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# 'GOD BLESSS Texas'

## Southern Baptists mobilizing to minister in wake of Hurricane Harvey

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
The Alabama Baptist

As the sun shines again over Houston, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) workers are mobilizing for what could be one of the largest relief efforts ever in the U.S.

Hurricane Harvey made its first landfall Aug. 26 as a Category 4 storm and brought record rainfall to the Texas Gulf Coast region. Torrential rains brought flooding to Galveston, Beaumont, Houston and areas in between.

As of Aug. 31, at least 35 were confirmed dead with the death toll expected to rise as the floodwaters recede.

Southern Baptist leaders are urging prayer for the people of Texas as they prepare for the weeks, months and even years of recovery ahead.

### 'Pray and be ready'

"Our prayers go out to the people of Texas in the massive flooding and damage caused by Hurricane Harvey," said Frank S. Page, Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee president and CEO. "Our Baptist disaster relief units will be the first on the scene to minister in a variety of ways. I call on Southern Baptists to pray and be ready to assist through giving and going. God bless Texas."

"We continue to be traumatized



The Texas Baptist Men mobile kitchen team serves breakfast at 5:30 a.m. to Texas Task Force teams 1 and 2 as they conduct rescue operations.

Photo courtesy of Texas Baptist Men's Facebook page

and horrified by the images of what's happening with Hurricane Harvey," said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "We need to pray for those who are in jeopardy and for the first responders as they are seeking to be of help."

Thousands in the path of the storm evacuated their neighborhoods as floodwaters rose. The Red Cross

estimated that more than 30,000 Texans were seeking refuge in some 45 shelters in the Houston area. The city's main shelter, the George R. Brown Convention Center, was housing more than 9,000 people in the days after the storm's landfall.

Thousands more may be displaced once cleanup efforts begin. As the rain stopped and floodwaters began to recede late last week, emergency

officials were out assessing damage and aiding residents who had sheltered in place.

SBDR personnel were deploying units as quickly as possible. Gordon Knight, field ministry strategist and director of chaplains for Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC), said SBTC cleanup and recovery, water treatment, (See 'Respond,' page 5)



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# COMMENT

## Knowing the Reason for Being

Have you ever heard of the Carriage Builders' National Association? Not likely. But in the latter half of the 19th century the organization represented the largest transportation group in the United States. Throughout the eastern and middle states of the nation, numerous companies made quality carriages. And in places like Cincinnati, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri, new upstarts began threatening the hold of the long established companies.

But it was not long before the well-established and the upstarts both lost their reason for being. The automobile was introduced and that put most of the carriage builders out of business. These companies consider themselves in the carriage building business and few successfully made the transition to being in the transportation business.

Knowing what business one is in — one's reason for being — is as important today as it was then. Knowing one's reason for being can keep a business alive. It also can keep a church, a religious entity or ministry faithful to its founding. Losing touch with the reason for being may take those same organizations somewhere they should never go.

A recent story related the experience of San Domenico School in San Anselmo, California. The school was founded as an independent Catholic school in 1850 run by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael.

### More inclusive

In June 2016 the board of trustees for the school adopted a new strategic plan that called for the Catholic school to be more inclusive in its outreach. Part of the reason for the new direction was because of the changing community. Officials said about 80 percent of current students are not Catholic.

To carry out the policy of being more inclusive the school has removed a statue of the baby Jesus and His mother, Mary, from its campus. Thus far, the story said, 18 of 180 Catholic icons and statues have been removed and the other 162 are scheduled for removal.

The story said the word "Catholic" had been



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

removed from the school's mission statement. Communion is no longer offered to students. Classes devoted to the Catholic faith are now classes about world religions. Uniforms, logos and colors were replaced to appear less Catholic.

### Coping with change

The changes are not sitting well with the school's traditional supporters. A mother whose children attended San Domenico School accused the school of being "afraid and ashamed" to celebrate the school's heritage and beliefs. Another said the school is eroding its Catholic heritage.

Defenders of the changes contend that confronting statues of Catholic saints like Dominic or Francis could be alienating for students of other religions and that the school "didn't want to further that feeling."

At the core of the problem faced by San Domenico may be a disagreement over the school's reason for being. Does the school exist to provide an inclusive education or does the school exist to provide an education reflecting a Roman Catholic worldview?

There is a difference between the two and until that question is resolved the situation may remain as it is now. One parent opined, "They're trying to do something for everyone and they're making no one happy."

There may be another layer to this disagreement. Directors and others may worry about the continued existence of the school. Their actions may be aimed at making the school more attractive to non-Catholics seeking a quality education

but not necessarily a Catholic education. If so then the reason for being is to keep the institution alive no matter what changes must be made.

Priority for others may be educating their children in a place grounded in a Roman Catholic worldview. For these the type of education provided is the first priority, not keeping the institution alive.

Again, the reason for being is a key question. The answer influences decisions.

Eventually this question is faced by every organization — churches, religious institutions and Christian ministries included. It influences such things as the name of a church (First Baptist Church or Love Rules Church?); the requirements of a school (Study denominational doctrine or world religions?); or the leadership of a ministry (Does the leader embrace the values of the ministry or is being a good leader more important?).

A few years ago a consultant recommended ways *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) could expand its ministry and some of the ideas are being implemented. The consultant also recommended a major new emphasis that would take the ministry away from its historical reason for being but could ensure the continuance of the company.

### Focused and on task

TAB leadership, including the board of directors, decided ensuring the continuance of the company was not a sufficient reason for being. We exist to inform, inspire and connect Baptists in the kingdom of God, not to create jobs. The way we accomplish these purposes changes — sometimes rapidly — but knowing why the ministry exists keeps us focused and on task.

Still, circumstances sometimes necessitate re-examining an organization's reason for being. That was true for the National Carriage Builders' Association. Perhaps that is what happened with San Domenico School. When that happens it is wise to face the changes head-on. Stakeholders can make a thorough study of relevant information. Options can be evaluated and informed decisions made. A new reason for being can be adopted.

Some may not support the new purpose and step away. That is to be expected. But the new reason for being may attract others who did not support the organization's original purpose.

### Tools of destruction

What should be avoided is an unrecognized erosion of the reason for being. That inevitably results in pleasing no one as the situation in San Domenico illustrates. Conflicting expectations, unfulfilled goals, people pulling in opposite directions — these are the tools of destruction for churches, religious institutions and ministries as well as businesses. †

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### RESTORED HOPE

A tip of my hat to Grace Thornton for her thoughtful article on Ben Moseley — "On that road to redemption" — in the Aug. 17 issue.

I recall the events related to the church burnings from 11 years ago

and wondered what kind of heartless creatures could do such a thing.

Grace helped to restore some of my perspective with the way she told the story of the "new" Ben Moseley. Thank you, Grace.

Here is hoping and praying Ben will

continue on his new path and reach out to the younger generation who may be led astray as he was years ago.

Gerald Hicks  
Hueytown, 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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# Millions of children suffering

## Famine in Sudan may lessen but hunger, malnutrition persist

**D**ecades of civil war, ethnic tensions and government infighting continue to contribute to extreme famine conditions in the world's newest country.

When the United Nations (UN) officially declared famine in South Sudan in February 2017, more than 1 million people were facing extreme scarcity of food. The declaration in South Sudan came just six years after the country officially broke away from Sudan, ending Africa's longest-running civil war.

However, continued government infighting in South Sudan caused millions to flee, often to neighboring regions in Sudan.

As a result, an estimated 3 million people require humanitarian assistance in the Darfur region of Sudan, with an additional 230,000 people in need in conflict-affected regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, according to USAID, the U.S. government agency that works to end extreme global poverty.

Two million Sudanese children under the age of 5 are acutely malnourished, including 550,000 who suffer from severe acute malnutrition. An estimated quarter of a million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition in South Sudan.

### School lunches

Approximately 350 South Sudanese children will receive lunch during the 10.5 months of their 2017 school year thanks to Baptist Global Relief (BGR), a global Southern Baptist relief and development organization.

Living Water Community Transformation, a BGR partner organization, operates two Christian primary schools in Akot, providing education to a total of 700 students. Funding from other sources will supply lunches for the remaining students.

The daily lunch program optimizes nutrition and growth for these children during their critical years of educational, physical and personal development, according to gobgr.org.

"Well-nourished, healthy children have more consistent school attendance, stay in school longer and learn better," a BGR partner says.

### Success stories

BGR also works in the region to equip and empower local farmers to grow more food through its agri-business project and to dig wells to provide clean drinking water.

The onset of harvests, increased access to livestock products and a decline in staple food prices expected in October may provide



Photo by Angela Stephens/USAID

USAID Acting Food for Peace Director Matt Nims measures a child's upper arm to help determine whether she's malnourished at a USAID-funded health clinic in ZamZam, a camp for internally displaced persons in El Fasher, Darfur, Sudan.

some relief from the severe famine in the region. Until then, up to four million people could require emergency food assistance through the lean season ending in September.

USAID and its UN partners remain the world's largest providers of humanitarian aid to Sudan, assisting more than 2.5 million food-insecure Sudanese, as well as South Sudanese refugees residing in Sudan, according to usaid.gov. In a visit to North Darfur State, Sudan, on Aug.

28, USAID administrator Mark Green said the situation in Sudan has reached a "critical point."

### 'America will not walk away'

"There is still a need for life-saving humanitarian assistance, and we hope to see a successful resolution to the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile)," Green said. "I want to underscore — America will not walk away from our commitment to humanitarian assistance, and we will always stand with people everywhere when a disaster or humanitarian crisis strikes, for that is who we are as Americans." (TAB)

**To learn more about BGR efforts around the world or to donate online, visit [gobgr.org](http://gobgr.org).**

**"I want to underscore — America will not walk away from our commitment to humanitarian assistance, and we will always stand with people everywhere when a disaster or humanitarian crisis strikes, for that is who we are as Americans."**

Mark Green  
administrator, USAID

# ‘Moment of gospel clarity’

## SBC leaders among signatories of Nashville Statement on sexuality issues

About 70 Southern Baptist leaders recently joined with other evangelicals to affirm a “Christian manifesto” on sexuality issues — a statement that says Christians can’t “agree to disagree” on homosexuality and transgenderism.

“We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it — particularly as male and female,” read The Nashville Statement, released Aug. 29 by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW).

The coalition of leaders hopes to “provide help for churches and Christian organizations that are looking for biblical guidance on how to address homosexuality and transgenderism,” said Denny Burk, CBMW president and professor of biblical studies at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

### Days ahead

The signers also hope to build a group of “like-minded evangelicals to stand together for the challenging days ahead” and to encourage young evangelicals who are under pressure to desert biblical teaching, Burk said.

The Nashville Statement is being labeled “anti-LGBTQ” by the media, and Nashville Mayor Megan Barry didn’t appreciate the statement’s connection to the city. But Baptist leaders such as Russell Moore say the document’s content is an “urgently needed moment of gospel clarity.”

### Have compassion

“In a culture nearly defined by sexual confusion and brokenness ... the church must stand ready to receive with compassion the many who are in need of a better hope,” said Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

The document contains 14 affirmations and denials about sexuality issues. It begins by affirming God’s creation of male and female as equals who marry for the purpose of a “covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union” meant to “signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.”

It denies any leeway for homosexual, polygamous or polyamorous relation-

ships — and it leaves no latitude for Christians who might believe differently on the topic.

In Article 10, the Nashville Statement called any church’s or Christian’s approval of homosexual or transgender lifestyles “sinful.” To affirm those lifestyles “constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness,” the statement reads.

Other points of the statement included:

- ▶ Adoption of “a homosexual or transgender self-conception” is inconsistent with God’s purposes.

- ▶ Same-sex attraction is not part of God’s original design, but people who experience such attraction may live fruitful lives through faith in Christ as they practice purity.

- ▶ People born with a sex development disorder possess the same “dignity and worth” as all other image-bearers of God.

In addition to Moore, other Southern Baptist signers included eight former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presidents; all six SBC seminary presidents; well-known pastors H.B. Charles, Mark Dever and J.D. Greear; and several SBC entity heads, such as Kevin Ezell of the North American Mission Board, O.S. Hawkins of GuideStone Financial Resources, Thom Rainer of LifeWay Christian Resources and Frank S. Page of the Executive Committee.

Other signers of The Nashville Statement included theologians J.I. Packer and Wayne Grudem, author and pastor John Piper, pastor John MacArthur, family leader James Dobson and theologians R.C. Sproul and D.A. Carson.

Burk said the aim of the statement “is to shine a light into the darkness — to declare the goodness of God’s design in our sexuality and in creating us as male and female.”

### ‘Biblically derived view’

The new declaration comes 30 years after the adoption of CBMW’s founding document, The Danvers Statement, in response to evangelical feminism.

That document, approved in a 1987 meeting at Danvers, Massachusetts, articulated “complementarianism,” which CBMW describes as “the biblically derived view that men and women are complementary, possessing equal dignity and worth as the image of God, and called to different roles that each glorify Him.” (TAB, BP)

**The full text of the Nashville Statement is available at [www.cbmw.org/nashville-statement](http://www.cbmw.org/nashville-statement).**

## Freeman to lead BCM, serve students at Montevallo, Jeff State Valleydale

Jacob Freeman is the new Baptist campus minister at the University of Montevallo.

Freeman will lead the BCM (Baptist Campus Ministries) at Montevallo and work with students at Jefferson State Community College Shelby-Hoover Campus. The two campuses have a combined undergraduate student population of approximately 7,500.

Freeman said he is excited and grateful for the opportunity to serve with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and BCM.

### ‘A privilege’

“What a privilege it is to be working with local church ministries in training future leaders of our congregations, discipling college students through their years of study and proclaiming the gospel to the nations as they come

from around the world to study at our institutions,” he said.

Freeman replaces Sean Thornton, now a campus minister at Auburn University who served at Montevallo from 2007–2017.



FREEMAN

### Baptist roots

Freeman is a Montgomery native who grew up at Eastmont Baptist Church. He attended Super Summer Alabama as a student, where he first began to explore a call to ministry. Freeman earned a degree in religious studies from LaGrange College in Georgia and a master of divinity degree from Beeson

Divinity School in Birmingham.

He previously served as associate pastor and college minister at Christ Central Church, Calera. Jacob and his wife, Brittany, are parents of twin sons. (TAB)

## Birmingham’s Iron Stream Media acquires New Hope Publishers

Iron Stream Media acquired New Hope Publishers effective Sept. 1 and plans to expand the impact for Christ as more readers engage in relevant, contemporary issues with a missional focus.

“With each book published by New Hope, we pray the content will transform the lives of believers and inspire them on their spiritual journey,” said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director/treasurer of national WMU and publisher of New Hope. “Because of Iron Stream Media’s success in publishing and delivering solid, web-based Bible studies, we believe they are poised to position New Hope books and Bible studies for exponential impact for Kingdom growth.”

According to John Herring, president and CEO of Iron Stream Media, his company initially began as a part of Student Life. The titles and studies associated with Student Life Bible Study were sold to NavPress. After a brief time with NavPress and the Navigators, Life Bible Study was born as an independent company and expanded to include content for adults and children in addition to students.

“Now known as Iron Stream Media, we produce curriculum, discipleship materials, educational content and other tools for ministries and missions,” Herring explained. “Much of our content is well-known by missionaries who use our studies at no cost in regions around the world. For our friends in the United States, we deliver incredibly beautiful Bible study lessons designed to be taught in a variety of ways, keeping God’s Word central in all we do. And, we do it very economically for our church partners.”

### ‘Common love’

“The Iron Stream team has a great fondness for New Hope Publishers,” Herring continued. “We share a common love for the Bible. We also share a common love for all things ‘mission.’ The acquisition of New Hope by Iron Stream is a natural merging of ministry minds — a combination that will enable us to grow faster together than we can separately.”

Both New Hope Publishers and Iron Stream media plan for a seamless transition. Iron Stream Media will welcome four New Hope Publishers staff members to their team and will continue to work at 100 Missionary Ridge in Birmingham. Iron Stream also operates their business in Birmingham.

Wisdom-Martin said, “The name [New Hope Publishers] will remain the same. The mission will remain the same. The employees our authors talk to will remain the same. I have complete confidence that only God could have orchestrated such details, and we are excited to see where He leads.” (WMU)



### Anti-trafficking ministry allowed to stay open

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — A major Christian anti-trafficking ministry narrowly escaped getting shut down after a CNN segment on child sex trafficking offended Cambodia's prime minister recently.

The segment told the story of mothers who sell their daughters into sex slavery, and Prime Minister Hun Sen took issue with the way Cambodians were portrayed.

The women in the segment, like a disproportionate number involved in trafficking in the nation, were ethnically Vietnamese, not Cambodian as the segment stated, according to Christianity Today.

As a result, Agape International Missions (AIM), which runs schools and shelters and investigates more than half of all sex trafficking raids in the country, nearly had to shut its doors after more than a decade of ministry.

But Don Brewster, the founder and president of AIM, apologized and explained in a press conference Aug. 21 that he had told CNN that the girls were Vietnamese, not Cambodian, while the segment was being produced.

Sen accepted AIM's apology Aug. 22 and took back his statement that "no matter what it costs us, this organization has to leave Cambodia." AIM has rescued more than 100 underage girls from the trafficking industry since its founding. (TAB)

### Iceland Down syndrome babies aborted

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Virtually 100 percent of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome in Iceland are aborted, according to an Aug. 14 CBS News report.

Iceland "has on average just one or two children born with Down syndrome per year" out of a population of 330,000, the report said.

The reason for the lack of Down syndrome births is that genetic testing leads nearly all mothers whose children are expected to have Down syndrome to opt for abortion.

Icelandic law requires all expectant mothers to be informed about the availability of prenatal genetic screening, and some 80–85 percent perform the testing, CBS reported. Some children born with Down syndrome are carried to term only because screenings misdiagnosed them as healthy, according to CBS.

This situation is "a tragedy" and should remind churches "to embrace children and adults with special needs and lead the way in showing the world how to include those with special needs," said Tracy McElhattan, a Kansas children's ministry professional who holds a doctorate in special education.

According to CBS, 67 percent of U.S. babies diagnosed with Down syndrome were aborted from 1995–2011. (BP)

### Child suicide bombings at all-time high

DORO GOWON, Nigeria — Boko Haram's abuse of children as suicide bombers is at an all-time high in the Lake Chad region including northeast Nigeria and neighboring countries, UNICEF said Aug. 22.

The jihadists have murdered at least 83 children since January by strapping them with bombs before sending them into public gathering places and detonating the explosives.

About 55 of the victims were girls under the age of 15, as girls often become pregnant in captivity as rape victims. At least one girl was much younger than a teenager. The remaining 27 victims were boys.

"The use of children in this way is an atrocity," UNICEF said in the report. "Children used as 'human bombs' are, above all, victims, not perpetrators."

The numbers for less than eight months of 2017 are a drastic increase over the 30 killed as suicide bombers in all of 2016, UNICEF noted, as well as the 56 in 2015 and four in 2014. In UNICEF's earlier report in April, Boko Haram had killed 27 children by using them as bombers. (BP)

# 'Respond in Jesus' name'

## Texas Baptists 'thank God for sister conventions'

(continued from page 1)  
communications and chaplains units were deployed almost immediately to the coastal Texas town of Rockport.

Mass feeding and shower units and chaplains were dispatched to Corpus Christi and Rockport.

Mass care feeding, shower and water units were sent to northwest Houston, and laundry, feeding, shower and water support units were set up in inland cities like Austin and San Antonio in order to assist evacuees.

Additional units — bunkhouse, feeding, chaplains, cleanup and recovery, shower, child care, communications and water treatment — were on standby as officials assessed whether conditions were safe enough for relief workers to enter.

Texas Baptist Men (TBM) also were set up to feed evacuees at the Brown Convention Center. A TBM spokesperson said they expect to prepare 24,000 meals a day at the shelter.

### Multistate effort

One thing is clear — the cleanup and recovery effort will require a multistate effort, Knight said.

"Thank goodness we have sister conventions that respond," he said recalling the crews from other states that have come to Texas' aid.

Alabama Baptists have been quick to respond and many are eager to go to Texas to help, said Mark Wakefield,

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions disaster relief and chaplaincy ministries strategist.

Alabama Baptists have 7,000 trained disaster relief workers. Last week volunteers began preparing food service, shower and child care units for deployment. Wakefield said teams will be deployed as specific needs are identified by personnel on the ground.

"Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers are ready to assist when requested," Wakefield said. "Self-deployment is discouraged since every part of the infrastructure is overloaded. A disaster this large will require time and a lot of



NAMB photo  
Disaster relief supplies are loaded onto trucks at the North American Mission Board's warehouse in Alpharetta, Georgia. Materials included rolled roofing, Tyvek suits, masks and Shockwave.

resources. Pray for responses to proceed smoothly."

Wakefield said people desiring to help in these initial days following the disaster can best help by giving.

"Giving makes it possible for survivors to purchase what they need and gives them control over their lives which they desperately need at this point," he said.

Wakefield urged people not to collect supplies unless a specific organization has requested them and has agreed to receive them. Clothes, shoes or jackets are not needed.

Wakefield noted that 100 percent of funds donated to disaster relief through SBOM will go to Southern Baptist response organizations

in Texas. No administrative fees come out of SBDR donations.

SBDR and Send Relief of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) also will be providing long-term aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Cleanup response teams will be mudding out houses and chainsaw crews will be clearing fallen limbs. Beyond that, Southern Baptists anticipate being involved in rebuild efforts to assist homeowners.

"There are some events that mark a time in history for generations to come," said Kevin Ezell, NAMB's president. "I believe Hurricane Harvey is one of those

events and Southern Baptists will be known by the way we respond."

Other Southern Baptist organizations are responding to the financial needs of Harvey survivors.

The Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Foundation announced a \$5,000 HEART (Humanitarian Emergency Aid for Rebuilding Tomorrow) Fund Grant to help WMU of Texas provide gift cards to help storm victims with immediate needs.

"We are so grateful that this grant will allow us to respond in Jesus' name to the very real and urgent needs that are all around us right now," said Carolyn Porterfield, interim executive director of WMU of Texas.

At press time, no Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief teams had been deployed, but individual churches and associations, including Coffee and Cleburne, have taken steps to aid in the relief effort.

### Long-term recovery

Cottage Hill Baptist, Mobile, collected cleaning supplies, diapers and toiletry items. Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton, and Mount Hebron West Baptist Church, Elmore, were collecting cleaning supplies and bottled water to take when disaster relief workers deploy to Beaumont, Texas. A team from First Baptist Church, Robertsedale, went to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to help prepare meals for those sheltered there.

Knight noted that trained volunteers will be needed for months and SBDR will be there for the duration. (BP contributed)

**To give to disaster relief efforts through SBOM, visit [sbd.org/texas](http://sbd.org/texas). Donations also can be made by texting SENDRELIEF to 41444.**

# ALABAMA

## UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

### Pastor Tommy Chesser reflects on 50-year ministry

As Tommy Chesser approaches the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the ministry, he said one thing means more to him than anything — the people in his churches who came to know the Lord.

“The greatest thing is just looking back and seeing the people who accepted Christ as their Savior,” he said. “At every church where I served, we had people who came to know Jesus.”

Chesser, who has served as pastor of Raimund Heights Baptist Church, Bessemer, for the past 11 years, was ordained in 1967 by Pastor A.B. Payne at Anderson Memorial Baptist Church, Lipscomb. He attended Clarke College in Mississippi and served as pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Lena, Mississippi, before transferring to Samford University in Birmingham to continue his studies.

Chesser also attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and went on to serve several Alabama Baptist churches as pastor — Cahaba Heights Baptist, Birmingham; Hollins Baptist; Pleasant Grove Baptist, Carbon Hill; Bethesda Baptist, Equality; and Robinwood Baptist, Birmingham.

He served as the director of Child Evangelism Fellowship of North Central Alabama from 1980 to 1990.

“I’m planning to keep serving the Lord as long as I can,” he said.

Chesser’s congregation at Raimund



CHESSE

Heights will be hosting a celebration for him Sept. 10, 2–4 p.m. (Grace Thornton)

### Etowah Association DOM Gary Cardwell retires

As Gary Cardwell looked around at his empty bookshelves, cleaned-out desk and file cabinet in late August, emotions flooded in. After 12 years as director of missions of Etowah Baptist Association (EBA) — a role he said he feels “blessed and privileged” to have served in — he retired Sept. 3.

“EBA has endured many changes over the past years and continues to be a very viable and much-needed ministry,” he said. “And as with any ministry, relationships are at the heart of everything. I have been immeasurably blessed by so many people.”

Cardwell also recently marked 36 years in ministry. Before coming to EBA, he served as pastor of three Alabama Baptist churches, most recently Fairfield Highlands in Midfield.

He and Carol, his wife of 46 years, plan to stay in the Gadsden area.

“We are looking forward to spending each day discovering what God has for us in the future,” Cardwell said. For one thing, he’s looking forward to devoting more time to his ministry as a law enforcement chaplain, a role he’s held for nearly two decades.

Cardwell is also available for supply preaching and interim pastorates. To contact him, call 256-393-7044. (Grace Thornton)



CARDWELL

our broken, moralistic and religious way of thinking and relating to God and to others,” according to the producers. “Once we begin to know who God is (and as a result who we are), we have something to invite the world into. Freedom from performance. Freedom from managing our behavior so we appear acceptable to God.”

Traylor Lovvorn’s struggle with compulsive behaviors, including pornography and sexual addiction, led to the Lovvorns’ divorce after 11 years of marriage. After six years of divorce, the couple remarried and founded Undone Redone to help others recover from the devastating results of sin, shame and guilt. Undone Redone is a ministry partner of *The Alabama Baptist*.

The Lovvorns will join friends and family at the AMC Lee Branch 15 theater in Birmingham to view the film. (TAB)

**For more information about the film including location and ticket information, visit [heartofmanmovie.com](http://heartofmanmovie.com) and [UndoneRedone.com](http://UndoneRedone.com).**

## Birmingham ministry founders featured in new film; viewings set for Sept. 14

A new film blending a cinematic retelling of the Prodigal Son story with contemporary stories of freedom in Christ will feature Traylor and Melody Lovvorn of Undone Redone, a Birmingham-based recovery ministry.

“The Heart of Man” will be shown Sept.

14, 7 p.m., in 600 select theaters around the U.S., including locations in Birmingham, Huntsville, Daphne and Mobile. The film features emotional interviews with the Lovvorns and others who have walked out of a

moralistic and behavior-centric journey with God and found healing, Traylor Lovvorn said.

Authors William Paul Young, of the *New York Times* best-selling novel “The Shack” and Dan Allender, of “The Wounded Heart” also are among those featured in the film.

“It’s a story inviting us to leave behind



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Biblical ‘Twins’

# Mercy and Grace

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

When we think of biblical twins, Jacob and Esau come to mind. Twins they were but not identical. Not all biblical twins are human; some are verbal. These verbal twins may often seem identical but closer examination finds some distinguishing mark.

Take for example, the verbal twins “mercy” and “grace.” The mercy and grace of God are frequently mentioned in the Bible. Often only one or the other is named, but on occasion these two aspects of God’s love are referenced together, as in Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” We quite often use these terms interchangeably, giving the impression they share the same meaning, as if the grace of God is simply an alternative way of expressing the mercy of God or that the mercy of God is a variation that means the grace of God.

In order to suggest a way of differentiating between God’s grace and His mercy, *Theology 101* this week looks more closely at these essential attributes of God by suggesting that it takes both the lens of mercy and lens of grace for us to have 20/20 vision of divine love.

As a starting point, we take as a settled truth that “God is love” and that He loves us. How then does God manifest His love to His children? Think of divine love expressed to us through twin channels of His mercy and His grace. Or put another way, mercy and grace form twin lens’s through which to view God’s love.

One way to get a practical and understandable grip on these twin aspects of divine love is to think of it like this: mercy is God’s love expressed to us in withholding from us what we truly deserve for our waywardness, neglect and acts of disobedience while grace is God’s love bestowing on us what, in fact, we do not deserve.

Love does not wait to be deserved or

earned. God gives His love freely in the twin acts of withholding and bestowing. Thought of like this, we understand God’s love to have both a positive and a negative dimension. Some way of understanding both mercy and grace helps us plumb the depths of God’s love. Together these two twin terms help us measure the immeasurable and express the inexpressible.

When the apostle Paul referred to his own testimony in writing Timothy, he wrote, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:12–14).

## God’s love

God’s withholding love was seen in Paul not being justly punished for his blasphemy, his persecution of Christians and his arrogance. Rather than the just reward of punishment, God’s love operated as mercy in withholding what Paul deserved. In a similar way, God’s bestowing grace was seen in giving Paul what he had no right to expect and did not deserve, namely love that was exceedingly abundant and putting him into the ministry.

We too can reflect on how often divine mercy has withheld from us what we rightfully deserve and divine grace has bestowed on us in abundance what we have not earned and do not deserve.✠

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.



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*

# MYERS-MALLORY PRAYER SEASON APPROACHING



Thank you, Alabama Baptists, for supporting missions through the Cooperative Program and with gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. During this month is the suggested **Week of Prayer for State Missions, September 10-17**. Your prayer support and financial gifts will help undergird the five strategic priorities of Woman's Missionary Union, Disaster Relief, Church Planting, Alabama Partnership Missions and Church Revitalization.



By Rick Lance  
*State Missionary*

This year's goal is \$1 million, and the Hallelujah Goal is \$1.2 million. I pray that you and your Alabama Baptist church will prayerfully

consider how you might participate with missional generosity and prayer support.

Please know that the ministries of your state missionaries, along with the missional infrastructure of the State Board of Missions, are sustained solely by gifts through the Cooperative Program whereas gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering are devoted entirely to the five Great Commission Ministries listed above.

If your state missionaries or the staff of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union may assist your congregation with any of these ministry areas, please contact us:

**Woman's Missionary Union:** Candace McIntosh, executive director, 1-800-264-1225,

ext. 222, or (334) 613-2222, cmcintosh@alsbom.org.

**Disaster Relief:** State Missionary Mark Wakefield, disaster relief strategist, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 267, or (334) 613-2267, mwakefield@alsbom.org.

**Church Planting:** State Missionary Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.

**Alabama Partnership Missions:** State Missionary Scotty Goldman, director of Global Missions, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 387, or (334) 613-2387, sgoldman@alsbom.org.

**Church Revitalization:** State Missionary Mike Jackson, director of LeaderCare & Church Health, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 220, or (334) 613-2220, mjackson@alsbom.org.

Many resources related to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering – including videos, missions studies, clip art, other images, announcements for large screen and print resources – are downloadable and available online at [myers-mallory.org](http://myers-mallory.org). You may also contact Sandra McKenzie at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2233, smckenzie@alsbom.org.

When you visit the website, please take time to read about the namesakes of the offering, Martha Myers and Kathleen Mallory. They were indeed two spiritual giants during two periods of time: two lives well lived for one mission: the Great Commission.

Matthew 16:24



For updates on Hurricane Harvey relief:  
**www.SBDR.org, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 356**

# 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.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

## Why I Believe In The Cooperative Program



BAILEY



[alsbom.org/cp](http://alsbom.org/cp)

The Cooperative Program is to Southern Baptist missions what American infrastructure is to our nation's industry. Both have made us world leaders respectively. Alabama's remains the model for Cooperative Program causes in our Southern Baptist Convention.

– **Morgan Bailey**, senior pastor, Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2017 OUTSTANDING MISSION VOLUNTEER

The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2017 Mission Volunteer. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.

Please think about lay people you know whom you feel are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize that there are many who could fit this requirement; however, for this purpose only one individual (or couple) will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required if a person (or couple) is to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name, address and phone number of the nominee's pastor, the church to which he/she/they belong and their association.
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost where he/she/they have participated during the past five years, including locations and dates. (If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas, please do not nominate that person.)
4. Statements supporting your nomination as Outstanding 2017 Mission Volunteer (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner).
5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

To access an Information Sheet and Nomination Application, go online to [a18c.org/volunteeroftheyear](http://a18c.org/volunteeroftheyear).

If you do not have web access, request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application by contacting Ministry Assistant Barbara Hope at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, or (334) 613-2238, [bhope@alsbom.org](mailto:bhope@alsbom.org).

REQUESTS MAY ALSO BE MADE BY MAIL TO GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFICE, ATTN: BARBARA HOPE, P.O. BOX 11870, MONTGOMERY, AL 36111-0870.

**Please note:** No phone calls or e-mail recommendations and/or endorsements accepted! Nominations must be received, not postmarked, no later than **Wednesday, September 20, 2017.**

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

# 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](http://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](mailto:emitchell@alsbom.org).

**FOCUS on One Mission**

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

**SAVE THE DATE!**

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

More info: [alabamabaptistsecretaries.com](http://alabamabaptistsecretaries.com)

**Faith-Focused  
Safe Travel  
Training:  
Level A**



**State Board of Missions,**  
2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery  
9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. ~ 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](http://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).

**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).

**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).

**FREE**



order your **2017-2018  
RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

THIS 16-MONTH CALENDAR (Sept. 2017–Dec. 2018) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events. It also includes an alphabetical listing of ministries and services along with directories of associational, state and SBC contacts.

**Limit 20 copies per church.** To order, please call, fax or e-mail your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; direct at 334.613.2231; 334.288.2693 (fax); [chobbs@alsbom.org](mailto:chobbs@alsbom.org); or order online at [alsbom.org/rd](http://alsbom.org/rd).

Be sure to include your name, church name, mailing address and number of guides needed up to 20.



# Myers-Mallory

State Missions Offering

Videos & other resources available

ONLINE

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



**FOCUS on One Mission**

# Disciple Be One. Make One.

Matthew 16:24



**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 Morning)

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

**Special event** Dinner program featuring Sherri Burgess, author of *Bronner: A Journey to Understand*, Tuesday evening between convention sessions.  
**Cost: \$15.** Register at [alsbom.org/burgess](http://alsbom.org/burgess)

**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

**Holiday Inn Express & Suites Huntsville West**  
2600 Old Fairway Rd  
\$99  
256-837-7171  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Springhill Suites Huntsville Downtown**  
745 Constellation Place Dr  
\$99  
256-512-0188  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Candlewood Suites Huntsville – Research Park**  
201 Exchange Place  
\$99  
256-830-8222  
Free WiFi

**Homewood Suites Downtown**  
714 Gallatin St SW  
256-539-1445  
\$119  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**TownePlace Suites Huntsville West/Redstone Gateway**  
6500 Redstone Gateway SW  
\$109  
256-895-3300  
Free WiFi and breakfast

**Hilton Garden Inn Huntsville South/Redstone Arsenal**  
301 Boulevard South SW  
\$119  
256-881-4170  
Free WiFi and breakfast

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

**Holiday Inn Research Park**  
5903 University Dr  
\$95  
256-830-0600  
Free WiFi and breakfast

## 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 include every aspect of church library work - administration, collection development, processing, book repair including preventive measures, automation with Concourse and Atrium, promotion of all sorts, and classification and cataloging. Church history, cardmaking, the Cricut machine, origami, making something useful out of the useless material are also favorites of this conference.

Special guests: Morlee Maynard, National Library Consultant, and David Francis from LifeWay Christian Resources.

There will be many give-away books and other items. Lunch is provided by the church. A LifeWay book store will be available.

For more information, please contact Eva Nell Hunter at (256) 353-5912 (church) or (256) 303-7739 (cell), [enhunter1946@gmail.com](mailto:enhunter1946@gmail.com) or [library@cbcdecatur.org](mailto:library@cbcdecatur.org).



## Senior Adult Choir Celebrations

**Thursday, October 19, 2017:** First Baptist Church, Pelham; Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery

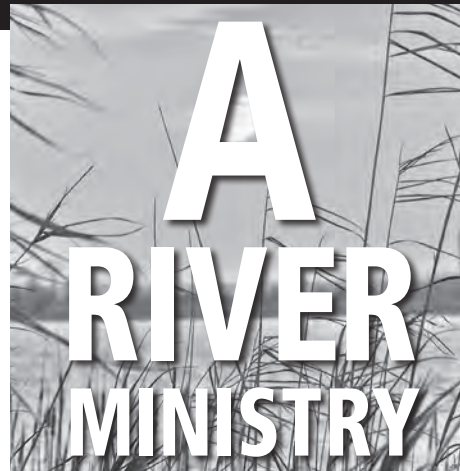
**Friday, October 20, 2017:** Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile; Providence Baptist Church, Opelika

REGISTRATION: [alsbom.org/seniorfest](http://alsbom.org/seniorfest)

Come and experience a gathering of worship with fellow senior adults at the Senior Adult Choir Celebrations. Individual groups sing prepared selections as well as singing the classic hymns together. There are four locations to choose from. Your group may attend one or more! The only cost is your lunch.

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

I receive several prayer updates from planters all across Alabama and beyond – this one I thought worth sharing with you today. It is from Barry Britt, who is planting the Oasis Church in Orange Beach. His comparison of a lake ministry and a river ministry is worth noting:



Dear partners in the ministry,

Last week, I got a little discouraged. After serving as a pastor in traditional church settings for more than 20 years, there were things that I began to miss. I missed the steady long-term relationships that develop.

When you pastor a church for a long time, you make lifetime relationships that grow even generationally. You may even have the privilege of leading someone to Christ, conducting their wedding, dedicating their babies and in time even conducting their baby's wedding, if you are there long enough.

I missed the security of a piece of land with a permanent building dedicated to the meeting place of the members with its designated spaces for children, youth and adults, worship, eating, playing, etc. I missed the organized ministry teams that focus on a specific area of ministry and see that all in that realm is taken care of. These are all things that take years to develop and are strong positives of an established local church.

As I reflected on past blessings and began to get a little sad, the Lord showed me something in my spirit while driving to share my weekly message with the Beach Club residents. Serving as pastor of a traditional local church is kind of like ministering in a lake while planting a new church or ministry is more like ministering in a river.

In a lake, things remain relatively the same and change slowly. There will be some new fish, ducks, turtles, etc. that come in periodically, and there will be some that fly away or slip over the dam.

However in a river, the fish, ducks, turtles and water are always moving and changing. In a lake, you can invest years of discipleship and ministry in a group of people, but in a river you may only have minutes to share the Gospel or plant a seed or help someone to the next step in their walk with Jesus.

The Lord is showing me that both ministries are important and have a place in the kingdom. I believe the river is the place where most of the lost and unchurched believers are living their lives today, and that is where God has called me and my family to serve or "fish" for now.

It has been an exciting adventure and every week is a new surprise.

Literally every week, we are seeing fruit from being in this unique position. There are locals who come to worship and serve regularly, and they are both precious and faithful as they join with us as a new body of believers called Oasis Church. They too immediately take on a river ministry mentality, and it has been so fun to serve with them!

We are so blessed and thankful for those who have blessed us in so many ways over the past 15 months, partnering with us in this new work: First Baptist Church, Gulf Shores; Spring Valley Baptist Church, Springville; Eastpointe Baptist Church, Spanish Fort; the North American Mission Board; the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; and various individuals. Check out our new website [www.oasischurchsbce.org](http://www.oasischurchsbce.org) to see what's going on. Also like us on Facebook at Oasis Church at the Wharf and watch one of our services live or recorded.

Thank you for being our friends, partners, and encouragers as we serve in this new ministry!

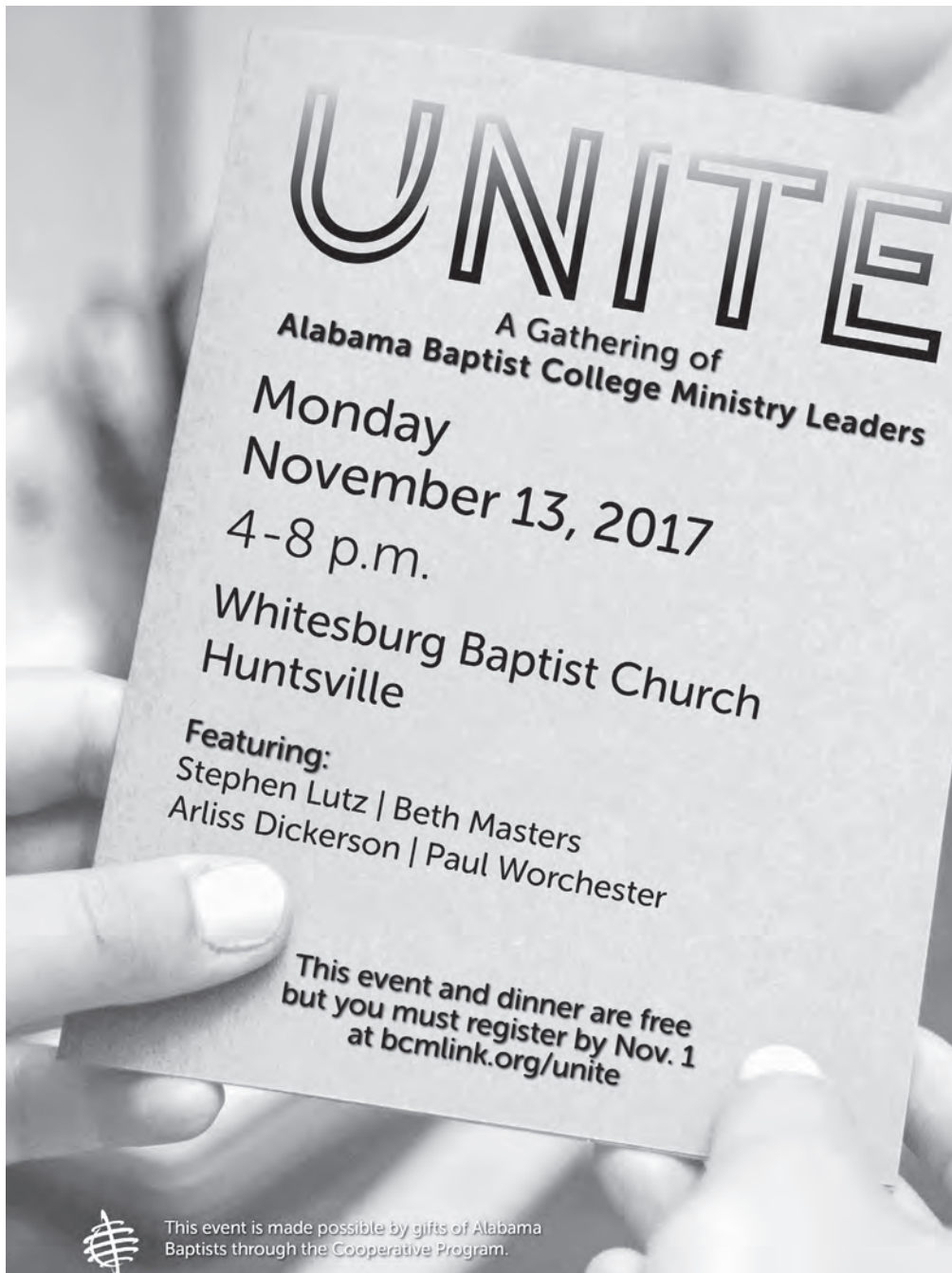
Barry, Lisa, and Houston Britt

Your Alabama State Board of Missions is able to assist this church plant because of gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

By Lamar Duke  
State Missionary



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



This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

**MARVEL**  
**IN HIS WORD**  
 Alabama Bible Drill  
Philippians: 4:13

# BIBLE DRILL RETREAT

Friday and Saturday, January 26 -27, 2018 📖 Shocco Springs

THEME: MARVEL IN HIS WORD

Join us as we **MARVEL IN HIS WORD** at the 2018 Bible Drill Retreat. Conferences will be designed for children, youth and high school drill participants as well as their leaders. Participants will be learning God's Word and about its importance in their lives.

Leaders will have the opportunity to learn more about Bible Drill and how it can be an effective ministry in their churches. Bible Drill in a Box, a make-and-take conference that provides more than 35 activities to use in classrooms, will be offered for each church.

REGISTRATION: [shocco.org/bible-drill-retreat](http://shocco.org/bible-drill-retreat)

For more information, please contact State Missionary Belinda Stroud, [bstroud@alsbom.org](mailto:bstroud@alsbom.org), or Ministry Assistant Julie Smith, [jsmith@alsbom.org](mailto:jsmith@alsbom.org), at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 255, or (334) 613-2255.

## Train your entire church how to have Gospel conversations!

**What You Will Learn:**

How to shift 30%, 40% or even 50% of your members to missionaries.

A simple follow-up plan so you can create and maintain a culture of witnessing and evangelism®.

### EVERY BELIEVER A WITNESS

#### 2017 Pastor Equipping Conferences

Date	District	City	Place
September 26	10	Muscle Shoals	Highland Park BC
October 17	1	Athens	Clements BC
October 19	12	Montgomery	State Board of Missions

REGISTRATION FEE: \$49

Attendees receive \$50 gift card. 🍴 Lunch provided.

**NOTE:** Registering as early as possible, even immediately, is encouraged, as you will receive preparation materials that will allow you to get the most from the training.

To register, go to: [ALSBOM.org/EveryBeliever](http://ALSBOM.org/EveryBeliever).

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

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND AUDITION CD'S: Wednesday, November 1, 2017. Between 150 and 170 students in grades 4-6 from Alabama Baptist churches will be selected.

## Children's Honor Choir Auditions

AUDITION FORMS: [alsbom.org/chc](http://alsbom.org/chc)  
 TOUR DATES: March 2-4, 2018  
 LOCATION: Shocco Springs

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



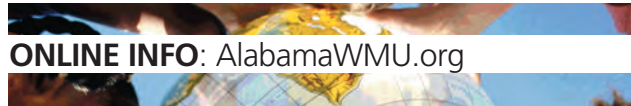
# FALL MISSIONS FESTIVALS

## 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

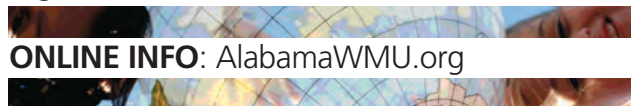
For more information, please contact Sandra McKenzie at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223, smckenzie@alsbom.org.

## 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

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



# CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS

for Mississippi River Ministry

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

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# NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

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 ≈ Office of 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).



# 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).



(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.

# 'Evangelistic decision'

## Historic congregation votes to relocate, 'finish what was started'

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
The Alabama Baptist

**A** building plan covered in prayer by Alabama Baptists. That's the vision First Baptist Church, Springville, members have for constructing a new facility in their growing community.

"We want to do what will put our church in the best position to win people for Christ," said First, Springville, lead pastor, Chip Thornton.

The 200-year-old church is one of the oldest in Alabama, but the congregation is not willing to rest on its past, Thornton said. Instead the congregation is looking to the future.

### Need for space

"God is moving people to St. Clair County," Thornton said. "We are at about 80 percent capacity most Sundays and hitting a point where we need to talk about space. The easy thing to do would be nothing but this is an evangelistic decision."

FBC Springville's current campus was built in three stages. The

oldest of the buildings was built in 1967 and the newest was built in 1991. That means the current buildings are 25-50 years old. Renovations would cost hundreds

of thousands of dollars but building makes sense for other reasons, Thornton said.

"The new campus will put us on the main street in Springville," Thornton said. "We will be moving to where the town is developing."

The church purchased the 26-acre property in downtown Springville in 2006 from a seller who believed a church would be the best steward of the land. The church erected a sign — "Future Home of FBC Springville" — and built an athletic complex with soccer fields and a baseball diamond as part of

their master plan to increase engagement with the community.

When the recession hit a year later plans for a new building were put on hold. For 11 years the work

stalled as members adjusted to the impact of the recession.

David DuPre, a pastor at the church, said, "I was there when we put that sign in the ground. I made a commitment — God's bride made a commitment — to the community that a church would be built here for the glory of God."

The church paid the debt on the land in 2015 but the bulk of the 26 acres has remained undeveloped. A sermon series on Zechariah stirred the vision again, DuPre said.

"God showed us through the

prophet Zechariah that we need to be a people of our word not for our glory but for God's glory," he said.

### Financing project

In July the church voted unanimously to "finish what was started" and begin planning for construction of a new facility. Raising funds is first on the agenda. Consulting an architect will happen when the church reaches its first goal of \$500,000 in savings.

Financing the new building with as little debt as possible also is one of the church's goals.

Another is maintaining its focus on outreach, evangelism and discipleship, which is why First, Springville, hopes fellow Baptists will pray for them during the fundraising and construction process.

"The temptation will be to become distracted from our focus on making disciples," Thornton said. "Pray that we will remain focused on the Great Commission. We forever desire to make God's glory our passion in order to lead others to 'Know, Grow and Go.'" ¶



Photo courtesy of FBC Springville  
An athletic complex was completed in 2010 on the future site of FBC Springville.

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### PASTOR

Camellia Baptist Church, 201 Woodvale Rd., Prattville, AL 36067, prayerfully seeking God's choice for a full-time pastor. Resumés with photo may be mailed, Attn: Pastor Search. [www.cbcprattville.org](http://www.cbcprattville.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 resumés 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).

#### WORSHIP LEADER

Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, Alabama, is seeking a part-time worship leader. The primary responsibility is, as a

Christ-follower, to lead and grow a "blended" worship ministry. Resumés may be submitted by email to: [churchoffice@deerfootbaptist.org](mailto:churchoffice@deerfootbaptist.org), or mailed to: Deerfoot Baptist Church, 5450 Mount Olive Church Rd., Trussville, AL 35173.

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### CHURCH SECRETARY

Eastside Baptist, Birmingham. Proficiency in Microsoft Office, publication design, office equipment, office administration and good communication skills required. Monday-Thursday, 30 hours/week. Send resumés to: [bfmurphy@bham.rr.com](mailto:bfmurphy@bham.rr.com).

### BUSINESS

#### 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.reliableesigns.com](http://www.reliableesigns.com). 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

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To advertise through TAB's online classifieds, visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org), scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Classified Ads."

# 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.

## BESSEMER

► **New Faith Church, Pleasant Grove**, will hold revival services Sept. 10-12. Danny Lovett will speak at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Kevin Hamm will speak at 7 p.m. on Monday and Dan Lanier will speak at 7 p.m. on Tuesday. Ted Blalock is pastor.

## BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its regular third Sunday night singing Sept. 17, 6 p.m. Special music will be by 2nd Mile from DeKalb, Mississippi. For more information call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-4468. Randy Burtram is pastor.

## CHILTON

► **West End Church, Clanton**, will host Charles Billingsley in concert Sept. 21, 7 p.m. A love offering will be received. Admission is free but a ticket is required to attend. Tickets are available at the church office on Tuesdays-Thursdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and by phone reservation. For more

information call the church at 205-755-0625. James Watkins is pastor.

## CHOCTAW

► **Bladon Springs Church, Silas**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a service Sept. 24, 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow. Ralph Lee is pastor.

## DEKALB

► **Macedonia No. 2 Church, Crossville**, will celebrate its 75th anniversary Sept. 17, 10:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome. Lawayne Levans is pastor.

## FRANKLIN

► **First Church, Russellville**, will hold a special service Sept. 10, 10:30 a.m. Frank Turek, president of [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org), will speak. First, Russellville, along with Belgreen Church, Russellville; Mountain View Church, Phil Campbell; Divine Church, Russellville; and other area churches will hold Turek's presentations at Russellville High School on Sept. 10-11, 6 nightly.

Patrick Martin is pastor of First, Russellville.

## RUSSELL

► **Nyhl Irvin** is the new pastor of **Shiloh Church, Opelika**. He holds a master's degree and served as a chaplain in the United States Army. He and his wife, Debra, have two children.



IRVIN

## MADISON

► **Willowbrook Church, Huntsville**, will host the women's conference "Cultivate" with Kelly Minter on Sept. 22-23. The Friday session will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. and the Saturday session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon. For more information or to register visit [www.cultivatevent.com](http://www.cultivatevent.com). Mark McClelland is pastor. ☕

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**I** am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

John 6:35

[ChildrensAL.org/committedtoacure](http://ChildrensAL.org/committedtoacure)

# THE FACE OF A CURE

The Alabama Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders is committed to finding a cure for Matthew and the more than 1,500 children who come to us for care each year.

As a founding member of the Children's Oncology Group,\* Children's of Alabama and UAB combine research and innovative therapies to help save the lives of children down the street and around the world.

Although the cancer cure rate has risen from 50 to 84 percent and strokes in patients with sickle cell disease have decreased by 90 percent, we are actively working toward a **CURE** for children and young adults like Matthew.

\*The Children's Oncology group is a clinical-translational trials organization with more than 9,000 experts worldwide dedicated to finding better cures and improving the outcomes for all children with cancer.

# RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

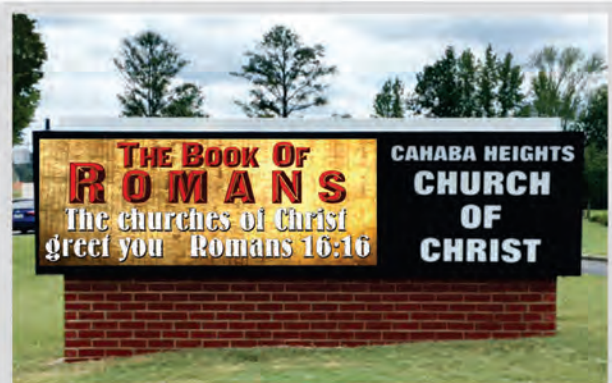
## Overseas military presence smallest in 60 years

WASHINGTON — For the first time in six decades, the U.S. military presence overseas has dropped below 200,000 active-duty troops, according to Pew Research.

In 2016, 193,442 (15 percent) of the nation's 1.3 million active-duty military personnel were deployed to locations outside the country. The number hasn't been that low since at least 1957, "the earliest year with comparable data," Pew reports.

The five countries with the largest presence of U.S. military in 2016 were Japan (38,818), Germany (34,602), South Korea (24,189), Italy (12,088) and Afghanistan (9,023), the last of which is the only one in an open conflict.

The U.S. military presence peaked at more than 1.2 million during the Vietnam War. (TAB)



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# in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders

## Clavis Eugene Akridge Longtime bivocational pastor dies at 88

Clavis Eugene Akridge, retired Alabama Baptist pastor, died July 10. He was 88.

Akridge accepted Christ as a youth during a night service at First Baptist Church, Bayou La Batre. After enlisting in the Navy in 1946, he accepted God's call to ministry. He was ordained at Madden Baptist Church, Heflin, Louisiana, in 1949.

Most of his 42 years of ministry were served bivocationally in Louisiana and Alabama and included pastoring the following churches:



AKRIDGE

Whitehouse Fork Baptist Church, Bay Minette; Friendship Baptist Church, Grand Bay; West Highland Baptist Church, Mobile; Nokomis Baptist Church, Atmore; Josephine Baptist Church, Elberta; Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church, Fairhope; and Shell Banks Baptist Church, Gulf Shores. He also served as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Gulf Shores; Bethel Baptist Church, Robertsdale; and First, Bayou La Batre.

Akridge also served for 27 years in teaching and school administration in Alabama's public school system.

He held a bachelor's degree from Louisiana College in Pineville and a master's degree from the University of South Alabama in Mobile. Akridge also attended seminary for one year.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, Margaret. He is survived by three daughters, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. (TAB)

## James 'Jim' Bruton Liberty Park pastor emeritus dies at 83

James "Jim" R. Bruton, pastor emeritus of Liberty Park Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, died Aug. 15. He was 83.

Bruton served as pastor of Liberty Park Baptist, formerly Woodlawn Baptist Church, for 33 years before retiring in 2004. In 1993 he led the congregation through the decision of relocating from the inner-city where it had been for more than 100 years to suburban Liberty Park.

During his ministry he also served as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Dothan; Liberty Baptist Church, Pansey; and First Baptist Church, Geneva, in addition to churches in Kentucky and Tennessee. Altogether he served the Lord in ministry for more than 50 years.

Bruton held a bachelor's degree from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and a master's degree and doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

He is survived by his wife, Oleta; one child; and two grandchildren. (TAB)



BRUTON

## REVERSE MORTGAGE NEWS

Hello fellow Baptists. The Lord is merciful and gracious and still smiling on me as I cover our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. FHA has made several changes to the reverse mortgage the last few years, but they are still a great way to get rid of your mortgage payment or to get some cash that you never have to repay as long as your home is your primary residence. Did you know that you can also purchase a house with a reverse mortgage, or you can build a nest egg with a line of credit that grows at a fantastic rate?

Your financial situation may be great at present, but let's talk about how to make it greater. Then again, it may be awful. It's always best to talk before you get behind on your bills, but even if you are, please call and let's see what we may be able to do, ok? The number below is my direct line and I would love to talk with you today. Please call now.

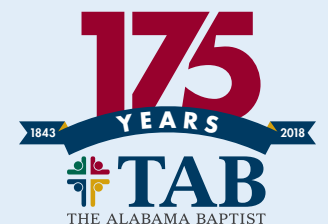
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According to the June 22, 1845, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*:

Readers began arguing over the \$250 contribution to convention causes required in the new Southern Baptist Convention constitution. One writer scored the "extravagant estimate put upon the privilege of membership." Another added, "The price of membership should be only in proportion to the actual expenses of the convention and not an inducement for anyone to give to missions." (TAB)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 10

## Explore the Bible By Kyle Beshears Instructor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### CONFRONTATION Exodus 7:1-13

#### Strategy Explained (1-5)

From Moses's perspective, it seemed that God's plan for redeeming His people from Egypt was lost. The first attempt Moses made to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go resulted in the Egyptian king doubling down on the severity of his tyranny (Ex. 5). Moses, distraught by Pharaoh's reaction, questioned why God had ever sent him back to Egypt in the first place (Ex. 5:22). Yet, God is never surprised because He is sovereign. He knew what would result from Moses's first attempt. So, God laid out His strategy of succeeding in redeeming His people from slavery. First He reminded Moses who He is. "I am Yahweh" (Ex. 6:28), God said, calling Himself by the same name revealed to Moses just earlier in Ex. 3.

How soon Moses forgot who God is. God is the God who keeps His promises of covenantal blessing (v. 4). He hears the plight of His people and moves to redeem them (v. 5). His strategy is always one of blessing and redemption for His people.

#### Simple Obedience (6-7)

After God explained His strategy for redemption, we are told that Moses, now 80 years old, and Aaron, 83, "did just as the Lord commanded them" (v. 6). Compare the difference between God's initial call to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3) to the immediate obedience we see here. At God's initial call to obedience, Moses gave the Lord excuses for his unwillingness to obey. Yet, with this call to obedience, Moses "did just" as God asked.

Do you struggle with obeying the Lord? You are in good company. Obedience to the Lord takes practice and perseverance. By the power of the Holy Spirit, who places within us new desires toward God and

showers us with grace, we can grow in our obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5). We need only look to Christ as our chief example of humble obedience (Phil. 2:8). And, as we see with the advanced age of Moses and Aaron, it is never too late to begin practicing godly obedience.

#### Signs and Wonders (8-13)

Moses and Aaron approach Pharaoh a second time. This time, however, God's request for His peoples' liberation is accompanied with a wondrous miracle. Aaron throws down his staff and it transforms into a serpent. The power of God through one of His servants manifests itself in a powerful and miraculous way before Pharaoh. Yet, instead of relenting to God's request, the so-called god-king of Egypt attempts to match the work of the Lord God who, lest we forget, is the Creator of Pharaoh, staffs and serpents. It takes a whole entourage of "wise men and sorcerers," many more than one man (Aaron), to reproduce the miracle (Ex. 7:12). Pharaoh's heart was hardened when the serpent from Aaron's staff ate the others, so he would not listen to the Lord.

Here we see the need for a regeneration of our hearts in contrast to the renewal of our minds. Logically, the king of Egypt should have thought through the implications of the miracle he witnessed from the servants of the King of kings. Rationally, his thoughts should have led him to obedience. Yet, it was his heart that resisted.

God has shown us the miraculous, from the intricate balance of cosmic laws to the conception of new life, so that we are without excuse (Rom. 1:18-20). Ours is not simply a head problem, but a heart problem. Even in the face of miracles, some hearts will not submit to the Lord. We must cast our hope, then, on the God who promises to give His people new hearts (Ezek. 36:26). And, as we've seen from this story, God keeps His promises. †

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

### DEMONS Mark 9:17-29

In our last session we confronted the difficult problem of knowing how to think about the character of Satan. Popular culture has depicted Satan as everything from a cunning deal-maker to a suave Bohemian to a monstrously evil father of the antichrist to a ridiculous red figure with cloven hooves, horns and a tail. These descriptions all seem far removed from the biblical depiction of Satan, yet even in the Bible it can be difficult to know exactly who Satan is.

In the first three-quarters of the Bible (the Old Testament) Satan appears only three times and then only as a minor figure (Job 1-2; 1 Chron. 21; Zech. 3). More often God is opposed by the chaotic and personified waters of the sea.

In the New Testament, Satan appears more often. But even here the dividing line between Satan and evil personified is not always easy to draw.

What is true of our understanding of Satan is true of demonic powers as well. We might be inclined to think of demons as fallen angels, but this idea rests on a very slender base of scriptural evidence. Several passages from the Old Testament actually describe "evil spirits" sent from the Lord, once against Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem (Judg. 9) and several times against Saul (1 Sam. 16-19).

We know God is not the author of evil, so we have to confess our ignorance of just exactly what may be going on in passages that describe the workings of the spiritual realm.

One fixed point that can guide our thinking in this area is the confident certainty that no matter what form evil may take, our God remains in absolute sovereign control and His plan is steadily working toward its absolute defeat. One passage in which we see this vividly illustrated is Mark 9.

### Evil spirits — demons — seek to destroy us. (17-22a)

As we pick up the story in v. 17, we find Jesus encountering an argument already in progress. A man had brought his son who was possessed by a spirit to the disciples in hopes that they could cast the spirit out, but they could not. The afflictions visited upon the son by the spirit are ones that sound familiar: seizures, falling to the ground, foaming at the mouth, clenched teeth, rigidity.

These sound to us like the symptoms of epilepsy, leaving us to wonder how we should think about this son's condition. Was his epilepsy demonically produced? Was spirit possession just the ancients' way of thinking about what we know of as a disease? Might this be an illustration of the nexus between the fallen state of creation — or evil, in a word — and the terrible effects it produces in death and disease?

### Only Christ has the authority and power over demons. (22b-27)

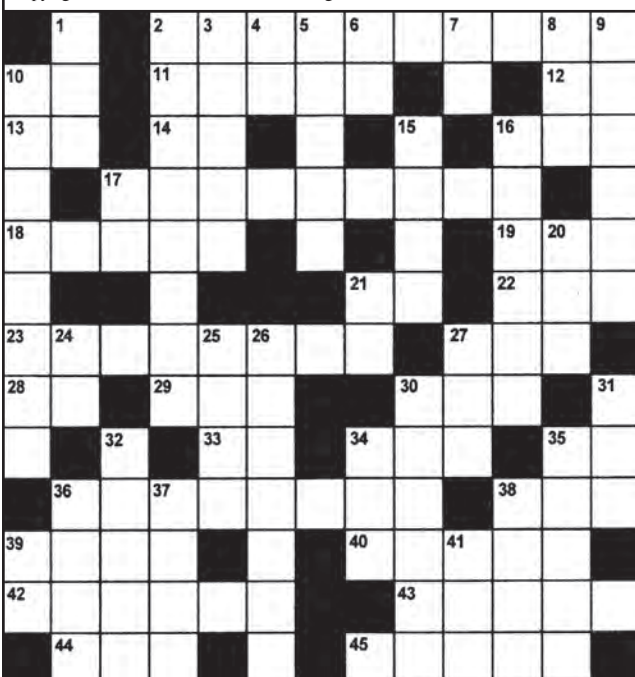
However we are to think of the problem the son had endured these many years, there is no ambiguity about the solution. When the father begs Jesus to have pity on them, Jesus does exactly that. Telling the father, "Everything is possible for him who believes," Jesus drives out the evil spirit and lifts his corpse-like body back to his feet.

### We overcome Satan's attacks through faith and dependence upon Christ. (28-29)

Amazed at what Jesus had done, His disciples ask Him why they had been unable to do it themselves. Jesus' response was both simple and profound: "This kind can come out only by prayer." In a simple sentence Jesus encapsulates all we need to know about facing evil spiritual forces. While they are a reality, they stand under God's power and control. Our task is to cling to and depend on God as He defeats them. †

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- He calleth together his friends and \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 15:6)
- His kingdom was lifted up \_\_\_\_ high. (1 Chron. 14:2)
- Loosen, free from bonds.
- North America. (abbr.)
- Vermont. (abbr.)
- Doctor. (abbr.)
- Buddy, friend, \_\_\_\_.
- Your \_\_\_\_ is come abroad. (Rom. 16:19)
- The state of wearing a robe.
- A type of grain. (singular)
- Expression of pain.
- Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a \_\_\_\_.
- Cain brought ... an \_\_\_\_ unto the Lord. (Gen. 4:3)
- Ye have put off the \_\_\_\_ man. (Col. 3:9)
- 2,000 in Roman numerals.
- Disk Operating System. (abbr.)
- Prefix meaning "before."
- Either/\_\_\_\_.
- They ... weave the

- spider's \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 59:5)
- \_\_\_\_-ta. ("good-bye" in baby talk)
- Who am also a \_\_\_\_ of the glory. (1 Pet. 5:1)
- Mice that \_\_\_\_ the land. (1 Sam. 6:5)
- Prefix meaning very small.
- An island in eastern Indonesia.
- In the \_\_\_\_ of one Tyrannus. (Acts 19:9)
- Ye shall be \_\_\_\_ from your enemies. (Num. 10:9)
- A brand of sneakers. (singular)
- Whose \_\_\_\_ I am not worthy to bear. (Matt. 3:11)

### Down

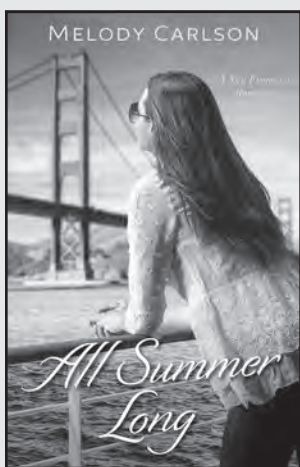
- Go to the \_\_\_\_, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- For he was \_\_\_\_ with us. (Acts 1:17)
- When forty days ... were \_\_\_\_ he hungered. (Luke 4:2)
- This is the way, walk ye in \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 30:21)
- "Get in." (colloquial)
- Whose son is \_\_\_\_?

- Eat straw like the \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 11:7)
- Ribonucleic acid. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_ them that have the rule over you. (Heb. 13:24)
- I have \_\_\_\_ the world. (John 16:33)
- He \_\_\_\_ who should betray him. (John 13:11)
- A \_\_\_\_ prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:17)
- Obstetrical. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_ed him in the killing of his brethren. (Judg. 9:24)
- \_\_\_\_ the King of Bashan. (Num. 21:33)
- Frequency Modulation. (abbr.)
- Because they had no \_\_\_\_ they withered away. (Matt. 13:6)
- Belonging to God's chosen nation.
- Globe.
- Lord, save us: we \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 8:25)
- Though \_\_\_\_ should rise against me. (Ps. 27:3)
- A hidden supply of stores.

- They are \_\_\_\_ with the showers of the mountains. (Job 24:8)
- The \_\_\_\_ of the field. (Matt. 13:36)
- The ravens of the valley shall \_\_\_\_ it out. (Prov. 30:17)
- Medieval churches had a \_\_\_\_ screen at the entrance of the chancel.
- To take from one place to another.
- Postscript. (abbr.)
- Former Chinese leader.



## BOOK



## All Summer Long: A San Francisco Romance

Melody Carlson. *Grand Rapids, Michigan: Revell, 2016. 320 pp. (Paperback).*

I try not to review too many of Melody Carlson's books, but they're so good, it's hard not to. I also try not to buy every book she writes, but this one had the Golden Gate Bridge on the cover — how could I resist? Besides, reading light, Christian romance is a good break from reading dissertation proposals.

If you need a break from something (or just want a fun read), let me recommend this book. It is the story of a young girl who gets a call from her aunt, who has a boat in San Francisco and an idea for turning the boat into a floating restaurant. I want to eat there! Tia accepts the challenge and ends up living on the boat in a marina while she oversees the conversion to a restaurant, and ... well, I won't give away the rest but doesn't that sound like fun?

The story, like all of Carlson's books, is well told and fun to read. And it has a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge on the cover. †

### 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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# Media reviews

## MOVIES

## New 'Ben-Hur' leads September streaming lineup

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Perhaps we should get this out of the way first: It likely was a bad idea to remake the legendary movie Ben-Hur. The Charlton Heston-led 1959 version cost \$15 million to make, grossed \$74 million and won 11 Oscars. Contrast that to the 2016 film which cost \$100 million, finished in the red with a \$26 million gross and was widely panned by critics.

It was — without a doubt — a financial disaster, a box-office flop and an easy target.

### Mainstream reviewers

But that doesn't mean it wasn't a good movie. In fact the 2016 version of Ben-Hur was inspiring, entertaining and well-done. And despite the fact that only 25 percent of critics at Rotten Tomatoes liked it, it did get thumbs up from mainstream reviewers at CNN, Huffington Post and RogerEbert.com. Not bad for a film that has forgiveness at its core and features Christ.

The newest Ben-Hur (PG-13) — which began streaming Sept. 2 on Amazon and Hulu — differs slightly from the 1959 version. In the 2016 movie the main characters of Judah Ben-Hur (Jack Huston), a Jewish prince, and Messala (Toby Kebbell), who is Roman, are adoptive brothers. In the '59 film, they're simply friends.

But that change benefits the 2016 plot, which is set during the time of Jesus and highlights the brothers' differences. They worship different gods and come from different cultures, and the gulf between them widens when Messala leaves the family to try and make it on his own.



Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

### Ben-Hur

Tragedy brings them back together when Judah is falsely accused of an assassination attempt on Pontius Pilate. Messala — now a Roman army officer — sentences Judah to work in the galley of a Roman slave ship where he will face a near-certain slow death.

### Chariot race

Yet Judah survives and pledges payback against his brother. He will get his revenge in a chariot race — a dangerous sport that kills most who attempt it.

The chariot race by itself makes this one worth watching.

Ben-Hur features one of the most powerful examples of forgiveness you'll ever see in a movie. It is rated PG-13 for sequences of violence and disturbing images. It contains no coarse language or sexuality. †

### Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a writer and podcast host for Heirloom Audio. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four small children.

## Streaming this month

By Michael Foust



Akeelah and the Bee

Photo courtesy of Lions Gate Entertainment Inc.

### Hulu

▶ **Akeelah and the Bee (PG, 2006)** — An 11-year-old black girl from Los Angeles competes in the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee.

The story is fictional but inspiring. (If you want a similar plot based on a true story consider the chess-themed Queen of Katwe on Netflix.)

Rated PG for some language. Sept. 1.

▶ **Barnyard (PG, 2006)** — Otis is a carefree young bull who would rather party and play than accept responsibility.

His father is determined to teach Otis how to work. Animated.

Rated PG for some mild peril and rude humor. Sept. 1.

▶ **Nacho Libre (PG, 2006)** — A monk raises money for orphans by moonlighting as a wrestler. This comedy was written and directed by the same director-writer team that brought us Napoleon Dynamite. The latter film is funnier but both are worth a watch.

Rated PG for some rough action and crude humor including dialogue. Sept. 1. †

# Identity in CHRIST

## Unrestricted free agent Tamme knows importance of staying spiritually fit

By Larry Rowell  
Western Recorder

**W**ith four state high school football championships under his belt, four years playing at the University of Kentucky (UK) — holding the all-time receiving record at UK for a tight end — and playing for nine years in the NFL, including three Super Bowls, one might say Jacob Tamme has had a fulfilling and successful life.

However, the unsigned free agent who played last season for the NFC Champion Atlanta Falcons takes his successes — and challenges — in stride.

“Yes, three Super Bowls, I’m 0 for 3,” Tamme said laughing, referring to the Indianapolis Colts losing to the New Orleans Saints 31–17 in 2009; playing for the Denver Broncos in 2013 and losing to Seattle 43–8; and last year with Atlanta losing to New England, 34–28, in overtime.

But what’s truly remarkable about Tamme is in spite of being a noted professional football player, he says his faith in Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance in his life.

As Tamme tells the story of his faith journey, he points to those whom God placed in his path for having impacted his walk with Christ.

### Strong influences

While one might think that money, prestige and power could lead a rookie in the NFL astray from his Christian principles and small-town roots, Tamme’s experience was just the opposite. And it began at home in Kentucky.

“I was raised in a Christian home with wonderful parents. We believed in God and we believed in Jesus Christ. I’m thankful for my upbringing in Danville, being in a small town.”

In reaching the pinnacle of professional football by being drafted by the Indianapolis Colts in 2008, Tamme was suddenly thrust into the national spotlight.

He credits Christian teammates, the head coach, the chaplain and a spiritual awakening of sorts during a Good Friday service to staying the course.

“I had probably a dozen teammates there in Indianapolis who were strong Christian men and who were strong influences on me. I also had Tony Dungie as a head coach,” he said. Dungie is well known for his Christian faith.

Eric Simpson, pastor of The Eagle Church, Zionsville, Indiana, also served as the Colts’ team chaplain.

“Eric Simpson is one of my best friends and mentors in the faith. His is the most profound display of a man who

**“Football for us has never been the main thing. It’s been a wonderful experience but football has never been my identity.”**

Jacob Tamme



Jacob Tamme (left) participates in the Atlanta Falcons training camp in 2016. commons.wikimedia.org

knew his Bible, knew his theology but most importantly knew Jesus and lived it out and that made a great impact on me,” Tamme said.

But it was these men, along with what happened on an Easter weekend that deepened Tamme’s walk with Christ.

“Man, there’s really a lot of power in Good Friday. Easter is not Easter without Good Friday and that was the most remarkable worship experience I’ve ever had. All those things combined transformed my faith,” he said.

Just as Tamme has to remain in top physical condition when competing for a spot on a NFL team, he knows staying spiritually fit is just as important.

“There is something truly supernatural that happens when we read the Bible in a yielding spirit, in a spirit that’s seeking truth and understanding,” he said, noting there are times he falls short in this area.

“What I need to do is read my Bible more. I don’t do it enough. The Lord is calling me to more and to be more responsive to that.”

Tamme’s prescription for spiritual growth and vitality is as simple as running plays in practice every day.

“The No. 1 thing you can do is to take 15 minutes in the morning and start your day off in the Word and listening to what it has to say. That’s where you start. That’s been transformational for me,” he said.

“Football for us has never been the main thing. It’s been a wonderful experience but football has never been my identity,” he said. “Identity should be found in Christ, as a follower of Christ. And when that happens, it’s amazing how much better you are to your family. Family experiences get richer and deeper because you’re more intimately connected with Christ.”

### ‘Connected with Christ’

While Tamme recovers from a season ending shoulder injury in 2016 and being declared an unrestricted free agent from the Atlanta Falcons, the future is uncertain as to playing in the NFL.

“I have no idea where I’ll play,” he said. “I don’t know if I’ll play this fall.”

But the uncertainty of the situation doesn’t worry Tamme. Now 32, which he says is 70 in football years, Tamme is content with his family at home on their farm in Danville.

“I played nine years,” he said. “No matter which way it goes, it’ll be good.” (BP)

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Larry Rowell is editor of the Casey County News, where this article first appeared, and a trustee of Western Recorder, the state Baptist newspaper of Kentucky.*