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Photo courtesy of Adam Bishop

Urban Nations Outreach holds a Back to School bash in 2016 in the Jackson Heights area of New York City.

# Breaking barriers

## 'God opened my eyes:' Alabama native spurred to reach nations

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**B**rittany Hall didn't feel too much of a pull to international missions. Then one day she agreed to go on a missions trip to Honduras with her church, First Baptist, Dadeville.

"God opened my eyes and rocked my world," she said. "I met people who had never heard the name of Jesus before. Technically I had

known those people existed, but growing up in Alabama, it's not something you see as much."

To come face to face with it was different, she said — and it made her different.

### Not if but where

"There were people who told me that some of the things I was feeling was a missions trip high and they would go away," Hall said. "But they never did."

She knew she had to do something about the people who had never heard the name of Jesus. "I knew I had to be a part of changing it," she said. "It wasn't a question of 'if' but 'where.'"

Hall started using all of her vacation time to go on trips and see where God might be leading her. Eventually she began to sense that God might want her to join a team in Asia. She would be teaching English at a university there and it

seemed like a good fit, Hall said. She began to work through the application process.

"During that time, one of my good friends had a friend who was moving up to New York City to do missions," Hall said. "She said, 'I really think you should talk to my friend. What she's doing seems like it would fit you well.'"

That friend was Erin Bishop, who along with her husband, Adam, (See 'Catching,' page 3)

Coming next week:

# BACK TO CAMPUS

Fall 2017

# COMMENT

## Modeling the Majesty of Ministry

The apostle Peter makes it clear. Every Christian is supposed to be an active participant in the ministry of the gospel. Still there are times when we need someone to encourage us by modeling the majesty of ministry in Jesus' name.

In 1 Peter 2, Peter describes Jesus' followers as "living stones" being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (v. 5).

He continues in verse 9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."

That which once belonged to Israel now belonged to God's new creation, the Church. That which was once the domain of the Old Testament priests now belonged to the believers in Jesus.

There can be no doubt. All Christian believers are called to serve the cause of Christ through His church. That was the earliest New Testament pattern as Acts 8:4 affirms when the writer reports, "Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went."

Both in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul expands the theme of every Christian being a minister of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 12:7 he writes, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." Paul affirms that each believer is gifted by God and the purpose of that gift is "for the common good."

### Body of Christ

Spiritual gifts are not for the private enjoyment or personal indulgence of the believer. Every gift is to be used to build up the body of Christ.

That point is made again in Ephesians 4:12 where Paul also says that spiritual gifts are "to prepare God's people for works of service so



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

that the body of Christ may be built up."

Building up the body of Christ does not mean the church can be indifferent to those outside the church or become a closed society hiding from the world. It was Jesus Himself who taught that those who believe in Him should seek both the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

### In word and deed

It is by engaging with the world through missions and ministry that Christ is made known in word and deed. Believers seek God's righteousness as they pursue justice and mercy and well-being of those around them so others will see the good works and glorify the Father in heaven.

The Christian faith is not like a coat that can be worn on Sunday and hung in the closet the other days of the week. The Christian faith is an expression of one's true personhood. The love of God permeates all that the believer is, all that the believer does. That is the implication of "living stones" being built into a spiritual house.

One writer noted, "The church needs teachers, social workers, parents, politicians, entrepreneurs, artisans and more who have captured a vision of their Christian citizenship and put it to work in their vocations."

The goal is all of God's people working together for the kingdom of God. If a pastor is

forced to do most of the work of ministry instead of ministry being done by all the people of God then the majesty of ministry erodes as the biblical truth of being "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" is lost through careless practice.

Despite clear biblical teaching it is still true that sometimes believers need encouragement as they grow in God's grace. Some may need a model to help them see the possibilities of the majesty of ministry in Jesus' name.

To some extent the elected leaders of a local church, especially the deacons, have the privilege of modeling the majesty of ministry.

The Baptist Faith and Message teaches the church has two spiritual offices: pastors and deacons. In the New Testament the terms "pastor," "elder" and "overseer" are used interchangeably. Historically, Baptists chose the word "pastor" to describe this office.

"Deacon" refers to a lay leader in the church. Interestingly little is said about the duties of the office. That may be because function may change based on needs and circumstances. Some might describe it as the context of ministry. But it should not be forgotten that the word translated "deacon" means "servant."

### Qualifications of a deacon

More is said about the qualifications of a deacon. In broad strokes, a deacon is to be a person of integrity; one who is dignified, tells the truth, is self-controlled and is not self-centered. The deacon is to evidence spiritual growth being sound in the faith. A deacon is to live life under the lordship of Jesus (see 1 Tim. 3:8-12).

Lay leaders like deacons are most influential in modeling what it means to be part of the "royal priesthood" of our Lord, to seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Lay leaders help establish attitudes about missions and ministry, about leadership and service.

Deacons help cast vision and set directions, establish values and set the tone of the congregation.

Deacons and other lay leaders help demonstrate the partnership in ministry the people of the church enjoy with their pastor.

Through their personal examples deacons help shape the culture of their congregation by modeling the majesty of ministry by all the people of God. As they lead, others will follow.

Baptists believe in the priesthood of all believers because that is what the Bible teaches. Every follower of Christ should know the majesty of ministry in Jesus name. We are indebted to all of those who encourage us in that effort by effectively modeling that all people are called to be ministers for our Lord. ☩

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### 'PROVIDING HOPE'

Thank you for the long overdue article "Providing Hope" in the June 1 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*. "The 5 Ways to Advocate for Life" section was excellent.

There is, however, another equally important action that must be taken to stem the holocaust in our state. Nothing can substitute for standing in front of the state's abortion businesses and providing a listening ear and materials to direct abortion-minded

women to the closest crisis pregnancy center.

Every believer in Jesus Christ should confront the magnitude of this evil of baby sacrifice by standing and praying in front of 1 of the 5 abortion mills in this state while they are open.

It also is extremely important to get to know the people who have already been standing in front of those abortion mills, some for years, offering hope and help to the abortion-minded women going inside.

The women considering abortion need to know clearly and directly that hope and help is available in choosing life for their baby girl or boy. If someone is not there to communicate, through sign and/or word, then they might never know.

Lyle Palmer  
Northport, Ala. ☩



# ✠ 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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# Catching the vision

## Team of Alabamians work together, see God do 'cool things' in NYC

(continued from page 1)

and three kids left Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, a few years back to partner with Urban Nations Outreach to reach South Asians in the Jackson Heights area of New York City.

"I was kind of like, 'Thanks but no thanks, I already know what I'm going to be doing,'" Hall said.

She sent a message to Erin Bishop just to be courteous to their mutual friend. But soon Erin Bishop had convinced her just to come check it out.

"Two weeks later I flew up there and served with them for a weekend," Hall said. That was in May 2015. And it was not at all what she thought it was going to be.

### 'Like entering another country'

"When you step off the plane and come into Jackson Heights, it's like entering another country," Hall said.

On one block it may feel like you are in Colombia; on the next, you may be in Little Bangladesh, she said.

"It just started clicking for me that I was working with all of these unreached people groups," Hall said. "I began to realize that this was exactly where God wanted me."

That October she resigned from her job and in December, after raising support, she moved to Jackson Heights.

Adam Bishop, who was the missions pastor at Heritage Baptist before moving his family to New York, said they were thankful to have her.

"Brittany has been a huge, huge asset to us," he said. "God definitely put this team together. We work really well together and God has allowed others to catch our vision."

The vision is to reach South Asians — Pakistanis, Nepalis, Tibetans and Bangladeshis



Photo courtesy of Adam Bishop

Alabama native Brittany Hall says serving with Urban Nations Outreach in the Jackson Heights area of New York City is 'like entering another country' on each city block.

— through a community center right in the heart of Jackson Heights. Hall teaches English there and builds relationships with the purpose of sharing the gospel. Other teammates serve there as well.

### 'Favor in the community'

When the center was started, relationships eventually turned into a Tuesday night Bible study in April 2016, which turned into a Sunday morning church service a year later.

The church meets on the second floor of a

restaurant owned by a Pakistani Muslim.

"God has given us favor in the community," Adam Bishop said. "He has been doing some cool things."

They have seen people hear the gospel for the first time, grow more and more open to accepting Christ and then be baptized, Hall said. "We are seeing barriers broken down. People are responding to the gospel."

For more information about Hall's ministry at Jackson Heights, email her at [light-uptheworld@att.net](mailto:light-uptheworld@att.net). ✠

## Nominee for religious liberty post 'exceptional'

When the White House announced July 26 that President Donald Trump planned to nominate Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback for the U.S. State Department's top religious liberty post, praise poured in from Southern Baptist religious freedom advocates.

Brownback, who is in his second term as Kansas' governor, will be nominated as ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Brownback will bring vast public service experience and a history of global religious liberty advocacy to the post.

Russell Moore, the Southern Baptist Convention's lead religious liberty proponent, described Brownback as "an outstanding choice" who will be "an exceptional ambassador." (BP)

## PASTORS: *A quick tip*

### Help your church grow

More churches are finding themselves plateaued or declined. While there can be complex issues involved, these tips may help.

1. Don't disguise the lack of growth.
2. Be willing to meet your particular situation head on.
3. Evaluate your current strategy and make sure it is focused on growth.
4. As your church analyzes/develops a plan for growth look at how many budget

dollars and volunteer hours are being invested in personal/church evangelism. Many are surprised how small the percentage is.

5. As a church develops a plan for growth involve many people in the process and implementation. If only the pastor and staff are involved, it will usually be the pastor and staff carrying out the plan. Our role as pastors is to equip the saints to do the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

6. Part of the growth plan should include measureable goals. Instead of setting a goal for how many lost people to be saved/baptized, set a goal for the number of people the church will share the gospel with. We have no control over who will be saved but can determine how many we will attempt to present the gospel to. The Holy Spirit does the saving.

—Chip Warren, ministry leader ✠

## SPEAK CONFERENCE



# Kingdom impact

Photo by Ashleigh Hicks

## SPEAK conference draws 900-plus, challenges students to be 'voice of influence'

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
The Alabama Baptist

Using the hashtag #speak17, students took their praise of Alabama's annual SPEAK conference to the place they know best — social media.

By the end of the conference, held July 21–22 at Vaughn Forest Church, Montgomery, more than 600 Instagram posts and dozens of tweets and Facebook posts

featured the hashtag. "With my faves," posted one student. Another wrote, "God moved in all of us. What a great night!" "It has made me a new person," one posted after Saturday's final session.

### 'God-filled experience'

Scooter Kellum, youth ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), called the weekend an "exciting" and "God-filled experience."

Chris Mills, state missionary with a focus on collegiate ministry for SBOM, said ini-

tial numbers indicated the 2017 conference would be one of the best attended in recent years, with a little more than 900 students and leaders registered.

SPEAK, formerly the Youth Evangelism Conference, is an annual summer event for youth ministries across the state. The goals of the conference are to reach lost students and to equip, inspire and motivate students to go back to their communities and reach others with the gospel.

"This is not just another conference. It's a life-changing moment," emcee and state missionary Larry Hyche told the crowd on Friday night.

Messages shared during the three main sessions centered on this year's theme, "Voice of Influence," and encouraged students to recognize the potential Kingdom impact their words can have.

"Jesus is not looking for more fans. He's looking for followers. He's looking for students who are willing to go to their schools and communities and live the gospel," said Friday night's speaker, Gadsden-based evangelist Acton Bowen.

Using Mark 8 as his text, Bowen told those gathered that when Jesus said to "take up your cross," He was drawing a line in the sand (v. 34).

"Jesus didn't die on the cross so we could go to church. He died on the cross so we'll be the church," Bowen said.

**"Jesus didn't die on the cross so we could go to church."**

**He died on the cross so we'll be the church."**

**Acton Bowen evangelist**

In the Saturday morning session, Birmingham-based radio personality Rick Burgess told the crowd there is a big difference between being a believer in Jesus and a follower of Jesus.

"We have to decide if we want to be serious, influential followers of Jesus," Burgess said.

Using 1 Timothy 4 as his text, Burgess advised youth leaders to be mentors to the students in their churches, just as Paul was to Timothy.

Burgess had a message for students too.

"Paul doesn't give Timothy a pass or lower the standards because Timothy is young," Burgess said. "You are responsible for your own walk — not the church, not your parents. Age doesn't reduce the standard of how influential you should be. You are called to defend the faith, called to advance the kingdom of God — and you're called to do that now."

In the Saturday afternoon session, student pastor-turned church planter Josh Holland began with question: "What's it going to take for us to speak — to use the influence that God has given us?"



Photo by Doug Rogers

Spoken word artist Shantrice Coleman, a high school senior from Louisiana, shares at each session of SPEAK conference, held July 21–22.

***“Age doesn’t reduce the standard of how influential you should be. You are called to defend the faith, called to advance the Kingdom of God, and you’re called to do that now.”***

**Rick Burgess**  
radio personality

He urged students to be courageous in taking the gospel to their communities after the conference. Citing Romans 10:1 in which Paul, speaking of the Israelites, expresses a desire that “they might be saved,” Holland asked students to consider who might be a “they” in their lives.

“Is it one of your friends at school? Someone in your family? A neighbor on your street? An unreached people group somewhere around the world? We have a message we get to proclaim. The question is, what are we going to do about it?”

**‘Short window’**

During the Saturday morning breakout sessions, Holland spoke to younger students, providing strategies for witnessing to unbelievers. Kimberly Andrews, Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) campus minister at the University of Alabama and Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, spoke to older students about preparing for a life on mission during college. Hyche spoke to leaders about the importance of disciple making in student ministry.

“We have a short window with students,” Hyche said. “It’s not just about fun. We need to be teaching, growing and developing disciples who can defend their faith.”

Trent Nolen, student minister at First Baptist Church, Demopolis, in Bethel Baptist Association, likes the event’s focus on evangelism.

“As a minister [who] challenges my students to use their everyday circumstances as opportunities to speak to others about their faith, SPEAK ’17 served as a great resource to encourage and even equip my students for evangelism.”

**God is always there**

Throughout the weekend, Alabama-based contemporary Christian band Rush of Fools led musical worship. Lead singer Wes Willis shared his family’s struggle with miscarriage as they attempted to have their fourth child.

“God never promised that we wouldn’t have storms, only that He would walk through them with us,” Willis said.

Leighann, a student at Rocky Creek Baptist Church, Alexander City, in Tallapoosa Baptist Association, said Willis’ testimony made an impression on her.

“It taught me that God is always with me no matter the circumstances,” she said.

Spoken word artist Shantrice Coleman, a high school senior from Louisiana who spoke at each session, also made an impression.

“It just amazes me to see so many kids my age living for the Lord because you

don’t see that very often,” Leighann said.

Stephanie Wingler, who serves with her husband, Anthony, as youth leaders at Fresh Rain Family Worship Center, Millbrook, in Autauga Baptist Association, said it was her first time at SPEAK but won’t be her last.

“We were blown away. Our students loved the speakers and worship, and of course, the Saturday night lip sync battle,” Wingler said. “They all said they were glad they went and each one received and took away something, which was awesome.”

SPEAK 2018 will be held July 20–21 at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery. The theme for 2018 is “Tell Your Story.” For announcements about conference leaders and registration deadlines, visit the student ministries website at [ymlink.org](http://ymlink.org) or follow “YM Link” on social media.✝



Photo by Doug Rogers

Alabama-based contemporary Christian band Rush of Fools leads worship during SPEAK conference in Montgomery on July 21–22.



Photo by Doug Rogers

**DECISIONS RECORDED**

**49** students indicated that they accepted Christ as their Savior

**177** students recommitted their life to Christ and His purpose

**422** students indicated they were committed to sharing Christ with their friends

**202** students said they were interested in serving in a missions experience while they were in school

This year’s SPEAK conference was one of the best attended statewide youth events in recent years, with more than 900 students and leaders involved.



# New online training resource to help Sunday School leaders

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's almost time. Sunday School leaders (both within Alabama and from other states) are only days away from access to a new online training resource.

An Aug. 13 event will mark the launch of this new leader training approach spearheaded by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) — One Great Sunday.

"For several years, we have experimented with churches on the best approach to train leadership," said Daniel Edmonds, director of the office of Sunday School and discipleship for SBOM. "We know that churches with trained leaders are healthy and growing. The problem is that so much is vying for the time of our leaders, so finding the one best time to train is exceedingly difficult."

Enter the virtual training approach, allowing groups or individuals to access the training in real-time or view the recorded sessions at a later time online. This digital platform means churches are able to create different environments for their training sessions as well.

"Some churches have indicated they will do an event on Aug. 13, other churches will do their event later and others will hold leaders accountable to watch at home," Edmonds said. "Several church leaders have

indicated they will not do the training at their church but will go to a leader's home, have a cookout and then they will put the videos on a big screen for all leaders to watch."

The Aug. 13 event from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. will mark One Great Sunday's launch but Edmonds said it will be an ongoing resource.

"The main thing we're trying to establish is that each year on the second Sunday of August, One Great Sunday will provide fresh training material to our churches," he said. "Hopefully, in coming years, it will expand to other areas of ministry, such as discipleship, evangelism, deacon ministry and more."

For this initial event, One Great Sunday is best suited for age group Sunday School leaders (preschool, children, youth, young adults, adults and senior adults) as well as small group leaders.

Each of the seven groups will have one speaker present four 15-minute training segments on topics specific to their age group. Training sessions will feature leaders from several states.

"We hope to be very responsive to requests from our Alabama churches and leaders' requests for topics to be covered," Edmonds said. "The hope is that we will learn during this launch year and be able to better serve our churches in coming years." †



**For more information about One Great Sunday or to view a sample of what the training will look like, visit [www.alsbom.org/onegreatsunday](http://www.alsbom.org/onegreatsunday).**



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Doctrine of Sin

## Sin's Consequences — Enslavement

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

Many weeks ago we began thinking about the doctrine of sin by looking at the powerful proponents of sin — the world, the flesh and the devil. We then embarked on a multiweek consideration of biblical descriptors of sin such as "missing the mark," "transgression," "impiety," "omission" and "iniquity." Now we round out the consideration of the doctrine of sin by giving attention to some of its consequences. One consequence of sin, if persisted in, is that of enslavement to sin. Given our own sinful natures along with the world's persistent allurements and the devil's powerful temptations, sin has a way of latching onto a person's life and then over time tightening its grip.

At first a particular sin might result in some twinge of conscience or sense of guilt. If repeated over time, that same sin seems to be less serious or less troubling. And often sin, if persisted in, loses some of its original thrill unless one goes deeper and deeper into it.

Repeated actions tend to become habits. Repeated sins result in forming habitual sinners. We have some common labels by which to speak of habitual sins. We might call them addictions or obsessions. A Bible label for such is "a stronghold."

People often then find themselves unable to break that stronghold and wake up someday to see themselves as slaves to a particular sin. What a person might have viewed as freedom to do as they please turns out to not be freedom at all.

Romans 6:16 asks a serious question, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey?"

Based on the truth in that question, the next verse addresses those who are said to have been "slaves of sin."

Persistence in sin has a way of producing insensitivity to wrongdoing. People find themselves increasingly unresponsive to the promptings of conscience. Sin tends to become the accepted way of life

and is pursued with little or no compunction. The Bible in fact speaks of people whose consciences had been seared as with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:2). Persistence in sin not only sears the conscience but also leads to a hardening of the heart against the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Sin, however, does not have to have the last word. People do not have to remain sin's slaves. God has an answer for people who find themselves enslaved by their sins.

The Bible promises, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

### 'Human terms'

The Bible also puts its promise in what is called "human terms" so that ordinary people might understand better its promise of victory over slavery to sin. "Just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness" (Rom. 6:19).

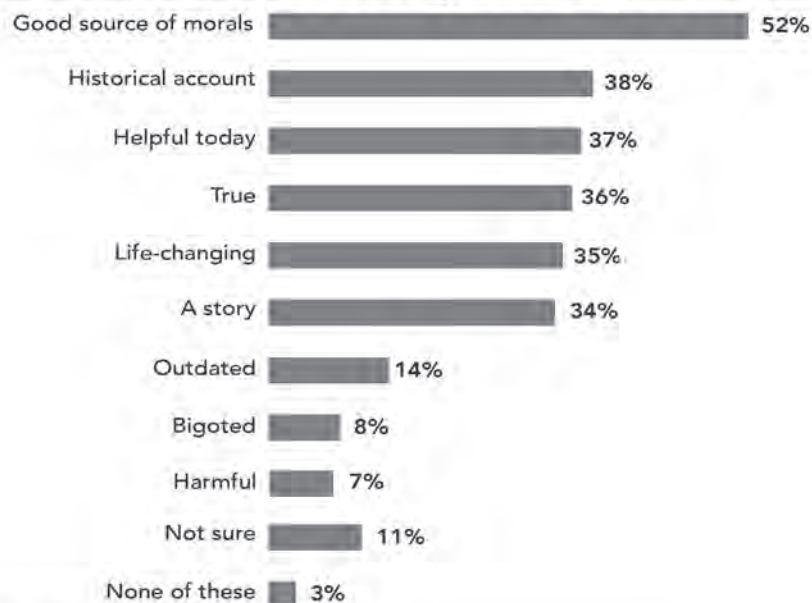
At this very human or minimal level of expression, God expects us to be as committed to right doing as once we were to wrongdoing. Of course, God has a higher standard toward which we are to aspire — to live as obedient subjects set free from sin's dominion and living under the lordship of Christ while seeking to become more and more like Him. †

*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.*



Among Americans:

### Which of the following describe the Bible?



Note: Respondents could select all that apply.

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## WEEK OF PRAYER SEPTEMBER 10-17

A pastor who trades in his retirement plans to plant a new church in Hueytown.

Families who use vacation time to participate in a mission project. College students who spend their spring break helping clean and repair hurricane-damaged homes.

Do you see the common thread? Alabama Baptists

across the state are routinely setting aside personal agendas to be on mission with God.

But there's another thread – these are three of eight stories we'll celebrate together during the upcoming Week of Prayer for State Missions September 10-17. You'll also meet a grandmother, daughter and granddaughter who share a bond through their experience at WorldSong



By Doug Rogers  
State Missionary

Missions Place 25 years apart; a Florida firefighter whose yard was cleaned up by Alabama Baptist disaster relief volunteers while he was out

serving others in need; and a church whose decision to connect with a church planting family from

southwest Alabama is realizing fruit in Montana.

In addition to participating in this time of concentrated prayer, your church also has the opportunity to give to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, now in its second year. With a goal of \$1,000,000, the offering will specifically support the strategic priorities of Alabama WMU, disaster relief, church planting, Alabama partnership missions and church revitalization. Please consider including the

Myers-Mallory  
State Missions Offering

Week of Prayer for State Missions on your church calendar either for the suggested dates of September 10-17 or whenever best

fits your church's schedule. Then give generously to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, knowing that your gifts will impact eternity.

To learn more about the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and Week of Prayer for State Missions and to download resources, please visit [Myers-Mallory.org](http://Myers-Mallory.org). Additional questions? Contact Alabama WMU toll-free at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325; direct at 334-613-2325; or by email at [khelms@alsbom.org](mailto:khelms@alsbom.org).

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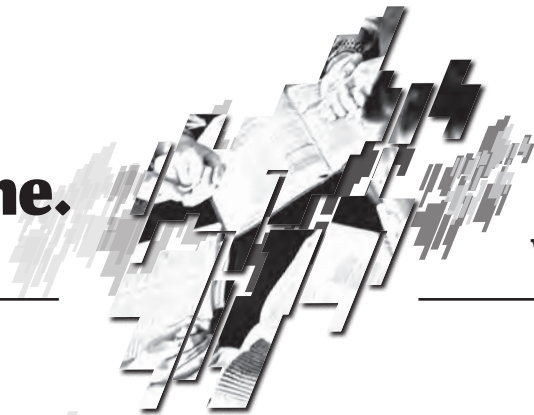
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**FOCUS on One Mission**

# Disciple Be One. Make One.

Matthew 16:24



**Annual Meeting of the  
Alabama Baptist State Convention**  
November 14-15, 2017  
**Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville**

**FEATURED SPEAKERS:**



**John Thweatt**  
convention  
president and  
pastor, First  
Baptist Church,  
Pell City  
(Tuesday Morning)



**Rick Burgess**  
radio personality  
and author  
(Tuesday Evening)



**Kevin  
Derryberry**  
music  
(Tuesday  
Evening)



**Stuart Davidson,**  
pastor, Eastern  
Shore Baptist  
Church, Daphne  
(Wednesday Evening)

**Special event:** Dinner program featuring Sherri Burgess, Tuesday evening  
between convention sessions (watch for registration details to come)

**HOTEL GUIDE** The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and is not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate is at any of these hotels, please contact Charleen Hobbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or [chobbs@alsbom.org](mailto:chobbs@alsbom.org).

**Huntsville Marriott – Convention Hotel**

5 Tranquility Base  
\$109  
256-830-2222  
Free WiFi

**Candlewood Suites Huntsville –  
Research Park**

201 Exchange Place  
\$99  
256-830-8222  
Free WiFi

**Hilton Garden Inn Huntsville South/  
Redstone Arsenal**

301 Boulevard South SW  
\$119  
256-881-4170  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Holiday Inn Express & Suites  
Huntsville West**

2600 Old Fairway Rd  
\$99  
256-837-7171  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Homewood Suites Downtown**

714 Gallatin St SW  
256-539-1445  
\$119  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Residence Inn Huntsville**

6305 Residence Inn Rd  
\$91  
256-895-0444  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Springhill Suites Huntsville Downtown**

745 Constellation Place Dr  
\$99  
256-512-0188  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**TownePlace Suites Huntsville West/  
Redstone Gateway**

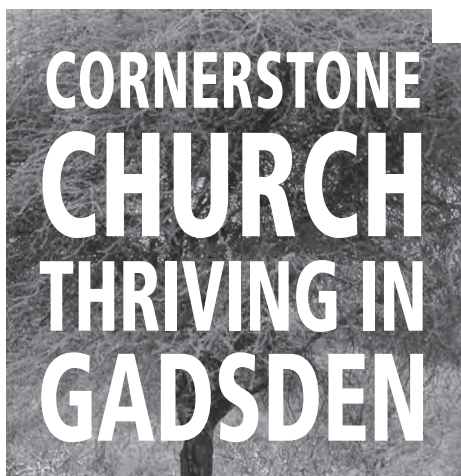
6500 Redstone Gateway SW  
\$109  
256-895-3300  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Holiday Inn Research Park**

5903 University Dr  
\$95  
256-830-0600  
Free WiFi and breakfast

*For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention).*

I just received terrific news from one of our church plants. Cornerstone Church in Gadsden launched in February, 2015. Here's an excerpt from a text that Cornerstone's pastor, Daniel Woodcock, sent me:



month and in the last two weeks of this month we've already seen 21 first time guests. We completely maxed out our parking lot this past Sunday. We have also raised about \$100,000 (over one year's time) of the \$200,000 we need over this next year, all in house! This is above tithes. Things are going well and we're looking to try to move to two services this September."

Just a few days later, I received another

text: "We had 281 with 31 first time guests! That's right 31! 281 is our highest attendance for a single service. We have

no more parking. Working through how to make more space for people!"

Daniel Woodcock is doing a fine job leading this church. Many Alabama State Board of Missions resources have been invested in this church plant, made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. Thanks for your faithful praying and giving!



By Lamar Duke  
State Missionary

*For more information about church planting in Alabama, visit [plantalabama.org](http://plantalabama.org), or contact State Missionary Lamar Duke, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332; (334) 613-2332; or [lduke@alsbom.org](mailto:lduke@alsbom.org).*

"We are baptizing seven people this Sunday and have already baptized 10 more this year! We are averaging 32 first time guests every

**FOCUS on One Mission**

# Senior Adult Singin'

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 98:4 (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.

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

# GET ACQUAINTED DAY

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

**Thursday, September 7, 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, or go online to [alsbom.org/gad](http://alsbom.org/gad).

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

# reaching the millennials

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY REGIONS ROOM  
COONEY HALL-FOURTH FLOOR  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017



**Registration:** 9 a.m. • **Conference:** 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$10 per person (includes lunch)

**Conference Leader:** Jess Rainer with Thom Rainer doing a lunch Q&A about the local church.

**REGISTRATION:**  
[ALSBOM.ORG/MILLENNIALS/](http://ALSBOM.ORG/MILLENNIALS/)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Rick Barnhart at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 220, or (334) 613-2220, rbarnhart@alsbom.org.

## Defending the Faith

**APOLOGETICS WORKSHOP**

**Gary Habermas**



**Jay Watts**

**TOPIC:**  
**CHRIST & CULTURE**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 7**  
**8:30 A.M. REGISTRATION**

MULTIPLE WORKSHOPS TO BE OFFERED

**SAMFORD UNIVERSITY**  
Regions Room, Cooney Hall, 4th Floor  
Register online at [www2.samford.edu/eve](http://www2.samford.edu/eve)

For more information, contact Amy Nelson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, (334) 613-2258, anelson@alsbom.org.

**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](http://alsbom.org/onegreatsunday)

or

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

## 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.

<p><b>Registration:</b>  <a href="http://alsbom.org/north">alsbom.org/north</a>                  You will also find a complete list of speakers, topics and schedules on this webpage.</p>	<p><b>Price:</b>                  Early registration is \$5 per person if registered by August 24. Registration received after August 24 will be \$10 per person.</p>	<p><b>For more information,</b>                  please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, <a href="mailto:jbaldwin@alsbom.org">jbaldwin@alsbom.org</a>.</p>
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THE CHURCH SHOULD BE ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES ON EARTH FOR A CHILD... BUT SOMETIMES IT'S NOT.

( This may be the most important conference you attend this year. )

### “Is Your Ministry Safe?” Workshop

Tuesday, September 19, 2017 ♦ 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. ♦ Canaan Baptist Church, 2543 Morgan Rd., Bessemer  
 This workshop, led by Gregory Love of MinistrySafe, will equip you with an awareness, understanding, tools and strategies needed to help protect children from sexual abuse in churches. It will also help protect churches through policy and procedure development.

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



# Myers-Mallory

State Missions Offering

Order Your  
Promotional  
Materials

Now

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](http://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](http://AlabamaWMU.org), email [khelms@alsbom.org](mailto:khelms@alsbom.org) or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, or (334) 613-2325.*



**FALL MISSIONS FESTIVALS**

**FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN**

Choose from October 6-7, 2017, or October 13-14 • Register by September 28

WorldSong Missions Place  
 \$50 per person (includes lodging & meals)

Children will hear from missionaries and learn about living out the Great Commission. They will experience another culture through food, customs, crafts and other fun activities, while having an awesome overnight camping experience at WorldSong.

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

*For more information, please contact Sandra McKenzie at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, [smckenzie@alsbom.org](mailto:smckenzie@alsbom.org).*

**FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR ADULTS**

**Tuesday, October 17, 2017**  
**Register by October 9**

WorldSong Missions Place  
 \$16 per person (includes lunch)

Join us for a day on the beautiful campus of WorldSong where we'll hear from missionaries, experience another culture, learn about what God is doing around the world and pray together.

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

*For more information, please contact Kathryn Helms at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, or (334) 613-2325, [khelms@alsbom.org](mailto:khelms@alsbom.org).*



**CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS**  
*for Mississippi River Ministry*

Share a gift of LOVE and the GOSPEL with a child in need this CHRISTMAS.

*Mississippi River Ministry works with compassion ministry sites and church plants in 8 states.*

*Alabama Baptists are challenged to provide at least 6,500 backpacks, bringing the Gospel to many who have never heard.*

**2017 COLLECTION DATES:**  
**OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 4**

For more information and collection sites:  
[AlabamaWMU.org/backpacks](http://AlabamaWMU.org/backpacks)




**Fulfilled**  
**Fall Senior Adult Retreat**  
**Monday - Wednesday,**  
**October 9-11, 2017**  
**Shocco Springs**



**PREACHER:** Daniel Wilson, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove

**CELEBRATION LEADER:** Mike Johnson, Bethsaida Baptist Church, Boaz

**WORSHIP LEADER:** Chris Weide, First Baptist Church, Opp

This retreat is for senior adults to get together, get into God's Word, get into worship and get away with having a grand old time at Shocco Springs! Conference leaders from around the state will lead a variety of conference breakout sessions. A complete list of speakers, topics and schedules will be posted about six weeks prior to the event at [alsbom.org/fallsenioradultretreat](http://alsbom.org/fallsenioradultretreat).

**REGISTRATION:** [shocco.org](http://shocco.org) or 1-800-280-1105. The cost per person is based upon your choice of lodging.

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



**ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF  
BAPTIST SECRETARIES  
56TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**MARCH 11-14,  
2018, SHOCCO**

More info: [alabamabaptistsecretaries.com](http://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](http://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](mailto:ddickey@alsbom.org).

**Leadership  
Awards**

**ONE-DAY SEMINAR**  
A Training Event To Develop  
Disciple-Making Leaders

**315**  
**LEADERSHIP  
CONFERENCE**



Register online @  
[alsbom.org/315LC](http://alsbom.org/315LC)

**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](mailto:mjackson@alsbom.org) or Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey, ext. 218, [ddickey@alsbom.org](mailto:ddickey@alsbom.org).

**THE 4  
DISCIPLINES  
OF EXECUTION**

Thursday,  
**November 2, 2017**

10 a.m.-3 p.m.

East Pointe Baptist Church,  
Spanish Fort

**Cost:** \$10 per person (includes lunch)

**Online Registration & Info:**  
[alsbom.org/4disciplines](http://alsbom.org/4disciplines)

**Registration Deadline:** Thursday,  
October 26, 2017

Dan Garland, director of church partnerships for LifeWay Christian Resources, will lead this conference focusing on "The 4 Disciplines of Execution." 4DX is a simple, repeatable and proven formula for executing your most important strategic priorities in the midst of the whirlwind of everyday activities.

**Topics of discussion will include:**

What "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" are and why they are effective.

How to execute your strategic priorities and get results.

How to effect change in human behavior to achieve your goals.

How to install "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" in your church.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Daniel Edmonds at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 285, or (334) 613-2285, [dedmonds@alsbom.org](mailto:dedmonds@alsbom.org).

## NORTH ALABAMA CHURCH LIBRARY CONFERENCE

Central Baptist Church, 2801 Highway 31 S., Decatur @ Saturday, **November 4, 2017**

**Theme:** BUILDING BLOCKS OF MINISTRY

**Registration begins at 8 a.m.** with general session at 8:25. The conference will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

This is the **17th annual training event** for north Alabama librarians and others who wish to attend.

**There is no cost to attend** but registration is necessary. This can be done by emailing or calling Eva Nell Hunter as shown below.

**Conferences will cover all areas of library work plus church history, copyright, card making for ministry and training in both Concourse and Atrium.** Lunch will be provided at which time an author will be guest speaker. There will be a book swap and lots of free items.

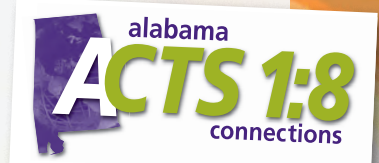
*For more information, please contact Eva Nell Hunter at (256) 353-5912 (church) or (256) 303-7739 (cell), [eva\\_hunter@att.net](mailto:eva_hunter@att.net) or [library@cbcdeatur.org](mailto:library@cbcdeatur.org).*

## 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](mailto:spoole@alsbom.org).*

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

## Why They Stay

*State Board Of Missions,  
2001 E. South Blvd,  
Thursday, August 31, 2017  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.*

**Cost:** \$10 per person

Steve Parr, vice president of staff coordination and development for the Georgia Baptist Convention, will lead this training to help parents and church leaders make investments that keep children and teens connected to church for a lifetime.

Steve is the author of five best-selling books: *The Coffee Shop That Changed a Church*, *Sunday School That Really Excels*, *Sunday School That Really Responds*,

*Sunday School That Really Works and Evangelistic Effectiveness: Difference Makers in Mindsets and Methods.*

**Online Registration & Info:**  
[alsbom.org/whyytheystay](http://alsbom.org/whyytheystay)

**Registration Deadline:** Thursday, August 24, 2017, or when the conference reaches capacity.

*For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Ramona Noah at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 312, or (334) 613-2312, [rnoah@alsbom.org](mailto:rnoah@alsbom.org).*



(augmented reality)

## Follow these instructions

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

# ALABAMA

## UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

### Pickens DOM marks 20th anniversary, announces retirement

Gary Farley has had a calling for decades to serve rural and small-town churches and associations. It's a calling that led him to the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) in 1984. And it's a calling that then led him to Pickens Baptist Association to serve as its director of missions in October 1997.

Farley said his calling hasn't changed; it's just being redirected as he marks his 20-year anniversary with Pickens Association on Oct. 17 and also retires.

Under his leadership the association made a concerted, intentional effort to minister to the women at the Federal Correction-

al Institution (FCI) in Aliceville during the last four years, resulting in more than 500 professions of faith, more than 150 baptisms and involving nearly 500 in discipleship programs. Three Protestant churches also have been planted inside the prison.

"Our vision is that FCI Aliceville will become a major missionary sending agency," Farley said. "So my focus has been on providing opportunities for every member of each of the affiliated churches to be a Great Commission Christian."

To accomplish this, Pickens Association sponsors missions trips, holds Samford University Ministry Training Institute (MTI) classes for bivocational pastors, has a thrift store and food pantry, offers a radio Sunday School class and much more in addition to the opportunities at FCI Aliceville.

"I pray that this work will continue and expand in years to come," Farley said, noting the importance of being "open to what God is doing and joining

with Him" in whatever ways He allows.

In retirement, Farley hopes to continue teaching MTI classes at the prison and for bivocational pastors within the association.

He and his wife, Jacqueline, have four children and five grandchildren. (TAB)

### Huntsville pastor Freeman celebrates 30 years at Hillwood

Patience, trustworthiness and integrity — those are some of the



FREEMAN

words Dana Workman, associate pastor of Hillwood Baptist Church, Huntsville, used to describe Pastor Charles Freeman. Freeman has marked 30 years as pastor of Hillwood, "the church that sits up on the hill."

Former church members came back to share testimonies at the May 28 celebration, as well as members of the search committee that called him to the church three decades ago.

"For someone to remain at a church for that length of time, it says something about the individual and the church," Workman said.

During the service, Charlie Howell, director of missions for Madison Baptist Association, read a letter honoring Freeman.

A letter from Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, also was read.

Several other presentations were given, including a flag that had been flown over the White House.

And Freeman's son, David, minister of praise and worship at Willowbrook Baptist Church, Huntsville, sang a solo of "Midnight Cry" backed by the choir and provided special music at the covered-dish luncheon that followed the service. (TAB)

## 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

#### FULL-TIME PASTOR

Elam Baptist Church, Tallassee, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Elam Baptist Church, 4686 Notasulga Rd., Tallassee, AL 36078. Attn: Pastor Search Committee or email to: [elambaptistch@elmore.rr.com](mailto:elambaptistch@elmore.rr.com).

#### PASTOR

Big Level Baptist Church in Wiggins, Mississippi, is seeking a full-time pastor. Resumé may be emailed to: [samuel@albrittonaccounting.com](mailto:samuel@albrittonaccounting.com) or mailed to: Big Level Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 1346 City Bridge Rd., Wiggins, MS 39577.

#### PASTOR

Immanuel Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, is accepting resúmes for a full-time pastor. The candidate selected will have 5 years senior pastor experience, seminary training, expository preaching style and

be able to attract and appeal to all age groups. We currently have an elderly congregation and no other ministerial staff. We have underused, debt-free, excellent facilities and a good location. Candidates with the above qualifications can email resúmes to: [immanuel38464@bellsouth.net](mailto:immanuel38464@bellsouth.net). Our website is [myimmanuel.net](http://myimmanuel.net). Please include current sermons on websites.

#### MINISTER OF WORSHIP

Calera Baptist Church, Alabama, is seeking a part-time minister of worship to lead a blended style of worship. See [www.calerabaptist.org/worship](http://www.calerabaptist.org/worship) for details. Email resúmes to: [info@calerabaptist.org](mailto:info@calerabaptist.org).

#### MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Church, Talladega, Alabama, is seeking a part-time minister of music to lead blended worship services (20 hours/week). Send resúmes to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 696, Talladega, AL 35161. Attn: Music Search Committee or email to: [fbcpublishings@bellsouth.net](mailto:fbcpublishings@bellsouth.net).

### BUSINESS

#### ELROD MOBILITY — GREAT PRICES

Stair-lifts, walk-in tubs, lift-chairs and lightweight take-apart scooters. Saving people a lot of money on walk-in tubs, stair-lifts and showers. Our lift-stairs and scooters are near internet pricing. A+ rating with BBB. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

#### NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Sign Services — a Christian operated, full service, lighted sign company located in Pelham, Alabama, for 23 years — is ready to help you expand your church sign ministry. From digital message boards to traditional signs, Reliable Signs will design, fabricate and install statewide. [www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com). 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

### TRAVEL/VACATION

#### LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful

view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to [www.paradisevista.net](http://www.paradisevista.net) to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

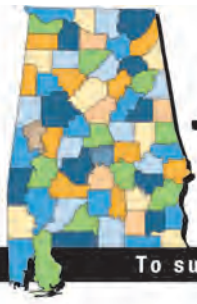
#### AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDO

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach for more than 25 years. Call 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2366 or visit [www.gulfshorescondos.com](http://www.gulfshorescondos.com).

### CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/RETREATS

#### MISSION/DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM

Join Advance Operations Training (AOT) this Aug. 17-Dec. 17, 2017. This mission/discipleship program is connecting Southern Baptist students (ages 18-29) to IMB strategies and North American church planters. For more information: [www.ntp52aot.com](http://www.ntp52aot.com).



# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BALDWIN

► **Brandon Moore** is the new pastor of **First Church, Orange Beach**, effective Aug. 27. He is leaving the minister to students position at Parkview Church, Decatur. He and his wife, Melissa, have one child.



MOORE

## COFFEE

► **Roeton Church, Brundidge**, will hold revival services Aug. 13, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Aug. 14-16, 7 nightly. Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the State Board of Missions, will speak. Ron Hendrickson, minister of music and associate pastor of Old Zion Church, Abbeville, will lead special music. For more information call 334-596-1277. Bill Hart is pastor. ► **Coffee Association** will host the Never Alone widow's meeting Aug. 7, 6:30 p.m. There will be food and fellowship. For more information call 334-894-6411. John Granger is director of missions.

## MORGAN

► **Lebanon Church, Falkville**, will hold revival services Aug. 13, 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Aug. 14-16, 7 nightly. Michael Mason will speak. Sheryl Lee will lead music. Randall Ashley is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY

► **Josh Jacobs** is the new associate music minister for **First, Montgomery**. He previously served as worship pastor for

Derma Church in Mississippi. He holds a bachelor's degree from Blue Mountain College in Mississippi. He is married to Jessie. Jay Wolf is pastor. ► **Currie Spoon** is the new pastor of **Bethel Church, Fort Deposit**. He previously served in student ministry for churches in Georgia, Kentucky and South Carolina. He holds degrees from the University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg and Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife, Annette, have one child and are expecting twins.

## MADISON

► **Kevin Moore** is the new pastor of **Mount Zion Church, Huntsville**. He previously served as pastor of churches in Texas for more than 13 years. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma in Norman and a master's degree and doctorate from Southwestern Theological



MOORE

Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. His first Sunday at Mount Zion was July 2. He and his wife, Stephanie, have four children. ► **University Church, Huntsville**, celebrated Eddie Hilderbrand for his 20 years of service to the church as associ-

ate pastor of education and senior adults with a special reception July 30. Bobby Burt is pastor.

## MOBILE

► **Jason Patterson** is the new pastor of **Navco Church, Mobile**.

He is currently enrolled at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Patterson was ordained into the ministry nine months ago. ► **Steve Bowersox** is the new



PATTERSON

worship pastor for **Dauphin Way Church, Mobile**. He previously served as executive pastor of worship for First Church, Jacksonville, Florida. He holds bachelor's degrees from Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, a master's degree from the University of North Texas

in Denton and a doctorate from Logos University in Jacksonville, Florida. He has three children. Blake Newsom is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Dogwood Grove Church, Montevallo**, will celebrate its 161st homecoming service Aug. 13. High Attendance day in Sunday School will be at 9:45 a.m. Worship will be at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. Everyone is welcome. Todd Burr is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR

► **Dan Moran** is the new transitional pastor of **Cropwell Church, Pell City**. He is the founder and director of Dan Moran Ministries and has served as transitional pastor for churches across Alabama and Georgia. He and his wife, Debbie, have one child.

## BETHEL

► **Trent Nolan** is the new student minister for **First Church,**

**Demopolis**. He previously served at Thorington Road Church, Montgomery. He holds degrees from Auburn University and Rawlings School of Divinity in Lynchburg, Virginia. He and his wife, Kasie, have two children. Carl Williams is pastor. ☞



NOLAN



According to the April 5, 1845, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*:

Editor James W. Hoskins wrote, "We give our hearty consent to the course which our Southern brethren are beginning to adopt (forming a new convention) and sincerely hope they will be united heart and hand.

"Our Northern brethren have long entertained this spirit of disunion and intolerance toward us," he added. (TAB)

Alabama pastors and associations, learn more about the North American Mission Board's resources and support from ambassador **Dusty McLemore**.

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 6

**Explore the Bible** By Douglas K. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Dean, Office for Global Engagement, University of Mobile

**THE CONFESSION**  
**Psalm 51:1-17**

Our psalm this week offers an intimate view of a compromised man and his covenant God. The superscription provides a context for this confession. Specifically the psalm corresponds with the events of 2 Samuel 12, when the prophet Nathan confronted King David about his adultery with Bathsheba and his conspiracy with Joab to make sure Uriah died in battle.

For nearly a year, David had gotten away with murder. The king's invitation to take in the mourning widow of a fallen general may have seemed like a magnanimous gesture to the community, but David and God knew the truth of all that had transpired.

In the fullness of time, after Bathsheba had born her first son with David, God informed Nathan and directed him to confront the king. Nathan utilized an indirect, storytelling method to capture David's attention. Once he drew the shepherd-king into the story about sheep the prophet then confronted David directly with his guilt and God's judgment upon David's son. Within this context, we turn to this 3,000-year-old confession of sin.

**GUILTY AS CHARGED (1-5)**

As we read the initial words of the song, let us be mindful that David confessed his sin in light of God's character. Here we must consider God's self-revelation to Moses at Mount Sinai when He characterizes Himself as gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and forgiving.

God also is just and He visits the sins of the fathers on their children (Ex. 34:6-7). Note how David calls for God to be who He revealed Himself to be. David knew the death of his son was God's justice. God never acts unjustly.

As a man after God's own heart, David knew the attributes of God and he appealed to them. David, however, did not presume upon the grace of God. He freely admitted his sin, called it evil, confessed God's justice and His blamelessness. He knew the depravity of his own heart, that from the moment of conception he inherited a sin nature (v. 5).

Here we learn an important lesson. God is God and we owe Him our allegiance, our obedience and our complete surrender. In the midst of our sin, when a loving brother or sister confronts us to bring us to repentance and reconciliation, we must not forget that God never stops being holy, righteous, just, perfect and pure. When we do not measure up to God's perfect standard, we are in the wrong — not God.

**Plea for Cleansing (6-13)**

The song continues with David's confession of his own inability to cleanse himself of guilt and shame. He also confesses God's unique ability to create (bara') a clean heart for David. The king pled for God to teach him, to purify him, to wash him and to allow him to rejoice. He was fully aware of the shame he had brought to God — hearkening back to verse 4 — and it was right for God to turn away in shame over David's sin.

We too must call upon the Lord for our cleansing. In Christ, we have the promise that when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

**Deliverance through Brokenness (14-17)**

God is impressed by neither the amount of our wealth nor the size of our sacrifice. In His presence He expects humility (v. 17) and integrity (v. 6) in our worship. He is Spirit and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). †

**Bible Studies for Life** By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh, Ph.D.  
Professor of Religion, Samford University

**THE GIFT OF GRACE**  
**2 Corinthians 12:2-10**

Faith is very fragile. Most of us struggle with emotions that can lead to turmoil in our hearts. It is hard to turn away from the world of experience and to put one's trust in the invisible and intangible world of the promises of God's Word. Often life seems like Good Friday — dark, deserted, full of death. Where is God in our moments of Gethsemane and Golgotha? Has God abandoned us?

**God honors and blesses us in Christ. (2-7a)**

Paul knew from personal experience the reality of trials and troubles in his life. But he also knew the gift of God's grace that enabled Paul to rise above difficulties to trust God and to testify to God's goodness in Paul's life.

As well as encountering difficulties, Paul knew some exalted experiences as a Christian. In this passage, he talks about being "caught up into paradise." We must be careful that this passage of Scripture doesn't make us feel spiritually inadequate because we have not known such an encounter with God. Paul's blessings are not the litmus test of our own faith. We are more likely to identify with Paul's sense of weakness in this passage, but that does not mean that we should not expect God to bless us in ways that are beyond our imagining. All the gifts of God come not because we are worthy but because He gives them to His people.

**Hardships can keep us from pride. (7b-8)**

Paul strongly suggests in these two verses that he could have become proud as a result of his spiritual encounters. This is why he believes God sent him a "thorn in the flesh" — to keep Paul humble. Just as

we do not know what Paul means by being "caught up in paradise," Paul also leaves us a bit bewildered as to this "thorn in the flesh." Commentators suggest a variety of possibilities: epilepsy, depression, headaches or even eye problems. We do not have a clue. Whatever it was, it was unpleasant and caused Paul great discomfort physically, emotionally and spiritually. What the problem was is not important. What is key to the issue is that it humbled Paul and brought him to his knees. From that place, Paul cried out to God in prayer.

**God helps us by His grace to endure anything. (9-10)**

Although Paul expresses a very human desire to be rid of what was causing him such distress, he came to the point in which God's answer was, "No." Yet Paul discovered a deeper spiritual truth: "My grace is sufficient for you."

The Scriptures assure us that we can put our trust in a God of affection, of tenderness, of mercy, forgiveness, compassion and also of strength and power. He is able to support us in times of great distress. This is the one to whom we come over and over and over again and cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us.

Annie J. Flint went through many difficulties. She was twice orphaned as her birth parents and both adoptive parents died. She suffered from severe arthritis and spent much of her life in a wheelchair. Yet, through it all, she discovered the grace of God and wrote about it in a hymn:

*"He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;  
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace." †*

## Christian Crossword

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**Across**

- Charity suffereth long, and is \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Cor. 13:4)
- They have spread a \_\_\_\_\_ by the wayside. (Ps. 140:5)
- Gather the wheat unto my \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 13:30)
- A thought or concept.
- I will set him \_\_\_\_\_ high. (Ps. 91:14)
- Having to do with life science. (prefix)
- Compass direction.
- Glory to God in \_\_\_\_\_ highest.
- How long shall I \_\_\_\_\_ with you? (Mark 9:19)
- British word for bathroom.
- Some would even \_\_\_\_\_ to die. (Rom. 5:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_, C.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and it shall be given you. (Matt. 7:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Father. (Mark 14:36)
- And did all \_\_\_\_\_ the same spiritual meat. (1 Cor. 10:3)
- Behold, the \_\_\_\_\_ wept. (Ex. 2:6)
- And his \_\_\_\_\_ went throughout all Syria. (Matt. 4:24)
- Decimeter. (abbr.)

- Calls for someone in a public place.
- Far \_\_\_\_\_ all principality, and power. (Eph. 1:21)
- The veil of the temple was \_\_\_\_\_ in twain. (Matt. 27:51)
- Nancy. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ angel of the Lord.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and walk? (Matt. 9:5)
- Before Christ. (abbr.)
- He is \_\_\_\_\_; yet is he clean. (Lev. 13:40)
- Gets up in the morning.
- All that handle the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 27:29)
- Side away from the wind.
- One of the Three Stooges.
- A type of deer.
- The father shall be divided against the \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 12:53)
- Saint. (abbr.)
- But also \_\_\_\_\_ die at Jerusalem. (Acts 21:13)
- His \_\_\_\_\_ was cleansed. (Matt. 8:3)

**Down**

- Boaz was of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Elimelech. (Ruth 3:2)
- "I've got a great \_\_\_\_\_!"
- Compass direction.
- Sweet fruit grown on palm

- trees.
- Christmas.
- Inhabitants of \_\_\_\_\_ dor. (Josh. 17:11)
- No man ... was \_\_\_\_\_ to open the book. (Rev. 5:3)
- City in Brazil.
- About \_\_\_\_\_ there shone great light round me. (Acts 22:6)
- Find the \_\_\_\_\_ wrapped in swaddling clothes. (Luke 2:12)
- One type of tide.
- A type of vermin.
- Kilobytes. (abbr.)
- He is \_\_\_\_\_ also to save. (Heb. 7:25)
- When he saw Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ off, he ran. (Mark 5:6)
- So be it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I my brother's keeper? (Gen. 4:9)
- Die in the flower of their \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 2:33)
- Eastern Standard Time. (abbr.)
- And \_\_\_\_\_ him that is high. (Ezek. 21:26)
- Pay tithe of mint, \_\_\_\_\_ and cumin. (Matt. 23:23)
- I have commanded my sanctified \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 13:3)

- They went their ways, one to his \_\_\_\_\_ (plural). (Matt. 22:5)
- If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked \_\_\_\_\_. (2 words)
- They that count it pleasure to \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Pet. 2:13)
- The fire causeth the waters to \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 64:2)
- Who loveth God love his brother \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 4:21)
- Several popes sharing one name.
- Lest ye \_\_\_\_\_ your God. (Josh. 24:27)
- To knock on a door; form of music.



## My JESUS Story

By Jenni Ingram  
Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

When I was first saved, I was on fire for Jesus and I wanted everyone to know the peace, joy and contentment I felt. I boldly made the statement, “Lord, if you send me, I will go.” I meant it with my whole heart and then, as life does, I got beaten down. I still loved the Lord but the fire dwindled.

Then critical illness happened and I almost met the Lord. I thought there was no purpose for me in relationship to the Kingdom. Then this column opportunity came about and I thought, “Great! I have a purpose. Lord, please give me the words and I will say them.” Then the opportunity to go on a missions trip was offered and, even with my health issues, I said, “If you send me, Lord, I will go.” This time, He sent me.

I am nervous, I am anxious about everything pertaining to the trip. Will I be able to travel? Will I be able to walk? Will I be able to serve? All of these things went running through my mind and of course the enemy was right there to seize the moment and make me doubt.

But you know what? I want my fire back. I want the passion of a newly saved soul to burn in my heart — so I am going. With prayer and supplication every minute of every day, I am going with nine others from my church. There will be opportunities to gaze upon God’s creation and I pray it will inspire us. There will be opportunities to witness and I pray that will inspire someone. Most of all, I pray God will allow us to see those opportunities. May the Lord’s will be done.✠

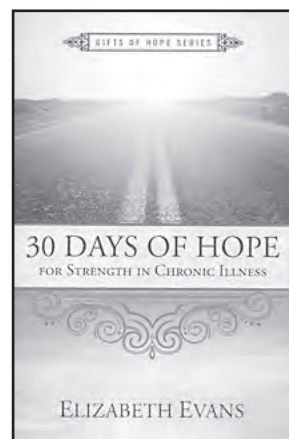


# Media reviews

## 30 Days of Hope for Strength in Chronic Illness

Elizabeth Evans. Birmingham: New Hope Publishers, 2016. 140 pp. (Paperback).

We all need hope; those who have chronic illnesses may need a little extra hope and encouragement. Author Elizabeth Evans provides some of that hope and encouragement.



In this book, part of the “Gifts of Hope” series from New Hope Publishers in Birmingham, Evans writes of her lifelong struggle with cystic fibrosis. Diagnosed at 18 months, she was not expected to live past the age of 3. She was 48 when she wrote

“30 Days of Hope for Strength on Chronic Illness.”

The book, as hinted at in the title, is in devotional form, with a model prayer, a Bible verse and a two-page entry for each of the 30 days. The devotions, while acknowledging the difficulties of living with a serious chronic disease — pain, depression, uncertainty — always include an uplifting note about God’s

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goodness, His mercy and His provision. Anyone who needs encouragement for any reason would benefit from Evans’ wise observations and advice.

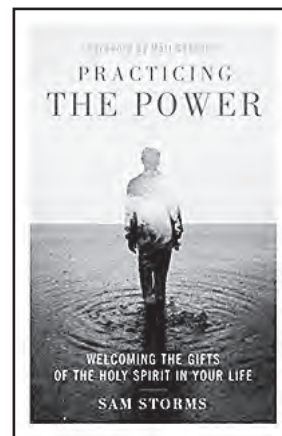
Soon after the book was published, Evans lost her battle with cystic fibrosis.

## Practicing the Power: Welcoming the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Your Life

Sam Storms. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017. 264 pp. (Paperback).

I have debated whether to review this book. The entire time I have been reading it, I have had this doubt noodling around in the back of my mind. As you see, the doubt was dismissed and I am going for it.

The book is pretty hardcore when it comes to what are often referred to as “sign” gifts. I have been interested in the debate between cessationists and continuationists since I read John Sherrill’s famous book, “They Speak with Other Tongues,” and even more so since Jack Deere’s “Surprised by the Power of the Spirit.” In a way, I was disappointed — the author wrote early in the book that his purpose was not to convince anyone “of



the validity and operation of all spiritual gifts in the present day.” He directs his readers to his other books and a sermon series for that argument.

Instead, Storms wrote the book “for those ... who are convinced from God’s Word that the Spirit is still

operative in and through the charismata — but you don’t have a clue what to do next.”

Well ... I was pretty clueless so I waded in. The book is just what the author promised — a “how to” guide for implementing, or maybe allowing the implementation of, the sign gifts in churches today. I read the book with a degree of reservation that diminished little as I read.

I think the problem is that, while Deere’s and Sherrill’s books were narratives of what they had observed and experienced, this book comes from another place entirely — a place of attempting to evaluate and manage the public display of gifts. Can that be done? Maybe — the apostle Paul did it to a degree.

I’m not sure Storms has done it — or maybe I just need to read his earlier books and watch that sermon series.

## Marriage Fulfilled: 31 Lessons From a Happy Husband

F. Max Croft. Rainer Publishing, 2016. 235 pp. (Paperback).

What a neat book this is. Max Croft, the happy husband in the title, has gifted readers with 31 short chapters on marriage — specifically, his 60-year marriage to the delightful Mary Ella.

Each chapter is a short, easy and entertaining read on its own, and each one has nuggets of wisdom about the marriage relationship. He introduces the book with a hilarious story about something that happened just after he and Mary Ella were married.

Their car stopped at a traffic light beside another car crammed with “no fewer than a hundred kids.” One of the women, noticing the “Just Married” sign on their car, “leaned her whole upper torso out the window. ... Her hair was tightly rolled in curlers and a cigarette was hanging between two stained fingers while a multitude of kids were almost falling out the window leaning over her shoulder. With a raspy snarl ... she spit out the words, ‘You’ll be sorrrrrry!’”

Sixty years later, Croft would like someone to tell the woman she was wrong.✠



## 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.



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# Foundation of faith

## Jacksonville pitcher's abilities 'stem from Jesus'

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**M**ike Kickham, a starting pitcher for the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp, says he's living his professional career to be a menace to Southern League hitters. And his 87- to 90-mph range has been effective.

"I put them on the defense early, attacking the zone. I like throwing the cutter. It's a tough pitch to hit when you execute it," said Kickham, who also has a slider, change-up and curveball in his arsenal. "I have confidence with the baseball and the ability to move it around."

He has also confidence somewhere else.

"One thing that I have learned is put my confidence in God first," Kickham said. "That is what enabled me to have confidence in my abilities — He has blessed me with talents and abilities."

Having God as his source of focus allows Kickham to do his best, he said.

It all "stems from having a relationship with Jesus, putting it first priority and daily strengthening it," he said. "That is my foundation."

From Springfield, Missouri, Kickham was drafted by the San Francisco Giants in the sixth round in 2010 from Missouri State

University in Springfield. After playing in the minors, he made his major league debut May 26, 2013, in San Francisco and moved around in the years that followed before landing in Jacksonville for now.

Of being in the big leagues, Kickham said, "It's tough to beat. That is something that I will never forget. It was awesome playing in front of a stadium full of people at that level, achieving a childhood dream. It's pretty surreal."

### Thanking God

When he got there, he said he thanked God and did his best.

"It didn't always go well. It's tough to get there. It's one thing to get there. It's another thing to stay," said Kickham, who is grateful for another opportunity to execute his talents and compete, although it is not in the majors.

"Not everyone is fortunate enough to play. Here I am at 28. Hopefully there are many more years

to come," he said. "It's a grind. It's fun. I wouldn't rather be doing anything else."

The progress will take care of itself, he said — he is simply focusing on doing his best and being a good influence on his teammates. Kickham said he wants to conduct himself "in a certain way based on my faith."

He said he hopes God will leave him where he is to be a tool to spread His Word.

Kickham became a Christian as a young man through the influence of his parents, Kevin and Dana Kickham.

"My dad was a big influence," Mike Kickham said. "He is a very strong man of God. He set a great example, not only for me but for my brother and two sisters. If I have any questions, he is a great resource that I can go to."

But Mike Kickham was in his 20s before his faith became personal.

"Faith has always been in my life but maybe not where it needed to be," he said.

A turning point came in 2015, which he described as a "pretty tough" year, personally and professionally. He had lost confidence in himself.

"That was a catalyst to reprioritize some things in my life and really put faith at the forefront of my personal life, to be the No. 1 priority in my life," he said. "I had to refigure

some things out. I think everything happens for a reason. That was a way for God to get my attention."

For Mike Kickham, staying strong in his faith includes reading the Bible, spending time with other believers who hold him accountable and listening to podcasts and sermons. "Getting into God's Word every day is huge and praying throughout the day strengthens me," he said.

Jacksonville manager Randy Ready called Mike Kickham "a solid guy with a great foundation."

"He is a refreshing young man to be around," Ready said. "He is a professional on and off the field. He sets a great example for the rest of the club. [His faith] is instrumental in his life and gives him the foundation to have the success he has had."

In Jesus, Mike Kickham has found "first and foremost, a Savior, forgiver of sins, a foundation."

"People come and go out of your life, but Jesus will never let you down," he said. "You can always rely on Him. We all need Him."✠



Mike Kickham

Photo by Cali Jones

## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Christians arrested for 'unlawful assembly'

PUJARIPURVAH, India — Police in Uttar Pradesh state, India, detained six Christians in June under "unlawful assembly" laws for worshipping together, sources said. During the June 25 incident police reportedly berated and slapped the pastor for reading the Bible instead of Hindu texts.

Police also confiscated Bibles, hymn books and devotionals. Station House Officer Aravind Kumar of Nanpara demanded that Pastor Asha Ram Sahni hand over literature he suspected was used to convert people, the church leader said.

On June 27 the officer ordered the 38-year-old pastor and five others to the police station, where they were taken into custody. Police charged them with knowingly joining or continuing in an assembly of five or more people. The Christians said Kumar constantly berated them and slapped Sahni.

Kumar denied the accusations. While police were harassing the Christians in Pujaripurvah on June 25, other officers arrived at their native village of Etah of Nanpara Mandal, Bahriach District, and harassed the Christians' families worshipping at a house there, sources said.

After traveling from Etah village to a church in nearby Pujaripurvah, the six Christians were detained for nine days before they were granted bail by Bahriach District's Second Class Judicial Magistrate Court on July 5. (MS)

### Christian teenager accused of blasphemy

DINGA, Pakistan — A member of an Islamic extremist group in Pakistan has accused a Christian minor of blasphemy after the boy had an argument with a Muslim, sources said.

Hina Shafaqat, mother of 17-year-old Shahzad Masih, said her son had been wrongly implicated in the case by a Muslim colleague with whom he had a quarrel, and the family has not been able to locate him since his arrest.

Working as a sweeper at Shamim Riaz Hospital in Dinga town, Gujrat District, Punjab Province for several months, Masih had an altercation with hospital pharmacy employee Ishtiaq Ahmed Jalali, she said. A fellow employee intervened and calmed the quarrel, but "Jalali nurtured a grudge against my son and has now plotted this case against him to settle the score," she said. "The police arrested my son [July 14] and since then we have been trying to locate his whereabouts."

Jalali is a member of Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Islam Pakistan.

Neither the Dinga police nor the Kharian police said they have him in their custody, she said.

Attorneys Riaz Anjum and Kashif Naimat from the Pakistan Center for Law and Justice said they had offered legal and financial assistance to Masih's family. Anjum said their investigation had corroborated the account of the Christian family and said "the case is clearly fabricated." (MS)

### Christian converts sentenced to prison in Iran

TEHRAN, Iran — The latest in a string of harsh sentences against church leaders in Iran has been handed down to four Christian converts for promoting Christianity, according to human rights activists.

Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, along with three deacons, were sentenced to 10 years in prison in a ruling by the 26th branch of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, according to a regional director of Middle East Concern (MEC), a human rights organization that tracks the persecution of Christians in the region. Nadarkhani and Omidi also have been sentenced to two years of exile in the south of the country, far from their families in Rasht.

In recent years the number of Christians arrested in Iran has decreased overall but church leaders have been targeted and given harsher sentences, according to the MEC regional director. What would have been a sentence of about a year for a first-time offense has increased to 10. (MS)