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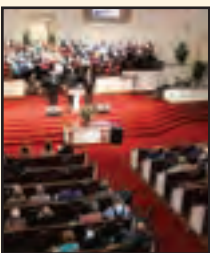
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Photo by Carrie Brown McWhorter

IMPORTANCE OF
social skills

Having strong in-person, interpersonal communication skills can help recent grads

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

College grads preparing to enter the workforce are armed with lots of knowledge when it comes to subject matter or trade-specific know-how, but having strong social skills can be just as critical to landing — and keeping — that first job.

The good news, says human resources professional Tiffany Sides, is that many young people

today possess strong in-person and interpersonal communication skills, helping them interview well, build relationships with co-workers and give and receive feedback in a mature manner.

Hard-working group

“They seem to listen well to feedback and communicate well with their managers,” said Sides, who has worked in human resources for 25 years. “For the most part, they seem at ease working with people

outside of their generation as well.”

They also tend to be a group of hard workers, said John Roland, director of development and marketing at The Foundry Ministries. He goes as far as to call younger workers “the hardest working employees we have.”

“I have been incredibly blessed with the young people I directly work with who are completely dedicated to our mission and who selflessly serve the volunteers and program participants,” he said.

“They give so much because they fully believe in our vision and mission and are our best brand ambassadors.”

Where does this generation fall short?

According to Sides, they need to be better about making themselves available to nondigital communication during the interview process.

“So many don’t include a phone number on their resumé, and yet hiring managers want to have a
(See ‘Younger,’ page 12)

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.”

Southern Baptist Convention
annual meeting

PREVIEW COMING NEXT WEEK

DALLAS

COMMENT

Are You an Apostle?

Apostle” is not a term often used in Baptist circles. For most Baptists the word connotes the Twelve disciples of Jesus who are called apostles in Matthew 10:2–4 and Luke 6:13–16. Luke says that Jesus chose the apostles — Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John (the sons of Zebedee), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon the Zealot, Judas (the son of James, also called Thaddeus) and Judas Iscariot — from among a larger group of disciples.

This point is made again in Acts 1:21–22 when Peter stipulated that candidates to replace Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus and then committed suicide, had to be believers who had traveled with Jesus from His baptism to His ascension following the resurrection. Matthias and others evidently met this qualification.

But the New Testament refers to others as apostles. Most notably the Apostle Paul refers to himself as an apostle. Acts 9 tells the story of Saul of Tarsus (later known as Paul the Apostle) meeting the Lord on the road to Damascus.

Paul argued that like the original Twelve, his calling came directly from Jesus (Gal. 1:1) and that he had a specific mission. He was an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13).

New Testament examples

Our preconditioned interpretation of the word “apostle” sometimes causes us to miss that the New Testament refers to others as apostles. For example, Acts 14 twice refers to Barnabas as an apostle. The clearest reference is verse 14. In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas were thought to be incarnations of Roman gods. The Bible says, “But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd.”

That reference helps us understand verse 4. Paul and Barnabas were teaching in the synagogues in Iconium. Their preaching caused a division in the city. Verse 4 says “some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles” — a reference to Paul and Barnabas.

James, the brother of Jesus also is called an apostle. The list of Jesus’ post-resurrection ap-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

pearances includes an appearance to James (1 Cor. 15:7). There is no evidence that James believed in Jesus prior to that time. Certainly he was not one of the original Twelve Apostles.

Yet in Galatians 1:18, Paul tells of a visit to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter. He adds, “But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord’s brother” (v. 19). Evidently the early church viewed James as an apostle too.

Romans 16:7 expands the group known as apostles even more. There Andronicus and Junias, who were believers before Paul, are described as “outstanding among the apostles.” These two whom Paul calls his “fellow prisoners” were known as outstanding apostles.

Evidently there were others who claimed to be apostles. Paul is blunt when he writes in 2 Corinthians 11:13: “Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

Obviously the New Testament indicates the term “apostle” was used more widely than the original Twelve chosen by Jesus.

When Jesus chose the Twelve and appointed them apostles, He did not invent a new word for their new charge. Rather Jesus chose a term already in common use. Understanding of that word is provided in 2 Corinthians 8:23.

In the passage, Paul commends Titus and other “brethren” to the Corinthians. Of them he writes, “They are messengers of the churches.” However, the word translated “messenger” in this verse is the same word for apostle. That is the key.

According to the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, the Greek word for apostle means “a title denoting a commissioned messenger or ambassador.”

Jewish life employed the same concept. Priestly leadership of the temple in Jerusalem regularly sent out emissaries to visit the wider Jewish population. These representatives were called

“shaliah” in Hebrew and their functions were similar to apostles in the Greek language. They usually traveled in twos, preached and taught in the synagogues and collected taxes to support the Jerusalem temple, scholars say.

Interestingly, Matthew 10:5 says that after selecting the Twelve and calling them apostles Jesus sent them out. They were to preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand and they were to heal the sick as evidence of that new kingdom. The pattern Jesus used elsewhere was to send the disciples in pairs like the “shaliah.”

Jesus used a term and a pattern with which all were familiar. But His was not a political commission. Jesus gave a religious commission to carry out the purposes of God for man’s salvation.

The commission of the Church was not limited to Jesus sending out the disciples prior to His crucifixion, however. The early Church clung to

the commission given by the Resurrected Jesus. The closing verses of Matthew record Jesus charging the Twelve to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Luke 24:47 quotes Jesus as saying, “Repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations.”

John 20 may expand the group receiving Jesus’ commission beyond the Twelve Apostles. Mary Magdalene may have been present. So may have been others who were in the group that fol-

lowed Him from baptism to that very moment. To these Jesus says in verse 21, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Acts 1:8 records the instruction to be witnesses for Jesus “to the ends of the earth.”

Jesus saw Himself as sent by God for man’s salvation and commissioned His disciples to proclaim that message.

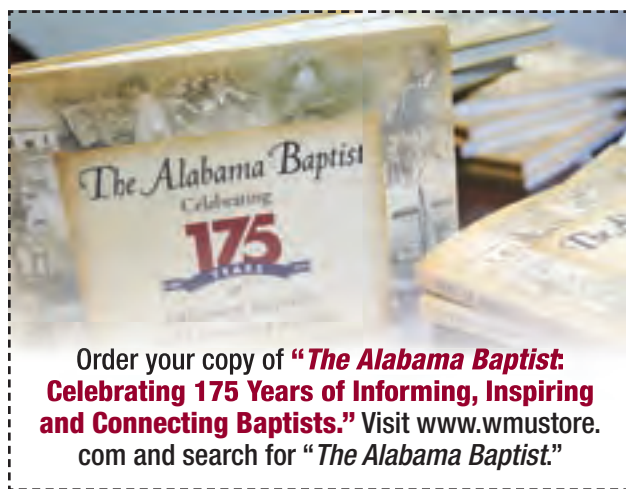
Final directives

The Christian Church has understood these commissions as binding on all Christians. These final directives make a lifelong claim on the lives of all who have seen the Resurrected Lord through eyes of faith, who believe Jesus paid the price for sin and His resurrection ushered in the kingdom of God.

Understood in this light, all Christian believers are to be disciples of our Lord, messengers of His grace and apostles of His salvation.

No, we are not like the Twelve whose names will be written on the 12 foundation stones of the New Jerusalem but we are all charged to be messengers — to be apostles — of our Lord.✠

“Jesus saw Himself as sent by God for man’s salvation and commissioned His disciples to proclaim that message. The Christian Church has understood these commissions as binding on all Christians.”



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

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'Movement of God'

Bible reading marathons bring believers from all denominations together

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

You may think that sharing Jesus is difficult, but Justin Abercrombie said he's found a contender. "It may be just as hard to read the Song of Solomon on the court square," he wrote on Facebook on May 1.

Abercrombie, pastor of Center Ridge Baptist Church, Arton, joined hundreds of others around the state who took turns reading the Bible aloud in its entirety in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer.

During the Bible reading marathons, volunteers gathered at a public venue and read around the clock in 15-minute increments for about 90 hours total.

Abercrombie read at the Dale County Courthouse during Ozark's Bible reading marathon, which started April 29 and ended May 3, the National Day of Prayer. Events in Troy and Heflin followed the same schedule, and marathons in Birmingham, Montgomery, Oneonta and Tuscaloosa started on the day of prayer and ended May 6.

Brent Thompson, pastor of Heflin Baptist Church in Cleburne Baptist Association, said for him, the event is a way for the church to "turn inside out."

"We just believe there's power in the Word of God. Our city and county needs to hear it, and we found that during the evening hours people would pull up a chair and listen," he said.

Volunteers kept coolers of water, pots of coffee and cookies and brownies for anyone who might wander by, and they were able to have a lot of great conversations, Thompson said.

At one point, they even heard that a bank robbery was happening on the other side of town, and volunteers at the Bible reading site

Local students and teachers read Scripture on the square in downtown Troy on May 3. "What a blessing it is to read God's Word in a public setting for all the world to hear," says Linda Adams, administrative assistant for Salem-Troy Baptist Association.



Photo by Linda Adams

immediately gathered to pray for the situation. "Nobody was hurt and the people were captured," Thompson said. "We felt God had answered our prayers."

It was Heflin's second year to participate in the Bible reading marathon, and Thompson said he hopes more and more cities will start their own in the years to come.

'A blessing'

"It's a blessing to see the Lord at work through this," he said. "I hope that it sparks other cities to see a movement of God."

Sheila Wright, a member of Liberty Park Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, said they definitely saw that where they were. The Birmingham marathon — in its eighth year — was "probably the best one we've had," she said.

Members of Liberty Park Baptist teamed this

year with 45th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham's East Lake community to host the marathon at East 59 Vintage and Café, which shares a courtyard with 45th Street Baptist.

"We were so grateful to partner together to do that," Wright said.

The Bible reading marathon there closed with someone blowing the shofar and a choir from True Vine Ministries in Tarrant singing four songs.

"It was such a blessing — their singing made it such a special, special time," she said.

Wright said she loves how the Bible reading marathon brings believers from all denominations together.

"We can do that (read the Bible) with no commentary," she said. "We're all uniting for one purpose — to honor and glorify God." (Maggie Walsh contributed)

Taylor Road hosts State Bible Drill, Speakers Tournament



Photo by Doug Rogers

Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, hosts the 2018 State Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament on April 28. Pictured are the participants.

The winners of the Youth Bible Drill are first place, Gabriel Taunton (Santuck Baptist Church, Elmore Association); second place, Samuel Hopkins (Whitesburg Baptist Church, Madison Association); and third place, Katie Boyd (Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham Association).

The winners of the High School Bible Drill are first place, Alex Thomas (Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham Association); and second place, Jodi Argo (Leatherwood Baptist Church, Calhoun Association).

The winners of the Speakers Tournament are first place, Bentley Stroud (Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Shelby Association); second place, Moriah Pfister (Whitesburg Baptist Church, Madison Association); and third place, Casey Martin (Antioch Baptist Church, Dekalb Association). (TAB)

'From success to significance'

Senior adults challenged to self-evaluate, serve Lord 'wholeheartedly'



By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

There are seven things every church in Alabama needs and that hell has, said Joel Carwile, pastor of First Baptist Church, Athens, at the 2018 Senior Adult Evangelism Conference on May 7.

Drawing from Luke 16:19-31, Carwile recounted the story of the rich man and the beggar. When both men died, the beggar went to be with Abraham in heaven while the rich man was tormented in hell.

"Death is sure," Carwile said. "So because one out of one of us die, we should be telling others about Jesus."

From hell, the rich man first had the clarity of vision to "see afar off" and know the truth and want to tell his family about it. Then he cried tears of agony over his earthly shortsightedness and eternal pain.

"You and I need to learn how to cry again. When was the last time you wept for someone who does not know Jesus Christ?" Carwile asked. "I believe that if we learn how to weep again, then the fire will return."

In the same way that hellfire is all-

consuming, so should be our fire for telling people about Jesus. And in order to keep that fire going, Carwile said, we have to remember what we've been saved from and "who it is who saves us."

'Great chasm'

Verse 26 talks about the "great chasm" or "gulf" between heaven and hell, a "separation from that which is unclean." As Christians we need to have that same kind of separation between people and their sin, Carwile said.

"We wind up throwing people away instead of dealing with them one-on-one to their sin," he said. "Let us love the sinner while hating the sin. Let us be willing to love someone who is different from us."

Carwile went on to say that from hell the rich man prayed and had concern for his family still on earth.

"Prayer ... does things that preaching and praise cannot," he said. "You have to be willing to trust Him when you don't trust yourself."

This is especially true when coupled with concern for others. It's vital that Christians not get caught up in preferences and think that church "is all about us," Carwile said.

Top left: Pastor Rick Evans of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, preaches on the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus. **Bottom left:** The conference included moments of congregational singing. **Below:** Charles Roesel, pastor emeritus of FBC Leesburg, Florida, tells senior adults there is still much for them to do.

Photos by Maggie Walsh





Photo by Maggie Walsh

Pastor Joel Carwile of First Baptist Church, Athens, speaks about the all-consuming fire we as Christians should have for telling people about Jesus, closing his message with an altar call.

“You have to be willing to give up your preferences for the sake of concern (for others).”

With those seven things — vision, crying, fire, remembrance, separation, prayer and concern — the Church can start another pentecost, Carwile said.

Rick Evans, pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, where the conference was held, preached on the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus, or the “red-headed stepchild of doctrine” as he calls it.

“If preaching on the soon-coming of Jesus does not bring comfort to your heart there is something wrong,” he said. “In our age group, you need to be looking for that day.”

Evans looks to the rapture with anticipation because it’s a rescuing of God’s people from impending danger.

And “as you examine your heart and your life as to where you are in your spiritual

journey,” Evans said, you can look to Noah as a kind of barometer because Noah loved God with all of his heart, believed God with all of his mind when he was commanded to build an ark and trusted God with all that he had despite naysayers and ridicule.

‘Which group are you in?’

Or maybe you fall more on the side of Lot, who believed in God but allowed himself and his family to be pulled toward the sins of the world until he was deep in a backslidden condition.

“The day is coming and it’s coming soon,” Evans said. “Every person is in 1 of these 3 groups: like Noah, Lot or lost.

“Which group are you in?”

Charles Roesel, an 80-something-year old with the passion of a 20-something, stepped up to the podium to challenge the senior adults that there is still much for them to do.

“When you retire, if you do, you should move from success to significance,” said Roesel, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Leesburg, Florida, with decades of experience in evangelism ministries. And sometimes that means wrestling with “the temptation of doing good stuff at the expense of doing the best.”

Living life to the fullest and for God’s glory “even as you get older,” Roesel said, requires a positive attitude, pleasant associations with those around you, passionate adoration for Jesus Christ and powerful anticipation for what’s to come in heaven.

Just look at Caleb in Joshua 14:6–15, he said. Caleb served the Lord “wholeheartedly” (v. 9) for 85 years and then received the inheritance that the Lord promised him, the land of Hebron.

The conference concluded with an altar call, and senior adults hit their knees before the Father. ✠

US Christians freed from North Korean prison

It looks like God is bringing Christianity back to North Korea, Southern Baptist consultant and native Korean Paul Kim told Baptist Press (BP) following the return of three Christians held in North Korean prisons for more than a year.

“Hopefully, this (will be) the trend,” he said. “I really believe that God is at work ... that God is in control. He reigns, and I want to praise God for what God is doing in that part of the world.”

The prisoners arrived back on U.S. soil May 10. They had been held on erroneous charges levied between October 2015 and April 2017, according to BP and other news reports.

Kim Dong-chul, a pastor in his early 60s, had been detained since 2015 on charges of spying.

Two others, Kim Hak-song and Tony Kim, were taken into custody a month apart in 2017.

Both were working at the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST), a private university that is officially secular but run primarily by evangelical Christian organizations, according to TIME.

Kim Hak-song had been held on suspicion of “hostile acts” since May 2017. He had previously described himself as a Christian missionary who intended to start an experimental farm at PUST, according to BBC.

Tony Kim, also known as Kim Sang-duk, had been arrested in April 2017 on espionage charges. South Korean media reported that he had been involved in humanitarian work in North Korea, including work at an orphanage.

PUST released statements saying that neither man’s arrest had anything to do with the work of the university.

Goodwill gesture

The release of the three prisoners — all U.S. citizens of Korean descent — is viewed as a goodwill gesture ahead of the historic meeting between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

Tony Kim’s family said in a statement: “We appreciate all of the support and prayers of friends and even strangers during this challenging year. We ask that you continue to pray for the people of North Korea and for the release of all who are still being held.” (TAB)

“We appreciate all of the support and prayers of friends and even strangers.”

Tony Kim’s family

Paid in Full, combined choir lead in worship

From southern gospel trio Paid in Full to the combined choir of nearly 100, those gathered for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions’ (SBOM) 2018 Senior Adult Evangelism Conference on May 7 had a toe-tappin’ good time as they praised God.

Paid in Full is based in New Albany, Mississippi, and is made up of Bradley Littlejohn, a math teacher; Lance Moore, a web and graphic designer; and Brock White, a police officer. The trio sang soulful medleys and classic hymns such as “Victory in Jesus.”

The choir led the congregation in worship, accompanied Paid in Full on several songs and also performed specials such as “On-Time God.” The choir included members of Heritage Baptist; First Baptist, Montgomery; Eastern Hills Baptist; and Dalraida Baptist, which was the host church for the conference.

Eileen Mitchell — state missionary with a focus on single adults, senior adults and family ministries for SBOM — also led the congregation in praise. (TAB)



Photo by Maggie Walsh

The trio Paid in Full sings soulful medleys and classic hymns at the 2018 Senior Adult Evangelism Conference.



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BIBB

► **Bethlehem Church, Centreville**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary and homecoming May 27, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Crimson Stained will perform. All former members and pastors are invited. Tom Conroy is pastor.

DALE

► **Jordan Johnson** is the new youth minister at **Daleville Church**. He is a graduate of the Baptist College of Florida in Graceville and will begin the master's degree program at New Orleans Seminary in August. He previously served at Plainview Church, Pensacola, Florida. He is engaged to Emma Connor. Jim Peters is pastor.



JOHNSON

BIRMINGHAM

► **George Martens** is the new pastor of **Lake Highland Church, Birmingham**. He holds degrees from Georgetown College in Kentucky and Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He previously served as pastor and minister of music at New Hope Church, Bessemer. He and his wife, Martha, have two children. ► **Brian Law** is the new pastor of **Eastside Church, Birmingham**. He holds two master's degrees from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He previously served at Park View Church in DeSoto, Missouri. He also has pastored churches in Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri.

He and his wife, Amy, have two children.

COVINGTON

► **West Highland Church, Andalusia**, will hold a homecoming celebration June 3, 10:30 a.m. Music will be led by director of music Linda Hartin accompanied by Sue Reeves and Jane Graddy. District Attorney Walt Merrell will be the guest speaker. Lunch will follow the service. Larry Stewart is pastor.

EAST LIBERTY

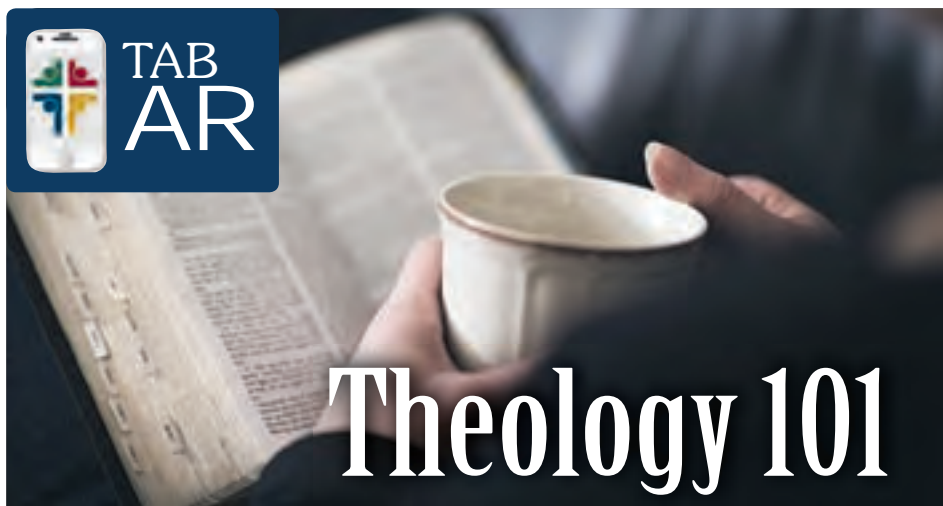
► **River View Church, Valley**, will celebrate its 121st anniversary and homecoming May 20, 10:30 a.m. EST. Chuck Goodwin will be the guest speaker and Stephanie Walker will sing. Lunch will follow the service. Lanny Sledge is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Austin Williams** is the new pastor of **Flint Church, Decatur**. He is currently attending New Orleans Seminary. He previously served at First Church, Falkville. He and his wife, Crystal, have three children. ► **Ron Madison** is the new interim pastor of **Southside Church, Decatur**. He served as pastor of Mount Zion Church, Huntsville, prior to his retirement. He and his wife, Charlotte, have three children and four grandchildren.

ST. CLAIR

► **Darryl Wood** is the new interim pastor of **Friendship Church, Springville**. He previously served as interim pastor at First Church, Tallasahatchie, in Alpine. He and his wife, Marcie, have two children and three grandchildren.✝



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Imagery

Lamb of God

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

This week we continue thinking about the person and work of Christ through another of the common images the Bible uses to speak of Him. Last week we looked at the image used by the Apostle John in the opening words of his Gospel, Christ as the “Word of God.”

This week we look at the introductory image used by John the Baptist when directing attention to Jesus at the outset of His public ministry. His declaration was, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Qualities of a lamb

With a lamb as our subject, we might deduce several ideas about Christ that ordinary people could have extracted from their observations of lambs. Such qualities as meekness, harmlessness, gentleness or approachableness are suggestive in the application to Christ.

However, the Bible is much more specific in using the lamb image with reference to Him. Christ came to be the sin-bearing Lamb for those who trust Him as personal Savior. Prior to Christ's coming animal sacrifices were offered by those who sinned.

However, the language of Hebrews 10:1–4 makes clear that animal sacrifices being repeated annually did not do what Christ the perfect sacrifice accomplished: “For it is not possible that blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (v. 4).

In fact, the very repetition of animal sacrifices served as “a reminder of sins every year” (v. 3). It remained for God's Lamb to become the perfect sacrifice that achieved the permanent taking away of the sins of repentant believers.

Christ, the sin-bearing Lamb of God, was foreshadowed in the prophesy of Isaiah 53:7: “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.”

Also foreshadowed in the sacrificial lamb of the annual Jewish Passover celebration, Christ's perfect sin-bearing sacrifice stands forever memorialized in the declaration of 1 Corinthians 5:7: “For

indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”

Not only is He the sacrificial Lamb of the gospel message, Christ also is portrayed as the triumphant Lamb who is worshipped in heaven. Repeatedly the Book of Revelation contains visions and images of this Triumphant Lamb.

One such passage sets Him forth as the object of heaven's praises: “I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was 10,000 times 10,000, and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing’” (5:11–12).

Later Revelation 17 describes the victory achieved by the Triumphant Lamb: “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful” (v. 14).

‘Be glad and rejoice’

Revelation 19 further describes the final triumph Christ's followers share with Him: “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready” (v. 7) to which is added the benediction, “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (v. 9).

The Triumphant Lamb will be the light of the New Jerusalem and will be joined by those “who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life” (Rev. 21:23, 27).✝

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.



BBA WMU holds special evening event



‘Going Deeper’

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Pat Ingram of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) shares her ‘Going Deeper’ story with the more than 125 participants at the Birmingham Baptist Association WMU annual meeting at FBC Birmingham on May 3. Jennifer Scott is associational WMU director. Jim Cooley is pastor of FBC Birmingham.

Facing fears

Learning to live free in a fear-inducing world

New experiences can cause fear, but potential for growth is worth risk

Feeling afraid

Jenny can't believe it but graduation is finally here. One more week and she'll be walking across the stage, shaking hands with the principal and receiving her high school diploma. She knows she should be excited but instead she only feels afraid.

She will miss her friends and the teachers she has spent so much time with over the past few years. She has accepted a scholarship offer at a university in a neighboring state — the college she always dreamed of attending.

She was so happy when the letter came, but now she questions her decision. Maybe moving away from her family is not the best idea. Starting over in a new place will be hard. Is she ready?

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Fear is a powerful emotion. The “fight or flight” impulse within us affects our actions, our thoughts and our decisions.

Fear is critical for survival, scientists tell us. They often compare our fear instinct to a home alarm system — fear warns us when danger is approaching. But fear also can be learned. Past experiences, news stories and cultural attitudes may teach us to be afraid of certain situations or people.

Fear is often associated with physical safety, a fact Jess Jennings knows well. Jennings and his wife, Wendy, have served more than 25 years with the International Mission Board (IMB) in Southeast Asia. They also direct Nehemiah Teams and Project 52, summer-long missions programs that send students all over the world.

Facing reality

The most frequently asked question Jennings receives from parents of students considering missions service is, “Will my child be safe?” As a parent of three children, Jennings understands the fear inherent in the question but says the question overlooks the common dangers we face every day wherever we live.

“Reality is there is no safe place,” he says. “Reality is we cannot protect our children or ourselves from all harm. Reality is every day we take risks. Thousands of people each year receive emergency room care from falling out of bed, closing the blinds and slipping in the shower.”

Familiar is often considered safe, he says, and unfamiliar is often considered dangerous. Jennings calls it a “risk-locked” attitude. Parents surf the internet and find all sorts of bad news about the place where their children will be serving and

then conclude that the place is unsafe.

It's an unfair standard, he said. People take risks every day for what they believe in. Firefighters, police officers, members of the military — all daily give their lives in the line of duty.

It's also an attitude that's unbiblical.

Fear vs. anxiety

“Jesus said if we follow Him we will be persecuted and sometimes killed,” Jennings said. “One student told us that much pressure was put on her by her home church ‘not to go to the Philippines, because God would never call us to a dangerous place.’ That may be an American value of self-preservation, but I cannot find that in my Bible.”

Max Lucado, in his book “Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World,” describes the difference between fear and anxiety.

“Fear is the pulse that pounds when you see a coiled rattlesnake in your front yard. Anxiety is the voice that tells you, ‘Never, ever, for the rest of your life, walk barefooted through the grass. There might be a snake ... somewhere.’”

Like fear, anxiety is a normal human response to new or different situations. In his writings, 19th century Danish philosopher and Christian

theologian Søren Kierkegaard suggests that anxiety arises when we are faced with the potential for growth.

New experiences — everything from going on a missions trip to applying for college to getting married — can cause fear, but the potential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth is worth the risk.

That's the message Jennings wants to communicate to parents who naturally worry about their children.

“I would challenge Christian parents to remember the commitment you made when

you dedicated your child to the Lord many years ago,” he said.

“They really don't belong to us. They are His. We really cannot keep them safe. They are safe in Him.”



Facing fear with confidence

To purchase “Unshakable Pursuit: Chasing the God Who Chases Us,” visit newhopepublishers.com/shop/unshakable-pursuit.

To follow Grace Thornton’s blog, visit gracefortheroad.com.

Author Grace Thornton shares how Christ is never far in new devotional book

By Grace Thornton
Special to The Alabama Baptist

It was a normal week, the week they found a spot on my dad’s lung. It was just a tiny spot, but it was dark and unknown — and that was scary. As I lay in bed that night, things rolling around in my mind, I rolled over on my side, pulled the covers over my head and curled my knees up to my chest. And from my tiny dark spot, I whispered, “God, you see it right? That spot — you see it? And you see me too?”

I had felt as though lately there had been a few things that had popped up, little dark spots that I didn’t quite know how to handle. Things that made me uncomfortable. Things that I felt unequipped to deal with. Things that made me afraid. And I’d curled up under the covers more than a few times, right into those spots, and I’d wondered — is this spot outside God’s line of sight?

I know that’s not true — nothing escapes His view. But subconsciously I’d been treating some of them like maybe that spot is the one place where maybe

He isn’t going to be who He says He is. Or that maybe it’s the one place in my life where He just won’t come through, that He just won’t be enough. Or that maybe the spot where God brought me to save me is now the spot where He’s going to leave me to figure it out on my own.

All of us who know Jesus have been in that spot — the one where He rescued and redeemed us. And we know this too: He didn’t take it all and run. He didn’t leave us there alone. He said, “Keep going. I’m right here.”

Be strong and courageous

That was Moses’s charge to Joshua when God’s people were first beginning to walk into the land God had promised them. Moses was passing the baton to Joshua as leader, and his biggest piece of advice was this — be strong and courageous, for God goes with you; He will not leave you or forsake you (Deut. 31:6). It didn’t matter what Joshua was going to face on this journey that God was taking him on — he would never be alone.

There would never be a moment when God didn’t see him and — even better — there would never be a moment when God didn’t care.

In Him we live and move and have our being — He is not far from any one of us (Acts 17:27–28). That includes that spot under the covers. That includes my worry over the spot in my dad’s lung. It includes all the other spots that ever have been and ever will be. He’s never left us alone. And He never will.

He sees. He knows. He loves.

It’s a beautiful thing for Christ followers, the way we’re rescued one day from the gnawing in our soul and suddenly realize we have everything we could ever need, all wrapped up in the One who made us. We’ve got infinite love, joy, mercy. We’ve got the Holy Spirit guiding us, planting heaven in our hearts, urging us on. We’ve got Him illuminating the Scriptures so we can meet Him as we read and see Him for who He really is.

We don’t go it alone.

There’s not a bend in our road He doesn’t see coming. There’s no enemy we’ll face that He isn’t ready for. There’s

no pain that surprises Him. There’s no grief too big for Him to carry you through.

Remember that as you face the obstacles that seem big in your life. Remember that when days hurt. Remember that as situations seem hazy or scary or unknown.

Remember it when you’re lonely. He’s never left you alone.

And as we trust Him with our path, it also brings the opportunity to cultivate a relationship here that makes the miles we walk feel more and more temporary compared to what’s to come. We look forward to seeing Him face to face. We yearn for it with everything in us. It’s a different kind of gnawing (2 Cor. 5:1–5).

It’s the kind that, when we curl up under the covers in the dark, we say, “Even here, God — even this part of the path is Yours. And You’re with me.”

EDITOR’S NOTE — Adapted from “Unshakable Pursuit: Chasing the God Who Chases Us,” a 30-day devotional by Grace Thornton. New Hope Publishers, 2018. www.newhopepublishers.com. Used with permission.



THORNTON



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. ... He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”

2 Corinthians 5:1–2, 5



Unplug from the negative

123rf.com

Ways Christians can learn to combat fear that stems from events out of our control

By Rod Campbell, MAMFT, LPC-S
Pathways Professional Counseling

As I sit down to write this article, the nation is still reeling from the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The very first news story I saw this morning was about a terrorist attack in a foreign country. The second story was an interview with a survivor of the Florida shooting. At this moment, two political pundits are debating some issue (does it really matter which one?) with all the requisite eye-rolling, name-calling, the-sky-is-falling, ratings-producing hysteria they can muster. And I haven't even finished my morning coffee.

I get at least one call per week from parents whose children suffer from anxiety. Once a week or more, a client wants to talk about some fear-inducing current event. The constant bombardment of negative news about tragedies, accidents and crises, both real and invented, can certainly take its toll. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves fearful that danger is hiding around every corner and that "something bad" could happen at any moment. That's a hard and heavy burden to carry all day, every day, especially for those of us who feel responsible for the safety of our loved ones.

Here are a few specific things I encourage people to do in order to combat fear that stems from events out of our control:

► **Guard your heart and the hearts of your kids.** Once upon a time, in a land not

so far away, the news was presented to us through a series of short video clips every evening. We could go on to read a few more details in the morning paper. Now we live with the 24-hour news cycle and are constantly bombarded with information, upsetting images and differing opinions. Some of these stories are uplifting and hopeful, but many are not.

Studies show that people react more quickly and more powerfully to bad news, which is why I strongly encourage my clients to discern carefully their news sources and the amount of news they consume. Many news sources are full of images and sound bites edited to have the biggest negative impact possible. Continually shepherd your heart and the hearts of your family by being intentional about news consumption.

► **Vet your sources.** Take time to make sure you're getting news as free from bias as possible. Whether your news source is the nightly news on TV, the local paper, a printed news magazine or a website, be sure to check their sources and make certain that what you're hearing or reading is factually based and fairly presented.

► **Search out the good.** We read in Philippians 4:8 to focus on things which are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, com-

mendable, excellent and worthy of praise. As you go through the day, intentionally choose to notice that really great things are happening around us all the time. Share those good things you come across with others too. In your town someone is making life better for the underserved or disadvantaged.

Someone is living out the gospel by sacrificing for others. Read these stories. Share these stories. Be a source of light in your part of the world.

► **Begin and end your day with a dose of good medicine.** It is as important now as it has ever been to fill our minds and hearts with the promises of God and with His Word. Begin-

ning and ending your day focused on God's provision for His people, His power over evil and His sovereignty over all things will help inoculate us against the onslaught of negativity we are likely to face each hour. Listening to Christian music and podcasts, sermons or other faith-based programming is a great way to keep your focus on things above and not on things of this earth.

► **Be consistent.** Because of the psychological effects of negativity, it might take days or a few weeks of doing all these things in order to fully detox. Studies indicate that long-term exposure to negative news can have a dramatic effect on our

moods and can even cause symptoms similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

This type of stress engages the emotional centers of our brain, and the longer this persists the more our brains become wired to seek and perpetuate this emotional cycle. Left unchecked for too long, the stress can bring on episodes of prolonged and persistent sadness, anger or general feelings of being "not quite oneself" and/or lead to destructive habits. In these cases, professional counseling can help (see story, page 10).

Early intervention

Fortunately early intervention can make a big difference. When we start to change things for the better, our own neurochemistry can fight against negativity, returning to the positive emotional cycles we've established for so long.

So unplug from the negative, check your sources, seek out good news, fill your mind with God's Word and repeat this process faithfully. It won't take long to notice that your fear and anxiety will start to subside. Living a life as free as possible from all the negative influences around us requires intentional living but freedom is worth it.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Rod Campbell is a Licensed Professional Counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. He presently serves clients in the Oxford, Ashville, Pell City and Birmingham offices.



'Emotionally safe place'

Professional counseling helps children, youth navigate difficulties

By Margaret Colson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

At a very young age, Mandy had a secret. She told no one and the secret began to control her thoughts and actions. The once vibrant little girl became quiet and withdrawn. Her mother, concerned, took Mandy to a Christian counselor. Soon the story began to unfold; Mandy had seen a traumatic event and felt an unbearable sense of guilt for not telling anyone.

"Through working on telling her story, discussing how she was a child and it was not her fault and learning how to label and appropriately express her emotions, she was able to come out of her shell and become the little girl her mom remembered before all this happened. She was happy and vibrant again," said Lisa Keane, clinical director at Pathways Professional Counseling.

Mandy is just one of untold numbers of students today who benefit from counseling. "Counseling provides an emotionally safe place to say and process things that you might not otherwise feel comfortable talking about. Through that processing and vulnerability in the counseling room, the client is able to make insights, work on his or her thoughts and assess the need for behavioral changes that would lead to feeling better," Keane said.

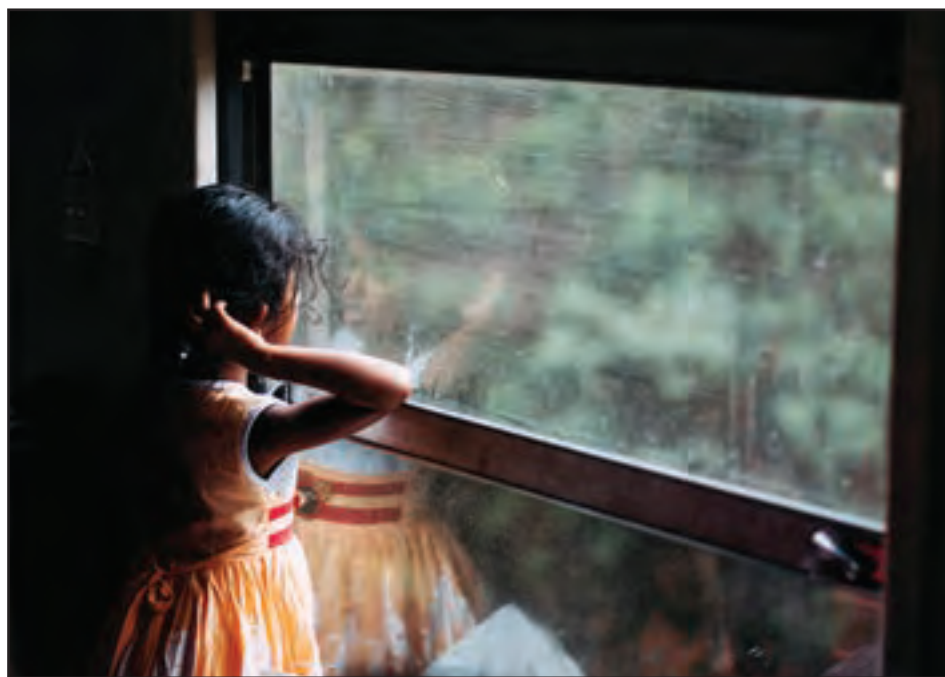
Sometimes a child or young person — often through the intervention of a parent or another concerned adult — might seek counseling after a major life event, such as the death of a parent, divorce or even abuse, Keane said. Other times parents might seek counseling for a child or youth who is struggling with negative behaviors or dealing with depression or anxiety.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 13 to 20 percent of American children ages 3 through 17 have a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder in a given year. Coping with mental health issues can affect learning and social interactions.

Americans are "more open to counseling today than in the past," Keane believes. "I believe people see counseling as more of a viable, normal option."

Christian counseling

To help address this need Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, provides counseling to individuals ages 3 and up, couples and



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families. All of the Pathways counselors are specially trained to work with children and adolescents.

Counseling is available at various locations throughout the state, and clients do not need a referral from a medical doctor to make an appointment.

As a Christian counseling ministry, Pathways Professional Counseling is "uniquely positioned to work with kids and incorporate the gospel message as we do that," Keane said. All Pathways counselors are highly trained and licensed, even as they bring a "basic understanding that healing comes from God and apart from Him, there is none. We are able to share Scripture references, point out road maps in Scripture for biblical ways to handle things and remind them of God's saving grace that covers us," she said.

Additionally, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama State Department of Education are seeking to undergird students with support needed to navigate life's traumas.

Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Lynn Beshear wrote in an article for the Alabama News Network that students with emotional disturbances may not reach graduation. And students who do not graduate are more likely to be institutionalized than their peers. She stated, "School-based mental health programs can have a positive impact on behavioral and

emotional health issues and increase attendance and academic achievement."

To address this need, 36 school systems in Alabama have paired with 12 mental health authorities to provide school-based mental health services. Beshear wrote, "Expanding this (program) would benefit the other students in the other 106 systems."

Pathways Professional Counseling has worked in the past with local school systems to provide psycho-education events on topics such as depression or cutting, and also has worked with specific schools on crisis response teams when a crisis occurs.

Community partnership

On March 1, Children's Hospital of Alabama launched the Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) and a referral hotline. PIRC is a community partnership, including public and private mental health providers and the Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope, intended to empower "parents, teachers, grandparents, physicians or any adult seeking mental health services on a child's behalf," wrote Beshear.

Concluding the press release, Beshear wrote, "The future of our youth is our foremost concern. If we want the best for them, we must invest our time and resources in preventative and interventional mental health programs."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Mandy's name has been changed for security reasons.

Helpful resources

▶ **"Fear Fighting: Awakening Courage to Overcome Your Fears"**
by Kelly Balarie

▶ **"Fear and Faith: Finding the Peace Your Heart Craves"** by Trillia J. Newbell

▶ **"Breaking the Fear Cycle: How to Find Peace for Your Anxious Heart"** by Maria Furlough

▶ **"Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear"**
by Max Lucado

▶ **"Live Fearless: A Call to Power, Passion and Purpose"** by Sadie Robertson



Compiled by Carrie Brown McWhorter

As VBS approaches, here are some helpful tips

By **Chip Warren**
Veteran VBS leader in Alabama

Vacation Bible School (VBS) remains the No. 1 outreach event for Southern Baptist churches. It has the potential to affect the eternal destiny of children and families in your community. Every child a church reaches from the community is a connection to many other people. One is never just one.

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions offers a full slate of resources (<https://alsbom.org/vbs/>) to help your church be ready each year, as does your local Baptist association staff.

VBS should have your full focus, energy and budget as your main summer activity. Even if you have VBS the same week every summer, don't assume everyone knows — and work hard to reach the unchurched kids especially.

Publicity and outreach efforts are important. Set numerical goals for your VBS and make a plan as to how to reach them.

Publicize well

Here are a few publicity and outreach tips:

Tip #1 — Print VBS T-shirts and put the dates and times on them. Make them available early so VBS leaders and other adults in the church can begin to wear them out in public. Your information is best seen on the back of the shirt.

Tip #2 — Have business cards printed with your VBS info on them. Business cards can be kept in a purse, wallet, pocket and car. They also are easier to handle than paper flyers. Be sure to have them available to all church members to invite kids and families to VBS.

Tip #3 — Encourage church kids to invite their friends who do

not attend any church to VBS. Reward the kids with VBS "money" to spend in the VBS store.

Once VBS kicks off, be sure to have everything organized and in place so the VBS team is settled, confident and ready to greet parents and children warmly and with a calm spirit.

While unexpected things happen on the first day, advance planning and preparation can eliminate some of the chaos.

Each parent and child needs to feel welcomed when they arrive on that first day. Parents also need to be assured they are leaving their child in a safe, secure and sanitary environment.

The child won't notice the same things the parent will notice. The child wants to have fun and that

should be a primary focus on the first day. Also, the Bible needs to come alive for VBS participants. Bible teaching should utilize all five senses to fully engage kids.

The child also needs to connect with at least one adult leader as well as other kids. Many kids have a built-in connection with their friends at VBS but not all have friends there. Bible study leaders should include a few connecting activities. Remind the church kids how important it is to make new kids feel welcome. And of course kids need to connect with God throughout the week.

Renew your vision

A good VBS has the potential to boost your church's sense of

significance and draw people together. If you are sensing a lack of energy or enthusiasm about VBS in your church, ask God to renew your vision and excitement.

If your church has experienced decline in recent years, you may have the attitude that no kids will want to come to your VBS — put that attitude away.

Get started by recruiting volunteers. Issue a personal invitation to new members and regular attenders. VBS is a great opportunity to connect. Create opportunities for as many people as possible to serve in your VBS, even if they are not needed for the entire time each session. Having a large number of adults working together in VBS will do something special for your church.

And don't forget the follow-up once VBS wraps up. That is just as important as all the planning. ✝

VBS remains the
No. 1
outreach event
for Southern
Baptist churches.



(augmented reality)

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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.

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

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PASTOR

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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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.

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Antioch Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational music minister. To apply, send resumé by email to: antiochbc1@yahoo.com or by mail to: 3415 Bankston Dr., Jasper, AL 35503.

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Babbie Baptist Church is seeking a full-time youth minister. The youth minister will oversee the communications/evangelism/discipleship training/events and activities of the youth ministry.

For detailed job description, visit our website: babbiebaptist.com. Interested persons must send a resumé with references and work experience to: Babbie Baptist Church, 19863 Babbie Rd., Andalusia, AL 36420, or email to: babbiebaptist@centurylink.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Birmingham Baptist Association is a network of biblically faithful churches building one another up and working together to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment of Jesus Christ. The executive director of missions provides visionary leadership for the association staff, its ministries and its financial support. The executive director of missions should be an effective communicator of the gospel who is able to work with leaders from churches of various sizes and settings. The ability to represent the association among other city leaders is vital. Resumés can be submitted to: Greg Corbin, 2865 Old Rocky Ridge Rd., Birmingham, AL 35243, or gcorbin@lakesidebaptist.com.

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Younger generation should remember nondigital communication is important

(continued from page 1)

conversation with someone rather than just an email exchange," she said. "I feel like the younger generation doesn't recognize the importance of that type of communication. Also, make sure you have a professional voicemail message — and be sure your mailbox isn't full."

It's important to listen to a voicemail, too, before calling a missed number back, she said.

"I often get a call from someone who says, 'I missed a call from this number,' and I ask if they've listened to the voicemail I left and they tell me no," she said. "That just comes across as so unprofessional."

Casual vs. professional

Speaking of professional, Sides recommends that candidates resist the urge to be casual during the interview process — even if the job they're interviewing for skews less professional (in dress, communication or other areas).

"Even though a lot of businesses have become more casual, that doesn't mean you should be casual when you're looking for

Etiquette tips for job seekers

1. Dress for the situation. Even if an office has a casual dress policy, business attire is appropriate for an interview.

2. Be on time and be prepared.

3. When meeting someone for the first time, offer a smile and extend your hand to shake.

4. If you are meeting with a potential employer in an office setting, make sure to greet the office staff and others you encounter.

5. Always stand when you are being introduced to someone. If standing is not

possible, lean forward to show interest.

6. In a conversation, listen at least as much as you talk.

7. Speak up. You don't have to yell, but others should not have to strain to hear what you are saying.

8. Maintain eye contact during a conversation.

9. Silence your cell phone and do not look at it during your interview.

10. Follow up an interview with a thank you note. Email is acceptable and more immediate. (TAB)

a job," she advised. "Keep your appearance and communication professional until you get the job and then you can adjust more to the culture once you're there."

Another piece of advice, Roland said, is to use discretion when communicating electronically.

"One thing I have noticed even in our best young employees is a

need for wisdom in what is communicated electronically and put in writing in emails and on social media," he said. "I'm afraid if they are not careful, impulsive emails and social media posts could be misinterpreted and used against them by [human resources] or future bosses. I am always very careful what I put in writing." ❖

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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

2018 marks 100th anniversary of prominent Presbyterian evangelist's death

He preached with D.L. Moody on the evangelistic circuit. Billy Sunday was one of his disciples.

John Wilbur Chapman (1859–1918) was a prominent Presbyterian evangelist as well as pastor, author and hymn writer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of his death.

He was born in Richmond, Indiana, on June 17, 1859, to Alexander and Lorinda Chapman. At age 17 he made a public declaration of faith and joined the Richmond Presbyterian Church. He was ordained into the ministry in 1881 and graduated from Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1882.

During a Dwight Moody crusade in 1878, Chapman had doubts about his

commitment to Christ. He went forward and talked with Moody who had him read the words of Jesus, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life" (John 5:24a). After reading it aloud over and over he finally had the assurance he was a Christian.

Chapman pastored churches from 1882 to 1902 in four states. Appointed Corresponding Secretary of the Presbyterian General Assembly's Committee on Evangelism in 1895, he oversaw the activities of 51 evangelists in 470 cities.

John Converse, a wealthy Presbyterian philanthropist, offered in 1905 to underwrite Chapman's expenses if he would be a full-time evangelist. Converse also set up

a trust fund to finance Chapman's crusades even after his own death. Chapman accepted his offer.



CHAPMAN

In 1907, Chapman joined with popular gospel singer Charles Alexander to launch the Chapman-Alexander Simultaneous Campaign. Their first joint campaign was in 1908 in Philadelphia from March 12 to April 19. The campaign resulted in 8,000 conversions. Chapman and Alexander later took the campaign to cities in Canada, Australia, the Philippines, China, Korea and Japan.

For many years Chapman promoted religious summer conferences. He served as director of the Winona Lake Bible Conference in Indiana and also helped establish Bible conferences in Montreal, North

Carolina, and the Stony Brook Assembly conferences on Long Island.

In 1912 when Chapman's "mass evangelism" technique lost popularity, he and Alexander began holding large revivals. They toured Australia, Scotland, Ireland, India and New Zealand as well as the United States. He averaged three to five sermons a day. The final revival tour was in January and February 1918.

Later life

A tireless worker, Chapman wrote 25 books and several hymns. His most popular one — sung in many Baptist churches today — is "One Day."

Chapman had emergency surgery for gallstones Dec. 23, 1918, and died on Christmas Day. He is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Bronx, New York.✠

By Joanne Sloan

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



Patterson issues apology while debate continues

Longtime Southern Baptist Convention leader Paige Patterson, embroiled in controversy over past remarks about domestic violence and his descriptions of women, has issued an apology.

"I wish to apologize to every woman who has been wounded by anything I have said that was inappropriate or that lacked clarity," said Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Fort Worth, Texas, in a May 10 statement titled "An Apology to God's People."

"We live in a world of hurt and sorrow, and the last thing that I need to do is add to anyone's heartache. Please forgive the failure to be as thoughtful and careful in my extemporaneous expression as I should have been."

The statement was the latest response by Patterson to public reaction to an audio clip from the year 2000 in which Patterson said he considered it unbiblical to recommend divorce, even in cases of domestic abuse.

Since the audio clip emerged two weeks ago, separate groups of Southern Baptist women and men have issued open letters to the SWBTS board of trustees questioning Patterson's current leadership.

A special meeting of SWBTS trustees is scheduled for May 22 to discuss the issue. (RNS)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 20

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

GIVING FAITHFULLY 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Confidence Expressed (1-5)

One of the main reasons Paul wrote 2 Corinthians was to encourage the believers to continue in their giving to the Jerusalem Christians who had been experiencing famine.

The Corinthians were glad to be able to give initially but then their zeal waned because of some false teachers who undermined Paul's teaching and questioned the venture.

In response to the attitude of the Corinthians, Paul mentions the Macedonians, who gave to the Jerusalem Christians out of their poverty. Interestingly, the Macedonians were motivated to give because of the initial giving of the Corinthians.

Paul suggests it would be embarrassing if any of the Macedonians were to see their attitude now. To encourage the Corinthians, Paul was sending Titus and two others.

As Christians we need to be concerned for the needs of others, especially fellow believers. One of the ways we do this is by collecting money for the use of helping others. Our churches gather offerings to use for God's kingdom.

We need to set aside money so we can participate in giving and in doing so participate in the ministry of the church. One of the best ways to do this is to establish a set amount to withhold from each paycheck each month and give this money first before spending on anything else.

Benefits Found (6-11)

Paul reminded the believers that giving should not be seen as an act of obligation but rather an act of love. When we give to others we ought to do so willingly and cheerfully. Since God has given salvation to us freely and without compulsion, we

reflect God's grace when we give to others with no regard to what they can give back to us.

We also need to recognize that all believers are united in Christ and therefore need to share each other's burdens, financially or otherwise.

One way we are able to share in each other's burdens is by praying for those Christians around the world who are in need financially or physically, as well as those who are persecuted and imprisoned for the sake of the gospel.

Furthermore, when we give to others we are blessed by the Lord. This is not to be taken as a financial blessing.

We need to be mindful of those false teachers who say if we give money to them and their ministries then we will be blessed financially.

God is free to do this if He would like but we do not give with the expectation that we will receive a reward. We give to demonstrate God's love to us with no regard for our own benefit.

Adoration Gained (12-15)

In giving to others we are participating in their ministry. When the Corinthians gave to the Christians in Judea they were helping to alleviate the suffering of those believers. This is a reflection of the gospel. Then when those disciples are able to minister to others because they have food, the Corinthians also are a part of that ministry.

In the same way for believers today when we help others we are involved in ministering to those in need, gaining a share in their ministry. For example, when we give to help missionaries we take on part of the ministry to the culture in which they are ministering.

This should encourage us to give freely to our brothers and sisters in ministry because in doing so God is allowing us to play a part in an eternal ministry.✝

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

STAND UP AND SPEAK Esther 7:1-10

Today we see Esther bring to light Haman's plot and thus end his abuse of power. This week and the next, however, we will also see some failures on the part of God's people. The story highlights these subtly but we see them. For example, Esther will plead to the king for her own life but she will ignore Haman's pleas for his. In so doing she misses an opportunity to show mercy to her enemy.

Expose the deeds of darkness. (1-6)

Esther's deed may have been one of many biblical examples on which Paul drew when he said, "Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

One part of the plot now reaches its climax: Haman is undone but the king's decree still stands. We are at the second of two banquets planned by Queen Esther, to which she has invited only her husband and Haman. In the first she plied them with wine and when the king promised to give her anything she wanted, she coyly deferred her request until the second banquet the following night. And so the suspense built. Now when the king asks for her request, she reveals both the plot and the plotter.

By doing this she takes another risk. She is divulging her identity as a Jew and because he cannot be counted on to act honorably King Ahasuerus may well follow through with his decree to kill her along with all Jews. Note that he is not bothered by the moral atrocity of killing tens of thousands of innocent people. He is enraged only because his favorite wife could have died.

Leave vengeance in the hands of God. (7-10)

Implicitly Esther is revealing evil for

what it is and leaving vengeance in God's hands. The author of Deuteronomy expresses this principle (Deut. 32:35), and Paul quotes it: "Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, 'Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord'" (Rom. 12:19).

The story uses both comic and tragic irony in telling of Haman's downfall. In Chapter 6, the king had read the official record of Mordecai's role in warning him of an assassination plot 12 years earlier (2:19-23). The king asks for Haman's advice: What should be done "for the man the king wants to honor?" Thinking Ahasuerus is speaking of himself, Haman proposes a lavish public spectacle, just the sort of thing he himself craves. When his nemesis Mordecai receives the honor and not he, he mourns.

This turnabout is classic comedy but we should not allow it to block the sympathy we feel for the man, for we too know the feeling of a deflated ego. What we read in verses 7-10, by contrast, is dreadful irony. There will be no mercy. Haman will be impaled on the same pole he has erected for Mordecai.

It is too simple to lionize Esther and demonize Haman, for the moral issues the story presents are as complex as its plots and counter plots. Haman isn't consumed by evil but held captive by pride. The story presents him as a stock character, which makes it easy to despise him. Esther by contrast possesses immense courage but she also withholds compassion when she ignores an opportunity to use her influence with the weak-willed Ahasuerus to make a plea on Haman's behalf.

Had our own Lord not commanded such mercy, we might delight too much in Haman's downfall. But He did command it, so while doing justice let us also enact God's mercy.✝

Christian Crossword

By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- The Son of Man is come to save that which was _____. (Matt. 18:11)
- Let down your _____ for a draught. (Luke 5:4)
- Low-ranking soldier. (abbr.)
- Take thine _____, eat, drink and be merry. (Luke 12:19)
- Lengthy, lyrical poems.
- River. (Spanish)
- Metric unit.
- Speaks of.
- Blueprints.
- Takes to court.
- Grinned.
- Frosted.
- Ties one's shoes.
- Monotony.
- A city in Oklahoma.
- Setting.
- That from which metal is extracted.
- I would that all _____ even as I myself. (1 Cor. 7:7; 2 words)
- Stolen waters are _____.

(Prov. 9:17)

- Not my will, but thine, be _____. (Luke 22:42)
- Thunderous rains.
- _____ Stravinsky.
- Small unclean animal. (Lev. 11:29)
- Highway directories.
- David dwelt in the _____. (2 Sam. 5:9)
- For _____ have sinned. (Rom. 3:23)
- The home of Salt Lake City.
- He came _____ his own. (John 1:11)
- Major football organization. (abbr.)
- Sandwich shop.
- Sly, suggestive look.

Down

- Make bare the _____. (Isa. 47:2)
- Boat paddle.
- Social Security Administration. (abbr.)
- For the _____ of God is holy. (1 Cor. 3:17)

5. Desert wanderer.

- God planted a garden eastward in _____. (Gen. 2:8)
- Stress.
- Supersonic transport. (abbr.)
- The Lord ... plentifully rewardeth the _____. (Ps. 31:23; 2 words)
- I am the _____, ye are the branches. (John 15:5)
- The waves thereof _____ themselves. (Isa. 5:22)
- _____ men as trees, walking. (Mark 8:24; 2 words)
- Diminish.
- Close hard.
- The word was _____ flesh. (John 1:14)
- _____ things through Christ. (Phil. 4:13; 4 words)
- Peaks.
- For the _____ that is in the land of Assyria. (Isa. 7:18)
- A city in Utah.
- New York team.

32. Incinerate.

- In the beginning was the _____. (John 1:1)
- Neither have I desired the _____ day. (Jer. 17:16)
- Japanese fish dish.
- Tehran is its capital.
- Country club sport.
- Gem.
- Wet dirt.
- For there is _____ God. (Mark 12:32)
- A fixed path of travel. (abbr.)
- Rocky hilltop.



WHAT ARE YOU READING?



123rf.com

Alabama Baptists share about
what they are currently reading

JOHN E. MILLER JR.

Student pastor, Lee Street Baptist Church, Enterprise

“Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book by Book Survey” by Kevin J. Vanhoozer

An excellent resource for students of the Bible, this book provides a history of interpretation and theological ideas for each book in the Old Testament. It opens up Old Testament theological interpretation for the 21st century Christian.

“The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family” by Martha Peace and Stuart W. Scott

I am reading this book as a requirement for Association of Certified Biblical Counselors certification. The most informative parts of the book are learning the differences in characteristics of age groups and how to minister to them. ✝

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

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TV/MOVIES

Media reviews



Photo courtesy of National Bible Bee

The ‘National Bible Bee Competition Show’ is a six-week series held yearly by the National Bible Bee.

‘National Bible Bee Competition Show’ leads May’s family-friendly spotlight

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

How long would it take you to memorize five Bible verses? Fifty Bible verses? Even 100 Bible verses? What about nearly 1,000?

Incredibly, that’s what some contestants in the “National Bible Bee Competition Show” did. The six-week series is held yearly by the National Bible Bee and premiered April 24 on Facebook Live, with a new episode going live each Tuesday through May 29 at 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

I watched the debut with my wife and 10-year-old son, not knowing if it would keep his attention. But by the end, he was engrossed in the competition and ready for the next week’s show.

It is co-hosted by Emeal Zwayne, president of Living Waters Publications, along with Jason and David Benham (formerly of HGTV) and Hannah Leary, who won the first season.

Convicting and inspiring

The series involves three age groups (7–10, 11–14 and 15–18) competing for a total of \$100,000 in prize money and is as convicting as it is inspiring. Sometimes you even feel sorry for the contestants — like when one was eliminated because she said “was” instead of “is.”

Watch it at BibleBee.tv.

Also worth watching this month:

► **“Monster Trucks”** — This quirky PG comedy bombed at the box office but was a recent family-friendly hit in my home. Now on Amazon Prime, it tells the story of a friendly octopus-looking monster that becomes the “engine” for a teen boy’s truck. It’s

the type of goofy plot that would have made for a hilarious 1970s Disney flick but it hit theaters four decades too late — in 2017. It has no language. No sexuality. Not even a kiss!

► **Amazon Prime’s Kid’s Christian Shows** — Netflix and Hulu each have their strengths for streaming fans but for children’s Christian or spiritual content, nothing beats Amazon Prime, which has at least three series that my children have watched recently: “Torchlighters,” “Superbook” and “Davey and Goliath.” Hopefully, Netflix and Hulu will catch up soon.

► **Netflix’s New Christian Movies** — Amazon Prime may shine with its children’s faith content but Netflix wins in the grown-up category, including two of its new selections: “Is Genesis History?” and “A Question of Faith,” each of which were in theaters in 2017. Netflix also has “The Case for Christ” and “Little Boy.” Search for “Christian” and you’ll discover similar content.

► **“Lost in Space”** — In this new Netflix remake of the 1960s series, the Robinson clan gets stuck on a planet and tries desperately to survive. It’s rated TV-PG and contains mild language — around two to three words each show — so caution is advised. It’s not entirely family-friendly, but it’s oh-so-close. I watched the first two episodes and enjoyed them. ✝

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.



BP photo

This scene is repeated each time drinking water bursts forth from wells drilled through projects coordinated by Baptist Global Response for villages suffering from unclean water.

Conduit for miracles

Beleaguered church buoyed by water from 'cursed' land

In the Bible, God demonstrates His power through water. Jesus turned water into wine and then walked on top of waves. He even compares Himself to water. And God still uses water as a conduit for miracles.

Shadrach Black, West Africa project coordinator for the humanitarian aid organization Baptist Global Response (BGR), recounted the miracle a beleaguered church experienced in 2017.

The church partnered with BGR to provide its village with a fresh water source. At the time, the pastor and congregation craved hope. "It's difficult to endure in an area where you are not wanted and where you are mocked and scoffed," Black said.

The small band of believers had suffered persecution from their surrounding community. Locals responded to the church's message with scorn. Husbands mocked Christian wives for their faith. Black said the pastor, Adama Diallo, did his best to encourage his congregation amid the oppression.

They believed a new well could make a difference in their bleak circumstances by improving life in the community and demonstrating the ability of the Christian God to meet needs.

Desperate need

The church had placed so much faith in the BGR project that its members felt overjoyed as soon as they saw the drilling equipment arrive.

The area desperately needed fresh water. Black described the ground in the region as sandy and insufficient for farming. People barely survive, living in mud-brick homes with thatch or tin roofing. The only significant income for villages often comes from young residents who find jobs in cities and send money back to help their communities.

But prejudice seemed stronger than thirst. Instead of supporting the project, the community had given the congregation a "cursed" tract of land for the

new well. Black said locals believed multiple spirits fought over that patch of dusty soil, and the supernatural struggle prevented any growth.

But the church decided to proceed anyway.

Supported by BGR funds, the drill team set up its equipment and began to work. Team members drilled to 30 meters and found only dust. Workers drilled 40 meters and still the well was dry. The team began the laborious task of packing up the equipment and moving it to another spot on the tract of land to try again.

God provided

The congregation began to despair. Christian women had to return home where unbelieving husbands mocked the failure.

"And so, the women are coming to the pastor as we're trying to pull up the rig (and) giving these testimonies of what they're enduring in their homes," Black said. "And (they're) just saying, 'Pastor, we need this. We can't endure without this.'"

The believers began to pray and workers began the drilling process again.

They saw signs of water before the end of the first day. On the second day, mud and water shot high in the air. God had provided.

"It was an amazing fountain of testimony to God's power in this place," he said. "And the celebration ... of God's provision wasn't just one of physical relief, it was one of justification in the midst of persecution and of trial."

Pray that more drill teams will find fresh supplies of water for thirsty communities, demonstrating Christ's love for those who have yet to experience it. For more information on BGR wells, visit www.gobgr.org/welldigdare. (BGR)

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names changed for security reasons.



Burma bombing drives out Christians

YANGON, Burma — The Burma (Myanmar) military in April bombed predominantly Christian, ethnic Kachin civilians and restricted aid to an estimated 4,000 displaced villagers trapped in the wilds, sources said.

Burma government forces fired artillery and dropped bombs on Awng Lawt village in mid-April near the northern town of Tanai, Kachin state, sending 2,000 villagers fleeing their homes, according to local Christian leaders. Sin Gau, a member of Kachin Baptist Convention, said the Burma army also bombed bases of the rebel Kachin Independence Army and civilians in nearby villages. Sin Gau said the Burma army also restricted access of aid into conflict-stricken areas where villagers are trapped.

Christian ethnic minorities have long suffered in Burma, where the government has recognized the special status of Buddhism and promoted it as a means to consolidate support. Burma is about 80 percent Buddhist and 9 percent Christian. The Burma military routinely occupies churches and summons entire congregations for interrogation, according to a report the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom released in December 2016.

Burma ranked 24th on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

Muslim attacks continue in Nigeria

JOS, Nigeria — Nigerian Christians are in shock following two deadly attacks that left at least 19 Christians dead.

On April 24, Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacked a Roman Catholic Church service in central Nigeria, killing two priests and 17 other parishioners during an early morning Mass, sources said. The attackers later destroyed more than 60 houses and ransacked food barns.

In April a spokesperson for the Christian Association of Nigeria said the herdsmen had destroyed 500 church buildings since 2011 with attacks that have killed hundreds and displaced 170,000 people, according to Morning Star News. Open Doors has called the attacks by Fulani herdsmen on Christian communities "evidence of ethnic cleansing."

On April 30, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari became the first African leader to visit President Donald Trump at the White House. The two discussed economic, security and military ties between the two countries. Trump repeatedly spoke up for Christians in Nigeria, saying the U.S. is "deeply concerned by religious violence in Nigeria." Trump encouraged Nigerian leaders "to do everything in their power ... to protect innocent civilians of all faiths including Muslims and including Christians." (TAB)



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'Anti-conversion' bill becomes law in India

NEW DELHI, India — Uttarakhand has become the seventh state in India to put "anti-conversion" legislation in force. Gov. Krishna Kant Paul signed the "Freedom of Religion" bill April 18, which the state legislative assembly had passed.

The new law stipulates a two-year jail term for a forced religious conversion of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to the socially disadvantaged Dalit people or indigenous groups. Opponents of the law say it violates national provisions of religious freedom that allow individuals to practice the religion of their choice without interference.

Seven states in India have adopted anti-conversion bills, which Hindu extremists routinely use to falsely accuse Christians of forcible or fraudulent conversion. (MS)