



**INSIDE**



**UM alumna takes gospel message to Japan with husband, 5 kids**

◆ Page 3



**Theology 101 — Confronting Satan's Strategies**

◆ Page 6



**Tent revival 'beginning of something great,' 'unity among races' in Butler**

◆ Page 9

# 'Servant leadership'

Convention president encouraged by spiritual passion of next generation

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**W**hen John Thweatt was elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in November 2016, one of the biggest things on his heart was the next generation.

So as he traveled the state this year, it came as no surprise that his biggest encouragement came from visiting with college students.

"It is amazing to see what God is doing on our college campuses," said Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City.

When he preached at University of Mobile's chapel, it was standing room only, with students packed in for worship.

**'Heart for worship'**

"They led the worship and were so engaged in the Word of God," Thweatt said. "It was so encouraging to see students with a heart for worship like that."

He saw that encouragement repeated when he visited and spoke at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, at the Baptist Campus Ministries of Jacksonville State University and at Judson College in Marion.

"At Judson, just getting to sit around with the young ladies and hear about their summer missions was exciting," Thweatt said. "They are so devoted and passionate about getting the gospel to the nations."



Photos by Austin Nichols

John Thweatt, pastor of FBC Pell City and president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, is grateful for the ways he's gotten to see God work and for the relationships he's been able to build.



THWEATT

That enthusiasm carried over as he and Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, met with groups of young pastors in different areas of the state.

"They were in the 35 or younger range, and we just got to meet with them, talk with them and hear their hearts," Thweatt said. "It's been my heart to try to involve younger pastors, and to see the heart they have for missions and for our state was so encouraging."

Thweatt said it has also been encouraging to see the faithfulness of state missionaries and entity leaders up close and personal.

"It has been a good reminder of just how blessed we are as a state to have the leadership that we have,"

he said. "The passion and excellence with which they carry out their work is wonderful."

Lance said Thweatt's leadership role has been crucial this year in the meetings that state leaders have walked through.

**'Real privilege'**

"John Thweatt has epitomized what we have come to know as servant leadership," Lance said. "I will forever be grateful to him for his wisdom and his wit during times

of deliberation and discussion. All Alabama Baptists can be proud of John Thweatt as our convention president."

Thweatt said it's been a "real privilege" to represent state Baptists this year as their convention president.

"I'm so grateful for the ways I've gotten to see God work and for the relationships I've been able to build," he said. "I run into pastor after pastor that I've gotten to know through these meetings, and I'm so grateful to have gotten that opportunity."✠

**"All Alabama Baptists can be proud of John Thweatt as our convention president."**

**Rick Lance, executive director  
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions**

# COMMENT

## I Saw a Miracle

Recently I had the privilege of seeing a miracle of God. No it was not a miraculous healing of some dreaded disease. Nor was it the unexplainable resolution of a dire situation. But it was still a miracle.

What I saw was a friend whose life had been made over by the power of God.

I have known this friend for about 40 years and frequently despaired at the path his life seemed to take. He was never anti-religious. He went to church occasionally and would tell you he believed in God, but the choices he made took him to some bad places. My friend had lots of ideas about how to get ahead in life, but every choice seemed to end in disappointment. He had problems with alcohol and other things.

But that was then.

Today there is no hint of such waywardness in my friend's life. Today he is a loving husband and a good father. Professionally he continues to assume new responsibilities in a growing business. He is a volunteer leader in his church and there is conversation about him being employed there. Today he is a responsible, caring person who honors Jesus in his life.

### Transforming lives

My friend's story would make a great illustration for a revivalist. He is a living testimony about how God can totally transform a life when Jesus becomes Savior and Lord.

I don't see my friend often anymore. We visit some, talk occasionally and keep in touch through social media. Perhaps that is why our last visit made such an impression on me. I remembered where he used to be and experienced where he is now. It was amazing.

Privately I almost said to myself that if God could so transform my friend, He could transform anyone. But before that thought could be completed God convicted me of my arrogance. God reminded me that it took no more grace to save my friend than it took to save me. Romans 3:23 is clear when it says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

My life's story and my friend's life story are



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

different, but our hope for eternity is the same for we are both "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that comes by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

God loves me no more because of my life story and my friend no less because of his. In John 3:16, the Bible declares, "God so loved the world." That means God's love is big enough to include both of us. God gave "His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Again that includes my friend, you, me and all who will call upon the name of the Lord.

The same Holy Spirit God placed in my life at the time of my repentance and salvation God placed in my friend (Acts 2:38). Sadly we have both grieved God's Spirit because of sin in our lives, but who is to say that one sin is greater than another?

James 2:10 says, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." It is no wonder the apostle Paul in Romans 3:10 repeated David's famous saying: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Ps. 53:3).

Sins of the mind are as grievous to God as overt actions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said 'do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).

The lustful mind, Jesus points out, falls short of God's glory just like the lustful act.

Sometimes sins of the mind wall us off from God more than open rebellion. The prodigal son of Luke 15 knew he had failed. After wandering in a distant land, he returned to the father in repentance and humility.

The elder brother in the story had remained at home. Yet his relationship with his father was more problematic than that of the younger brother.

Jesus' own experiences illustrated that point.

*"Hopefully we will never forget that God can transform any life. No one is beyond the reach of God's mercy and grace. Hopefully, we understand that God died for all, even the ones we consider gross sinners."*

The strongest opposition He encountered for preaching repentance for the Kingdom of God is at hand did not come from those caught up in gross immorality. The strongest opposition came from those whose lives were devoted to vocational service of God — the priests, scribes and Pharisees.

While their opposition resulted in the foulest of deeds — the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth — it was their attitudes that led them to that bad place. It was their feelings of superiority,

their judgmental nature, their refusal to recognize truth or sense the presence of God.

In some way I was like the Pharisees as my friend and I spent time together. There was a sense of judgment in the thought "If God can transform a life like that." I almost forgot God had done just as great a miracle in saving me and using me in His service.

### Christ died for all

Hopefully we will never forget that God can transform any life. No one is beyond the reach of God's mercy and grace. Hopefully, we understand that God died for all, even the ones we consider gross sinners. Hopefully, God's power will keep on working around us and we will continue to see transformed lives that are nothing short of miracles.

But let us never forget that each of us who believe in God through faith in Jesus Christ is a living miracle thanks to the power of our Lord who has transformed us from "children of wrath" to "children of God." ✠

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### RUTH APPROACH

I am writing in regards to the Oct. 26 "Bible Studies for Life" notes on Ruth in *The Alabama Baptist*.

While I appreciate that Dr. Leonard was sharing his unique take on Naomi in these notes, he seems to have gone too far in emphasizing the bitterness of Naomi as focused on her daughters-in-law and in interpreting

her actions as malevolent.

Numerous leaders and teachers at my church expressed their shock and disappointment in the material and some were deeply angered at this approach. I regret that the limited space assigned to this material was not better used to highlight the kinsman redeemer motif and to focus on the covenant faithfulness of God.

While indeed bitter, rather than treating Ruth terribly Naomi seems to have been very concerned for her daughters-in-law and grieved that she could not provide better for them. Her encouragement for them to go  
(See 'Letters,' page 13)





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;  
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc. is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-879-6026. **Website:** www.thealabamabaptist.org. **Email:** news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and at additional mailing offices.

**PRINT SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
Church Budget — \$13.75  
Individual — \$22.25

**DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
Church Budget — \$8.50  
Individual — \$14.95

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY**  
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash  
Editor-elect

Maggie Walsh  
Assistant Editor

Lauren C. Grim  
Designer

Wanda Bergeron  
Local Editions Coordinator

Linda Harrison  
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore  
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell  
Director of Circulation  
and Public Relations

**NEWS SERVICES**  
Baptist Press (BP), Baptist News Global (BNG), Religion News Service (RNS), Forum 18 (F18), Morning Star News (MS).

**POSTMASTER**  
Send address changes to:  
The Alabama Baptist  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209

**ADDRESS CHANGE**  
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:  
Circulation Department  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of  
Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of  
Evangelical Council for  
Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional  
Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016 as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council

# 'What God had been preparing'

## UM alumna takes gospel message to Japan with husband, 5 kids

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Tara Jones had never really given much thought to going overseas. "I just thought I'd stay in Alabama, live there, get married there — the typical," she said.

Then while she was in college at the University of Mobile, God started stirring her heart for the nations. She felt the conviction growing as she attended Redemption Church, Saraland.

And the next thing she knew she was on a missions trip to Germany, then later to Japan. She loved both. But Japan felt different, she said.

"I got there and realized for the first time I could see myself living somewhere else," Tara Jones said. "It surprised me and I said, 'God, if this is what you're calling me to do, tell my mom.'"

He did, according to her mother, Barbara Greene.

"I could tell there was something different about her when she came back from that trip," Greene said. "I said, 'So God spoke to you — what are you planning to do and when are you planning to go back?'"

### Journeyman program

Turns out, it was soon, Jones said. As she finished up that year of school she applied to the Journeyman program of the International Mission Board (IMB) and was accepted.

Around the same time in Missouri, God was working on the heart of a farm boy who had felt a call to the ministry in high school but said his worldview "had a 50-mile radius."

"I thought I would meet my wife where I grew up, maybe work during the week and preach on the weekends," Jared Jones said.

But over time, he said he realized that he had "taken God along instead of letting God take me." He told his pastor he didn't know what God had planned but that he finally surrendered all.

And the next thing he knew, he was on a plane to Japan to serve with the IMB in a different 50-mile radius — one that included Tara Jones (then Greene).

Fast-forward a decade and the now-married couple has five kids — four biological and one adopted Japanese

son, something they say is a miracle in and of itself. They've made a home of the East Asian nation.

And they've seen God open doors people told them would never be open.

"People told us that it would be difficult to adopt but God has blessed us with a son," Jared Jones said. "That little guy has given us mul-



TAB AR

**Main photo:** The spiritual soil in Japan is hard to till but IMB missionaries Jared and Tara Jones say the Japanese have a deep longing to know genuine love and purpose.

**Small photo:** People gather to pray during a Sunday service at a church plant that meets in a pediatrician's office in Japan. The Joneses partnered with their pediatrician to help start the church, which they pray will be a lighthouse to the community for generations to come.



IMB photos

iple opportunities to talk about the Lord and the blessings of life."

And people told them that it would take years to see fruit in Japan but God is doing a work there that can only be attributed to Him, Jared Jones said.

The Joneses have gotten access to orphanages and schools, something unheard of in the nation where less than 1 percent of the population claims Christianity. They were there through the earthquake and tsunami of 2011 and got the opportunity to minister to people's needs in ways they never would've expected.

And they've seen God answer years' worth of prayers to plant a church — they just couldn't have imagined where it would be or how God would work, Tara Jones said. One day when she took their adopted son Ezra to the doctor, the pediatrician asked her if she and Jared were church planters.

"She said she had been praying about starting a church there at her office," Tara Jones

said. "As she shared, I knew God had brought our paths together."

Amazed, Tara Jones went home and prayed with her husband, and they knew God was confirming that this was exactly what He had in mind.

The first week the new church opened its doors, more than 70 people came.

"Jared and I were amazed — people showed up that we hadn't seen in years, people we had tried to share the gospel with but thought that nothing had taken root," Tara said. "We just looked at each other and wept. It was a beautiful picture of what God had been preparing."

### 'God can make doors'

The hearts they've seen change in the months that followed are something only God could bring about, Jared Jones said.

"God can make doors where doors don't exist," he said.

The Joneses are among more than 3,600 IMB missionaries supported by funds given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

For more information about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, visit [www.imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering](http://www.imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering).



Decorated Vietnam War veteran Bobby Welch, a native of Fort Payne, created 'Winning Warriors' that showcases his Purple Heart in honor 'of all those brave souls' pushing through their own wars.

# Celebrating heritage

## Welch brings his own 'boom' to Fort Payne

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

Some call it Dye Branch, others Dye Ditch, but no matter the reference used, natives of Fort Payne who grew up in the area in the 1950s and 60s know all the stories — and the secrets. Those who came along later have most certainly heard the adventurous tales that just might rival Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer.

One of those natives, Bobby Welch — former president of the Southern Baptist Convention and retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, Florida — has decided to take the stories to a new level with an official visual representation of those days.



"This is a heritage tribute, a tribute to the ordinary," Welch said. "It is for the heroes of the environment — those who stayed and have been here through the thick and thin. They are producing, innovating, booming and doing what needs to be done."

Welch has technically been gone from the area since his then pastor Dan Ireland at First Baptist Church, Fort Payne, helped him settle into New Orleans Seminary following a surrender to preach.

But despite only visiting since that time, Fort Payne will always be part of Welch. And he has actually been creating scenes from the "boom" era of Fort Payne in paper mache style since 2014.

Still the heritage piece he is now developing as a donation to the city might be his masterpiece.

Armed with stacks of old newspapers and magazines and his handy hot glue gun, Welch plans a 360-degree scene encapsulated in something similar to an upside-down aquarium.

Eight characters will represent various points of life for those growing up around Dye Branch during the boom years. But the

characters are not fictitious, Welch noted. "The people who are the inspiration behind each character will see themselves but it won't be obvious to everyone," he said.

The heritage tribute will be his first piece designed for outdoor placement and will be in the city park or nearby, said councilwoman Lynn Brewer.

"We are trying to celebrate our heritage and the people from Fort Payne, and Bobby is part of that," she said.

Darlene Rotch, curator of Boom Town Makers Market, added that Welch's work will remind those who see it to "never give up."

"That's what Fort Payne is all about," she said, noting the city is headed into its next boom.

Welch agreed. "I smell good things here," he said. "We've got enough boom spirit in us. This is a good place with good blood and Dye Ditch water in it." 🍷



**THANK YOU, veterans, for your honor, sacrifice and duty.**

**Veterans Day is Saturday, Nov. 11.**

Photos by Jennifer Davis Rash



Former SBC President Bobby Welch describes how he comes up with ideas for his pieces, such as the 'Puzzled Puppy' (pictured above), and uses old magazines and newspapers to create the ideas that stick.

**Left:** Wallace Avenue NE cuts off the open flow of Dye Branch, which runs behind the railroad tracks in Fort Payne. The branch served as a backdrop for many adventures in Bobby Welch's childhood.



The 'old mill' (pictured here) in downtown Fort Payne is where countless socks were made. In the 1950s the leftover dye was dumped in the local branch (photo above) each day, giving it the name Dye Branch.



Bobby Welch — who was baptized, licensed to preach and ordained at FBC Fort Payne — describes the story behind his art with those attending the Landmarks of DeKalb County annual meeting Oct. 29 in Fort Payne.

## — Bad case of laryngitis —

By William Perkins  
Editor, The Baptist Record (Mississippi)

There's a segment of Mississippi's political and business establishments that have been strangely silent for the past several years. They've apparently been hiding under their desks as the weak state budget exposed their lies to the people.

Remember when we were told a little legalized gambling on a few riverboats would solve all our money problems? Remember when we were told the small gambling venues hadn't actually solved all our problems after all, but allowing massive, permanent structures over water would? Remember when we were told the multi-billion-dollar casinos over the water weren't enough to solve our problems, but allowing them to creep onto dry land would?

The Mississippi Miracle, also known to proponents as the Gambling Revolution, turned out to be neither a miracle nor a revolution.

The gamblers, who were always about transferring as much money out of Mississippi as possible anyway, have begun to high-tail it out of the state. Once-gleaming casino complexes have closed from

Tunica to the Gulf Coast, taking all those promised jobs with them — at least the mostly lower-level jobs that actually did materialize.

Members of Mississippi's gambling/political complex apparently began to realize they had led the citizens of Mississippi on a chase for fool's gold. They lost their voices rather quickly.

### State lottery

One has to wonder where all of them are today. They haven't been on television lately, trying to convince us that legalized gambling is an economic panacea. They haven't been on radio talk shows, arguing that we should have gambling because everyone else has it. They're not writing op-ed pieces in the newspapers defending their point of view.

Oh, wait. That's right. Now they're

lifting up a state lottery to solve all our financial woes. Legalized alcohol didn't do it. Casino gambling didn't do it. On-shore gambling didn't do it. Fantasy sports gambling isn't doing it. Somehow, though, a lottery is going to save us.

### Taking a toll

We are awash in legalized gambling and all the social ills that go hand-in-hand with it. What we don't have are the economic benefits we were promised. Meanwhile, the human toll continues to mount as the mass addictive behavior that defines legalized gambling takes its toll on the good citizens of this state.

Embezzlement and theft are rife. No company or charity or institution is safe where gambling is legal. That's a provable fact. The list of fallen Mississippians includes lawyers, bankers, teachers, law enforcement officers, and others who could not resist the lure of one of the most addictive activities known to man.

It also should be noted that all the crimes committed in the name of gambling are not "soft" crimes like embezzlement. At least one elderly woman was murdered in her home for gambling money. A couple was slaughtered in a casino elevator for their winnings. Armed bank robbers go from the scene of their crimes straight to casinos, where they gamble away their ill-gotten gain in a matter of minutes.

Serious crimes committed in casino parking lots are too numerous to list, but include leaving children to shiver in cars in freezing weather as their parents gamble away the family food money inside.

All of this is happening in Mississippi, where we were assured by our political and business leaders that all the known social ills of legalized gambling would be tolerable given the unlimited amount of money that would come rolling in. The truth had to come out sooner or later, though.

The truth about the proposed state lottery will eventually be known, too. Just pray that it won't be too late this time. (Reprinted with permission)

## Celebrate ALCAP Sunday, Nov. 12.

**Alabama Citizens  
Action Program  
works to fight the  
expansion of gambling  
in Alabama as well as  
educate about the ills  
of gambling and the  
existence of illegal  
gambling operations  
in the state.**

**"No company or charity or  
institution is safe where gambling  
is legal. That's a provable fact."**

William Perkins  
editor, *The Baptist Record*



## Worship attendance leads to more giving, study finds

The more frequently a household attends worship services, the more likely its members donate to religious institutions and give generously, new research shows.

"Most strikingly, those attending religious services once a month or more make an average annual religious contribution of \$1,848, while those attending religious services less than once a month donate \$111," says the report from Giving USA.

The report, released Oct. 24, draws on data from the University of Michigan's Philanthropy Panel Study.

"Giving to religion," as defined by the Chicago-based Giving USA Foundation, includes contributions to congregations, religious media, denominations and missions organizations. It does not include faith-related institutions such as the Salvation Army, the University of Notre Dame, global relief organization World Vision, Catholic hospitals or Jewish foundations.

Overall, giving to religious causes amounted to close to a third of all charitable giving in 2016, Giving USA says. Religious institutions received \$122.94 billion that year, or 32 percent of charitable donations. That figure is more than double the amount received by educational institutions, the next highest sector within nonprofits, which garnered \$59.77 billion.

### Religious giving still popular

David King, director of the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving at Indiana University, said it's notable that religious giving has remained at about a third of charitable giving in recent years "despite trends that we've seen around declining religious affiliation and religious involvement."

Researchers from the university found that almost one-tenth of households that never attend religious services give to reli-

gious institutions, but in far lower amounts — \$67 annually on average.

Households that attend religious services every week or more are 28 times more likely to give to religious causes than those that never attend, researchers found.

### Young people 'do give'

"(Y)ounger generations do give to religion and do so at a rate that is similar to earlier generations," said Rick Dunham, a board member of Giving USA Foundation and president of a fundraising company that focuses on faith-based nonprofits. "It is reasonable to expect that as younger generations mature, they will be similarly engaged in charitable giving as older generations are."

Among donors to religious causes that Giving USA tracks, Protestants give more to those causes (\$2,809) than Jews (\$2,291), Catholics (\$1,372) or those of other affiliations (\$1,979).

African-Americans give a greater percentage of their donations to religion than other groups — 74 percent, compared with 66 percent among Hispanics and 58 percent among whites.

Age also is viewed as a factor in giving. Among donors to religious causes, annual average giving reaches its peak between ages 40 and 64 (\$2,505) — which is higher than donors under age 40 (\$1,892), and those over 65 (\$2,338).

Religious giving also increases with income as well as with educational attainment.

While 21 percent of heads of household without a high school degree gave to a religious institution, 49 percent with education beyond a bachelor's degree gave to religious causes. Researchers attribute that change in part to connections between education and income. (RNS)

## My JESUS Story

By Jenni Ingram  
Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

There are so many things that I want to talk about when I think about how Jesus has worked in my life but one thing I want to talk about this week is stepping out of your comfort zone. Jesus is completely God, yes, but He also is human. This means there were times in His perfect life that He felt uncomfortable as He experienced every emotion we experience.

My husband and I were granted the opportunity to serve with our church on a missions trip. For me this is not only a matter of faith but also a matter of obedience, and I was very uncomfortable about it. I am a person who likes a set

routine and I like my alone time. In our last meeting before the trip, our pastor said the key to any missions trip was to be flexible. Me? Flexible? Um, OK — very far out of my comfort zone, but I convinced myself I could do it. And I did, by the grace of God.

I imagine one of the times Jesus felt uncomfortable was at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12). His mother asked Him to perform a miracle. He was in a position to obey His mother and perform this miracle or decide whether to wait for His time to come. He chose to obey His mother, but I would have been very uncomfortable. After all, this was unplanned.

The point is, if we honor God with what we do, meaning we obey His commands like "honor your mother and father," then we do the right thing. Even if we have to bend and be flexible, even if we are not comfortable, God's way is always the right way. ✠



# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

**BALDWIN**

► **Bromley Church, Bay Minette**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 12, 11 a.m. Former pastor John Anderson will speak. Lunch and fellowship will follow the service. Wayne Cornelius is pastor.

**MORGAN**

► **Lebanon Church, Falkville**, ordained two new deacons, Lynn Thompson (left) and Sam Smith (right), on Oct. 1. Pastor Randy Ashley (center) spoke.



Photo courtesy of Randy Ashley

**BLOUNT**

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold their regular third Sunday night singing Nov. 19, 6 p.m. The Fishermen will perform special music. For more information call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-4468. Everyone is invited. Randy Burtram is pastor.

**COLUMBIA**

► **Malvern Church** will celebrate homecoming and Harvest Day on Nov. 12, 10:30 a.m. Coley Holloway will speak. Lighthouse String Ensemble from Troy will perform special music. Lunch will follow the service. Everyone is invited to attend. Hosea Parker is pastor.

**DEKALB**

► **R. Pat McFadden**, former longtime pastor of **First Church, Fort Payne**, was named pastor emeritus Oct. 29. McFad-

den has been in ministry for more than 40 years, 27 of them as pastor of First, Fort Payne. He also served as pastor of Eastdale Church, Montgomery, and First Church, Elba. He and his wife, Sue, also served as International Mission Board missionaries in the Dominican Republic from 1979 to 1982. The couple has two children and four grandchildren. Nathan VanHorn is pastor.

**SHELBY**

► **Oak Mountain Church, Pelham**, celebrated its 50th anniversary Sept. 10. Church historian and longtime member Scott Martin, who also chaired the homecoming committee and published a history of the church, presented a brief history. Keith Brown, church and community ministries director for Shelby Association, and Mavis Gates of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission each presented a plaque to the church. The Reunion Singers provided special music and Pastor James Blair rededicated the church bell.

**TUSKEGEE LEE**

► **Joe Fain** is the new pastor of **Elam Church, Tallassee**. He previously served as interim pastor of the church. Prior to Elam Church, Fain served as pastor of Goodwater Church. He holds a bachelor's degree from Baptist Bible Institute (now The Baptist College of Florida) in Graceville and a master's degree from Covington Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Fain and his wife, Sherry, have one child and two grandchildren.✝



FAIN

**Across Alabama's Associations will not run in the Nov. 23 issue due to state convention coverage.**

## Two Burmese Baptist pastors sentenced to prison for contributing to news report

Two Baptist pastors from Myanmar have received prison sentences for leading journalists to a church reportedly destroyed by military air strikes in late 2016. The pastors also helped a human rights group investigate the incident.

Dumdaw Nawng Latt, 65, was sentenced to four years and three months and his nephew, Langjaw Gam Seng, 35, to two years and three months Oct. 27 under the country's Unlawful Associations Act.

Both men are pastors in the Kachin Baptist Convention, a 300-church denominational body formed when American missionaries were forced to leave the country historically known as Burma by a military

dictatorship that seized control in 1962.

In January family members and Kachin Baptist leaders reported the men missing since Christmas Eve 2016, when they were summoned purportedly to assist with the release of civilians held at a military base.

The men were handed over to police under a law left over from the era of British colonial rule on charges of working as "financial supporters, informers, recruiters and rumor-mongers" for ethnic armed groups at war with Burma's army since 2011.

Latt received an additional two-year sentence for defamation, stemming from remarks he made in media interviews deemed as criticizing the military. (BNG)



## BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Demonology

# Confronting Satan's Strategies

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

For several weeks Theology 101 has been thinking about the Bible's teaching concerning demons. Theology can quite easily become theoretical at the cost of losing practicality. The practicality of good theology has been termed "theology in shoe leather." The idea of holding fast to solidly based biblical theology has the very practical dimension of helping us know "how we ought to walk and to please God" (1 Thess. 4:1). So this week we conclude these sessions on the doctrine of demonology by letting the Bible speak to us about practical ways to confront satanic strategies.

Last week we were thinking about the reality of spiritual warfare. This week we seek to give thought to ways we can confront approaches of the devil and his angels. We may put at the top of our list the need for vigilance. The Bible is quite clear on this point, admonishing us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). We must not be lured into sleep or complacency when it comes to demonic activity. Satan's chosen way to oppose God is sometimes to get at God through God's people. We need to be able to say what 2 Corinthians 2:11 voices: "We are not ignorant of his devices." The Bible reminds us that we are not children of the night, the time when people sleep, but children of the day, the time when people are wide awake (1 Thess. 5:5).

### 'Submit to God'

Vigilance or alertness must be coupled with resistance. Not only must we be alert to the adversary, but 1 Peter 5:8-9 adds to vigilance a command that we resist the "roaring lion" while remaining steadfast in our faith. In another place the Bible admonishes us as His people to "submit to God" and "resist the devil" (James 4:7). The order of these two commands is important. We submit to God in order to have strength

to resist. We cannot resist successfully if we omit submission to God.

To vigilance and resistance we do well to add avoidance — avoidance of any and all occult practices. Involvement in such activities as fortune telling, séances, witchcraft and other black magic indulgences are invitations to the demonic to invade our lives.

### Armor of God

While what we avoid is important, so is what we take up. The Bible wisely instructs us to take up the whole armor of God in order to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11-18). To wear God's armor requires that we become intimately involved with His truth and righteousness (v. 14). We must walk in the surefootedness of the gospel while presenting as a shield the faith that dulls and deadens temptations (vv. 15-16). We must always walk with awareness of possessing divine salvation and the inspired Word of God (v. 17). The needful companion to spiritual armor is the practice of regular prayer and supplication that is inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit (v. 18).

We not only have impenetrable spiritual armor but Christians also have the indwelling of God's Spirit. In the face of evil spirits that are at work as enemies of God and His people, as Christians we can overcome the opposition "because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). In the face of evil influences we can choose to wear the armor and walk in the Spirit.✝

*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.*



## in Loving Memory

### William Alton "Billy" Nutt State missionary, former pastor dies

William Alton "Billy" Nutt, retired director of associational and cooperative missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), died Nov. 1. He was 83.

Nutt served under four SBOM executive directors during his 33 years at the State Board. He worked in church development (also served as director of this area) and church administration before he moved into associational missions, where he became director. He ended his time at SBOM in 2000 as special assistant to the executive director.

Nutt held a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Before joining SBOM, Nutt served as pastor of churches in Kentucky and Alabama including Magnolia Baptist Church, Letohatchee; Oakdale Baptist Church, Ramer; Goshen Baptist Church; and Millry Baptist Church. He was a longtime member of Southlawn Baptist Church, Montgomery, while serving with SBOM.

Nutt was preceded in death by his first wife of 50 years, Geraldine "Geri." He is survived by his wife of 11 years, Harlean; four children; four stepchildren; eight grandchildren; seven step-grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren. (TAB)

### Henry Earl Trull Pleasant Hill pastor dies at 76

Henry Earl Trull, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Fayette, died Oct. 21. He was 76.

Trull grew up in Echola and joined the Army before entering into full-time ministry. His wife, Linda, remembers him saying countless times about his decision to become a pastor, "God called me and that's all that matters."

In 1979 he began pastoring full-time. Over the next 46 years Trull served as pastor of various churches in Alabama, such as Harris Chapel Baptist Church, Cherokee, and Arbor Springs Baptist Church, Reform; Mississippi; and West Virginia before retiring and returning to Echola. But even in retirement Trull served the Lord as director of missions for Sipsey Baptist Association, a role he held for a couple years. He then served bivocationally as pastor of Dunn's Creek Baptist Church, Echola, before transitioning to Pleasant Hill Baptist, where he was serving at the time of his death.

Trull is survived by his wife of 57 years, three children, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. (TAB)

### Alton Vaughn Longtime Alabama pastor dies

Alton Vaughn, an Alabama Baptist pastor for more than 50 years, died Oct. 27. He was 82.

During his years as pastor, he served twice at Minvale Baptist Church, Fort Payne, and was there longer than any of his other pastorates.

"The church membership and facilities don't even bear a resemblance to what was there when he was first called," said Chris Murdock, pastor of Ruhama Baptist Church, Fort Payne. "They went from a cinderblock building on the corner to a new sanctuary, Sunday School rooms and a family life center."

Younger pastors were drawn to Vaughn and he "impacted a lot of them over his years in ministry," Murdock said. Vaughn, who retired from the pastorate at Minvale, also served as pastor of Ruhama; Central Baptist Church, Fort Payne (now closed); and Mount Zion Baptist Church, Collinsville.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Doris; and grandson, Taylor Vaughn. He is survived by his wife, Melba; four children; nine grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. (TAB)

## 'Peace Cross' in D.C. area ruled unconstitutional

An old, rugged cross that has stood on public land in a Washington suburb for almost a century has been deemed unconstitutional by a federal court.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Oct. 18 that the so-called Peace Cross violates the establishment clause of the Constitution with "excessive religious entanglement."

"The Latin cross is the core symbol of Christianity," the court wrote in a 33-page opinion. "And here, it is 40 feet tall; prominently displayed in the center of one of the busiest intersections in Prince George's County, Maryland, and maintained with thousands of dollars in government funds."

The cross is planted in the town of Bladensburg — a short drive from the U.S. Capitol, at the intersection of a state road and a federal road — and commemorates World War I veterans.

### Dissenting opinion

But the three-member court was not unanimous in its ruling. The dissenting judge, Chief Judge Roger L. Gregory, wrote in his opinion that the establishment clause does not require "purging" religion from the public sphere, but requires only governmental "neutrality" about religion.

"In my view," the chief justice wrote, the court's ruling "confuses maintenance of a highway median and monument in a state park with excessive religious entanglement."

The suit against the cross was brought by the American Humanist Association (AHA) and was

supported by the Center for Inquiry and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, three national secularist organizations.

The defendant was the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and it was supported by the American Legion with amici briefs from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and a number of state governments.

"The court correctly ruled that the cross unconstitutionally endorses Christianity and favors Christians to the exclusion of all other religious Americans," said Monica Miller, senior counsel from the AHA's Appignani Humanist Legal Center, in a statement.

Roy Speckhardt, AHA's executive director, said his organization isn't against veterans or religion.

"Instead of a Christian-only memorial, we want a universal monument that reflects the patriotic contributions of all our fallen heroes and heroines," he said in an email. "We stand side by side with religious folks of all stripes that don't want government to take sides on religion."

Federal courts have not been consistent regarding crosses on public land. In 2010 the Supreme Court ruled a 5-foot cross in the Mojave National Preserve, also erected to honor veterans, did not violate the Constitution. But in 2012 the Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that said a cross on California's Mount Soledad violated the First Amendment.

The defendants in the Peace Cross case may appeal to the Supreme Court. (RNS)



**BEST CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS**  
U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

**Russell Campus**  
1600 7th Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35233  
205.638.9100

Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children:  
Lowder Building  
McWane Building  
Children's on Third Outpatient Center  
Children's Park Plaza

1601 5th Avenue South  
1600 7th Avenue South  
1600 7th Avenue South  
1208 3rd Avenue South  
1600 5th Avenue South

**Children's South**  
1940 Elmer J. Bissell Road  
Birmingham, AL 35243  
205.638.4800

Outpatient surgery services, Pediatric Imaging Center, laboratory services, specialty care clinics and After Hours care.

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

### Children's of Alabama is ...

- The third largest pediatric hospital in the United States
- Licensed for 332 beds & 48 NICU bassinets
- The first LEED-certified hospital building in Alabama
- One of the Top 20 employers in Alabama with more than 4,700 employees across the state
- The pediatric teaching hospital for the School of Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Home to the Pediatric & Congenital Heart Center of Alabama, where more than 450 cardiac surgeries are performed annually
- Site of the only pediatric kidney dialysis program in the state — one of the largest in the country
- Home to one of the largest burn units in the Southeast
- One of the largest pediatric rheumatology programs in the nation and the only one in Alabama
- Provides care for more than 90 percent of Alabama children with cancer and blood disorders



**Children's of Alabama**

## ATTENTION: BUSINESS OWNERS

- TAB reaches more than 162,000 weekly readers.
- 94% of our readers are homeowners.
- 43% of our readers have incomes of more than \$80,000.
- TAB has regional and statewide advertising programs.  
\*(Statewide cost per household: .01 cents)



**TAB**  
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

SALES

\*Statewide average cost per household (CPHH) is calculated by taking the cost for a 15-inch ad (\$7,000 package) and dividing it by the number of subscribing households.

For advertising information, please contact Bill Gilmore:  
[bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org) or 205-777-6307.

## We have a problem.

*Simply put, we've stopped  
having gospel conversations.  
We've stopped evangelizing.  
We've stopped  
making disciples.*

## Will you take the Gospel Conversation Challenge?

Join the SBC/NAMB/Alabama Baptist evangelism initiative to reach a national goal of ONE MILLION gospel conversations by June 2018. Please consider partnering with us in this endeavor by encouraging your church members to have gospel conversations with their friends, neighbors and relatives over the next year and registering your church's gospel conversation goal now at [alsbom.org/gcchallenge](http://alsbom.org/gcchallenge). Then plan to participate in one of the following equipping opportunities (the first eight are Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail locations):

### **GC** Challenge

January 30 - Magnolia Grove, Mobile  
February 1 - Highland Oaks, Dothan  
February 6 - Capitol Hill, Prattville  
February 8 - Grand National, Auburn  
February 13 - Oxmoor Valley, Birmingham  
February 15 - Silver Lakes, Anniston  
February 20 - The Shoals, Muscle Shoals  
February 22 - Hampton Cove, Huntsville  
February 27 - Judson College, Marion  
March 1 - Bryant Conference Center, Tuscaloosa

*You'll receive training in several strategies, including CAST, 3 Circles (Life Conversation), 3151, My Hope, Every Believer A Witness, and SOS. There will also be a session on extending an effective evangelistic invitation and you'll be given a free book on that topic.*

*Cost of \$25 includes all resources, lunch and a \$25 gift card.  
For more information or to register, go to [alsbom.org/gcchallenge](http://alsbom.org/gcchallenge) or contact Lori McGough,  
1-800-264-1225, ext. 245; direct at 334-613-2245; [lmcgough@alsbom.org](mailto:lmcgough@alsbom.org).*

[gcchallenge.com](http://gcchallenge.com)



**Alabama Baptist**  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

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



### Bladon Springs holds centennial celebration

It's a story of sustained faithfulness — from meeting under a brush arbor to deciding to become organized as Bladon Springs Baptist Church to purchasing the 145-year-old church building in the 1990s. The Choctaw Baptist Association church in Silas began 100 years ago meeting once a month, and now it meets twice a month. On Sept. 24 the congregation celebrated its centennial with a special service. Choctaw Association Director of Missions Terry Long brought the message in the 11 a.m. service, and Debbie Fuller, who grew up in the church, read a history of the church. Special music was sung by Ted Nelson and Theresa Wood, and a historical presentation was made by Jerrol Hare of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.



Photo courtesy of Jerrol Hare

From the church adorned with fall décor to the fellowship lunch that followed in Bladon Springs State Park, "it was a beautiful day," said church member Gay Chesnut. Ralph Lee is pastor.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB

# Tent revival 'beginning of something great,' 'unity among races' in Butler

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Something happened recently that Terry Long said is still reverberating through the county — something nobody will forget.

The Fire in the Field Crusade, held in a big tent just west of downtown Butler, was "the beginning of something great," said Long, director of missions for Choctaw Baptist Association. "I don't think we've yet seen the full fruit of it."

But they have seen a good bit, he said — just shy of 1,000 people attended the event held over five nights Oct. 15–19.

The revival brought together churches across denominational and racial lines, and "God came and the glory of God fell on that tent," Long said. Washington Baptist Association also partnered with them to run the event.

"It was a tremendous work of unity among the churches," he said. "I've never seen so much unity among the races and the different denominations."

For more than a year leading up to the event, pastors have gathered at 10 on Wednesday mornings to pray. They've moved the meeting around to cover all parts of the county.

"It was some of the best prayer meetings I've ever been in," Long said, adding that they could see



Photo courtesy of The Choctaw Sun-Advocate

Gospel singer Shannon Knight, of Tuscaloosa, leads worship during the Fire in the Field Crusade in Butler. Knight and other crusade leaders also participated in school assemblies that week.

the effects of that prayer on the event. Ten new believers came forward to profess Christ at the crusade, and dozens of Christians "got revived," he said.

Evangelist Frank Shelton of Washington preached at the cru-

sade, and Shannon Knight, of Tuscaloosa, led worship. John Bush of Montgomery was the event coordinator.

They also led assemblies in local schools and saw around 100 students profess faith in Christ. ✝

## Southwestern alumni lunch set

Alumni and friends of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, are invited to a lunch meeting set for Nov. 14 in Huntsville.

The Alumni & Friends Luncheon is being held in conjunction with the Alabama Baptist

State Convention annual meeting Nov. 14–15 at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville.

The Southwestern luncheon is from noon to 1:30 at Logan's Roadhouse, 4249 Balmoral Dr. SW, Huntsville, and is Dutch treat.

Gil McKee, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, is organizing the event. Michael Crisp will be the featured speaker.

If you plan to attend the luncheon, email Becky Hall at [bhall@fbctuscaloosa.org](mailto:bhall@fbctuscaloosa.org). (TAB)

## WGIB RADIO

THE WHERE GOD IS BLESSING BROADCASTING NETWORK

91.9 BIRMINGHAM		106.1 JASPER
107.9 TUSCALOOSA		92.3 SPRINGVILLE
106.1 MOODY/ORENVILLE		92.7 LEEDS
101.5 COLUMBIANA		47.2 WAY TV RADIO FEED

LISTEN ONLINE AT [GLENIRIS.NET](http://GLENIRIS.NET) OR ON THE GLEN IRIS MOBILE APP

## Questions about Medicare?

### Call us today!

# VIVA MEDICARE

## 1-888-830-VIVA (8482) | TTY USERS 711

Hours: Mon - Fri, 8am - 8pm • Oct 1 - Feb 14: 7 days a week, 8am - 8pm • [www.VivaHealth.com/Medicare](http://www.VivaHealth.com/Medicare)

Viva Medicare is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Viva Medicare depends on contract renewal. Viva Health complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-294-7780 (TTY: 711). 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電1-800-294-7780 (TTY: 711).

H0154\_mcdoc1913A CMS Accepted 10/20/2017

1843 YEARS 2018

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Alabamian Martha Crawford, missionary to China, shared in a letter to the editor in the March 25, 1853, issue of *The Alabama Baptist* about starting a school for girls. The first class had nine girls ranging in age from six to 12. Only one had ever been in any kind of school before. A boys' school led by Mr. Crawford was planned for opening after the Chinese New Year.

# Lookout Mountain churches share Christ's love on Outreach Saturday

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For the past eight years, Lookout Mountain Baptist Association churches have designated a weekend to put toward community relationship building.

This annual event, which has come to be known as Outreach Saturday, has had participation from the association each year since it began.

"We were inspired to begin an annual 'day we all go visiting' while searching and seeking God's will concerning our lost neighbors in the church community," said Lloyd Borden, director of missions for Lookout Mountain Baptist Association. "Most all our churches have some form of outreach, some more organized than others. We believed if we could get members of a church together on a Saturday morning for prayer and a visiting plan, good results could be expected."

An added benefit of the event, Borden said, is that it gives church members a focused opportunity to share their testimonies with people in their own community — something many members may not have had a chance to do outside of an event like this one.

## 'Based on needs'

"The plan for the day is fairly open, with places to visit being based on needs that are shared with the group," Borden said. "We ask our churches to let us know how the day went, sharing any numbers or successes they have experienced. We always have response from some of those who are visited and our members are always strengthened by the fact they have prayed, walked and driven our rural roads, sharing Christ."

This year's Outreach Saturday was Oct. 21, and James Maples, pastor of Welcome Hill Baptist Church in the Sand Rock community, said his church took the opportunity to both go out into the community and invite local residents to their church by throwing a fall festival event.

They wanted their youth to take a lead role in this year's Outreach Saturday and ultimately had seven youth, three youth leaders and a handful of additional church members and staff for a total of 13 participants.

"Our youth pointed us to many homes with children their age, and they really took initiative in inviting their peers to church and to our fall festival," Maples said.



Photos courtesy of James Maples

Welcome Hill Baptist Church, Sand Rock, participates in Lookout Mountain Baptist Association's Outreach Saturday by holding a fall festival for the community. The Oct. 21 event attracted about 80 people, the majority of whom were not church members, according to Pastor James Maples.



"We began the day by splitting into smaller groups to go visit members of our community. We had a new family move in a home close to our church, and we made a priority to visit with them and welcome them to our community. We also visited shut-in, ailing and recently absent church members. As we visited, we passed out flyers for our church fall festival which took place that night."

All the homes that Welcome Hill members visited were friend-

ly and receptive, Maples said.

At their fall festival that evening, the church had food, carnival games, a cake walk, hay rides and a bonfire. The event attracted about 80 people — the majority of whom were not church members.

"For our small country church, this was an amazing turnout, and we're so thankful to everyone who helped make it great," Maples said. "It was a great time for fellowship ... and such a blessing to meet so many new people."✠

Thinking about a  
**REVERSE MORTGAGE?**

Call Jimmy Dixon  
**205-567-4800**

for a free reverse mortgage  
proposal or brochure.

EMAIL: [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com)

NMLS #20751B



## Judson, UM named among safest small colleges in US

Judson College in Marion and University of Mobile (UM) — both Alabama Baptist institutions of higher education — have been named among the "50 Safest Small Colleges & Universities in America" by College Choice, an online publication dedicated to helping students and their families find the right college.

### 'Gone to great lengths'

Judson ranks No. 13 on the list with an overall score of 98.6 out of 100. UM ranks No. 19 with an overall score of 97 out of 100.

"Judson College has gone to great lengths to create a safe and healthy campus, a fact proven by their low crime stats," according to collegechoice.net.

Judson also offers free self-defense classes for all its students and faculty, has several emergency phone booths on campus and offers escorts who will walk or drive students to their destinations.

UM was noted for its security department, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week; patrols by foot and car; and whose officers are certified in first aid and CPR and trained through an extensive field training program.

College Choice found the safest colleges based on four grades: general safety grade, women's safety grade, anti-discrimination grade and party scene grade.

"To find the safest colleges we have combed through those campuses, as well as their local cities and neighbors, that boast the lowest crime rates," reads collegechoice.net.

### Factors considered

From there, they compare the reported crime activities from each school in the last three years, including documented hate crimes, violence against women, arrests made and discipline-enforced activities for each.

For the full ranking, visit collegechoice.net. (TAB, UM)



**Your \$1.95 = a holiday meal.**

It's more than meal for the homeless.

It's a reason to be thankful again.

Please donate today.



THE JIMMIE HALE MISSION

**JimmieHaleMission.com**

(205) 323-5878 • PO Box 10472, Birmingham, AL 35202

# TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

## CHURCH POSITIONS

### PASTOR

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

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mt. Philadelphia Baptist Church in Cordova, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a bivocational pastor. Send resumés to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 13, Cordova, AL 35550.

### PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER OR FULL-TIME MUSIC/SENIOR ADULT MINISTER

Sardis Springs Baptist Church in Athens, Alabama, is seeking God's will for a part-time music minister or full-time music/senior adult minister. Please send resumé to: 18310 AL Hwy 251, Athens, AL 35613, or email to: [sardis1@integrity.com](mailto:sardis1@integrity.com).

## OTHER POSITIONS

### DAY CARE DIRECTOR

Eastside, Birmingham. Responsible for the planning, organizing and execution of all programs and care. Send resumés to the Personnel Committee at [bfmurphy@bham.rr.com](mailto:bfmurphy@bham.rr.com).

## BUSINESS

### STEEPLES, ETC.

No job too big or too small. Call for free on-site consultation. Toll-free 1-888-699-9679 or Alabama local 205-699-9679. Ask for Terry Barnes, owner. Visit gallery at [leedsstainedglass.com](http://leedsstainedglass.com).

## BUSINESS FOR SALE

Home-based ad agency for non-profit charities. Established clients. Average annual net \$67,000 part-time. Do from any location. Easy to learn. Retiring. \$29,900. Call Leida, 828-633-6382.

## NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

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

## ELROD MOBILITY — GREAT PRICES

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

## TRAVEL/VACATION

### TWIN RIVERS RESORT-RETREAT CENTER, NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Churches/families/weddings, 10 fully equipped cabins and lodge. Room for 65 to meet, eat and sleep. 866-754-2010. [www.TwinRiversResort.net](http://www.TwinRiversResort.net).

### LOG CABIN RENTAL

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

### GULF SHORES CONDO

1/2/3 BR luxury beachfront condos and 4 BR beach resort house. Owner direct save you \$\$\$. Chris 1-800-713-6435 or [cashley945@earthlink.net](mailto:cashley945@earthlink.net).

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



## Baptist churches in Israel see record number of baptisms

NAZARETH, Israel — A record number of baptisms, 73, were registered in Baptist churches in Israel in 2017, the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel reported Nov. 2.

"Almost all local churches perform their baptismal services in the Jordan River, the same river where



Photo courtesy of Association of Baptist Churches in Israel

John the Baptist baptized our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," said Bader Mansour, development officer for the Association of Baptist churches in Israel. "The majority of these outdoor baptisms are done in the warm season and are usu-

ally followed by a church picnic close to the shores of the Sea of Galilee."

The total comes from 10 churches, with Cana of Galilee Baptist church baptizing 12 people during the past year, the most of any Baptist church in the area. (TAB)

## Annie Armstrong Easter Offering reaches all-time high

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The 2017 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is the largest in history — \$59,648,377, according to Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). The offering for North American missions beat the previous 2007 high by \$185,096.

"In 1895 the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) collected the first missions offering to benefit North American missions, then called home missions. Since that year, Southern Baptists have raised more than \$1 billion through the offering named in honor of the missions advocate and WMU leader, Annie Armstrong."

The Annie Armstrong offering funds 50 percent of NAMB's ministry budget. Every dollar of the offering goes directly to the field in support of NAMB missionaries. (BP)

## GuideStone health plans available

DALLAS — Guidestone Financial Resources is helping pastors and staff members obtain health care coverage for themselves and their families that fits within the Affordable Care Act guidelines.

GuideStone is increasing access to individual plans and group products, including GuideStone's personal plans, microgroups — for churches with as few as two employees — and group plans for larger and medium-sized churches and ministries.

For more information, call 1-844-467-4843 or visit [www.GuideStone.org](http://www.GuideStone.org). (BP)

## GuideStone retirement plan changes

DALLAS — GuideStone Financial Resources has announced changes to protection coverage offered to qualified participants in the Church Retirement Plan, the 403(b)(9) retirement plan offered exclusively to

Southern Baptist churches and their staffs.

The minimum monthly contribution to their retirement account for those eligible for the benefits increases to \$50 monthly, effective Jan. 1.

Disability benefits must begin before age 65 and will be limited to a payout of 60 months. Participants currently receiving benefits will not be affected.

The changes are designed to help offset costs, which are currently shared. As of Jan. 1, GuideStone will absorb 70 percent of coverage costs — up from the current 60 percent — with 30 percent to be provided by state conventions, which determine which staff positions are eligible for the benefits.

To determine if a state convention provides a particular staff member with coverage, visit [GuideStone.org/SBCChurchBenefits](http://GuideStone.org/SBCChurchBenefits). (BP)

## Union University to open R.G. Lee's renovated birthplace Nov. 11

JACKSON, Tenn. — A piece of Southern Baptist history, the renovated birthplace of famed pastor R.G. Lee, has been moved to the campus of Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

The home, a 32-by-16-foot house, was moved from Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, where Lee served as pastor for 33 years, from 1927 to 1960. During his time as pastor there, he was elected as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and served as a trustee of Union, which is affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The opening of the home at Union will mark the 131st birthday of the renowned pastor and orator.

The opening of the home will take place at 2 p.m. Nov. 11 and include a brief presentation and a tour. Visitors can set up tours by contacting Abby Scott at [ascott@uu.edu](mailto:ascott@uu.edu) or at 731-661-6587. (BP)

## Baptists provide humanitarian aid to Rohingya people of Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar — Residents of Myanmar — early beneficiaries of the Baptist missions movement two centuries ago — once again are the focus of work by Baptists. This time, Baptists are providing aid in response to a humanitarian crisis among the Rohingya, a large Muslim people group in southwest Myanmar.

During the past two months, more than 600,000 Rohingya have been displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine State by so-called security operations of the nation's Buddhist government. The security operations were initiated in response to Rohingya militant attacks on government outposts and have involved burning numerous villages to the ground among other acts of violence, according to media reports.

The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has called the crisis "the largest mass refugee movement in the region in decades."

In light of the crisis, the humanitarian aid organization Baptist Global Response (BGR), in conjunction with local partners, has launched relief projects for thousands of Rohingya in Southeast Asia. (BP)



Photo by Kristi Woody/Union University

Ernest Easley, professor of evangelism at Union University, stands outside the R.G. Lee birthplace.

**You are invited** to a continental breakfast to hear Samford President Dr. Andrew Westmoreland share an update on new things happening at Samford and our enduring partnership with the Alabama Baptist State Convention.



**Tuesday, Nov. 14 | 7-8 a.m.**

**Willowbrook Baptist Church**

7625 Bailey Cove Road  
Huntsville, AL 35802

*Willowbrook is only two miles from the site of the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting.*

**RSVP at [samford.edu/go/abcreeption](http://samford.edu/go/abcreeption)**

**Questions?** Contact Dedra Phillips at [dgreene@samford.edu](mailto:dgreene@samford.edu) or 205-726-4055





(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.

# LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

back home should be understood as a recognition that accompanying her would be tough and that they may be better off at home with their birth families.

Likewise, the deep bond that develops between Naomi and Ruth is overlooked as well as the full account of the testimony of the town women in Ruth 4.

Rather than focusing on the possibility of Naomi taking advantage of Ruth and taking her son, the emphasis in the text is on the blessing to Naomi from God through Ruth and by extension to all of Israel in providing for a future king.

While the novel approach taken by Dr. Leonard may appeal in a limited way to some, it denigrated the role of this mother-in-law in helping influence Ruth for the Lord and it assumed actions as evil that typically are not interpreted that way.

As a former professor of biblical studies myself, I understand that encouraging people to look at the text from a different perspective may help readers apply the text to their lives, but this was not the proper channel for such an approach nor was this approach the best use of this space.

Grady Tew, Ph.D.  
Flomaton, Ala.

### 'FLAWED' ON RUTH

I am responding to the commentary by Dr. Jeffrey M. Leonard in your "Bible Studies for Life" column in the Oct. 26 edition of *The Alabama Baptist*.

I know that Dr. Leonard is a regular writer for *The Alabama Baptist* and I enjoy his biblical insight. However, I have never heard/read such a negative interpretation on the book of Ruth. I choose to embrace Dr. David Jeremiah's commentary in his study Bible which points out that the

book's themes are "... redemption, loyalty and kindness, and God's sovereignty."

In fact, in his "What It Means for You" section of his commentary, he makes these powerful statements: "In this story we find three people who went against the status quo and faithfully heeded the Lord's direction even when they could not see where it would take them. And that trusting obedience brought redemption for us all, not just their family."

I am not a skilled theologian, just a simple Bible student, but I believe Dr. Leonard's theology is flawed in his treatment of the Book of Ruth.

Judy H. Robbins  
Evergreen, Ala.✝



## Discipleship sessions added to Pastors Conference

Part of running your Christian race and finishing well is intentionally discipling those around you, said Richard Richie, treasurer of the 2017 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

"You're finishing well when you disciple others and bring them along," said Richie, pastor of Blue Springs Baptist Church, Somer-

ville. "Sometimes as pastors and ministers we get into the rut of being overseers and CEOs of our churches and ... lose that passion of individual sharing."

That's why adding two breakout sessions focused on discipleship was important to the Pastors Conference officers this year.

The first session will be Nov. 12

from 4 to 8:30 p.m. and will focus on "Becoming a Disciple-Maker." It will be led by Billie Hanks Jr. and Robert Coleman. It is limited to the first 50 who sign up. To do so, call 256-353-5912.

The second session will be at 8 a.m. Nov. 13 and will be a demonstration of the D-Life discipling strategy. It is sponsored by Life Bible Study and *The Alabama Baptist*.

Refreshments will be provided at both sessions and both will be held in Room 221 at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville. (TAB)

**FINISH!**  
2 Timothy 4:7-8  
Monday, November 13, 2017  
Whitesburg Baptist Church

### Speakers

 <b>TEMAN KNIGHT</b> Pastor Heritage Baptist Church Montgomery, AL	 <b>SCOTT GUFFIN</b> Executive Director Christian Ministries Degree Program Samford University Birmingham, AL	 <b>JIMMY JACKSON</b> Pastor Whitesburg Baptist Church Huntsville, AL	 <b>ROBERT COLEMAN</b> Distinguished Senior Professor of Discipleship & Evangelism Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary South-Hamilton, MA
 <b>BILLY HANKS, JR.</b> Founder Becoming a Disciple-Maker/ International Evangelism Association Salado, TX	 <b>DAVID UTH</b> Pastor First Baptist Church Orlando, FL	 <b>PHIL WALDREP</b> Founder & President Phil Waldrep Ministries Decatur, AL	 <b>J.D. GREEAR</b> Pastor, Author, Theologian The Summit Church Raleigh-Durham, NC

[www.ALBaptistPC.com](http://www.ALBaptistPC.com)

### WILLS, TRUSTS & ESTATE PLANNING

- Very reasonable fees.
- Have a customized will, trust, or long-term care power of attorney.
- Wills and trusts are prepared by an Alabama law school graduate with over 25 years experience.
- We can come to your home for execution of documents as needed.

**TERRY LAW FIRM P.C.**  
**251-459-4543**

No representation is made that the quality of legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 12

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

### SET APART Leviticus 9:15-24; 10:1-3

#### Cleansed (9:15-21)

“Why is your god so obsessed with blood? Isn’t that rather gory?” I was once asked these questions by a well-meaning skeptic who was honestly puzzled by passages such as these in Leviticus. Can you blame him? Slaughtering, blood splattering, burnt pieces of animal flesh; the Motion Picture Association of America would certainly not rate this passage for a general audience were it made into a film. Why? Because atonement is a messy affair. God is not obsessed with blood; rather He is ardently passionate for reconciliation.

Such passages show the extreme lengths God is willing to go in order to reconcile us to Himself. The blood of goats and oxen was meant to remind Israel of the reality of sin’s consequences. “The wages of sin is death,” Paul reminds us (Rom. 6:23a). Seeing the blood of animals drain from their bodies was a grisly and uncomfortable experience, which was precisely the point. We are not meant to be comfortable with sin or death. Yet the reality remains — our sin leads to death.

Praise be to God, however, that the blood of goats and oxen also was meant to cast Israel’s hopes forward, “a shadow of the good things to come” as the author of Hebrews says (Heb. 10:1). This gruesome system of sacrifice foreshadowed the ardently passionate work of Christ on the cross for our reconciliation. Animal sacrifice does not save us. Only Christ’s shed blood and the victory of His resurrection can save. Faithful belief in this fact, coupled with the confession of sin, is the only way to experience reconciliation with God.

#### Blessing (9:22-24)

The offering made was an offering received. God’s presence was made known

to the people as a consuming fire accepted their offering. As before, this scene foreshadows the perfect sacrifice of Christ accepted by God.

It is important to note that God’s presence came as the sacrifice was being made. Christ’s sacrifice makes it possible to be in God’s presence, a blessing beyond description. Elsewhere, the Bible tells us that God is not satisfied to reconcile one or two people here and there. No, His ultimate goal is a much grander reconciliation — sin and death will be destroyed and God’s presence will forever fill the earth as His people worship and glorify Him (Isa. 6:3, Ps. 57:5). A preview of this beautiful scene is given in this passage, where God’s presence, having been welcomed by sacrifice, results in the people’s worship.

#### Holy (10:1-3)

This is a familiar pattern within the community of Israel. God acts in mercy and blessing but Israel responds with shortcomings and failures. At the peak of this grand inauguration of the priestly system, Aaron’s two sons failed to obey God’s statutes and were killed as a result. The punishment might seem severe but it serves to remind us of the seriousness of sin against the backdrop of the holiness of God. Had God allowed this transgression to go unpunished, their carelessness would spill over into Israel’s neglecting of the whole law. Additionally this sacrifice can have no more or less than what God requires, which in turn is a stark reminder of our relationship to Christ’s sacrifice. Christ offered no less to God than perfection; we cannot offer more to Christ’s finished work by way of our own works.

The lesson we learn from Aaron’s sons is valuable. Our worship of God cannot be marked with carelessness or irreverence. Praise God that He has indwelt us with His Holy Spirit so that we may worship Him in spirit and in truth. ✠

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

### JOHN: SINGLE-MINDED FOCUS John 1:26-34; 3:26-30

Some of the Bible’s most interesting characters are those who live out beyond the edges of polite society. A person like Ezekiel comes to mind. Ezekiel’s outlandish physical illustrations of his prophecies made him anything but mainstream. Using a sword to shave off his hair in the public square, lying for more than a year in front of a model of Jerusalem, cooking meals over camel dung — all of these served to make Ezekiel an outsider even among his own fellow Israelites.

Elijah was a character cut from the same cloth. Soon after we are introduced to Elijah, we find the prophet out in the wilderness, drinking from a brook and being fed by food-bearing ravens. With hardly an ally to stand beside him, Elijah challenged King Ahab and his powerful wife, Jezebel, and threw down the gauntlet to their god, Baal, and his many priests. But no sooner had Elijah won the battle with Baal than he was off again to the wilderness, alone once again.

The New Testament contains its own roster of “characters on the edge.” Few characters lived so completely on the edge as did John the Baptist. When we first meet John in Mark’s Gospel we can’t help but raise an eyebrow: “Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey” (1:6).

And John was certainly not one to mince words when it came to his preaching. He lambasted the religious leaders of the day with words like, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Matt. 3:7). Such an odd character and yet Jesus once said of John, “Among those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John” (Matt. 11:11). This is high praise indeed.

### Point to the greatness and salvation of Jesus. (1:26-30)

But what was it that elicited such praise from Jesus? Like the “edgy” characters noted above, John was a man of singular focus. Willing to endure the scorn of more respectable circles if necessary, John was focused squarely on his task. Come life or death all must know that the Messiah’s arrival had come. In John 1 we find John already pointing his audience toward Jesus. “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” was the heart of his message.

### Point to your encounter with Jesus. (1:31-34)

The Baptizer goes on in the Gospel of John to explain his own process of coming to accept Jesus as Messiah. We know from the other Gospels that John was determined to proclaim the coming Messiah even if it led to his own death. For a time it was not entirely clear that Jesus of Nazareth would, in fact, turn out to be that Messiah. But in John 1, John the Baptist narrates the path his own mind took in coming to recognize Jesus as that promised one. John shares with his hearers the process he himself underwent to accept this Jesus.

### Point to Jesus, not yourself. (3:26-30)

Later, John the Baptist gives us further insight into his own relationship with Jesus. Troubled at the loss of their audience to Jesus, John’s own disciples ask John what he plans to do about it. John explains with something like: “Jesus is the Messiah, not me. I am just the best man who gets to revel in the Groom’s special day.” John’s final words in this passage are among the most simple and yet profound in all of Scripture: “He must increase but I must decrease” (John 3:30). Given the tendencies of our own fallen hearts this may be John’s most “edgy” comment of all. ✠

## Christian Crossword

By Diana Rowland Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



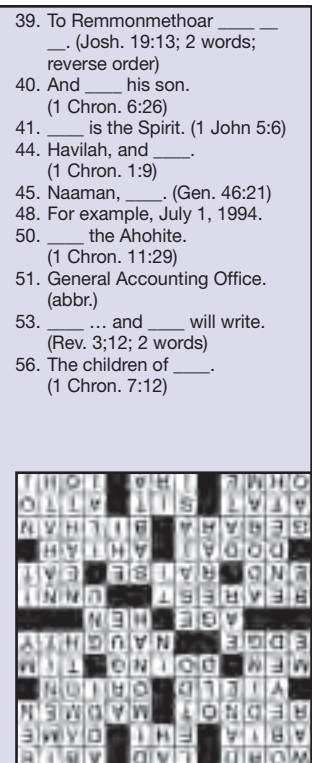
### Across

- The \_\_\_ of life. (1 John 1:1)
- There is a \_\_\_ here. (John 6:9)
- The month of \_\_\_. (Deut. 16:1)
- Roboam begat \_\_\_. (Matt. 1:7)
- Naaman, \_\_\_, and Rosh. (Gen. 46:21)
- Woman’s title equal to a “sir.” \_\_\_ (Matt. 16:3; 2 words)
- Cut down, O \_\_\_. (Jer. 48:2)
- Fountain both \_\_\_ salt water and fresh. (James 3:12)
- Maketh the seven stars and \_\_\_. (Amos 5:8)
- Unto you, young \_\_\_. (1 John 2:13)
- Not weary in well \_\_\_. (2 Thess. 3:13)
- Timothy. (nickname)
- Escaped the \_\_\_ of the sword. (Heb. 11:34)
- A \_\_\_ person. (Prov. 6:12)
- The flower of her \_\_\_. (1 Cor. 7:36)
- As a \_\_\_ gathereth. (Matt. 23:37)
- Thou barren that \_\_\_ not. (Gal. 4:27)
- Bakbukiah and \_\_\_. (Neh. 12:9)
- Receiving the \_\_\_ of your

### Down

- Ye fight and \_\_\_. (James 4:2)
- Sara \_\_\_ Abraham. (1 Pet. 3:6)
- Man \_\_\_ upon a red horse. (Zech. 1:8)
- Breed of dog: Great \_\_\_.
- \_\_\_ us \_\_\_ good unto all
- faith. (1 Pet. 1:9)
- Will also \_\_\_ up us by his own power. (1 Cor. 6:14)
- Neither did we \_\_\_ any man’s bread. (2 Thess. 3:8)
- Was \_\_\_ an Ahoite. (1 Chron. 27:4)
- Elihoreph and \_\_\_. (1 Kings 4:3)
- Abimelech king of \_\_\_ sent ... for she is \_\_\_ man’s wife. (Gen. 20:2, 3; 2 words)
- Sons also of Jedial; \_\_\_. (1 Chron. 7:10)
- Not \_\_\_ all to come \_\_\_. (1 Cor. 16:12; 2 words)
- \_\_\_ thou on my right hand. (Acts 2:34)
- \_\_\_ Ephesus, and \_\_\_ the faithful. (Eph. 1:1; 2 words)
- \_\_\_, let \_\_\_ escape thither. (Gen. 19:20; 2 words)
- \_\_\_ an Ithrite. (2 Sam. 23:38)
- \_\_\_ said, \_\_\_ that \_\_\_ had wings. (Ps. 55:6; 3 words)

- men. (Gal. 6:10; 2 words)
- \_\_\_, thou that destroyest the temple. (Mark 15:29)
- Kinah, and \_\_\_. (Josh. 15:22)
- The son of \_\_\_. (Luke 3:28)
- From \_\_\_ in the valley. (Num. 21:20)
- \_\_\_ have ... think of \_\_\_ ... didst receive \_\_\_. (1 Cor. 4:6, 7; 3 words)
- Zechariah, \_\_\_. (1 Chron. 15:18)
- Sons also of Jedial. (1 John 2:7)
- To fight with words.
- Profitable to thee and to \_\_\_. (Philemon 11)
- Abideth \_\_\_ him sinneth not. (1 John 3:6)
- \_\_\_ little children. (1 John 3:18)
- \_\_\_ shall say. (1 Cor. 12:16)
- African antelope or wildebeest.
- Isaac dwelt in \_\_\_. (Gen. 26:6)
- \_\_\_ is very bold ... \_\_\_ was found. (Rom. 10:20; 2 words)
- Not \_\_\_ ashamed before him. (1 John 2:28)
- Them that rejoice \_\_\_. (Isa. 24:8)
- King Rehoboam sent \_\_\_. (1 Kings 12:18)
- Fa, So, La, \_\_\_.





# Media reviews

**MOVIE**

## 'The Star' breaks faith-based animated film drought, set to be released Nov. 17

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In the dozen or so years since "The Passion of The Christ" sparked the modern faith-based film wave, there have been dozens of Christian movies at the box office.

We've seen movies about police and firefighters ("Fireproof," "Courageous"), movies about glimpses of the afterlife ("Miracles from Heaven," "Heaven is for Real"), movies about football and surfing ("Woodlawn," "Soul Surfer"), and movies about kidnappings and murders ("Captive," "End of the Spear"). We've even had a couple of comedies ("Mom's Night Out," "The Resurrection of Gavin Stone").

But there has been a shortage of animated films geared toward children — the last major one being "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie," which was released in 2008.

That will change Nov. 17, when Sony's Affirm Films releases "The Star," which follows a donkey named Bo (voiced by



Photos courtesy of Sony Pictures Animation



Steven Yeun), a dove named Dave (Keegan-Michael Key), a sheep named Ruth (Aidy Bryant) and a host of other animals as they accompany Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and experience the nativity story.

I can't give away any plot details about "The Star" but I am free to say this: It's very good and it's

genuinely funny — for both children and parents. Also, it's much better than the trailer. It will have you and your children laughing as the animals witness the greatest story ever told.

DeVon Franklin, who was once named one of the "Most Influential Christians Under 40" by Beliefnet, serves as the executive producer, while Academy Award nominee Timothy Reckart is the director.

Faith-based animated films at the box office are rare. In fact, among the Top 50 grossing Christian films of all time, only three — "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything"

(2008), "Jonah: A Veggie Tales Movie" (2002) and "The Prince of Egypt" (1998) — were animated.

### Lack of funds

Ash Greyson, the founder of Ribbow Media, told *The Alabama Baptist* that the dearth of animated faith films can be attributed to a lack of funds.

"The last few animated faith films have not done very well," Greyson said. "They are expensive to produce and I suspect that is why we haven't seen many. Most people of faith have no issues with Pixar or Disney, so you can't just

pitch a faith animated movie as an alternative to Hollywood." Still, Greyson believes there is potential in faith-based animated projects.

"I think this is a space where Hollywood can win. Look at what 'The Prince of Egypt' did."

Released in 1998, "The Prince of Egypt" opened in second place and stayed in the Top 10 for six weeks. It finished with a total gross of \$101 million.

Time will tell whether "The Star" approaches those numbers. But Christian families at least have another option at the box office this holiday season.✝

YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC  
In the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.  
[www.wrvfmtheriver.com](http://www.wrvfmtheriver.com)



TAB AR



Photo courtesy of Temple Baptist Church

A GenSend team from Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, Louisiana, serves in Chicago during the summer of 2016.

# Living on mission

## Students' GenSend experience boosts church's giving

By **Alexandra Toy**  
North American Mission Board

In the summer of 2016, college students from Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, Louisiana, traveled to Chicago and Calgary, Alberta, in Canada to learn to live on mission. That experience not only changed the lives of the students, it also impacted the church — and the congregation's missions giving as well.

Temple Baptist consistently encourages its students to live on mission and to passionately pursue the Lord's will for their lives.

Because of that, many of the church's students participate in the North American Mission Board's GenSend initiative — a collegiate opportunity where students learn how to lead missional lives in specific contexts through mercy ministry and church planting.

"Initially, I felt a pull toward the city of Calgary when I first heard about it at Temple, but I rejected the Lord's call," said GenSend participant Jackie Widder. "I decided to serve in Turkey for the summer but when the government closed the country's borders, I realized I had been making my own plans instead of listening to God."

After months of prayer and receiving encouragement and mentorship from her college pastor, Widder said she felt "a peace about going to Calgary and decided to listen to God."

Temple Baptist college student Mitchell McCallon said, "Living on mission is a big emphasis at Temple."

### Making summer count

"It is consistently preached from the pulpit and it is lived out in our leaders' lives," he said. "Pastor Casey, our college minister, played a huge role in motivating me to go on GenSend. He is constantly encouraging us not to waste our summers."

Both the Chicago and Calgary groups were impacted by the needs they recognized in the cities. "Chicago needs more pastors and more church

planters," McCallon said. "But most of all, it needs faithful followers of Christ to go into the city and do life with the people who live there, which begins with the Church."

Widder noted, "One thing I noticed about Calgary is the people are lonely and searching for purpose.

"They are longing for community even if they don't realize it," she said. "Also the city does not have enough churches for the 1.3 million people who live there. Most of the church plants are new and in need of volunteers. If more churches were planted, then the people of Calgary would receive the community they desire but for now there are not nearly enough churches to adequately serve the city."

### 'A Kingdom story'

At the end of the summer, each group's leader gave an overview of their summer to the congregation.

Because of the stories shared by their student missionaries, Temple increased their Annie Armstrong Easter Offering giving by 20 percent — from \$5,000 in 2016 to \$6,000 in 2017. Seeing the needs of each city through the eyes of the students encouraged them to engage more.

"One thing Temple Baptist does extraordinarily well is caring and providing for college students," McCallon said. "I can't say enough about how much support we as a college ministry receive from the general congregation. I think this is reflected in the amount given to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Simply put, Temple loves supporting its college students in their walks with God, and they are always enthusiastic when individual students express a call to ministry or missions."

GenSend's purpose is being fulfilled in churches such as Temple Baptist. The students are learning how to live on mission, while simultaneously motivating their home church to see the needs of the cities they are stationed in and meeting them through the Annie Armstrong offering.

"This is not a Temple story, it's a Kingdom story," said Reggie Bridges, pastor of Temple Baptist. "We're just excited to be a part of it." (BP)



### Church leaders arrested for holding worship

OMDURMAN, Sudan — In an ongoing bid by the government of Sudan to take over leadership of the Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC), police arrested five SCOC church leaders Oct. 22 after they refused to comply with an order to refrain from worship.

Police officers arrived at the SCOC-Harat church in the Hai Al Thawra West area of Omdurman and ordered the Christians to cancel the worship service. When the church leaders refused, police arrested them, sources said.

Angry police spoke harshly to them during the arrest, threatening that they would not be released, the source said, but after questioning they were released at 11 p.m. They had been detained on charges of disturbing the peace.

The harassment came after police in Sudan detained and questioned another church leader in Omdurman in September and arrested seven other church leaders in August.

Another SCOC pastor, Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor, had received a 12-year sentence early in the year after being charged with spying and trying to tarnish Sudan's image, but he was freed along with Abdulmonem Abdumawla of Darfur on May 11 after receiving a presidential pardon.

Sudan ranked fifth on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2017 World Watch List of countries where Christians face most persecution. (MS)

### Detained shipment adds to Bible shortage

KHARTOUM, Sudan — More than two years ago, two shipping containers of Bibles were headed for Sudan's capital, Khartoum, when they were detained at Port Sudan.

At the end of October, one of them was still sitting there, detained by authorities without explanation, according to a representative of the Bible Society of Sudan. At present, the society does not have a single copy of an Arabic Bible available in Khartoum.

A church leader said availability of Bibles and Christian literature in the country is increasingly limited. "There is difficulty in getting Bibles in the country," he said.

Other international Bible providers also have complained of Sudan detaining shipping containers full of Bibles — usually because of corruption, but in some cases the complaints are to keep Judeo-Christian Scripture out of the country.

The Bible Society in Sudan representative said a port official has been more willing to consider releasing the shipment in recent days. Sudan links Christianity with the West and Christian leaders speculated that Sudan may be more open to releasing the shipment after the U.S. administration lifted sanctions Oct. 12. The sanctions had been in place since 1997 for Sudan's terrorist ties and human rights violations. (MS)

### 48 Christians killed in attacks in Nigeria

ZANWRUA, Nigeria — Attacks on Christians in Nigeria's Plateau state escalated in mid-October, with 48 dying in uninterrupted assaults between Oct. 8 and Oct. 17.

"All Christians in villages around here have been displaced and worship buildings have been abandoned," said Dauda Samuel Kadiya of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Zannwua. "Some of the church buildings were destroyed by the attackers."

The attacks on 13 Christian communities in the north-central state also wounded nine people and destroyed 249 homes.

Moses Tsohu, a Zannwua village leader and ECWA member, lamented that the attacks were carried out in spite of the presence of soldiers stationed at checkpoints on the Jos-Miango Highway.

"In the past few weeks, our people have been attacked by Muslim Fulani herdsmen who are collaborating with armed terrorists to invade our communities," Tsohu said. "These attacks are being carried out daily. Every blessed day we witness the invasion, killing of our people and the destruction of their houses." (MS)