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# WORLD HUNGER

World hunger on rise after 10 years of decline, report shows

**W**orld hunger is on the rise for the first time in nearly a decade, according to a report released Sept. 15.

And the increase is not a small one — 815 million people suffered from hunger in 2016, a significant rise from the 777 million the year before. For the decade prior, hunger had been falling.

The United Nations report, “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World,” blames the reversal on conflict and climate-related issues such as floods and droughts in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, western Asia and southeast Asia.

The data showed:

- ▶ About 11 percent of the world population is affected by hunger.

- ▶ Violent conflicts have increased in countries already facing food insecurity issues.

- ▶ Stunting from hunger affects nearly 1 in 4 children under the age of 5.

- ▶ Child wasting — or suffering from acute malnutrition — affected 7.7 percent of the population under the age of 5. About 17 million children suffered from severe wasting.

The numbers are staggering but the progress has been significant in recent years, according to Bread for



A young boy waits for food at a camp for internally displaced people in Kenya.

IMB photo

the World Institute’s 2017 Hunger Report, “Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities.” Between 1990 and 2015, the hunger rate was cut in half and extreme poverty was cut by even more.

“The world as a whole is mak-

ing unprecedented progress against hunger, poverty and disease,” said David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. “But a large and growing share of world hunger is concentrated in fragile states.”

These places include countries

like war-torn Syria and South Sudan. In countries ripped apart by fighting, more people die from hunger than violence, according to Bread for the World. By 2030 two-thirds of the world’s hungry will

(See ‘Baptist,’ page 3)

October is  
**Pastor Appreciation**  
month.



# COMMENT

## Preparing for Worship

**D**o you know what it is like to have droopy eyes during a worship service? Probably. At one time or another the likelihood that all of us have been plagued by this malady is high. Our eyes might have been so droopy that we lost concentration on the service, perhaps even dozed.

Often the droopy eyes are not the fault of the worship service — not the fault of the music or the speaker. The droopy eyes are our own fault. We did not prepare for worship.

During my college years one of my professors who also served as pastor of a small nearby church counseled that preparation for worship includes one's Saturday night activities.

Hollis Todd, chairman of the speech department at Mississippi College in Clinton, guarded his Saturday evenings so he would be physically strong and mentally alert when he stood in the pulpit the following morning. Being physically prepared to preach was more important to him than any late Saturday night activity.

### Hard lesson to learn

That has been a hard lesson for me to learn. At one time in my life I officiated freestyle wrestling. One year I officiated the national Amateur Athletic Union wrestling tournament held in Waukegan, Illinois, north of Chicago. When the tournament ended Saturday evening, another friend and I drove all night back to Louisville, Kentucky, where I lived at the time. I took a quick shower, changed clothes, loaded my family into our Dodge station wagon and drove to Covington, Kentucky, (more than a two-hour drive) where I served as interim pastor of Latonia Baptist Church.

Looking back, the foolishness of that episode is obvious. So is its irresponsibility. I did not make preaching my top priority. I let something else take precedent over being physically prepared to lead God's people in worship. While I would never attempt anything so ridiculous as that now, I sometimes wonder about how late I get back from Saturday night football games or how long I



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

sit up watching some ballgame on television.

The number of people who wearily drag into church on Sunday morning still dazed by the activities of Saturday night are legion. Even the casual observer will conclude that many of us have yet to learn that real worship takes preparation. That is true for all seeking to worship God, not just the preachers.

Every student of the Bible should know the importance of preparation for worship. In Exodus 30:20, God instructs Moses that those who enter the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, must first wash with water. When the priests approached the altar they had to first wash their hands and feet. They had to prepare to meet God.

When God summoned Israel to meet with Him, they first had to wash before they could assemble to hear God's words. Again, they had to prepare for the occasion.

During the days of Jesus, before one could ascend to Temple Mount to offer sacrifices one had to wash, often in the Pool of Siloam. Pilgrims would bring new white clothes which they would put on after preparing to worship God through the ritual of washing. Then they would ascend the steps, enter Temple Mount and there offer sacrifices and worship to God.

Every Jew understood the experience of worship and sacrifice as a special time. Never would they rush into God's presence without preparing for the experience. Early Christians did not use cleansing rituals before approaching God in worship but they were keenly aware of God's holiness. Worship began with praise, with confession and with petition.

Recognizing the holiness of God kept New Testament Christians from being casual about worship, taking worship for granted or rushing into worship without some form of preparation.

Early Christians also understood that presence

did not equal worship. We need to understand that too. Worship is an encounter with God. It is not just showing up at a church service. And while God in His providence may break in on us anywhere at any time, worship usually happens when we are seeking God.

That means worship becomes a personal priority and if worship is a priority, we must prepare for it as best we can.

Part of that preparation is physical. To doze off while in conversation with our work supervisor would be unthinkable. To be so weary we have trouble talking to friends or family would be rude. Yet we often attempt to worship our Creator and Redeemer when physical energy is drained.

Worship demands alertness both physically and mentally. We must be able to hear God, to sense His presence, to respond to His spirit. That cannot happen when senses are numbed by exhaustion.

Part of that preparation is mental. Worship must be a priority. It cannot stand in the back of the line behind a list of other concerns. Occasionally we may have an issue which needs to be laid before the Lord in prayer before we can worship. Most of the time, however, it is the ongoing problems of life that push worship to the back of the line.

Worship is not supposed to be like accidentally bumping into a friend. It is supposed to be more like intentionally seeking out that friend. Worship is an intentional time to meet God.

Part of that preparation is spiritual. Try reflecting on what God has done for you before you leave for a worship service and see what a difference it makes in your experience. Think about all the ways you are praying that God will act in your behalf and for your family. Ponder what you have read from the Bible each day during the past week. Mull over all the things God has been saying to you. Remember the joy of those worship experiences from the past.

### Reorientation

These and other similar exercises can reorient us toward the things of God. They can help make us aware of the ongoing conversation between us and our Savior and prepare us for the next part of that conversation through worship.

Nothing can guarantee an encounter with God. Our Lord is not manipulated by anything we do. But when we seek Him with our whole hearts — when we are prepared for worship — God promises that He will be found (Jer. 29:13).

*“Worship is not supposed to be like accidentally bumping into a friend. It is supposed to be more like intentionally seeking out that friend. Worship is an intentional time to meet God.”*

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**TAB**  
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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# 'Spiritual technology'

## New Bible filled with memory devices launches in Alabama

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**E**mmett Cooper said the idea first got planted in his head just before a spelling test in the third grade. "I was a struggling student and I couldn't remember how to spell the word 'geography,'" he said.

Cooper said he must've been trying to decipher it out loud, because the boy behind him piped up and said, "What, you can't spell 'geography'? That's easy. George Earl's Oldest Girl Rode A Pig Home Yesterday."

Hearing his classmate use that memory device was a pivotal moment for Cooper, he said. "That ignited in my heart a desire to find a way to learn stuff easier. I explored that extensively over the next few years and I did better in school."

And now as an adult, Cooper said his passion is to see Christians grab hold of Bible concepts in the same easy-to-remember way. He wants both adults and children to connect biblical truths with everyday items, just the way God meant for it to be, he said.

"It's the spiritual technology of Deuteronomy 6:8," he said, referring to the passage where God instructs Israel to bind His words on their hands and write them on the doorposts of their houses and gates.

"The secular world has used this tie-a-symbol-to-a-message technology effectively for years," Cooper said. Hearing "plop, plop, fizz, fizz" still makes people think of Alka Seltzer, even though that campaign ended decades ago, he said. And seeing a swoosh on a cap makes people think of "Just Do It."

"This technology has always belonged to God's people, and we need to take it back and use it for God's purposes," Cooper said. "How

can we apply what we can't remember?"

There are symbols that correlate to biblical truths, like the lion and the lamb, which point to Christ, he explained. There also are symbols like the 12 stones that the Israelites set up as a memorial to remind the next generation of how they had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.

"Once all this began to come together for me, I had the desire to create a Bible that used these memory devices," Cooper said.

He's worked on the project for decades, but now it's in print — the HoneyWord Bible, with a tagline that says "Making God's Word Stick."

The idea is to tie everyday symbols with biblical truths so that more and more tangible things can remind people of who God is and the truth of His Word, Cooper said.

"It is meditative in its orientation," he said. "When you read and associate symbols with biblical truths, you walk through life seeing those objects and thinking about the truth that correlates with them."

How does the HoneyWord Bible work?

Each concept has a "click-er," or a symbol that takes the concept and helps "make it stick." For instance, next to the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, which forbid stealing, there's a picture of an orange peel along with an easy-to-remember phrase: "I won't steal even an orange peel."

Mike McLemore, executive director of Birmingham Baptist Association, said the "simplicity" of this Bible "can be a great tool."

"It gives a theme that every child can understand, but youth and adults can benefit from it as well," he said. "It's very simple to use and a unique concept in learning, and I would love for all of our churches to know that it's an option when they consider what Bible to give to their children."

That's Cooper's hope — that every child in Birmingham and beyond will have that tool in their hands. Through the generosity of donors, the HoneyWord organization founded by Cooper gives the Bibles to children for free.

Sandor Cheka, director of HoneyWord nonprofit publishing ministry, said they hope to see the Bibles make an impact starting in Birmingham and spreading out across Alabama and to the world. Formerly a Baptist children's minister, Cheka said he was impressed with the

HoneyWord concept because it's something that kids "can grab onto."

"At the end of the day, there's nothing greater that we can do than to teach the next generation about the principles of the Bible and salvation," he said.

Cooper agreed.

"My burden is not HoneyWord — my burden is to equip God's people with this make-it-stick approach so we don't lose the next generation," he said. "It's something God taught us to do, to associate things with His Word. The Bible is the biggest picture book in the world. The Word and the world that God created are designed to be seamlessly used together to make God's Word stick." #



For more information, visit [honeyword.org](http://honeyword.org).

## Baptist hunger funds take needed aid to crisis areas

(continued from page 1)  
live in these types of places.

"The rest of the world has largely given up on some of the poorest fragile states," Beckmann said. "But to continue to move toward the end of hunger, we need to mobilize increased support for peacemaking and development in the toughest situations."

One way Southern Baptists are doing that is through Global Hunger Relief (GHR), formerly known as the World Hunger Fund. GHR-funded projects take needed humanitarian aid to crisis areas, address chronic hunger and meet other food-related needs.

It also reaches into the food-insecure areas of the U.S. — some communities have poverty rates of 50 percent or more, according to Bread for the World.

It's for hungry people everywhere that seven Southern Baptist organizations — Baptist Global Response, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the International Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources, the North American Mission Board and national Woman's Missionary Union — have partnered together to meet needs through GHR.

But Alabama is not immune to food insecurity — 27 percent of

the state's children live in poverty, according to the 2017 Kids Count Data Book, released by the An-

nie E. Casey Foundation. And one in 10 senior adults in Alabama experience food hardship, according to the Food Research and Action Center.

"The hunger needs in Alabama are great but the funds available to help are low," said state missionary Jim Swendenburg, who promotes the Alabama Hunger Offering for Alabama Baptists. The Alabama Hunger Offering

sends 75 percent of what comes in from Alabama Baptists to GHR and that money is distributed everywhere except Alabama. In fact, 12 percent of all GHR hunger funds are from the Alabama Hunger Offering.

### Alabama Hunger Offering

Twenty-five percent of the Alabama Hunger Offering remains in the state and funds are distributed based on need. To make a hunger fund request, email state missionary Kristy Kennedy, [kkennedy@alsbom.org](mailto:kkennedy@alsbom.org).

To donate to the Alabama Hunger Offering, mail a check to Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Attn: Accounting Services, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111 and note "hunger offering" on the check. (TAB)

**GLOBAL HUNGER SUNDAY IS OCT. 8.**

100 percent of donations to the Alabama Hunger Offering and Global Hunger Relief go toward meeting hunger needs. For more information, visit [www.alsbom.org/worldhungersunday](http://www.alsbom.org/worldhungersunday).

# 'It's a miracle'

## Pastor released from North Korean labor camp

**H**yeon Soo Lim has a lot of numbers he remembers. He traveled more than 100 times to North Korea to help with humanitarian aid before being arrested there in January 2015.

He spent two years, six months and nine days in isolation. He ate 2,757 meals alone. He spent eight hours a day digging holes that were one meter wide and one meter deep. In the winter, the ground was frozen, and he fought against frostbite. In the summer, the sun was scorching.

"It was difficult to see when and how the entire ordeal would end," Lim told *The Guardian*.

But he never lost hope.

Lim, pastor of the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Mississauga, Ontario, returned to Canada on Aug. 9 after a sudden and unexpected release from his North Korean labor camp, according to *The Guardian*.

The longest-held Western prisoner in decades, Lim was convicted of crimes against the state and was serving a life sentence of hard labor, according to CNN.

He was "released on sick bail" after a plane carrying senior Canadian officials, a medical doctor and a letter to North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un was dispatched to Pyongyang "at the last minute," according to family spokeswoman Lisa Pak.

The 62-year-old pastor lost more than 50 pounds in his first

two months in captivity and was hospitalized several times in serious condition, according to the *Toronto Sun*.

### 'Continually praying'

Lim's faith is what got him through, he said. "One of the core strengths for me was my relationship with God," he said, according to *The Christian Post*. "So even while I was in hard labor, just consistently continually praying. And also the Bible that was provided to me, just having that nearby was a real strength."

He read the Bible in both English and Korean five times while in prison, along with memorizing

more than 700 verses, according to *The Guardian*.

"There were moments of discouragement, resentment and grumbling that soon changed [into] courage, joy and thanksgiving," he said.

At Lim's church, a congregation of about 3,000 members, the crowd was standing room only to welcome him back to the pulpit Aug. 13. "It's a miracle for me to be here today," he told them.

Between 50,000 and 70,000 Christians currently are held in North Korean labor camps, according to Open Doors, which serves persecuted Christians worldwide. (TAB)

*Singing with Heaven!*

## The Annual Samford Hymn Sing

**Sunday, Oct. 1 at 2 p.m.**  
**First Baptist Church of Birmingham**  
**2209 Lakeshore Drive**  
**Birmingham, Alabama**

### Note change of location this year!

An afternoon of singing great hymns and gospel songs selected by the congregation

### Free and open to the public



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According to the March 16, 1849, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*:

The Baptist Almanac and Annual Register reported 62,685 "colored members" of Baptist churches in 16 states. The report added, "This does not excel one half of the whole number" and asked for "rigorous exertions to report the whole number" the following year. (TAB)

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Nigerian churches continue to be destroyed

ABUJA, Nigeria — Religious leaders in Nigeria are amplifying their call for the government to pay compensation for the destruction of churches by Boko Haram, even as the Islamist militants escalate attacks in the country's northern states.

Nigerian clergy say at least 1,000 churches have been destroyed in the six-year insurgency, which the government declared crushed in 2016. Human rights groups say thousands more churches have been abandoned or closed in the conflict and that schools, mosques, markets and military installations also have been targeted. Clergy say the attacks on churches have compromised freedom of religion as well as Nigerians' right to live in peace. And while Boko Haram is the agent of the attacks, religious leaders also assign blame to the government.

Two religions are predominant in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation — Christians in the south and Muslims in the north.

The United Nations estimates that 20,000 people have died in the violence brought by Boko Haram, which also has displaced 2 million people in the northern states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno. (RNS)

### Trump administration supports Christian baker

LAKEWOOD, Colo. — Christian baker Jack Phillips recently got support for his case from the Trump administration, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief to the Supreme Court backing Phillips' right to refuse business.

The Colorado-based cake baker was found guilty of discriminating against Dave Mullins and Charlie Craig — a same-sex couple — in 2012 when he declined their request to bake their wedding cake, according to *The Christian Post*. The Supreme Court announced in June it would hear Phillips' appeal.

A 20-state coalition led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton also filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court to support Phillips' right to religious liberty. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall was included on that brief.

Over the past 20 years, Phillips also has declined making other cakes — those depicting Halloween, anti-American themes, adult-themed cakes and others. (TAB)

### Country Mill Farms returns to farmer's market

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Thanks to a federal judge's decision, a Michigan farmer banned from a local farmer's market because of his views on traditional marriage is once again serving his customers.

Steve Tennes has been selling produce at the market since 2010 but was denied a vendor's license by the city in March because of a Facebook post in which Tennes, a Catholic, said his orchard, Country Mill Farms, would continue to hold weddings at the farm but reserve the right to deny same-sex weddings.

Tennes filed a lawsuit against the city in May and Sept. 15 federal district judge Paul Maloney issued a preliminary injunction allowing Country Mill Farms to return to the market through the current season that ends in October. In his ruling Maloney wrote that the family was likely "to prevail on the merits of their claims for speech retaliation and for free exercise of religion." (TAB)



## Thy Kingdom Come: Life in the Millennial Age

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 + shipping

**DISASTER RELIEF UPDATES**

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers Royce O'Donnell (left) and Buddy Allen prepare lunch for thousands of people Sept. 19 at McGregor Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Florida. The meals are being delivered by the American Red Cross throughout Southwest Florida.

# Committed volunteers

## Alabama relief effort 'up and running' in Fla.

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**  
The Alabama Baptist

**A**labama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) volunteers are serving meals, clearing trees and covering roofs as Florida continues to recover after Hurricane Irma.

"Our effort is set up and running, and our teams are staying busy," said Mark Wakefield, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "Hundreds and hundreds of volunteer hours have been put in for us to be able to do the recovery work that's being done."

Assessment and administration teams from Alabama have been working since Sept. 13 to set up a command center at McGregor Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Florida. Eleven ABDR teams were working in Lee, Hendry and Charlotte counties as of Sept. 20 and more are scheduled to relieve those teams in the weeks ahead. The effort will go on as long as ABDR teams can be helpful, Wakefield said.

### Need for volunteers

"We will be here as long as we can and as long as volunteers can come," he said.

Christina Morgan, ABDR state administration coordinator and a member of First Baptist Church, Prattville, in Autauga Baptist Association, said ABDR has received more than 250 calls from people requesting

assistance. Many area residents were still without power and food and many simply needed a listening ear, she said.

"Many don't have any physical needs but they are suffering from post-traumatic stress. Our chaplains have visited shelters and given comfort to many and we've had at least one salvation reported every day we've been at work," Morgan said.

In addition to tree clearing, roof covering and mudout work, ABDR volunteers are operating a mass feeding unit in Fort Myers. Wakefield said the need for meals had increased in the first full week of relief work, with 7,000-11,000 meals served daily. He praised the volunteers for their hard work, which happens under a tent that can reach up to 120 degrees when the ovens are running full force.

"We couldn't do this without the committed volunteers," he said. "Just to put out that number of meals every day requires people who are trained and can work together as a team. They are committed to the Lord and to helping people, and we couldn't do it without them."

In addition to the mass feeding unit, smaller units are supplying food for workers. Laundry and shower units also are set up to serve ABDR volunteers.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Inscore/The News-Press

As floodwaters receded, teams discovered some residents who had been spared flooding in their homes but had been cut off from their community by flooding on local roads. One of those residents was a Vietnam veteran whose house trailer had been destroyed. The man was living in a camping trailer on his property and a pine tree was precariously close to falling on that second home. The man told volunteers, "It's the only place I've got to live." A chainsaw team came back the next day to get the tree away from his camper. They brought the man more water and a chaplain was scheduled to visit as well.

Wakefield also noted that teams from Covington Baptist Association and Elmore Baptist Association assisted in cleanup work at Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana in Fort Myers on Sept. 14, allowing the Hispanic congregation to have worship the following Sunday.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, asked Alabama Baptists to continue to pray for ABDR workers as they serve, especially for the nearly 400 newly trained "yellow shirts" who will be serving for the first time. He also encouraged continued giving to hurricane relief at [sbd.org](http://sbd.org), noting that all donations will go directly toward relief efforts to help people in areas impacted by the storms.

Ken Conaway, an administration team member from First Baptist, Wedowee, in Randolph Baptist Association, noted many local residents will need help from missions teams once the relief phase is complete.

"Our teams are going to be able to remove trees and maybe put a tarp over the damaged roof, but the need for a new roof is going to be there long after we leave," he said.

### Matching federal disaster aid

Though they don't do it for financial reasons, faith-based volunteers' hours have financial benefit in the communities they serve. *USA Today* recently noted that 75 percent of members of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, an alliance of volunteer organizations that assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in disaster recovery, are faith-based.

According to FEMA guidelines, states must "match" federal disaster aid. Volunteer hours are valued at \$25 per hour and count toward the state match.

"FEMA cannot do what it does so well without the cooperation of faith-based non-profit organizations and churches," Jamie Johnson, director of the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships, told *USA Today*. "It's a beautiful relationship between government and the private sector and it is something to behold."✝

### HOW CAN I HELP?

Visit [sbd.org/hurricanerelief](http://sbd.org/hurricanerelief) for ways to pray, give and serve.

## Etowah Association ministry assistant shares about personal impact of SBDR

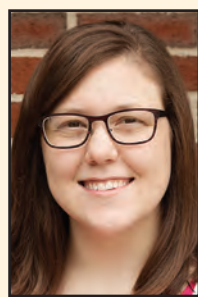
By **Emily Hamilton**  
Etowah Baptist Association

**I**f you had asked me years ago what my opinion of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) was, I might have been able to tell you that they were the men who wore the yellow shirts. I had seen offering envelopes and promotional pieces throughout my childhood every now and then. I never knew how profound the impact would become in my own life. Living in central Mississippi, I had my first taste of SBDR in August of 2005 when our entire state was impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

When Katrina made landfall in my small hometown, it was still a category-5 strength hurricane, causing spin-off tornadoes that destroyed surrounding towns. Not being from a coastal region, we had no idea what to do. School was out for weeks while power was being restored. It was then that I first saw the folks in yellow in action.

Again in the spring of 2011, a band of tornadoes (with which Alabamians also are familiar) ripped through my small college town. For the first time, I was

able to see hands-on the ministry of an SBDR team. My church became disaster relief headquarters and college students were called upon to help set up housing and maintain other facility issues so that those hard-working men and women in yellow could again spring into action. I heard stories of families who had lost everything that were able to sit and pray with a SBDR chaplain as



**HAMILTON**

a chainsaw team removed trees off of their house and tarped their roof. When I moved to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in

2012, seven years after Katrina, SBDR still had a presence on our campus. Buildings were slowly being rebuilt as money was made available. Those yellow trailers in the apartment parking lot were a reminder to me that many had sacrificed to provide relief to the friends, faculty and campus I would grow to love.

### Hands and feet

Once more, just last year, I was able to volunteer with NAMB Relief. This time I was able to take college students to Baton Rouge and gut houses that had been flooded. Sitting with different families and hearing their stories

of watching their entire lives fill up with water is an experience I will never forget.

There is so much I could tell you about SBDR. I could spend the entire newspaper explaining to you how detailed and strategic they are or tell story after story of people affected by their ministry. However, I will simply say this: to support SBDR work is to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Emily Hamilton serves as ministry assistant in church and missions development at the Etowah Baptist Association.✝*

# 103-year-old Nichols returns home to FBC Roanoke

In August, a centenarian did not allow age to stop her from being active in church.

At the conclusion of morning worship Aug. 20 at First Baptist Church, Roanoke, 103-year-old Lucile Nichols asked to become a member.

Nichols, who lives in a local assisted living facility, previously had been a member of First, Roanoke. At the assisted living facility, she has been attending a Sunday School class taught by Mark Lowry, who is a member of First, Roanoke.

Nichols told her daughter, Nell Wright, and Lowry that she very much wanted to rejoin First, Roanoke. Jerry Wayne Carter — the church's interim pastor — met with Nichols to discuss her desire to return to First, Roanoke.

In the conversation, Carter asked Nichols

if she had asked Jesus Christ into her heart to be her Savior. She told him in very vivid detail about her salvation experience that was 92 years ago.

"And I thought that was wonderful," Carter said. "What an example (she is)."

Nichols' enlightening contributions to Sunday School class discussions have impressed Lowry. "She is amazing," he said.

First, Roanoke, marked Nichols' return to her church home Aug. 20 with a lunch fellowship and a special message on the church sign.

Wright said her mother is excited to be back at First, Roanoke.

Nichols turned 103 on July 26.

She has three children (one of whom is deceased), as well as many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. (TAB)



Photo courtesy of FBC Roanoke  
103-year-old Lucile Nichols (left) rejoins FBC Roanoke on Aug. 20. She is pictured with interim pastor Jerry Wayne Carter.



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Biblical 'Twins'

## Power and Authority; Gladness and Joy

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

In prior weeks we have sought to discern legitimate differences between several closely related biblical terms, such as mercy and grace, wrath and anger, and joy and happiness. This week Theology 101 will examine subtle nuances of meaning in the next sets of similar or related ideas.

### Power and authority

Some Bible passages seem to interchange power and authority depending on which English translation one is reading. For example the familiar Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 in its opening words, according to the King James Version, records Jesus as claiming, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." However, reading this passage in several other English versions, one finds the alternative translation, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

The immediate question to be asked concerns whether "power" and "authority" are identical verbal twins with interchangeable meanings. It is helpful to recognize that the idea of having power suggests possessing the ability or might to perform some act, while having authority suggests having the right to exercise that power. Of course, our resurrected Lord possesses both ability and authority when it comes to exercising divine power.

Then we turn to another familiar passage in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus left His followers this promise: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." In this case a different term is used from that in Matthew 28:18. Although it is a bit subtle, it is helpful to recognize that believers possess delegated power to witness and minister, but Christ retains the authority to determine when and how spiritual power will be used.

### Gladness and joy

Two closely related words are used to speak of another human emotion. We often interchange gladness and

joy in giving expression to a cherished emotion, saying either "I experienced fullness of joy" or "I was exceedingly glad." Is there a proper distinction to be made between these terms?

If so, it may well be in this respect. Take, for example, Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount: "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad" (Matt. 5:12). A difference is discerned in the grammar used by Jesus.

First, He used an imperative verb by which He issued a command, "Rejoice." Given that Jesus did not give commands that people were not capable of obeying, it would follow that obedient believers can choose to rejoice. The act of rejoicing lies within human capability. For example, we might use the Psalms or the hymnbook to obey the command to rejoice.

### A glad heart

The second part of Jesus' statement is not an imperative. He does not command us to be glad, something we cannot do. Rather, this part of Jesus' statement uses a passive verb, the essence of which is that we receive an action from outside ourselves rather than initiating the action (as in active verbs).

So if we choose to rejoice, something we can willfully do, then the Lord acting through the Holy Spirit begins to make us glad. We are not commanded to be glad, but to rejoice. The choice to rejoice makes possible a glad heart.

We recall that the Bible promises a glad or merry heart is like good medicine (Prov. 17:22). †

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.



## Somerville's Oak Forest holds river baptism



Photo courtesy of Jimmy Smith

Oak Forest Baptist Church, Somerville, members gathered at the Bluff City boat landing Sept. 10 to baptize four new believers in the Tennessee River. Three of the four being baptized were siblings ranging in age from 10 to 16 — India, Brooks and Addie Dillard — and the fourth was Neville Brooks. Both of Neville Brooks' legs were injured in an automobile accident, and his father was able to help him maneuver his walker in the water so he could get baptized. Pastor Jimmy Smith said, "It is always a joyful time when one accepts the Lord as Savior and is obedient in baptism, but God just blessed us above measure on this day."

**SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH.**



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# Facing the realities of **TEEN SUICIDE**

## How Alabama Baptist churches can help prevent teen suicide in their community

**By Denise George**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**S**uicide is the third leading cause of death in Alabama among children, youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 years. And since 1990 the state has shown higher rates for suicide than the national average.

In the United States today, a person dies by suicide every 13 minutes. One hundred Americans will take their own lives every day. Someone in the nation attempts suicide every 31 seconds. The heart-breaking stories of young Alabamians killing themselves is becoming too common.

A 15-year-old student in the Decatur area hung herself from a balcony in 1999. She was the third teen to commit suicide in five months in Morgan County that year.

In May 2016 police in Decatur found a 19-year-old male dead inside his home from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

A 19-year-old male from Baldwin County threatened to kill himself in July 2016 and a few hours later wrapped his seat belt around his neck while riding as a passenger with his 16-year-old girlfriend. He jumped from the car and strangled himself.

A 15-year-old girl from Pinson took 40 300 mg aspirin tablets trying to end her life after being cyber bullied by another

student in August 2016. “Go kill yourself,” the text message on her phone said, “Everybody is waiting.” She had endured constant bullying for a year and a half.

In March 2016 the Alabama Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 11, sponsored by Sen. Gerald Allen (R-Tuscaloosa) to establish a suicide prevention training program for school officials and teachers.

The bill is named after 16-year-old Jason Flatt a “good, all-American boy” who was active in his church youth group.

In 1997, Jason shot himself in the head after his girlfriend broke off their relationship. His father, Clark Flatt, created The Jason Foundation as a way to address and help stop the national teen suicide epidemic.

It requires all K-12 public schools to establish a policy, staff-training program, student curriculum and list of resources for suicide prevention services. The act was signed into law May 10, 2016, making Alabama the 18th state to pass The Jason Flatt Act since 2007.

### Role of the church

While some suicides are impossible to prevent, most are believed to be preventable. Church leaders can be instrumental in their efforts to help prevent teen suicide within their congregations and communities.

There are many ways churches can help:

- ▶ Take opportunities to preach and teach (from the pulpit and in Bible study classes) on the value of God-created life and the tragedy of teen suicide.

- ▶ Begin a proactive suicide prevention program in your church. Train and equip your congregation to respond to broken, desperate people needing help.

- ▶ Build strong children and youth programs that create safe and welcoming environments for the church’s young people to meet, talk, learn and fellowship. Pray with and for your young people.

- ▶ Invite Christian professionals from agencies in your community to speak to parents/grandparents, offering a variety of faith-themed parenting classes. Seek to build healthy family relationships in your congregation.

- ▶ Require your pastors of children/youth to take mental health first aid training through organizations like NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Alabama.

- ▶ Teach your church staff, teachers, children/youth ministers and congregation to take threats of suicide seriously and to respond appropriately.

- ▶ Train your church leaders and congregation to recognize the symptoms of potential suicide.

- ▶ Create a network and updated list of trusted mental-health professionals and resources for immediate referral.

If, in spite of your efforts, teen suicide occurs within your congregation, take action immediately:

- ▶ Minister to grieving family and

church members, showing them the love of Christ. Be a patient presence, praying with those affected. Refer them to Christian grief counselors and others for help.

### Be available

- ▶ Bring together church and community members. Invite professionals to speak, addressing the suicide. Mourn the loss of the victim. Hold a remembrance service in his honor. Be available to help family members arrange funeral/burial arrangements.

- ▶ Watch for signs of “copycat” or “clustered” suicides. Teen suicide can often trigger tendencies that cause others to imitate the tragic act. †

*In the United States today, a person dies by suicide every 13 minutes.*

## How to respond to potential suicide

If someone mentions or shows signs of suicide:

- ▶ Do not leave the person alone.
- ▶ Remove firearms, medications and other objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.

- ▶ Call the police or the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

- ▶ Take him or her to an emergency room or seek help from a mental health professional. (Denise George)

## TEEN SUICIDE

# 'Bright, talented, happy' young girl

## HAD HER DESPAIR

'Every day is a struggle for us now but ... it's our wish that her death would not be in vain'

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

In hindsight, there's always "could've" and "should've." But for Joseph and Patrice Bright, in the months and weeks leading up to their 14-year-old daughter's suicide, the signs were just not there, they said.

Anna was a cheerleader and a talented artist and musician. She wrote an entire fan fiction novel and drew impressive sketches. She was smart and creative — she made all As in her AP classes.

"She was a girl who looked forward to the future," Patrice said. "She wanted to be a forensic artist and she made everybody smile. She had a tender heart for people and befriended everybody."

Anna had a voracious desire to learn — she taught herself sign language, photography, several musical instruments and art.

"We went on a family trip to Disney in March, and she learned every Disney song she could before we left for that trip," Patrice said.

That trip was a precious time for their family — Joseph, Patrice, Anna and her 11-year-old brother, Samuel.

They had no idea that less than three weeks later, Anna would take her own life.

After school on April 18, Anna called her mom at work while she walked from the bus stop to the house, just as she always did.

"We talked about her day, just like normal," Patrice said. They talked about an art project Anna was working on — a family crest.

Then Anna got home, and Patrice told her she would see her in a little while. They both said, "I love you."

That was the last time they would talk.

When Patrice pulled up at the house a couple of hours later, it was swarming with first responders. Her heart sank as a policeman asked her to park and get out of her car. She saw Joseph walking toward her, a policeman under each arm, supporting him as he walked.

Life was forever changed.

"I couldn't believe it — still can't," Joseph said. "Not only was she a happy girl, she was scared of needles, spiders, getting hurt. I couldn't believe she would ever take her own life."

### Reasons why

The Brights spent the night at a friend's house that night, then spent three months living at a hotel — they couldn't bear to go back in the house.

They leaned on God. They tried to keep breathing. And they tried to piece together what had happened.

On the sidewalk outside his house on April 18, Joseph had gasped out the words, "How would she have known to do that?"

A policeman standing nearby gently told him that, though not exactly the same, Anna had modeled her death after the teenage girl on the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" (see story, page 10), a graphic show about a teenage girl who commits suicide.

Without her parents' knowledge — and without their permission — Anna had



Photo courtesy of the Bright family

The Bright family (clockwise from top) — Joseph, Patrice, 11-year-old Samuel and 14-year-old Anna — at Disney World in March.

watched all 13 episodes of the show.

"We had talked about the show and I told her I didn't want her to watch it," Patrice said.

The two had talked about the show when Anna brought it up, and they had talked about suicide before too.

Patrice said she and Anna always had their best deep discussions about life and God on the way to school in the mornings, and the subject had come up before, after actor Robin Williams had committed suicide in 2014.

"She had asked if people who committed suicide went to heaven, and I told her that God's hand is a big hand — nothing can snatch you out of it if you are really His," Patrice said. "But I told her it cuts short the life God meant for you to live, and it hurts the people who love you."

After Anna's death, a classmate turned in a journal that Anna had left with him. In it, she had described deep struggles against the darkness she felt. She threw the journal in his locker at the end of the day on April 18 as she was leaving school and told him to read it the next day.

When he did, he found she had written about what she was going to do.

"We have talked to counselors since and found out that she likely had major depression that was hidden behind her infectious smile," Patrice said. "We now know that she was determined to hide the spiritual warfare within her."

It's crushing, Joseph said. As parents, they did everything they knew to do to raise their children well. They were present. They asked good questions. They taught them to know God, and Anna had professed faith at church and in the journal where she wrote about her struggles.

But as parents, they still fight against deep guilt.

"Sometimes we feel like we are going to come unglued but God reels us back to truth and Scripture," he said.

And both of them can see God's hand at work caring for them. They found a new house. Someone donated four burial plots to the family. Several people came to faith at Anna's funeral.

"God has left stamps on our lives," Patrice said. "He has met every single need we've had, even when we wake up and don't know how we will even survive the day."

Just weeks before Anna's death, Joseph had resigned as pastor of a small, rural Baptist church, feeling it was time to get his family in a place where they could be involved in a youth group and be more a part of the community where they lived.

### Incredible support

"We feel like God was getting us to the place where we needed to be in order to be ministered to at this time," Patrice said. Their church, The Branch at Mission Hills, Alabaster, has supported them in an incredible way, she said. A group of men have come around Joseph to hold him up, just as a group of women have for Patrice.

School counselors, teachers and friends have rallied around Samuel too.

Patrice has even been able to share their story a few times, most recently with a church in a neighboring community and at a townhall meeting on mental health.

"This journey is not something we would've ever chosen for ourselves but we want God to use it," Patrice said. "Every day is a struggle for us now. But it's our desire that her life be a testimony to those around us. It's our wish that her death would not be in vain."

"Giving people hope no matter what they are facing is our new life mission."✠

## 10 ways to support someone who has lost a loved one to suicide

1. Accept the intensity of the grief. This is complicated grief and will result in complicated mourning.
2. Listen with your heart.
3. Avoid trite and simple explanations and clichés.
4. Be compassionate.
5. Respect the need to grieve.
6. Understand the uniqueness of suicide grief.
7. Be aware of holidays and anniversaries.
8. Help connect them to support groups and grief resources.
9. Respect their faith and spirituality.
10. Realize this is a long and hard journey.

Source: Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition

## Helpful resources

▶ **The Jason Foundation** — jasonfoundation.com and <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/pss/Suicide%20Prevention/The%20Jason%20Flatt%20Act%20Q%20%20A%208-3-16.pdf>

▶ **NAMI Alabama (National Alliance on Mental Illness)** — 334-396-4797, [www.namialabama.org](http://www.namialabama.org)

▶ **Alabama public health suicide prevention** — [www.adph.org/suicideprevention/](http://www.adph.org/suicideprevention/)

▶ **The Amelia Center at Children's of Alabama** — 205-638-7481, [www.childrensal.org/amelia-center](http://www.childrensal.org/amelia-center)

▶ **The Crisis Center (Central Alabama)** — [crisiscenterbham.org](http://crisiscenterbham.org); 205-323-7777 (main line); 205-328-5465 (teen line)

▶ **Crisis Services of North Alabama** — [www.csna.org](http://www.csna.org); 256-716-1000 or 1-800-691-8426

▶ **Family Counseling Center of Mobile** — [www.lifelinesmobile.org/services\\_helpline.php](http://www.lifelinesmobile.org/services_helpline.php); 251-431-5111 or 1-800-239-1117

▶ **Cullman Mental Healthcare** — 256-255-1020

▶ **U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** — 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

▶ **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** — [afsp.org/chapter/afsp-alabama/](http://afsp.org/chapter/afsp-alabama/)

(Compiled by Denise George)

## Suicide warning signs

Studies show that 4 out of 5 children, youth and young adults that attempt suicide have given clear warning signs. Take action when a person:

- ▶ Expresses suicidal thoughts
  - ▶ Shows increased irritability, loss of concentration/motivation
  - ▶ Withdraws from family and friends
  - ▶ Experiences a drop in grades
  - ▶ Is unable to sleep and/or eat
  - ▶ Loses interest in personal appearance and favorite activities
  - ▶ Shows signs of depression
  - ▶ Endures bullying and/or cyber bullying
  - ▶ Abuses alcohol and drugs
  - ▶ Is involved in abusive dating relationships
  - ▶ Frequently runs away or is arrested/incarcerated
  - ▶ Loses family members or experiences problems with parents
  - ▶ Has unplanned pregnancy
  - ▶ Impulsive, aggressive behavior; frequent expressions of rage
- (Compiled by Denise George)



unsplash.com

## Moving past the GRIEF

### 'God doesn't let any situation go unused,' says father on son's suicide

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**M**ike Jackson's family has seen more than its fair share of tragedy — he and his two brothers have each lost a son.

One brother's son was killed in a car accident on the way home from a lock-in at church in 2004. His other brother's son was killed when a tornado hit Enterprise High School in 2007.

"There's been so much grief," Jackson said.

But the passing of his son, Aaron, 14 years ago has been compounded at times with complicated emotions — his death was a suicide.

"Aaron made the choice to end his life, and as a result, May 17, 2003, is a day that will always haunt us and bring back those memories," Jackson said. "Death is hard enough, but it wasn't a natural disaster or an accident. And there's almost a stigma that comes with that, a heavy guilt."

That reality has made it hard to know how to talk about Aaron's death, grieve or carry on with life, he said. "All of us who have experienced that kind of loss are on a journey, and we will never fully arrive until things are set right one day in heaven."

But Jackson, director of the office of LeaderCare and church health for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he's reminded often of the fact that others are on the journey with him. When he shares about his family's journey at grief conferences, there is almost always someone there who is dealing with the same kind of grief.

"I'm convinced that God doesn't let any

situation go unused," Jackson said. "It's available for His glory if we'll just allow it to be that."

He offers a few things he's learned along the way:

**1. Respect the journey of individuals mourning the loss of someone who took his or her own life.**

They need plenty of time to mourn, Jackson said — the emotions have many layers.

"It's such a traumatic death, even if there were some warning signs beforehand," he said. "You can never really be prepared for it or expect it. It's devastating."

There's so much pain and heartache, but there is often also shame, Jackson said.

#### Feeling of shame

"Be aware that the stigma society places on suicide can lead to shame in the one who is going through the grief process."

Before Aaron's death at age 19, he had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and been in outpatient treatment.

"He had been hospitalized a few times but we felt like we had a handle on what was going on," Jackson said.

He's learned since that often when someone suffers from bipolar disorder, an episode may trigger the decision to take their life.

"He and his girlfriend got into a fight and he chose that the best thing to do was to end his life," Jackson said. "It was a permanent solution to a temporary problem. But I can't understand the depth of the darkness that a person goes through who is dealing with depression and bipolar issues. Sometimes situations seem unbearable."

The lasting impact of suicide is that survivors are left behind attempting to put

their lives back together. They often beat themselves up wondering if they did all they could to help, Jackson said.

"They may think, 'Why wasn't it me? I've lost my life instead of them losing theirs,'" he said.

A sensitivity toward these emotions can be very helpful for those who are grieving, Jackson said.

**2. Encourage them and help them remember the person they lost for who they were.**

In the darkest hours of grief and struggle, God brought encouragement, Jackson said. "He sent folks at the right time and put us at the right place to hear what we needed to hear."

One of those times was when Jackson was preaching at Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, and a young lady came up and asked if he was Aaron's dad.

"She said, 'I was one of his friends and his life impacted my life to the point that I'm at church because of him,'" Jackson said. "Tears welled up in my eyes. My wife was with me and I asked the young lady if she would go over and tell her the same thing."

**3. In your own life, take opportunities seriously.**

If someone hints about taking their own life, take that seriously and get them some help, Jackson said. "You never know what they might act upon."

And don't take relationships for granted, he said. "My wife and I and our two daughters, we are closer than we ever have been, and we don't hesitate to tell each other we love each other. We take every opportunity to be together." ✝

## TEEN SUICIDE

# Feeling REAL and RELEVANT

## Netflix TV series about teenage girl who commits suicide gets mixed reactions from praise to concern to blame

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

If you're wondering how much of a prevalent theme teen suicide has become, your TV may just be a mirror, according to Focus on the Family.

Earlier this year when Netflix aired its series "13 Reasons Why," a drama about a teenage girl who committed suicide, it got more than 11 million tweets in its first week.

The response led producers to film a second season, which reportedly will focus on the recovery phase of teen suicide. The release date for season 2 is not yet known.

As far as season 1 is concerned, the show "can feel both real and relevant" to many adolescents, Focus on the Family wrote in its Parents' Guide. "Even if teens can't fully empathize with ... the main character, her trials ... may feel very familiar."

Hannah, a new girl at a fictional high school, gets the reputation right away that she sleeps around, even though it's not true. She becomes the target of bullying, stalking and rape. A few hours before she takes her own life, she mails a set of cassette tapes to her classmates explaining why she did it

and how each of them played a part in her decision. The series doesn't back down from portraying these issues graphically, and as a result, it got a TV-MA rating — for "mature audiences" only.

It's gotten mixed reactions, from praise to concern to blame. Forty percent of teens say they have been bullied online, and some say the show sheds light on these important issues and their potentially tragic consequences.

But the families of two California teens who committed suicide in April blamed the show as a trigger — the girls didn't know each other but had each finished watching the show a few days before their deaths.

### Dangerous presentation

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, wrote on his blog that parents should talk about suicide prevention with their teens but believes the show's presentation of suicide is dangerous.

"Many depressed teenagers that I've talked to over the years, and others with suicidal tendencies, don't actually want to be dead as much as they want to end one story



Illustration by Adaia Washington

and start another," Moore wrote April 27 at russellmoore.com. "In many cases, the suicide becomes, in the imagination, the way to resolve storylines that one sees no other way to resolve."

In the show, the deceased teen becomes the "star" and other characters come to their senses — a story a depressed teen might long for, Moore wrote.

"'13 Reasons Why,' I fear, just might fuel the pull to suicide in some because the storyline itself furthers the illusion that suicide is 'fixing' something," Moore wrote.

When it comes to these heavy subjects, parents might consider skipping the show and just tackling the topics instead, said Lisa Keane, clinical director of marriage and family for Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

### Navigate the topics

"It is imperative that as a parent, you are willing to navigate these topics with your teen instead of wondering in silence if they are influencing your child," Keane wrote in a blog at pathwaysprofessional.org. "Most teens have been influenced by these shows in one way or another — it could simply be hearing about it in the halls at school, in conversations with friends or watching it without your knowledge. Don't think your child is immune from the current (TV) fad,

because chances are, they probably already know all about it."

Counselors at Pathways deal with teen suicide and thoughts of suicide on a regular basis, she said. "We have seen and heard reports of how '13 Reasons Why' has negatively impacted teens, whether that was

through prompting suicidal thoughts or having someone actually attempt a suicide."

If you decide that your teenager doesn't need to watch these shows for whatever reasons, sit down with them and explain why, she said.

"Attempt to come alongside your child and ask them why they would be interested in watching them in the first place,"

Keane wrote. "Be willing to have the hard, sometimes awkward, conversations about these topics with your child so that their desire to watch the show can possibly decrease."

If you do decide to let your teen watch programs like "13 Reasons Why," watch it with them, Keane said. "These shows are not something you would want your teenager watching alone, feeling they have no one to process what they are seeing with."

Whether you watch the show or not, encourage your teen to come to you or another trusted adult if they are struggling with any of these types of heavy topics, she said.

"Be willing to take your child seriously and find them the help that they need to overcome those feelings too." ❖

## Why do teens commit suicide?

Most teen suicides (90 percent) involve depression, anxiety, drug or alcohol abuse, behavioral problems, relationship struggles, mood disorder and/or sexual or physical abuse.

Other reasons might include:

- ▶ Bipolar disorder (manic depression)
- ▶ Physical illness
- ▶ Feelings of failure, loss, helplessness, hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness
- ▶ Getting into trouble, problems in life, loneliness
- ▶ Making bad grades on tests

- ▶ Arguments, breaking up with a friend/love interest
- ▶ Severe bullying

▶ Recent abortion (In the six months following an abortion, high school girls are 10 times more likely to commit suicide.)

- ▶ Confusion about sexual identity
- ▶ Drug abuse (Heroin and prescription painkillers have replaced cocaine in popularity and overdoses can often be lethal.)

(Compiled by Denise George)

**For more information, visit [www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Teen-Suicide-Statistics.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Teen-Suicide-Statistics.aspx).**



# Rashional THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

## SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

### Processing reality of suicide

The details are foggy about that morning but the tragic reality never leaves me. I remember the call, the intense grief and the hours my younger brother, even younger cousin and I spent playing in the car as the adults in our family surrounded my Aunt Sybil and Uncle Jim.

The scene was too much for the three of us kids, so our parents tucked us safely away where they could keep an eye on us but not expose us directly to what was happening inside the house.

My oldest cousin, Steve, had committed suicide a few hours before daylight.

It has been about 35 years since that difficult day but I can still sense the intensity surrounding it all — especially the devastation and heartbreak of my Aunt Sybil, who found him that morning. She never spoke of Steve again in public. There were no photos of him in her house. Everything of his disappeared. I'm sure she had it stored away somewhere safe but it was not to be discussed.

My Aunt Sybil held tightly to her faith and served everyone she could with every ounce of energy she had. She took great care of my Uncle Jim, who suffered from several serious health issues.

She grieved hard when she buried him too, but there was something different about the grief she walked through with her son.

### Making sense of it all

I remember spending a lot of time at Aunt Sybil's house, especially after Steve's death. She loved to spoil her nephews and nieces, and we loved how she spoiled us.

Every once in a while I would actually be the only one there with her. I don't remember how or why but I treasured those moments because that's when she would talk about Steve and her relationship with

the Lord and how she was surviving each day on the journey.

Her eyes always welled up with the biggest tears and she could never look directly at me as she talked, but she would share until the pain was too much to bear.

She couldn't understand why he would take his own life, why he didn't want to live.

She described the pain as having an entire section of her body ripped away with a gaping wound that remained eternally raw.

I'm not exactly sure how I processed all of that as a pre-teen and young teenager, but I know I hurt deeply for my aunt and uncle as well as our entire family.

There has been another incident of suicide in my extended family and at least two moments when I was the one on the phone for hours talking someone down from threatening suicide.

It's truly an overwhelming experience and I found myself angry at times — angry because the person seemed to be acting so selfish in that moment. How could he or she do this to the rest of us? How could he or she hurt his or her parents like that?

As I've researched articles through the years, heard people's stories, talked to experts and learned more about the tendencies of suicide, I've realized that a person at that point truly doesn't see a way out. There are a number of reasons that lead to the pivotal point, but in all cases the person needs professional assistance.

The articles on pages 7–10 shine a spotlight on teen suicide. I urge you to save the four-page pull out and use it as a resource if/when needed. The articles have challenged me to also stay aware of the moods and needs of those in my life and work to help everyone I know realize they are truly valued, and they are not alone.✠

# RASHIONAL Extras ...



## Ready. Set. Rest.

By Caleb Jones

Resting, recharging and taking time for myself are all things I struggle with immensely. However, they are necessary for thriving in life.

I prefer to live by words like “don't stop,” “keep going,” “push through it” and “it's OK, I'm fine.”

I haven't rested in who knows how long, and as I'm writing this, my body hurts and my mind feels fried. I just need to stop and sit with Jesus; I need to sit at His feet and not move for a very long time.

But where in the world am I supposed to find time to stop?

I've got to remind myself that life will go on, and there will always be that next thing that I need to accomplish. However, if I'm not careful I can get so focused on accomplishing tasks — even if they are positive tasks — that I forget to simply worship. We cannot afford to forget to worship Jesus.

If we do keep pushing on through exhaustion and continue to allow ourselves to be overcommitted, we are headed down a road that can easily lead to a fiery crash.

According to the Guinness World Records, the longest anyone has consecutively juggled three objects is 12 hours and 5 minutes. I know this isn't exactly the same

as juggling life but it should give us some perspective. We shouldn't lie to ourselves. We can't continually juggle everything because eventually we are going to drop something.

Jesus wants us to sit at His feet. Yes, He wants us to make disciples and go to the nations proclaiming His name, but He wants us to do so while we are closely connected to Him. He knows that if we live lives that constantly pour out and are constantly on-the-go we will eventually hit empty.

My prayer for myself is that I desire Jesus and that I desire to be with Him above all else — not that I desire to do great things for Jesus. If I desire Him above everything and great things happen, then awesome, but if I do that and I don't see the things happen on earth that I want to see that's OK because when I'm gone from this earth I will get to see Jesus. Nothing is greater than that.

So I'm going to put some stuff on hold and worship my Creator. The time to rest has come.

Ready. Set. Rest.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This is an excerpt from Jones' blog post “Ready. Set. Rest.” at [theropetab.wordpress.com](http://theropetab.wordpress.com).*

## Your beam of light

By Melissa Mann

If your personal beam of light isn't pointing forward, you will never know just how far the light will reach.

We are all born with internal flashlights. When we enter into a relationship with Christ, He turns the light on and points it forward. He knows how far the beam will reach, how long the batteries will last and where He needs it to take us.

But sometimes we re-adjust the angle and shine the light on our surroundings, toward the clouds or on ourselves.

If our lights are focused on anywhere but forward, we lose sight of what we can do, start comparing ourselves to others and possibly have a pity party. We forget our light can make a difference on the journey when we fail to keep it pointed forward.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This is an excerpt from Mann's “Where are you pointing your beam?” blog post at [Momentsalongthe-journey.blogspot.com](http://Momentsalongthe-journey.blogspot.com)*

## Daily heart check

By Pastor Franklin Kirksey  
First Baptist Church, Spanish Fort

Author Warren W. Wiersbe wisely observes, “The heart is the ‘master-control’ of the life; a wrong heart always produces a wrong life. To allow sin into the heart is to pollute the entire life. ... Live in God's Word and He will protect your path, direct your path and perfect your path for the glory of Jesus Christ.”

Proverbs 4:23 reads, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

Note the duty of it — “Keep your heart”

Note the diligence of it — “with all diligence”

Note the details of it — “For out of it spring the issues of life.”

“The direction of your life will determine your destination. ... What captures our attention influences our direction. Attention, direction, destination. That's the principle of the path in three words. And as your attention goes, so goes your life.”

Andy Stanley

“The Principle of the Path: How to get from where you are to where you want to be”

“Just be where you are right now and forget everything else. Focus on now. Be where your feet are.”

From “The Sender: A story about when right words make all the difference” by Kevin Elko and Bill Beausay

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Edgil Grove Baptist Church in Jasper, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. Send resumés to: [edgilgrovebaptistchurch@outlook.com](mailto:edgilgrovebaptistchurch@outlook.com), or mail to: 100 Edgil Grove Rd., Jasper, AL 35503.

### PASTOR

Immanuel Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, is accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. The candidate selected will have 5 years senior pastor experience, seminary training, expository preaching style and be able to attract and appeal to all age groups. We currently have an elderly congregation and no other ministerial staff. We have underused, debt-free, excellent facilities and a good location. Candidates with the above qualifications can email resumés to: [immanuel38464@bellsouth.net](mailto:immanuel38464@bellsouth.net). Our website is [myimmanuel.net](http://myimmanuel.net). Please include current sermons on websites.

### PASTOR

Pastor needed at Flint Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama. Send resumé to: 4119 US Hwy 31 South, Decatur, AL 35603, or submit by email to: [flintbaptistchurch@att.net](mailto:flintbaptistchurch@att.net).

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Louisville, Alabama, is seeking a Spirit-filled man of God to serve as bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: 402 County Road 9, Louisville, AL 36048, or email to: [mtzionbapt774@gmail.com](mailto:mtzionbapt774@gmail.com).

### 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.

deerfootbaptist.org, or mailed to: Deerfoot Baptist Church, 5450 Mount Olive Church Rd., Trussville, AL 35173.

### PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

Sampey Memorial Baptist Church in Ramer, Alabama, is looking for a part-time minister of music. We would like to have a mixture of contemporary and traditional music in our services. Please send resumés to: [rnoffsin@bellsouth.net](mailto:rnoffsin@bellsouth.net).

### DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

West End Baptist Church, Chilton Association, Clanton, Alabama, is seeking full-time children's minister. Send resumés with references: West End Baptist Church Search Committee, 2005 2nd Ave. North, Clanton, AL 35045.

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Sunday morning services. New Cedron Baptist Church, Billingsley, Alabama. Call 205-755-6172.

### CHURCH & COMMUNITY MINISTRIES ASSISTANT/BOOKKEEPER

Shelby Baptist Association, Columbiana, Alabama, is seeking a church and community ministries assistant/bookkeeper. A current job description and application can be found at [www.shelbybaptist.org](http://www.shelbybaptist.org). Applications and resumés may be sent to the attention of Dr. Hugh Richardson, at Shelby Baptist Association, P.O. Box 888, Columbiana, AL 35051, or to: [hugh@shelbybaptist.org](mailto:hugh@shelbybaptist.org). Applications must be received by Oct. 6.

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# What is reverse mortgage?

By Jimmy Dixon

A reverse mortgage is a loan sponsored by the U.S. Government that enables senior homeowners (62 and older) to convert part of the equity in their homes into tax-free money or pay off an existing mortgage. Increasingly, older homeowners are using reverse mortgages to supplement their retirement incomes, pay for health care, make home improvements and create cash reserves for emergencies.



Jimmy Dixon

The reverse mortgage is an excellent planning tool that has been used by homeowners from all walks of life to enhance their retirement years. The growing popularity of the product is evidence of its benefit in an array of financial circumstances. To be eligible for a reverse mortgage you must be 62 years old and be a

homeowner with some equity in your home. You may qualify even if there is an existing mortgage on your home.

How much you can get depends on a few factors, including your age, the value of your home, the amount of equity in it and interest rates.

There are several options available for how you receive the money from a reverse mortgage. You can receive the money in an upfront lump sum, a line of credit, fixed monthly amounts or a combination of options.

Remember, like The Alabama Baptist, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He and his wife are members of FBC Pleasant Grove where Jimmy is the church visitor teams leader. For a free brochure or free reverse mortgage quote, contact him directly at 205-567-4800 or [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com).



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# CAMPUS News



## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University Names Strange to Granade Chair:** Samford University has named religion professor James Riley Strange to the Charles Jackson Granade and Elizabeth Donald Granade chair in New Testament.

Howard College of Arts and Sciences Dean Tim Hall said the honor recognizes and supports Strange's excellence in teaching and his ongoing archaeological research at the site of the ancient village of Shikhin in Israel.

► **Samford University An-**



STRANGE

**nounces 9th Consecutive Record Enrollment:** Samford University continues a growth pattern that began eight years ago and exceeds national norms, setting a fall enrollment record for the ninth consecutive year. University officials announced a record of 5,509 students as of Sept. 8.

Included in the totals are 3,373 undergraduate and 2,136 graduate/professional students, both records, representing 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 29 other countries. The freshman class is one of the most diverse and academically accomplished in Samford history.

► **Samford Journalism Program Named Best in Alabama:** Samford University's Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) Department was named the number one journalism program in the state of Alabama for the third year in a row by College Factual. Overall, the Samford JMC department

ranks 54th in the United States.

Additionally, the JMC department ranked as the 21st "most focused" program and the 29th "best value" program, according to College Factual.

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Hosts Expo to Connect Students with Local Churches:** Students at University of Mobile met representatives from local churches and ministries at "For the Church and City," an expo event on campus aimed at getting students connected quickly with local churches as fall semester began.

About 150 church leaders and volunteers met and mingled with students on the Baptist college's campus. They represented 25 churches and 8 ministries throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties and gave students a wide variety of ministries with which to engage.

► **University of Mobile**

**Professors Honored for Guiding Departmental Focus:** Two University of Mobile (UM) professors received an award for leadership and contribution to a team

focused on the preparation of early



MILNER

educators in the state of Alabama.

UM School of Education Dean Carolyn Corliss and assistant professor of education Ashley Milner received the Childhood Education Innovative Program Award this summer.

Corliss and Milner were recognized for their leadership in the network and exemplary development of their department's early education focus. The network's leadership consists of forward-thinking and proven early educator preparation professionals from four Alabama universities.

► **School of Business Dean Helps Elementary School Gain National Award:** Todd Greer, dean of the University of Mobile School of Business, helped a local elementary school gain national recognition as one of "America's Entrepreneurial Schools." He was on hand Sept. 18 as the selection of Mary B. Austin Elementary School for the national designation by the National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (Entre-Ed) was announced.

Greer helped model and promote foundational business skills and entrepreneurial education to students at Mary B. Austin Elementary, which is the first school in Alabama to earn this honor.



CORLISS

## JUDSON COLLEGE



► **Judson College Welcomes New Faculty:** Judson College in Marion welcomed four new faculty members to campus this semester for orientation sessions. The new professors are Stephanie Peek, assistant professor of religion; Allison Newton, assistant professor of education; Joshua Pickens, assistant professor of art; and Chris Brown, assistant professor of music and director of ensembles.

► **Judson Students Connect with Community During Marion Matters:** Judson College students and community partners at 15 project sites in Marion participated in Judson's 12th annual "Marion Matters" on Sept. 8.

Approximately 180 Judson students, faculty and staff members participated in Marion Matters. Organizations that Judson partnered with included the Perry County Library, Marion Academy, the Sowing Seeds of Hope Job Training Center, Southland Nursing Home and Francis Marion School.

► **Judson College Preview Days Set:** Judson College recently held its first Preview and Scholarship Day on Sept. 23, the first of three opportunities for prospective students to experience the college community of Judson through campus tours, meetings with faculty and students and more in-depth explanations of programs.

The next Preview and Scholarship Day is set for Nov. 18. ✠

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Across ALABAMA'S Associations

**MORGAN**  
► **East Highland Church, Hartselle,** will celebrate its 47th homecoming Oct. 1 with

Sunday School at 9:15 a.m. and worship at 10:20 a.m. It will be the only service of the day. Walter Blackman is pastor. ✠

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 1

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

### SUFFICIENT Exodus 16:1-5, 11-20

#### Questioning the Future (1-3)

My oh my, what a difference a month and a half makes. About 40 days earlier, Israel was redeemed from slavery in a spectacular episode of God's amazing power. Even though Israel expressed praise their trust in God's goodness apparently expired after a matter of weeks. Upon reaching a point of severe hunger in the wilderness the Israelites grumbled so much that they actually wished they could return to slavery.

This scene, I confess, is eerily familiar to my life. So often I find myself basking in the gracious provision and blessing of the Lord only to mistrust Him days later. Do you find yourself there? If so, perhaps you could curb your doubt by journaling the times that God has blessed you. Then in times of doubt revisit that journal to remember all that He has done. It'll help lead you away from grumbling and into praise.

#### Questioning Their Obedience (4-5, 11-12)

God is patient and gracious. Without a hint of anger, the Lord meets the needs of His people before Moses has a chance to bring Israel's faithless complaint to Him. In doing so, God devises a test to determine how Israel would fare after He gives them the law and asks for their obedience to His good and perfect will (Ex. 16:4). The test was simple. God would miraculously provide bread (or manna) in the wilderness to satisfy their hunger, but He would only do so on a daily basis (double on the day before the Sabbath). God satisfied them in the short term but was asking them to trust Him in the long term by recognizing their dependence on Him and His consistent faithfulness to bless them. Indeed, God was asking them to trust Him anew every day, to pray to the

Lord for their "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). We too are asked by God to trust Him every day for our provision, purpose and strength. Do you daily trust in Him?

#### Questioning the Provision (13-18)

The time came for God's plan to serve His people by blessing them. He is a God who gives out of compassion. Israel's complaints, however loud, were drowned in God's compassionate grace. What a beautiful picture.

There have been many times in my life when God has met my complaints with grace. Were it not for the Holy Spirit bringing me to a sobering realization that God had answered a prayer or met a need, I would have continued grumbling even while stuffing my mouth full of manna. Do you share my experience? If so, we are certainly not alone. God is patient as His Spirit sanctifies us. Reflecting on God's provision and repenting from grumbling will quickly foil the enemy's plans to rob the joy that comes from obedience to the Lord.

#### Questioning the Next Meal (19-20)

About 40 days after the Exodus, Israel failed the test of faithfulness that God had given them. In their failure, Israel learned the important lesson that "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3). If these words sound familiar, it is because Jesus quoted them when He became hungry in the wilderness after 40 days and was tempted by the enemy to be faithless (Matt. 4:2). Unlike Israel, however, the Lord Jesus remained faithful. Jesus is our greatest example of obedience.

When we are tempted to disobey the Lord, if we look to ourselves for strength we are destined to fail. However, if we look to Christ, who is ultimately faithful, we will find strength to succeed in His power and for His glory. ✠

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

### BATTLE ARMOR Ephesians 6:10-20

One of the fondest memories of my teenage years is a cross-country vacation my family took from Birmingham to California. While being cramped in the backseat of the car with my younger brother and sister for two weeks proved more "character building" than I wanted, getting to see the highlights of the American West was incredible. The Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge, Yosemite, the Rockies — we saw it all. One of my favorite stops on the trip was at a movie studio in Los Angeles. The studio had a few rides, which was nice, but the rides were not the real attraction. What really brought people in was the chance to go behind the scenes and see how movies were really made. I have never felt more lied to in my life.

I just could not believe the tricks and techniques filmmakers used to capture just the images they wanted. Windows were set at different heights to make cowboys look taller or shorter. Wooden rails in saloons were put together with toothpicks so they would collapse when someone crashed into them. Tiny models were made to look like full-scale buildings on camera. With each display and explanation, one message came through loud and clear: When you watch a movie, there is a lot more going on behind the scenes than you could ever imagine.

#### We are in a spiritual battle. (10-13)

The book of Ephesians would tell us the same thing is true when it comes to challenges we face as believers. Behind the scenes, in a realm beyond what we can fully describe or quantify, a spiritual struggle is taking place. Ephesians uses a wide variety of terms to describe the spiritual enemy set against God's people: the devil, enemies not of blood and flesh, rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of this present darkness,

spiritual forces of evil. What these terms have in common is their description of spiritual forces that stand in opposition to God's purposes.

#### God equips us and protects us completely. (14-17)

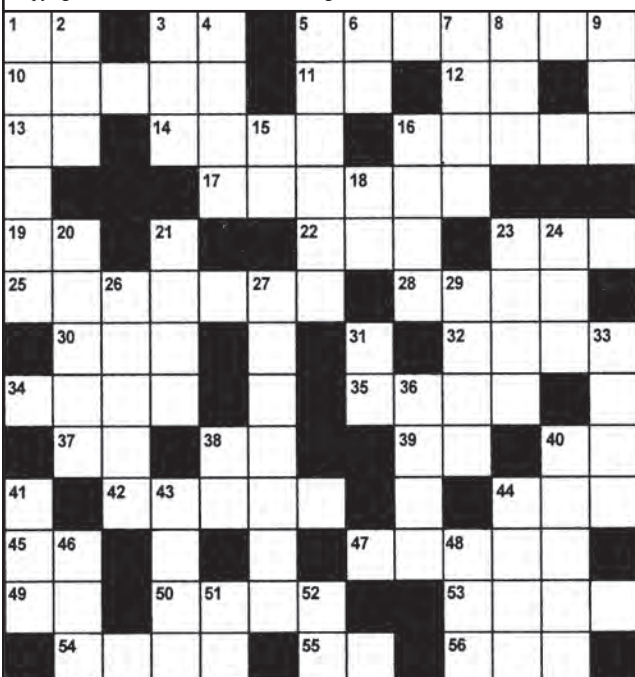
Although Ephesians uses a wide array of terms to describe these spiritual forces, it is interesting that the book does not encourage believers to delve into the intricacies of these forces as a means of defending against them. Believers are not told to map out the contours of the spiritual world, to "know the enemy" as it were. On the contrary, Ephesians argues it is enough to know there is an enemy and then encourages believers to guard themselves against this enemy by focusing on the fundamentals of their own Christian walk. Using the image of a soldier gearing up for battle, Ephesians tells us twice to put on "the whole armor of God." The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of readiness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit — these are the way the writer tells us to be people marked by truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, salvation and God's Word.

#### Equipped by God, we can act with boldness and confidence. (18-20)

Undergirding all of these spiritual disciplines is the most important defense of all: prayer. Four times in the passage Ephesians tells us to pray, giving it far more attention than any other aspect of our spiritual defense. The reason for this heavy emphasis is not hard to find. Prayer best captures the most important aspect of our weathering the storm of spiritual attack: dependence on God Himself. When we pray, we are throwing ourselves into the arms of our Father and expressing our faith in and dependence upon Him. This is the most important part of our spiritual security. ✠

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- River in northern Italy.
- Before Christ. (abbr.)
- The \_\_\_\_ of the loaves. (Mark 6:52)
- \_\_\_\_ unto God thanksgiving. (Ps. 50:14)
- Glory be to God \_\_\_\_ high.
- Musical note.
- \_\_\_\_ it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it. (Acts 5:39)
- To patch a hole in a sock.
- The lowest point.
- The \_\_\_\_ of Jesus was there. (John 2:1)
- Have mercy \_\_\_\_ me. (Matt. 15:22)
- To hurry away.
- \_\_\_\_ meal; a cereal.
- Let all the \_\_\_\_ be gathered together. (Isa. 43:9)
- The quick and the \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Pet. 4:5)
- Let your moderation be known unto all \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil. 4:5)
- A type of bomb.
- In order; picked up.
- They shall walk every

### Down

- The \_\_\_\_ of asps is under their lips. (Rom. 3:13)
- Not on.
- I have made my \_\_\_\_ in the darkness. (Job 17:13)

- one in his \_\_\_\_\_. (Joel 2:8)
- Senior. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_, so would we have it. (Ps. 35:25)
- Bachelor of Science. (abbr.)
- Television. (abbr.)
- Paul stood on the \_\_\_\_s, and beckoned. (Acts 21:40)
- That they may be one, as we \_\_\_\_\_. (John 17:11)
- Ye shall be \_\_\_\_ gods. (Gen. 3:5)
- The fruit of righteousness is sown in \_\_\_\_\_. (James 3:18)
- 3.14159265.
- A wise man.
- Persia is now known as \_\_\_\_.
- The time is now \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 14:15)
- Who rejoice to \_\_\_\_ evil. (Prov. 2:14)
- God led them by the way of the \_\_\_\_ Sea. (Ex. 13:18)
- To study for a test at the last minute.
- There are 12 in a year.
- I am \_\_\_\_ the Father. (John 14:10)
- The promise is to all that are \_\_\_\_ off. (Acts 2:39)
- A man who is a heel is called a \_\_\_\_.
- Give \_\_\_\_ to my words, O Lord. (Ps. 5:1)
- Nickname for Rosemary.
- I am rich, and ... have \_\_\_\_ of nothing. (Rev. 3:17)
- Hello!
- Whose \_\_\_\_ are in the book of life. (Phil. 4:3)
- To give clues.
- If a man swear an \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 30:2)
- Why make ye this \_\_\_\_ and weep? (Mark 5:39)
- Began to wash his feet with \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 7:38)
- Say \_\_\_\_ to any man. (Mark 1:44)
- Ingests.
- When the sun was \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 13:6)
- In him we live, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 17:28)
- He is \_\_\_\_ also to save.



# Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

## New leader named for largest united church

WASHINGTON — Andre Bokundoa-bo-Likabe, general secretary of the Baptist Community of the Congo River and a former vice president of Baptist World Alliance, was elected president of the Church of Christ in the Congo (CCC) in August.

CCC is the largest united church and the second largest Protestant denomination in the world. It is often simply referred to as the Protestant Church and includes “communities” of churches that are Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, Methodist, Mennonite, Lutheran, Evangelical, Moravian and others.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is larger geographically than all of Western Europe. The CCC provides a central administration and a spiritual forum for the dozens of Protestant denominations that it includes. It functions under a national “synod” and an executive committee. (BWA)

## IMB trustees approve \$262 million budget

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — International Mission Board (IMB) trustees gathered at Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, North Carolina, on Sept. 11–13 to celebrate more than 25,000 years of service by emeritus missionaries while approving the appointment of 51 new personnel sent by Southern Baptist churches.

IMB trustees also approved a \$262 million budget for the 2017–2018 budget year — Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. (IMB)



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- 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.

# ‘You’re valuable’

## Comedian Tim Lovelace tackles bullying in new DVD

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Christian comedian Tim Lovelace vividly remembers the days he was bullied as an elementary school student in Alabama. The bully had arms “the size of hot water heaters” and was shaving by the time he was in fourth grade. Well, at least that’s how Lovelace remembers it.

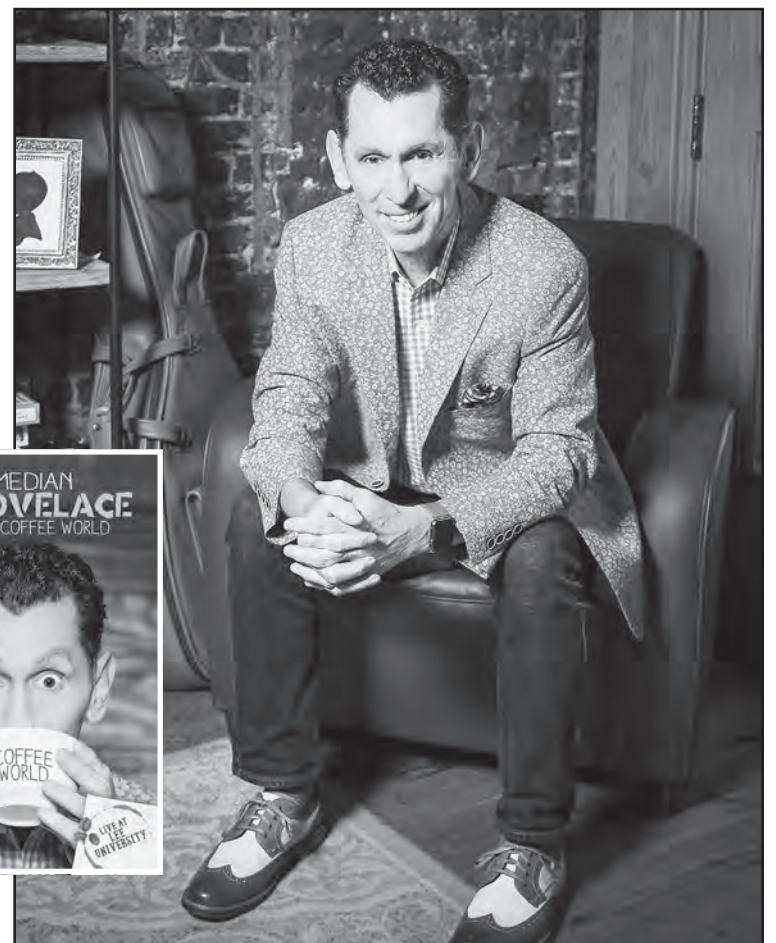
Less funny was the physical abuse he took from the bully, who often put the scrawny Lovelace in chokeholds. Lovelace reported it to the teacher but nothing was done.

“It was a different time,” Lovelace says.

The story is just one part of Lovelace’s new comedy DVD, “Living In A Coffee World,” which features clean, family-friendly humor that often has a serious point about life. A Grammy- and Dove-nominated artist, Lovelace also is known as a singer and hosts *The Music City Show*, which is syndicated and features gospel and country music stars.

His new comedy DVD was recorded at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, and is being released at a time when bullying is in the national spotlight.

According to government data, 28 percent of U.S. students in grades 6–12 say they have been bullied, and 70 percent of students say they have witnessed it.



Tim Lovelace

Photo courtesy of Bozeman Media

Lovelace, of course, addresses the subject with humor. Desperate for help against the bully as a young boy, he stumbled upon a book at the store. It was titled simply: “The Complete Book of Karate.”

“It changed my life,” he says to laughter.

Needing a sparring partner in a household with three sisters,

he turned to ... his bunk bed. So over a series of days and perhaps weeks, he pretended his bed was that bully — he calls him Kenny Wayne Jr. — and whipped it to a bloody pulp.

### Mental scars

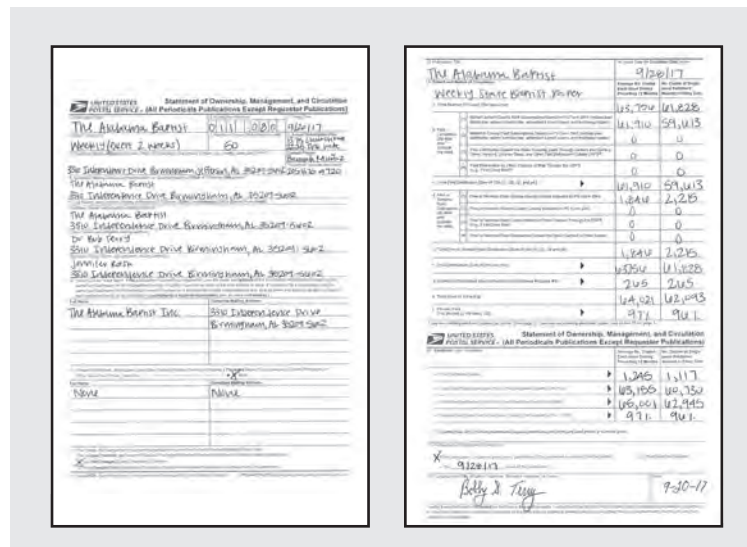
Incredibly the karate moves worked on the bully — not once but twice. It’s been several decades since he and the bully squared off, but Lovelace still has mental scars.

In his routine, Lovelace encourages students to speak up.

“Bullying is happening around this country,” he says. “You may not know what to do, but there’s someone who will fight for you. Violence is not the way. But if you’re being bullied at school, you report it — no matter if they laugh at you.”

He encourages students to report bullying to adults until something is done — to a parent, a teacher, a principal.

“Do not give up,” he says. “You’re valuable and God made you for a special reason. Do not allow that bullying to happen.”





IMB photo

Nepalese believers pray during a worship service in Nepal, a country where it often takes people years to decide to follow Christ after they hear the gospel for the first time.

# Pressure is mounting

## While Christianity grows in Nepal so does persecution

**W**hen the Christians in Nepal used to throw a party, they would slaughter a chicken. “Now they slaughter a goat,” said Bishwa Mani Pokharel, news chief at Nepal’s *Nagarik* newspaper, according to NPR.

They need the extra meat, he said, to feed the growing guest list.

The number of Christians in the Himalayan country has boomed in the past several decades. Census data from 1951 shows no Christians in Nepal. A decade later, there were 458. But in 2001, Nepal had about 102,000 Christians, a number that had more than tripled by 2011, according to NPR.

While the numbers have grown, so has persecution. Attacks against the Christian minority have increased, according to *The Christian Post*.

And Nepalese leaders are less than excited about the boom in believers.

In August the country’s parliament passed a bill that made conversion a crime. The law will likely make persecution increase all the more, the Post reported.

One clause of the bill that restricts conversion could be stretched to fit a wide variety of religious expressions, including the charitable activities of religious groups. Talking about one’s faith could be included too.

### Up to five years imprisonment

And clause 158 of section 9 is similar to Pakistan’s blasphemy laws, which make it a crime to insult someone else’s religion.

Those found guilty, including foreign visitors in the country, could be slapped with up to five years

imprisonment for violating either of these clauses, according to the Post.

The constitution of Nepal says it is a secular country, but along with the evangelism ban, the law also protects Hinduism, the majority religion. And Hindu nationalist groups say Hinduism is under threat as more people are converting to Christianity.

In April, Christian worker Santosh Khadka was shot as he returned home from an Easter service, according to the Post.

### Charged with ‘proselytizing’

Earlier, eight counselors were arrested and charged with “proselytizing” after giving out a brochure about Jesus at a Christian school in the wake of an earthquake. They were later cleared of charges.

But the pressure is mounting in the country.

Other Christians have been falsely accused of conversion-related crimes, according to the Post, and Christians find they have no land to use for burial. If they bury their dead where Hindu authorities say they are not allowed, they are forced to dig up the bodies and take them somewhere else.

Lokmani Dhakal, a Christian in Nepal’s parliament, had asked for the two sections to be removed from the bill before it passed.

“It seems very clear to me that this country when preparing the civil code has forgotten it is a signatory to international treaties that protect the freedom of religion and human rights,” he said, according to the Post. “Please don’t let it be possible for the world to say of Nepal that we are the kind of nation that on the one hand signs international treaties but when making internal laws and in implementing them, does something else.” (TAB)



### US pastor faces new charges in Turkey

IZMIR, Turkey — Andrew Brunson, a Christian pastor from North Carolina imprisoned in Turkey on a false terrorism charge because of his Christian faith, now faces four new charges including espionage, according to *The Christian Post*.

The new charges against Brunson include “gathering state secrets for espionage, attempting to overthrow the Turkish parliament and government, and to change the constitutional order,” *The Wall Street Journal* reported, quoting the local Anadolu Agency.

Brunson has served the Turkish people for more than two decades. According to the U.S.-based International Christian Concern, Brunson led a Protestant church in Izmir, Turkey. Brunson and his wife, Norine, were reportedly summoned in October to discuss their application to renew their visas but were instead arrested by Turkish police. Norine Brunson was released 13 days later but Andrew Brunson was charged with having links to terror organizations.

Andrew Brunson was jailed Oct. 7, 2016, and denied regular and appropriate access to legal counsel and American consular services. President Donald Trump reportedly spoke to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan about Andrew Brunson’s case when the latter visited the White House in May.

In a February letter to the Turkish president, 78 members of Congress wrote, “there appears to be no evidence to substantiate the charges against him (Brunson) for membership in an armed terrorist organization.”

The letter urged Turkish officials to “reaffirm respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.” (TAB)

### Al-Shabab beheads, burns alive Christians

NAIROBI, Kenya — Hundreds of Kenyans are living in displacement camps in Lamu County, Kenya, after fleeing from al-Shabaab. The Somali-based terrorist group allied with al-Qaeda has been seeking out and slaughtering Christians in Kenya. The extremists murdered seven believers in a series of deadly raids in July.

The latest attack where three Christian men were fatally attacked and another was burned alive in his home came as Uhuru Kenyatta, the president of Kenya, had urged families to remain at displacement camps as the army attempts to eradicate the terrorist threat in the area, according to *The Christian Post*. Christian leaders working in the region revealed that the victims left the camps to check on their homes and crops despite the warnings. The son of a Christian teacher was among those killed.

The Associated Press noted in its report on the latest attacks that al-Shabab is starting to carry out beheadings more frequently, which is a tactic the group had not used much before.

U.S. airstrikes continue in full force against the Somali jihadists. The U.S. military said Sept. 13 it had killed six militants in an airstrike in Somalia. (TAB)

### Jerusalem might have welcomed refugees B.C.

JERUSALEM — New archaeological finds in Jerusalem show that the city might have welcomed thousands of refugees in the millennia before Christ.

The findings — seals containing dozens of “biblical-type” names — support the idea that the city was an administrative capital of the Judean Kingdom, according to *The Christian Post*.

Archaeologists found the seals at Jerusalem’s City of David and noticed they were written in ancient Hebrew. This and other characteristics support the theory that many of the tribes who fled the Assyrian destruction of the kingdom of Israel in 732 B.C. escaped to Judah and ended up in Jerusalem, according to Joe Uziel, the director of the excavation.

One famous name found on a seal was that of King Ahab, whose wife was the infamous Jezebel. Another name was that of a woman named Elihana bat Gael, who was described as “exceptional.” (TAB)