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How can we protect the church?

Safeguarding congregation against active shooters now part of pastor's role

By Denise George
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

On Nov. 5 our nation experienced yet another mass shooting at a local church during its morning worship service. The small congregation at First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas, was victim to an active shooter who walked into the church at about 11:30 a.m.

He killed at least two dozen church members, wounding about 20 others. A close-knit community, Sutherland Springs is home to about 400 residents. The church, like most

small Southern Baptist churches, had minimal church and grounds security.

After another church shooting and mass murder of members, pastors and church leadership are asking how they can protect their church members against this kind of unexpected violence.

Ways to protect

► Hire security guards as a first line of defense. Train volunteer church greeters to be watchful for those who are suspicious and may cause violence. Provide them with two-way radios to report possible

danger to an appointed church person.

► Establish a no-concealed weapons policy in your church.

► Meet with local police and learn their strategy for responding to an active shooter. Give police a detailed blueprint of every room in the church to be used if they might need to secure the building. Ask police for up-to-date contact information in case of a church crisis and distribute to church leadership/staff. Ask law officials about a lockdown policy for your church to avoid the chaos of an unexpected evacuation.

► Train your deacons to be watchful before, during and after church worship services and events. Teach them to be actively aware of people/things that seem out of the ordinary. During worship services, place deacons throughout the sanctuary, balcony and building. Most church shootings take place after the worship service begins.

► Consider locking some church entrances after services begin, but use doors that allow members to

(See 'Taking,' page 14)



Lorenzo Flores (left) and Terrie Smith visit a line of crosses in remembrance of those killed in the shooting at FBC Sutherland Springs, Texas.

Reuters photo/Rick Wilking

COMING NEXT WEEK

Alabama Baptist State Convention
annual meeting coverage



COMMENT

There Is Much Work to be Done

Protestant Christianity in the United States and around the world has just celebrated the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Yet according to a recent study, less than half of Protestant adherents embrace the two major tenants of that movement — sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) and sola fide (faith alone).

Protestant denominations trace their origins back to this important time in religious history. More importantly they trace their theological convictions back to this turbulent era. Yet a study released Aug. 31 by the Pew Research Center for Religion and Public Life found that only 46 percent of Protestants believed “faith in God alone is needed to get into heaven” (sola fide). The same percentage also believed “the Bible provides all religious guidance Christians need” (sola Scriptura).

That means more than half of all Protestant Christians — 52 percent in each case — believe good works must accompany faith for salvation and church teachings and traditions stand alongside the Bible as authoritative for Christian belief and practice.

Unfortunately, the Pew study found a bleaker picture than that. Only 30 percent of Protestants believe both Scripture alone and faith alone. The study found 17 percent believed in Scripture alone but not faith alone and 18 percent believed in faith alone but not Scripture alone.

A lot of work to do

White evangelical Christians showed more commitment to these two central doctrines flowing from the Reformation. Sixty-seven percent of this group affirmed belief in faith alone as the way of salvation. Fifty-eight percent said the Bible provides all the religious guidance Christians need. But that still leaves one-third of evangelicals who add good deeds as a necessity for salvation and 41 percent who say church teachings and traditions stand alongside the Bible as authoritative.

Obviously, evangelical churches have a lot of work to do to help people know and believe the cardinal truths of Christianity.

The recent Confession of Faith titled “A Re-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

forming Catholic Confession” (see *The Alabama Baptist*, Sept. 21, 2017, pp. 1, 6) expressed both doctrines in succinct fashion for evangelicals. Of Holy Scripture, it says, “That God has spoken and continues to speak in and through Scripture, the only infallible and sufficiently clear rule and authority for Christian faith, thought and life (sola Scriptura).

Of salvation, the confession states, “It is wholly by grace, not our own works or merits that we have been forgiven; it is wholly by Jesus’ shed blood, not by our own sweat and tears, that we have been cleansed.”

The Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) is equally clear. Related to authority, it states, “(The Bible) reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried.”

For Baptists and other evangelicals the Bible alone is the final authority for our faith and practice.

Of salvation the BF&M states, “(Salvation) is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer.” Salvation comes by the work of Jesus, not by any good works done by human beings.

Perhaps the way Pew Research phrased the question about authority of Scripture contributed to skewed responses. Respondents were asked if they believed that, in addition to the Bible, Christians need guidance from church teachings and church traditions.

A “yes” answer to that question could come from anyone. Baptists and other evangelicals believe church teachings and traditions inform us about insights and understandings of past generations. It is important to know one’s history if for no other reason than not to repeat past errors.

But in the Protestant tradition, including Baptists, church teachings and church traditions stand

under the authority of Holy Scripture. They do not stand alongside the Bible as co-equals.

During the Reformation the question about salvation was called the “first and chief article.” Some said the position on that issue was “ruler and judge over all other Christian doctrines.” There was no give between the position of the Reformation in salvation by grace through faith and the position of the Roman Catholic Church at that time that salvation included both faith and personal merit.

As the Pew study indicates, the majority of Protestant and Roman Catholic lay members continue to believe in a combination of grace and works. However, the official positions of Roman Catholics have moved away from such teachings toward the traditional position of Protestants.

In 1999 in a Lutheran and Catholic “Joint

Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” both church groups declared, “Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works” (Paragraph 15).

Other paragraphs of the statement said, “Listening to the Word of God in Scripture has led to such new insights” and that Lutherans (the acknowledged beginning of the Reformation) and Roman Catholics “are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ” (see Paragraphs 5 and 8).

Nearly 20 years after this change of position was officially announced few outside the worlds of academia and church hierarchy seem to know of its existence. That is unfortunate and another indication of the immense amount of work left to be done by all churches as they help members know, understand and believe what the Bible teaches.

Atoning work of Jesus Christ

Salvation is offered by God’s grace alone through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross. As the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration says, “Sinners stand under God’s judgment and are incapable of turning by themselves to God to seek deliverance, of meriting their justification before God or of attaining salvation by their own abilities. Justification takes place solely by God’s grace” (see Paragraph 19).

That is the message of the Bible — God’s Holy Word and our final authority of faith and practice. That is the message we preach and teach so let’s get busy and begin changing the religious landscape of America and the world. ✝

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"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.

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Individual — \$22.25

DIGITAL
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'A port in the storm'

Montgomery City of Refuge offers help, hope to struggling pastors

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Montgomery Baptist Association Director of Missions (DOM) Neal Hughes has a burden for pastors who find themselves suddenly without a ministry.

Hughes' dream of establishing a place of sanctuary for pastors and leaders displaced from their ministries has been realized with the opening of Montgomery Association's City of Refuge. The new ministry was "a port in the storm" for its inaugural recipient, Bill Goodwin, and his family during a difficult time. Goodwin is an Alabama Baptist pastor who was terminated by his church but found healing through City of Refuge — officially "graduating" Nov. 6 during the association's annual meeting.

Hughes said, "Our goal from the start was to bring hope from hurt. Our objective is to get the pastor and his family reconciled to God and man and to allow the Holy Spirit to direct their next steps."

Goodwin said that is exactly what happened. "I look at all the things that have transpired over the last 4 to 5 months and see that God had a purpose in all of it," Goodwin said. "I feel like I'm going to be a better pastor as a result of this experience."

City of Refuge is based on the model established more than 20 years ago at First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, by the church's longtime pastor, Johnny Hunt. Prior to coming to Montgomery Association in 2016, Hughes worked for the North American Mission Board at its headquarters in Alpharetta, Georgia. He and his wife, Mary, were members of First, Woodstock, and became keenly aware of the City of Refuge ministry.

"We began to know the people involved and to understand the rewards, blessings and challenges of the ministry," Hughes said.

When Hughes was called as DOM, he said he "couldn't help but think this should be a ministry of the association."

The idea to provide sanctuary for someone in crisis is based on the Old Testament cities God provided as places of safety or sanctuary during times of trouble. For pastors who lose their job, not only is there a loss of income, there are often other ramifications too — if the church provides the pastor's home, then the family may be forced to move quickly. Insurance benefits also may cease. In most cases, the family is left with many difficult decisions to make.

That's the situation the Goodwins found themselves in after serving 15 years as pastor of a church in East Alabama. Goodwin was



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Montgomery Association DOM Neal Hughes (left) introduces the inaugural City of Refuge ministry recipient Bill Goodwin (right) and his family during the association's annual meeting Nov. 6.

given notice by church leaders who wanted him to find another place of service. He began seeking another church and anticipated a call to a church in Tennessee. When the church voted not to call him and no other ministry opportunities opened, Goodwin and his wife, Sharon, who also served on staff at the church, were forced to consider what their lives might look like outside of church ministry.

"We were about to sign a lease on an apartment and were planning to take money out of retirement to pay our bills — whatever we could do to get through," he said.

Then on Mother's Day, Goodwin got a call from friend and fellow Alabama Baptist Teman Knight, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, and a member of the City of Refuge oversight team. Knight explained the program and the Goodwins visited Montgomery to

see the house where they would live, courtesy of the association and supporting churches.

There were questions, of course, but the Goodwins felt the benefits were worth the risks. They agreed to move to Montgomery, immediately got plugged in at Heritage and got to work on the restoration part of the program, which Hughes compares to a "three-legged stool."

One leg of the program is counseling through the association's counseling ministry.

"A crisis comes with baggage, with hurts, so we want them to have appropriate clinical care," Hughes said.

Another leg is pastoral care — working closely with a mentoring pastor to see what a strong healthy church is like.

The third leg is leadership care, which includes coaching on a variety of leadership-related issues, resumé building and other aspects of career development.

The three elements of the program work together to help the minister explore past successes and failures in order to build a stronger foundation for future ministry, Hughes said.

In the case of the Goodwins, Hughes said the ultimate goal was always "to bring a sense of resolve so this family can bless this other congregation."

Called as new pastor

On Nov. 5, that goal was realized when Bill Goodwin was affirmed as the new pastor of Ocmulgee Baptist Church, Selma, in Cahaba Baptist Association. Goodwin is excited about the new opportunity, as he told Montgomery Baptists at the associational meeting. He expressed his gratitude for what City of Refuge has meant to him and his family.

"The experience has helped me hone my skills and prepare me for my next ministry," Goodwin said.

As Hughes and his team prepare to say goodbye to the Goodwins in a few weeks, they know based on statistics that another pastor will need their help soon. Hughes hopes other associations will consider starting their own City of Refuge ministry to help meet the need.

"These are people who have nowhere to turn," he said. "We can help them by providing a healthy environment so the Lord can do His work." ✠

"We can help [pastors] by providing a healthy environment so the Lord can do His work."

Neal Hughes
director of missions
Montgomery Association

'God is weaving our story'



Encyclopedia of Alabama photo

In 1931, Cudjo Kossola Lewis was the last survivor of the last cargo of slaves captured in Africa and sold in the States.

Alabama missionary becomes answer to 30-year prayer of former slave

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

The dirt road snaked long and lonely out to Cudjo's cabin on the outskirts of Mobile, and as the car rolled down it, Mary Ellen Caver tried to mentally prepare.

She had lived for years as a single missionary to a tribe in Nigeria before coming home to Alabama.

She was used to the unusual.

But she had been told she had a crazy man on her hands.

Many questions

The day before, as she had walked out of a church in south Alabama, she had met a group of black men waiting for her in the parking lot.

They knew she had been a missionary to Africa and they wanted

her to put some of their questions to rest.

"There's a man in our church, and we think he's crazy," they said. "He tells all these parables and stories, and he talks in a different language and claims he comes from Africa."

She told them that even if he was from Africa, the chances of him speaking the same dialect she had learned were one in a million.

They didn't listen. And the next thing she knew, the car had rolled to a stop at Cudjo's gate.

It was the eve of the Depression era when Caver had returned from Nigeria and begun the stateside part of her story, traveling around Alabama leading training sessions for the Sunday School Department. That's what she had been doing the day the men met her outside the church.

"She traveled all over by bus and would have only milkshakes — she was not going to cost the Alabama Baptist convention a great deal of money," said Eugenia

Brown, who led sessions for the Training Union Department at the time and often ended up at the same events.

Caver took Alabama Baptists' missions money seriously — she knew that it was those dollars that had sent her to Nigeria and kept her there.

But she had no idea that that money and her missions work would lead to a divine appointment back in Alabama that no one could've ever seen coming.

That day at Cudjo's cabin, Caver swung open the gate, and from his porch Cudjo greeted her in his native dialect.

It was the language of the Dahomey people, the tribe she had

been sent to in Africa — the one in a million.

She answered him.

And he erupted with a reply, not to her, but to God: "I thank You, Lord — I knowed You would."

What Cudjo "knowed" God would do began more than 30 years before when he was a young Dahomey man and found himself on a course he couldn't change.

Sold and shipped away

The day he was chained to a long, single-file line of other people marching toward a slave ship, he had just had his teeth sharpened. It was a rite of passage for the Dahomey people, the sign he had gone from a boy to a man in his tribe.

But then an enemy tribe captured him, and everything changed.

He was sold and bound for Alabama.

His story would one day be told in the December 1931 issue of



CAVER



Photo courtesy of Samford University Special Collection

Cudjo Kossola Lewis praised the Lord when he met Mary Ellen Caver, a missionary who shared the gospel message with his tribe in Nigeria. Lewis became a Christian after being sold into slavery.

"The information had been scratched on [the headstone]. It had his name, Cudjo Kossola Lewis, and the fact that he had been born in Africa. It was simple. And down below it, it said, 'I believes in prayer.'"

Eugenia Brown
former state missionary, Training Union Department

“God took all these parts from Africa, Mobile, Texas, Owassa and Mary Ellen’s church in north Alabama and put them all together to tell this incredible story.”

Lonette Berg
 executive director, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

National Geographic — he was the last survivor of the last cargo of slaves captured in Africa and sold in the States.

Glimpse of home

The article would tell of how the ship rolled in the swells and crept into Mobile Bay one night to sneak Cudjo and others into Alabama.

And it would tell of how a traveling circus brought the nearest glimpse of home. Cudjo was working in the field with other Dahomey tribesman when they heard the elephants trumpeting as they passed through. Thoughts of Africa swelled in their hearts and they wanted to run after the elephants.

For days afterward, they were happy, Cudjo told *National Geographic*.

But that fleeting happiness didn’t touch the lifetime of homesickness.

It also didn’t touch Cudjo’s greatest joy — he found Jesus in Alabama.

For decades he had served lighting the lamps and ringing the bell at Union Missionary Baptist Church, the whole time praying that he would live long enough to hear that his people in Africa had heard the gospel.

And then Caver appeared at his gate, telling him that she had been the one to go.

“He asked if she would go in his kitchen and look in the pie safe and get the jar that was in there,”

Brown recounted. “The only thing in that pie safe was a bowl of flour gravy and a jar with coins in it.”

When Caver took the coins to him, he said, “I want you to take these and give them so my people in Africa will know more about Jesus.”

She tried to talk him out of it but he wasn’t swayed. God had done the seemingly impossible — the very thing he had prayed for — and he wanted to give everything he had in return.

One day down the road, at a different training session in Mobile, Caver asked Brown if she would drive her out to visit Cudjo’s grave.

“I said, ‘Who?’ and she (Caver) said, ‘You haven’t heard of Cudjo?’ and I said no,” Brown said. “And she said, ‘Well, he has a beautiful story. You need to hear it.’”

And she told it to Brown.

When they arrived at his grave, they found a crude headstone made out of concrete.

“The information had been scratched on there,” Brown said.

It had his name, Cudjo Kossola Lewis, and the fact that he had been born in Africa.

“It was simple,” Brown said. “And down below it, it said, ‘I believes in prayer.’”

Brown is now in her 90s and Caver has been gone since 1956.

But the “incredible” story of Cudjo’s answered prayer got dusted off again recently when

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, got a call to pick up some historical mementos for preservation.

“We stored them at the Special Collection at Samford and they included some mementos from Mary Ellen Caver,” Berg said.

One letter from the missions field stood out to Berg and she planned to read it and tell Caver’s missions story at the 2016 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting.

“That was ruminating in my mind when I was down in Owassa one night staying with a friend, Eugenia Brown,” she said. “We were having dinner, and I asked her if she wanted to hear what I was thinking about sharing at convention. I mentioned Mary Ellen, and she said, ‘Oh, I love Miss Mary Ellen. She was such a great lady.’”

‘I was just overcome’

She began to tell Berg the story of Cudjo. She told her about Caver’s trip out to the cabin and she told her about her own trip to the grave.

“It was emotional to hear it,” Berg said. “I was just overcome.”

Brown rummaged around in a drawer and came back with the *National Geographic*, which had been sent to her by a relative in Texas who gave it to her not because of Cudjo but just because it had a section featuring Alabama.

“God took all these parts from Africa, Mobile, Texas, Owassa and Mary Ellen’s church in north Alabama and put them all together to tell this incredible story,” Berg said. “It’s an amazing, meaningful story. All these parts to me are encouraging — that God is weaving our story, whether it’s big, global things or just a visit with one person.”



Photo courtesy of Eugenia Brown/Lonette Berg
 Cudjo Kossola Lewis’ story was told in the December 1931 issue of *National Geographic*.



Photo courtesy of Samford University Special Collection

Mary Ellen Caver dressed in native African attire when she served as a single missionary to a tribe in Nigeria before returning to Alabama to lead training sessions for the Sunday School Department.

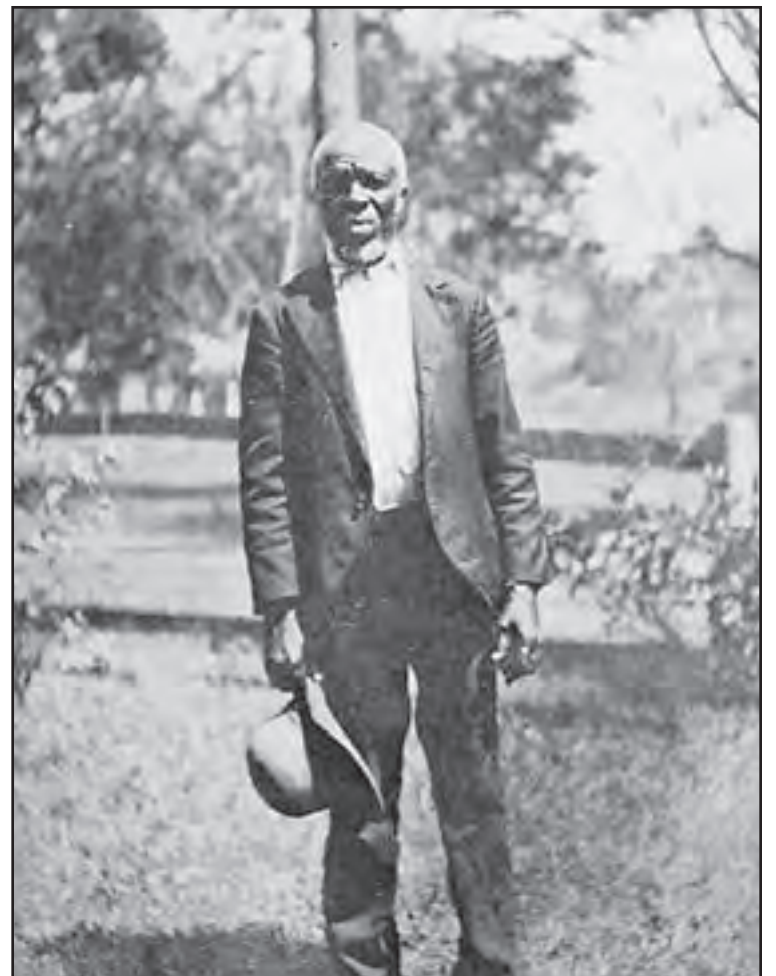


Photo courtesy of Samford University Special Collection

Cudjo Kossola Lewis was captured by an enemy tribe in Africa and sold as a slave shortly after having his teeth sharpened, a rite of passage signifying the transition from boy to man.



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BLOUNT

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

CENTRAL

► **Rockford Church** will hold a retirement reception for Wayne Henderson, director of missions for Central Association, and his wife, Margaret, on Dec. 3, 2-4 p.m. His last day will be Dec. 31. Jeff Fuller is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Ino Church, Kinston**, will celebrate Pastor Garry Winstead's 25th anniversary at the church Nov. 19. Winstead began serving at Ino on Nov. 22, 1992.

MUD CREEK

► **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, will hold a Thanksgiving service Nov. 19. A singing at 1:30 p.m. will follow the regular morning service and will feature The Waylighters Quartet. Everyone is invited. Marvin Terry is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Taylorville Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold a note burning ceremony Nov.

26, 10:15 a.m. Rick Lance, executive director of the State Board of Missions, will speak. Curtis Kelley is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Brad Hartsfield** is the new pastor of **New Hope Church, Berry**. He previously served as associate pastor of Lakewood Church, Northport. He also served at Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa, and Temple Church, Tuscaloosa. He has studied at New Orleans Seminary and Luther Rice College and Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia. Hartsfield and his wife, Rhonda, have two children.✝



HARTSFIELD

Correction

In the Nov. 2 "Across Alabama's Associations" section, Tyler Pendley was incorrectly noted as the pastor of Little Bear Creek Church, Tusculumbia. Pendley is the new pastor of Nitrate City Church, Muscle Shoals. Gatus Cheatham is pastor of Little Bear Creek Church.

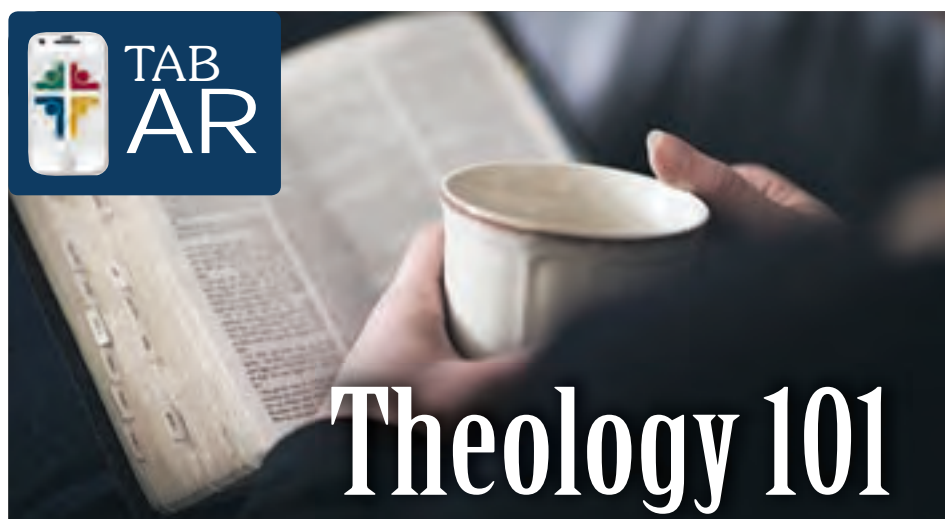
Across Alabama's Associations will not run in the Nov. 23 issue because of state convention coverage.

Colbert-Lauderdale golf classic raises \$20,000



Photo courtesy of Pat Gallagher

Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association's 8th annual Earle Trent Assembly Golf Classic included 88 golfers, including (l to r) Doug Dortch, Fred Clark, Director of Missions Eddy Garner and Ronnie Brewer. Proceeds from the Oct. 9 event, which raised \$20,000, will go toward improvements at Earle Trent Assembly in Florence, according to camp director Pat Gallagher. Barrett Long (small photo), pastor of FBC Tusculumbia, was the 2017 Pastor's Cup winner.



TAB
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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Thanksgiving

The Grace of Gratitude

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

Thanksgiving Day is only a week away. It is one of America's secular but highly cherished holidays, stemming not from some feature of the Christian calendar such as Christmas or Easter. However, as Christians we have every reason to make Thanksgiving Day a time vested with deep religious significance. Giving thanks is a biblical thing to do. Passages abound that admonish us to give thanks or that testify to the rightness of being grateful persons. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 admonishes, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Ephesians 5:20 speaks about thanksgiving all the time for all things when it says, "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Psalms talk to us about "coming before His presence with thanksgiving" (95:2), as well as encouraging worshippers to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving" (100:4).

If we look closely behind all of the reasons we have for giving thanks, we will be looking upon some aspect of the grace of God, as James 1:17 reminds us, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." As Christians through the ages have thought about God's grace, they have identified two broad categories of grace. One is often called common grace or general grace. Jesus made reference to God's common grace in the Sermon on the Mount, with the assertion that God "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). If indeed people do pause at the season of Thanksgiving to express gratitude to God, the emphasis tends to be on giving thanks for the many expressions of common grace. Giving of thanks will make mention of food that is made possible by the common blessing of sunshine and rain. Christians and non-Christians

alike experience multiple expressions of the general grace of God. Mention will likely be made about the supply of life's basic necessities, such as what prompted the thanksgiving of the pilgrim colony at Plymouth in 1621. In addition to material benefits such as food, clothing, shelter, friends and family, we may well give thanks for common nonmaterial blessings, such as love, friendship and peace. In the Thanksgiving season we will no doubt think about the common freedoms that all of us enjoy as citizens in this "land of the free and home of the brave."

Particular grace

The second category of grace is usually termed "particular grace" or "saving grace." John 1:17 speaks of the grace that "came through Jesus Christ." In like manner, Titus 2:11 calls attention to "the grace of God that brings salvation." Then there is the witness of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." For those of us who are among the whoever-believes-in-Him group, our national Day of Thanksgiving has so much deeper and eternally meaningful reasons for expressions of gratitude. Whatever the particular terminology that Christians might use in giving thanks for God's particular grace, we will be offering thanks for the gift of His Son. In doing so, we will be doing our best to speak about God's gift that is unspeakable by attempting to express what is inexpressible or take the measure of what is immeasurable (2 Cor. 9:15).✝

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.



'We ... will continue to worship'

Birmingham's FBC Roebuck Plaza adapts, adjusts after being vandalized Nov. 3

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

First Baptist Church, Roebuck Plaza, in Birmingham, is cleaning up after vandals struck the church Nov. 3.

Pastor Jim Auchmuty received a call from the Irondale Fire Department at about 2 a.m. on Friday morning telling him that the church had been vandalized. Two wreaths on the church's front doors had been set on fire, as had an awning over a single door at the rear of the church. Also, a large paving stone had been thrown through a stained-glass window.

Structural damage

"The window is about 12 feet off the ground, and the rock landed on the second pew," Auchmuty said.

The plastic wreaths melted,



Photos by David Gaddis

Vandals break a window and set fire to front door wreaths and the back door awning at FBC Roebuck Plaza on Nov. 3.

causing damage to the fiberglass doors and to the carpet just inside the doors. Had the doors been wood, the damage to the church would have been much worse,

Auchmuty said. As it was, church and community members got to work and repaired the structural damage.

"By the grace of God and

people of good will, by 6 p.m. Friday night, new doors had been installed and a new window had been placed," Auchmuty said.

Cleaning the interior

There was no evidence of entry into the church by the vandals, but there is extensive soot and smoke odor throughout the building, Auchmuty said.

A professional cleaning crew immediately began to clean and deodorize the carpet and interior surfaces, a process that Auchmuty said might take a few more days.

"Fortunately we have the fellowship hall where we can worship and will continue to worship until the sanctuary is fully restored," the pastor said.

Nothing like this has ever happened to the church, and Auchmuty said emotions ran high throughout the weekend among

the 30 or so regular worshippers at the church.

"There was great disappointment and some anger, but we are a congregation of older people who survived the aftermath of the Great Depression," he said. "All their lives they had to adapt and adjust as best they could. So they took it in stride and we had a good worship service on Sunday (Nov. 5)."

Lifting up prayers

During the service church members offered prayers for the individual or individuals who committed the crimes, praying that they could be forgiving and that the guilty ones would come to repentance.

A gas station in the vicinity of the church also was vandalized Nov. 3.

The investigation into the two cases is ongoing.✠

Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



First American woman missionary to China dedicates short life to Lord

Henrietta Hall Shuck (1817–1844) was the first American woman missionary to China. This year marks the 200th anniversary of her birth.

She was born Oct. 28, 1817, to Colonel Addison Hall and Susan Edmonds in Kilmarnock, Virginia. The greatest influence on her life was her father, a devout Christian.

At the age of 13, she attended a girls' school in Fredericksburg. One day her teacher wrote on the board, "Where shall I be a hundred years' hence?" This question made Henrietta ponder her relationship to God. She made a confession of faith at a camp meeting and was baptized when she was almost 14.

Family life

Her mother died two months later. She took responsibility of her two younger sisters and three younger broth-

ers. The rest of her life she wrote them long letters, encouraging them in their faith.

She moved to Richmond and studied at the Classical and English School. She taught Sunday School at First Baptist Church, Richmond. She met Jehu Lewis Shuck, a student at the Baptist Seminary. They both belonged to the American Baptist Board for Foreign Missions.

Henrietta wrote of her love for missions: "The sincere prayer of my heart is, 'Oh, that I were qualified to become a missionary of the cross.'"

Jehu was ordained Aug. 30, 1835. Seventeen-year-old Henrietta and Jehu were married Sept. 18. They were appointed for foreign missions at a service at First, Richmond.

They sailed for China, stopping in Burma for Henrietta to visit the grave of Ann Jud-

son. Judson's memoirs had inspired Henrietta to become a missionary. They reached Singapore in March 1836 where Henrietta later gave birth to a son named Lewis.

In September 1836 the Shuck family arrived in Macoa, located 40 miles from Hong Kong. The Chinese government allowed foreigners in Macoa.

Henrietta founded a small boarding school. She taught two to eight pupils. She also bore another son, Ryland, and a daughter, Henrietta.

The family worked there six years until the end of the first Opium War (1839–1842), also called the Anglo-Chinese War.

They moved to Hong Kong in 1842. Henrietta was the first Western woman to live there. They established the first Baptist church, Queen's Road Baptist Chapel, and soon founded two more churches.



SHUCK

In 1843, Henrietta set up a boarding school for about 15 students, both boys and girls. This school pioneered education for Chinese girls. The next year the expanded school had 32 boarders.

'God is our Friend'

She penned her last letter to her family in Virginia shortly before her death. "I rejoice to be able to say that recently ... I have felt so much happiness, so much joy," she wrote. "How delightful to know that God is our Friend, and that all things shall work together for our good."

On Nov. 26, 1844, after the birth of their fifth child, Henrietta suddenly became ill and died at age 27. She was buried in Hong Kong Cemetery.

Henrietta holds a special place in the annals of Southern Baptist missionary history: her fame is second only to Lot-tie Moon.✠

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Faith & football

Alabama high school officials face challenges related to religion

Faith and football — many Alabamians would say that they're both a part of the fabric of Alabama, at least historically speaking.

But these days, getting the two to play well together isn't as easy as it used to be.

School districts are faced more and more with the tension between what's always been — like prayers before high school football games — and challenges from “nontheism” organizations.

Leeds High School, for instance, came under fire back in early October when Leeds City Schools Superintendent John Moore received a letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) about the band's halftime show.

The letter alleged that the band's program was “promoting religion in school-sponsored performances,” according to the *St. Clair News Aegis*.

The FFRF is a national non-profit agency based in Wisconsin that says its “purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.”

“A concerned local parent informed FFRF that the Leeds High School band in Leeds, Ala., regularly performs a halftime show designed to resemble a Christian church service,” FFRF stated in an Oct. 2 press release.

“The performance features Christian-themed music and involves church pews set up on the field. Some of the songs performed during this show include: ‘Will the Circle be Unbroken,’ ‘I Saw the Light,’ ‘Swing Low Sweet Chariot,’

‘Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee’ and ‘Amazing Grace.’ The parent also reports that the band director has said that members of the band who do not support this religious routine can ‘drop out of band.’”

Moore said the wording in the



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While the battle happens in local school districts, churches are finding their own ways to support students in their communities.

complaint is a mischaracterization of the band director.

“He (band director Chip Wise) is a longtime employee of the school system and is well thought of in the community,” Moore said, according to the *News Aegis*. “He would never say that.”

While the FFRF release focuses on the traditionally religious songs performed, Moore said the halftime show and band performance also includes songs from Beethoven, a '60s pop song and a variety of other songs. All of the songs are instrumental and do not include singing or lyrics.

In the letter and press release, FFRF asked Leeds City Schools officials to ensure that the district is not impermissibly promoting religion in school-sponsored performances.

“(FFRF) is wrongly pointing out that we're trying to have church,” Moore said, according to the *News Aegis*. “We have had



Photo courtesy of Shoal Creek Baptist Church

Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Priceville, hosts Meet the Bulldogs at the beginning of the season. Rick Burgess (left) challenged participants to let Jesus lead them in all they do. Pictured is Mayor Melvin Duran (right), Burgess and the Priceville High School Football coaching staff.

complete support for the program that I'm aware of.”

While the battle happens in local school districts, churches are finding their own ways to support football players with faith-based ministries. For example, Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Priceville, hosted Meet the Bulldogs in August as a kickoff to the Priceville High School football season.

The church provided lunch after the morning worship for all of the coaches, teachers and students.

Rick Burgess, co-host of the

popular syndicated “The Rick and Bubba Show” radio program, “challenged the Bulldogs and all that were in attendance to let Jesus lead them in all they do,” said Gary Linville, pastor of Shoal Creek Baptist.

“It's a good opportunity to share the gospel with them,” Linville said.

The church also tailgates sometimes at games to give out free hotdogs to “show the love of Christ to our community,” he said. (TAB)

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University of Mobile unites to give back during annual Project Serve

By Rivers Brunson
University of Mobile

It is a Christ-centered devotion to students that gives purpose to University of Mobile's (UM) annual Project Serve, a university-wide day of service in Mobile and Baldwin counties, now in its seventh year.

On Oct. 20 more than 1,000 red shirts featuring "#umserves" flooded Mobile and Baldwin counties' elementary schools, nursing homes, community centers, parks and churches. From cleaning dusty trophy cases at James Seals Community Center to mascot-hugs at Saraland Elementary School, students and faculty hit the streets to fill them with the love of Christ.

"This is what we do as Rams. We give back," said Katrina Hampton Frazier, recreation program supervisor for community centers for the City of Mobile.

A 1999 graduate of UM, Frazier gave a thorough orientation that resembled a pep rally for students serving at one of the community centers she manages.

"Together Everyone Accomplishes More," an acronym for TEAM, was printed on a

poster and displayed prominently at the front of the room.

"My university is stepping up to the mic, and they have dropped



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile

University of Mobile (UM) accounting major Caleb Cox (left) works with UM President Dr. Timothy L. Smith to clear vines at a community center during Project Serve, a university-wide day of service. Cox is a junior from Dothan.

the mic on the City of Mobile," Frazier shouted. Her words were met with cheers from dozens of students and faculty.

How does a day of service represent the core value of being "student-devoted"?

"It provides an opportunity for us to go and build relationship and community, as well as serving the community as Christ calls us to, and to share the

message of His gospel to other people," said Philip Vo, a student from Mobile.

President Dr. Timothy L. Smith

"It provides an opportunity for us to go and build relationship and community."

**Philip Vo
UM student**

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Faith Project

One child's wish to Santa becomes annual ministry

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

It's the question every mom wonders when her kid strides up to Santa with purpose, Carol Baker said. She was riding the North Pole Express in Calera on a trip with her daughter Faith's kindergarten class in December 2015. She watched as Faith walked over to Santa, sat in his lap, told him her wish and then went back to her seat.

"The whole time I was thinking, 'Oh, I wonder what she's telling him she wants,'" Carol Baker said.

So she asked.

And Faith told her — she wanted blankets for the homeless.

Carol Baker was stunned. "I said, 'That is great, Faith — how thoughtful of you.'"

But her wheels were already turning, trying to figure out how to make her daughter's selfless wish a reality.

And it wasn't long before she, Faith and her now-9-year-old sister, Grace — all members of Antioch East Baptist Church, Greenville — got together with

their friend, Staci Anderson, and her daughter, Charlotte Kate, and started the Faith Project.

"We started Facebooking and asking our churches, and blankets just started piling in," Carol Baker said. "What a blessing that was."

Faith and Grace Baker collected 550 blankets for Christmas 2016.

That year, the girls took the blankets to the Friendship Mission, a local women's shelter, and the Adullam House in Wetumpka, along with coloring books and crayons.

PROPER LEGACY PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL!



Meet Dr. Jim and Pearleen Graham. Jim is the pastor of Coosada Baptist Church in Coosada, Alabama. **When approached by The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA) about legacy planning, Jim knew that he personally needed to update his will.** He and his wife were eager to take advantage of the free professional coaching that is offered to all Alabama Baptist pastors through TBFA.

After experiencing the process, Jim was so pleased that he began reaching out to other leaders in his church to encourage them to participate. He said, "I counsel people in my congregation coping with death all the time. **As pastors, we know people deal too often with the mess left behind when a loved one dies without making proper plans. By offering a Legacy Ministry in their church, pastors can have peace knowing they served their people well through TBFA's professional Christian estate planning.** One of the most caring things our people can do before they leave earth is prepare a plan for their family. As pastors, we need to help our people be prepared."

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Photo courtesy of Carol Baker

Recently (l to r) 9-year-old Charlotte Kate Anderson, 7-year-old Faith Baker and 9-year-old Grace Baker collected blankets, diapers, wipes and formula, loaded up a vehicle and sent it to hurricane victims in Texas.

“The experience — it was just awesome,” she said.

Faith Baker agreed. “Some of those people might not have had a Christmas before then,” she said. “We wanted to help them.”

Her sister, Grace, said the recipients’ reactions were the best part.

“It was really fun handing out the blankets and to see the people’s smiles,” she said.

The girls collected and handed

out 200 blankets that year, then 550 for Christmas 2016. They also took boxes of new coats to the Brantwood Children’s Home in Montgomery.

“The response from the teenagers there was phenomenal,” Carol Baker said, noting that they also took

shaving kits, toiletries, coloring books and Bibles. “The kids were just in tears because they’d never had anything of their own. The girls want to go back every year

because they get to be Santa and tell them about Jesus.”

Staci Anderson said she was “so proud” of the way the girls just jumped right in the middle of the children there and helped them pick out the blankets they liked.

‘Depth of need’

“I think this experience has helped them realize in their little minds the depth of need in our community,” she said. “And as long as they want to help, Carol and I will drive them around.”

The three girls collected the blankets and other items by

“My 7 year old gets it. She just has the heart ... for this.”

Carol Baker



Photo courtesy of Carol Baker

(L to r) Faith Baker, Grace Baker and Charlotte Kate Anderson collect the blankets and other items by speaking at churches and local community groups and enlisting people to help.



Photo courtesy of Carol Baker

The girls collected and handed out 200 blankets for Christmas 2015, then 550 for Christmas 2016. ‘It was really fun handing out the blankets and to see the people’s smiles,’ Grace says.

speaking at churches and local community groups and enlisting people to help, Carol Baker said.

“It’s just so sweet to hear them share their hearts — they don’t get intimidated at all speaking about it in front of groups,” she said. “And as a result, 750 lives have been touched. If three little children can do that in two years

with Christ, what does the future hold for the Faith Project?”

She said she credits so much of the girls’ inclination to missions work to the GA leaders and children’s program workers at Antioch East Baptist.

“My 7 year old gets it,” she said of Faith. “She just has the heart and a passion for this.” ✝

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When tragedy strikes, kids need attention

Ways to help children, youth deal with random acts of violence

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Churches and Christian schools have experienced random acts of violence in the past several years, like what happened at First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas, on Nov. 5.

In this small community of about 400 people, people knew their neighbors and many were related. Among those killed were several children and youth, friends and siblings of those who survived.

Here are some ways to help children and youth cope with tragedy:

- ▶ **Allow the child to lead.** Adults may want to talk about the violent situation they have experienced. Kids may not. What they saw or experienced may come out in play or drawings.
- ▶ **Avoid details but be honest.** Older children may be able to understand the situation. Younger children may not. Answer questions in an honest way. Otherwise, children will make up what happened and their version of the story may be worse than the actual event.
- ▶ **Model appropriate emotions.** If a child cries, allow them to ex-

press feelings in this way. Never criticize or embarrass a child. God gave us the ability to shed tears and this is one way of coping. Remember, children will react to situations in a similar manner as other adults with whom they have contact. If this happens, allow the emotional outburst, briefly, then redirect to a positive activity.

- ▶ **Learn to listen.** Listen with all your senses. If a child wants to talk, observe their facial features, body language, hand gestures and even fidgeting. These characteristics may tell you more than the words they speak.

- ▶ **Re-establish a normal schedule and routine when possible.** When a child's world is in turmoil, they don't know what will happen next. Returning to regular habits and practices aids healing.

- ▶ **Provide comfort animals.** Across our nation, many institutions are bringing in comfort animals when a violent situation takes

place. Children who have experienced stress and suffering often respond to a gentle dog, a purring kitten or a soft bunny. Animals such as these offer unconditional love and acceptance.

- ▶ **Limit media.** Many media stations replay violent events over and over. Children do not need to witness these situations. Talk with parents about limiting TV news programs when these occur. Don't impose a blackout but be ready to answer questions.



Unsplash.com

- ▶ **Be truthful as to promises.** Children depend on adults to keep them safe. Refrain from making promises that you may not be able to follow through. Instead, tell children, "I'll do everything in my power to keep you safe and protect you." Or, "This was a terrible thing that happened but we're going to be OK." Kids need to be reassured.

Tragedies like the one in Texas remind us of steps we can take

to prepare for a crisis. Here are some safety strategies church leaders and parents can implement:

- ▶ **Teach children to follow instructions.** Children should learn to obey a teacher. Learning this important rule could be the difference in survival. A church should be a peaceful place where all people feel safe but this isn't always true. Practice weather-related safety drills. Practice moving quickly and quietly. Practice following instructions.

- ▶ **Know your physical surroundings.** In case of a violent act, do you know the emergency exits? Are heavy metal doors separating your class from the hallway? Is there a safe room in your church for weather-related disasters? Is there an intercom or communication system throughout the building?

- ▶ **Keep lines of communication open between the church and home.** Children may act differently when at home with parents or caregivers, as compared to being in church programs. If a child is showing unusual stress after a period of time, teachers should relate that information to the parent. Options could include a visit to the child's doctor. 🙏

Taking preventive measures vital for churches

(continued from page 1)

leave the building if necessary. Put greeters or a security guard outside entrance doors left unlocked to meet latecomers.

- ▶ Establish an emergency plan in the event of an act of violence and practice it regularly. Equip church leaders and staff with information on how to respond to emergencies, as well as how to get police and medical assistance. Create a list of counselors in your area who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

- ▶ Hold a disaster leadership workshop. Ask a local police chief to train appointed key leadership/people in your church to deal with active shooters.

- ▶ Also plan for a post-incident course of action: evacuation and assembly points, witnesses speaking with police, prayer time and counseling, etc.

- ▶ Make the congregation aware of all emergency exits in the building. Ask members to report any concerns and/or anything out of the ordinary to the appointed central person. Teach them what to do in case of an emergency. This can be done with the congregation as

a whole or through newsletters and brochures. Practice emergency procedures together as a church on a selected day.

- ▶ In your children's ministry area, organize a safe system of drop-off and pickup for each child. Make sure each volunteer worker with children has passed a criminal background check. Station security volunteers or professionals at the entrance of the children's area. Report any suspicious persons.

Designated points

- ▶ In case of an emergency, alert your members to places they can take cover and hide, as well as a designated rally point inside or outside the church.

- ▶ Know your church members, especially those people who have criminal records, a history of violent behavior or a grudge against the church and/or leadership.

- ▶ Establish a good method to communicate among church leaders, staff and security teams.

- ▶ Install closed-circuit televisions, alarm systems and good lighting for church grounds at night, especially sidewalks and parking lots.

Why the Church may be targeted

- ▶ Churches are welcoming to strangers, inviting them inside to join worship services and church events.

- ▶ Most churches have no preplanned emergency guidelines or established safety precautions.

- ▶ Security is limited and/or nonexistent at many churches.

- ▶ Church members are often too trusting of those who pass through the church doors.

- ▶ Churches may not conduct professional criminal background checks before they allow or hire volunteers to work with children, nurseries, etc.

- ▶ Church worship services provide a shooter with open opportunities to enter church sanctuaries and the greatest number of people to kill or injure at any given time and space.

- ▶ Most outside and inside doors are unlocked and easily accessible.

- ▶ Oftentimes church doors may be left unlocked at night. (Denise George)

Southern Baptists offer to cover funeral expenses

When disaster hits — whether it's a natural event or a tragedy like a mass shooting — Southern Baptists reach out and respond.

On behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has offered to cover funeral expenses for all victims of the First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas, shooting in coordination with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, NAMB confirmed.

In what has been called the deadliest church shooting in U.S. history, at least 26 were killed and about 20 were wounded when a gunman entered the church Nov. 5 and opened fire. The dead ranged from an unborn baby in its mother's womb and an 18-month-old to a 77-year-old, *The New York Times* reported. (TAB, BP)

- ▶ When reporting an active shooter, call 911 immediately. Tell first responders the following urgent information (if you know it):

- The estimated number of shooters.
- The shooter's location in the building.
- The type of weapon the shooter might be using.
- The immediacy of the threat.
- The location of nurseries, children's ministries and other sensitive areas.

Stay on the line to keep police informed about happenings, etc.

While church shootings are rare, shooting violence is escalating. Taking preventive measures including designated security teams, carefully placed safeguards and a practiced plan of action/evacuation can help Southern Baptist churches avoid the tragic results of active shooters and other acts of violence.

To help your church guard against violence and other disasters, GuideStone Financial Resources offers a safety toolkit through a partnership with Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. For more information, visit www.guidestonepropertycasualty.org. 🙏

Church ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB

Elkton Road celebrates 50th anniversary

Elkton Road Baptist Church, Athens, celebrated a golden history with its 50th anniversary Sept. 24.

The special service featured several guest speakers as well as anniversary presentations. Pastor Tony Wales recognized former ministerial staff and Joe Teal, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the church with a plaque to commemorate its years of ministry.

A video presentation of the church's history was shown and personal testimonies were shared by Colt Hunter, Jenni Hosner and John Allfrey. Also, Beulah Lee shared a video testimony.

The church and children's choir also performed special music throughout the service. Steve Linginfelter, who served as pastor of Elkton Road Baptist from 1978 to 1988, shared the message.

A timeline of the church's history, including the four different facilities through the years, was on display and members and visitors were given a booklet with the church history and a ribbon bookmark. The day ended with lunch in the fellowship hall.



Photo by Joe Teal

The joint anniversary and homecoming celebration service focused on what God has done in the past and what He will do in the future, said Pastor Wesley Johnson. During the 9:30 a.m.

service — in which there was standing room only — milestones were shared by Martha Sherbert, accompanied by a slideshow of historic pictures.

Former interim pastor Trull Hill brought the morning's message and the Renfro Mountain Medicine Show sang special music. A group of children also performed songs.

A commemorative certificate was presented by Mary Staggs on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and a fellowship lunch wrapped up the day.



Photo by Mary Staggs

Macedonia No. 2 gives God glory for 75 years

From personal testimonies to glimpses into the past, the 75th anniversary of Macedonia No. 2 Baptist Church, Crossville, was a "sweet day of fellowship" for current and former members.

The choir sang old hymns and Ken Allen, director of missions for DeKalb Baptist Association, brought the message.

Allen also presented a plaque to the congregation on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

A special time of the service was when church members Phyllis Bolton, Donald Gilbert, Keith Harper and Michael Edmondson each gave personal testimonies of how they came to the church and what it has meant to them.

Guests got to view a slideshow of former pastors and

memorabilia including an old pulpit and building plans, photos and church minutes from years past. Each guest also was given a gift bag and a history booklet featuring notes from former pastors and their spouses, articles from members and photos.

To remember the day, a manmade boulder with an inscription commemorating the anniversary was purchased and displayed in front of the church.

"It was a spectacular day," said church member Leisa Bishop. "We give God all the glory, honor and praise for bringing the church to where it is now."

Lewayne Levans is pastor.

Lanett's Huguley Baptist marks 50 years

For Jackie Blair the 50th anniversary of Huguley Baptist Church, Lanett, is evidence of God's faithfulness.

"It's awesome to think our church has been here for 50 years. We have been down to seven or eight, but now we're back to 30 to 35. God kept us going. He still has work for us to do," she said.

During a celebration service Oct. 1 the Sanders Family, a musical group from the area, sang special music and Calvin Milford (pictured, left), a representative of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to the congregation in East Liberty Baptist Association. Charter



Photo courtesy of Jackie Blair

member Odell Chancey (pictured, right) was recognized.

Pastor Marty Dunlap (pictured, center) brought the morning's message.✠

Talladega Creek marks 75 years of service

"Why are the lunch tables decorated in a chicken house theme?" This is a question a visitor may have asked themselves at the 75th anniversary service of Talladega Creek Baptist Church, Talladega, on Oct. 1. The answer? Because the first building the church met in was a chicken house.

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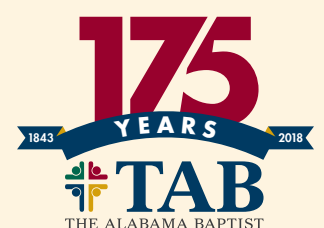
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According to the May 25, 1854, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, a committee of the Alabama Baptist State Convention to provide relief and support to "worn out ministers and the families of those deceased" made its first report after meeting in Selma. Key to providing relief was that the church last served by the pastor had to contribute at least \$100 for relief of ministers.

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Alabama Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists



SAMMY GILBREATH

Director of the office of evangelism, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

It is always an honor and privilege to have an opportunity to share the many talents of the Alabama Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists (ACOSBE). As director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, we work together through the Alabama Baptist churches to reach a lost and dying world and to bring them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I would like to recommend that you contact these men and women of God for your next revival, outreach event or fellowship you have in your church or for your community. ✝

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)

FBC Guin couple spends years teaching their kids about lifestyle of missions

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Marguerite Butler remembers vividly April 3, 1974, the day a tornado swept through Guin and nearly wiped it off the map.

But she remembers one thing even more vividly — a lady who sat weeping in her Sunday School class the following weekend.

“She was retired but she had gone back to work so that she could earn the money to buy a pleasure boat,” Marguerite Butler said. “It got blown away with the house. She just cried and said she had spent two years working for nothing.”

Marguerite Butler’s heart went out to her but she decided something right then and there about life’s priorities.

Thinking the same thing

Her husband, Gilbert, said, “Marguerite came home and said, ‘We ought to do something to help our children have a priority in their life that can’t be blown away with the wind.’ She told me she had been thinking about spending some of her summer vacation doing missions and I told her I had been thinking the same thing.”

The Butlers, both schoolteachers, called the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) and asked them

to assign both of them and their three teenage children anywhere they wanted for two weeks that summer.

A family affair

“We decided we would go anywhere they needed five sets of hands,” Gilbert Butler said.

And in the years that followed, the mission board took them up on their offer.

They did missions in St. Louis, assisted visitors to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta and served at the Seaman Center in Mobile, among others.

Marguerite Butler said, “The children loved it. Every year they asked often if we knew yet where the mission board was sending us this summer.”

After the kids went off to college, the Butlers broadened their reach.

“We let the International Mis-

sion Board know we’d be open to longer assignments,” Gilbert Butler said. “After that, we spent three summers in China, a year in Guyana and six months in West Africa.”

They went to Ukraine twice and they taught school in American Samoa, where a storm found

them again.

“A hurricane blew our school away and I had to rebuild it,” he said. “We had to start trying to fix it before the wind had even stopped, just so we could save the school supplies inside.”

But at 95 and 93, respectively, Gilbert and Marguerite Butler both say they would pick that kind of storm over the boat-ruining kind. A map at

their church, First Baptist, Guin, is strewn with pins marking the places they’ve been over the years.

“It’s been a lifestyle for them from a long, long time,” said Scott Stokes, director of missions for Lamar Baptist Association and former pastor of First, Guin. “Both of them are missionaries at heart.”

Still working for the Lord

They’re still just working for the Lord, Marguerite Butler said — something they would encourage anyone to do.

“If you’re considering doing missions, go for it — you’ll never regret it,” she said.

They have no desire to slow down but they are starting to pass the baton — their youngest grandson just got back from a missions trip to the Dominican Republic. And the elder Butlers have only just stepped down from their position as missions mobilizers for the North American Mission Board.

“God has been so good to us,” she said. “Our children have been deeply blessed because they’ve seen how God can work through them. And all of our grandchildren have been involved in missions too. We’re grateful for that.”

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Photo courtesy of the Butlers
Back in 1974, Gilbert (right) and Marguerite Butler sought to help their 'children have a priority in their life that can't be blown away with the wind.'

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 19

Explore the Bible

By Kyle Beshears
Instructor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

SET FREE

Leviticus 16:3-10, 29-30

Preparing to Sacrifice (3-6)

The beginning of this passage reminds us of the sobering event where we last left off. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were killed for disobediently stepping outside the boundaries of God's law (Lev. 10:1-2). At the time Aaron remained silent (Lev. 10:3). Doubtless he grieved with the loss of his sons. Yet through it all he maintained the right perspective on God's holiness. God, not wanting Aaron to suffer the same fate as his sons, gave him the exact method to approach the divine presence — through sacrifice. This is an important reminder that we cannot come to God on our terms; rather, we must approach God on His terms.

Even though the world advertises many different avenues to God, in reality there is only one. We are left with only two options: to follow the example of Aaron or his sons. God has made one way to Himself through the sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only Way, Truth and Life, the only means by which we come to the Father (John 14:6). The rest of this passage will foreshadow exactly how the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus made this one way possible.

The Chosen Goat (7-10)

Have you ever been blamed for something you didn't do? If so, what word did you use to describe your situation? Likely, it was scapegoat. This passage is where that idea comes from. In order to receive forgiveness for sins, Israel would offer a sacrifice through their high priest. To show the people that their sins were removed, Aaron was instructed to sacrifice one goat while symbolically putting the sins of the people on the other. This other goat, the scapegoat, was led off into the wild never

to return. God wanted His people to see the removal of their sins as they ran far away into the wilderness. As the goat fled the presence of the people, so the sin of the people fled their presence. God forgave their sins and removed its stain from His people. This is, of course, the same desire God has for us. Scripture tells us that "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12). The wonderful truth behind this psalm is that east and west have no end — you could follow a compass either direction and never come to the end of either. When God graciously forgives us, our sin — like the scapegoat — walks off into the wilderness and never returns.

The Day of Atonement (29-30)

Of all the biblical feasts the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, was the most somber. It was the day when Israel reflected on her sin and mortality even as those sins were met with God's life-giving grace and forgiveness.

The Day of Atonement became so important that it was eventually referred to as simply "The Day." The significance of this day as a foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Christ is important. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies on this day by passing through the veil. Christ's death, however, tore the veil in half from top to bottom, signifying that His sacrifice forever removed the separation between God and His people (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). Moreover the sacrifice Israel made was required annually but the sacrifice Christ made was once for all (Heb. 9:25-28). Jesus' sacrifice fulfilled the intention behind not only the Day of Atonement but the entire sacrificial system. In other words, anyone who believes in Christ has both a perfect sacrifice and a high priest as their mediator (1 John 2:1-2). ✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

HANNAH: TRUST-FILLED PRAYER

1 Samuel 1:9-11, 17-18, 26-28; 2:1-3

As the father of two incredible sons, Samuel and Elijah, it is difficult for me to approach a text like 1 Samuel 1-2 objectively. These sons did not get their names haphazardly. My younger son, Elijah, bears the name of the person most associated in the Bible with zeal for God. The hope my wife and I held onto as we gave our son this name was that our Elijah would possess the same zeal for the Lord that the biblical Elijah displayed.

Before Elijah, though, came Samuel — not only in the biblical narrative but also in our lives. For many years it seemed unlikely that my wife and I would be able to conceive and bear children. Like many young couples, we got married, planned to see the world and thought we would then settle down to have a family. Sadly, while the marrying and seeing the world components of our plan progressed as we had hoped, the settling down to have a family element did not. One year led to another and another as our attempts to have kids seemed doomed to failure.

And then finally, miraculously in the same year when we had nearly given up hope, my wife discovered she was at long last pregnant. Each day from pregnancy test to delivery room was filled with tension as we hoped and prayed this long-awaited conception would culminate in the birth of our first child. When on Sept. 9, 1997, we welcomed a healthy son into the world, no other name would do than Samuel. As the biblical Hannah had prayed for her son, so we had prayed for ours. And the name she had given to her son, Samuel, could hardly be improved upon for our own son, another Samuel.

Bring your needs to God. (1:9-11)

Hannah's story is one fraught with sor-

row. Although her husband, Elkanah, loved her more than his other wife, Peninnah, Hannah's inability to have children was a constant source of anguish to her. Finally Hannah could bear her childless state no longer and she poured out her heart to God in bitter tears and sorrow.

God hears your prayers and answers. (1:17-18, 26-28)

The priest at the temple where Hannah offered up her prayers to God did not immediately recognize what she was doing. At first he supposed she had drunk too much and was not herself. Hannah assured Eli that she had not been drinking but had instead been praying as fervently as she knew how. With Eli's blessing she continued to offer up her requests, promising God that if He would only give her a son, she would give that son back to God by letting Him serve as an attendant at the temple.

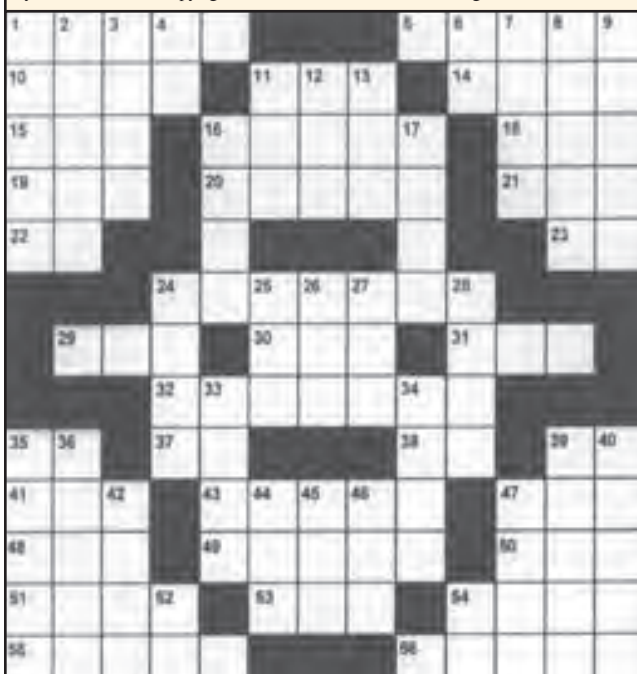
Respond to God with thankful praise. (2:1-3)

Against all odds, Hannah's prayers were answered. Though there was no earthly indication that Hannah would ever be able to bear children, through her heartfelt appeal to God she was miraculously allowed to conceive. Just as she had promised, Hannah fulfilled her vow to dedicate her son to the temple. This son, Samuel, would grow up to be Israel's last and most faithful judge. This was the Samuel who would anoint Israel's first king, Saul, and Israel's greatest king, David.

Whatever heights this son would attain, the most poignant moments of his life would remain with the world of his mother. When Hannah prayed, she appealed to God's deep love and care for the powerless. And when she bore a son as a result of God's gracious intervention, she did not hesitate to follow through with her vow to give that son back to God. ✠

Christian Crossword

By Janet Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Am I in God's ____? (Gen. 30:2)
- They say he has a _____. (Matt. 11:18 NIV)
- Consumes.
- By a mighty hand, and by a stretched out _____. (Deut. 4:34)
- Lion's headdress.
- By way of.
- Alaskan native.
- Department of Economic Affairs. (abbr.)
- Building addition.
- I will ____ him up at the last day. (John 6:40)
- People that do ____ in their heart. (Ps. 95:10)
- They follow "M"s.
- Naval vessel designation.
- Goes up.
- Alternate spelling of Baal.
- Sanballat invited Nehemiah to the plain of _____. (Neh. 6:2)
- Thickness or layer.
- ____ my statutes, and do them. (Ezek. 37:24)

- And ____ shall judge the world. (Ps. 9:8)
- Add ____ your faith virtue. (2 Pet. 1:5)
- Commercial message.
- News agency.
- Spanish cheer.
- I will make thee a ____ nation. (Gen. 12:2)
- Much ____ About Nothing.
- Cleaning tool.
- Classifieds.
- Gay Pa ____.
- Long, exciting adventure tale.
- They compassed me about like _____. (Ps. 118:12)
- An atlas is a book of ____.
- There remaineth a ____ (plural). (Heb. 4:9)
- ____p ____ Dumpty sat on a wall.
- And ____ shall judge the world. (Rev. 12:4)
- And others. (Latin)
- Like.
- Printer's measure.
- Thou hast ____ him a little lower than the angels. (Ps. 8:5)
- Dollar bills.
- Approaches.
- In this manner.
- Real estate investment. (abbr.)
- He heard ____ ick and dancing. (Luke 15:25)
- ____(s) of the Covenant.
- Began the golf game.
- Great amount. (2 words)
- Type of lettuce.
- Compass direction.
- Neither/ ____.
- Went rapidly.
- Mires.
- Large tubs.
- Ancient author.
- Run away to wed.
- Able, skillful.
- The art of poetry.
- American Anglican church: ____ copal.

- Will a man ____ God? (Mal. 3:8)
- Before (poetic).
- Did eat.
- Kemuel the father of _____. (Gen. 22:21)
- Court. (abbr.)
- Invent to themselves instruments of ____ sick. (Amos 6:5)





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Media reviews

Waiting for a Song in the Night: The Trauma of Pastoral Termination

Eli Landrum. Cleveland, TN: Parson's Porch Books, 2016. 101 pp. (Paperback).

This is not the first book on pastoral termination I have reviewed this year. Since it is a topic that has already been done, I thought of giving this one a pass until I read a page or two and realized what a gem it was.

I think what captivated me at first was the beauty of the writing — it was more poetry than prose, with language carefully crafted

to convey tone and meaning — but the potential value of the story itself soon took over and made the book one I didn't want to skip over.

The author has not actually experienced forced termination but had a close brush a few years ago, which has made him sensitive to and understanding of the plights of fellow pastors. And apparently, there are a lot of pastors who experience the heartbreak — or trauma, as Landrum characterizes it — of being fired by a church.

LifeWay reported in 2011 that 10.5 percent of pastors were terminated in the seven previous years.

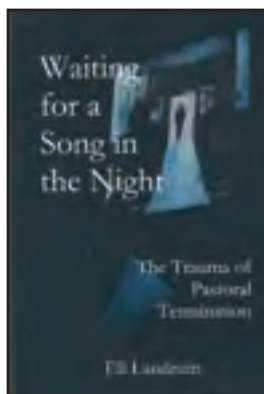
After telling his own story, Landrum shifted gears, providing analysis of the problem and its causes before ending with a note of hope with suggestions for how pastors and congregations can avoid the heartbreak of termination.

Landrum has retired from a position as editor at LifeWay and continues to write for LifeWay in retirement.

Whole Living in a Broken World

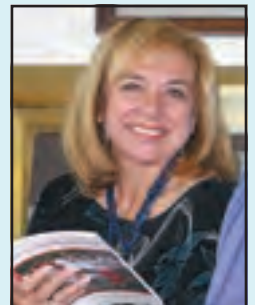
Charles W. Davis. Columbus, GA: Brentwood Christian Press, 2016. 160 pp. (Paperback).

Author Charles Davis maintains that the world is broken, and it is hard to argue with him, especially when he outlines the brokenness of the church: a 2013 survey by the Barna Group revealed that 46 percent of churchgoers reported that church attendance had not changed their lives at all; when he outlines the brokenness of the family: half of all marriages end in divorce; and when he points out the inner conflict of individuals, who cannot seem to choose between



Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for *The Alabama Baptist*. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.



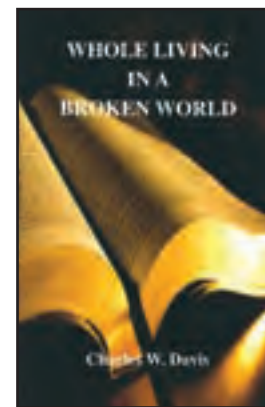
BookReviews@charter.net

following God and following the world.

No, we won't dispute that the world is broken. The question is, how can we be whole in a broken world? The book goes a long way toward answering the question by providing sections on essentials to whole living, factors that prevent whole living and practical helps for whole living.

The book is filled with references to Scripture, quotes the author has collected and references to books and other authors. It is designed as a practical guide for the Christian who wishes to have a positive impact on the world and work toward healing some of its brokenness.

probably wouldn't make it past *The Alabama Baptist* editorial staff, I'll expand a little even



though I'm sure most of you have already opened a new tab on your laptop and typed in "Amazon.com."

What is a life beyond amazing? According to Jeremiah, it is being "rooted and solid," able to weather the storms of life with strength, confidence, peace and calm. It's about developing into what God wants us to be in order to provide what the world needs: "solid-to-the-core people with unimpaired grit and unimpeded godliness."

If you have stopped for a moment to think about it, you have probably figured out why the number "9" is used. The 9 decisions are based on the fruit of the spirit outlined in Galatians 5. Each chapter is rich, filled with the wisdom and encouragement we

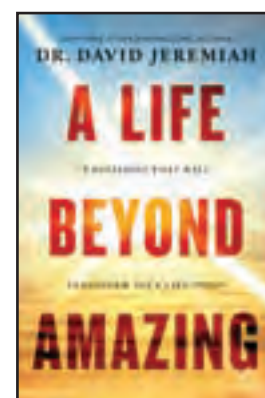
have grown to expect from the beloved pastor.

Make sure you have a highlighter ready so as soon as UPS delivers your copy you can start marking the passages you want to return to and work on applying to your life. You might need two highlighters — there's a lot of good stuff in this book.✝

A Life Beyond Amazing: 9 Decisions That Will Transform Your Life Today

David Jeremiah. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017. 256 pp. (Paperback).

The way I see it, a David Jeremiah book is like a Junior Hill book — all I really need to do is point you toward it and get out of the way. But since that



**If you have a book you would like reviewed, mail a copy to:
P.O. Box 1504, Hartselle, AL 35640.**



Photo courtesy of Christopher Smith

Composer Christopher Smith, author of the musical 'Amazing Grace,' seeks to create God-honoring entertainment on Broadway and beyond.

'Amazing grace'

Broadway composer seeks 'lights' in entertainment

Amid entertainment industry scandals and a steady stream of profanity- and sex-laden content from Hollywood, Broadway composer Christopher Smith aims to inspire a generation of Christians to be salt and light in the entertainment world.

Smith — author of the script, music and lyrics for the musical "Amazing Grace" — has pursued that aim through speaking engagements at several Southern Baptist-related schools, including Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. He also hopes to demonstrate what God-honoring entertainment looks like with a 70-city tour of "Amazing Grace" starting Nov. 17 at the Museum of the Bible's grand opening in Washington.

"I really believe," Smith said, "in the redemptive power of theater which is excellent in its artistry and honors God."

"Amazing Grace" is based on the true story of 18th-century slave trader John Newton, an atheist turned Christian pastor who helped abolish the slave trade in Great Britain and wrote the autobiographical hymn Amazing Grace.

Art mirrors life

Inspired by Smith's encounter with a book about Newton years ago, "Amazing Grace" mirrors Smith's personal testimony in some ways. God saved him out of atheism at age 17. Then he went on to become a police officer and youth pastor in Pennsylvania before breaking into the theater business with "Amazing Grace."

During the show's 2015 run on Broadway, audiences reacted enthusiastically. Some theatergoers told Smith the production made them rethink their priorities in life.

One woman happened by the theater after learning from a doctor she had three or four months to live, Smith said. She decided on the spur of the moment to watch "Amazing Grace" and told the cast afterward the show helped her realize "there are things I need to get right in my life and people I need to get right with."

Performance without compromise

On a regular basis, audiences stood at the end of the musical to sing the hymn "Amazing Grace."

"You leave 'Amazing Grace' knowing ... that God can be in the theater," Smith said.

In mid-October, Smith helped students and graduates at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, present a concert of selections from "Amazing Grace" that featured a 400-person choir and full symphony orchestra. In rehearsals leading up to the concert, Smith said, he tried to help aspiring performers understand how to "communicate the gospel in a hostile industry, a hostile world without being adversarial."

That goal also has led Smith to form a nonprofit organization called Lights on Broadway — with the assistance of Southern Seminary philosophy professor James Parker among others — to train aspiring Christian performers. In addition to helping them hone their craft, Lights on Broadway will produce musicals consistent with a Christian worldview.

Young people in entertainment tend either to "quit because they don't want to compromise" their morals or "compromise because they don't want to quit," Smith said. "That's our fault. We need to create great quality entertainment [so] they can practice their gift without compromising their values."

Secularists "did a takeover of entertainment," Smith said. "I really think theater is the way to start to claw back something that will honor God."

"Amazing Grace" runs at the Museum of the Bible through Jan. 7. A schedule of other tour stops will be released at amazinggracemusical.com. (BP)



Egypt's president meets with evangelicals

CAIRO — Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met for the first time with evangelical leaders from the United States who expressed their concerns about religious freedom and persecution of Christians in the majority Muslim nation.

The Nov. 1 meeting at the presidential palace in Cairo lasted nearly three hours. Topics included the persecution of Egyptian Christians by Islamic extremists, according to The Christian Post.

U.S. representatives included Family Research Council President and Baptist Pastor Tony Perkins, religious freedom advocate and informal Trump administration adviser Johnnie Moore, Jerusalem-based evangelical writer Joel Rosenberg, Egyptian-born Christian pastor and author Michael Youssef and former U.S. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann. Andrea Zaki, the leader of the Protestant community in Egypt, also was in attendance.

"We talked about education, we talked about the economy, we talked about housing, we talked about church law, the role of a Christian in Egypt, what are Christians' civil rights, what is the government doing to improve the status of Christians and protect them," Rosenberg told the Post.

The evangelical leaders expressed optimism for religious freedom in Egypt, a country that ranks as the 21st worst nation in the world when it comes to Christian persecution, according to Open Doors USA's 2017 World Watch List. (TAB)

UMC court upholds language on homosexuality

LOS ANGELES — The United Methodist Judicial Council, the denomination's highest court, has refused to rule on two petitions attempting to change the denomination's official position against homosexuality and gay "marriage."

Under the heading "Qualifications for Ordination," the United Methodist Church (UMC) Book of Discipline states that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." The petitions from the California-Pacific Annual Conference and the Denmark Annual Conference asked the court to label the wording unconstitutional.

In Memorandum No. 1347 and Memorandum No. 1354 released Oct. 27, the Judicial Council concluded that it did not have the authority to rule on the constitutionality of the language.

"The Judicial Council has no jurisdiction to answer questions from an annual conference that do not relate to annual conference or the work therein," read Memo 1347. "It would be improper for the Judicial Council to answer questions beyond its authority."

The council also re-stated its earlier opinion that all qualifications of ministerial candidates must be examined in response to a decision by church officials in Baltimore-Washington to exclude a lesbian candidate from ordination, according to the UMC News Service. (TAB)

Nepal enacts law against religious conversion

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Converting to another religion is now a crime in Nepal, thanks to a bill signed into law Oct. 16 by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari.

The signing comes two months after lawmakers passed legislation for the criminal code bill, according to The Christian Post. At the time, it was reported that religious conversion could earn a sentence of up to five years in prison and that "hurting of religious sentiment" could earn up to two years' jail time. Religious freedom advocates say the law resembles the controversial blasphemy laws of Pakistan, which have frequently been abused.

Churches and charitable organizations fear how this law might limit their future activity.

"We are deeply saddened that this bill is now law," said Pastor Tanka Subedi, the founding member and chair of Dharmik Chautari Nepal and Religious Liberty Forum Nepal. "Our appeals to the president and other policy makers to amend this have been ignored. Nepali government have taken a regressive step as this law severely restricts our freedom of expression and our freedom of religion or belief." (TAB)