



May 10, 2018
Vol. 183, No. 19

Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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INSIDE



Patterson's previous spousal abuse comments spark fresh social media, news coverage

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Covering *the* state

F.A.I.T.H. Riders circling Alabama with prayer

Everybody needs prayer and everybody needs revival." Phillip Cook said he knows that to be true and for the past several years as he's been riding around Alabama on his Harley Davidson he's felt a burden for that to start right here.

So this year for the months of June, July and August, he and other members of F.A.I.T.H. Riders Alabama will circle the perimeter of the state on motorcycles, praying for churches, pastors and communities and asking God to bring revival.

"We don't want it to stop there but to begin there," said Cook,

state coordinator for F.A.I.T.H. Riders Alabama and a member of Enon Baptist Church, Montevallo. "We want this to be something this ministry consistently does. We want to encourage pastors and church people and show them we care and that God cares."

The plan consists of (See 'Leading,' page 4)



Photo courtesy of Jason Green

For the months of June, July and August, members of F.A.I.T.H. Riders Alabama will circle the perimeter of Alabama on motorcycles while in prayer.

To watch the videos from this week's issue, visit our YouTube channel or use the HP Reveal app on your phone or tablet and hover over the segments marked "AR."

Coming next week ...

Facing fears: Learning to live free in a fear-inducing world



COMMENT

Mothering the People of God

The most common image for God in the Bible is “Father.” Jesus referred to God as “Father” 65 times in the synoptic gospels and more than 100 times in the Gospel of John.

“Father” is the term Jesus taught the disciples to use in their prayers. It is the term used by the earliest congregations. The Apostle Paul refers to God as “Father” more than 40 times in his writings. The term was used by the early congregations (Rom. 8:15), by the earliest church councils such as in the Apostle’s Creed (“I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth”) and in Christian churches everywhere across the centuries.

There is no question about God as Father.

The Bible also presents God in female images in both the Old and New Testaments. A look at some of them provides understanding about God’s “mothering” the people of God in addition to God as Father.

First human relationship

Deuteronomy 32 begins with praise of God and all that He did for Israel. But the tone changes in verse 15 with the declaration, “Then he forsook God who made him and scorned the Rock of his salvation.”

Verse 18 sums up the complaint by saying, “You neglected the Rock who begot you and forgot the God who gave you birth.”

The writer compares the relationship between God and Israel to a woman who has given birth to a child. The mother-child relationship is the first human relationship. It is natural, important and is supposed to be valued and sustained. To ignore that relationship is to cut one’s self off from one’s heritage. It is unnatural.

One should not neglect the “rock” from which one came nor forget the One who birthed you, the writer contends.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Numbers 11 recounts God’s care for Israel in the wilderness. In verse 12, Moses reminds God that He (God) had conceived this people and brought them into the desert. Now, Moses says, God “carries them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant to the land which Thou didst swear to their fathers.”

The words move beyond creation of a people. They picture God’s care being like a woman caring for a nursing child. God is a constant presence providing for His own and He will provide for them until His promise has been fulfilled.

Perhaps the Psalmist has this story in mind when he writes in Psalm 71:6, “By you I have been sustained from my birth.” God is not only like a mother nursing her child in infancy. God is like a mother who diligently works to provide food and sustenance for her child all the days of dependency.

Isaiah 66 reports the words of the Lord related to rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple after the Babylonian captivity. Beginning in verse 7, God uses the imagery of a woman giving birth to describe His care for those returning to their homeland.

Then the word picture goes beyond birth and nursing. Verse 12 adds, “You shall be carried on the hip and dandled on the knees.” Who cannot see the picture of a toddler riding the hip of a mother as she walks or bouncing on her knees as she rests?

The words describe dependency of the child and, more importantly, the trustworthiness of the mother. Just so, God will care for His own and His people are to trust their God.

“As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you,” God declares in the following verse. Like a mother God calls His people into being. He nourishes them. He sustains them. He carries them and comforts them. And like a child trusts his mother, so God’s people are to trust God.

In Isaiah 49, the imagery of a mother also is used. Those who have lived in Babylonian captivity complain “the Lord has forsaken me and the Lord has forgotten me” (v. 14).

Again, the Bible presents the response as the very words of God. “Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?” asks God (v. 15).

The response is a rhetorical question. A “no” answer is expected. It assumes the truth that a mother cannot forget her child — not a nursing child, not a difficult teenage child, not even a wayward adult child. God is saying to the captives that He has not forgotten them and never will.

God knows us. God cares for us. God acts in our behalf. That is part of mothering the people of God.

In His last week of earthly life Jesus looked over Jerusalem and with tears in His eyes said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you would not” (Matt. 23:37).

God cares for us all

That imagery only adds to the constancy of God as loving and caring, as seeking and sheltering. It only adds to the beauty, tenderness and affection of the picture of God mothering His people from their beginning to the present moment. God cares for us all. He beckons us all to Himself. Ultimately all are offered shelter through Jesus Christ who gave Himself “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

This Sunday, May 13, is Mother’s Day. There is no better example of mothering to celebrate and no better example for Christian families to model than the consistent mothering image of God loving, caring, sustaining, comforting, seeking and sheltering His people. ✠



LEARNING ABOUT GOD:

A Personal Story

To read ‘Order out of chaos,’ see page 5.

Mother's Day
IS SUNDAY, MAY 13

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching,
for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

PROVERBS 1:8-9





"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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Individual — \$14.95

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'Time for a new era'?

Stetzer calls for Patterson to step down from leadership

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

At least one prominent Southern Baptist is publicly calling for Paige Patterson to step down from leadership after comments he made 18 years ago reignited a discussion of the church's tolerance of abuse.

Ed Stetzer wrote in a column for *Christianity Today* that many Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders believe it is time for Patterson to step down as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and to excuse himself from giving the convention sermon June 13 at the SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

Stetzer is executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in Illinois and former head of LifeWay Research.

A message 'we must not send'

"If Patterson preaches at the SBC, he will, because of his past work, get a standing ovation. Every news story will point to that moment, tie it together with the (sexual abuse) accusations against Paul Pressler and say that Southern Baptists don't take abuse seriously," Stetzer wrote. "It's not just a public relations crisis. It's a message to women that we must not send."

An article in *The Washington Post* on April 29 by Jonathan Merritt and tweets by Merritt with audio recordings of the comments brought Patterson's words to prominence, though they have been shared by other journalists and bloggers in the past. The comments were made in March 2000 at an SBC conference co-sponsored by the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. (Patterson's wife, Dorothy, is a founding member of that council.)

In response to a question about women who are abused by their husbands, Patterson said:

"It depends on the level of abuse to some degree. I have never in my ministry counseled that anybody seek a divorce, and I do think that's always wrong counsel. There have been,



PATTERSON

however, an occasion or two when the level of the abuse was serious enough, dangerous enough, immoral enough that I have counseled temporary separation and the seeking of help. I would urge you to understand that that should happen only in the most serious of cases."

Patterson then told the story of a woman in a church where he served who was being subjected to "some abuse," in Patterson's words. Patterson advised the woman to pray by the bed as her husband went to sleep. When the woman then came to church with two black eyes, Patterson described what happened next: "She was angry at me and at God and the world ... (and) said, 'I hope you're happy.' And I said, 'Yes, ma'am, I am.' And I said, 'I'm sorry about that, but I'm very happy.'"

Patterson released a statement April 29 in which he stated that the couple in his story reconciled after the husband made a public decision for Christ that same day. He called

sharing the story "probably unwise" and added that "my suggestion was never that women should stay in the midst of abuse, hoping their husbands would eventually come to Christ. Rather, I was making the application that God often uses difficult things that happen to us to produce ultimate good. And I will preach that truth until I die."

Many prominent Southern Baptists joined the online discussion in response to Patterson's comments including Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, who issued a statement April 30 on Twitter stating he "cannot be silent on the issue of abuse of women."

"My silence becomes a reverberating echo of indifference at best. There is no level or type of abuse of women that is acceptable. We have been called by God to show honor and respect to all women and girls. They are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our granddaughters and our wives. We thank God for them. And I stand with all who say 'no' to any type of abuse of women at any time and under any circumstance," Rainer wrote.

Stetzer said there is an "unofficial custom" in the SBC that leaders do not criticize other leaders, which is why comments by Rainer, Beth Moore (see story, this page) and others are significant. He said Patterson's retirement would be a "better way forward" for the SBC's future mission.

But Alabama Baptist pastor Rick Patrick disagrees with the challenges to Patterson.

"Any writer who would apply a 6-month-old cultural template to an 18-year-old comment must realize that the foundation of their criticism crumbles under the weight of their misplaced historical context," wrote Patrick, publisher of the blog SBC Today.

"When Patterson says he opposes divorce, this does not mean he opposes a woman's safe separation," Patrick wrote in an April 30 blog post. "A woman can separate from her husband and find a safe place without seeking a divorce." 🌿

Beth Moore protests sexism, tolerance of abuse in Church

Blasting a church culture of rampant sexism, Beth Moore took to social media to respond to past comments made by Paige Patterson that seem to suggest women should stay in abusive marriages.

"I've dealt with sexism in my church culture for 60 years. Had to accept certain degrees of it to serve & serve I would because I was called. Then 18 months ago the meticulously groomed dog that is sexism rolled over & we who'd bear to look saw its gross underbelly, full of ticks," Moore, founder of Living Proof Ministries and a prominent Bible teacher and author, tweeted April 29. When the comments by Patterson sur-

passed again, Moore tweeted that she is "pro marriage" but took to task counseling against divorce regardless of circumstances.

'We do not submit to abuse'

In an April 28 tweet she wrote, "When we as a church culture demonize divorce as the worst possible outcome — the sin of all sins — we truly have no clue on this ever-loving earth what some people are enduring. We do not submit to abuse. NO."

She later tweeted: "It's grossly naïve to assume every man who bruises up his wife, realizes he's been outed, shows up at church & cries over how sorry he is, really has repented.

REPENTANCE BEARS FRUIT."

Moore has been vocal about her own history of sexual abuse and about issues of sexual abuse and assault in the Church. She joined the #MeToo movement in October 2017, posting on Twitter, "A well-meaning mentor told me at 25 that people couldn't handle hearing about sexual abuse and it would sink my ministry. It didn't. #MeToo."

In the months following allegations against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein of years of sexual abuse and assault, the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements saw thousands of people share their stories of abuse. (TAB)

Leading *the* way

Alabama riders hope to meet pastors, church members

(continued from page 1)
using the men and women of the 30 local F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapters throughout the state to cover specific regions on the map. F.A.I.T.H. Riders, a Florida-born motorcycle ministry that migrated into Alabama more than a decade ago, focuses solely on sharing the gospel through practical ministry. It's in the name itself — F stands for forgiveness, A for available (forgiveness is available), I for impossible (it is impossible to please God on our own), T for turn (from sin) and H for heaven.

Chapters will work to cover 150- to 200-mile stretches of road around the perimeter of the state.

Robert Rhodes, pastor of Cotton Baptist Church in Russell Baptist Association and national F.A.I.T.H. Riders chaplain, says the heart of the effort comes from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

"God has told us that 'if My people will humble themselves

and pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sins and heal their land,'"

Rhodes said. "Our Alabama chapters of F.A.I.T.H. Riders believe our state can lead the way for healing here and around the country."

While the project will begin on the state's perimeter, it will not end there. Cook said after the perimeter is covered, the organization



Photo courtesy of Jason Green

The vision and outreach of F.A.I.T.H. Riders Alabama 'will set the standard' for other states with F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapters, according to the organization's national director Mike Stewart.

will begin working through its local chapters to cover the interior of the state.

"We want people to know we are taking this seriously," Cook

said. "We want to get to every county and as many Southern Baptist churches as we can. We want to meet as many pastors

and church members as we can. We want them to know when we are going to be in their area so we can pray for them and with them. There's something very encouraging about experiencing another brother or sister in Christ praying with you."

Mike Stewart, national director of F.A.I.T.H. Riders, said it is only through prayer that meaningful ministry can take place.

Catching the vision

"The primary focus of this incredible motorcycle ministry is evangelism, but without prayer and the support of local pastors and churches our ministry would not be effective," he said. "This vision and outreach in Alabama will set the standard for the other 28 states with F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapters. We pray that other states will catch this vision and follow in Alabama's tracks."

Anyone is welcome to join the ride this summer, Cook said. (TAB)

For more information, contact Phillip Cook at faithriderphillip@gmail.com or 205-369-3770.

TAB subscriber receives anniversary book



Photo by Lonette Berg

Subscriber to *The Alabama Baptist* and member of Calcedonia Baptist Church, Centre, Kenneth Stinson received his copy of the 175th anniversary book, "*The Alabama Baptist: Celebrating 175 Years of Informing, Inspiring and Connecting Baptists.*"

Stinson was looking forward to the release of the book because "it tells about *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper and how it got started. The more you read it the more you will learn about Alabama Baptists," he said.

If you're interested in learning about the history of Alabama Baptists and would like to purchase a copy of "*The Alabama Baptist: Celebrating 175 Years of Informing, Inspiring and Connecting Baptists*" visit thealabamabaptist.org or wmstore.com and type "*The Alabama Baptist*" into the search bar. (TAB)

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

A.G. "Bo" Brantley



BRANTLEY

Little Escambia Baptist Church, Flomaton

Escambia Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: Acts 1:8

FAVORITE HYMN: "Without Him"

HOBBIES: Woodworking and vegetable gardening

FAMILY STATUS: Married for 59 years to wife, Dot; son, Mike; daughters, Sheri, McKenzie and DeeDee; nine grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren

Bo Brantley, 80, sees church and community activities as avenues for sharing Jesus Christ. Brantley is a deacon, trustee, Sunday School director and Discipleship Training teacher, as well as an agent for Woodmen of the World Life Insurance, board member of Flomaton Area Chamber of Commerce and Escambia County Health Care Authority and member of Gideon International since 1976. He hosts the "Sunday Down South" radio gospel hour on WKNU 106.3 in Brewton from 8 to 10 a.m. on Sundays.

Q: What influences in your life pointed you to Christ at the beginning of your faith journey?

A: The first full-time pastor we had at Little Escambia Baptist Church led me to the Lord one evening. ... He met me at the barnyard gate and began to talk to me. I accepted Christ right there. We were in a revival at the time. That Friday, I walked the aisle and professed Christ as my Savior. As a 15-year-old boy, I was baptized in a creek one Sunday afternoon with 55 other people.

Q: When and how were you led into your ministry work?

A: I became Training Union director at 15. That was a turning point. But it made me more aware of what God wants in my life. Several years later, I was on a pastor search committee and heard a man who was with Gideon International. I felt that was something I wanted to do, but I didn't qualify on business grounds. My wife

and I opened the Sears Catalog Store (in Flomaton) and that qualified me business-wise. In April 1976, I was accepted into the Gideon ministry.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: As a deacon, it demands that I be in church, do God's will and be in His work — visitation, teaching, leading others to be disciples. In Gideons, it allows me to work with pastors in our area in sharing Jesus Christ to those lost all over the world.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: Absolute joy. I love my church work. I love my Gideon ministry. It just keeps me involved in God's work.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in this in the future?

A: I intend to be involved in the church and the Gideon ministry as long as the Lord will allow me to pick up one foot and put it in front of the other. You don't retire from the Lord's work.

Q: What difference will this ministry work make for you in the future?

A: I ... hope that it would make me a better person, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather — that others might see Jesus in me.

Q: What difference has Jesus Christ made in your life?

A: He saved me as a sinner and made a better man out of me. He has had three opportunities to take me, but has left me here for a reason.✠

Order out of chaos

EDITOR'S NOTE — *This year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of my wife, Eleanor, who died from injuries suffered in an automobile accident in South Africa. For all of those 20 years I have tried to support people walking the grief journey as I was supported in that crisis time.*

It is only in the last few months that I have been able to write something I can share with others about the many crises of that experience and what I learned about God in the midst of grief. This article is part of that series. I pray it will be helpful to others walking the grief journey.

By Bob Terry
Editor, The Alabama Baptist

While a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps, Viktor Frankl learned to look into fellow inmates' eyes and accurately predict which prisoner would live and which would die. Later in his book "Man's Search for Meaning," Frankl wrote that if one has a purpose for living, one can endure the cruelest of circumstances. Without a purpose, life cannot be sustained.

I had a reason for living — my children, my 4-month old grandson, my calling to be editor of *The Alabama Baptist*. And I had God's promise that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." But that did not mean the grief journey would be smooth or always upward.

The first three years after Eleanor died I sat under an umbrella at the foot of her grave every July 20 between 6 and 6:30 p.m. That was the time Eleanor died. Every year it stormed at that time and more than once I sat there praying God would strike me with a lightning bolt. That would be an honorable way to die.

The loneliness was almost unbearable. Ours had been a good marriage and I longed for those days to return. One grandchild became two and then three and eventually four. I could not provide the support and help that Eleanor had when our first grandchild was born. My inability only compounded feelings of unworthiness.

Too soon I began dating and sometimes I pushed relationships too hard. Now I know that "find and replace" is a failed strategy for heartache. It prevents grief issues from being faced, but those issues eventually will demand attention, usually in unhealthy and destructive ways.

One can only work on one relationship at a time. Until issues related to one's former relationship and one's present identity have been worked through, the survivor has little to offer a new partner.

It took me about three years to begin to find a new sense of balance, to learn to live with an open wound. Often it was three steps forward and two back. But the falls were not as deep as before and it didn't take as long to regain the lost ground.

I quit pushing toward goals as if it all depended on me and began taking (dare I say enjoying) life as it came.

The leaders of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, asked me to be their interim pastor in 1999. I told them I was not sure I was able to help because I was still



Photo courtesy of Bob Terry
Pat and Bob Terry (back row, left and center) participate in a missions experience with International Mission Board missionaries Jonja Jacks (back row, right) and her husband, Ken, along with other missions team members and hospital personnel at Imanuel Hospital in Lampung, Indonesia, in 2017.

pretty broken from Eleanor's death. Ironically, Pleasant Ridge was the last church in which I preached the Sunday before Eleanor and I left for South Africa.

The leaders said their congregation was broken too — they had just had a split — and maybe we could help each other heal. In some ways, I think we did.

At the 125th anniversary of the church the following May, I was introduced to the daughter of one of the deacons — Patricia Hart, a professor at Samford University in Birmingham and former Southern Baptist missionary to Venezuela. The church still had a Woman's Missionary Union group named for her. We talked briefly and that was that.

More than a year later Pat and I made contact through circuitous circumstances and agreed to meet for dinner. I remembered our earlier meeting but not what she looked like. I found a Samford directory to look up her picture so I would recognize her when she arrived.

I arrived early and was watching the door in order to greet her appropriately. While I didn't expect it, it happened — when Pat stepped through the restaurant doors my heart jumped. Something inside of me said, "This is going to work."

'Bells and whistles and fireworks'

Sometime before, in a conversation with friends who also had lost their spouses, I shared how I had read that second marriages were more about companionship than the "bells and whistles" of early romances. One in the group dismissed that immediately saying she was looking for "bells and whistles and fireworks" in any future relationship.

That Sunday night it was all "bells and whistles and

fireworks" for me. We talked until the restaurant closed. We saw each other on Thursday and went to Samford Homecoming on Saturday. The next Saturday, I asked Pat to marry me and she said, "Yes."

That was October. We were married in March. We were both like teenagers caught up in a whirlwind romance. Our preoccupation with each other caused us not to be as considerate of other family members as we should have been. We had to work through that mistake with love, understanding and forgiveness.

Different people

There was one more challenge. I knew how to be Eleanor's husband. I had to learn how to be Pat's husband. Pat and Eleanor were different people. The relationships were different and that meant different ways of relating, acting and communicating.

And now more than 16 years later we both remain confident in who we are as individuals and as a couple because of love for one another and God's promise that we "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" us.

For neither of us did life work out as originally envisioned. But God is faithful and works amid all the circumstances of life to bring good for His children and honor to His name. Out of the chaos created by sin God brings order and wholeness.

That is why a visitor to our home will see God's promise recorded in Jeremiah 29:11 prominently displayed. The verse declares, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Our story is not over because the journey is not over. Life is never finished this side of heaven. We are always learning, always changing. But amid all the change and uncertainty one thing is sure — as believers we "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" us. ✠

LEARNING ABOUT GOD:

A Personal Story

Part 6 of 6



BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its third Sunday night singing May 20, 6 p.m. with Three in One. Everyone is invited. For more information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

COFFEE

► **New Home Church, Enterprise**, will hold a revival May 20–23. The Sunday service will begin at 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday services will be at 7 nightly. Rick Hayes will be the guest speaker. There will be special music each night. Clifford Quincey is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Michael Adams** is the new interim pastor of **Central Park Church, Decatur**. He previously served as interim pastor of other Alabama churches including First Church, Jasper, where he served as pastor prior to retirement.



ADAMS

MADISON

► **Hillwood Church, Huntsville**, will host Ivan Parker in

concert May 19, 6 p.m. For more information call 256-883-0485. Charles Freeman is pastor.

SAND MOUNTAIN

► **New Home Church, Pisgah**, will host a Bible camp May 14–16, 6:30 nightly. There will be a morning service May 15, 10 a.m. Special guests will include Phil Hoskins, Randy Hobbs, Heath Williams, the Higginbotham Family and The Diplomats Quartet. David Smith is pastor.

SELMA

► **Shiloh Church, Sardis**, will celebrate its bicentennial May 20 beginning at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Bill Gardner is pastor. ✝

UM announces summer intensives for ages 14–20

Students ages 14 to 20 are invited to audition for summer intensives in music theatre and worship arts in the first Summer Art Series of the Alabama School of the Arts at University of Mobile (UM).

The Gulf Coast Music Theatre Intensive will be held June 7–16 on the UM campus. The Gulf Coast Worship Intensive is set for June 11–15. Both intensives are designed for exceptional students eager to dive deep into an immersive experience that challenges and refines their talents.

The Summer Art Series is part of The Academy at the Alabama School of the Arts at UM. The Academy offers year-round in-

tensive training with private or class lessons for children, youth and adults. Programs are offered in music, theatre, art and dance.

Individual coaching

The Gulf Coast Music Theatre Intensive focuses on refining performers in their singing, dancing and acting techniques in a performance-based environment. Students will be taught and coached individually and in classes in movement, voice, acting and monologue, with individual and group rehearsals.

Students also will have the opportunity to practice auditioning skills and participate in various master classes.

The Gulf Coast Worship Intensive provides unique insight and training for the next generation of worship leaders. Worship Intensive is designed for every member of a worship team, including keys, bass, electric guitarists, lead vocals, background vocalists, drummers, rhythm guitarists and technicians.

Auditions are required for both intensives. Registration is underway and applications are due by May 15. For more information on audition requirements and program details, visit umobile.edu/theacademy, call the Alabama School of the Arts at 251-442-2553 or email theacademy@umobile.edu. (UM)



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Samford University President Andrew Westmoreland presents Mike McLemore's family with a resolution. Pictured are (l to r) daughter Britney, Westmoreland, son Brandon, wife Wanda and daughter Bonnie with her husband Luke Britt.

Samford holds 'Mike McLemore Day'

The late Mike McLemore, a longtime Alabama Baptist leader, was honored April 26 when Samford University President Andrew Westmoreland declared the day "Mike McLemore Day" on campus.

The recognition came at the regularly scheduled Board of Ministerial Mentors meeting at the university.

McLemore, who died Feb. 10 while serving as executive director of Birmingham Baptist Association, also previously served nearly 24 years as pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham.

During those years, he held leadership positions across the Alabama Baptist State Convention and Southern Baptist Convention, including serving as

state convention president from 2000 to 2002.

He also was a Samford alum, earning his bachelor's degree there before going on to earn a master of divinity degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Later he was awarded an honorary doctorate from University of Mobile.

Resolution

Westmoreland made the presentation of the resolution declaring Mike McLemore Day "in thanksgiving to Almighty God for this friendship and blessed memory of a life well-lived."

The resolution was presented to McLemore's wife of 47 years, Wanda; daughters, Britney and Bonnie; and son, Brandon. (TAB)

Boy Scouts name will be Scouts BSA

The Boy Scouts program for older youth will officially become Scouts BSA in February 2019 to reflect the organization's inclusion of young women.

Boy Scouts of America (BSA) said May 2 the organization itself will retain its name, as will Cub Scouting, the program for younger children that has already begun accepting girls, and Venturing, an outdoor adventure program for both boys and girls that became co-ed in 1969. The only name that will change is that of the program for youth ages 11–17.

Next year, girls will be able to join Scouts BSA, formerly Boy Scouts, and work toward the rank of Eagle Scout. This decision was made by BSA in 2017.

The Association of Baptists for Scouting says the single-gender troops will offer continued opportunities for youth development and ministry. (TAB)

Hobby Lobby returns illegally obtained artifacts to Iraq

Hobby Lobby has returned thousands of antiquities to Iraq after U.S. officials determined the artifacts were illegally obtained from Iraqi archaeological sites, making their purchase a violation of federal law.

The Oklahoma-based arts and crafts retailer will return 3,800 of the more than 5,500 objects it purchased in 2010 for \$1.6 million, according to news reports.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) determined Hobby Lobby bought the artifacts despite being warned by an "expert on cultural property law" that the objects could have been looted from Iraqi archaeological sites.

The boxes containing the artifacts were falsely labeled as "tile samples" and "ceramics" and came into the U.S. through a

United Arab Emirates-based supplier.

"The acquisition of the artifacts was fraught with red flags," the DOJ statement said.

A \$3 million fine

The antiquities, which include cuneiform tablets, cylinder seals and clay bullae, were returned to Baghdad on May 2. In 2017, Hobby Lobby agreed to pay a \$3 million fine to settle a civil lawsuit from the Justice Department over the acquisition.

Hobby Lobby President Steve Green said in a statement in July 2017 that the company "should have exercised more oversight and carefully questioned how the acquisitions were handled."

The antiquities were to be part of a collection of historical Bibles and other artifacts

about the Bible "consistent with the company's mission and passion for the Bible," Green said in the statement.

Hobby Lobby helped fund the Museum of the Bible, a \$500 million venture in Washington that contains some 40,000 biblical artifacts. The museum received \$201 million worth of artifacts from Hobby Lobby and the Green family's large collection of Christian pieces, *The Washington Post* reported.

The DOJ said Hobby Lobby had pledged to set up policies on the buying of cultural property, provide necessary training to its personnel, hire qualified outside customs counsel and customs brokers and submit quarterly reports to the government on any cultural property it buys for 18 months. (TAB)



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Imagery

Word of God

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

For a number of weeks Theology 101 will be looking at Christology or the Doctrine of Christ by considering some of the common images that are associated with Him, some of which He claimed for Himself and some that others used for Him. We are thinking of this as Christology through imagery.

Upon reading the first few verses of the Gospel of John, we encounter this image: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). So as not to leave us to ponder the point of reference, the later explanation is, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). Only Christ fits this description.

Christ as the Word

It has been common practice to suggest that new believers do well to begin their reading of the Bible with the Gospel of John. This suggestion is based on the observation that in many ways it has the simplest expression of the gospel message and has a common touch in presenting the message and mission of Christ. Paradoxically, however, scholars recognize there also is a depth to the fourth Gospel that continues to challenge the understanding of those who think deeply about the Christian faith.

A longstanding truism is that John is the Gospel in which a child may wade and an elephant may swim. This truth attaches especially to thinking about Christ as the Word. This week Theology 101 seeks to lay aside the exploration into how ancient philosophers used the idea of Word (or Logos) because that's not how the ordinary people of Christ's day would have understood or profited from the term. Instead we seek to ponder Christ as the Word in the more obvious or common meaning of the term.

Words are the common possession of all people, whether spoken, heard or read. The most basic intent of words is

communication. We convey thoughts by verbalizing them. God had a message to convey, so He communicated that message through One whom we might think of as the Word.

Several truths about Christ are immediately introduced. First is His eternality, expressed by the Gospel's opening phrase, "In the beginning was the Word" (1:1). Like God, He has always been. He is eternal, being without beginning of days or ending of life. Jesus spoke in prayer about the glory He had with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5).

Then follows the emphasis on Christ's divinity: "The Word was God." Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

Even so, along with His eternity and divinity there is His distinctiveness as one member of the Trinity. Thus it is twice emphasized that He was "with God" (1:1-2). In order to have been with God, He had to have had His own distinctive personhood, helping make possible God as three persons in One.

As the Word, Christ became the incarnate One: "The Word was made flesh (1:14). Thus, the Word that "was" also is the Word that "became." He is also the Word that "will be." This thought takes us to Revelation 19 where the Incarnate Word will be the Triumphant Word whose name is called "The Word of God" (v. 13) and who has written on His person and His robe, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (v. 16).

This week, ponder Christ as the Word of God — eternal, divine, incarnate and triumphant.✠

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



Alabama Baptists observe National Day of Prayer

Baptist churches and other groups across the state banded together May 3 to observe the National Day of Prayer.

All day long, dozens gathered at nearly 60 designated sites ranging from churches to courthouse steps to intercede for the nation. For all of the sites, this observance included public prayer; for some, it also included a meal, a message, music or even a Bible reading marathon.

Bible reading marathons

In Birmingham, Montgomery, Oneonta and Tuscaloosa, the day of prayer observance kicked off just such a marathon. As part of the event, volunteers take turns reading the Bible aloud over the city for several days until they have read it cover to cover.

Troy and Ozark also held Bible reading marathons starting April 29 and finishing up on the day of prayer.

"Today all across our country, people will gather for the National Day of Prayer," Steve Sellers, church relations manager for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, wrote on Facebook on May 3. "May we do so with a broken



Photo by Justin Abercrombie

Cammie Abercrombie reads aloud in downtown Ozark during the area's Bible reading marathon May 1.

repented heart crying out to the Lord for a Great Awakening."

He called on Christians to gather "with a hunger, a desire and a passion for the power of God to fall upon our nation."

The National Day of Prayer has been observed annually since 1952. (TAB)

"May we [gather for the National Day of Prayer] with a broken repented heart crying out to the Lord for a Great Awakening."

**Steve Sellers, church relations manager
Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries**

Thweatt speaks at pastors fellowship meeting



Photo by Michael Brooks

Shelby Baptist Association Director of Missions Hugh Richardson (left) welcomes Alabama Baptist State Convention President John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, to the Shelby Association pastors fellowship meeting held April 3 at Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster. Thweatt was the guest speaker at the meeting and spoke from Psalm 91. Charlie Dale, pastor of First Baptist Church, Indian Springs, in Pelham, is president of the Shelby Association pastors fellowship for 2018.

Seeing the harvest field

Progress continues at Alabama missions training center in Mentone

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Launch pads for future missionaries. That's how one missions team from Ohio describes the trail shelters they've built at the Nehemiah Teams Training Center in Mentone.

It's also a great way to describe the work that career International Mission Board (IMB) representative Jess Jennings hopes to see accomplished on the 60-acre property.

"Our vision is to lead students to finish the Great Commission in this generation," Jennings said.

Jess and his wife, Wendy, both natives of Alabama who have served with the IMB in Southeast Asia for more than 25 years, are especially eager to see Alabama Baptist students involved in missions. They help coordinate summer teams, Nehemiah Teams (NT) that serve internationally and Project 52 (P52) teams that serve in North America, as well as a semester-long gap-year program called

Advance Operations Training (AOT).

NT annually trains approximately 180 young adults ages 17 to 29 in outreach and evangelism strategies during a one-week orientation in Alabama at the beginning of summer. Though being a student is not a requirement, most participants are recent high school graduates and college students — a

prime age to be involved in missions, Jennings said.

"During their college years, students stand at many crossroads, making decisions that affect the rest of their lives. It is our prayer that through NT students stop long enough to consider God's call, the needs of the world and their role in the Great Commission. In this way, over many years perhaps a foundation for missions

involvement or even a missions movement can be laid," Jennings said.

After training, NT members head out across the globe to work with IMB missionaries in a variety of settings. Some will teach English, others will be involved in sports ministries and still others will head into remote areas to identify unreached

To see how your church can help, visit www.ntp52aot.com/donate. For more information on Nehemiah Teams and Project 52, visit www.NehemiahTeams.com, www.GoProject52.com and IMBStudents.org.

Missions team members from Jersey Baptist Church, New Albany, Ohio, cut plywood for the floor of a trail shelter at the Nehemiah Teams Training Center in Mentone.



Photo by Erika Bartlett



people groups and develop future strategies for missions.

'Many opportunities'

"Each year, there are many opportunities that students choose, meeting their gifts, interests and budget," Jennings said.

Since NT training began in Alabama in 2010, at least 1,000 students from 33 different states have been trained and sent out to serve. And since its inception in 2004, almost 3,000 young people have served

on more than 660 teams sent to multiple unreached people groups in 31 countries through NT.

Some NT students volunteer with P52, choosing assignments in North America instead of abroad, though the work is often similar.

"P52 teams have served in eight urban centers in North America among some of the most unreached people groups in the world. It has been more of a challenge to help students see this harvest field and stay in North America. God has brought the nations to our doorstep. We must welcome them," Jennings said.

Jennings hopes that in summer 2019, NT training can be held at the Nehemiah Teams Training Center. Since acquiring the property in 2015, missions teams from Catalyst Community Church, Gadsden; First Baptist Church, Fort Payne; Jersey Baptist Church, New Albany, Ohio; and Beulah Baptist Church, Muscadine, have built eight trail shelters designed to house NT trainees. Lea's Chapel Baptist and Violet Hill Baptist Church, both in Valley Head, and a local Lion's Club also have helped with construction. Four outhouses also have been completed.

More work is yet to be done, however. Another 15 shelters, two outhouses and several metal buildings intended for use as classroom space are still needed, as is site preparation work that will involve clearing trees and leveling land.

Missions teams are invited to join the work and donations are always welcome, Jennings said. ✝

Missions team members from Beulah Baptist Church, Muscadine, raise the back wall of a trail shelter at the Nehemiah Teams Training Center in Mentone.



Photo by Carrie Brown McWhorter

Geneva Association continues to lend helping hand

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Dicky McAllister says he never stops being surprised at how many people show up right in his backyard with a lot of needs.

“It’s amazing how many people from different states move into Geneva County, and when they do sometimes they only have what’s in the car they came in,” he said.

But McAllister says that’s right where he and other local Christians want to meet them, offer help and share the love of Christ.

For the past 12 years Geneva Baptist Association has run Christ’s Helping Hands Ministry, a resource that offers food, clothes and household goods as well as financial assistance for needs like rent and utilities.

“In the worst of times for people we want to do the best we can for those we reach,” said McAllister, director of missions for Geneva Association. “And we’re meeting spiritual needs through personal counseling, witnessing and encouragement.”

Meeting needs

That encouragement comes from the volunteers who keep the ministry running every day and pour into the lives of visitors. They meet people’s basic physical needs and they also sit down to eat lunch with some of the people who come to the center for help.

“Getting them around that table and fellowshiping with them is a big, big plus,” McAllister said. “They just see the depth of Christianity and they want to come back.”

That’s where the witness comes from, he said.

And for those who need counseling, that comes from McAllister, who walks the 30 steps across the parking lot from the associational office to Helping Hands often to sit down with people, listen and share truth.

“We sit down and really discuss some situations going on in their lives,” he said.

Changing lives

Over time, sometimes those relationships last, McAllister said. He’s seen Christ change people’s lives and he’s even gotten to perform weddings along the way.

“You get close and attached to people,” he said. “Sometimes they come in to the ministry a little reluctant, but they meet the people there and it can be a very encouraging experience for them.”

Keeping the ministry running is a full-time job, he said — the needs are great. It has its constant challenges, but it’s “a good experience and a great ministry,” he said.

And it’s well-supported, McAllister said. Helping Hands is held up by “a lot of dedicated servants” and the kind gifts of area Christians.

“We work on donations and people are very, very generous with their donations,” he said. “They flow in like a river.”

The ministry has grown to the point it always needs more volunteers and it desperately needs a building expansion, he said.

“We want to reach people at their point of need and always point them to Christ — that’s what we are here for,” McAllister said.

“God keeps blessing and we keep serving.”



Photo courtesy of Randy Hagan

In August 2017, The Truckers’ Chapel at the Embry Crossroads exit and truck stop held its first service. The mobile classroom, which was purchased after the tornadoes in 2011, was given to them.

Trucker’s burden for ministry leads to I-20 truckers’ chapel

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Harold Griffitt had always wanted to drive a truck. It was a desire he couldn’t shake so when he retired from his career at a paper mill he went to truck driving school.

He drove six years and he loved it.

But he came off the road in 2008 — the year he rededicated his life to the Lord — with a different vision that he couldn’t shake: He wanted to start a ministry to truckers.

It took him a while to get that cranked up too.

“I went into jail ministry and did that for nine years, but I never stopped thinking about what God had laid on my heart,” Griffitt said.

And when he finally mentioned it to Randy Hagan, director of missions for Coosa River Baptist Association, Hagan got excited.

“Harold proposed the idea about putting a ministry up and hosting worship services for truck drivers at a truck stop,” he said.

And Hagan loved it. Interstate 20 cuts right through the middle of Coosa River Association, so it seemed like a needed ministry. To get an idea of how something like that could work, he went and visited the state’s other truck stop ministry, a chapel off I-10 in Robertsdale.

And then he and Griffitt started putting their heads together.

“We decided to look into getting a portable classroom and we were struggling to find one we could afford,” Hagan said.

Then someone offered to give them a mobile classroom purchased after the tornadoes in 2011, a facility that was practically new. Now the truckers’ chapel had a building — it just needed a place to sit.

A couple of possible truck stops popped up along the way then got shut down, Hagan said. But then

Ken Allen Sr., a member of First Baptist Church, Talladega, said they could put the chapel at the truck stop he owned at Embry Crossroads. In fact, he said it was an answer to prayer.

“He had been praying for there to be a ministry like that for 20 years,” Griffitt said.

With that providential permission, Hagan and Griffitt powered on — only to be quickly stopped by the local government. But even that got cleared up as local officials allowed zoning changes to help the chapel open.

And in August 2017, The Truckers’ Chapel at the Embry Crossroads exit held its first service. It’s been a slow start, Griffitt said. Sometimes he only has one person attend. Other times he has several. But every Sunday and Wednesday he is there faithfully inviting truckers to come to Bible study.

“We’re just out there to reach America’s truckers for Christ,” said Griffitt, a member of First Baptist Church, Oak Grove, in Sylacauga.

It’s hard to reach them but they’re reachable, he said.

Hagan said Griffitt’s faithfulness is challenging and encouraging — he’s faithful on the days when truckers get offended by the invitation to worship and he’s faithful when he only gets to talk or pray with one person on any given day.

It could get heavy on a person’s heart, Hagan said, but he and Griffitt both know God has knocked down too many doors to get them there for it not

to be where He wants them.

“It’s a ministry that’s got to be there for the long haul, because you really have to earn the trust of truckers,” Hagan said. “Our results have not been tremendous, they’ve been small so far — but the reward is great. God’s got us there and I believe there is a divine appointment for some trucker down the road. Our goal is to be there to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.”



Photo by Elaine Scarborough

Geneva Baptist Association runs Christ’s Helping Hands Ministry, a resource that offers food, clothes and household goods as well as financial assistance for needs like rent and utilities.



Photo courtesy of Wesley Johnson

Harold Griffitt’s idea of creating a truckers’ chapel came to fruition in August 2017.

University of Mobile, Samford garner top rankings in new College Consensus

Two Baptist schools of higher education in Alabama have earned top ranks in the new College Consensus approach to evaluating colleges.

University of Mobile (UM) came in at No. 1 in the Best Regional College in the South category.

Samford University in Birmingham is ranked No. 4 in the Best Regional Universities in the South category.

In the Best Christian Colleges and Universities in the nation category, Samford is ranked No. 6 and UM is ranked No. 8.

In the Best Colleges in Alabama 2017-2018 category, Samford ranked No. 1 and UM ranked No. 7.

To identify the 2018 Top Colleges, College Consensus combined the latest results from the most respected college rankings with thousands of real student reviews to produce a unique consensus score for each school, according to an April 25 announcement.

The College Consensus ranking is a combined average of a school's average rating score from the most respected college rankings publishers, including *U.S. News & World Report*, and a school's average student review score from around the web, according to the site.

"Like Rotten Tomatoes or Metacritic does for movies,

College Consensus gathers the publisher rankings and student reviews from around the web and distills the results into simple, easy-to-understand scores so students can quickly and easily compare schools. It is the ranking of all rankings, so to speak," said College Consensus founder Jeremy Alder.

Crunching numbers

College Consensus says the rankings are "crunching the numbers, pure and simple, to see which colleges the experts admire and which ones the students love."

Several other Alabama colleges and universities are among the rankings. For the full list, visit collegeconsensus.com. (TAB, UM)



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TO THE ALABAMA BAPTIST'S SPRING EDITORIAL INTERN

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

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Johntown Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Johntown Baptist Church, 5201 Vance Rd., West Blocton AL 35184.

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Clearview Baptist Church in the Clay/Pinson/Trussville area is seeking a part-time worship leader to lead our Sunday worship. Must be comfortable and familiar with modern worship music and be able to work with our worship team and band. Contact Pastor Robbie Weems at 205-617-1277 or send resumé and/or supporting files to: connie@clearviewbaptist.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Eastside Baptist Church is searching for a part-time minister of music. It would be 15 hours a week. Resumés can be sent to: churchoffice@ebcbirmingham.org.

WORSHIP LEADER

Fairhope Community Church, Fairhope, is currently accepting resumés for a part-time worship leader for a blended worship service. Fax or email resumés to: 251-990-4449 or linda@fairhopecommunitychurch.org. More information: www.fairhopecommunitychurch.org/job-opening.

STUDENT MINISTER/ASSOCIATE PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Moody, is accepting resumés for full-time student minister/associate pastor. Please send resumés to: ATTN: Search Committee, 902 Church Street, Moody, AL 35004.

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Deerfoot Baptist Church is seek-

ing a part-time youth minister called by God who affirms the Baptist Faith & Message; who loves students and will model to them a growing relationship with Jesus. Minimum 2-years experience in youth ministry preferred. Deerfoot Baptist has a multipurpose facility to encourage growth of youth and family ministries. We welcome your resumé to: churchoffice@deerfootbaptist.org.

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Easley FBC, Easley, S.C., looking for a minister/director to children and families. 4-year degree/experience required, graduate study preferred. Web www.efbc.org/jobs. Submit resumés to: childrenministersearch@efbc.org.

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- 2 Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 3 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.
- 4 Look for *The Alabama Baptist (TAB) augmented reality logo* (example shown above). Hold your device over the logo and watch the paper come to life.
- 5 Each week when *TAB* arrives, open the app and look for the AR logos.



Charles Theo Kerby

Former Alabama pastor dies at 88

Former Alabama Baptist pastor Charles Theo Kerby died April 11. He was 88.

A Decatur native, Kerby served several Baptist churches in Alabama, Florida and Louisiana during his 55 years of ministry. One of them was Rocky Mount Baptist Church, Newton, in Dale Baptist Association, where he served from 2006 to 2010.

He also was an instructor in ethics and world religion at the Alabama Aviation and Technical College in Ozark.

Kerby was preceded in death by his wife, Rose Evelyn. He is survived by three children and four grandchildren. (TAB)



KERBY

Louise Donaldson

Retired southern Baptist missionary dies at 76

Louise Donaldson, a retired southern Baptist missionary, died April 10. She was 76.

A native of Johntown, Donaldson earned a bachelor's degree from Howard College in Birmingham (now Samford University) and a master of religious education from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She also trained in pastoral counseling at Georgia Baptist Hospital (now Atlanta Medical Center).

Following her studies, Donaldson served as an elementary school teacher in Tuscaloosa County and as children's director for Campbellsville Baptist Church in Kentucky.

She served with the International Mission Board in Brazil from 1971 to 2005, working as a missionary and school chaplain.

After she retired, Donaldson served tirelessly at Harvest Baptist Church, Coker, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association and in her community until her death. (TAB)

David McMichael

Former pastor of Huntsville's Mount Zion dies

David McMichael, former pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association, died April 14. He was 86.

During his 35-year ministry, McMichael also served churches in Kentucky and Illinois.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, and a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

McMichael is survived by three children. (TAB)

ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

McIntosh celebrates 15 years as executive director of Alabama WMU

Candace McIntosh said it seems like it was just yesterday that she was asked to step into the role of executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in 2003. She didn't take it lightly. And she knew that it wouldn't be about her — it would be about God and what He's doing through Alabama WMU.

"The one thing that has resonated in my heart is the word 'expectancy,'" she said. "With each new adventure the Lord places before us I live with a holy expectancy to see what He will do."

During the past 15 years she's seen God do amazing things over and over. "With each event, ministry project and operational change in the office, I am often left in awe seeing how He moves," McIntosh said.

Alabama WMU has a rich history, she said, yet it remains relevant in the lives of state Baptists today. Throughout the years it has picked up major projects to help relieve poverty, provide restorative justice, stop human exploitation, help those suffering from PTSD and aid refugees. It

has worked hard to help women in need find employment through Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC).

"Through the CWJC ministry women not only come to know the Lord but the whole spiritual dynamic of the family is changed as the mom begins to lead with a biblical worldview," McIntosh said.

It's one of many ministries run by Alabama WMU's "resilient, resourceful and responsive" members, she said. "I love watching God work through the members of Alabama WMU. It is His mission living out in their hearts that keeps us moving forward." (Grace Thornton)



MCINTOSH

Wolf honored as religious Citizen of the Year by area magazine

Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, was recently honored by *River Region Living* as Citizen of the Year: Religion.

"Wolf has been recognized and honored repeatedly not only in the River Region area but nationally and around the world," the March 10 article read.

As pastor of a "mighty church," Wolf has mobilized church members to impact thousands through more than 50 diverse ministry projects "striving to meet the needs of every age, race and type (of) person," the article read. In his 26 years, he started numerous programs including the church's Community Ministries, various feeding programs and the Barnabas Ministry, which provides encouragement and assistance to the unemployed.

River Region Living also recognized Wolf for his work in organizing churches of all denominations and backgrounds to join the One Montgomery initia-

tive, which promotes understanding and trust across racial and ethnic lines.

Wolf has stepped into other prominent roles as well. In April 2017 he was chosen to hold the Bible as Kay Ivey was sworn in as Alabama's new governor.

Douglas McElvy, a member of First Baptist, Montgomery, said, "There is no citizen of Montgomery more recognized, better known and more respected than Dr. Jay Wolf." (Grace Thornton)

Butler Baptist Association DOM Allen Winn to retire June 30

As a 10-year-old sitting in Sunday School, Winn heard the Bible story about the woman who wept and kissed Jesus' feet. Her humility and worship sparked something in Winn and he realized that the woman knew something he didn't. He soon accepted Jesus as his Savior.

Then in high school at a revival held by his home church Winn began to feel the calling of God. "I began to think that God was calling somebody else and I was just feeling the effects of it," Winn said. "But by the end of the revival I realized that it was me He was calling all along." That day Winn responded to God's calling into ministry and he has been faithful ever since.

On June 30, Allen Winn will retire from Butler Baptist Association where he has served as director of missions for the past 10 years.

When asked about his time at Butler Association, Winn said that "it's been a productive time for me personally. I feel like I have grown. ... I feel that the association has grown as well."

Winn has remained faithful to his calling by making himself available for whatever service God would have him do and by prioritizing his alone time with God.

"I have enjoyed working with everyone," Winn said. "I have really enjoyed the association."

Winn holds a bachelor's degree from Mobile College (now University of Mobile) and master of divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

And he may be retiring but Winn said he "won't be going anywhere." (Jessica Ingram)

Melissa Calton retiring after 30 years in children's ministry

Children are a special part of God's kingdom and Melissa Calton has dedicated more than 30 years of her life to ministering to children. On May 6 she retired from Community Baptist Church, Maylene, after 13 years as children's minister.

Before going to Community Baptist, Calton served at First Baptist Church, Helena. In 2002 she served on the Vacation Bible School (VBS) missions team for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. She also was the VBS director for the Shelby Baptist Association for six years.

"I see all children as little lambs looking for a shepherd and I love telling them about the Good Shepherd who's looking for them," Calton said.

She and her husband, David, have three children and two grandchildren. (Jessica Ingram)



WINN



WOLF

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announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

Award-winning

For the 22nd consecutive year, *The Alabama Baptist* has been named among the top regional Christian newspapers in the nation. Below is a list of awards won by *The Alabama Baptist* and other state Baptist entities based on work published in 2017.

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

▶ **The Alabama Baptist overall** by TAB staff — award of excellence, regional newspaper, overall (ACP); award of merit, print newspaper, overall (EPA)

▶ **Nov. 23 issue on ABSC annual meeting** by TAB staff — award of excellence, convention or meeting coverage (ACP)

▶ **“The Alabama Baptist: Celebrating 175 Years of Informing, Inspiring and Connecting Baptists”** by Liz Wells, Grace Thornton, Bob Terry, TAB staff — award of excellence, nonfiction book (ACP); first place, overall publication, book (BCA)

▶ **Feb. 2 issue** by Lauren C. Grim — award of merit, newspaper front page design (ACP)

▶ **“Communicating the gospel through storytelling”** by Lauren C. Grim — award of excellence, newspaper spread design (ACP)

▶ **Feb. 2, 2017, issue on Human Trafficking** by TAB staff — award of excellence, periodical, single issue (RCC)

▶ **“Faith and Family — Dealing with Disappointment”** by Carrie Brown McWhorter — first place, feature writing, series or package (BCA); award of merit, writing for publication (RCC)

▶ **www.thealabamabaptist.org** by TAB staff — award of merit, digital media (RCC)

▶ **Rashional Thoughts blog post “Processing Reality of Suicide”** by Jennifer Davis Rash — award of merit, digital media (RCC)

▶ **“Road to Redemption”** by Grace Thornton — third

place, feature article, more than 1,500 words (BCA); honorable mention, feature article (ACP)

▶ **“Editor Bob Terry challenges biblical reference”** by Brian Harris for Twitter and Maggie Walsh for Facebook counterpart — honorable mention, social media single post: Twitter (ACP)

▶ **“Uncle Cudjo”** by Grace Thornton — third place, feature article, 750–1,500 words (BCA)

▶ **“Forced Resignation”** by Jennifer Davis Rash — first place, news article, less than 750 words (BCA)

▶ **“Samford Controversy”** by Bob Terry, Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB staff — second place, news writing, series or package (BCA)

▶ **“The Loss of Sarah Harmening”** by Margaret Colson, Jennifer Davis Rash, Maggie Walsh — third place, news writing, series or package (BCA)

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

▶ **“A Litany of Thanksgiving”** by Doug Rogers — second place, script (BCA)

▶ **“Alabama BCA Beach Medley”** by Doug Rogers — third place, script (BCA)

▶ **Speak 2017 Wrap-up** by Doug Rogers — third place, video, other (BCA)

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

▶ **“Forever Samford”** by Division of Marketing and

Communication — first place, brochure design (BCA)

▶ **2016 Annual Report** by Division of Marketing and Communication — award of excellence, annual report (RCC); first place, annual report design (BCA)

▶ **Samford University Beeson Magazine** by Division of Marketing and Communication — award of excellence, design, overall publication (RCC)

▶ **Samford University Arts Brochure** by Division of Marketing and Communication — award of merit, design, overall publication (RCC)

▶ **“Devlin Hodges Shoots for the Walter Payton Award”** by Division of Marketing and Communication — first place, video, other (BCA)

▶ **“Bach Among Theologians”** by Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School — second place, audio, other (BCA)

▶ **School of the Arts at Samford University** by Division of Marketing and Communication — second place, video promotion, less than 3 minutes (BCA)

▶ **“Why Beeson?” Overview** by Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School — second place, video promotion, more than 3 minutes (BCA)

▶ **“Forever Samford, Parents Scholarship Fund”** by Division of Marketing and Communication — third place, video promotion, more than 3 minutes (BCA)

TUSCALOOSA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

▶ **“Night to Shine”** by Bethany Rogers — second place, photography feature, series (BCA)

Associated Church Press (ACP); Baptist Communicators Association (BCA); Evangelical Press Association (EPA); Religion Communicators Council (RCC)

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‘Godly men’

FBC Robertsdale men to start ministry for fatherless boys

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Ronnie Hall was growing up, he had a lot of pent-up anger — and a lot of it was aimed at his dad.

“I did not have the best role model growing up,” said Hall, a member of First Baptist Church, Robertsdale. “When that happens, you can go astray, which I very much did in my early years.”

That’s why a certain booth at a men’s conference in Mobile caught his eye a few months ago — a booth for Kids Outdoor Zone (KOZ), a ministry aimed at helping Christian men invest in fatherless boys.

It was manned by T.J. Greaney, an outdoor journalist from Texas who had started KOZ almost by

accident through a boys’ Sunday School class years ago.

“Back then, teaching third through fifth grade boys, I would take the Scripture passage and the virtue for the week and develop hunting and fishing stories to go with it,” Greaney said. “We would walk around outside on the grounds and I would tell them the stories. They loved it.”

And the class grew. The boys kept bringing more friends who all needed a man’s influence.

“Our group grew so big that I had to get my buddies who were not really doing anything at church to come help me,” Greaney said.

Over time, the men started organizing Saturday activities for the



Eight men from FBC Robertsdale recently trained to be Kids Outdoor Zone leaders, with plans to kick off the outdoor ministry in June.



GREANEY

boys like fishing and learning survival skills.

They caught fish. They took nature hikes. And boys kept showing up.

“We loved hanging out with them and we began to find out that some of the single moms really relied on it,” Greaney said. “They wanted their boys exposed to some good godly men and outdoor activities.”

Soon after, he started writing curriculum so that other churches could use it. And over time KOZ was born. The concept was so impactful that early on Greaney was considered for his own reality show — a spot he lost to the Duck Dynasty folks.

But God had plans to expand his reach in a different way.

Now Greaney travels around training churches to start their own KOZ ministry, a layman-run outreach to young boys that takes

place one Saturday a month. Seventy churches — some as far away as Canada — have started a KOZ ministry of their own.

First Baptist, Robertsdale, will be Alabama’s first.

And Hall is excited about it — he said he feels it’s something they are compelled to do.

“Mentoring a young man is very important,” Hall said. “We’ve got a great need for this here.”

Eight men at the church recently trained to be KOZ leaders, with plans to kick off the ministry in June.

The men will start by inviting boys in their own church and boys who come to a Friday night basketball ministry that the church runs at its old campus. They will use the abilities and resources the men already have — acres of hunting land with ponds.

From there, the men at First, Robertsdale, can expand as God leads, Greaney said. He noted that in many cases, people in the community hear about what’s happening and start approaching them to be a part.

“Many organizations and foster care parents are desperate for male mentors for kids,” he said. “When they hear you are doing it they want to be involved.”

For Greaney, this whole ministry is personal, much like it is for Hall.

“I was raised in a broken home and spent a lot of time on the streets as a kid making a lot of really bad decisions,” he said.

He wants to break that cycle for the next generations, if he can. And not just that — he wants to get men plugged in to meet that need in a way that fits them.

‘A real need’

“There’s a real need for this kind of outdoor ministry in churches,” Greaney said. “There are so many men who are desperately seeking something tangible they can do that has a real impact on the community.”

Josh Lilly, pastor to families at First, Robertsdale, said KOZ is a ministry that brings men together for a purpose.

“It’s easy to get started,” he said. “Ronnie had the vision and T.J.’s ministry has a good plan that church members — not pastors — can run. We are excited to see what God is going to do.”

For more information about Kids Outdoor Zone, visit kidsoutdoorzone.com.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 13

Explore the Bible By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

BECOMING NEW 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, 6:1-2

Reborn (5:16-17)

We live in a world where magazine covers show pictures of men and women who are “flawless” and the advertisers tell us we need to be like them. Some men and women even try to find their “true self” by having gender reassignment surgery to fulfill their true desire. The tragedy of this is that all of these strivings are futile because the only way to find our true identity is in Jesus Christ.

One can see this in the life of Paul. Paul was on the road to Damascus looking to arrest Christians when Jesus appeared as a bright light, spoke to him, and changed him and his desires (see Acts 9:1-9).

Paul found he was a new creation because he now identified with Christ, leading him to pen one of the most profound verses in the entire Bible, 1 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Look, new things have come.”

Paul emphasizes that the gospel brings hope for all people. Anyone who chooses to follow Christ and accept the gospel is a new creation. All sins are forgiven, and we are free to live a life pleasing to God.

This is why Jesus spent so much time with sinners — because they recognized their need for forgiveness which only He could provide. Because of this forgiveness we need to share this good news. The most vile wretched sinner can be made completely new regardless of past action, race or culture.

Reconciled (5:18-21)

The root of being a new creation in Christ is that our sins are forgiven and we are now God’s ambassadors, representing Christ here on earth. This is a vital task

and we need to always remember our duty as ambassadors. Just like an ambassador to a country needs to act in a way that accurately reflects the attitudes and beliefs of the country he or she represents, we need to be sure to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

Loving our neighbors, being kind and compassionate to one another and forgiving each other are all ways that Christians can show the love of God and stand out from the culture.

Our culture is one that seeks to lord victory over opponents and mock those who fail. This is not the way of a Christ follower. Living for God will make us stand out from the culture and give us a chance to be witnesses for Christ.

Of course, we can do this because we have been reconciled to God. In fact, Paul says that the Father has placed our sin upon the sinless one — Christ — so that His wrath can be appeased. God hates sin and must punish it.

Christ lived a sinless life and then died in our place, substituting Himself for us so that those who accept this and believe in this have their sins atoned for by this work of Christ on a cross. Because of Christ’s sinlessness He is able to be our perfect substitute.

Ready (6:1-2)

Since the gospel is so important, it is vital that we represent Christ accurately and present the gospel to others. Our actions influence how others perceive the gospel, so we need to live godly lives in Christ Jesus.

It also is imperative that we seek to tell others about Jesus so they too can be reconciled to God. The Bible is clear that Jesus is the only way for humans to be reconciled (see Acts 4:12) so we need to make the most of every opportunity to tell others.✠

Bible Studies for Life By James Riley Strange, Ph.D. Associate Professor of New Testament, Samford University

STAND WITH HUMILITY Esther 5:1-14

Review chapters 3 and 4. Today we begin to see the culmination of Haman’s plot to kill Mordecai by convincing the Persian king to issue a decree to execute all Jews in the Empire and Esther’s counter plan to undo Haman.

Take a look at your Bible map of the Persian Empire. The Empire was vast, stretching from the Indus River in the East (modern-day Pakistan) to European Macedonia in the West, as far north as the old southern Soviet republics, and south into Egypt and Libya in North Africa. It included, of course, Judea and Jerusalem. The size of the massacre being planned is immense.

Take the initiative and act with humility. (1-8)

“On the third day” refers to the three-day fast for which Esther has called. In a religious system dominated by males, Esther’s inauguration of a community fast stands out. Her presence “in the inner court of the king’s palace” (v. 1) means she is fulfilling her promise to try to save her people at the risk of her own life.

She has said the king will kill anyone who enters this part of the palace without being called unless he holds out his golden scepter to the perpetrator (4:9-11). We have seen King Ahasuerus’s favor toward Esther but we also have seen him agree, apparently with no moral qualms, to slaughter all Jews. So at verse 1 we do not know what will happen to Esther. Verse 2 resolves the mystery; she will survive. For now.

We still do not know whether she will succeed in convincing the king not to carry through with the decree. If she fails, she will die because she is a Jew.

As clever as Haman is, Esther is clever.

Often people with little overt power must use subversive power and intelligence when dealing with the dominant elite. Esther plays on the king’s pliability and on Haman’s ego by inviting them to a banquet one night and then to another banquet the next night. Remember, the word for “banquet” really means something like a cocktail party. No food is mentioned, only wine.

Three times the king will promise to give Esther “half of his kingdom.” Like Herod Antipas in Matthew 14, Ahasuerus is a drunk, rash buffoon.

Pride brings no satisfaction. (9-14)

Esther is setting up Haman for his fall by using his pride against him. Pride is the source of his rage at Mordecai, who refuses to bow prostrate before him, and it blinds him to Esther’s true motives.

He is convinced that the beautiful queen has invited him to two nights of drinking with her and the king because of his wealth and position. Pride also keeps him from enjoying the honor Esther supposedly is showing him. The sight of Mordecai, standing in defiance of the law while others prostrate themselves, sours his stomach.

Like Haman, pride can convince us that our status reflects our true importance, that we are entitled to accolades. When we don’t receive what we think is our due, at best we sulk and at worst we work to harm those who have offended us. Yes, Christians do this too, not just Amalekites. This is why Jesus had to preach humility to His disciples (Matt. 5:3, 5), and why Paul had to do the same to his churches (Gal. 5:6-6:4; Phil. 2:3).

Let us shun the Haman in us and follow the example of Esther. Let us risk much in order to do God’s justice in the world, and if no one recognizes us for it, let justice be its own reward.✠

Christian Crossword

By Pamela Jensen Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. ___, and be not afraid. (Matt. 17:7)
5. Be of good ___. (Isa. 41:6)
11. I will bless her, and ___ thee a son. (Gen. 17:16)
12. I will ___ all the families. (Jer. 1:15)
13. American Library Association. (abbr.)
14. Symbol for element rubidium.
15. Every man according to his ___. (Acts 11:29)
17. The kingdom of ___ in Bashan. (Josh. 13:12)
18. Salah begat ___. (Gen. 10:24)
19. Airport code for Tel Aviv/Jaffa, Israel.
20. British rank above viscount and below marquis.
21. Ex officio. (abbr.)
22. A small, low islet of coral. (abbr.)
24. Extravehicular activity. (abbr.)
26. Turn ___ unto me. (Zech. 1:3)
27. Minnesota. (abbr.)

28. ___ shall offer it. (Lev. 1:3)

30. The ___ of the Lord. (John 12:38)
33. Capital of South Korea.
36. Play on the hole of the ___. (Isa. 11:8)
39. And ___ is the way. (Matt. 7:14)
42. Daughters shall be ___. (Isa. 60:4)
44. A company or group.
45. A group of five.
46. One ___ without blemish. (Num. 6:14)
47. Master of Arts. (abbr.)
49. Eleazar the son of ___. (2 Sam. 23:9)
50. Eight quarts.
51. For the sky is ___. (Matt. 16:2)
53. Actual Weight. (abbr.)
54. Large open Eskimo boat.
56. I come to ___ thy will. (Heb. 10:9)
57. Monsignor. (abbr.)
58. The Lord is ___ hand. (Joel 1:15)
59. The patience of ___. (James 5:11)

Down

1. Make an ___ with me. (Isa. 36:16)
2. A narrow strip of fabric.
3. Intravenous. (abbr.)
4. ___ me ... and know my heart. (Ps. 139:23)
5. Whosoever shall ___ on the name. (Acts 2:21)
6. In her mouth was an ___ leaf. (Gen. 8:11)
7. Ultimate. (abbr.)
8. Associate in Arts. (abbr.)
9. To him be ___. (Rev. 1:6)
10. He shall fly as an ___. (Jer. 48:40)
12. In the ___ of David. (Luke 2:4)
16. To Jerusalem every ___. (Luke 2:41)
23. Sixth century b.c. Greek author of fables.
25. Of more ___ than many sparrows. (Luke 12:7)
29. I will not ___ it. (Gen. 18:30)
31. Ye also have a ___ in heaven. (Col. 4:1)
32. ___ is the way. (Matt. 7:13)
34. One little ___ lamb. (2 Sam. 12:3)

35. To remove the contents.
37. ___ with that holy Spirit of promise. (Eph. 1:13)
38. Doctor of Pedagogy. (abbr.)
40. Sharp ___ of the mighty. (Ps. 120:4)
41. I have heard a ___ from the Lord. (Jer. 49:14)
43. Registered Nurse (abbr.)
47. All eat the same spiritual ___. (1 Cor. 10:3)
49. Seven days under the ___. (Lev. 22:27)
50. Airport code for Peoria, Illinois.
52. Female deer.
55. Now it came ___ pass. (Ruth 1:1)





Media reviews

TV/MOVIES

Also streaming this month

Amazon Prime

▶ **“Eight Men Out”** (May 1, PG) — It’s the story of the 1919 “Black Sox” scandal that forever changed baseball. But beware: Despite its PG rating, this 1988 film has some rough language. A PG-13 rating would have been more appropriate.

▶ **“Rocky”** through **“Rocky V”** (May 1, various ratings) — I’m not a boxing fan, but the U.S.-vs.-Soviet Union storyline in “Rocky IV” still gives me chills. Of course, these films may not be appropriate for the kids. “Rocky V” is rated PG-13. The others are PG.

▶ **“Dino Dana,” Season 2** (May 22, TV-G) — In this animated children’s series, a young, budding paleontologist interacts with real (CGI) dinosaurs in her backyard. I enjoyed watching season one with my children, but you might want to screen an episode first to ensure it’s appropriate.

Netflix

▶ **“A Little Help with Carol Burnett”** (May 4, rating unknown) — Children dish out advice to help celebrities solve their life problems. Comedy icon Carol Burnett hosts it. I haven’t watched a screener but the trailer looks promising.

▶ **“Coco”** (May 29, PG) — A little Mexican boy who loves music is transported into the Land of the Dead, where he meets his deceased relatives in hopes that they will bless his musical career. This Disney/Pixar flick is artistically beautiful although the worldview may concern some parents. (My youngest kids haven’t watched it yet.)

▶ **“Chonda Pierce: Enough”** (currently streaming, TV-PG) — We get a glimpse of the Christian comedian on and off the stage following the death of her husband.

Hulu

▶ **“Eight Men Out”** (May 1, PG) — See above.

▶ **“Rocky”** through **“Rocky V”** (May 1, various ratings) — See above. †



Photos courtesy of Animal Planet

Animal Planet’s ‘River Monsters’ stars extreme angler Jeremy Wade as he investigates mysterious attacks on people and animals and then finds the water predator that was the culprit.

‘River Monsters’ tops new streaming entries

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

What do you get when you combine Bear Grylls and Bill Dance, and then toss in a little history, a ton of mystery and even some cultural education?

The answer: You get Animal Planet’s “River Monsters,” which stars extreme angler Jeremy Wade as he investigates mysterious attacks on people and animals — and then finds the water

predator that was the culprit.

Sometimes he catches a fish, while other times he lures in something stranger, like an eel or a squid. But whatever he pulls up from the deep, the show is always edge-of-your-seat fascinating.

Binge watching

It began airing in 2008 but I didn’t discover it until recent weeks — thanks to my 10-year-old son Graham — when Amazon Prime added the first nine seasons to its catalogue. Ever since, he and I have been on a

“River Monsters” binge.

The 62-year-old Wade is the perfect fit for the show, with a skill level and flare for boldness and bravery that few could muster. The British native also speaks about a dozen languages, which benefits him when he’s in the jungles of Africa or the countryside of Peru.

For Christian families, there are only three caveats: the show can be intense, he occasionally swears (mostly d—n) and he often discusses local religions.

With my 10-year-old son, I’ve used the show as a stepping stone to discuss cultures, worldviews and false gods — with extreme fishing as a backdrop. †

Meet the reviewer

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



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'Great spirit'

Former Iowa Mr. Basketball relies on faith in NBA quest

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Jarrood Uthoff's pro basketball career has been marked by change but what hasn't changed is Uthoff's devotion to the faith he found as a player at the University of Iowa. "I grew up Catholic but never really knew what it means to be a Christian," Uthoff, an All-American at Iowa, said. "I knew it was important to be a Christian. I grew up with that mentality. I always believed in God. I thought ... following the Ten Commandments was going to get me to heaven."

He credits two people, his then-girlfriend now-wife Jessie, and former Iowa director of basketball operations Billy Taylor, for leading him to Christ and opening his eyes to what being a Christian means.

Iowa's Mr. Basketball in 2011 as a senior at Jefferson High School in Cedar Rapids, Uthoff (pronounced You-hoff) began his college career at the University of Wisconsin. After a redshirt season in 2011-12, he played briefly during the 2012-13 season but transferred to Iowa mid-season. Uthoff paid his own way to play for the Hawkeyes but had to sit out much of the 2012-13 season because of NCAA transfer rules.

During that time, he dedicated himself to basketball and his studies in economics.

"I wasn't the party type. I didn't go out. I hung out with (Jessie). It was basketball and academics," said Uthoff. Through conversations about faith with Jessie, Taylor and others on the Iowa basketball staff, Uthoff learned "what Christianity really is" and became a believer in Jesus.

Earning honors

He also earned honors on the court and off. His senior season he was second team All-American, first-team All-Big 10, All-Big 10 Defensive team and Academic All-American of the Year for Men's Division 1 basketball with a 3.42 grade point average.

Uthoff signed a multiyear contract with the Dallas Mavericks in March 2017 and played in nine games, averaging 4.4 points, 2.4 rebounds and

one assist. He was traded in June of that year to the Houston Rockets and waived a month later. In September he was signed by the Indiana Pacers but was released in October. He now plays for the Fort Wayne Mad Ants, an Indiana Pacers affiliate in the NBA's G-League, the official minor league for the NBA. The 6-foot-9-inch power forward has averaged 12.7 points, 6.87 rebounds, 1.9 assists and 1.03 blocks during the 2017-18 season.

The moves have not discouraged him, he said.

"It's been a wonderful ride. I tell you that much.

I have enjoyed every bit of it because every place I have been I have learned something new," said Uthoff, 24. Uthoff's strength is versatility on both ends of the court. He is able to space the floor on offense, attack the rim and pass at the same time. On defense he can guard multiple positions.

Dallas center/power forward Nerlens Noel said of Uthoff, "He spreads the floors, shoots the ball. He has great court awareness, great love for the game. He is a good asset to have." Noel, who played at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, also called Uthoff "one of the most humble kids" he has known.

"I think he is very gracious, very appreciative of everything. He works very hard. He has a great spirit with him. Being

around the right guys who are good guys is very contagious for a young team. To have a great group of a young core continues to build (the team)," Noel said.

Uthoff said he still enjoys the game tremendously.

"It's nice to go out and play, run up and down the court. A lot of time in the NBA young guys don't get a chance every day. You relish the opportunity," he said.

He also says his spiritual life is better than ever. He and Jessie read the Bible together, and Uthoff said he relies on his faith to navigate pro basketball waters.

"I am finding new things about myself and continue to grow," he said. "You try to live with a Christ-like consciousness and unconditional love. You play for the glory of God and for Jesus. Obviously He died on the cross for our sins and made it possible for us to go to heaven. He means everything." ✠



Jarrood Uthoff

Photo courtesy of Fort Wayne Mad Ants

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

Navy defends Bible in 'Missing Man' display

OKINAWA, Japan — The United States Navy has rejected demands that it remove a Bible on display at a "Missing Man" table honoring prisoners of war and those missing in action at the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa.

The Christian Post reported that the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and 26 families in Okinawa sent a complaint to Rear Adm. Paul D. Pearigen alleging that the Bible's inclusion was a violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and constituted a government promotion of religion.

Pearigen countered the protest by explaining that the Missing Man table has been a part of military tradition since it began at the end of the Vietnam War. He stated that since the Bible is one of nine symbolic references on the table and not the main focus of the table, it does not violate any military or constitutional laws. (TAB)

'Nones' get their first congressional caucus

WASHINGTON — Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and organizations promoting atheism, agnosticism and humanism recently announced the creation of the first Congressional Freethought Caucus.

Ron Millar, political and PAC coordinator at the Center for Freethought Equality, said in a statement that the caucus will "help end discrimination against nontheist candidates and elected officials, allow candidates and elected officials to be authentic about their religious beliefs," and encourage atheists, agnostics and humanists to consider runs for political office.

The Congressional Freethought Caucus was founded by four representatives, all Democrats: Jared Huffman of California, Jamie Raskin of Maryland, Jerry McNerney of California and Dan Kildee of Michigan. It will be chaired by Huffman and Raskin, who identify as humanists. (RNS)

New Jersey court says no to church grants

TRENTON, N.J. — The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled April 18 that government grants used to repair and restore 12 historic churches in Morris County, New Jersey, violated the state constitution's ban on aid to religion.

The churches, all of which maintain active congregations, were awarded more than \$4 million in government grants from 2012 to 2015 as part of a historic preservation project.

The court found the funds in question were used specifically for religious purposes — specifically to "sustain the continued use of active houses of worship for religious services and finance repairs to religious imagery" — and not for neutral purposes as was at issue in the U.S. Supreme Court's Trinity Lutheran Church playground decision. (TAB)

Huntsville man accused of embezzlement

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — A Huntsville man was arrested April 19 and charged with first-degree theft of property from his church, Mayfair Church of Christ.

Lieutenant Michael Johnson told WHNT News that Gary "Tripp" Bradley, the grandson of Mayfair's church growth minister Gary Bradley Sr., started depositing checks from Mayfair Church in the fall of 2017. A Redstone Federal Credit Union employee noticed Bradley was depositing checks into a personal account and notified the church who later notified authorities. Bradley is out on bond. A hearing is scheduled in May. (TAB)

Gender-related bathroom bill fails in Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Voters in Alaska's largest city have defeated a referendum that would have required people to use public bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender at birth as listed on their birth certificate.

Proposition 1, which was proposed by nonprofit Christian policy group Alaska Family Action, was defeated by a 53-47 margin. (TAB)