments, but their most significant quality is the willingness to serve with a Christ-like spirit and missions focus evident in all they undertake."

Taylor estimates that the hours COM volunteers have invested at Shocco would value more than \$850,000 if it could be monetized and that's a big part of the COM mission.

Win-win situation

Many churches can afford materials but not labor. Alabama COM doesn't have a funding source for materials but they have ready and able labor. It's a win-win situation, Foster said.

Churches assist COM by setting up temporary campsites where electricity, water and sewer connections are available for campers. Those basic utilities are all campers need to keep their homes away from home comfortable. They are on-site and ready to work each day, a temporary yet welcome addition to the community, all in the name of Christ.

Everyone stays busy on a COM project. Those who don't work on construction teams utilize their skills in sewing and missions support. Most recently, several COM ladies sewed 49 dresses and pants and packed 134 backpacks to send to Guatemala. They also made several dresses for missionaries going to Nicaragua.

In whatever activities they undertake, the gospel is always at the forefront, Foster said. One of the group's major events every year is the National Peanut Festival held in Dothan each November. Alabama COM members help



Photo courtesy of Alabama Campers on Mission

Alabama Campers on Mission volunteers use their talents to support missionary needs around the world. Missionaries often request dresses and pants for the people they serve. These dresses are headed to missionaries in Central America.

at the festival by taking up tickets and providing clowns and balloon artists.

"We attract folks with the fun and then we initiate conversations about the gospel," Foster said. "This past year we set up doughnuts and coffee for the carnival workers and we were able to share the gospel with several of them."

Variety of sessions

At the national COM rally, missions volunteers can attend seminars on evangelism, including classes on puppetry, jewelry making, clowning and ballooning. Other sessions will focus on construction tasks, including drywall installation, plumbing, carpentry and electrical work. There will be opportunities to learn about the RV life too with sessions to address

full-time RVing, tax concerns for RVers and travel opportunities.

McGovern, who is a retired master plumber, said, "Many members are skilled professionals but training such as this equips the COM members so he or she will have more skills to help in future projects at churches and camps."

However, if there's one thing COM leaders want prospective members to know, it's that no particular skills are required to serve. The most important requirements are a willingness to serve others and a love for the RV life.

"It's an amazing opportunity," Foster said. "We get to see the country, meet new people and we get to help our little bit in expanding the kingdom of God." †

Retired missionary: 'Thank you from bottom of my heart for giving, praying'

In the early 1940s I had been looking for several years for the best way to please and honor Jesus on His birthday. I found the answer when basic training for the Army brought me to Alabama (Fort McClellan) in 1946.

The Lord led me to First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, where I got acquainted with Southern Baptists.

Among other things (including beautiful Alabama girls, one of whom I married and with whom I will soon celebrate our 70th

wedding anniversary) I was very impressed with the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO).

During and after my education at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, my wife, Maxine, and I were privileged to serve churches in Jefferson, Clarke, Wilcox and Calhoun counties. I was privileged to lead our churches in giving generously and sacrificially to LMCO,

little knowing we would one day be the beneficiaries.

But praise the Lord He gave us each a call to foreign missions, me in 1952 and Maxine in 1957. We were approved by the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) in July 1958 and served in Thailand from 1958 to 1994.

Since then we have been retired and living in Anniston and were active at our church, Parker Memorial Baptist, until 2009

when Maxine was afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease and I became her full-time caregiver.

Maxine is now 93 and I am soon to be 89. We want to express our thanks to our Southern Baptist brothers and sisters for your faithful (and often sacrificial) support for us for almost 60 years. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your giving and praying for us and all our fellow missionaries.

Bob and Maxine Stewart
Anniston, Ala. †

Providing HOPE

Crisis pregnancy centers in Alabama remain vital part of pro-life advocacy in state

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

The U.S. abortion rate is at a historic low but the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers in Alabama remains a vital part of pro-life advocacy in the state.

“As great as it is to hear that the abortion rate is down the reality is that too many abortions are still occurring and the number of women considering abortion is alive and well,” said Lisa Hogan, executive director of Sav-A-Life Pregnancy Test Center in Birmingham.

The mission of pregnancy test centers

throughout the state is to help women see their options in a time of crisis, Hogan said.

“Our staff members and volunteers are called to serve these women and men and just love on them,” Hogan said. “That’s our goal. ... God is at work and lives are changed as a result of what we are able to offer.”

A January 2017 news release issued by the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization affiliated with the abortion movement, reported that the number of abortions in the United States dropped below 1 million in 2013 for the first time since 1975, two years after the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalized abortion. According to Guttmacher, 958,700 abortions were performed in the U.S. in 2013 and 926,200 abortions were performed in 2014.

Abortions in Alabama are also down from 8,080 in 2014 to 5,899 in 2015, according to the Alabama Center for Health Statistics. However, those numbers are a bit misleading, said Sue Turner, executive director of Alabama Physicians for Life, because the West Alabama Women’s Center in Tuscaloosa, which performs about 60 percent of the state’s total abortions, closed for seven months in 2015.

Abortion clinics

“Women aren’t having abortions if there is no access to an abortion center,” Turner said.

Alabama has five abortion clinics currently open, one each in the cities of Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa. Alabama law also places many restrictions on abortions, including counseling, waiting periods and parental consent for minors.

Alabama law requires a woman to have an ultrasound before obtaining an abortion, though the law does not require her to view the image.

Providing free ultrasounds is an important service offered at most pregnancy testing centers, Turner said, also noting the centers are

5 ways to advocate for life

1. Know the options. Educate yourself about crisis pregnancy centers in your area so that you are ready to tell a daughter, granddaughter, neighbor or coworker considering abortion where to go for help.

2. Plan a 40 Days for Life campaign at your church. Get involved in a focused effort involving prayer, fasting and peaceful vigil to end abortion. For more information, visit www.40daysforlife.com.

3. Raise money. Get students and kids involved in raising money through creative fundraisers like Baby Bottle Boomerang. Give each family in your church an empty baby bottle to fill with money. Donate the proceeds to a local pregnancy testing center.

4. Purchase a Choose Life license plate. Available at your local tag office, these customizable tags are a significant source of funding for pregnancy centers and adoption agencies in the state. Since the tag debuted in 2004, more than \$3.3 million has been raised. Choose Life tags “let Planned Parenthood and the rest of the world know that Alabama is a pro-life state,” said Cindy Harless, executive director of Choose Life Alabama.

5. Host a baby shower. For nine months, pray for women and their babies. At the end of nine months, throw a baby shower for your local crisis pregnancy or service center to help new moms.

(Compiled by Carrie Brown McWhorter)

pro-life and often Christian-based.

“Research tells us that 80–90 percent of women considering abortion decide against it after hearing their baby’s heartbeat,” Turner said.

The work of pregnancy centers doesn’t end when a woman makes her decision, however. Most centers provide referrals for needs such as food, clothing and medical care. They also offer education and training to help parents-to-be. Topics generally include the health aspects of pregnancy and childbirth, money management, healthy eating and relationship building.

Programs like “Earn While You Learn” allow pregnant moms to earn points, often called “mommy dollars,” for completing classes and keeping appointments. Dads can take the classes and earn dollars too. The dollars can be redeemed for supplies and equipment parents will need when their baby is born. Though the dollars are only good for baby supplies purchased at the pregnancy test center, the financial incentive helps remove one of the barriers to parenting that many women seeking an abortion face, Hogan said.

The parents get a lot of encouragement from shopping in these special “baby boutiques” for new cribs, clothing, diapers and other baby necessities, Turner said.

“Their eyes light up and they begin to think, ‘I can do this.’ They realize there’s

help and begin to feel hopeful,” Turner said.

Providing hope is really the heart of crisis pregnancy centers, Hogan said.

“We want to give hope and help to anyone who seems to be facing an insurmountable obstacle in their lives,” Hogan said. “By the grace of God and with the help of folks like us to walk alongside them, we pray that each one realizes that God is in the midst of their crisis.”

In addition to free pregnancy testing and ultrasounds, crisis pregnancy centers often offer referral services and education for those who choose to make an adoption plan for their unborn babies. There are also referrals for post-abortion counseling, a need that continually grows, said Cindy Harless, executive director of Abortion Recovery Alabama.

Need for volunteers

“Over a half million women in Alabama have had an abortion. Even if abortion ended today, our job would not,” Harless said.

Volunteers are essential to helping those coping with a crisis pregnancy and there is always a need for more, Turner said.

“There is so much to do and so few willing to get involved and commit,” she said. “Everyone can participate in this ministry. If you feel called at all to advocate for life, there’s a place for you.”



Seminaries confer degrees on Alabama Baptist grads

Alabama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and divinity schools in May 2017. *The Alabama Baptist* was provided the following list of graduates by the schools.

▶ **Beeson Divinity School:** *Master of Arts in Theological Studies* — Lorrie Beth Milton, Birmingham

Master of Divinity — Christopher Campbell, Hartselle; Brittany Gilmore, Childersburg; Lauren Gilmore, Hokes Bluff; Sidney Jordan, Mobile; Lawrence O'Neal, Tallassee; Bradley Patton, Alabaster; Hunter Sandlin, Montgomery; Jonathan Smith, Decatur; Courtney Trotter, Daphne; Palmer Kennedy*, Mobile; John Steakley*, Birmingham

Doctor of Ministry — Peter von Herrmann, Homewood

▶ **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:** *Master of Arts in Christian Apologetics* — Brantley Ditto, Fairhope

Master of Arts in Christian Education — Jessie Leonard, Birmingham

Master of Divinity — Wesley Braswell, Jackson; Jason Murphree, Cullman

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Charlie Martin, Trussville

▶ **Doctor of Ministry** — Scott Davis Jr., Fayette; Wayne Norman Jr., Semmes; Thomas Winborn Jr., Southside

Doctor of Musical Arts — Jessica McMillan, Mobile

▶ **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Divinity — Zach Carter, Huntsville; Nickolas Byron Funderburk, Alexan-

der City; Michael C. Head, Gardendale; John E. Jernigan, Birmingham; Brandon Keel, Dadeville; Charles M. Sanders, Roeton; Bill Weaver, Falkville; Jay Wise, Opp
Doctor of Philosophy — Jon English Lee, Montgomery
Master of Arts in Leadership — Zach Terry, Moulton; Wesley Layton Walters, Southside

▶ **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Arts — Lauren Elizabeth Horn, Ashland; John C. Stickle, Dothan

Master of Divinity with Christian Ministry — Nicholas Burke Gagnon, Lanett; Robert Steven Nelson, Lanett
Master of Divinity with International Church Planting — James Daniel Crim, Huntsville

▶ **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Theological Studies — Christopher Atencio, Florence

Master of Arts in Christian Education — Alan Cooper Bush, Decatur

Master of Divinity — Joshua Heath Wilson, Mount Olive

▶ **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Divinity — Joseph Andrew Heurion, Livingston

Doctor of Counseling — Cary Allen Corley

▶ **Gateway Seminary:**

Master of Arts — Bethany Pate Li, Montgomery
Doctor of Ministry — Bryan David Gill, Homewood

EDITOR'S NOTE — Asterisk denotes graduates who participated in graduation ceremonies in May but will receive their degrees in August.✠



Photo courtesy of Billy Douglas

The annual REACH Camp is bathed in prayer by 48 individuals across Choctaw Baptist Association who sign up to pray for 30-minute timeslots during each of the four days of camp.

Prayer is vital

REACH Camp connects churches through prayer

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Choctaw Baptist Association was planning its first REACH Youth Camp in 2012, someone on the camp planning team read a list of ways churches sending out missions groups could do to help support those groups. One of the items included in the list was a prayer vigil, and the association thought that would be a perfect way for churches to help support the camp participants.

"Every year we ask for 48 people in our county to sign up for a 30-minute timeslot and pray for the youth and the camp during that timeslot each of the four days [of camp]," said Billy Douglas, director of youth ministries for Choctaw Association. "God was so faithful to respond [that first year], and we have had the prayer vigil at the core of every camp since."

Sixth consecutive year

This will mark the sixth consecutive year the REACH Camp prayer vigil has taken place. This year REACH Camp will be June 13-16, and as of late May about half of the 48 prayer slots have been filled, Douglas said.

Those participating in the vigil will be asked to pray for each of

the youth participating in camp by name, asking God to help them fully participate and focus while at camp.

"We will be asking people to pray for the counselors, the youth camp volunteers, the praise and worship teams, the speakers, the facilities — that everything done at this camp would bring glory to God," Douglas said. "That we all would realize more and more, day by day, what it means to 'abide in Jesus.'"

Prayer is critical to the camp experience, Douglas says, because "we are asking God to do what only He can do." He says participants are asking the Lord to connect with the youth who attend the camp in such a way that they would all grow up and become faithful servants for His kingdom.

Don Giles' son spearheaded the start of REACH Camp, and Giles and his wife, Kay, have been involved as volunteers at the camp for the last several years.

"To see young people come together and worship under an outdoor tabernacle that has been there for years is unique," said Giles, who serves as a member of the mission develop committee for Choctaw Association. "It's one of those holy places where you can feel the presence of the Lord. It is amazing to look back at how God has used and blessed this camp over the years."

This year REACH Camp's theme will be "Lost," and main speaker Jon Wiggins, pastor of Skyland Baptist Church,

Tuscaloosa, will be teaching from the parable of the prodigal son. Other speakers will deliver messages and testimonials during the camp's daily morning service as well as during three late-night services. Other camp highlights will include a talent show on Thursday evening as well as special recreation on Wednesday with water balloons, a water slide and a mud pit.✠

Interested in being part of the 2017 REACH Camp prayer vigil team?

Email Billy Douglas at REACHYouthCamp@gmail.com or call or text him at 303-601-2711 to request a 30-minute slot.

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Research shows faith matters when it comes to making marriages stick

By Martha Simmons
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The bad news: If you're over age 50, you're more than twice as likely to get a divorce as the same age group did 25 years ago; for couples over age 65 the divorce rate is triple that of their parents' generation.

The good news: If you've been married long enough and attend church regularly, your marriage is more likely to stick.

"In 2015 for every 1,000 married persons ages 50 and older, 10 divorced — up from five in 1990, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau," Pew Research Center recently reported. "Among those ages 65 and older, the divorce rate has roughly tripled since 1990, reaching six people per 1,000 married persons in 2015."

Different age ranges

While the overall divorce rate for people younger than 50 is still twice as high as that of the previous generation, there is encouraging news in the fact that divorces among the 25 to 39 age group have fallen 21 percent during the same period, from 30 per 1,000 to 24 per 1,000.

However, the 40 to 49 age group's divorce rate rose 14 percent, from 18 per 1,000 to 21 per 1,000.

Baby boomers lead the upswing in the so-called "gray divorce rate," Pew reported, noting that this generation had "unprecedented levels of divorce" in their young adult lives, contributing to marital instability in their later years. "Among all adults 50 and older who divorced in 2015, 48 percent had been in their second or higher marriage," researchers reported.

In general, and perhaps not surprisingly, the longer the marriage the less likely it is to end in divorce, research indicates. Still 34 percent of recent divorces among the 50-plus age group are people



unsplash.com

who have been married at least 30 years and 12 percent have been married more than 40 years.

While many such late-life divorces are initiated because the partners have become dissatisfied and seek new independence, the dissolution of marriages often comes at the expense of financial security and social satisfaction, Pew researchers noted. Divorced women experience high rates of poverty and seniors living alone, especially men, are dissatisfied with their social lives.

Such statistics should be of special concern to citizens of Alabama, whose divorce rate, while declining, is still the seventh highest in the United States, according to 2015 data (the latest available) from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

So how can married couples fight these rising divorce rates?

Get serious about church.

"Being a committed, faithful believer makes a measurable difference in marriage," according to Glenn T. Stanton, director for family formation studies at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs. "Saying you believe something or merely belonging to a church, unsurprisingly, does little for marriage," Stanton wrote in a 2011 Baptist Press article. "But the more you are involved in the actual practice of your faith in real

ways — through submitting yourself to a serious body of believers; learning regularly from Scripture; being in communion with God through prayer individually and with your spouse and children; and having friends and family around you who challenge you to take your marriages seriously — the greater difference this makes in strengthening both the quality and longevity of our marriages," Stanton wrote.

Regular church attendance appears to serve as a significant inoculation against divorce.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health reported in 2016 that "religious service attendance is associated with greater marital stability — or more specifically, with a lower likelihood of divorce." Researchers found that "those who attend religious services are about 30 to 50 percent less likely to divorce than those who do not."

Practicing Christians

Barna Group, a research organization focused on faith and culture issues, reported that as of 2016, 25 percent of all adults — including practicing Christians and evangelicals — have been divorced. However, Barna found, "Practicing Christians and evangelicals are much more likely to be married than the average American.

"For instance, almost 6 in 10 (59 percent) practicing Christians are married (a number that has remained steady since 2000), compared to just over half (52 percent) of the general population," Barna reported. "This is even more pronounced among evangelicals, 67 percent of whom are married, 15 percent higher than the general population."

No matter how you slice the data, as Glenn T. Stanton wrote, "Faith does matter and the leading sociologists of family and religion tell us so."✠

"The more you are involved in the actual practice of your faith in real ways ... the greater difference this makes in strengthening both the quality and longevity of our marriages."

Glenn T. Stanton
director for family formation studies, Focus on the Family

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

John D. 'Jack' Collier



COLLIER

Hillview Baptist Church, Birmingham
Birmingham Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 1

FAVORITE HYMN: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

HOBBIES: Learning; playing card games on computer

FAMILY STATUS: Widower since 2016 following 67 years of marriage to wife, Hazel; children, Donna, Paula and John; 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren

At 95, Jack Collier, of Birmingham, is chairman of deacons, trustee and member of three committees at his church as well as Sunday School teacher at a Forestdale fire station. Years ago, Collier was a founding member of the Hillview Volunteer Fire Department. An auto and diesel mechanic, he operated Collier Center Filling Station in Forestdale. During World War II, he was an Air Force pilot, attaining the rank of first lieutenant.

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

A: My grandmother and my grandfather, my family and aunts and uncles. I was in my 30s when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

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

A: My daddy told me to go to church and it kind of grew from that.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: To change my irritating ways — (from) being too mouthy to being somewhat less mouthy. To live and learn to do better. To assist and take part in the work of our church and its missions.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: There are little places where the Lord blesses me — Scripture that means something, sometimes the people I know at church and deal with. The Lord kind of ministers to me all along. I get puzzled and study my Bible. I get from it knowing Jesus, knowing God.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: As much as they can. They are loving and kind and generous and do anything they can to help.

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

A: Ministering in the church and to be a good citizen.

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

A: Heaven. As long as my health holds out, I will be going to church. And my health is good for an old man.

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

A: He saved me from the graveyard a long time ago and he keeps on doing it. He overcame all those idiot mistakes I made. Sometimes when I made stupid errors, He compensated.✠

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

Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**



*Focus
on*

ONE MISSION

ONE MISSION:The Great Commission **ONE PROGRAM:**The Cooperative Program **MANY MINISTRIES:**Great Commission Ministries

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

PRAY FOR ESSENTIAL CHURCH

The State Board of Missions has invested heavily in Essential Church in Huntsville, led by **Tim Milner**, through assessment, training, coaching, congregational assistance, a start-up grant and rental assistance. These types of resources are made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.



Milner

He recently shared that he thought he would not run into the same sort of folk that he dealt with in California but has found many of the same needs in Huntsville. Tim said, "We're praying that we would see God do

something mighty in the lives of our people — something we could only point to Christ and say, 'He alone did this.' "

I want to share these specific prayer requests from Tim and invite you to join me in praying for God to do a great work through Essential Church. Here are Tim's requests:

–Please pray for two things: wisdom and favor.

Regarding favor, we need God to do what only He can do. Look at this from Acts 16:14: "One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay

attention to what was said by Paul" (ESV).

–Please pray that we would have the favor of the Lord that will open the hearts of many in Huntsville to listen to Him.

Also in Acts, we see that Paul and Barnabas spoke in a way that many believed. Acts 14:1 tells us, "Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed" (ESV). Please pray that we would have the wisdom to preach, teach and reach in such a way that many will believe in Jesus.

Thank you for joining us in praying for God's Kingdom to expand in Huntsville.

Tim was our featured church planter in the inaugural Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering during 2016. As we prepare



for the Week of Prayer for State Missions in September, remember Morris Johnson and the Integrity

Church in Hueytown, who will be our featured 2017 church planter.

For more information about the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, go online to www.myers-mallory.org.

For more information on church planting among Alabama Baptists, please contact State

**By Lamar Duke
State Missionary**



Missionary Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist, at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org, or visit PlantAlabama.org.

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BOBBY KEITH

I have personally worked with ministries

receiving support through the Cooperative Program in my metropolitan area, my county, my state, my country and seven other countries on continents ranging from South America to Eastern Europe to Africa. No one church is large enough to support all of these ministries, but through

the effort of many, many are served. We are and have been for some time the richest country in the world. We want to and should be known as a Christian nation. Giving and going, whether across the street or across the oceans, is an important part of any Christian's life. Christ told Peter three times to "feed my sheep." I am glad I have supported the Cooperative Program all of my adult life.

Bobby Keith, a member of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Homewood, serves as a trustee for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.



ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

one Great Sunday

An online resource for Sunday School Leadership Training

Join us live on
August 13, 2017 • 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.
alsbom.org/onegreatsunday

or

create your own leadership training event with these provided videos as resources anytime of the year.



THE SUMMIT

Shocco Springs, August 4-5, 2017

Register online: 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.

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.



Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

WEEK OF PRAYER

FOR STATE MISSIONS

SEPTEMBER 10-17, 2017

Your gifts help support:

- Alabama WMU
- Disaster Relief
- Church Planting
- Alabama Partnership Missions
- Church Revitalization

Myers-Mallory.org



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

**State Goal:
\$1,000,000**



Saturday, August 19 Alabama WMU One Day Training

ONE DAY, TWO LOCATIONS:

Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery ❖ Seventh Street Baptist Church, Cullman

COST: \$10 per person

LEADERSHIP TRAINING WILL BE OFFERED FOR:

- ❖ WMU directors and other general leaders
- ❖ Women's Ministry
- ❖ Women on Mission/Adults on Mission/myMISSION
- ❖ Acteens/Youth on Mission
- ❖ Girls in Action/Children in Action
- ❖ Royal Ambassadors
- ❖ Mission Friends.

For more information, go online to AlabamaWMU.org, email pingram@alsbom.org or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, or (334) 613-2325.

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

ALABAMA ACTS 1:8 CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE Thursday, August 3, 2017, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 2209 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham

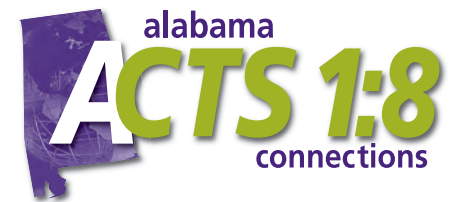
COST: \$10 per person (includes lunch)

REGISTRATION: a18c.org/a18c

Join us for the third annual celebration of Acts 1:8 Connections. It's an opportunity to meet:
▲ representatives from all IMB affinities ▲ church planters from NAMB ▲ church planters who are in Alabama

Learn about their work. You will have the opportunity to connect with them and their work during three sessions to meet with these Alabama folk who are sharing the Gospel in Alabama, across the U.S. and around the world.

For more information about Acts 1:8 Connections, please contact State Missionary Scotty Goldman at **1-800-264-1225**, ext. **387**, or **(334) 613-2387**, sgoldman@alsbom.org.



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

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
For more information, please contact Crystal Akers at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, cakers@alsbom.org.

MAC FOR GIRLS

(girls completing grades 2-6)

June 19-23, June 26-30, July 17-21

MAC FOR TEEN GIRLS

(girls completing grades 7-12)

June 19-23, July 17-21

EXTREME MAC FOR TEEN GIRLS

(girls completing grades 7-12)

June 12-14

MAC FOR CITs*

(girls completing grades 9-12)

June 26-30

MINI MAC FOR GIRLS

(girls completing grades 2-6)

June 12-14

MAC FOR GIRLS & BOYS

(coeds completing grades 2-6)

June 5-9, July 10-14

MOM & ME

(girls completing grades 2-6)

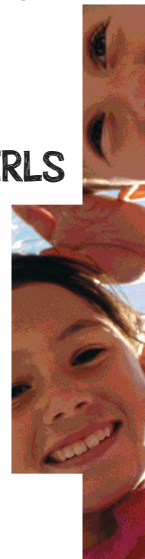
June 15-17

MOM & ME LITTLE

(girls completing grades K-3)

June 23-24

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



FOCUS on One Mission

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



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

Registration: alsbom.org/children-summit or 1-800-280-1105

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. • Facilitate 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.

An Interactive Leadership Conference

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



COST: \$305 per person with \$80 per person deposit at time of registration.

IN ADDITION TO MUSIC CAMP:

- Hiking Trails • Putt-Putt Golf • Basketball
- Volleyball • Pedal Boats • Horseshoes
- Octaball • Disc Golf • Poly Pong • Fishing
- Ropes Course • Paintball • Pedal Cars • Swimming

REGISTRATION/OTHER INFO: 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.

Watch our new promo video at mixmusiccamp.org



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



Come hear Nik and Ruth Ripken, IMB career missionaries who have visited 72 countries, as they lead this compelling event focused on the persecuted church. Nik is the author of *The Insanity of God* and *The Insanity of Obedience*. **This conference is a must** for mission pastors, pastors, and others seeking to penetrate the unreached people groups of our world, as well as our own neighborhoods, with the Gospel.



To register, scan this QR code or visit alsbom.org/iog.

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



CHOOSE FROM TWO LOCATIONS/TWO DATES – BOTH 10 A.M. - NOON:

Tuesday, September 12, 2017
Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Albertville

Thursday, September 14, 2017
Prattmont Baptist Church, Prattville

COST: \$10 per person (includes lunch)

Psalm 94:4 (NIV) says to

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song.



Join Frank Jones as he leads senior adults to sing hymns to God. Choose your location and day to join in

musical praise and "shout with joy to the Lord" in song! You may even want to come to both of these "Singin's."

ONLINE INFO AND REGISTRATION:

alsbom.org/senioradultsingin

For more information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.



Super Summer Alabama

July 10-14, 2017, Samford University

Super Summer Alabama is an intense week of discipleship and leadership training for students 8th-12th grade (completed). It is an amazing "beyond the basics" discipleship experience!

For registration, cost, camp schedule and other details, please go online to: supersummeral.org.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Scooter Kellum, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 280, or (334) 613-2280, skellum@alsbom.org or State Missionary Jamie Baldwin, ext. 240, (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Is Your Ministry Safe?

"We at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions are impressed with MinistrySafe as effective team equippers for churches to utilize in facing the growing challenges related to sexual abuse in our culture. Gregory Love and Kimberlee Norris are proven experts in helping churches and other ministry organizations train their leaders in sex abuse prevention and in preparation for dealing with these horrific problems when they occur. Being prepared ought to be our operating principle. MinistrySafe will help you to be prepared."

Rick Lance, Executive Director
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

MinistrySafe Workshop • TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017 • 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH, 2543 MORGAN RD., BESSEMER • LED BY GREG LOVE AND KIMBERLEE NORRIS

Visit alsbom.org/ministrysafe for updated information and to register.

Questions? Contact Ministry Assistant Nancy Cornett at 334-613-2208 or 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.

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

EQUIP

Leadership Training of Alabama WMU

July 21-22, 2017
Shocco Springs Conference Center
Talladega, Ala.

► Bible Study with
Sandy Wisdom Martin
Executive Director/
Treasurer, WMU, SBC



► For more info:
AlabamaWMU.org/Equip
800.264.1225 ext. 223
pingram@alsbom.org

Featuring:

- **OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP TRAINING** opportunities for new or seasoned WMU, Women's Ministry and Royal Ambassadors leaders
- **PERSONAL ENRICHMENT CONFERENCES** on a variety of topics that will challenge you to deepen your walk with Christ
- **MISSIONARY TESTIMONIES** that will draw you into God's plan for the nations
- **ALABAMA WMU BIENNIAL MEETING** and the election of new officers
- **FUN TIMES AND SWEET FELLOWSHIP**

as you go

Speak

Voice of Influence
(formerly Youth Evangelism Conference)

July 21-22

Vaughn Forest Church, 8660 Vaughn Rd., Montgomery

Cost: \$30 per person

messages from

Acton Bowen
Rick Burgess
Josh Holland



worship with
Rush of Fools

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.

Faith-Focused Safe Travel Training: Level A

State Board of Missions,

2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

CHOOSE FROM TWO DATES:

~ Thursday, August 31, 2017

~ Thursday, October 26, 2017



Cost: \$25 per person (*non-refundable, includes training, brunch and snacks*). Limited to 20 participants.

These generic Faith-Focused Safe Travel Trainings will be led by **David Dose**, founder and president of StrongHold Security Stewardship. The training will be taught via webinar/Skype. The completion of Level A training will provide you and your team Emergency Traveler Support while traveling overseas.

This training is highly recommended for all churches taking mission trips and is required for participants in State Board of Missions projects.

For more information or to register, go online to a18c.org/ffst or contact Ministry Assistant Sheron Poole at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 298, or (334) 613-2298, spoole@alsbom.org.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Check out our new promotional video at alsbom.org/boyscamp



MORE THAN JUST
BOYS CAMP...
IT'S ADVENTURE
WITH A PURPOSE!

2017 CAMP DATES & COST

Southeast Alabama-Ariton (near Ozark) ~~~~~
Vineyard Christian Retreat Center

July 6-8, 3rd-6th grade Boys Camp (\$100 per person)

July 6-8, 1st-3rd grade Boys & Dad or Mom (\$150 per pair)

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

July 20-22, 3rd-6th grade Boys Camp (\$100 per person)

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

Central Alabama-Cook Springs ~~~~~
WorldSong Camp

July 24-26, 3rd-6th grade Boys Camp (\$100 per person)

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 or contact Ministry Assistant Monica Thompson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 227, or (334) 613-2227, mthompson@alsbom.org.

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF BAPTIST SECRETARIES 56TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 11-14, 2018, SHOCCO

More info: alabamabaptistsecretaries.com



The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Awards will be given to those individuals who have demonstrated evidence of leadership that has advanced the church in four key areas: kingdom growth, ministry advancement, missions involvement and numerical growth.

The recipients will be from three categories – New Work (church less than ten years old), Established Work (church older than ten years), and Bivocational (church where pastor holds dual employment).

Nominations may be made by visiting alsbom.org/TLMLeadershipawards, or you may contact our office for a copy (see contact info below).

Send your nomination form to ≈ Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions ≈ LeaderCare & Church Health ≈ **Attn: Debbie Dickey** ≈ 2001 East South Blvd. ≈ Montgomery, AL 36116

The deadline for receiving nominations is September 22, 2017.

For more information call or email Debbie Dickey, ministry assistant, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218 or ddickey@alsbom.org.

Leadership Awards

ONE-DAY SEMINAR



OCTOBER 12, 2017

A TRAINING EVENT TO DEVELOP DISCIPLE MAKING LEADERS
impactdisciples.com

315 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Thursday, October 12, 2017 • 9:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.
State Board of Missions, 2001 East South Blvd., Montgomery

Theme: Raise up leaders after God's own heart... who raise up more leaders!

SPEAKER: Ken Adams, lead pastor, Crossroads Church, Newnan, Ga., founder of Impact Ministries and 315 Leadership Model

COST: \$25

THE 315 ONE-DAY IS FOR YOU IF:

- You need help in developing authentic church leaders.
- You want a proven process for producing more disciples.
- Your goal is to see leaders multiplied in your church.
- Your church is stuck or declining in growth!

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

ALABAMA BAPTIST DEACONS RETREAT

60th Annual Retreat for All Men and Boys

THEME:
ADVANCING CHRIST'S KINGDOM THROUGH DEACONSHIP

Online Info:
AlabamaDeaconsRetreat.org
Registration/Cost: 1-800-280-1105

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 11-12, SHOCCO SPRINGS



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Doctrine of Sin

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

The fact of sin forms the basis for giving attention to the doctrine of salvation as Theology 101 has done for a number of weeks. In weeks to come we will give thought to the doctrine of sin, the reality of which makes necessary the reality of salvation.

Before considering some of the ways the Bible describes sin we consider this week the convergence of three powerful proponents of sin, whether of sinful attitudes, sinful thoughts or sinful actions. All of us live daily in the vortex formed by these powerful compulsions seeking to lure us into sin. The three work together to become a formidable, unrelenting and unholy trinity. They are commonly referred to as the world, the flesh and the devil.

The world

This common term is sometimes reserved to refer to the spiritual forces that come against us from society around us as enticements to adopt its ways of thinking and acting. “The spirit of the world” is the way 1 Corinthians 2:12 summarizes society’s negative influences. Ephesians 2:2 voices a warning about walking “according to the course of this world.” Sadly much of life today unfolds under the indictment expressed in the title William Wordsworth gave to a poem, “The world is too much with us.” The world’s shallow glamour and glitz, its enticements and standards, as well as its definition of pleasure and its thoughtlessness about God and His commands lure people into behaviors that are polar opposites of godliness.

We may call it peer pressure or rename it political correctness. The Bible gives God’s summary judgment about the world’s role in tempting people into sin with the charge, “The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19).

The flesh

Just as “world” sometimes carries a meaning beyond a literal reference to the created order so “flesh” sometimes conveys a meaning beyond the physical

component of our bodies. That meaning is of an inward disposition to do wrong. We sometimes refer to this as our bent toward sinning.

In fact, Romans 7:23 describes this inclination toward or openness to sin as a law or principle that works in human beings, making us prisoners of sin. Galatians 5:17 cautions that the desires of the flesh are contrary to those prompted by God’s Spirit and then continues by listing a sampling of sinful deeds that flow from the flesh: sexual immorality and lewdness, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred and discord, envy and selfish ambitions, heresies and dissensions, murder and drunkenness and so on (Gal. 5:19–21).

The devil

From the beginning the Bible simply asserts the existence of the devil as the enemy of God and opponent of all that is upright and praiseworthy. The devil is described as deceptive and dangerous. He is portrayed as a lion seeking whom he might devour. He casts a powerful influence for evil and has the distinct advantage of being invisible. His strategy includes using the world and its enticements while also taking advantage of our inborn inclinations to do wrong to complete the unholy trinity that works together to multiply sinful thoughts and deeds.

A popular comedian in the 1970s popularized the phrase, “The devil made me do it.” But while the devil tempts, suggests and allures he does not make us sin. We choose to sin. He may plant an idea but we nurture the idea into willful action. At the end of the day we are the guilty party and the ones standing in need of salvation. †

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.



Developing generous givers part of June 3 workshop

Churches managed by a single staff member — the pastor — or a small number of paid and volunteer workers will want to have a representative at the upcoming workshop on church finances in Birmingham.

The “Small Church, Big Responsibility: How to be Financially Savvy No Matter Your Size” workshop presented by Samford University’s Ministry Training Institute will be June 3 from 9 a.m. to noon. There is no fee to attend and lunch is included.

The event is co-sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper.

Samford’s Gary Fenton and SBOM’s Jim Swedenburg will share information on stewardship, budgeting, increasing tithing and basic financial management.

Biblical understanding

Fenton, senior advancement officer at Samford and retired longtime pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, said the sessions will provide biblical understanding and how-tos related to teaching and preaching on stewardship with confidence.

“Generosity is not a personality trait,”

Fenton said. “It is a spiritual discipline.

“Biblical generosity builds community. When people do not hear the call to give, they also may not hear the call to community.”

“Paul’s last instructions to the Ephesians, his last quote of Jesus to this group, involves stewardship,” Fenton said. “Lack of stewardship is not lack of faith; often it is rejection — ‘I don’t give because I don’t believe.’”

Resources, consulting

Along with two instructional sessions, participants will have an opportunity for one-on-one consulting and will receive a workbook and resource bag if pre-registered.

Those not pre-registered will receive the workbooks and resource bags on a first-come, first-served basis until supplies run out.

The workshop will be held on the third floor of the Sullivan-Cooney Family Field House (the building on the south end of the football stadium, closest to Lakeshore Parkway and the west campus entrance).

For more information, call 205-726-4055, email mti@samford.edu or visit <https://www2.samford.edu/eve/index.php?formid=1643>. (TAB)

Southern Christian Writers Conference set for June 2–3 at FBC Tuscaloosa

For the 200 published and aspiring Christian writers who attend the Southern Christian Writers Conference (SCWC) each June, the event is as much of a family reunion as a training workshop.

And SCWC founders — David and Joanne Sloan and their daughter, Cheryl — meant for that to be the result when they launched the first conference 27 years ago.

“My initial goal for SCWC was to offer practical workshops where participants could learn the basics of writing,” Joanne Sloan said. “We also wanted to not only inform but inspire and motivate writers. We wanted participants to leave the conference ready to go home and begin writing.”

Participant reviews consistently note how everyone at the conference feels like

a friend and how quickly they bond with each other, even when it is their first time to attend.

Other reviews read like this one from the 2016 conference:

“I love the format and the content. I have attended several years, and every year there is a little something different, and I love that. I also love the fact that you consistently cover the basics. This has been a great conference! I cannot thank you enough for your servant ministry as writers. What a blessing and encouragement your conferences are.”

The conference is set for June 2–3 at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, and is limited to the first 200 people to register.

For more information or to register, visit scwconference.com. (TAB)

Alabaster's Westwood to host safety training

Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster, is hosting the Safety Ministry Alliance of Alabama on June 10. Organizational discussions will take place from 10 a.m. to noon and an on-site lunch will be held until 1 p.m. Special training will go until 4:30 p.m. where Reggie Parker, senior negotiator of the Hoover Police Department, will lead de-escalation techniques.

The recently formed alliance aims to assist any faith-based organization with a security program or anyone wishing to establish a program with a time to share ideas and receive training, said Spruce McRee,

director of security at Crosscreek Baptist Church, Pelham, and fire chief of Brierfield Fire and Rescue.

“We have found that [so] many churches wish to protect their flock but are uncertain just how to go about it. That is our goal,” he said, noting Proverbs 27:12: “A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.”

To find out the cost for lunch and make reservations, contact McRee at 205-908-3850 or tvmcree@gmail.com. Kenneth Bruce is pastor of Westwood. (TAB)



Across
ALABAMA'S *Associations*

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

BIRMINGHAM

▶ **Sixth Avenue Church, Birmingham**, will host a community VBS on June 12–16. To register visit <https://goo.gl/6R7EW3>. John Cantelow is pastor.

CAHABA

▶ **Danny Sumerlin** recently resigned as pastor of **Ocmulgee Church, Selma**, after 9 years to become the pastor of Friendship Church, Malone, Florida.

COFFEE

VBS set for ▶ **First Church, Enterprise**, June 4, 4–7 p.m. and June 5–8, 8:30 a.m.–noon. Ben Bowden, pastor. ▶ **Ino Church, Kinston**, June 4, 5–8 p.m. and June 5–8, 6–9 p.m. Garry Winstead, pastor. ▶ **Roeton Church**,

Brundidge, June 5–9, 5:30–8:30 p.m. Bill Hart, pastor.

CALHOUN

▶ **First Church, McClellan**, in Anniston, will hold a yard and jewelry sale June 10, 7:30 a.m.–noon to benefit a Nicaragua missions trip. Donald Sills is pastor.

FAYETTE

▶ **John Killian** is the new director of missions for **Fayette Association**. A past president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, he previously served as pastor of Maytown Church for 19 years. He also served at Sharon Heights Church, Birmingham, and First Church, Boldo, in Jasper; taught at New Orleans Seminary extension; and has served on multiple boards, committees and in elected posi-



KILLIAN

University of West Alabama and a master of divinity and doctorate from New Orleans. He and his wife, Jeanie, have two children.

MONTGOMERY

▶ **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will hold VBS on June 4–9, 6 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Donnie Dickens is pastor. ✝

tions within the state and national conventions. Killian holds a bachelor's degree from Tennessee Temple University, a master's degree from the



(augmented reality)

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SENIOR PASTOR

Full time for FBC Chalkville, Birmingham, Alabama. Please send resumé to: 2100 Old Springville Rd., Birmingham, AL 35215, Attn: Beryl McWaters or email fbccchalkville@att.net.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

First Baptist Church, Union Grove, is seeking a bivocational music director. Submit resumé to: FBC Union Grove, P.O. Box 125, Union Grove, AL 35175.

OTHER POSITIONS

MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Valley Creek Baptist Church is seeking a ministry assistant (30–32 hours) to serve alongside our lead pastor and pastor to families and children. Microsoft software experience is essential. Communication and public relations are vital to the collaborative team ministry approach. VCBC serves the areas of Hueytown, Bessemer and McCalla and is committed to making disciples who make disciples. Resumés can be mailed to: Valley Creek Baptist Church, 3523 Virginia Dr., Hueytown, AL 35023 or emailed to: info@vcbchurch.com.

MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Taylorville Baptist, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, seeking full-time ministry assistant. Knowledge of Microsoft Office, phone tree

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Kenneth "Ken" Farley

Church development director Farley dies at 65

Kenneth "Ken" Farley, church development director for Columbia Baptist Association, died May 15. He was 65.

Farley earned his bachelor's degree from Mobile College (now University of Mobile) before taking his first pastorate at First Baptist Church, Axis, in 1978. He then served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Orange Beach, and Zion Baptist Church, Mobile, before taking a sabbatical to earn his doctorate from Covington Theological Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Before joining the Columbia Association staff in 2001, Farley served as education director for Shiloh Baptist Church, Saraland.

As church development director for the association he worked closely with disaster relief efforts, men's ministries and special projects such as Biker Ministry and Raceway Ministries. He also assisted churches with their educational and missions needs.

Farley also was serving as interim pastor of Pilgrim Home Baptist Church, Wicksburg, at the time of his passing. Altogether he served as a pastor for more than 20 years.

He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Kathy. (TAB)



FARLEY

Grady Cothen

Former pastor, SBC leader Cothen dies at 96

Former Alabama Baptist pastor Grady Cothen — president of the Baptist Sunday School Board from 1974 to 1984 — died May 19 at 96.

Cothen also served as executive secretary of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California (1961–66), president of Oklahoma Baptist University (1966–70) and as president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1970–74) before going to the Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources).

A native of Mississippi, Cothen received an undergraduate degree from Mississippi College in Clinton, a master of Christian training from New Orleans Seminary and three honorary doctorates. (BP)

New Home Baptist builds outdoor Bible camp to reach community

Pastor David Smith's long-time dream to host camp meetings through the ministry of New Home Baptist Church, Pisgah, may just have come true.

New Home recently built a Bible camp with an outdoor meeting area on property near the church. A variety of events such as camp meetings — a form of revival held outdoors — youth activities and Bible studies will be held at the camp. The first event was held in mid-May.

'Great blessing'

"I have preached in various camp meetings and conferences and revivals and that led me to a burden for that type of ministry because I have found that there is a great blessing in this type of meeting," Smith said. "I shared the vision with some church leadership and we began praying about purchasing some land."

Prayers were answered when a longtime Tennessee River Baptist Association pastor and personal friend of Smith's — Kenneth Higgins and his wife, JoAnn — donated a 20-acre plot of land.

Smith added, "We didn't even have to ask for the land, they just graciously gave it to us."

Refreshing

New Home church members are excited to host camp meetings because "the meetings are refreshing for the saints of God, and we [as the church] believe that we will be able to reach the community in a different way through this ministry," Smith



Photo courtesy of New Home Baptist Church

New Home Baptist Church, Pisgah, debuts its tabernacle in mid-May. The tabernacle was built as part of the congregation's new Bible camp constructed on property near the church.

said. "People that might not come on Sunday could possibly come to an open-air camp meeting."

Church members are referring to the meeting area at the camp as "the tabernacle" because they believe the Lord will meet them there, Smith said.

"New Home's goal is to encourage its members in their faith and be a blessing to revive and refresh believers, because if the church is going to reach the lost then the church needs to be refreshed and revived," he said. (Caleb Jones)

Retired Pastor Max Youngblood recommends

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YEARS

1843 2018

According to the July 15, 1843, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*: Bro. Oliver Welch challenged an essay by Bro. Jesse Hartwell concerning the ordination of the apostle Paul. Welch argued against ordination of those "too young or too much unqualified for this solemn responsibility."

"As learned as [Paul] was and as old as he was at the time of his conversation, he waited more than 10 years before the prophets and teachers in Antioch laid hands on him and sent him forth as an ordained preacher." (TAB)

My JESUS Story —

By Jenni Ingram
Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

The other day, my husband and I were blessed by a family member to be able to go to our favorite restaurant to eat. As we were leaving, the server's tip was handed to the cashier who assured us that she would get it. I felt a little guilty because I wanted to hand it directly to her but then the thought hit me, my conscience is clear.

Then I literally stopped in my tracks because I applied this same feeling to my relationship with the Lord and wondered if my conscience was clear in God's eyes. Was I carrying some unconfessed sin in my heart?

If Jesus called me home as I was walking out of that restaurant, could I stand before Him and know all my sins were covered under the blood of Jesus? I do pray for forgiveness immediately when I realize I have sinned, but when was the last time I really reviewed my life and fully repented (turned away) from it all?

When was the last time I had a nasty thought? Even if I never said it out loud it's a sin.

When was the last time I gossiped before I realized what I was doing? Mmmm hmmm, yep, there was guilt there and it broke my heart.

It was then with much trepidation in my heart that I went before the throne of Jesus and asked Him to help me examine my heart and confess any sin that I may not be aware of consciously and repent of it.

Warning — Be prepared with tissues in hand if you ask that of Him. He loves us more than we could ever imagine. He gave us Jesus as our intercessor.

Examine your heart, ask His forgiveness and leave those sins to the enemy. You are God's child.✠

When a pastor's kid doubts her faith

Max Lucado's daughter shares how expectations affected her walk with God

By Andrea Lucado
May 4 blog post at MaxLucado.com

My dad tells this story from when I was five years old. He was teaching me and my two sisters about the Garden of Eden. In the middle of the story, I interrupted, "Wait, if God didn't want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree, why'd He put it in the garden?" And thus my impulsively inquisitive nature reared its head.

Such questions and concerns have never quite left me. I've always felt the need to ask "why?" until I get a sufficient answer. I consider this a gift now. Curiosity and questioning are what have led me to deeper truths about God and about myself and others. But when you grow up as a pastor's daughter, there are expectations.

Growing up in church

My father, Max, has been the pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio for almost 30 years — my entire life. I do not know life apart from church and apart from being a visible member of the church. For the most part, this has been a wonderful and enriching place for me and my growth as a believer in Jesus. But somewhere along the way, while being raised in front of the congregation's eye, I began to carry the weight of expectations. I needed to act a certain way. I needed to look a certain way. And, I needed to believe a certain way. My faith needed to be strong like my mother's and father's. It needed to match my poised exterior.

So I kept my doubts to myself. I talked to my parents about them but few others. I grew inward in my faith. I kept it private for fear of others knowing that I asked questions like that one when I was five years old.

In the church of my childhood, and still today, there is a prayer time at the end of the service. Several members of the congregation called "prayer partners" line the front of the auditorium, and the rest of the church body is invited to come forward for prayer. No

one told me I shouldn't go forward for prayer during that time, but because I had internalized those faith expectations, I didn't think I was allowed to. I never even considered it. Not once.

What would people think if I, Andrea Lucado, went forward for prayer? They would think my prayer life was not strong enough on its own. They would think something was wrong with me or my family. I saved the prayer partners for those who were brave enough to be prayed over in public.

I wonder if this happens to other pastors' kids. If somehow in the midst of all of the church people we know, we end up living private spiritual lives. I had quiet times. I read and studied and prayed, but I did so alone.

I lived my private spiritual life for as long as I could, until it didn't work anymore. Until the doubts grew overwhelming.

I moved to Oxford the fall after I graduated college. I went there for a master's program in English literature at a school called Oxford-Brookes.

During the year I was there, the questions that had been rumbling beneath the surface came out in full bloom. The world of Oxford academia will do that to you. Being plucked out of the Bible Belt and dropped into post-Christian Europe will do that to you. Being the only Christian in your class for the first time in your life will do that to you.

Why do I believe what I believe?

Would I still be a Christian if I had not been raised in a Christian home?

Why do the atheists and agnostics I know seem more peaceful and loving than many of the Christians I know?

These questions swirled round and round in my head. My nights turned restless with them. And my quiet times, the ones I had been faithfully keeping since high school? They turned, well, quiet. So quiet that they only echoed my own voice back to me. "Anyone out there? Anyone out there? Anyone?"

Someone talking to God

What I wanted instead — what I needed — wasn't God, but someone, a physical real-person someone, to show me the way. I wanted to talk to someone who I knew was talking to God, even if I couldn't or just didn't want to.

I found that in a friend in Oxford. He was kind. He was fun. And his faith was not in turmoil as mine was. He had a steadiness to him that I craved. We didn't talk much about my own faith. We went on walks and ate out at restaurants and drank tea on my couch to keep our hands warm in the winter months. It seemed that being near him was exactly what I needed that year. I needed to simply talk to someone who was talking to God.

The people who talk to God, as I learned, can do a lot for you and for your faith if you let them. I once heard author and pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber speak. During the Q-and-A session at the end, a guy

stood up and said, "I had faith and it was strong, but now I'm doubting. I feel weak in my faith. What should I do?"

Bolz-Weber's suggestion? "You can take a break now. Let someone else on the pew be strong for you."

I like this idea of giving each other permission to take a break from trying and let the others on the pew be strong for us for a little while. This is not something I gave myself permission to do growing up as a pastor's daughter, but it is something I am a strong advocate for now.

I left Oxford with a deeper faith than I had when I arrived. The restless nights eventually led to a knowing and a peace, largely due

to that friend and a few others on the pew I let be strong for me for a while.

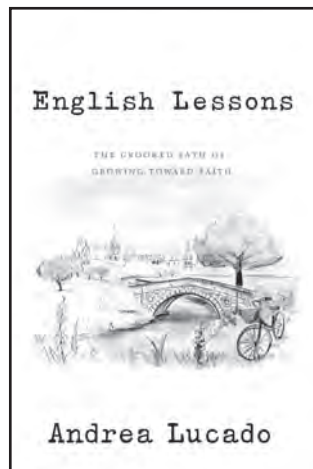
I still find it difficult to go forward in church for prayer. I default to keeping up appearances and appearing strong and fine but I'm getting there. God has been gentle and patient with me and I hope that one day, when the pastor calls for the

time of prayer, I'll be the first running down the aisle.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Andrea Lucado is a freelance writer and the author of "English Lessons: The Crooked Path of Growing Toward Faith" (WaterBrook & Multnomah). She blogs regularly at AndreaLucado.com. This blog post from MaxLucado.com was used with permission.✠



LUCADO



Grateful to Alabama Disaster Relief volunteers

By Mark Wakefield
Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have risen to the occasion to serve those affected by recent floods in Missouri and Arkansas.

Chilton and Morgan Baptist associations sent teams to Missouri in May. And West

Cullman and Tuskegee-Lee Baptist associations were serving in Arkansas at press time.

Three other teams were prepared to assist. But because of the efforts of many volunteers, Missouri or Arkansas were able to see a significant reduction in the jobs to be completed.

That means Baldwin, Etowah

and Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist associations had teams ready to go but were no longer needed. One can imagine the disappointment for them.

Alabama Baptists are grateful for these volunteers and all who are committed to providing hope and help in Jesus' name.✠

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Pruned by God

Oakland A's pitcher prays teammates will see Jesus in him

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For Oakland A's pitcher Daniel Coulombe, faith is at the center of all he does — and it shows. However, he says, this closeness with Christ wasn't always his reality. Coulombe (pronounced KOO-lohm)

was at Texas Tech University in Lubbock when he started his personal relationship with Christ and says his "life changed from there."

"It took Christ four years of pruning me and me denying Him and running away from Him," he said. "He kept pruning me and pruning me to follow Him. He completely opened my eyes to Him and it became a blessing. That day when I was 22 years old is when I gave my life to Him and started trusting Him ... ever since it's not the most glamorous thing or easiest thing walking in Christ but it's the most fulfilling thing."

Part of the "pruning" process was a series of injuries Coulombe sustained, beginning in college.

Although he was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers out of high school in 2008 in the 17th round, he chose to play at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles on a scholarship instead. There he ran into health issues that affected his athletic performance.

He soon transferred to South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona, and sustained a shoulder injury in the first inning of the season. He would later have shoulder surgery and he began to feel like he was about to strike out of baseball altogether.

He then enrolled at Texas Tech but on March 11, 2011, tore a ligament in his pitching elbow and underwent surgery to repair the tear.

He recovered and was able to return for the 2012 season, where Coulombe was 1-0 in 10 games with a

2.53 ERA. He was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers later that year.

Coulombe played with the Dodgers' Minor League from 2012 through 2014 and then pitched his first Major League game with the team in September 2014. That season he was traded to Oakland to initially play with the Nashville Sounds of the Pacific Coast

League, eventually getting promoted to pitch for the A's in 2016.

"Jesus is the reason why I am here," said Coulombe, a left-hander who is one of the best relievers in Major League Baseball. "He is the reason why I play baseball. He has blessed me with this ability."

Former Chattanooga Lookouts manager Razor Shines called Coulombe one of the "better people" and said those around him "are fortunate." He observed Coulombe's faith in action.

"He lives it," Shines said. "He walks it. It's on his sleeves. He walks to the light. He does everything correctly and if he doesn't, nobody is going to believe it anyway because he is that good of a person."

While admitting it is tough sometimes to be a Christian, Coulombe

prays that teammates will see Jesus when they look at him.

"I want them to say that you can tell that he enjoys being here — he smiles all the time, he enjoys coming to the ballpark and you can tell there is something different about him," he said.

Coulombe says that being part of the major leagues has provided him with a public way to exhibit his faith.

"It's a great platform," he said. "People look up to you and you don't know exactly what God has in store for you, but definitely while you are doing this you enjoy it and use it to show Christ, to love Him and to bring others to Christ." ✝



Daniel Coulombe

commons.wikimedia.org

"Jesus is the reason why I am here. He is the reason why I play baseball. He has blessed me with this ability."

Daniel Coulombe
Oakland A's pitcher



Christian recovery programs help fight epidemic

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — In 2016 more than 900 people in British Columbia died of drug overdoses, a record and an 80 percent increase from 2015. The culprit: fentanyl, an opioid painkiller 100 times more powerful than morphine. The smallest error in dosage can be fatal.

Overprescription of opioid painkillers created demand for the powerful drugs. In the early 2000s Canadians were being prescribed opioids such as oxycodone even for chronic pain. Illicit manufacturers soon began producing fentanyl pills using cheap, easily imported chemicals from China. First responders started seeing staggering numbers of overdoses.

And along with the increase in addictions came challenges in finding a bed in a recovery program, according to a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. Under British Columbia's health care system, addicts are eligible to receive \$30 Canadian (\$21 U.S.) per day for treatment, which they pay to rehab programs such as one of the 19 Christian-run recovery homes.

Luke 15 House is one of those homes. Named after a chapter of the New Testament that contains parables of loss and redemption, Luke 15 gets the rest of its funding from fundraising initiatives, private donors and various local churches.

The center has space for 24 men, who often arrive straight out of jail and are encouraged to stay for at least 10 months. They go on a 12-step program that combines an Alcoholics Anonymous-type plan with Scripture study and are assigned a structured daily routine that includes daily prayer and dinners with former residents to see that a drug-free life is possible. (RNS)

New Tribes Mission changes name to Ethnos360

SANFORD, Fla. — New Tribes Mission USA is celebrating its 75th anniversary with the announcement of its formal name change to Ethnos360. New Tribes Mission was founded in 1942 by American missionaries Paul Fleming, Cecil A. Dye, Lance B. Latham and M. Robert Williams. They had a vision for reaching people groups with no access to the gospel.

With a determination to maintain the foundation of that vision in the face of shifting world dynamics, organizational leaders knew a name change was needed. And they believe Ethnos360 is the name that anchors the ministry to that foundation while pointing it to its vision.

"Ethnos" is the nations that Christ referred to when He commanded His followers to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) and said "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all the nations" (Luke 24:47).

The entirety of the globe is represented with the "360" — all 360 degrees. Ethnos360's goal is to go wherever in the world is necessary to see a thriving church for every people.

For more information on Ethnos360 and its formal name change, visit ethnos360.org. (TAB)

Cake bakers take case to UK's Supreme Court

LONDON — Two cake bakers in Northern Ireland who were found guilty of discriminating against gay people are now bringing their case to the United Kingdom's Supreme Court, according to The Christian Post.

Daniel and Amy McArthur of Ashers Baking Company incurred \$258,000 in legal bills and were forced to pay \$657 in damages to a gay rights activist, Gareth Lee, who sued them after they refused to bake a wedding cake with a pro-gay "marriage" slogan. The couple refused on the grounds that it went against their religious beliefs.

"The fact that the Supreme Court is willing to hear arguments ... reflects the importance of the issues and the high-profile nature of the case," said Daniel McArthur, according to the Post. The ruling had been previously upheld by an appeals court.

Despite the controversy, the company has done well, with profits rising to about \$1.94 million in 2016, up from \$1.68 million in 2015. The company has seven outlets across the country. (TAB)