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Main photo: Holden Roberts raised \$400 for hurricane disaster relief by selling pumpkins at his home in Jemison. Small photo: Chilton Baptist Association Director of Missions Larry Felkins (right) thanks Holden Roberts for his donation.

Photos courtesy of Chilton Baptist Association



Pumpkins for missions

Jemison preschooler raises \$400 for disaster relief

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

When 4-year-old Holden Roberts saw a news report featuring a little girl whose family had taken shelter from Hurricane Irma, it made him sad to think that kids had to leave their favorite toys behind.

Holden's favorite toy is a log truck, but he asked his parents, Brett and Julie Roberts, about sending some of his other toys to the children who had lost theirs.

"I explained that the families might have some more immediate needs, but I told him we could find a way to help," Julie Roberts said.

Earning money to give

The family decided to create a pumpkin patch at their home in Jemison with pumpkins purchased from a farmer's market in Birmingham. On Sept. 16 the family was out early setting up the pumpkin patch. They spent the day selling pumpkins to family, church friends and neighbors who not only got a pumpkin for their fall decorations but contributed to hurricane relief as well. Holden, whose dad and grandfather work in sales, has the gift, his mom said.

"As people were looking them over, he would ask, 'Do you like that pumpkin? I'll load it up for you.' It worked out perfect," Julie Roberts said.

By the end of the day, Holden had

sold 40 regular pumpkins and 22 stackable pumpkins — their entire inventory — and had raised \$400 for Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief. Holden and his family made the trip to the Chilton Baptist Association office to present the donation to Director of Missions Larry Felkins.

"It's a testimony to his parents and their character that they encouraged him in his desire to help others who are suffering. It's a complement to his church as well. Someone has taught him about missions," Felkins said.

The pumpkin patch definitely reinforced lessons about serving and giving that Holden learns at his church, Pleasant Grove No. 1 Baptist Church, Jemison, his mom said.

"We could have just given him money to give but encouraging him to put forth the work even at a young age was my main goal," Julie Roberts said. "He saw a need and he put in the effort to earn money to give." 🍂

Disaster relief work continues in Florida

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) volunteers helping residents in hurricane-ravaged Florida are finding many physical needs and great spiritual needs as well.

"A lot of it is heartbreaking but some of it is joyous," said Thelma Goolsby, an ABDR chaplain from Hepzibah Baptist Church, McCalla, in Pleasant Grove Baptist Association, who had several opportunities to share the gospel with hurricane survivors while serving in Lee County, Florida, on Sept. 14-19.

One encounter Goolsby had with a young mother left no doubt the Holy Spirit is speaking to the lost in the midst of recovery efforts.

"I asked her who Jesus is to her and she said, 'I don't do religious stuff.' I said I don't either — it's about a relationship with Jesus Christ," Goolsby said. "I told her Jesus loves her so much that He sent me from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to Fort Myers, Florida, to tell her."

After a long conversation, Goolsby left the young woman with a Bible she promised to read and a promise from Goolsby to pray for the woman and her children. Goolsby has several new names on her prayer list from her time in Florida, as do other volunteers who are helping as part of ABDR's work in Florida.

One of many teams

Goolsby's team was just one of several ABDR teams serving in the three-county area where ABDR volunteers are currently assigned.

A chainsaw team from Etowah Baptist Association served Sept. 19-27. They cut down trees and picked up debris, working daily in the late summer heat and humidity.

(See 'Alabama,' page 5)

COMMENT

Helping the Hungry and Hurting around the World

Baptists and others across the nation were quick to respond to the devastation caused by hurricanes Harvey and Irma. We responded with prayers and offerings. We responded with compassion for the displaced. Baptists responded with teams of volunteers going to care for the hurting and to help restore and rebuild the damaged areas.

But before Hurricane Irma hit Florida the storm spent three days wreaking havoc on the islands of the Caribbean. When the eye of the hurricane moved across some of the islands, Irma was a Category 5 storm with wind speeds in excess of 185 miles an hour — and a report of more than 200 miles an hour at one point.

Mountainsides were stripped bare of foliage, homes were leveled and, in some places, infrastructure was destroyed.

Among the first to respond

In the Caribbean, as well as in Texas and Florida, Baptists were among the first to respond. Initial focus for Baptist relief was on those things that could save lives — food, water, shelter and health care. In the weeks and months ahead, Baptists will be there helping overcome some of the long-term problems faced by hurricane survivors.

Leading Baptist response in the Caribbean is Baptist Global Relief (BGR), a nonprofit relief organization that responds to human need worldwide through its partnerships with the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), Global Hunger Relief, Alabama Baptists, other state conventions and Baptist bodies across the world.

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Irma, BGR opened projects in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Cuba. That was quickly followed by projects in the Bahamas, St. Thomas, St. John and the Virgin Islands. And BGR was there after Hurricane Maria hit Dominica and Puerto Rico less than two weeks after Irma.

Working with national partners such as Baptists in Cuba and the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, BGR facilitated food and water distributions and worked with other partners to bring in resources such as an Alabama Baptist mobile kitchen unit.

BGR Director Jeff Palmer, a former IMB missionary, said BGR tries to buy local food when available — such as in Cuba. Local food can be distributed more quickly than bringing food from



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

afar. Also, it is food with which the people are already familiar.

Using local Baptists for assessment, oversight and distribution means relief efforts of Baptists can start quickly.

The work is not burdened with high administrative costs and because local leaders know their communities, Baptist relief efforts get to needy places quickly.

Baptists can respond swiftly to disasters like Hurricane Irma because of the annual Global Hunger Relief Offering (known in Alabama as the Alabama Baptist Hunger Offering) scheduled on the Southern Baptist church calendar for Sunday, Oct. 8. This annual offering underwrites hunger relief efforts in the United States and around the world. The Alabama Baptist Hunger Offering sends 75 percent of what comes in from Alabama Baptists to Global Hunger Relief and 25 percent is kept for use in Alabama. Of the funds going to Global Hunger Relief, 20 percent goes to NAMB for use in fighting domestic hunger outside Alabama and 80 percent goes to IMB for use in international hunger relief efforts.

BGR is the arm through which international hunger relief ministries are carried out by Southern Baptists.

BGR responds to earthquakes in Nepal, floods in Bangladesh, drought in South Sudan, refugees in Syria and more. By capitalizing on its network of Baptist partners around the world BGR can quickly be onsite with the type of response needed in a particular emergency.

Not all hunger relief projects are related to natural disasters.

In Ecuador, for example, several fishing villages lost their ability to provide for themselves after a series of earthquakes drove the fish from the traditional fishing grounds. BGR used Global Hunger Relief funds to help bridge the gap while fishermen learned a new craft that could help them provide for themselves and their families.

The whole project was done in partnership with local Baptists who placed a full-time volunteer onsite to assist in the project.

An estimated 40 percent of the world's population lives in moderate to severe poverty. Many live in rural communities where animal husbandry and agriculture projects can help address issues of hunger and poverty by providing food and income.

BGR projects teach techniques appropriate for the particular area to raise better crops and livestock. In addition to a food source, participants learn how to sell products (meat, eggs, milk, vegetables and even animal dung) for income to meet the needs of their families.

In such an environment, a gift of an animal or a bag of seeds can be the spark that moves a family from hunger and poverty into empowerment and self-sufficiency.

About 780 million people worldwide use unsafe water sources and 2.5 billion lack improved sanitation facilities. BGR helps provide high-quality water for as many people as possible by distributing water filters, drilling wells, building latrines and offering sanitation training throughout various impoverished countries.

The needs are staggering. Response is limited only by the resources Baptists invest in helping hungry and hurting people. In 2016, Alabama Baptists contributed \$627,586 to the Global Hunger Relief Offering. The goal

for this year is \$800,000.

The goal is challenging. Alabama Baptists have just completed a push to raise \$1 million through the Myers-Mallory Offering for State Missions. Twenty percent of all receipts will go to disaster relief. In addition, many Baptists have given to relief efforts for victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

While it may not be necessary to help Baptists guard their wallets, a long list of special offerings eventually erodes the amount of funds received for the basic channel of missions support — the Cooperative Program.

Baptist response

Still, the Oct. 8 Global Hunger Relief Offering is vital to Baptist response to human needs around the world. It is vital to Baptist efforts to demonstrate God's love and care through human touch and vital to opening doors for sharing the gospel.

On Oct. 8 don't overlook the opportunity to support the Global Hunger Relief Offering and help keep Baptists among the first who respond to hungry and hurting people. ☛

Give to hunger relief through your local church or by mailing a check marked 'Hunger Offering' to the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Attn: Accounting Services, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111.



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

✠ 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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'God has always been faithful'

Retired missionaries robbed at gunpoint outside home in McCalla

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

It was dark when Phyllis Baker turned back to the car she had been loading in her driveway in McCalla.

But not so dark that she couldn't see the guns.

She and her husband, Tom, and their friend and fellow retired missionary Mary Simmons were getting ready to leave for a conference in the early morning hours when two young men emerged from the darkness. One held a gun to Tom, the other to Mary. They ripped Tom's phone from his belt. They demanded money and the keys to the car.

And Phyllis Baker started yelling.

"All I could think of was a man who had been shot in his driveway last year in a subdivision nearby," she said. "So I just started crying out to Jesus as loud as I could — 'Jesus, come save us, come help us.'"

She said she probably sounded like a crazy person, but as she yelled, one of the young men shouted for the other to leave.

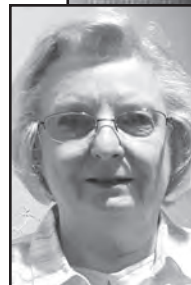
"The other young man was going through Mary's purse, and she just kept saying to him, 'You don't need to do this; you need to turn your life over to the Lord,'" said Phyllis Baker, a member of Grace Life Baptist Church, McCalla.

'A strong tower'

The young man left, and he left behind her wallet, credit cards, car keys — and the car itself.



TOM & PHYLLIS BAKER



SIMMONS

"All they got were Tom and Mary's phones," she said. "I believe the name of Jesus is a strong tower, and when we ran

to it, He saved us."

Simmons said she was grateful God gave her the words she needed and kept her from being afraid.

"I praise God for giving me the courage and words to share — that God was what both boys needed," said Simmons, a member of Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, who along with her late husband, Errol, was one of the first missionaries to

serve in Hungary after the iron curtain fell. "I thank him for taking away my fear, and I praise God that He showed His power over the danger we were in when we asked Him."

Police were able to track her phone and retrieve it that day. Though she and the Bakers were shaken up, they left later in the day for the Celebration of Emeriti, an event held once every five years to honor the International Mission Board's (IMB) emeritus missionaries.

Praising God

"Two days later, the police called us while we were at Ridgecrest and said they had arrested two juveniles that they were pretty sure were our thieves," Phyllis Baker said. "The conference was a great time of worship for us, and we praised God for what He had done."

More than 2,200 IMB missionaries including the Bakers and Simmons hold emeritus status. That adds up to a combined total of 25,297 years of service — and a lot of stories.

For the Bakers, those stories included at least a handful of trials — during 27 years abroad, they had been robbed in three countries.

The Sept. 11 incident made four.

"It always is unnerving, but God has always been faithful, and we've lived to tell the story," Phyllis Baker said. "They just walked up and saw three old, gray-haired people and thought they had found easy pickings. They didn't know we had the Lord fighting on our side." ✠

Children without enough food are global concern

While a greater number of children in low-income countries go hungry than in high-income countries, the wealthier areas also have children facing each day without enough food.

For instance, data from a Gallup World Poll gathered between 2014 and 2015 shows 20 percent of U.S. children and 27 percent of children in Saudi Arabia are moderately or severely food insecure.

The U.S. ranks second among high-income countries while Saudi Arabia is the top-ranked high-income country, according to World Bank Income Groupings.

The most extreme food insecurity among children shows up in South Sudan at 92 percent. South Sudan is the top low-income country in the study.

"Food insecurity is not an outcome of unequal economic growth," said Audrey Pereira and Pablo Diego-Rosell in a Sept. 28 Gallup News article. "Because hunger knows no boundaries, continued and sustained efforts are needed across and within the developed and developing worlds to reach zero hunger."

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Office of Research-Innocenti has used the Gallup data to report estimates of food insecurity among households with children younger than 15 years old. The estimates are based on the

Food Insecurity Experience Scale which was developed by the Voices of the Hungry project, according to the Gallup News article.

To read the full UNICEF report, visit <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/900/>. (TAB)

Percentage of children living in a moderately or severely food insecure household according to income levels

Top two low-income countries

- ▶ South Sudan — 92%
- ▶ Liberia — 89%

Bottom two low-income countries

- ▶ Afghanistan — 48%
- ▶ Nepal — 32%

Top two lower middle-income countries

- ▶ Nigeria — 56%
- ▶ Philippines — 52%

Bottom two lower middle-income countries

- ▶ Ukraine — 15%
- ▶ Bhutan — 3%

Top two upper middle-income countries

- ▶ Iran — 56%
- ▶ South Africa — 47%

Bottom two upper middle-income countries

- ▶ China — 5%
- ▶ Croatia — 5%

Top two high-income countries

- ▶ Saudi Arabia — 27%
- ▶ United States — 20%

Bottom two high-income countries

- ▶ Sweden — 4%
- ▶ Japan — 1%

Source: news.gallup.com

Practical tools



123rf.com

Annual Pathways Professional Counseling conference addresses Cluster B personality disorders

Are you a counselor? Ever treated someone who dealt with antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder or narcissistic personality disorder? Somewhere around 10 percent of the population falls into those categories, according to Dr. C. Jeffrey Terrell, dean of the College of Education and Human Services and professor of counseling psychology at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

That's why treating those four disorders — called Cluster B personality disorders — is the topic of the fall conference put on annually by Pathways Professional Counseling, with support provided by the School of Public Health of Samford University and *The Alabama Baptist*. The conference, set for Oct. 13, features Terrell as guest speaker and is designed to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and abilities to accurately identify and treat their most difficult personality disordered clients.

Q-and-A

Pathways recently interviewed Terrell to learn more about his background and work with Cluster B disorders.

Q: Tell us about yourself and how you came into this field of work.

A: I have a long background in helping. I felt a calling early in life toward vocational ministry but wasn't sure what that might entail. After earning a bachelor's degree in music education from Samford University, I completed a master's degree in biblical languages and later a specialty in counseling and pastoral ministries at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. I also served as pastor of two small churches. But I ended up back in another master's and doctoral program, this time in psychology. After graduation, it all came together when I became the president of a graduate school for Christian counselors.

Q: What are Cluster B personality disorders?

A: Personality disorders are enduring maladaptive patterns of behavior and cognition that affect every area of the person's life. Cluster B disorders are the most dramatic and are often considered the most difficult problems to treat. Depending on whose research you read, somewhere around 10 percent of the general population has one of these four personality disorders, which is rather shocking. The numbers are likely higher in clinical settings, especially when clients have experienced early trauma and/or neglect. We all see these clients, but if you're not aware of what you're seeing, they will cause great difficulty to you, and they will not get better.

Q: What made you want to study more about personality disorders?

A: When I became president of a graduate school in Atlanta, somehow my practice began to attract more and more executives. C-level employees of major companies, entrepreneurs, managing partners and even some pastors made up an increasing set of my clinical practice. I began to notice that — though not necessarily diagnosable with a personality disorder — most of these people had personalities that had a significant amount of narcissism, and a few had more psychopathic personalities. Working to understand what was going on with these clients was the stimulus that led to more study. Later, I developed a graduate course on personality disorders and then began to do conferences and workshops around the country on the topic.

Q: What practical tools will participants come away with from the conference?

A: I tend to use a lot of video of

clinical settings, mostly me working with individuals with these personality disorders. I find that seeing the dynamics in real life illustrates the nature of these disorders better than anything else. So the conference will involve a lot

of application. We'll discuss what you can expect from these clients in therapy and how to cope with your own feelings when working with these difficult

personalities. When working with personality disorders, it's critical to understand how the psychopathology got so severe so that you can be empathic with the client even as you work to maintain firm boundaries.

Q: How does your Christian faith inform your counseling practice?

A: There are times that clients come in and issues of growth and spiritual development are the

predominant issues. Prayer and deepening biblical knowledge are very helpful with these clients. However, even in those times, we have to be careful to make sure we are tracking where the client is and how we can best serve. I believe that counseling is an incarnational practice — even if we never name the name of Christ, we are living as Jesus lived. When working with these dramatic, manipulative and erratic Cluster B personality disorders, most of the time it is better for our own personal faith to remain in the background and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work, to avoid giving the client something to try to manipulate.

I had a female client with one of these disorders one time who attempted to use in-session prayer in a manipulative way to get closer emotionally, which would have been counterproductive at that point in her treatment. Balancing these demands can be tough, but it's what we're called to do as Christian counselors.

CE credits

This conference is recommended for professional counselors, social workers, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and students in these fields. CE credits are available as well for those who need to pursue credits. (Pathways)

For more information on this year's workshop or to register, visit www.pathwaysprofessional.org/events.



According to the Nov. 14, 1849, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*:

Shady Grove, Harmony, Bethesda, Kingston and Elim churches in Autauga County explained they withdrew from Mulberry Baptist Association because "the association has steadily resisted all our efforts to promote the missionary cause and we have lost all hope of ever giving that aid and assistance to said cause which we wish to do." (TAB)



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RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

Pastor, Christian politician sentenced for scams

VALLEJO, Calif. — A California pastor and a Christian politician in Tennessee were each sentenced in September to more than 20 years in prison for running scams and defrauding their followers out of millions.

Luther Feltus-Curry, pastor of Revival Center Ministries in Vallejo, California, was convicted in February of 27 counts of felony theft and securities fraud. He and a co-conspirator, Alma Perez, created shell companies and promised their victims low risk and high returns, but they used the money — roughly \$1 million — for personal expenses, the Associated Press reported.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra called the case “despicable” when announcing Feltus-Curry’s 24-year sentence.

In a separate scheme, former Tennessee lawmaker and Christian politician Larry Bates was sentenced to 21 years in prison for running a multimillion-dollar Ponzi coin scheme.

He used his Christian broadcast programs to encourage listeners to buy silver and gold coins that would give them financial protection against a religious and economic collapse at the end of the world called “mystery Babylon.”

The victims included Colorado pastor Charles Grimsley, who claimed he and his wife sent Bates more than \$200,000 of their retirement money and got little in return, according to The Christian Post. (TAB)

Church that meets under bridge marks 25 years

WACO, Texas — A church that meets under a highway bridge in Waco, Texas, recently celebrated 25 years of service among the city’s homeless population.

“We are a church ‘with the poor and marginalized’ — not ‘for’ — that invites the ex-offender, mentally ill, homeless, addicts, and other marginalized,” said Jimmy Dorrell, lead pastor for Church Under the Bridge, a nondenominational congregation.

Church Under the Bridge, which gathers underneath the Interstate 35 underpass bridges, held its first service Sept. 20, 1992, with five homeless men in attendance. Now the church averages about 300 people for weekly worship from a variety of backgrounds, according to The Christian Post.

About 450 people attended the anniversary celebration, which featured Delvin Atchison, director of the Great Commission Team for Texas Baptists, as guest speaker.

“Almost half of our funds go to serve the poor, locally and globally. We have 13 small groups during the week,” Dorrell told the Post. “Through special efforts, leadership skills and empowerment will begin to raise up leaders in the church from racial and economic minorities who are capable of preaching, teaching, pastoring, leading worship and other responsibilities.” (TAB)

Muslim college buys Lutheran seminary campus

BERKELEY, Calif. — A Muslim liberal arts college that offers subjects such as Islamic law alongside courses in math and philosophy has bought a former seminary campus for its undergraduate program.

Zaytuna College, the nation’s first accredited Muslim college, paid \$10 million for the 10-acre Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary on a hilltop in Berkeley, California. The college, whose name means “olive tree” in Arabic, integrates Islam with the Western canon.

Zaytuna, which has 52 male and female undergraduates enrolled this fall, will move to the seminary grounds in January. It will continue to own three buildings near the Graduate Theological Union, also in Berkeley. Those buildings will be used to develop a graduate-level seminary down the road, said spokesperson Amna Mirza.

The seminary Zaytuna bought is 1 of 7 in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Pacific Lutheran, which is part of California Lutheran University, recently moved to an office building in downtown Berkeley. (RNS)

‘We were blessed’

Alabama Baptists dive into hurricane relief efforts

(continued from page 1)

But blessings abounded, team member Donna Skaggs wrote in a Facebook post.

“(From) seeing beautiful tropical flowers that survived the storm and even witnessing at McDonalds, we were blessed. I just noticed that in almost every picture we were all smiling,” she wrote.

Several reports of salvation gave volunteers across the area more reason to smile. A 12-year-old neighbor of one family being assisted by ABDR was saved. Pleasant Grove Director of Missions (DOM) Dan Wiggins reported 12 salvations among those ministered to by his team.

“God is so good,” he wrote in a newsletter update.

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) Executive Director Rick Lance noted the salvation reports and the help ABDR has provided in getting churches ready for services once again.

Cooperative effort

Lance also praised Alabama Baptists’ cooperative effort in sending funds to Texas for hurricane relief work there and for their financial and volunteer support in Florida.

“I want to thank you, Alabama Baptists. This has been a supreme test for us,” Lance said. “I want to thank you for your praying, your giving and for those who are able to go, your going.”

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) entities

are working to help survivors in several Caribbean islands devastated by hurricanes Irma and Maria. Hurricane Maria left almost all of Puerto Rico’s 3.4 million citizens without power.

A statement from the U.S. Department of Defense on Sept. 27 said nearly half of the population also remains without drinking water. A church planting catalyst in Puerto Rico told Baptist Press that the condition of most of the 90 or so Southern Baptist churches on the island is still unknown.

On Sept. 28 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) gave Southern Baptist



Photo courtesy of Gary Cardwell

A chainsaw team from Etowah Baptist Association cuts down trees and picks up debris in Florida on Sept. 19-27.

Disaster Relief teams permission to move onto the island to help recovery efforts, according to a source from the North American Mission Board (NAMB). The teams had been on standby as National Guard and U.S. military troops conducted search and rescue efforts and delivered emergency humanitarian resources.

In the meantime NAMB has been working closely with state Baptist partners, FEMA, the American Red Cross and Southern Baptist pastors on the island to set a response in place.

To donate to ongoing hurricane relief in Texas and Florida, visit sldr.org/hurricanerelief.

“We have just received a green light from government officials,” said David Melber, NAMB’s vice president of Send Relief. “Southern Baptists will play a

significant role in this response and there will be a long-term need for volunteers and resources.”

Melber said the Southern Baptist response will include feeding teams that will be serving at several locations throughout the island. In addition, Send Relief is sending care packages directly to Puerto Rican Southern Baptist pastors. The packages will include vital equipment and supplies. Pastors are visiting with survivors in shelters, praying with them and offering spiritual comfort.

Recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where an additional eight Southern Baptist churches are lo-

cated, also has been slow because of crippled infrastructure.

Lennox Zamore, pastor of Ebenezer Memorial Baptist Church in Saint Thomas, said churches are rallying to help by serving as distribution centers for food, supplies, tarps and counseling. It will take months to regain electrical power; reopen schools, universities and government offices; and restore government services, he said.

Baptist Global Response (BGR) is working with partners in the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and Dominica, island nations hit hard by hurricanes Irma and Maria. A BGR update on hurricane relief noted that the power plant on Grand Turk was “totally destroyed,” leaving residents without electricity for cooking and refrigeration. A BGR update also noted that in the midst of the desperate situation, Caribbean hurricane survivors and relief partners are expressing gratitude for prayers and aid.

Expressing gratitude

“Thank you so much for your response in this time of need across the Caribbean,” the update read. “Know that the people of the affected countries greatly appreciate the effort. We continue to pray that our gracious Lord will replenish your strength as you show His love to the nations across the region.”

More information is available at sldr.org, sendrelief.net and gobgr.org. (BP contributed)



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BETHEL

► **Bobby Hopper**, who serves as director of missions (DOM) for **Bethel and Hale associations**, has retired from his role at Bethel. He will be honored for his 14 years as DOM at the Bethel Association annual meeting Oct. 16. A retirement reception is being planned by the association. Before coming to Bethel as DOM, Hopper served three years as pastor of Gallion Church. He will continue serving as DOM of Hale Association.

BETHLEHEM

► **Ramah Church, Pine Orchard**, will celebrate its 145th anniversary Oct. 8, 11 a.m. Mr. and Mrs. Craig Hayles and Russell Ball will perform special music. Lunch will follow the service. Pastor William Bodiford will bring the message.

BESSEMER

► **Mike Bell** is the new pastor of **New Faith Church, Pleasant Grove**. He previously served as pastor of Liberty Church, Brookwood. He also served as a bivocational pastor for 42 years, evangelism director for Pleasant Grove Association and served in nursing home ministry and radio ministry. Bell holds a bachelor's degree from Jimmy Swaggart Bible College and Seminary in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He and his wife, Theresa, have three children and two grandchildren. ► **Grace Life Church, McCalla**, will have a Pumpkin Patch at Shadow Lake in McCalla on Oct. 14–15 and 21–22. The patch will be open Saturdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sundays, 1–5 p.m. For more information visit yourgracelife.com/pumpkinpatch. Joel Frederick is pastor.



BELL

BIRMINGHAM

► **Ruffner Valley Church, Irondale**, will celebrate Heritage Day on Oct. 8. Sunday School will be at 9 a.m. and worship will be at 10:15 a.m. Former pastor Larry Morris will speak. Lunch will follow the service. Point of Honor will perform special music after lunch. Stan Prewett is pastor. ► **Sue Curlee**, wife of retired pastor, author and playwright **Bob Curlee**, died Sept. 20. She was 81. She held a bachelor's degree from Judson College in Marion and a master's degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Before her retirement, she taught at W.J. Christian School in Birmingham. Bob Curlee served as longtime pastor of **Centercrest Church, Center Point**, which merged with Eagle Ridge Church, Clay, in 2010 to form North Clay Church, Clay. She is survived by her husband of 58 years, four children and 13 grandchildren.

CLARKE

► **Evergreen Church, Jackson**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 15. Sunday School will be at 9:45 a.m. and the service will be at 11 a.m. Brent Fuller will speak. Lunch will follow the service. John David Stewart is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Lee Street Church, Enterprise**, will hold revival services Oct. 8–11. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday–Wednesday services will be at 6:30 nightly. Rick Coram will be the guest speaker. For more information call 334-347-4981. Slade Stinson is pastor.

CONECUH

► **Brooklyn Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 8, 10:30 a.m. Gospel Melodies of Evergreen will perform special music. Lunch will follow the service. Jack Williamson is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold the 39er's CLUB on Oct. 10, 11 a.m. Kay Chandler will speak. Contact your table hostess to make or cancel your reservation. If you've never attended a meeting call the church office at 334-684-9617 to make your reservation. Steve Wegmann is pastor.

MARION

► **Harmony Grove Church, Winfield**, will host "Magnificent Mondays" in October at 7 nightly. Kevin Hamm spoke Oct. 2, Junior Hill will speak Oct. 9, Joel Frederick will speak Oct. 16 and Tim Tindle will speak Oct. 23. Steve Stamps is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

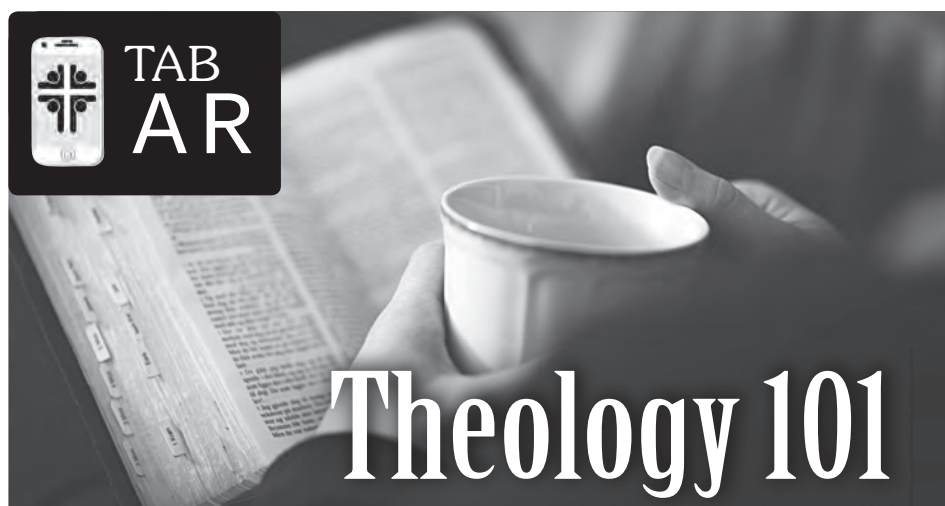
► **Open Acres Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate its 68th homecoming Oct. 8. The Dennis Family will perform special music at 10 a.m. and a service will be at 11 a.m. Eric Jackson will speak. Lunch will follow the service. Ron Davis is pastor.

PLEASANT GROVE

► **Antioch Church, Brookwood**, will hold Old-Fashioned Day on Oct. 15, 10:30 a.m. Legacy will perform special music. Church members are encouraged to dress in period clothing. Antioch Church also will hold an ordination ceremony for James Riley on Oct. 8. He and his wife, Clara, have three children and have been members for almost two years. Dwight Kizziah is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Sam Day** has resigned as director of missions for **Tuscaloosa Association** and accepted an administrative position with Birmingham Water Works. His last day was Sept. 25. Billy Austin, retired president of the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, has been named interim executive director. Also, the title for the position has been changed from director of missions to executive director. ☛

TAB
AR

Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Demonology

Demonology — Fact or Fiction

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

October is the month for Halloween. Halloween traditionally draws attention to witches, goblins, ghosts, curses, haunted houses, the world of the dead and unseen things like spooks or spirits that go bump in the night. Such features of Halloween affords a good time to give serious thought to the biblical witness to unseen, evil spirits. What about evil unseen spirits? Do demons exist and, if so, are they active today? The common category for thinking about evil spirits is termed "demonology." During this month Theology 101 will explore the biblical witness about demonic activity.

Even a casual reader of the Bible notices that frequent reference is made to demons or evil spirits. One must ask if passages that reference demons are simply an accommodation to ancient times when superstition caused people to imagine the dark activities of demons and thus were part of the trappings of an ancient and outdated worldview. Or does the Bible faithfully and truthfully bear witness to a real, active and unseen realm of reality in which evil spirits operate? Are passages in the Bible that involve reports of demonic activity fact or fiction? If we hold to the conviction that the Bible is totally true and trustworthy, then we must take seriously the many times it references demonic activity. Given such a conviction, Theology 101 will proceed to take seriously the biblical witness about the doctrine of demons.

What we know

At the outset Theology 101 recognizes that there are questions about which we would like simple answers but concerning which God has been pleased to reveal only what we need to know, not necessarily what we might like to know. For example, we might like to know when demons came into being. Assuming God created all things and that all He created was good, how did good spirits become evil spirits? In addition, we might wish to know if demonic spirits are organized in some hierarchical arrangement.

God has chosen not to speak to our curiosity by giving detailed information concerning demons. We might say that in His pursuit of a redemptive plan that centers in Christ, God has along the way given hints concerning our questions.

Origin of demons

As for the origin of demons, the biblical evidence suggests they were originally good angels that joined a heavenly rebellion under the leadership of a chief angel. The chief angel became diametrically opposed to God and was followed by a host of other angels. These fallen angels simply show up in the Bible as demonic spirits. They appear in opposition to all that is holy. Based on the fact that Satan was around when God created Adam and Eve, we can surmise that the creation and rebellion of angelic spirits occurred prior to the creation of humankind. Was it not Mark Twain who in applying for a passport was asked for a birth certificate, which he did not possess? His reported reply was quite practical, "I may not be able to prove that I was born, but you cannot deny that I am here." We may not be able to outline the details of when and where demons came to be, but if we take the Bible seriously and evaluate our experiences honestly, we cannot deny that they are here.

So working from the premise that demons exist and are active, Theology 101 seeks in coming weeks to explore the topic of demonology not for the purpose of elevating evil spirits but in order to help us live and minister victoriously in spite of spiritual opposition. ☛

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Focus
on

ONE MISSION

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

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

Rick Burgess to Highlight Convention Tuesday Evening Session

Disciple Be One.
Make One.
Matthew 16:24

One of the largest gatherings for a Tuesday evening session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention was in 2008 at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, when Rick Burgess, co-host of the popular radio program, "The Rick

and Bubba Show," spoke and musician Kevin Derryberry led worship.

That same team returns to lead us in worship at this year's state convention annual meeting November 14-15 at Whitesburg



By Doug Rogers
State Missionary

Baptist Church in Huntsville. The duo will again be featured in the Tuesday evening session, beginning at 6:45 p.m.

The focus of Burgess' remarks, and the theme for the entire gathering,

will be **"Disciple: Be One. Make One."** based on Christ's admonition to His disciples in Matthew 16:24 that true discipleship involves denying self, taking up one's cross and following Him.

Prior to that session, a special dinner event has been planned featuring Rick's wife, Sherri, a sought-after speaker in her own right and author of "Bronner: A Journey to Understand." Cost for the meal is \$15 and registration is required at alsbom.org/burgess. Everyone is invited to this inspirational event.

Other highlights of the annual Alabama Baptist "family reunion" include a message by convention president John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, and the convention sermon by Stuart Davidson, pastor of Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne. Two theme interpretations scheduled for

Tuesday morning and Wednesday morning will also serve to amplify the focus on discipleship.

Combine these messages with reports from various ministries and entities, an update on the new State Board of Missions building being constructed in Prattville, and the opportunities for fellowship in the hallways and exhibit area, and you can see that the table has been set for a wonderful time of celebration and inspiration.

For more information about the annual meeting, including a hotel guide and the updated convention program as it becomes available, visit alsbom.org/convention.

For questions about convention arrangements, please call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or (334) 613-2231, chobbs@alsbom.org.



For Disaster Relief updates and to give, visit www.SBDR.org.

FALL MISSIONS FESTIVALS

FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN

October 13-14

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

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

ONLINE INFO: AlabamaWMU.org

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

FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR ADULTS

Tuesday, October 17

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

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

ONLINE INFO: AlabamaWMU.org

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

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



MIKE GOFORTH

I am a longtime pastor in the Alabama Baptist State Convention. I am at Sardis Baptist Church in Boaz. I have been serving as a pastor for almost 40 years. I have watched and participated in missions and evangelism all through those years.

As our churches give through the Cooperative Program, we help young students go to college and seminaries and prepare

for the Lord's calling on their life.

I have met many of our IMB missionaries through the years, and I know our church could never send that many by ourselves.

Two years ago, our son and daughter-in-law went with IMB to the mission

field. I have watched them go to language school in a foreign country and learn the language. Now we are watching them plant a

church, and it is amazing to see how the Cooperative Program really works.

You can multiply that by the thousands and see what our Cooperative Program does. Couple that with the power of the Gospel, and it is an unstoppable force. Thank God for the Cooperative Program. — **Mike Goforth**, trustee, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and pastor, Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz



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

315 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



Register online @
alsbom.org/315LC

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

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

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

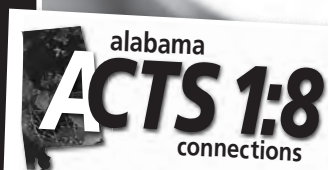
COST: \$25

THE 315 ONE-DAY IS FOR YOU IF:

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

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

Faith-Focused Safe Travel Training: Level A



State Board of Missions,

2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery
9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. ~ Thursday, October 26, 2017

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

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

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

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

THE 4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION

Thursday,
November 2, 2017
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
East Pointe Baptist Church,
Spanish Fort

Cost: \$10 per person (includes lunch)

Online Registration & Info:
alsbom.org/4disciplines

Registration Deadline: Thursday,
October 26, 2017

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

Topics of discussion will include:

- What "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" are and why they are effective.
- How to execute your strategic priorities and get results.
- How to effect change in human behavior to achieve your goals.
- How to install "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" in your church.

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

churches
in Georgia,
Pennsylvania and Florida and
planted new churches in
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and
Boca Raton, Florida.

Tommy has had five-plus years of experience in training, resourcing and coaching church leaders as vice-president of Training for Church Leader Insights and Nelson Searcy.

Alongside Searcy, Tommy co-taught The Launch Conference to 500-plus church planters.

Since 2014, Tommy has trained more than 175 men in coaching networks across Alabama. Tommy and his wife, Amber, live in Savannah and have two children.



By Lamar Duke
State Missionary

"Tommy is a great guy
with a heart for Christ

and for pastors, especially church
planters. As an experienced
church planter and pastor, Tommy

ALABAMA CHURCH PLANTERS' NETWORK DINNER

NOVEMBER 12, 2017

identifies with
and empathizes
with those of us
in the trenches.
He has a talent
for laying out
significant
knowledge
in ways that
promote memory
retention in
the listener. His
insights into
the challenges

of planting and how to navigate
through those challenges are well
worth the investment of time!" –
Faron Golden, church planter

**Online information may be found
at plantalabama.org.**

For more information, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.

Make your reservations for what we believe will be the largest gathering of Alabama church planting types ever to assemble.

The Alabama Church Planters' Network Dinner will be held on Sunday, **November 12, 2017, 4:30-8:30 p.m.**, at Essential Church, 1806 University Drive, Huntsville. This is the Sunday before the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on November 13 and the Alabama Baptist Convention meeting on November 14-15.

The cost will be \$15 per person or \$25 for a couple.

We advertise this event as a family reunion of church planter types. It is really for any Kingdom-minded person.

Church planters and their wives or anyone interested are invited to this event.

The speaker for this event will be Tommy Duke, connection pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia. He has served as pastor of

Annual Meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention

November 14-15, 2017

Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville



FEATURED SPEAKERS:



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



Rick Burgess
radio personality
and author
(Tuesday Evening)



Kevin Derryberry
worship
leader
(Tuesday
Evening)



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



Special event Dinner
program featuring
Sherri Burgess, author
of *Bronner: A Journey
to Understand*, Tuesday
evening between
convention sessions.

Cost: \$15.
Register at
[alsbom.org/
burgess](http://alsbom.org/burgess)

ALL ARE INVITED.

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

Huntsville Marriott – Convention Hotel
5 Tranquility Base
\$109
256-830-2222
Free WiFi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit alsbom.org/convention.



Senior Adult Choir Celebrations

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

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

REGISTRATION: alsbom.org/seniorfest

Come and experience a gathering of worship with fellow senior adults at the Senior Adult Choir Celebrations.

Individual groups sing prepared selections as well as singing the classic hymns together. There are four locations to choose from. Your group may attend one or more!
The only cost is your lunch.

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



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

Children's Honor Choir Auditions

AUDITION FORMS: alsbom.org/chc
TOUR DATES: March 2-4, 2018
LOCATION: Shocco Springs

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



Train your entire church how to have Gospel conversations!

EVERY BELIEVER A WITNESS

2017 Pastor Equipping Conferences

Date	District	City	Place
October 17	1	Athens	Clements BC
October 19	12	Montgomery	State Board of Missions

What You Will Learn:

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

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

REGISTRATION FEE: \$49

Attendees receive \$50 gift card. Lunch provided.

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

To register, go to: ALSBOM.org/EveryBeliever.

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

NORTH ALABAMA CHURCH LIBRARY CONFERENCE

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

Theme: BUILDING BLOCKS OF MINISTRY

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

This is the **17th annual training event** for north Alabama librarians and others who wish to attend. **There is no cost to attend**, but registration is necessary. This can be done by emailing or calling Eva Nell Hunter as shown below.

Conferences will include every aspect of church library work - administration, collection development, processing, book repair including preventive measures, automation with Concourse and Atrium, promotion of all sorts, and classification and cataloging.

Church history, cardmaking, the Cricut machine, origami and making something useful out of the useless material are also favorites of this conference.

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

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

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

FREE ADMISSION

2018 State Evangelism Conference

January 22-23, 2018

Monday at 6:15 p.m. • Tuesday at 8:45 a.m.

Eastmont Baptist Church

MONTGOMERY

Speakers

Roc Collins
Greg Corbin
Nick Floyd
Ronnie Floyd
Kevin Hamm
Terrence Jones
John Meador
Tom Richter

EVANGELISM RESURGENCE

Does your church have an effective evangelism strategy?

PRAYER CARE SHARE

For More Information,
contact Ministry Assistant Amy Nelson
at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, or
(334) 613-2258, anelson@alsbom.org



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

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

featuring
Selah



BIBLE DRILL RETREAT

Friday and Saturday, January 26 -27, 2018

Shocco Springs

THEME: MARVEL IN HIS WORD

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

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

REGISTRATION: shocco.org/bible-drill-retreat

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



CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS

for Mississippi River Ministry

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

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

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

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

For more information and collection sites:
AlabamaWMU.org/backpacks



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

Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries 56th Annual Conference

March 11-14, 2018

Shocco Springs

Scripture: *I am the Lord your
God who teaches you to profit,
who leads you in the way you
should go. ~ ISAIAH 48:17*

General Conference Leader:
Melanie Hill, First Baptist Church,
Dothan

Music/Worship Leader: Kevin Cobb,
West Mobile Baptist Church, Mobile

Make plans now to join us for a time of spiritual,
professional and personal growth through worship, study,
fellowship and educational breakout sessions.

**Walk
in the Way
of the
Lord**

More info: alabamabaptistsecretaries.com

Please check out our website:

alabamabaptistsecretaries.com

Facebook page: Alabama
Association of Baptist
Secretaries

For more information,
please contact Lisa Daniels,
2017-18 AABS President,
at (334) 699-1595 or
ldanielsbca@gmail.com

**alabama
association of
baptist secretaries**



Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

HOW DOES THE MYERS-MALLORY STATE MISSIONS OFFERING HELP WITH HURRICANE RELIEF?

This year's emphasis on the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and Week of Prayer for State Missions happens to coincide with some of the worst disasters in history. With hurricanes, floods and wildfires all raging at once, we are reminded of the great need we have one for another and the great need for preparedness, wisdom and generosity. In that spirit, we wanted to remind you of a few facts regarding Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief and the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering:

■ After Alabama faced a catastrophic, statewide tornado outbreak in 2011, Disaster Relief coffers were drained and a Disaster Relief Offering was established.

■ That offering was then combined with Alabama WMU's Kathleen Mallory Mission Offering and expanded to include other Great Commission Ministries last year in Alabama's first-ever Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

■ Thanks, in part, to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief is able to be prepared **ahead of disaster** with valuable people, infrastructure and financial resources at the ready.

■ Thanks, in part, to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, Disaster Relief volunteers will be able to help with long-term recovery efforts **after the storm of media outlets move on** to the next "top story of the day."

■ Similar to the way the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering complements Cooperative Program giving, it will serve to complement designated hurricane relief giving, as well. The hope is that Alabama Baptists will see the value in our State Missions Offering, while continuing to give above and beyond for designated relief help.

VISIT MYERS-MALLORY.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

State Goal:
\$1,000,000





(augmented reality)

Follow these instructions

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

Samford conference highlights medical missions

By Sarah Waller
Samford University

Samford University's Center for Faith and Health and Beeson Global Center partnered with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions on Sept. 23 to host Medical Missions and the Local Church Conference.

The conference brought together medical professionals, pastors and church leaders in the community to discuss strategies and motivations behind medical missions work.

Attendees heard from three speakers, each of whom possesses a wealth of experience in missions: Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills; Larry Pepper, a doctor and missionary to Tanzania; and Rebekah Naylor, an award-winning surgeon and missionary now practicing in Dallas.

Crossing barriers

"This is truth. Health care professionals are unique," Naylor said. "It is true that any follower of Jesus in any profession can go

anywhere and find people whom he can access and share Jesus Christ. We are commanded to do it but the health care professional can cross more barriers than any other profession."

Naylor, who worked in Bangalore, India, with the International Mission Board (IMB) from 1974 to 2002, shared how in her experience she found that health care can cross any geographic, economic and cultural barrier that exists.

"But perhaps the most important, we are the only people who in minutes can reach a spiritual conversation," she said. "We can get there very quickly because of our relationship with the patient."

All three speakers spoke on the biblical mandate for missions. In Matthew 9:35-38, the Bible says, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom and heal-

ing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers

are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'"

Wood shared how this verse demonstrates the pillars upon which every missions strategy should be based: evangelism, compassion/justice and discipleship.

In Matthew 9, Jesus was "proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom" (evangelism), He was "healing every disease and sickness" (compassion and justice) and He was sharing with His disciples about the harvest (discipleship), Wood said.

Pepper, who has worked at Kigoma Baptist Hospital in Tanzania with the IMB for 22 years,

shared that it is equally important to proclaim the gospel as well as demonstrate it. Health care opens doors to do this, he said.

He explained his strategy: access the unreached, get behind closed doors and have intimate conversations about Jesus, provide compassionate care, disciple internationally and empower others to do the same.

'A great success'

"It is a process I am constantly thinking about," Pepper said.

In addition to their talks in the morning, Naylor and Pepper spoke specifically to medical professionals during the afternoon breakout sessions.

"This conference was a great success," said Michael Hogue, associate dean of Samford's Center for Faith and Health. "At Samford, we encourage students to seek out God's calling on their lives, which often comes through missions. With events like this, we are able to share this message with our community." #



NAYLOR

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

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

PASTOR

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

WORSHIP LEADER

Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, Alabama, is seeking a part-time worship leader. The primary responsibility is, as a Christ-follower, to lead and grow a "blended" worship ministry. Resumes may be submitted by email to: churchoffice@deerfootbaptist.org, or mailed to: Deerfoot Baptist Church, 5450 Mount Olive Church Rd., Trussville, AL 35173.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

Kinsey Baptist Church, Dothan, Alabama, is seeking a part-time minister of music/worship leader. We desire a mixture of

contemporary and traditional music. Please email your resume to: melanjohncoch@yahoo.com or mail to: Kinsey Baptist Church, 6745 Walden Dr., Kinsey, AL 36303.

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 resumes to: rnoffsin@bellsouth.net.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR

Calvary Heights Baptist Church, Alexander City, Alabama, is receiving applicants for a part-time, bivocational music director. Deadline for resumes is Oct. 31. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to: CalvaryHeightsBaptist@gmail.com.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

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

OTHER POSITIONS

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. Applications and resumes 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. Applications must be received by Oct. 6.

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2 Timothy 4:7

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Judson, UM earn national ranking for best online psychology degree

Two Alabama Baptist schools have been named among the top in the nation for their online undergraduate psychology programs.

Judson College in Marion ranked No. 7 and University of Mobile (UM) ranked No. 12 in the nation among private colleges for quality and affordability by Best Degree Programs, an online college resource guide. They were the only institutions from Alabama on the list.

The ranking was created by consulting the National Center

for Education Statistics' College Navigator database to identify private nonprofit colleges and universities offering online bachelor's degree programs in psychology. The top schools were selected from those with rankings or recognition by major publications such as *U.S. News & World Report*, according to Jamie Agamalian, manager for online communica-

tions at BestDegreePrograms.org.

For more information about online degrees at UM, visit umobile.edu/online or contact UM's

Alabama College for Online Studies at 251-442-2287. For more information about online degrees at Judson, visit judson.edu or contact Leah Washburn, enrollment coordinator for distance learning, at

1-800-447-9472 or lwashburn@judson.edu. (TAB, UM)



Looking for fall activity for your church group?

The Judgment Seat will return for its 26th year at Shiloh Baptist Church, Somerville, beginning Oct. 30. In the past 25 years, nearly 47,000 people have experienced The Judgment Seat, the first production of its kind

in the area. This year's theme is "Questions" and covers topics such as "how can a good, powerful and loving God allow bad things to happen to people?"

Nearly 100 people responded to a call to follow Christ at last year's

production. The Judgment Seat will run from Oct. 30–Nov. 1 at 6:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. and Nov. 2 at 6:15 p.m.

For more information or tickets, call 256-286-0509 or visit www.thejudgmentseat.net. (TAB)

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MTM names new executive director

The Ministering to Ministers (MTM) foundation board named Catherine M. Ralcewicz executive director Sept. 1. Key to her new position was her eight years' experience as second-in-command at MTM.

MTM seeks to provide support for ministers and churches

to establish a good beginning, to work through change and to manage transitions in relationships and crises. Many of the annual MTM retreats have been held at Samford University in Birmingham.

For more information, call MTM at 804-594-2556 or visit mtmfoundation.org. (MTM)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 8

Explore the Bible

By Kyle Beshears

Instructor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

COMMANDED

Exodus 20:1-17

The God of the Commandments (1-2)

Some people believe that the Ten Commandments are all about rules we must follow. This is absolutely true; God is Creator and is in the privileged position to wisely protect us against sin and folly. Others believe that the commandments are all about obedience and faithfulness. This also is true; God is the King whose name we bear and glorify when we faithfully obey His good and perfect will. Yet, verses 1-2 tell us that there is more to these commandments than first meets the eye.

Before giving Israel the Ten Commandments, God reminds them that He “brought [them] out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery” (v. 2). Why? So that Israel would be His people and He would be their God (Ex. 6:7). He desired a relationship with them. You see, the Ten Commandments also are about relationship. From the world’s perspective, there was nothing special about Israel. In fact, she was just a group of undesirables who were trapped in slavery. But God does not see things the way the world sees them. Where the world saw valueless tools, He saw “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). So, God redeemed them for relationship and because of that relationship Israel could obey God and act as a beacon of His light to the nations.

By His grace, God does the same thing with us. He does not call us out of slavery of sin just to fit us with arbitrary rules. He calls us out of sin and into righteousness, equipping us not only with His perfect commands but also the Holy Spirit. Through Him alone we are able to glorify God (Rom. 8:6-10).

Relating to God (3-11)

The first four commands deal with the relationship of God to His people. Throughout

the Old Testament, God likened His relationship with Israel to the covenant of marriage (Isa. 54:5; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 2:7). In marriage, the partnership must be exclusive. The wife cannot have two husbands (and vice versa), so Israel cannot invite other gods into their relationship. Therefore, the first command God gives is to resist the temptation of worshipping other so-called gods. The second command is like it — resist the temptation to worship idolatrous representations of those so-called gods. The third command is perhaps one of the most misunderstood. God is not merely commanding Israel to abstain from cursing with His name. God also reminds Israel that they bear His name, so they must act accordingly to fulfill Israel’s mission of being a light to the nations. The fourth command is a welcomed relief after centuries of brick-making day after day. We, too, must take time to remember that we are not what we produce; rather, we are what God has produced for us — adopted sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:18).

Relating to Society (12-17)

The remaining six commands deal with the relationships of people and are meant to allow marriages, families, communities and societies to flourish for God’s glory. These are not arbitrary “thou shalt not” rules. Behind every negative prohibition (“thou shalt not”) is a positive permission (“thou shalt”). The negative prohibition not to commit adultery is actually the positive permission to enjoy a loving, secure and flourishing relationship with your spouse. The negative prohibition not to covet is actually the positive permission to enjoy in contentment all the blessings that God has given you. Yet, lest we forget, we can only enjoy obedience to God through His own power. We can only obey through the power of the Holy Spirit out of Christ’s righteousness given to us by God through faith in Christ’s work.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

BATTLE PLAN

Matthew 4:1-10

The author of John tells us that if everything Jesus did were written down “the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). The Gospel writers had to select the events and sayings they most wanted to preserve. A study of the Gospel of Matthew reveals that this writer was particularly interested in the way Jesus acted as a sort of “second Moses.”

Both Moses and Jesus were threatened by tyrannical kings (Pharaoh, Herod) issuing edicts to kill Hebrew boys. Both were miraculously delivered in Egypt: Moses in the basket, Jesus in the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt. Both passed through the waters: Moses through the Red Sea; Jesus through the waters of baptism. Both discussed God’s law on a mountain: Moses on Sinai; Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Satan will tempt us through our physical appetites. (1-4)

Matthew’s comparison of Moses and Jesus is one of our best clues for understanding the dynamics of Jesus’ temptation by the devil. The key is to read the story of Jesus’ 40 days of temptation in light of Moses and Israel’s own 40 years of testing in the wilderness.

This is especially important when we consider the devil’s first temptation: turn these stones into bread. While we can understand why Jesus might have been tempted — he had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights — it is hard to understand what sin might be involved. We find our answer in the way Jesus responds.

Instead of replying directly to the devil, Jesus quotes a passage from Deuteronomy: “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Put simply, the temptation was for

Jesus to end His dependence on the Father and instead depend on Himself. We find confirmation of this reading in the context of Jesus’ quote from Deuteronomy. Just one verse earlier Moses had told the Israelites, “God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart” (Deut. 8:2). The test for Israel was to see whether they would trust God. It was the same test for Jesus.

Satan will tempt us to question or test God. (5-7)

The devil’s second temptation raises the stakes considerably. Here, he tells Jesus to leap from the pinnacle of the temple and let the angels catch Him, as they surely would. The real key to this temptation is that such a public miracle would remove all doubt as to whether Jesus was the Messiah.

With this act, Jesus might have been swept up by the crowd and made king. This might not seem so terrible except for one thing: Enthroned as Messiah, Jesus would not have been able to accomplish the chief purpose of His incarnation, dying on the cross. This was a much more powerful temptation: Leap and you can avoid the cross.

Satan will tempt us to worship something other than God. (8-10)

The devil’s final temptation was also his greatest: Worship me and all the world can be yours. It is hard not to hear echoes in this temptation of Israel’s false worship of the golden calf. Where the people failed in the wilderness, though, Jesus passes the test.

Responding in a way that continues to show His complete reliance on the Father, He quotes Deuteronomy: “Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him” (6:13).

Even the Messiah was unwilling to face temptation in His own power. Instead, He relied wholly on God and on His Word.✠

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Omri ... did ____ than all before him. (1 Kings 16:25)

5. Fools die for ____ of wisdom. (Prov. 10:21)

8. ____ are his people. (Ps. 100:3)

10. Tempted like as we _____. (Heb. 4:15)

11. Migratory birds.

13. Shortened form of a place to wash up.

14. The ____ of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)

15. The women ____ hangings for the grove. (2 Kings 23:7)

16. Compass direction.

18. Anno Domini. (abbr.)

19. He that ____ eth is like a wave of the sea. (James 1:6)

20. One way to move a boat.

21. Desert places with water and vegetation.

22. Let us ____ and be sober. (2 Thess. 5:6)

24. If he ____ lamb. (Lev. 3:7; 2 words)

27. Children of Gad called the altar _____. (Josh. 22:34)

29. Is not her younger sister ____ than she? (Judg. 15:2)

30. Your wives shall be _____. (Ex. 22:24)

33. Railroad. (abbr.)

34. ____ I go unto him that sent me. (John 7:33)

36. Thy ____ goats have not cast their young. (Gen. 31:38)

37. I Daniel was mourning three full _____. (Dan. 10:2)

39. The Lord is with thee, thou mighty _____. (Judg. 6:12)

40. Vietnamese new year celebration.

41. If he gain the ____ world. (Matt. 16:26)

43. Love thy neighbor ____ thyself. (Matt. 19:19)

44. Egyptian sun god.

45. The path of virtuous conduct in Confucianism.

46. A highly prized game fish.

49. Where David and his men were ____ to haunt. (1 Sam. 30:31)

50. New Testament. (abbr.)

Down

1. Cautions.

2. Northwest state. (abbr.)

3. Symbol for rhenium.

4. Goodness gracious!

5. Blessed are ye that ____ now. (Luke 6:21)

6. Biblical word for donkey.

7. Compass direction.

8. The ship was covered with the _____. (Matt. 8:24)

9. Christ abideth for _____. (John 12:34)

12. For example. (abbr.)

13. The ____ of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

14. Equipment used to help patients move around.

15. Have ____ their robes and made them white. (Rev. 7:14)

17. Mightest war a good _____. (1 Tim. 1:18)

19. Women's Army Corps. (abbr.)

21. Old Testament. (abbr.)

22. A growth on the skin.

23. Strong bulls of Bashan have ____ (singular verb form) me. (Ps. 22:12)

24. He that is ____ God heareth. (John 8:47)

25. It rained ____ and brimstone. (Luke 17:29)

26. Regarding. (abbr.)

28. Does (biblical variation).

30. I rejoiced because my ____ was great. (Job 31:25)

31. Set cherubims within the ____ house. (1 Kings 6:27)

32. Except a corn of ____ fall into the ground. (John 12:24)

35. Health Maintenance Organization. (abbr.)

37. And ____ not a little comforted. (Acts 20:12)

38. And the ____, and the pelican. (Lev. 11:18)

42. Not cold.

47. The head of Elisha ... stand ____ him this day. (2 Kings 6:31)

48. Utah. (abbr.)

WHAT ARE YOU READING?



Alabama Baptists share about what they are currently reading

SUE RASH

Cairo, Georgia

“The Daniel Prayer: The Prayer that Moves Heaven and Changes Nations” by Anne Graham Lotz

I started “The Daniel Prayer” by Anne Graham Lotz a couple of months ago. It is not a “quick-read.” This prayer is not an “everyday type of prayer.” It has reminded me, once again, that I must begin my prayers with praising God for His faithfulness, not a “grocery list” of my wants and needs.

Based on Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9, it will “help you pray effectively for your nation, for your family and for yourself.”

Anne Graham Lotz stated she found that “while prayer does work, sometimes the pray-ers don’t.”

MELISSA MANN

Blogger from North Alabama

“The Circle Maker: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears” by Mark Batterson

I’m reading “The Circle Maker” and in every chapter I’m reminded that the only prayer that is never answered is the one that is never asked. Don’t lose hope when the answer seems to be a delay ... God’s still on His way.✝

Tell us what you are reading, a quick summary of what it is about and your response to it so far. Email news@thealabamabaptist.org or visit www.thealabamabaptist.org/submissions/what-are-you-reading/ and fill out the form. You may also mail your information to: 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.



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Photo courtesy of Michael Foust



Media reviews

MOVIE

Same Kind of Different as Me (PG-13)

Paramount Pictures and Pure Flix

Same Kind of Different as Me” may be the first faith-based film with two Oscar winners and another two Oscar nominees.

And to producer Stephen Johnston, it wasn’t luck or fortune that brought the talent together.

“I don’t think anything just necessarily happened with this film,” Johnston told *The Alabama Baptist*. “I felt like God’s hand has been on this project since the beginning.”

Based on a *New York Times* bestseller by Ron Hall, the film tells the true story of a successful businessman whose crumbling marriage is saved when an angry, emotionally scarred homeless man enters his life. The movie stars Greg Kinnear as Hall; Renée Zellweger as his wife, Debbie; Djimon Hounsou as Denver, the homeless man; and Jon Voight as Hall’s father. Zellweger and Voight have won Academy Awards, while Kinnear and Hounsou have been nominees.

Release date

It is being released Oct. 20 by Paramount and the Christian studio Pure Flix.

“The heart of everything in this movie is the concept that we ought to love one another even though we may be different, even though we may come from different back-

grounds,” Johnston explained.

Johnston is the lead financial investor in the film, although his involvement had humble beginnings. He learned about the book in 2010 after his wife read it and recommended it to him, but he put it aside and didn’t pick it up until his pastor referenced it in a sermon.

“It really spoke to me in a powerful way,” said Johnston, who at the time was CEO of a technology company. After he sold the company in 2012 for \$100 million, he began considering investing in a film. Eventually, he settled on “Same Kind of Different as Me.”

“I ended up getting to know Ron Hall, the author of the book, and committed to step in and help them get this story told,” Johnston said.

The film features several scriptural themes, including forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption and unconditional love. It also tackles racism.

Johnston expects it to appeal to mainstream and faith-based audiences — as well as to adults and teens.

“Teenagers who have seen the film really love the story. It’s not your typical action film that a teenager would like,” he said. “It’s a very dramatic film. However, a lot of students across the country have read the book as required reading. And for them to be able to see that

story unfold on the big screen is just a really amazing moment.”

Johnston hopes faith-based moviegoers will support the film during opening weekend and send a message to Hollywood that “we care about this type of content and we’re going to support these types of movies.” He also wants audiences to be inspired by the relationship between Ron and Denver — two men from vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Act of kindness

“Just that one conversation that he had with Denver led to a life-long friendship,” Johnston said. “And I think there’s a lot for us to learn from that relationship that they had. ... Go out and make a difference in your community. Do one small act of kindness for someone and see where it will lead you.” ✝

Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a writer and podcast host for Heirloom Audio.

He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four small children.

For more information, visit SameKindOfDifferentAsMeMovie.com.

'You're good enough'

Tim Tebow inspires Albertville area youth

By Adam Prestridge
The Advertiser-Glean (Guntersville)

The spotlights on McCord Field at Albertville High School's Aggie Stadium shined brightly on former Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow on Sept. 20 as more than 10,000 fans from Marshall and surrounding counties listened intently to his message.

However, Tebow made it clear from his first words that his "Heavenly Father" should be given all of the glory as "Shine: A Night with Tim Tebow," organized by Compassion City Church of Albertville working with Excellent Events, kicked off. That message was well received as more than 100 in attendance made professions of faith.

"We are blessed to have a community that pulls together to bring inspiration to our youth," Jermaine Davis of Excellent Events said following the event. "Thank you to all who volunteered, who gave up countless evenings for planning and those who gave monetarily. We rejoice in the souls that were saved tonight. That's what 'Shine' is all about."

Hip-hop artist Canton Jones performed for the crowd for just over an hour before Tebow emerged from a black SUV parked behind a stage set up on the football field. His message to be true to yourself hit home with many. He used his personal experiences in high school, college and professional sports as a platform to engage the crowd made up of thousands of young athletes as he projected his Christian belief and the part it played in his success, even when he was knocked down.

"What happened when I got cut? What happened when I got traded? What happened when they said 'You're not good enough?'" Tebow asked. "You see, in the same year, I was voted one of the most popular athletes in America, and I was cut."

Finding success

Tebow found much success playing college football for the University of Florida in Gainesville as the Gators' quarterback — winning the Heisman Trophy in 2007 as well as leading the team to win a national championship. He was selected by the Denver Broncos in the first round of the 2010 NFL draft and spent two seasons with the team. He also played for the New York Jets in 2012. Additionally, he had pre-season stints with the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles in 2013 and 2015, respectively.

"So who am I? Who was I? Was I this person that a lot of people liked and supported and cheered for? Or

was I this person that others said, 'You're not good enough?'" Tebow asked the crowd. "Let me tell you something, if you live by the world's standards of what success, significance and meaning are, eventually you will be broken. Eventually, they will let you down because eventually you won't be good enough; eventually, people will forget your name. But let me tell you this, the God of this universe — before you were ever born — He said you're good enough. He said 'I'll never forget your name because I created you and I love you, and even if you don't know that I hold you in the palm of My hands, you are significant to Me. You are so significant that I gave My Son for you; I gave My Son for you, that's how much I love

you.' That's how much you matter. That's how special you are. See, you're not an accident; you're not a mistake; you are important and you are loved by the God of this universe."

Prior to the event's kickoff, Tebow met with dozens of special needs children and adults, who continue to hold a special place in his heart. Tebow's foundation sponsors "Night to Shine," a prom night experience centered on God's love for people with special needs ages 14 and older. On Feb. 10, 375 churches from around the world hosted "Night to Shine" for 75,000 honored guests through the support of 150,000 volunteers.

Woodville resident Roger Morrison and his

23-year-old son, Austin, who suffered severe injuries after being hit by a drunk driver four years ago, were unable to attend the meet and greet prior to the event. However, as the event began to conclude, they were approved by one of the hundreds of volunteers.

"We were just sitting in the stands and a lady came over there and said, 'We saw your son and would like to know if he would like to meet Tim,'" Roger Morrison explained.

The duo was ushered behind the stage and Austin Morrison was able to meet Tebow just before he was rushed away to the airport.

"My son just told him how much he loved him," Roger said. "He's been an Alabama fan and had a hard time when Tim was with Florida. The fact that they would bring us back here to meet him is outstanding."

Austin agreed.

"He shook my hand, stood me up and hugged my neck," he said. "I love Tim Tebow."

Tebow is now a baseball player with the New York Mets' organization as well as an analyst with the SEC Network and contributes to a variety of ESPN platforms. (Reprinted with permission)



Photo by Adam Prestridge

Tim Tebow signs autographs at Albertville High School's Aggie Stadium.

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



China tightens its 'chokehold' on churches

GUANGZHOU, China — China has tightened its "chokehold" on churches across the country in recent weeks, according to advocacy group China Aid.

Recent bans on unregistered church worship and on teaching Christianity to children, "as if intending to eliminate all house churches at once," have startled Christians, a China Aid source reported.

In Guangzhou in southern China, a source told China Aid that in late September police visited members of unregistered church members at their homes to warn them not to attend worship services. Officers also summoned a large number of them for questioning. In Ezhou in the eastern part of the country, an almost weekly conflict between officials and members of a house church that met outdoors escalated when government-hired thugs beat five or six Christians in August, China Aid reported. Previously these thugs had "shot firecrackers at the Christians, hurled mud at them and beaten a woman with high blood pressure unconscious, continuing to kick her even after she fainted."

In the eastern province of Jiangsu officials have launched a new investigation that includes acquiring information on key church leaders and other members and their connections to Christians overseas, as well as their plans for future development.

And in Wenzhou on the eastern coast, children were specifically prohibited from attending church services, with local officials ordering churches to cancel all activities involving teenagers. (MS)

Four imprisoned Christians released in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Four Christians in Nepal who were sentenced to five years in prison on false charges of "witchcraft" and "violence" were released Sept. 22 after a high court annulled their convictions, church leaders said.

Lali Pun, Bimkali Budha, Suk Lal Pariyar and Ganga Pariyar had been accused in Salyan District Court in May 2016 for praying for a mentally troubled woman, according to the Federation of National Christian Nepal (FNCN). In December 2016 they were convicted of witchcraft, violence and holding the woman against her will, though she testified that she was not mistreated or held captive and had been healed by the prayer.

In addition to the prison sentences, the Christians had been told to pay a fine of 50,000 rupees (\$475), an overwhelming sum in Nepal. The arrest and conviction of the four Christians came at a time when Nepal's Hindu majority was increasingly influencing authorities to harass Christians. While Nepal has long outlawed evangelizing, a new constitution in 2015 and the release of related laws in August reinforced existing prohibitions against evangelizing. Hindu interests have used them to falsely accuse Christians. (MS)

Muslim Fulani herdsmen kill 20 Christians

ANCHA, Nigeria — Muslim Fulani herdsmen in central Nigeria massacred 20 Christians, including children, in the wee morning hours of Sept. 8.

Police reportedly said the attack was an act of vengeance for the beheading of a Fulani boy in a different village.

But a village Christian said the area's terrified residents were at a loss to explain why they were targeted.

"The village where they claim one of them was killed over a year ago is not part of our village, and we have never had any misunderstanding with them in the past," said John Bulus, church secretary of Salama Baptist Church-Ancha.

Awoken by the sound of gunshots, Bulus quickly went outside to see who was shooting. He said he saw three people standing with guns in their hands and that he stood quietly watching them until they shot at him, nearly hitting him before he ran back into his house. The shooting lasted 25 minutes, Bulus said. Nine of the 20 Christians killed were children, ranging in age from 3 months to 17 years old. (MS)