



INSIDE



Life with dementia: Resources and church-based ministries

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Barbour DOM continues ministry through rare disorder

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FBC Tallassee's Carpenters for Christ helps provide wheelchair ramps

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Volunteers from Morgan, Limestone and Madison Baptist associations prepare meals near Fayetteville, N.C., as part of Alabama Baptist DR's response to Hurricane Florence.

Photo courtesy of Mark Wakefield

Spreading Christ's love

Alabama Baptists help with cleanup efforts after Hurricane Florence

Disaster Relief (DR) volunteers from multiple states including Alabama have been deployed to the Carolinas to assist in cleanup efforts following the localized flooding and storm damage wrought by Hurricane Florence.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief strategist Mark Wakefield said DR volunteers from several Alabama Baptist associations began arriving

in North Carolina on Sept. 17. Many faced road closures and downed trees as they traveled. The teams are staging at Southview Baptist Church, Hope Mills, North Carolina.

An Alabama Baptist feeding unit and a shower/laundry unit were in place as of Sept. 21, and several units were doing mudout and chainsaw work in the Fayetteville, North Carolina, area. Assessors were working to identify needs.

"They are telling me there are places that are hard hit not far from here," Wakefield said.

Alabama Baptist DR teams are getting direction from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Wakefield said. Those operating the feeding unit also are coordinating with North Carolina Emergency Management Agency and American

Red Cross to establish a plan for feeding community members.

"We don't know yet how many meals will be needed," Wakefield said. "The feeding numbers may go up as people return home."

Wakefield added that more mudout teams will probably be needed as record floodwaters recede.

Widespread damage

More than 30 inches of rain fell in some regions of North and South Carolina as Florence made landfall Sept. 14 and moved inland. Flooding, power outages and structural damage were widespread and at least 42 deaths were attributed to the storm as of Sept. 21.

Dozens of churches, as well as buildings at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly and the Baptist

Children's Homes of North Carolina, reported storm damage.

The heavy rains and flooding meant some DR efforts had to wait. Floodwaters also cut off access to some cities in need of help.

In Wilmington, North Carolina, 117,000 residents were on "an island" surrounded by floodwater, said Roy Smith, network missionary for the Cape Fear Network of Baptist Churches. Days after Florence made landfall, a feeding unit scheduled for setup at First Baptist Church, Wilmington, could not be reached by DR workers, he said, and chainsaw crews could not enter the city.

Members of Wilmington-area Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church removed downed trees from houses and patched roofs with tarps, Smith (See 'Baptist,' page 6)

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."

COMMENT

Pastor and People

As churches across Alabama observe Minister Appreciation Month in October, it may be helpful to reflect on some of the dynamics which help shape the relationship with the pastor.

First is the realization that a pastor, every minister for that matter, carries a special responsibility given to no other. The pastor is concerned about the salvation and Christian walk of those touched by the ministry of the church. But the pastor also is concerned about all that affects those he serves. He is concerned about jobs, about marriages, about life struggles.

A pastor is intentional in his efforts to walk with people through life's journey. His efforts are not always appreciated, but most of the time, companionship through life's joys and sorrows, victories and struggles can be a source of joy. Representing God's presence in all of life is part of what God has called the pastor to do.

A pastor does not get to choose where he serves. The call to a church begins with an invitation by the congregation and a sense of affirmation from God. Only then can a minister accept or decline a pastorate.

Extended family

But wherever the pastor feels the sense of call becomes "home." The people of the church are those who become part of the pastor's extended family. They are the ones he is given to love and lead. Here he will put down roots and nurture relationships. Here he will demonstrate compassion and grace in the church and the community.

No church is just a stepping stone in a ministerial career. Each church is "home" for the pastor and his family.

Pastorates often began with high energy and even higher expectations. But God's timetable is not always the timetable of the pastor's dreams or the pulpit committee's promises. Pastor and people often have to learn patience. Relationships grow at different rates. Some spring to life quickly. Others take time and hard work.

Curbing impatience and frustrations is something both pastors and the members of the church



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

must frequently practice in their everyday lives.

God does not call anyone to a position without equipping them for that service. Remembering that Christ is our sufficiency is imperative. Every pastor finds himself in positions for which he feels ill equipped, perhaps believing that someone else could do a better job.

A gospel song extols "learning to lean on Jesus." That is what a minister has to do in such times. Jesus is our strength and it is His abiding presence which the pastor offers to hurting people. The loving, caring presence of Jesus, illustrated by the pastor's ministry, is more important than all of the philosophical responses to the "why" questions so often asked.

Every pastor needs a support network of some type — a mentor, a peer group, a friend, a continuing education group. These resources are invaluable. They provide a listening ear, advice, encouragement, stimulation toward continued growth.

The pastor who works alone as if he were the Lone Ranger will face undue difficulties in multiple areas. Loneliness will be a constant companion, frustrations will compound and family stress will regularly increase.

It is one thing for a pastor to say, "I'm not perfect." It is another for that pastor to come face to face with mistakes. No pastor is perfect. We know that. Neither is any church member. The pastor will make mistakes. Recognizing mistakes and taking responsibility for them is important.

Trying to justify a mistake or explain it away is never as helpful as owning the mistake and gracefully apologizing for the wrong. Defensiveness builds barriers. Humility is much less fatal to relationships and opportunity.

In this light, it is important for the pastor to listen to the people to find God's voice in their feedback. Unfortunately, some church members seem to believe it is their duty to keep the pastor

humble by pointing out everything they deem a mistake. Seldom is God's voice found in such an attitude.

But churches are filled with members who love their pastor, support their pastor and pray for their pastor. Such members are frequently used by God to speak wisdom to the pastor. It is incumbent on the pastor to listen with spiritual ears to see if God is speaking through such caring members.

Remember the story of Moses recorded in Exodus 17? Joshua led Israel into battle and as long as Moses stood with the staff of God raised in his hands, Israel prevailed. When Moses grew tired and his hands drooped, Israel lost.

Verse 12 says Aaron and Hur sat Moses down on a rock and held up his hands. Israel won a great victory.

Church members can be Aaron and Hur to their pastor. They can expand the church's ministry by "holding up his hands." They can care for their pastor in his times of need. Not a life crisis necessarily but in the ongoing needs of life.

Sometimes it is harder to accept help than it is to provide help. A wise pastor will appreciate and humbly receive the care provided him and his family by members of the congregation or the church as a whole.

Week in and week out, a pastor plans worship for his congregation. He leads worship, Bible studies, prayer meetings and more. But like other members of the church, the pastor needs to worship God. He must be alert to those special moments when

the sense of God's presence overcomes all that is taking place. Such moments are different for different people but being in the awe-inspiring presence of a Holy God is as necessary for the pastor as it is for others.

Participant in worship

Churches do well to make sure their pastor is provided opportunities to be a participant in worship without being its planner or leader.

Finally, pastors do well to find contentment with the place they are serving. Equally, congregations do well to find contentment with their current pastor instead of wondering who will be next. Putting down roots, establishing relationships, becoming family and caring for one another is much closer to the will of God than a rebellious spirit that protests where one serves or the one who serves.

May God bless our pastors and our churches with healthy relationships between pastor and people. ✠

"Every pastor needs a support network of some type — a mentor, a peer group, a friend, a continuing education group. ... They provide a listening ear, advice, encouragement, stimulation toward continued growth."

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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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'Next strategic step'

SBC Executive Committee approves funding for sexual abuse advisory study

An initiative by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear to address sexual abuse in the church will be funded by the first \$250,000 in Cooperative Program (CP) overage for 2017–2018, by a vote of the SBC Executive Committee (EC).

In appropriating money for Greear's Sexual Abuse Advisory Study, an initiative in conjunction with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), the EC acted on behalf of the SBC "to provide two years of funding ... to study ways to address sexual abuse and related issues in a church or ministry context," according to a recommendation approved by the EC at its Sept. 17–18 meeting in Nashville.

The funding will be drawn from an anticipated \$5 million overage from the 2017–2018 CP Allocation Budget.

The remainder of the overage will be distributed among SBC entities according to the convention's formula for overage distribution. At the conclusion of Greear's initiative, any unused funds also will be distributed according to the 2017–2018 overage distribution formula, which designates 53.4 percent to the International Mission Board.

The EC's officers were authorized to approve additional funding for the sexual abuse study up to \$50,000 if necessary. The study's proposed reports, recommendations and resources must be presented to the EC no later than Feb. 1, 2020, according to the recommendation.

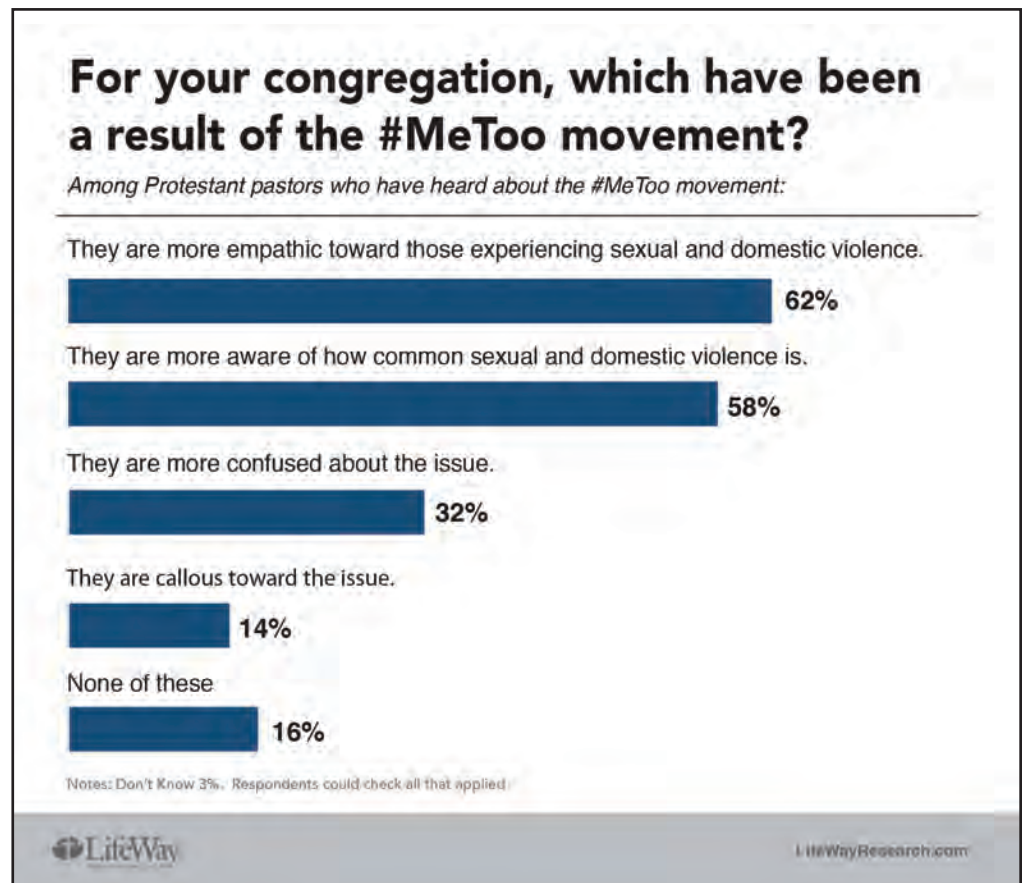
Three phases

A budget proposal submitted to the EC by the ERLC projected the study will include three phases:

- ▶ Assessment of what facets of sexual misconduct need to be addressed
- ▶ Development of partnerships with seminaries, state conventions and churches
- ▶ Implementation of the study's recommendations.

The assessment phase will include a survey by LifeWay Research on Protestant churchgoers' views of sexual misconduct and abuse. The EC's Business and Finance Committee also urged the ERLC to work closely with Baptist associations to ensure all churches have ready access to resources developed.

Three SBC seminaries — Gateway Seminary in Mill Valley, California; Southeastern Baptist



Graphic by LifeWay Research

Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas — reported to the EC they are strengthening efforts to train students, faculty and staff to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

Last year Gateway Seminary began a partnership with the MinistrySafe sex abuse prevention organization, president Jeff Iorg said, to add sexual abuse and harassment prevention training to the seminary's curricula. Training will begin this year and be fully operational by the 2019–2020 seminary calendar as a required course in all master's degree programs.

Southwestern Seminary will initiate a new MinistrySafe program for all students in the spring of 2019, interim president Jeff Bingham told the EC. Bingham said the seminary also plans to "increase and improve the harassment training that all of our employees must take."

Southeastern Seminary is revamping an existing orientation course for students to ensure

"a designated time of training ... on the legal, moral and biblical responsibilities" in preventing and reporting sexual harassment, president Daniel Akin said. Faculty and staff are already required to go through training to identify and prevent sexual harassment, Akin said.

Growing awareness

A LifeWay Research study released Sept. 18 found that Protestant pastors are thinking more about the effects of sexual and domestic abuse on their congregation members.

Two-thirds of pastors say domestic or sexual violence occurs in the lives of people in their congregation. And many pastors believe the #MeToo movement has made their churches more aware of how common sexual and domestic violence are.

More pastors say they are addressing these issues from the pulpit. Still, half say they lack training in how to address sexual and domestic violence.

EC chairman Mike Stone said the study is "the next step in a trajectory we've been on for a while" to address sexual abuse.

"There's never, in my estimation, been a hesitancy about addressing these issues" in the SBC, Stone, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Blackshear, Georgia, said. "We see in the culture and in the media an increased emphasis on this issue of sexual abuse. So I think it's time for us to take that next strategic step." (BP)

"We see in the culture and in the media an increased emphasis on this issue of sexual abuse. So I think it's time for us to take that next strategic step."

Mike Stone
chairman, Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention

Adjusting to life with dementia



123rf.com

Husband of dementia patient shares experience, tips

By Alan Johnston
Special to The Alabama Baptist

This is not my story, it is our story. It chronicles the journey of faith, hope and love that (my wife) Judy and I have experienced in the 15 years since that day the doctor said, “Mrs. Johnston, you have Alzheimer’s disease.”

Our prayer has long been that our journey might encourage someone else, or perhaps even provide hope, but above all else do as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:7, “to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

Do not be ashamed

I have observed that many people seem almost embarrassed to talk about what is happening. I have had people speak to me in a whisper as they explain their diagnosis. I have met some who will not even speak the name of the disease, as though not calling it what it is will mystically make it something other than what it is — Alzheimer’s.

My experience has been that for a long, long time dementia has been shoved into the corner, both by clinicians and the community, as though it is somehow not only a sad disease, but a shameful disease as well.

Judy and I decided from the beginning we would talk about it, and we did. We told family and our church. We made radio and television appearances, did newspaper interviews and marched in Alzheimer’s walks. We once hired a marching band to march with us to draw attention to this far-too-long-ignored disease.

One day as we were driving across town, Judy heard a song on the radio that contained the lyrics, “I’m not crazy, I’m just a little unwell.” It made her laugh.

We used that as a springboard to become advocates for supporting families struggling to cope with Alzheimer’s, and

to create awareness on the lack of funding dedicated to find a means of preventing and curing this horrific disease.

You are not alone

My momma is now in heaven, but for so many years she was there with Judy and me. We could not have made it without her love, acts of mercy and presence. The great burden that comes with caring for someone with Alzheimer’s should not be borne alone. In fact, it should not and cannot be done, at least not for long.

It does take a village to cope and provide the necessary care for a loved one with any form of dementia. The good news is that to some extent that village already exists. Alzheimer’s is a family disease. Beyond the family there can be found a myriad of resources and support.

Some of that support is church-based, some is community-based, while other levels of support are found in the professional world. Support groups sponsored by the Alzheimer’s Association meet regularly. Adult day care for adults with dementia, memory care facilities and respite care programs (see story, page 5) are available, as are numerous support resources. There is no reason to think that one has to do this alone.

Practical planning

For believers there is the great certainty of heaven as our future home. There is the certainty of a life free of pain and heartache. God’s word makes all of that very clear. Yet the here-and-now can be full of surprises, losses, pain and grief.

I believe that we honor God when we plan for the future.

There are care plans to be arranged. There are legal arrangements that must be made in advance while all persons can still think clearly and make sound judgments. One must understand what insurance programs will and will not pay, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

If sitters are needed, who will pay for them? Are hospice services an option?

There are often more questions than answers, but we must do what is within our ability and power to do to prepare for the future.

Lean on God

I have lost count of the number of times family, friends and acquaintances have asked how I’ve managed to care for Judy. It is done out of love and commitment. It is done because of a promise, a vow and a covenant I made with

Judy all those years ago.

But beyond that, survival is a matter of faith, and in my personal experience it is faith in God and in His word. He is a promise keeper. Hope has come from praising God, from the promises of God, from prayers (my own and those of others), from answering the Bible’s call for perseverance and from the peace and presence of God.

In 2 Corinthians 4:7–18, Paul said he felt crushed, but wasn’t; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

Some will say it is not possible to react in that manner to some of life’s crushing blows. Humanly they are correct. However, Paul went on to say, “so we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.”

Judy and I both have survived these many years clinging to the promises of God. Our hope rests in Christ.

“Judy and I both have survived these many years clinging to the promises of God. Our hope rests in Christ.”

Alan Johnston

Resources for caregivers

The Alabama Cares Program is a statewide initiative that provides help and information to caregivers of individuals with a disability, Alzheimer’s disease or some form of dementia or frailty from aging.

The Alabama Cares Program offers:

- ▶ Information on resources and services available within your community through public education, health fairs and newsletters
- ▶ Caregiver access assistance to help in obtaining access to the services and resources that are available within your community through outreach and case management
- ▶ Caregiver education and counseling to assist in making decisions and solving problems relating to areas such as health, nutrition and finances

▶ Caregiver respite to provide temporary relief or a brief respite from care giving by providing personal care, homemaker services, adult day care and other services requiring a skilled helper in the home

▶ Caregivers supplemental services to provide on a limited basis incontinent supplies, minor home modifications, assistive technology, home-delivered meals, emergency response alarms, nutritional supplements and transportation.

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) at 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463).

Book recommendations

▶ “Grace for the Unexpected Journey: A 60-Day Devotional for Alzheimer’s and Other Dementia Caregivers” by Deborah Barr

▶ “Experiencing Dementia” by H. Norman Wright

▶ “Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade: The 5 Love Languages and the Alzheimer’s Journey” by Gary Chapman, Deborah Barr and Edward Shaw ✠

“For believers there is the great certainty of heaven as our future home. There is certainty of a life free of pain and heartache.”

Alan Johnston

EDITOR’S NOTE — This article was adapted from Alan Johnston’s unpublished manuscript titled “Jars of Clay: Surviving Alzheimer’s ... A Story of Faith, Hope and Love.” ✠

‘Joy-filled, God-filled’ space

Church-based dementia ministry provides ‘best day ever,’ offers respite for caregivers

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Walk into the Encore program at Canterbury United Methodist Church (CUMC) in Birmingham, and you

feel like you’ve walked into a party.

The notes of “You Ain’t Nothin But a Hound Dog” are bouncing down the hall as people sing and dance to the piano. Decorations are still everywhere from that day’s theme — on this particular day it’s National Banana Day, and there have been crafts, games and snacks to match.

There’s usually a speaker to talk about anything from the history of radio to Winston Churchill to how peanut butter is made. A lot of days there’s a “drive-in movie,” with popcorn, candy and an episode of Andy Griffith or “I Love Lucy.” Most days, there’s a game of balloon volleyball played with pool noodles.

Day of activities

The point, says Kristen Snell, is to give Encore participants the best day ever. “It’s a joy-filled, God-filled space,” said

Snell, family and community educator for Encore, a community respite ministry that offers a day of scheduled activities for people with dementia.

More than a day care

The ministry was birthed out of a dementia support group at the church, said Valerie Boyd, director of SAGE (Seasoned Adults Giving and Engaging) ministries at CUMC.

People in that group had been asking about the possibility of a day care, and Boyd said they knew they would like to offer a way for caregivers to have a break. But she said she also knew immediately that they wanted it to be more than just that — they wanted it to be a place where participants loved to be.

So she went to Montgomery and paid a visit to the Respite Ministry at First United Methodist

Church. It was a well-run ministry, and participants were engaged and having a great time.

“Right away we knew we wanted to do one of those here,” Boyd said.

And in June 2016, Encore was born. At first it was offered two days a week

“It’s about empowering them and making them feel they still have purpose.”

Valerie Boyd
director, Seasoned Adults Giving and Engaging



Photo by Grace Thornton

(From left) Valerie Boyd, director of SAGE (Seasoned Adults Giving and Engaging) at Canterbury United Methodist Church, and Anne Warren, an Encore volunteer, sing and dance while Patti Williams, Encore program director, plays familiar songs on the piano. Every day at Encore, participants wrap up the day with music.

from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., but as word spread, they’ve increased it to run Monday through Thursday.

They have enough volunteers to make the ratio nearly one to one with participants, but participants don’t know they’re volunteers. Everyone wears the same nametags. Everyone participates in what is described as a social gathering for retirees.

And volunteers have one task — to make it the participants’ best day ever.

Patti Williams, Encore’s program director, said they get “a day filled with laughter and purpose and meaning.”

“We love our people, and we don’t ever stop thinking about them,” Williams said. “Everything I plan for their day is designed so the participant can succeed and feel valued. Too often they feel like they have nothing to contribute any more, and we help them have purpose and meaning again.”

‘They leave happy’

Boyd agreed. “We don’t talk about dementia or sickness,” she said. “It’s about empowering them and making them feel they still have purpose.”

It’s remarkable therapy, she said. “Even if they don’t remember what they did that

day, they remember how they feel. They leave happy.”

It’s not rocket science, Snell said — it’s just letting loose and having fun with them.

Vital ministry

And it’s a vital ministry for the caregivers too.

“Half, if not more, don’t have the means to have a full-time caregiver,” she said.

Often the family member is the only caregiver — and 60 percent of caregivers pass away before the person they are caring for does.

There’s such a big need for ministries like Encore that their program is filled

to the brim all four days, even with most participants only coming one day a week. A few other churches have started similar ministries, and others are considering it, including a few Baptist churches in the Birmingham area, Boyd said. (For tips on how to start one at your church, see sidebar story.)

To minister to families with dementia, you don’t have to start big — do what makes sense for your church, she suggested. Another possible way to help is to provide scholarships to cover the small fee families in your church would pay at a ministry like Encore. ✠

For more information about Encore, visit encorerespite.org.

Tips for churches considering a dementia ministry

1. Don’t be intimidated by your church’s size or perceived lack of resources.

Do what makes sense for you — that could be two volunteers and one person with dementia, or it could be 30 volunteers and 40 participants. There are ways you can run a vital and impactful ministry regardless of size.

Some things you may find you need as you go are resources like volunteer training. Getting in touch with a ministry like Encore can help make that process easier. You also may require specific needs met for the ministry, like a way to provide lunch. Often volunteers in a church could sign up to cook or provide that. There’s ample room for creativity.

2. Get in touch with a church that’s already doing it.

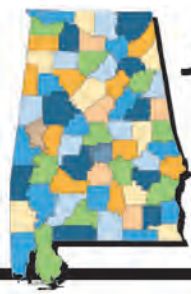
Reach out to someone at a church with an existing memory care ministry like Encore. Ask to schedule a time to visit and see what they do, then sit down and talk through what you need to get started.

To get in touch with Encore, call 205-874-1525 or email Patti Williams at encorepatti@gmail.com or Kristen Snell at encorekristen@gmail.com.

3. Be the driving force.

To get something like this started, you have to have a passion and be the spark in your church. Promote it. Get people excited about it. Then stick with it.

Source: Encore respite ministry, Canterbury United Methodist Church



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

CALHOUN

▶ **Calhoun Association** will hold its annual meeting Oct. 14 at Golden Springs Church, Anniston. The business session and missions fair will begin at 3 p.m. A worship rally will begin at 6:15 p.m. Richard Blackaby will be the guest speaker. Roger Willmore is associational missionary/director of missions.

CLEBURNE

▶ **Larry Riddle** recently celebrated 10 years as associational missionary/director of missions of **Cleburne Association**.

COFFEE

▶ **Coffee Association** recently honored **Mary Walker** for her service as association clerk. Walker has served at Coffee since 2007. John Granger is associational missionary/director of missions.

COOSA RIVER

▶ **Brian Clifton** recently resigned as pastor of **Mountain View Church, Childersburg**.

SELMA

▶ **Shady Grove Church, Selma**, will hold a revival Oct. 7–10. Sunday services will be held at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday–Wednesday services will be held at 7 nightly. Mike Vineyard will be the guest speaker. Terry Johnson is pastor.

SHELBY

▶ **First Church, Montevallo**, will host Christian comedian Billy Bob Bohannon on Oct. 11, 11 a.m. Lunch will be served. Terry Sutton is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

▶ **McEntyre Church, Ashville**, will hold revival services Oct. 7–10, 6:30 nightly. Jerry Keeling will be the guest evangelist. McEntyre also will hold a singing Sept. 30, 2 p.m. featuring The Ambassadors. Bobby Joe Winningham is pastor.

ETOWAH

▶ **Sibert Church, Attalla**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. Sam O'Dell is pastor.

MORGAN

▶ **East Highland Church, Hartselle**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 14 to celebrate its 48th anniversary. Worship will begin at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. Walter Blackman is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

▶ **Providence Church, Opelika**, will hold its fall festival Oct. 6, 10 a.m.–noon. Activities will include games, face painting, a fish pond, hay rides and cake walks. There will be a musical program by Billy Bob Bohannon. For more information call 334-745-4608. Rusty Sowell is pastor.✠

Baptist state conventions partner with NAMB to mount disaster relief effort

(continued from page 1)

said. But they were on pace to run out of tarps, with no way of leaving the area to buy more.

Needs assessment ongoing

The North American Mission Board (NAMB), which coordinates multi-state disaster responses, reported that DR units from at least nine state conventions were in place to help storm victims and emergency workers in communities affected by the storm.

As of Sept. 21, assessment teams continued to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state emergency management agencies in the Carolinas along with The Salvation Army and American Red Cross to determine where resources will be needed and how best to get those resources in place as floodwaters recede.

As Baptist state conventions partner with NAMB in the disaster relief effort, the response is “a true testimony to the effectiveness of the partnerships

throughout all state conventions,” said David Melber, president of Send Relief, NAMB’s crisis response arm.

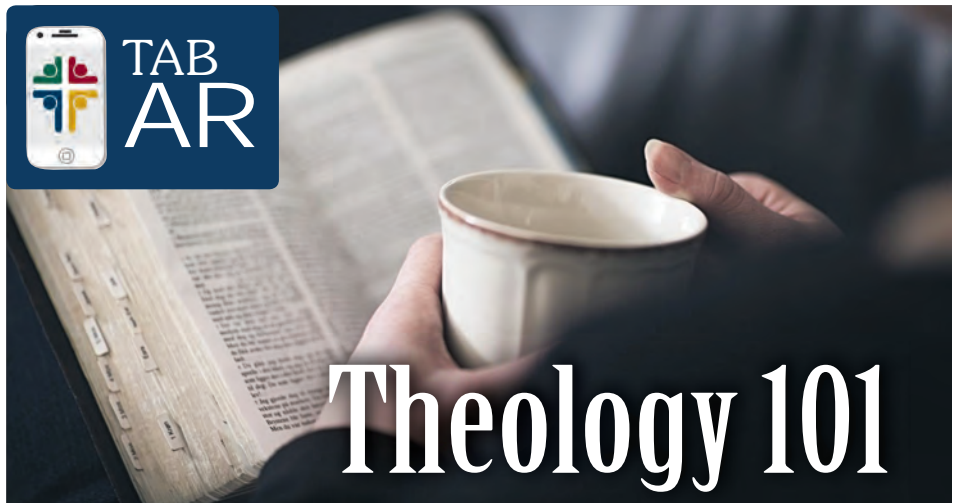
In New Bern, North Carolina, Temple Baptist Church served as a staging site for DR workers. Temple pastor Jim Pennington said believers have given physical help with spiritual encouragement, as in the case of a man whose house was destroyed shortly after he canceled his homeowner’s insurance policy.

‘God is going to use this’

Drawing on Jesus’ stilling of a storm in Mark 4, Pennington told the man, “God’s promise to you is that He will get you to the other side of this.” Sobbing, the man responded, “I needed that.”

Despite the destruction, Baptists have much to anticipate as they spread the love of Christ in the Tar Heel State, Pennington said.

“It’s amazing how God is going to use this to reach our community for Christ,” he said. “I have no doubt in my mind whatsoever.” (BP, TAB)



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Stewardship

Stewardship of Talents

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

The Baptist Faith and Message statement about stewardship opens with three significant sentences: “God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others.”

In previous weeks Theology 101 has focused on the responsibility to be faithful in the use of time and material possessions. This week our attention is drawn to the matter of stewardship of talents. Some human abilities seem to be inborn as God-given talents or the ability to perform in some ways that are above the norm. While we may develop and enhance such talents, they are among God’s good gifts. Consequently, God expects us to use or manage these talents in ways that honor Him and help others. We often think of talents in terms of artistic abilities or extraordinary craftsmanship. God-honoring stewards have chosen to use their talents for good rather than making them channels of sinful influence or indulgence.

Somewhat in the same category as native talents but essentially different are the abilities the Bible terms spiritual gifts. In fact, the Bible uses two different terms in referring to such abilities. One term is built on the word for spirit (pneuma) and is rendered into English as spiritual gifts. A different term is built on the word for grace (charis) and could be rendered grace gifts. This term gives us the descriptive adjective charismatic.

This twin terminology serves to remind us that such gifts are in a different category from natural or inborn talents. There is something supernatural about spiritual or charismatic gifts.

That supernatural difference is a matter of God’s grace and His enabling Holy Spirit. Several gift list samplings are found in the New Testament in Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, 28–30; and Ephesians 4:7–12.

Whether we are dealing with God’s gifts or our talents, we are to be good and faithful stewards of their use. These are not badges to be worn in order to show others how godly or spiritual we are, neither are they given for one’s personal enjoyment or reputation enhancement. These are not signs that point to our spiritual superiority over others.

Rather, God’s grace gifts are for use in serving Him through performing some ministry for the sake of Christ’s body, the Church.

For God’s glory

The presence of God-given talents or Spirit-inspired gifts become reasons for humble devotion to God and faithful stewardship unto Him, knowing that ultimately our accountability is to Him as the sovereign source of all we have, including talents and gifts. As stated in the Baptist Faith and Message, both native talents and special grace gifts are to be used “for the glory of God and for helping others.”

Rather than being considered evidences of spiritual superiority, God’s gifts and talents bestowed on His children are accompanied by an exacting stewardship. Jesus expressed it like this: “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48b).✠

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.



'First of all...'

Starting with prayer 'vital' to leading gospel-centered life, church

By Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

In many churches, evangelism and outreach is visiting those who visit the church. But according to Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, that's missing the mark — that's "in-reach."

"The church isn't the goal," he said during the recent Engage 24 workshop. "The city is."

On Sept. 17–18, more than 160 church leaders from four states gathered at First Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association, for the Engage 24 evangelism workshop hosted by the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

Engage 24 exists to help church leaders learn how to mobilize their church members and how to see the gospel spread in their communities and around the world. Taught by leading pastors from around the country, the Engage 24 workshops provide leaders of large and small churches with the resources to impact the area around them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is much more than preaching the gospel from the pulpit on Sundays, the pastors emphasized.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist

Church, Woodstock, Georgia, and the new senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at NAMB, stressed the importance of community engagement and being intentional about interacting with unbelievers.

"I've found that the longer I'm a part of God's family, it seems the further removed I am from those Christ died for," Hunt said. "Jesus didn't just let His light shine. He shared. He preached the Kingdom and all His disciples did as well."

Christians should use their jobs, their skills and their passions to find niches in the community where they can share the good news of Jesus.

"A gospel-centered church is not one where the pastor simply preaches the gospel, but one in which the

entire church shares the gospel," said John Meador, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas. "At some point I realized that I was not just called to pastor a church but to pastor a community."

Engaging in the local community is key to advancing the gospel, said Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida. "If you're going to advance the gospel, you've got to get to the place where you interact with the world," he said.

On top of community engagement, the speakers also stressed the necessity for renewed passion for prayer in seeing unbelievers come to faith in Christ.

"If you don't pray you will be lifeless and powerless," Pitman said. "We must establish a house of prayer. If we want to see souls won to Christ, it will not happen apart from prayer."

Hunt agrees with this statement. "We only go into the streets that we have covered in prayer first," he said.

Reading from 1 Timothy 2:1–8, Pitman explained how the passage embodies the entire mission of the gospel and the im-

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people."

1 Timothy 2:1



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Workshop speakers Vance Pitman (second from left), Tim Dowdy (second from right), James Merritt (right) and Joel Sutherland take questions about their churches and evangelism from the audience.

portance of prayer in that mission. "Look at how the passage starts," he said. "'First of all ... pray.'" He explained that as pastors and leaders, they must first cultivate the field with prayer, sow the seed of the gospel, then trust the Lord for a harvest. Evangelism is a "supernatural work of God in response to the cries of His people," Pitman said.

He noted that in many churches prayer has lost priority. "We have (made) prayer in the life of our churches moments of transition when we move people on and off of the stage," he said.

It isn't people who advance the gospel, said Tim Dowdy, pastor of First Baptist Church, Eagle's Landing, in McDonough, Georgia. "God doesn't need us, but He includes us."

'Favor of God'

According to Traylor, it is the favor of God that advances the gospel. "The prayers of God's people advance the gospel," he said. "You can do more in a minute with the favor of God than in a lifetime without it."

Statistics support the importance of prayer in evangelism. Referencing a recent



Photo by Jessica Ingram

Texas pastor John Meador explains the importance of pastoring the entire community and not just a church.

survey of Southern Baptist churches across the United States, Joel Sutherland, executive director of evangelism at NAMB, said in highly evangelistic churches there was an emphasis on prayer and spiritual awakening. "They are saturated with prayer for the lost."

James Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, Georgia, said the greatest thing to ever happen in his life is coming to know Jesus, and we should all be anxious to share that joy.

"Jesus did for you what you could not do for yourself," he said. "The greatest thing you can ever do for another human being is tell them about the Jesus that changed your life." ✠

Practical tips for evangelism

▶ Lead well. Design times where you can teach and model an evangelistic lifestyle. (Ex. sermon series on evangelism, have witnessing partners.)

▶ Immerse every ministry with a culture of evangelism. Celebrate those who come to Christ. Create intentional evangelistic engagement opportunities.

▶ Strategically plan events for your church that will reach into the community. Use holidays and seasonal celebrations.

▶ Tell the stories of those who come to Christ. Use video testimonies, interviews during worship and/or tracts with a salvation story.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Tips compiled from Tim Dowdy's session at the Engage 24 evangelism workshop. ✠

"Be careful that you don't live your life to make your name great, but rather to make His name known."

Pastor Tim Dowdy
FBC Eagle's Landing, McDonough, Georgia

Barbour DOM continues ministry through rare disorder

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Don Hatcher can settle in and tell a lot of stories about what he's seen God do.

He's seen God take several churches of 30 or smaller and grow them into churches of several hundred.

He's seen God merge two congregations who were struggling into a vibrant new church that's still growing.

And before any of that, He called Hatcher out of a different denominational background and into Southern Baptist life.

God has done amazing things, and as a pastor for decades and now associational missionary/director of missions for Barbour Baptist Association, Hatcher loves to tell about them.

He tells those stories with a smile.

'My voice is a story'

But he also tells them with a strained, hoarse voice, one that sounds like he's come down with a case of laryngitis this week — except he's had it for eight years.

"My voice is a story in itself," he said.

In 2010, Hatcher was diagnosed with spasmodic dysphonia,

a neurological condition that prevents his vocal cords from vibrating as they should.

It's not all that common, but it's not uncommon either, he said. Often people who have spasmodic dysphonia have suffered a head trauma — which he hasn't — or have used their voices vocationally, like teachers, singers, attorneys or preachers.

But even so, Hatcher has never met another preacher who has what he has. It's incurable.

For some, it's helped by periodic Botox injections into the vocal cords, but that treatment didn't work for him when he tried

it — in fact, it made his voice even more whisper-like for a few months. The only other option was vocal cord surgery, and that was a "very sensitive" surgery with a big risk — he could lose his voice totally if something went wrong.

So he opted not to risk it. "The search committee knew this was a condition I was dealing with when we talked about me coming here to Barbour Baptist Association five years ago," Hatcher said.

But they were behind him all the way.

"I try not to let it be a hindrance," he said.

His main struggle is talking on the phone. Sometimes putting it on speakerphone helps with that. But he usually starts a conversation with, "I have a vocal cord condition, so if you can't understand me, just tell me — I won't be offended."

Frustrations

And when Hatcher is in a large crowd with people he doesn't know well, he often doesn't contribute much to the conversation.

"That's the most frustrating part of it probably, because I love to be able to be involved and contribute," he said.

But he gets by just fine, he said. He's got a smile that can't be dimmed, especially when he talks about the churches he's served or his wife, children and the seven grandchildren he's watching grow up.

And when he preaches, something kind of miraculous happens — he has a big, booming voice. Sitting in his office, he demonstrates, and suddenly the place changes from library to auditorium.

A preacher voice

"When I preach, it's crystal clear," Hatcher said.

People think it's a miracle, but medically speaking, vocal cords do something different when your brain pushes itself into a different

kind of voice — a preacher voice, Hatcher said.

But to him and to others, it's still a miracle. For talking to be such a daily struggle, he is able to preach more than half the Sundays of the year in churches around his association and beyond. In 2017 he preached 37 Sundays. This year, he's already preached more than 25.

Rick Barnhart, director of the office of associational missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said it's incredible to hear.

"It is amazing that despite his voice struggling that when he gets into the pulpit he can preach with clarity and strength," he said.

And out of the pulpit, Hatcher

has been a strong ministry partner, Barnhart said. "Don has been faithful in his service of a struggling association. We have worked together in assisting a couple of churches merging to form a stronger church and to better steward resources."

It's all part of God's story, Hatcher said.

When he looks back over his life, he doesn't immediately call up his spasmodic dysphonia as something he would change.


'A good journey'

"I don't know of anything I'd change about where God has brought me," he said. "God's been good to me. I give Him all the glory," Hatcher said. "It's been a good journey." ☞



Don Hatcher


Photo by Grace Thornton



Pastor Charles Lewis
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Photo by Rick Couch

Handicapped-accessible ramps allow Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services clients of all ages to live more independently. Ramps like those built by FBC Tallassee's Carpenters for Christ are needed throughout the state.

'Good for the soul'

FBC Tallassee's Carpenters for Christ helps build needed wheelchair ramps

By Rick Couch
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The brutal Alabama heat and humidity could not erase the smiles on the faces of the Carpenters for Christ volunteers as they worked on one of their most recent projects.

The group, which operates through First Baptist Church, Tallassee, in Elmore Baptist Association, has assisted Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Independent Living Specialist Sharon Weaver in providing wheelchair ramps for clients who would otherwise have a difficult time entering and leaving their homes.

One of the group's founders, Glen Baggett, said the program began with wheelchair ramp projects several years ago when his daughter Angie, an Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC) employee, discussed the needs of a coworker's family member.

Another DOC employee who is paralyzed informed Angie that ADRS might be able to provide support. From there, a partnership was formed.

Baggett said when he and Weaver connected, she was excited about the opportunity to work with the group.

"When I mentioned ramps, her eyes lit up," he said. "We have been building ramps for (ADRS) ever since."

Carpenters for Christ has been espe-

cially busy this summer, having built a ramp every Monday. The crew generally consists of 10 to 20 volunteers from a roster that includes a retired Air Force officer, a Montgomery Police Department SWAT team member, a retired college baseball coach and many others from interesting backgrounds.

"We have a wide variety of people," Baggett said. "There are a lot of retirees, but we even have a few guys who are still working."

Because so many are willing to lend a hand, the group usually completes their projects within a day. While the builders work quickly, Tallassee's minister of education Barry Tice said the good vibes the workers receive last much longer.

"All of the guys here get a blessing out of this,"

he said. "We work hard, but I feel like we are the ones who are the recipients of the blessings in addition to the people who get the ramps. That's why they do it — to give back because the Lord has been good to us."

Volunteer and retired Air Force Col. Steve Miller agreed. Miller, who discovered the group after being invited to the church by a friend, said it is a true blessing to offer assistance to those in the community in need.

"Everyone says what we do means so much to the people we do it for," he said. "I would never underplay that, but what we get out of it is worth so much more.

"We help people who are not always able to help themselves."

**Bill Carroll
church member,
FBC Tallassee**

"We work hard, but I feel like we are the ones who are the recipients of the blessings in addition to the people who get the ramps."

**Barry Tice
minister of education, FBC Tallassee**

It's good work, it's good to fellowship and we get to help people."

Miller said he has been blessed his entire life, and it is rewarding to be able to share those blessings with others in the community through ADRS and Carpenters for Christ.

"This is good for the heart and good for the soul," he said.

Church member Bill Carroll said he has traveled all over the world in 20 years of missions work. His stops have included Nicaragua, Belize and several states. However, he said one of the most rewarding service projects has been the help he and others provide in his own community in his home state.

'Huge blessing'

"We get a huge blessing when we ask them to come out, come down the ramp and see their expression," he said. "We get more of a blessing right then. That is what it is all about. We help people who are not always able to help themselves."

The group generally receives information about a project from Weaver. After an

initial visit to the site, the group uses its measurements to make a list of the materials needed. Weaver and ADRS then provide financial support.

From there, the Carpenters for Christ spring into action.

Weaver said partnering with these volunteers has been an extremely rewarding experience.

"They have been a real blessing to SAIL (State of Alabama Independent Living/Homebound Services)," she said. "They are eager, and they love what they do. It is dear to their heart. They love to serve people, and it is fantastic for us because we get to help our consumers to live more independently."

For more information about how to participate, visit www.fbctallassee.com or www.ADRSRehabNews.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Rick Couch is public information specialist in the Office of Communications and Information at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. This article originally appeared at www.ADRSRehabNews.com.



Photo by Rick Couch

A volunteer with FBC Tallassee's Carpenters for Christ ministry prepares to cut a post on a new wheelchair ramp. Ramps are generally a one-day project.

ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Furr honored for 25 years at Vestavia Hills Baptist

Twenty-five years ago Gary Furr was called as pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, Birmingham. On Sept. 16 the church celebrated Furr's tenure at Vestavia Hills Baptist. He was recognized during the morning service, and a reception was held later in the afternoon.

Baptist leaders, members of the church and Furr's family were among those attending the event.

A collection of notes of appreciation and remembrances were given to Furr and his wife, Vickie, at the afternoon reception.

"This (was) a historic event for our church,"

said administrative pastor Dennis Anderson. "Even though we are known for long-tenured pastors here, Gary (was) the first to celebrate 25 years as our pastor."

Furr has overseen tremendous growth and strides during his 25 years at Vestavia Hills. The church has welcomed 1,100 new mem-

bers, experienced a 282 percent increase in missions giving, sent more than 300 members to 25 countries on missions trips and made extensive renovations and expansions to the facility.

"As pastor I see myself as shepherd and servant leader," Furr said. "My primary role is leadership, pastoral care and preaching and teaching."

Before coming to Birmingham, Furr served as pastor at churches in Georgia and Texas. He holds a bachelor's degree from Carson-Newman College (now University) in Jefferson City, Tennessee; a master's degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina; and a doctorate from Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

He also is a graduate of the Academy for Spiritual Formation through Upper Room Ministries, and a graduate of the inaugural class of Leadership Vestavia Hills. Furr has served on the coordinating council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, on the executive board of the Birmingham Baptist Association and on the board of directors of Baptist Health Systems.

Furr also is a conference speaker and a published author. He has served as an adjunct professor at Samford University and

Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

Currently, Furr is serving as the founder of the Alabama Coalition for Healthy Mothers and Children, a faith-based, nonprofit organization of health care professionals, educators and community leaders advocating for the health care of children in underserved areas of Alabama.

The Furr's have three children. (TAB)

Randy Johnson marks 50 years in gospel ministry

"Because of God's grace, His great love and His call, all I can say is wow — what a ride."

That's what Randy Johnson said recently looking back over his 50 years of ministry.

A room full of people gathered Sept. 9 at First Baptist Church, Foley, to help him celebrate that milestone.

Johnson was ordained in 1968 in Mississippi. Three years later, he moved to Alabama to become associate pastor/youth director at Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Jasper.

He studied at Samford University, then finished up his degree at Athens State University while serving as youth director of First Baptist Church, Athens. After a brief

time of ministry in Louisiana while attending New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he moved on to serve as pastor of Graceland Baptist Church, Vancleave, Mississippi, for seven years. After that Johnson made his second move to Alabama to become pastor of Cypress Shores Baptist Church, Mobile, where he served for 15 years.

"We had the glorious opportunity to be with Cypress Shores during and after Hurricane Katrina, and it became a 'healing station,' for many during the years of rebuilding," said Johnson's wife, Janie.

From there, the Johnsons served as house parents for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries in Mobile.

Then he served for seven years as pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, Bon Secour. Since then, he has done supply pastorates for several churches.

"Throughout the journey God has been faithful not just to His servant but to His word," Johnson said. "The friendships we have made are forever friends." (TAB)



FURR



JOHNSON

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CHURCH POSITIONS

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First Baptist Church, Lake St. Louis, Missouri, is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Senior pastor experience required. Please send resumé to: psc@fbcls.org.

PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Glencoe, is in search of a full-time Southern Baptist pastor. Send resumé to: FBC Glencoe Search Committee, P.O. Box 5305, Glencoe, AL 35905 or email to: fbcg-searchcommittee@gmail.com. For more information, see our ad on www.thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds.

PASTOR

Maple Avenue Baptist Church in Geneva, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: 1009 W. Maple Avenue, Geneva, AL 36340, or email to: maple000@centurytel.net.

PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Foley is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Sharon Collins at scollins@fbcfoley.com or P.O. Box 307, Foley, AL 36536.

WORSHIP PASTOR

Farmstead Baptist Church in Jasper, Alabama, is seeking a worship pastor to lead dynamic blended worship services. The person must be a self-starter, have strong organizational skills and able to conduct a choir and praise band in a ministry of worship for a congregation of about 325. Please send resumé to: belindaksmith@bellsouth.net or mail to: Farmstead Baptist Church, 265 Curry Hwy, Jasper, AL 35503.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

New Hope Baptist Church in Skipperville, Alabama, is searching for a part-time music director. Email resumé to: judwaldrop@yahoo.com.

MINISTER TO STUDENTS

Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, is seeking a full-time student minister. Please send resumé to: search@hbcm.net. Dr. Teman Knight is the pastor.

STUDENT MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Chalkville seeking student minister. 20 hours per week. Emphasis on outreach to grow existing groups

using biblical-based programs and activities. Email resumé to: gloriastuckey20@gmail.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

KEYBOARD PLAYER

New Beginnings (Graysville) is looking for an experienced keyboard player. Needed for Sunday AM, Sunday PM and Wednesday PM services. Please send resumé to: secretary@nbccbaptist.com.

PIANIST

First Baptist Church, Union Grove, is seeking a pianist. Send resumé to: FBC Union Grove, P.O. Box 125, Union Grove, AL 35175, ATTN: Personnel Committee.

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(augmented reality)

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- 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, look for the AR logo to watch the video extras through the app.

Someone You

Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett

Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

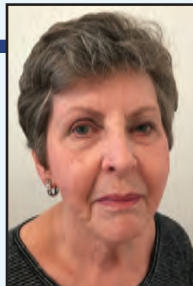
Charlotte Langner

Educated at Samford University and Jacksonville State University, Charlotte Langner turned music into a ministry through which she taught public school students and private piano students. The Oneonta woman used her talents in her church as well. Only recently did the 79-year-old retire after 45 years as church organist.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION: Long-time church organist

CHURCH NAME: First Baptist Church, Oneonta, Friendship Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11)



LANGNER

Q: Describe where you focused your greatest ministry efforts:

A: Being church organist, director of the handbell choir, accompanist for the senior adult choir and assisting R. Moses Clark, the church's minister of music, in planning the Hanging of the Greens (service).

Q: Tell about a "turning point" in your life and how God was involved.

A: After I graduated from Samford University in Birmingham with a degree in music education, I taught elementary music in the Jefferson County School System, led the second-grade choir in my church, Dawson Memorial, and supplied for the pianist. In 1971 my husband accepted a position with the City of Oneonta and we became active members of First Baptist Church, Oneonta. In 1972, I became pianist, and then the organist position came open. I was asked to move to the organ. I just recently retired from this position. I never thought of this as a job, but as a way of using my talent to bring honor and glory to God. ... The music program has been an important part of my life and I am thankful that I have had

the opportunity of leading in worship through music.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: For the last six months I have had medical issues that prevented me from fulfilling my duties as church organist. During this time I think God was teaching me a lesson in patience. I had not experienced anything like this and I wanted instant relief, but it took more time than I expected. I had been praying about retiring, and during this time, the answer came. This season of my life needed to come to an end, and a new one begins.

Q: Does your church have any special traditions that mean a lot to you? What are they?

A: The Hanging of the Greens is a special tradition at my church that I enjoy because it reminds those of us who are Christians about the true meaning of Christmas. It is a worshipful and beautiful service. ✝

DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS Someone You Should Know?

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o *The Alabama Baptist*, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

How to add administrators to your church's Facebook

Facebook is a free communications tool churches can use to post photos, announce events and generally keep in touch with members and friends of the congregation. But what happens when the administrator of your church Facebook page is no longer able to do that job? The answer is easy and should be part of your church's social media plan.

Churches, ministries and other community organizations all are considered "businesses" when it comes to creating a Facebook page. All Facebook business pages must be linked to at least one personal Facebook account. This person is called an Admin for the page.

An Admin can manage all aspects of the page, including publishing posts to the page, responding to and deleting comments, creating events and assigning page roles.

What many Facebook page managers don't realize is that a business page can and should have more than one Admin. The reason is simple — if something happens to one of your page Admins, you need someone who can carry on the page. Otherwise, you have to start over with a new page, which means starting from scratch with new followers, photos, videos and content. Not only do you potentially lose content and friends, a second page creates confusion when Facebook users search for your page.

Publishing responsibilities

Adding multiple page administrators will help your church or organization maintain your page even if leadership within the organization changes. And note

that additional administrators don't get access to your personal Facebook account. They only share publishing responsibilities on the business page you are managing together.

Four steps

To add an additional Admin to your Facebook business page, follow these steps:

- ▶ Go to your page using your desktop and click the Settings on the toolbar above your cover photo. (On mobile devices, this option would be in the menu as "Edit Settings.")
- ▶ From the menu on the left side of the page, choose Page Roles.
- ▶ Under the "Assign a New Page Role" option, type the name or e-mail of the person you want to add. Click the shadowed box that says "Editor," then select Admin. You will be prompted to enter your Facebook password to finalize the change.

▶ The new Admin's profile should then appear in the Existing Page Roles list.

As long as there is at least one other Admin for the page, a user who is no longer able or willing to manage the page can be removed.

But continue with your social media plan — when an Admin is removed, find someone else within your organization who is willing to share in the duties of managing the page.

Having at least two Admins on your page at all times will allow your church or ministry to maintain a continual presence on Facebook even as leaders within the organization change. (TAB)

The Alabama Baptist Digital Services team can help your church establish and improve your online presence using websites and social media. For more information, contact Haley Piersol at 205-870-4720 ext. 118 or e-mail hpiersol@thealabamabaptist.org.



Facebook screenshot

Adding multiple page administrators will help your church or organization maintain your page even if leadership within the organization changes.



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Charles Paul Wood

Former Mobile associate pastor dies at 84

Charles Paul Wood, former associate pastor at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, died Aug. 21, just hours before his 85th birthday.

Wood retired from his full-time duties at Cottage Hill Baptist in 2001 but remained a faithful member of the church until his death. He continued serving in the church by teaching the senior adult Sunday School class.

Wood also served at churches in Louisiana.

He graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Fort Worth, Texas, with a master's degree in religious education.

He is survived by sons Roger, Terry and Glen; daughter, Jamey; seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. (TAB)



Bonny Brook Baptist Church marks 50 years since 'planted'

Fifty years ago, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, planted a new church in Calhoun Baptist Association. On Aug. 19 that church, Bonny Brook Baptist Church, Jacksonville, celebrated its golden jubilee.

Former pastor Marlon Greenwood was the guest speaker for the service. Heirborn Quartet brought special music.

Church member Michael Murray gave a brief history of the church and presented the church with a certificate from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

"It was a wonderful time. The crowd overflowed," Murray said.

Herb Murray is pastor. (Jessica Ingram)

Westside Baptist Church celebrates 50th anniversary

On Aug. 18, Westside Baptist Church, Cullman, in West Cullman Baptist Association, celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Pastor Steven Sutter delivered the celebration message. Former pastors Derald Brisco and Tommy Graves reflected on their ministries at Westside and both were honored for their service. Jordan's Shore brought special music. Jerry Armor from the



Photo by Jerry Armor

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to the church.

Derald Brisco also read a brief history of the church.

Lunch was served in the fellowship hall. "It was a wonderful day," church member Donna Craft said. (TAB)

Center Baptist celebrates 125 years

On Sept. 9, Center Baptist Church, LaFayette, in East Liberty Baptist Association, celebrated 125 years of ministry.

Former pastors Ken Tankersley and Yancey Sanders were the guest speakers for the service. Ken Tankersley and the choir performed special music.

Calvin Milford, representing the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a certificate commending its long-lasting ministry.

Lunch followed the service.

"It was a time of great fellowship," said church member Elaine Brown. "The celebration sparked conversations about memories of the church and what it means to the people." (TAB)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 30

Explore the Bible By Kyle Beshears Associate Dean and Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

TRUE FREEDOM Galatians 4:8-20

The Problem (8-11)

In the earlier passages, Paul walked through the grand narrative of God's plan of redemption, from Abraham to Israel, from the law given through Moses to the law fulfilled in Christ. By faith in Christ, we are given a new identity as God's adopted kids who, in their hearts, may now approach the creator and sustainer of the universe in the same way a child approaches his or her father.

What an amazing gift we have been given! Why would we want anything less?

Yet because of sin, we become distracted by the empty promise and false comfort of obedience in exchange for God's love rather than obedience as a result of God's love. Forgetting God, we turn to the "weak and worthless elementary principles of the world," and in the words of C.S. Lewis, we are like an "ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea."

Only the daily reminder of the gospel will inspire us to stand up from the mud and live a grace-filled life by the sea.

The Plea (12-14)

Paul pleads with us to follow his example. He implores believers to stop relying on obedience to the law for justification because he knows where that dead-end street leads. Consider Paul's life. He was once a devoted Pharisee trying to capture God's attention for love and justification through meticulous attention and obedience to the law. Yet he was liberated from legalism by grace and given the task of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles.

Paul was so serious about this mission that he shed his cultural distinctive and became like them. Without compromising

the gospel, Paul became as they were — to the Greek, Paul became a Greek (1 Cor. 9:20) — so that culture could not stand in the way of his mission to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

What cultural practices and preferences are we willing to surrender for the sake of the gospel?

The Passion (15-20)

Paul reminds his readers about their former love and dedication to him. Sadly, they later withdrew that devotion to Paul, who brought them a message of liberation, and gave it to false apostles, who brought them a message of bondage. What a terrible exchange! It may not have been what they wanted to hear, but Paul loved the churches in Galatia so much that he was willing to tell them a hard truth — they were swindled by liars.

There is a powerful lesson for evangelism and discipleship in Paul's example. First, believers must know that speaking truth related to the gospel is offensive. The gospel is a message that calls people to repentance, humility and Christ-like living. It is an offensive message, but therein lies its power (John 15:18-21; 1 Cor. 1:23-25; Gal. 5:11-12). Believers should not be the source of offense. In fact, we ought to always present the gospel in gentleness and respect, in a spirit of love and passion like Paul.

Are we willing to be the deliverers of an offensive message for the sake of salvation? Are we willing to receive an offensive message for the same reason?

While at times we must be like Paul, bringing an offensive message, we must also be the kind of people who are willing to receive an offensive message. We must be humble enough to receive rebuke when concerned brothers and sisters in the faith point out when we have been swindled to believe a false gospel. †

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

AUTHENTIC JOY 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

When we read the early chapters of the book of Acts, we could easily be lulled into the sense that early Christianity moved from one success to another in the days after Pentecost. In Acts 2 we read that 3,000 souls came to faith in response to Peter's first sermon. In Acts 4 another 5,000 respond after Peter and John heal the lame man and preach to the crowd. Samaritans respond (Acts 8), then Gentiles follow suit (Acts 10), and the gospel steadily begins to spread through the Roman world.

Interspersed among these high notes of success are much more somber notes of difficulty and trouble. Apostles are arrested (Acts 5). Stephen is stoned (Acts 7). Saul, later Paul, leads a great persecution of the Church (Acts 8). James is killed (Acts 12). Opponents of Christianity riot against Paul and his message in Ephesus (Acts 19). Paul is imprisoned (Acts 21). The early spread of the message of Jesus was accompanied by great suffering on the part of the apostles who carried that message.

The birth of Christianity in the town of Thessalonica was no exception to this pattern. In other places, it would be Gentiles who would oppose the spread of the gospel. Luke tells us that in Thessalonica, it would be members of the local Jewish synagogue who would do so. The result was that those who came to faith in Thessalonica would do so in the face of significant persecution.

Faith and love drive what we do. (1-3)

When Paul reaches out to the Thessalonians, it's against this backdrop of persecution that he writes. Knowing the challenges and difficulties that the Thessalonian believers have faced, Paul writes to tell them how thankful he is for their fidelity. Along with his fellow workers, Silvanus and Timothy, Paul reassures the Thessalonian Christians

that they do not stand alone in the midst of their isolation and persecution. Paul and his companions are in constant prayer for them, appealing to God on their behalf with reminders of the Thessalonians' faith, love and hope in the Lord Jesus.

Joy flows from our salvation. (4-6)

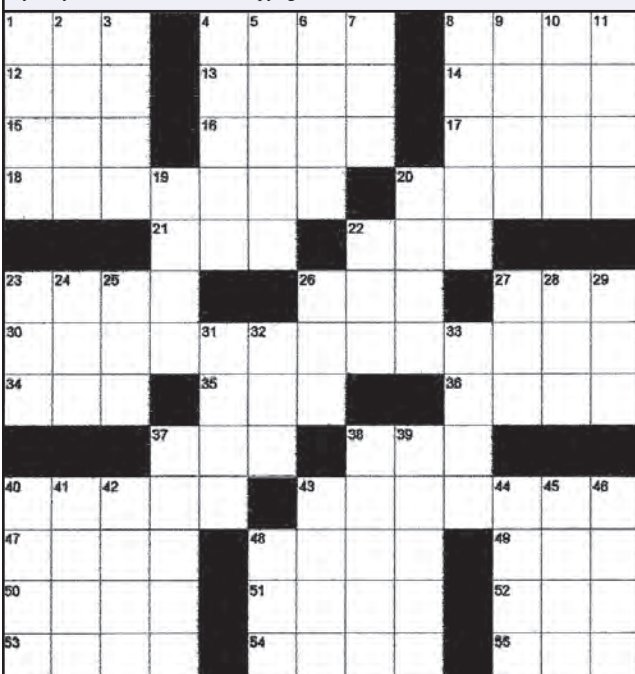
To this message of reassurance that the Thessalonians are being constantly supported by the prayers of the apostles, Paul adds another word of encouragement. He reminds the Thessalonian Christians that ultimately their confidence should lie in the fact that God Himself has chosen these believers and called them to be His own. They are both loved and chosen by God. In times when they might be prone to doubt their choice to follow Jesus, Paul urges them that their calling was one in which the Holy Spirit's work was powerfully manifest in their lives. Here, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of another important truth: while they received the message of Jesus in difficult circumstances of affliction, they also received that message with joy. These believers had experienced that unique gift from God that allowed them to have joy in their hearts even in the midst of the most trying circumstances.

Love and joy flow out of us as a witness and example. (7-10)

Paul goes on to encourage the Thessalonian Christians that their testimony of joy in the face of affliction was one that had moved far beyond the town of Thessalonica. The entire region of Macedonia and Achaia had heard their story. Turning away from their former idolatrous practices to follow the risen Jesus had been a powerful demonstration of God's grace. Holding onto faith even as others had begun to persecute them for that faith was even more powerful. Now, enduring persecution with divinely inspired joy in their hearts had set an example for all the world to follow. †

Christian Crossword

By Judy Woodward Bates Copyright 2001 Clues from NIV Bible



Across

- Leader of temple servants. (Neh. 7:47)
- Rush initials.
- Molten rock.
- One of Midian's kings. (Josh. 13:21)
- Greek letter or small amount.
- Adam and Eve's home.
- ___ Mahal.
- "The Lord is ... ___ to anger." (Ps. 145:8)
- Clan listed in Ezekiel 8:6.
- Saul searched here for his father's donkeys. (1 Sam. 9:4)
- Son of Shiza. (1 Chron. 11:42)
- It helps one sleep.
- Cancer org. (abbrev.)
- "Give your rewards to someone ___." (Dan. 5:17)
- Certain over-water rescue. (abbrev.)
- "___ them in their hands." (Luke 6:1)
- "Who may ascend the ___?" (Ps. 24:3)
- Climbing plant.

Down

- Stitched border.
- A priest. (Neh. 12:12-15)
- Tribe listed in Rev. 7:5.
- KJV's spelling of this city. (Gen. 12:8)
- One of the 70 elders. (Num. 11:24-30)
- Son of Ham. (1 Chron. 1:8)
- Son of Zibeon. (Gen. 36:24)
- Father of one of the 12 spies. (Num. 13:5)
- Son of Caleb. (1 Chron. 4:15)
- Killer whale.
- Son of Shema. (1 Chron. 5:8)
- Computer lingo: MS-___.
- East Indian tree.
- "Eloi, Eloi, ___ sabachthani?" (Matt. 27:45)
- Medical specialist. (abbrev.)
- Place listed in Neh. 11:31.
- Bridal path.
- "God's ___ foundation stands firm." (2 Tim. 2:19)
- Participle.
- "From the ___ of the bear." (1 Sam. 17:37)
- Directs.
- Cosam's son. (Luke 3:28)
- Blood vessel.
- Prophetess of Luke 2:36.
- Cain's brother. (Gen. 4:2)
- Measure of land.
- "Lie on ___ heaps." (Lam. 4:5)
- Son of Benjamin. (Gen. 46:21)
- Roman 54.
- "Some ___ way to arrest Jesus." (Mark 14:1)
- Banking machine.
- "Strike ... with a ___." (Mic. 5:1)
- Large vase.
- Drama degree.
- Son of Simeon. (Ex. 6:15)
- Provided nourishment.
- "A ___ for wild beasts!" (Zeph. 2:15)

- Name listed in Gen. 22:24.
- King of Tyre. (1 Kings 5:1)
- He divorced his foreign wife. (Ezek. 10:27)
- Name listed in Josh. 15:55.
- Ireland.
- Cyprinid fish.
- Descendant of Jonathan. (1 Chron. 8:36-37)
- Assistant.
- Heavy metal.
- Necessity.
- Actor ___ Holbrook.



MOVIES



Media reviews

‘Unbroken’ sequel leads September’s family-friendly spotlight

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The 2014 film “Unbroken” opened at the box office in the top three, ended its run with a gross of more than \$110 million and inspired countless moviegoers with its story of American runner Louis Zamperini, who was tortured in a World War II Japanese prison camp, but had the courage and determination to make it home.

Unfortunately, the movie ended before the Christian side of the story began. An upcoming film will tell that next chapter.



ally became an evangelist and founded a camp for at-risk boys. The movie shows a single Zamperini falling in love and getting married but also battling PTSD and thoughts about the war. With their marriage steering toward a separation and possible divorce, his wife invites him to the crusade.

Matthew Baer, who produced both movies, said Zamperini’s life story was too complex to be told in one movie. Indeed, the 2014 movie spanned more than two hours.

“It was always my wish that we could tell the entire story, and that wasn’t possible in the first film for a variety of reasons,”

“Unbroken: Path to Redemption,” which released in theaters Sept. 14, picks up where “Unbroken” left off. In the sequel we see a revenge-filled Zamperini falling apart and drowning his sorrows in alcohol until a visit to the 1949 Billy Graham Crusade in Los Angeles changed his life. Zamperini became a Christian at that crusade and then did the unthinkable, traveling back to Japan to forgive his captors. He eventu-

Baer said. “And so in the case of ‘Unbroken: Path to Redemption,’ it allows for Louis’ tremendous postwar journey to be told in a fully rendered way — be that in his marriage, his struggle with PTSD, his battle with alcoholism and ultimately his finding his faith.”

Universal 1440 Entertainment partnered with faith-based companies PureFlix and The WTA Group on the movie, which stars



Photo courtesy of PureFlix



Samuel Hunt (“Chicago Fire,” “Chicago P.D.”) as Zamperini and Merritt Patterson (“The Royals”) as his wife, Cynthia. Billy Graham’s grandson, Will Graham, plays the famous evangelist.

The movie is rated PG-13 for thematic content and related disturbing images, although it doesn’t contain any language or sexuality. Yet with themes involving alcoholism and possible divorce in the movie, parents may want to think twice about taking small children.

Also worth watching this month:

► **‘The Wild Brothers’ new videos** — YouTube is filled with trivial and even trashy videos, but there is plenty of content worth watching too. Such is the case with the channel by the Wild Brothers — four missionary kids who live on an island in the Pacific and who regularly post

videos about nature, animals and faith. They recently posted several new videos. Learn more at WildBrothers.com or on their YouTube channel.

► **‘Dry Bar Comedy’** —

Laughter is a gift from God. Unfortunately, most of the comedy in movies and on television is too filthy and juvenile to watch as a family (or as a couple, for that matter). Not so with VidAngel Studio’s “Dry Bar Comedy,” which has amassed 40 million YouTube views since its launch



Photo courtesy of PureFlix

in February 2017 and features some of the nation’s cleanest comedians — once again proving that the funniest and most original comedy is the cleanest comedy. New content is added weekly.

► **‘Little Women’** — Set to hit theaters Sept. 28, this modern rendition of Louisa May Alcott’s classic novel tells the story of four

Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

sisters — Amy, Beth, Jo and Meg — who are coming of age. It’s being released during the 150th anniversary of Alcott’s book and has the endorsement of the Parents Television Council, which calls it a “wholesome portrayal of women that is so rare in today’s media.” It’s rated PG-13 for some thematic elements and teen drinking.

► **‘Brothers of the Wind’** — Now on DVD and streaming video, this film follows a boy named Lukas who lives with his father in the mountains and raises an injured eagle chick. Unrated, the movie features the best wildlife cinematography I’ve ever seen on the big screen. It contains no sexuality or violence and only one coarse word (d—n). †

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Photo by Stephen Ball

Ken Wilson (seated) teaches young students at Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Thanks to his vision, children at the church begin to learn hymns at an early age.

'Hymns for a Lifetime'

Music makes theological impact on children

Which can you more likely recite over Sunday lunch after worship: a point from the sermon or a refrain from a hymn?

Congregational singing is a hallmark of Baptist worship. But it's not just a chance to stand up and stretch, a warmup for the sermon or an interlude before the offering.

The poetry put to music in a good hymn worms its way into our subconscious, and because so many hymn texts are based on Scripture, or at least on theological tradition, we literally sing our faith.

The importance of hymn singing to teach theology and cultivate a worship culture motivated Ken Wilson's 32-year ministry in music at Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

When he came to Knollwood in 1986, children didn't really know hymns. That mystified Wilson because he grew up singing hymns and knew virtually the whole book.

Pondering the difference, he realized that all of his childhood he sang four to five hymns at opening Sunday School assembly, then three to four more in worship Sunday morning, more on Sunday night and Wednesday night, and at youth events.

"I sang at least 20 hymns every week of my life, from infancy," he says. That's about a thousand hymns a year."

Learning hymns

Wilson's response was to create a schedule to make sure young people at Knollwood learned a similar number of hymns, a process he eventually named "Hymns for a Lifetime."

It started slowly, simply letting children stay in "big church" through the second hymn, rather than leaving after the first.

Then, taking a cue from friend and musician Mi-

chael Hawn, he figured out a way to sing with every child in the church every week.

He recreated opening assembly in children's Sunday School, starting promptly at 9:45 with hymn singing. Teachers were happy to "give up the time" because kids didn't really arrive en masse until 10. He figured he could do the first verses of 10 hymns in 15 minutes.

And, by the way, kids started getting there at 9:45 so they could sing.

Teaching children

"I didn't ask the children's permission," Wilson recalls. "I didn't ask if they liked singing hymns, or wanted to sing hymns. I just smiled a lot, and we sang hymns. I was teaching the children that hymn singing is simply what we do at Knollwood."

Eventually, he created a hymn book with 60 hymns, color-coded in three groups of 20, with the goal to learn 20 hymns each year.

Children who memorized 60 hymns in three years became members of the "Hymns for a Lifetime All-Star Team," with their names engraved on a plaque in the choir room. It became a big deal among the children to be listed on the plaque.

Each of the 60 names that adorn it strikes a chord of humble pride in Wilson. He says educators sometimes criticize him for expecting too much of children. But, he thought, first graders can recite 25 radio jingles, so why not infuse that memory power with meaningful music?

And the kids love it.

"They cannot wait to sing," he says. "Each Sunday after we sing hymns, it's favorite hymn time, and they're jumping up and down to pick their favorite. No one ever complains about being tired of the same 60 hymns. They know what they love and love what they know." (BNG)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Boko Haram threatens to kill more hostages

DAPCHI, Nigeria — A schoolgirl abducted by Boko Haram urged the government to secure her release in an audio recording sent to local media by her captors.

Leah Sharibu, a 16-year-old Christian, was kidnapped Feb. 19 along with more than 100 other girls. The other girls were released in March but Sharibu was not released because she refused to convert to Islam, according to local sources. Sharibu's father told Morningstar News that no one from the government has called his family since her abduction in February. He said Christians around the world have been supporting and praying for the family.

Fears for Sharibu have increased since Boko Haram killed a female aid worker, Saifura Khorsa, who was taken captive along with two other aid workers in March while serving with the International Committee of the Red Cross at a clinic for internally displaced people in a village outside Maiduguri. Boko Haram has threatened to kill all the hostages.

The Nigerian and international Christian communities have called on Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to negotiate the release of the captives. Buhari claims that he and his administration have defeated Boko Haram in Nigeria, though abductions and attacks continue throughout northeastern Nigeria, according to news sources.

Nigeria ranks as the 14th worst nation in the world when it comes to persecution of Christians, according to Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List. (TAB)

Attack in IDP camp kills 42, mostly women

BRIA, Central African Republic — Dozens of people are feared dead after suspected Islamist rebels attacked a group of civilians in early September.

Sources told World Watch Monitor that as many as 42 people were killed during the two-day attack Sept. 4-5 by members of the Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance, one of four factions of the now-disbanded Seleka rebels, an Islamic extremist group.

The victims, mostly women, were shot or hacked to death while returning to PK3, an internally displaced persons camp in Bria with a population of more than 50,000, many of them Christians. At least one of the victims was pregnant.

Since 2013, Christians have been displaced, tortured and killed in fighting between various militant factions. Although Seleka has mostly been driven from Central African Republic, violent splinter groups remain, Open Doors reported.

Central African Republic is No. 35 on Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB)

Pastors in hiding after false media charges

NEW DELHI — Influenced by Hindu extremists, campaigns against Christians in Uttar Pradesh state, India, have increased, sending several pastors into hiding.

False media reports of large-scale, fraudulent conversions of Hindus by pastor Durga Prasad Yadav in Jaunpur District went viral in July. The reports were followed by false police charges.

As a result, worship meetings have been disrupted, pastors and evangelists have been arrested and Christian leaders have fled their homes to avoid arrest, sources said.

At least 12 pastors have gone into hiding since the false reports surfaced, a source unnamed for security reasons told Morningstar News.

Those detained by police said officials have ordered them to list all pastors and other church leaders in the area.

However, attendance at Yadav's church has nearly doubled since Hindu extremists began targeting him, reports said.

India ranks 11th on Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of countries where persecution of Christians is highest. (MS)