



INSIDE



The Station Church gets a home of its own in Bessemer

◆ Page 4



Encourage your pastor — October is Pastor Appreciation Month

◆ Pages 6-7



How to address sexual assault, protect children, adults within your church

◆ Page 17



Founded in 1960 near Beirut, Lebanon, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary equips its students for the ministry challenges arising in the Middle East and North Africa.

Photo courtesy of Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

# Saying 'yes' to God

## Arab Baptists continue ministering in community amid extremist threats

By Teresa Sfeir  
Communication and Editing Officer  
Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

It all started with an Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) student who died for his faith.

Back in 2003, I owned a big beauty salon in the north. I was preparing my immigration papers to Canada when a young Jordanian believer suddenly appeared in the area. He was an ABTS student who wanted to spread God's love. He was so enamored with Christ; I couldn't help but take him in. Before I knew it, he had grown so close to my heart. I had been a believer for 14 years, but

my faith was traditional. I regularly attended church and pursued holiness, but I never thought of serving outside the church walls.

We began to serve together at a yearly book exhibition held in the north. We would rent a corner and there exhibit Bibles and Christian material; we certainly drew attention, including that of extremist religious groups. That year, my friend went to be with the Lord as a result of a bomb from members of those groups. I can't forget standing near his blood and then taking care of his funeral details.

The Lord called me to continue the ministry of my dear friend. I said, "Lord, I am still in financial debt. I can't do it." From 2003 to 2008, despite the worsening security situation in the area, God blessed me,

and I was able to pay all my debts. In 2008, I was ready to follow God's calling. I left my job and began to study theology at ABTS. I studied for two years and graduated in 2010. After graduating I returned to my

ministry at the book exhibition. Then in 2011 the Syrian crisis began, and so did our ministry with refugees.

As I happen to have good relations with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Leba-

non and the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD), I started a relief ministry in the North through the latter. My ministry team and I realized that it was time to practically live out our Bible teachings. The Lebanese Christian community was not equipped for such a work. At first, the idea of serving Syrian refugees repulsed them

because of the wounds the [Lebanese civil] war had left behind.

The Lord changed this with time, and he helped the church to grow in accepting and adopting this work. We went to them, and many opened up to us as they saw how we had genuinely embraced them.

Almost four years ago the community's reality changed. We became more pressured as more extremist religious groups appeared in the area. We were threatened and blackmailed.

### God turned his heart

Once, a group of 50 armed young men came for me; I was escorting a team that included 14 women. Upon reasoning with their leader, the Lord turned his heart, and he began to help us as we distributed aid. Then a police commander warned me to leave the area. He told me that a police undercover informant had heard an extremist group say that I was one of their targets.

(See 'Sharing,' page 3)

For more information on the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary or to sign up for the seminary's newsletter, visit [www.abtslebanon.org](http://www.abtslebanon.org).

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

## Detraction or Demonstration

Which would you say to the hundreds of Alabama Baptists who volunteer at Sav-A-Life pregnancy centers across the state? Would you say they are detracting from the gospel message or that they are living out the gospel message by demonstrating God's love?

Which would you say to the volunteers at Shelby County Baptist Association's thrift store, which serves hundreds of needy families each month, or to the volunteers of Washington County Baptist Association's food ministry who help feed hungry people? Are they detracting from the gospel or living out the gospel?

The question is important because in mid-August, well-known evangelical leader John MacArthur charged that those concerned with social justice issues threaten the gospel. MacArthur said, "I've fought a number of polemical battles against ideas that threaten the gospel. This recent (and surprisingly sudden) detour in quest of 'social justice' is, I believe, the most subtle and dangerous threat so far."

A month later more than 4,000 people have signed on to MacArthur's statement and it is being discussed widely in evangelical circles.

### Faith and works

At least two questions emerge from MacArthur's statement. First, are helping ministries — sometimes called "social justice" issues — an enemy of the gospel? Second, are helping ministries new for Bible-believing Christians, as MacArthur says?

The answer to both questions is a resounding "no." There is no dichotomy or separation between faith and works in the Bible.

Certainly, the starting line for both is a personal faith in God through commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior. The finish line is becoming a disciple who receives God's welcome of "well done good and faithful servant."

Consider that both the Old Testament and the New Testament condemn those who want to believe right without doing right. In Isaiah 58:1–10, God describes a people whose beliefs result



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

in religious activities and discussions alone. Beginning in verse 6, He asks, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Jesus, in Matthew 7:21, warns that "not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." Even some who prophesied, cast out demons or performed miracles will be cast away because they did not do the will of the Father.

The late Vernon C. Grounds, long-time president of Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, once wrote: "Unquestionably, the Old Testament insists on social justice. Passionately it affirms the evidence of a right relationship with God is a right relationship with one's neighbor — and this implies a willingness to struggle for (the neighbor's) rights."

Grounds added that the New Testament does not negate the Old Testament demands for social justice. Rather it fulfills and intensifies the demands of the Hebrew revelation.

### Christian ethics

In Luke 4:18–19, Jesus described His ministry as being "to preach good news to the poor ... to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In Matthew 22:37–39, Jesus tied Christian ethics to Christian belief when He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus linked judgment to ethics when He insisted that believers are to minister to the hungry, the thirsty and the strangers, to the sick, the imprisoned and the naked (Matt. 25:35–36). This is putting love of God in action. When Christians care for "the least of these," it is as if they were caring for Christ Himself.

None of this is about earning salvation through good works. Salvation is always "God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:9). Instead, each shows that because one is rightly related to God, one works to bring all dimensions of life under His Lordship. That is exactly the point of James 2:14 in which the writer links faith and works together in a way that cannot be separated.

The New Testament ethic then is an imitation of Jesus Christ, an ethic of gratitude and faith and obedience, all grounded in love of God and resulting in love to others.

Grounds declared, "The imitation of Jesus Christ, Calvary-inspired and Spirit-enabled, means a life of service and sacrifice, a life of sensitive caring, a life of identification with the oppressed and disinherited and needy, a life of constructive [engagement] against any political and religious [forces that are frustrating to God's will]."

### Genuine religion

Jesus' life alone confirms there is no escaping the conclusion that genuine religion expresses itself in concern for social justice — ministering to others.

Trying to separate faith and works is a false dichotomy. At best it evidences a lack of understanding that faith in Christ is more than repeating a type of magical incantation. Faith in Christ is evidenced in a relationship with the risen Lord that changes our hearts and changes our values to Christ-like values. If it is not that, it is nothing at all.

Historically, the church has understood that faith and works are inexorably linked together. In our own nation it was evangelical Christians who championed social justice issues like opposing pornography, prostitution, child labor, worker exploitation and more. It was Bible-believing Christians who worked for education for all, medical care and prison reform.

Today that work continues in efforts like Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps — both led by Woman's Missionary Union. It continues in crisis pregnancy centers, Christian thrift stores, hunger ministries, jail ministries and more. It is seen as Christians work for policies and laws reflecting biblical values in society.

All of these and more are evidences of God's love for His creation and the Christian believer's love for God and for one another.

So to the countless Christian believers offering many kinds of "cups of cold water in Jesus' name," God bless you. Keep it up. What you are doing does not detract from the gospel at all. Instead it affirms the gospel as people see God's love lived out among and through God's people. 🇺🇸

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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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# Sharing God's love

## Arab Baptists use job training, other ministries to make disciples

(continued from page 1)

Two months later, we had a big event at church. We had 200 to 300 attendees. The congregation was afraid, but our pastor encouraged us. A few extremist young men came to church on that day and directly threatened me. They told me that they were armed, and it was better for me not to contact the authorities, lest I would witness a massacre. I tried to reason with the leader, but he insisted that the matter was out of his hand. Upon this threat, we realized it was time for us to leave the area. We, the ministry team, began to pray that we might be able to start a center. We found a relatively safe area to which refugees can easily flock. In 2014 we built a wide, underground center.

We have a children's ministry that welcomes 225 Syrian refugee children. We teach them English, Arabic and French. We set up summer camps and sports activities. In addition to this, we provide the children with medical assistance, and we provide alimentary aid, heating, hygienic material and clothes to refugees. We also have a home-visits ministry. Moreover, we provide young women with vocational training.

### Graduation celebration

In April 2018 we had a graduation celebration for 26 Lebanese and Syrian women as beauticians under the patronage of the association of beauty salon owners in North Lebanon. We started giving a course on makeup art to 30 Lebanese and Syrian women (both Christian and Muslim) at the beginning of July. The course will stop at the end of 2018.

In all, our ministry has reached some 60,000 families. We also still take part in the yearly book exhibition. Every year, we distribute 15,000 to 20,000 publications (ranging from Christian books to Bibles or tracts) that talk about salvation through Christ alone. We fol-



Photo courtesy of Arab Baptist Theological Seminary  
In April 2018, 26 Lebanese and Syrian women graduated as beauticians from the ministry's vocational training program.

low up yearly with 200 to 250 people who fill out questionnaires.

We also have more than 600 young men and women who decided to become disciples of Jesus within the past three years. They put their trust in God's salvation through Jesus after they had fully understood the message.

I praise God that we, with the help of LSESD and the brothers and sisters at ABTS, were able to help many people who had no hope. We found jobs for some and gave them a new chance. We fed the hungry and provided heating resources to those who were cold.

I believe that life is one big opportunity to share God's love with the world around us. Most importantly, we tell them of redemption, forgiveness and a personal relationship with God. I always encourage ministry workers at the center to study theology. We now have six from our team who are studying theology through ABTS Online. Two will be studying as ABTS full-time residential students next year, by God's grace.

### Empowered by the Holy Spirit

I believe in the Holy Spirit who empowers God's servants. We do our part in reaching out to others, but a miracle must take place in their hearts. My petition is for God to grow and establish the people we are discipling so that they would know more of His will and rise to obedience. We might try to lead them to the right way, but no one can change another person's mind. They must be ready to make that decision for themselves.

Our campus halls once more echo with the lively chatter of anticipating students. Our classrooms are once more busy and put to use. Our returning students have many stories to share of a summer spent serving God and their people and putting to practice what they gleaned at ABTS. Both our returning and new students come with hearts aflame, having said "Yes" to God. They come with a willingness to be transformed into leaders fit for the calling — able to make a change in their communities.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This article is from an interview with a graduate of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary who serves in the north of Lebanon, an area recently caught up in the struggle against religious extremists which has been playing out in Syria over the past few years. This article originally appeared in the seminary's September 2018 newsletter.*

## Rain doesn't impede See You At The Pole event

Rain across parts of the state Sept. 26 didn't prevent this year's See You At The Pole (SYATP) event from drawing an even bigger crowd than recent years, said Greg Davis, executive director of First Priority of Alabama.

Tens of thousands of students gathered around their flagpoles or in gyms or other covered areas nearby to pray for their school, city, state and nation before school that morning.

Baptist churches and as-

sociations participated in various ways. And some schools with very low attendance in the past saw large numbers attend this year after starting new First Priority groups this school year.

SYATP is "a great way to publicly acknowledge God," Davis said. "It's a great way to let students know you can pray at school, share your faith at school and do Monday through Friday what we talk about on Sunday."

The student-led event has been going on since 1990. (Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Randolph County High School

Students gather to pray around the flagpole at Randolph County High School in Wedowee.

# The Station Church gets a home of its own in Bessemer

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Randy Norris said he keeps finding himself getting emotional every time he walks into the building where his church now meets.

When he looks around, he sees the labor of love that his church members have put in every Wednesday and Sunday for weeks. He sees the gutting and rebuilding they've done on the inside of the old ITT Tech building in Bessemer — the building that was just what they needed.

"It already had classroom space that was divided in the perfect way for us to use it," he said.

And he sees the hand of God that's been faithful to provide exactly what his congregation — The Station Church — has needed for the past 12 years.

## Keeping an eye out

"From the very beginning of planting the church, when it was just me and my wife stepping out from where I was pastoring and my wife was a full-time school teacher, God has given us what we needed," Norris said. "It was a really scary thing, but God immediately caught us and let us know He's got us. It's been remarkable all along the way."

The Station Church met first at Bes-

semer Academy for a few months, then moved to Brock's Gap Intermediate School in Hoover for about seven years. For the past four years or so, it's met at Southeastern Bible College.

But Norris and other church leaders were always keeping an eye out for a place they could call their own, and when this building in Bessemer became an option, they spent some time in prayer and knew it was for them.

The congregation celebrated its grand opening service Sept. 23.

## 'Roots'

"It will be nice to have our roots," Norris said. "People often visit us and ask, 'Is this where you're planning to stay?'"

This will give us more of a hub that people

can come to and expect us to be here for the long haul."

But even so, The Station Church has never been about a building — and he wants it to stay that way.

"That's why we're called The Station Church — people don't go to a station to stay; they gather because they're headed out somewhere else," Norris said. "God has called us to the Great Commission, and throughout the week we are headed other places. But we realize that the building is a great tool, and we're thankful for it."

The church is "a family built on faith and fun," Norris said. "It's a casual, comfortable place, but we are serious about our faith."

## 'Missions-minded church'

And with their strong focus on pre-school, children and youth ministries, a large percentage of their congregation is under 18, he said.

"It's really all about family," Norris said. "No matter how much the church has grown, we all know each other."

Barry Cospers, associational missionary/director of missions for Bessemer Baptist

Association said Norris has done "an outstanding job" leading this church plant.

"They will be a church who will reach the disenfranchised, those who have become disillusioned with the traditional church and individuals who prefer a contemporary worship experience," Cospers said. "Their commitment to missions will enable them to identify with the needs of individuals of the community."

Norris said that's his hope for The Station Church.

"We're a very missions-minded church," he said. "Our people are about to bust — it's an exciting time for us."✠



Photo courtesy of The Station Church



Photo courtesy of The Station Church

Randy Norris, pastor of The Station Church, Bessemer, preaches in the church's new building during the 'sneak peak' service Sept. 16. The church had 417 people at its grand opening service Sept. 23.

## REFLECTIONS



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# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Ecclesiology Through Imagery

# The Church as a Body

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

**T**he Bible uses more than a dozen common images by which to speak of the church. From these images we can glean deeper understanding about the church's formation, function and future. In thinking about spiritual insights from some of the images, one of the most meaningful images is that of a body, specifically, the body of Christ.

The idea of a body conveys the thought of variety within unity. This truth is expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:20, "Now indeed there are many members, yet one body." This variety within unity is evident in the human physical body in that a singular body is composed of many and diverse parts — head, hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc. A logical question then is, "If they were all one member, where would the body be?" (1 Cor. 12:19).

The image of the church as a body has immediate application to a local congregation. Many members comprise a local church, but no two members are exactly alike. We bring varying talents and gifts to our church. Not all sing well nor can all teach well. Nonetheless, together our variety contributes to the distinct characteristics and ministries of our church. The declaration of 1 Corinthians 12:4 emphasizes this diversity: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." If everyone possessed the fine ability of singing, but none were effective teachers of the Bible, where would we all learn what God has revealed to us and about us in His word?

This diversity within unity is the underlying truth that should keep any of us from discounting or belittling any others of us. We cannot comprise a healthy, functioning local church if we do not honor and make a place for the diverse gifting and functioning of a variety of believers. The Bible makes the point that all are needed and none are dispensable: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor

again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:21).

This image of the church as a body not only has local church application but also has universal application. The Baptist Faith and Message statement about the Church ends with this paragraph: "The New Testament speaks also of the Church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." The key is "all of the redeemed," not necessarily all individual members of every denomination. Someone once captured this caution by saying that some will be in heaven that we did not suspect would be there, while others will be absent who we thought were genuine members of the body of Christ.

### Head of the body

The image of the Church as Christ's body carries the additional truth that He alone is the head of this body. Ephesians 1:20–23 declares that by virtue of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, God "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Denominations have revered human leaders, such as presidents, bishops, superintendents, directors, cardinals, popes and patriarchs, but none of these occupy the exalted, God-installed head of Christ's body, the Church. All human church leaders serve the body as one taken from among the body and function under Christ's authority and headship.✠

*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.*



## Across ALABAMA'S Associations

### BETHEL

► **Myrtlewood Church** will celebrate its 134th anniversary Oct. 7 at 10:30 a.m. Mike Mason will be the guest speaker. A covered-dish lunch and time of fellowship will follow the service. Steve Walley is pastor.

### BETHLEHEM

► **Southside Church, Monroeville**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. Mike Crowe is pastor.

### BIBB

► **Bethel Church, Brent**, will celebrate its 200th anniversary Oct. 14 at 10 a.m. Lunch will be served following the service and the Cahaba River Band will share special music after lunch. Scott Peters is pastor.

### CAHABA

► **Faith Chapel Church, Marion**, will celebrate its 70th anniversary with a homecoming service Oct. 7 at 11 a.m. Donald Harris will preach, and Belinda Davis will share special music. Lunch and music will follow the service. Lloyd Stockman is pastor.

### BIRMINGHAM

► **Church on the Bluff (formerly Bluff Park Church), Hoover**, will celebrate its 120th anniversary Oct. 14, 10

a.m. Former pastor Richard Trader will speak, and former music ministers Harold Newberry, Wayne Goodwin and Steve Yarborough will share special music. A covered-dish lunch will follow the service. Tony Barber is pastor.

### COFFEE

► **Newbia Church, Elba**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 7 at 10:30 a.m. Blest will lead worship and Bobby Hataway, former pastor of Newbia, will preach. Lunch will follow the service. For more information call 334-308-7510. Will Jordan is pastor.

### CONECUH

► **Brooklyn Church** will hold a homecoming service Oct. 14 at 10:30 a.m. Gospel Melodies of Evergreen will share special music. All current and former members and friends are invited to attend. Lunch will be served following the service. Jack Williamson is pastor.

### GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on Oct. 9 at 11 a.m. Suzanna Mixon will bring a special music program. For reservations call 334-684-9617. ► **New Prospect Church, Hartford**, will hold a revival Oct. 7–9 at 6 nightly. Scott Roper will be the guest speaker. For more information call 334-248-2807. Ed Barley is pastor.✠

## Bayside shows appreciation to local teachers, staff



Photo courtesy of Bayside Baptist Church

A few days before the 2018–2019 school year began, Bayside Baptist Church, Lillian, in Baldwin Baptist Association, delivered home-baked cookies to teachers and staff at Elberta Elementary and Elberta High School. The cookies were packaged with a note thanking the teachers and staff for all they do for the students. Bayside member Sharon Davis (left) and Bayside pastor Tom Harris (right) delivered cookies to Elberta High School assistant principal Katy Padgett (center) and kindergarten student Anna Grace Davis.

**OCTOBER IS PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH.**

# 8 ways to wound a pastor



Unsplash.com

## Church members should encourage pastors, handle disagreements appropriately

By **Bob Browning**  
Baptist News Global

**S**hepherds play an important role in the biblical narrative. Shepherds appear frequently in both the Old and New Testaments, often in reference to leaders.

One of my favorite images of a shepherd is that of a caregiver. It is common for a shepherd to examine sheep for wounds as they gather in a pen or cove after a day of grazing. The shepherd cleans the wound and applies an ointment to it before bedding the sheep down for the night.

Congregational ministers are trained to be good shepherds. Identifying and binding wounds are significant parts of a minister's job. This was certainly true for Jesus.

Instead of conducting His ministry in the temple in Jerusalem like many of His colleagues, Jesus chose to walk down dusty Palestinian roads where He could interact with people from all walks of life. He listened to their stories so He could respond to their needs with mercy and grace.

### Good Shepherd

Being the good Shepherd did not prevent Jesus from being wounded. Nor does it keep today's ministers from being wounded.

Who wounds the leaders whose job it is to heal broken hearts and bodies? Tragically, it can be the people they are called to serve. It was true for Jesus. It is no different for modern-day shepherds.

I am convinced many church members are unaware of ways they wound their ministers. By and large, laypersons have good hearts. They love the men and women God has called to lead their community of faith.

Regrettably, this is not true for all who inflict wounds on ministers. Sadly, their words and deeds are meant to harm.

Perhaps it would help church members to know how ministers are wounded. This could lead to constructive changes in the way they relate to their ministers.

### Ministers are wounded when:

► People play fast and loose with the

facts. Assumptions are rarely accurate. Gossip never is. People who spread rumors or speak assertively about subjects they have no personal knowledge of do more harm than good. It breaks a minister's heart to think that people believe they are guilty of saying or doing the things they are being accused of by those who pass on inaccurate or incomplete information.

► Members leave the church without having a conversation with their minister. It is bad enough when faithful members lose interest or become disaffected in some way and quit attending without discussing this decision with their minister. It is worse when, without any previous conversation, a letter arrives informing the church one of their members has transferred his or her membership.

What is a minister to think when this occurs? Most ministers I know wonder what they did wrong and often shoulder the blame.

► Church leaders do not lead. Ministers rely on mature congregational leaders who are competent, strong, courageous, insightful, honest, reliable and trustworthy. Ministers must have their candid input and unwavering support, especially when making difficult decisions and charting a path forward.

Few things startle and disappoint a minister more than a leader who remains silent when their voice needs to be heard or abandons the minister when their presence is crucial. When this occurs, ministers feel lonely and disillusioned.

► Members use money as leverage to

get their way. Ministry is expensive. Meeting the needs of people is overwhelming. It requires sacrificial and steady financial support from all the members.

Money needed to fund ministries should never be used as a bargaining tool. Tithes and offerings are given in response to God's generosity and faithfulness and are never to be offered or withheld in order to get one's way.

Members who attempt to do this create an immeasurable amount of stress and anxiety for ministers. Their attention is drawn away from the ministries they oversee to the threat that could undermine all they are doing for others.

### Lack of follow through

► Members do not follow through with promises. Ministers are by nature trusting people. Every dream, program, ministry or goal is built upon a foundation of promises made by those who called the minister to lead them.

Ministers get a sinking feeling in their gut when they realize the people they were relying on to fulfill their commitments don't follow through as they said they would. Ministers feel betrayed as they make their way to the cemetery of broken dreams.

► Members are critical of a sermon or service on their way out of worship. Worship always demands a response from worshippers. Criticism of what just occurred is not one of them. Awe, praise, gratitude, humility, repentance and commitment are on the list.

If a worshipper has an issue with the way the service is conducted or the temperature in the sanctuary, these concerns need to be voiced in private at another

time. When leaving the sanctuary, be mindful of the fact that ministers have planned, prepared, studied and rehearsed to usher people into the presence of God. Focusing attention on anything other than God's unspeakable riches in Christ Jesus at that time crushes the minister's spirit.

### 'Gotcha' questions

► Members ambush a minister in front of others with "gotcha" questions. People who want to make a minister look bad in public often ambush that minister rather than sitting down in private to have a discussion. Instead of giving the minister an opportunity to formulate cogent thoughts in the normal give-and-take of a conversation, some members delight in putting a minister on the spot. Evidently, they think it makes themselves look smart and powerful.

Members need to understand that ministers know more than they are at liberty to say, at least in public. Sensitive questions are best asked in private.

► Members criticize the minister's family. Ministry is one of the few professions where a leader's family is scrutinized and judged. Sensitive issues other families deal with in private are often discussed in public by church members. When members weigh in on what a minister's family is going through, it hurts. It can lead to bitterness on the part of a minister's family who did not ask to live in a glass house.

Please don't hear me saying that ministers do not need to be held accountable for their actions. We do, and we know it. We also know it is our duty to model the behavior we want to see from our members. When we fail, we need to acknowledge it and repent.

There is always a time and place to deal with a minister's humanness, and healthy Christians and healthy churches know when and where those are. Henri Nouwen referred to such people as "wounded healers." And that is a ministry to which all of God's people are called. (BNG)

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Bob Browning is a retired Baptist minister. He served as the pastor of six churches during his 49-year career. He and Jackie have three children and six grandchildren. He lives in Frankfort, Kentucky. ✝*

***"Members need to understand that ministers know more than they are at liberty to say, at least in public. Sensitive questions are best asked in private."***

# Pastor compensation

## SBC pastor salaries not keeping pace with inflation, compensation study shows

Compensation for full-time Southern Baptist pastors and church staff has lagged behind the growth in the cost of living over the past two years. And health insurance coverage remains low, according to the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Church Compensation Study.

The biannual study is a joint project of state Baptist conventions, GuideStone Financial Resources and LifeWay Christian Resources. Compensation and congregational data is collected anonymously from ministers and office/custodial personnel of Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions.

According to the 2018 report, Southern Baptist churches spend an average of 51 percent of their budget on personnel expenses. This is the first year this spending was analyzed.

Compensation (salary plus housing) increased 3.8 percent for full-time, Southern Baptist senior pastors over the last two years, 1.5 percent for full-time staff ministers and 2.3 percent for full-time office personnel. The U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for the same two-year period increased 4.6 percent.

### 'Typical growth'

"After a period of very low inflation, the cost of living has moved closer to typical growth in consumer prices," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "Churches that are unable to reflect this in their wages will hurt their staff."

Factors correlating with compensation for senior pastors include weekly church attendance, education level and total years of experience. Larger churches tend to pay

their pastors more, the study shows.

Churches with 100 or more in average weekly attendance were more likely than smaller churches to provide some level of medical coverage for the pastor.

### Additional benefits

Some churches also provide additional insurance benefits to senior pastors including life and/or accident insurance (29 percent), disability (25 percent), dental (24 percent) and vision (11 percent).

Higher compensation also is linked to education level. Those with a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$5,681 more than similarly qualified pastors with no college education or an associate degree. Master's and doctorate degrees correspond with compensation increases of \$5,754

and \$10,868, respectively, when compared to college graduates.

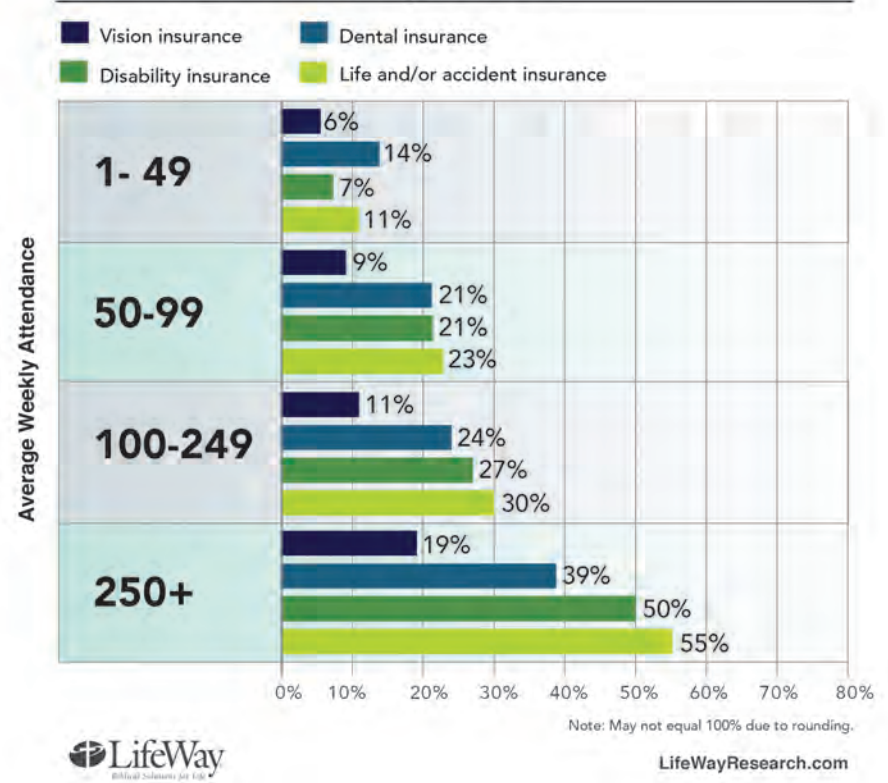
Years of experience also netted increased compensation. Pastors earned \$358 more for each additional year of experience in ministry. In contrast, older pastors compared to an otherwise similar individual received slightly less compensation.

"It's true that you can't gain another year of experience without also getting one year older. But age and experience have opposite relationships with pastor compensation," explained McConnell. "When age and other factors are similar, more experience is related to higher pay. When experience and other factors are similar, higher age is related to lower pay. Those who become pastors later in life receive lower pay."

Overall, the increase in value of the entire pay package (salary, retirement, housing

**For more information on the survey or to download the full report, visit [LifeWayResearch.com](http://LifeWayResearch.com).**

## SBC churches who fully or partially pay for the following benefits for full-time senior pastors



Graphics by LifeWay Research

and other benefits including insurance) for senior pastors was slightly under the pace of inflation. However, the growth in pay packages for full-time staff ministers and office personnel fell well below the pace of inflation.

"We have always endeavored to ensure churches take proper care of their staff," said Greg Love, who provides leadership for the church retirement relationship team at GuideStone.

"A church can maximize its limited resources by implementing a sound, structured compensation plan and not a lump-sum payment. This enables the church to provide salaries and suitable benefits for workers and their families, including life and health coverage," Love said.

"Additionally, it empowers the church

to provide highly important retirement contributions to ministry workers. These significant tasks can be accomplished as the church navigates smart financial stewardship, equips believers for ministry and strives for kingdom impact."

### Resources for churches

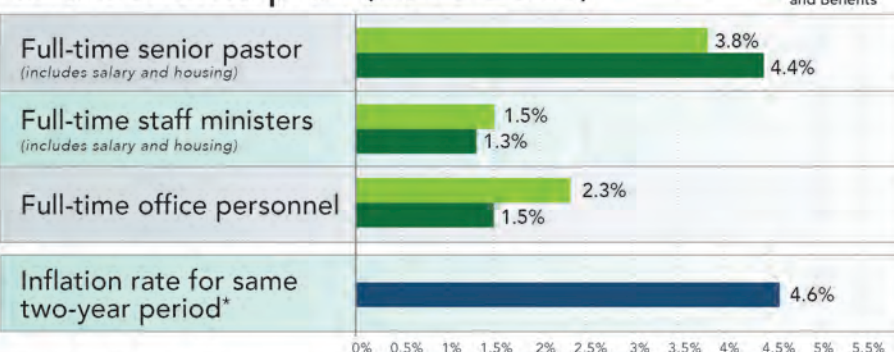
GuideStone provides many resources for churches seeking to establish, restructure or evaluate pay and benefit packages for ministers and other staff.

The free resources can be found at [www.GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning](http://www.GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning).

The 2018 online survey was open from Feb. 1 to July 6, 2018.

Data from 6,894 full-time SBC respondents is available at [LifeWay.com/CompensationSurvey](http://LifeWay.com/CompensationSurvey). (LifeWay)

## Changes to SBC church staff compensation and benefits plan (2016-2018)



**For free church resources, visit [GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning](http://GuideStone.org/CompensationPlanning).**



## Special Sunday night service

He may have played for presidents and Hollywood royalty and his musical talent may have garnered him worldwide invitations, but on Sept. 23 Randall Atcheson immersed a home crowd with “his sport.”

The Maplesville native entertained a full house at First Baptist Church, Birmingham, with a variety of classical, sacred, popular and patriotic pieces — most of which had a special story attached.

He shared about growing up with a street preacher father, how he discovered his love for the piano and the influence mentors and special friends have had on his life.

Atcheson — known for his flashy jackets, shoes and socks — also described his near-death experience as a young man and how that experience led him to spend his life pointing people to Christ. (TAB)



Photos by Jennifer Davis Rash  
Randall Atcheson performs an afternoon concert at First Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Sept. 23

## Countless afghans donated through crochet ministry



Photo by Grace Thornton

Edna Harden, a member of Antioch Baptist Church, Bynum, in Calhoun Baptist Association, has lost count of the exact number of afghans she has crocheted through the years for children in the care of the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries. Despite being visually impaired, Harden has crocheted as many as 80 blankets a year for the past 30 years and given them for all kinds of ministry purposes.

# Someone You

# Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett  
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

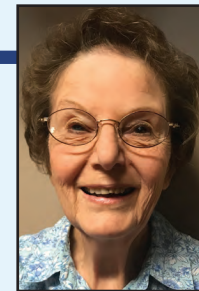
## Suzi Howle

Born in Hungary, Suzi Howle spent her formative years in Germany during World War II and in Brazil. She came to the United States to learn the English language and later married a U.S. soldier. At 80, the Jacksonville woman co-leads a group of people who pray together ... and have seen mighty results.

**MINISTRY DESCRIPTION:** Retired after 41 years as Sunday School teacher to 5th and 6th graders

**CHURCH NAME:** First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, in Calhoun Baptist Association

**LIFE VERSE:** “For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5b)



HOWLE

**Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts:**

A: Serving as co-leader of a prayer group that meets weekly to pray for missionaries, government officials, individuals and their needs, the church, community, state, nation and world.

**Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?**

A: A friend from church, Margie Workman. She is always pointing people to God and praising Him.

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

A: (Howle speaks of her childhood as a refugee in Germany. She recounts fleeing to the countryside because the city where she lived was about to be bombed. She tells how her mother hid cigarettes in a secret part of a baby carriage to trade for food. Howle says God was working in her young life to get her to a certain place at a certain time for her to hear about Jesus and to ask Him to come into her heart to be her Savior.)

Jesus drew me to Himself when I was 37 years old. Our children were teenag-

ers and were invited to church by their friends. My husband and I started to go too. ... The love of the people got to me. God used the people of the church to draw me to Himself. ... Had God not brought me to Jacksonville (State University to study the English language), He would have had to work on me some other way.

**Q: What has God been teaching you lately?**

A: No matter what changes come into my life, His grace is enough and readily available.

**Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?**

A: The song (lyrics) “because He lives, I can face tomorrow.” Two very unexpected changes came into my life 35 years apart (including a cancer diagnosis seven years ago). The words of that song encouraged me.✝

## 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.

## Alabama Baptist STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Focus  
on

## 1 MISSION

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist  
State Board of Missions | (800) 264-1225 | alsbom.org

# CELEBRATING ASSOCIATIONS IN OCTOBER

Associations are networks of churches in your geographical region that gather together usually around this time of year and many in October: (1) to celebrate what God has been doing among the churches and (2) to help you understand what the churches in your association can do to spread the Gospel together to reach communities for Christ.

Some associations have already gathered for business sessions and for celebration of what God has been and will be doing. Your presence as messengers at the annual meetings can help determine the direction of associational leadership.

I have the privilege to serve the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) as the missionary on assignment to work with associations, their leadership, associational search teams, and especially your Associational Missionary (Strategist)/Director of Missions (AM/DOM).

Associations are dependent upon the contributions of the churches of their association to sustain the work. The SBOM does not hire your AM/DOM or oversee the work of any association. In the same way that your church is autonomous, so is your association.

My role is to be an encourager, a provider of training opportunities, and assisting your AM/DOM in being strategic in their work with you and your churches.

Your

By Rick Barnhart  
State Missionary



responsibility – and, yes, you do have a responsibility should you choose to accept it – is to be an encourager, to walk alongside your AM/DOM in the work you have commissioned him to do, and to reach your communities for Christ with the partnership of

your cooperating association member churches.

We are blessed in Alabama to have some of the finest missionaries serving your associations. We are blessed to have the opportunities to partner through associations and through the SBOM with missionaries in Alabama, across the nation and around the world.



Many associations work in partnership with your churches in training and sending church planters as well as in supporting missionaries through long-term and short-term missions projects.

Join your association this year in your annual meeting. Support your AM/DOM through prayer and the financial support of member churches in an association.

Be an encourager of your pastor and encourage him to be a leader in the work of your association.

Remember Paul's challenge to us in Colossians 3:17 (HCSB): "And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

State Missionary Rick Barnhart may be contacted at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 220, or (334) 613-2220, rbarnhart@alsbom.org.

# It Just Makes Sense

Even ants know that accomplishing great things requires working together. Let's follow their example and see what we can build together.



**Stronger Together**

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

## Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

**CHURCH PLANTERS** and wives or anyone interested in planting are invited to this event. Childcare will be provided.

**OUR SPEAKER:** Kenny Grant was born and raised in Brunswick, Ga. He has served as pastor/planter for churches in both Brunswick and Savannah, Ga., for many years. A former Marine drill instructor, Kenny has a unique style of teaching and preaching. He communicates the Word of God with insight, clarity, passion and conviction. Often punctuated with humor, his impactful messages always leave his audiences informed, inspired and equipped to apply God's Word to their daily lives.

Currently, Kenny serves as the senior pastor at Calvary Baptist Temple, Savannah. Kenny's teaching ministry has extended to a wide range of groups and events throughout the United States. Kenny's wife, Shirley, "completes

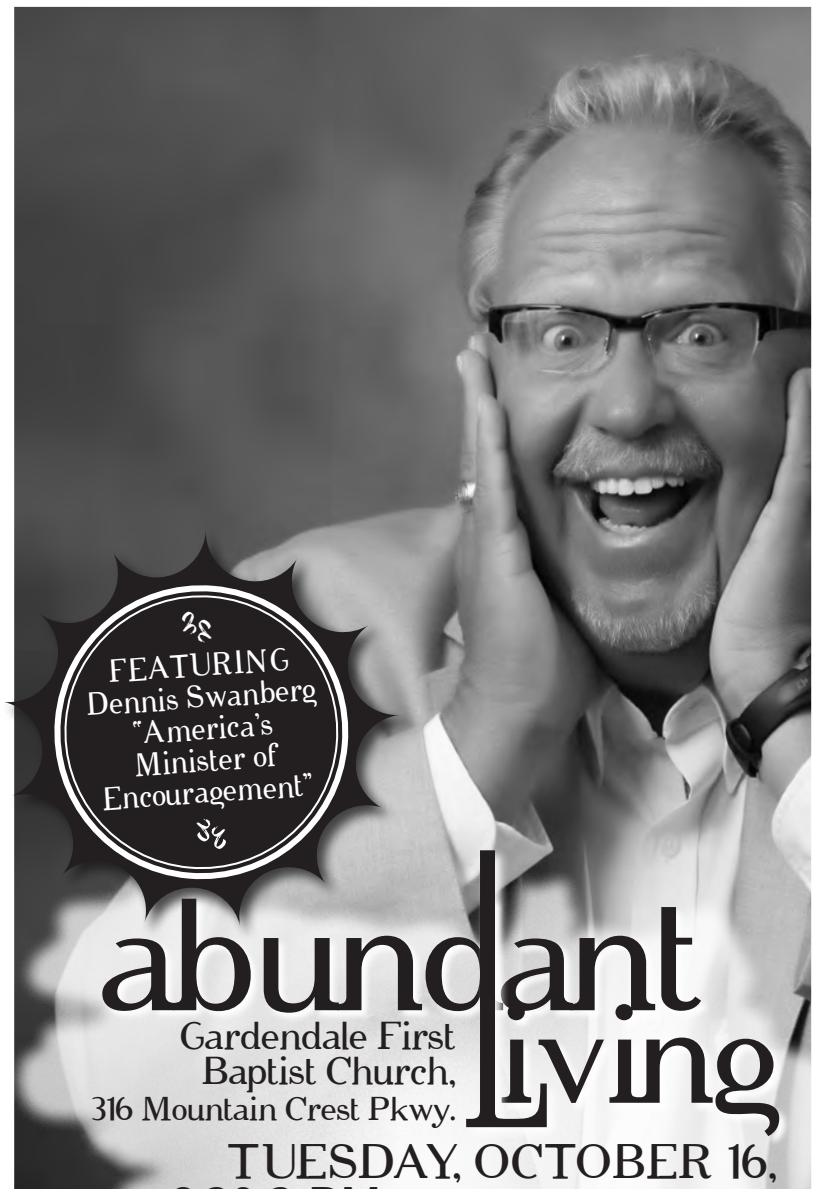
him." They are the parents of four children: Kenetha, Gina, Kenny, Jr., Kameron; and four grandchildren.



**SCHEDULE:** Registration, 4:30-6 p.m.; dinner, 6-6:30; worship led by Worship Band from New Beginnings Church, 6:30-6:45; inspirational message by Kenny Grant, 6:45-7:15. From 7:15 to 8:30, wives' session will be led by Susan Lovett; planters/pastors will be led by Kenny Grant. Dismissal is at 8:30 p.m. to pick up children from childcare.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION:** [plantalabama.org/dinner](http://plantalabama.org/dinner)

*For more information, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke (lead church planting strategist) at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, [lduke@alsbom.org](mailto:lduke@alsbom.org).*



FEATURING  
Dennis Swanberg  
"America's  
Minister of  
Encouragement"

**abundant Living**  
Gardendale First Baptist Church,  
316 Mountain Crest Pkwy.

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16,  
9:30-3 PM (DOORS OPEN AT 9)**

*For more information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, [emitchell@alsbom.org](mailto:emitchell@alsbom.org).*



one  
Great  
sun  
day

One Great Sunday is no longer a singular event, but a 24/7 training resource. Plan your training/leadership development events using these videos as resources any time of the year.

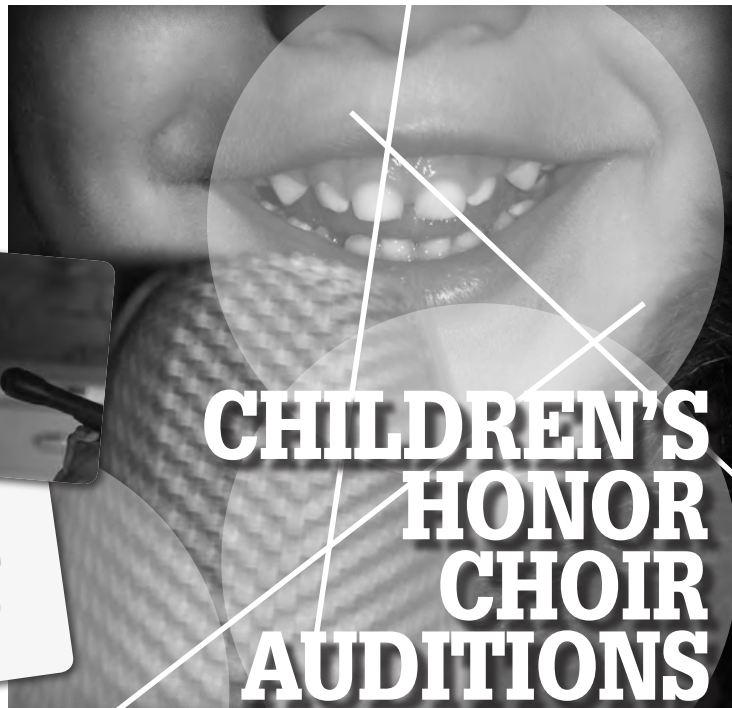
**Fresh content is now available in numerous Great Commission Ministries including:**

55+ Ministry, Associational Clerks/Secretaries, Bible Drill, Bivocational Minister's Finances, Church and Community, Church Building, Church Clerks/Secretaries, Church Compensation, Church Evaluation, Church Planting, Church Revitalization, Church Tax Requirements, Communications Tips, Cooperative Program, Deaf Ministry, Disaster Relief, Disciple-Making, Discipleship Training, DOM Leadership, Evangelism, Family Ministries, Legal Issues, Literacy, Men's Ministry, Personal Money Management, Protecting Children from Abuse, Royal Ambassadors, Singles Ministry, Social Media, Stewardship, Student Missions, Sunday School, W.M.U., Women's Ministry, Worship Leadership and Youth Ministry.

For more information, please go online to **[onegreatsunday.org](http://onegreatsunday.org)** or contact State Missionary Daniel Edmonds at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 285, or (334) 613-2285, [dedmonds@alsbom.org](mailto:dedmonds@alsbom.org).



children's  
honor  
choir



**CHILDREN'S  
HONOR  
CHOIR  
AUDITIONS**

Auditioned choir consisting of 150-165 children, grades 4-6, from Alabama Baptist children's choirs throughout the state. Must have audition forms and CDs/digital files received by **Thursday, November 1, 2018**. Forms and audition sample for preparation are available online at [alsbom.org/chc](http://alsbom.org/chc).

**Tour Dates:** March 1-3, 2019

**Locations:** Panama City, Fla., and Enterprise, Ala.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, [cparrish@alsbom.org](mailto:cparrish@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Thursday, **October 18**

First Baptist Church, Birmingham

Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

Friday, **October 19**

First Baptist Church, Opelika

Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

**SENIOR ADULT CHOIR**  
**+ CELEBRATIONS +**

Online Registration: **[alsbom.org/seniorfest](http://alsbom.org/seniorfest)**

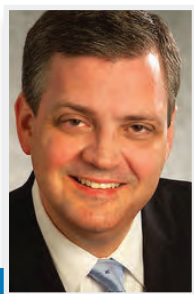
For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant April Brewer at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, [abrewer@alsbom.org](mailto:abrewer@alsbom.org).

# Faithful

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION  
**NOVEMBER 13~14, 2018**

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • TRUSSVILLE, ALABAMA

## FEATURED SPEAKERS:



**Albert Mohler**



**John Thweatt**



**Terrence Jones**

**THE TUESDAY EVENING SESSION** will feature **Albert Mohler**, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, with worship led by an intergenerational choir involving current Children's Honor Choir members, alumni members of the Children's Honor Choir over its 20-year history, and members of the Alabama Singing Men and Women.

**OTHER HIGHLIGHTS** include Tuesday morning's President's Address by **John Thweatt**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, and Wednesday morning's Convention Sermon by **Terrence Jones**, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery.

**HOTEL GUIDE** The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and is not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate is at any of these hotels, please contact Doug Rogers at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 319, or drogers@alsbom.org.

**CONVENTION HOTEL:**

**Hilton Garden Inn, Trussville**  
 3230 Edwards Lake Parkway, Trussville  
 205-655-5222  
 Free WiFi and breakfast buffet  
 Only 3 miles from FBC Trussville  
 \$114 + tax

**Holiday Inn Express & Suites**

Birmingham NE - Trussville  
 5911 Valley Rd., Trussville  
 205-655-2700  
 Free WiFi and breakfast buffet  
 Only 1.7 miles from FBC Trussville  
 King: \$89.99+tax  
 2 Queens: \$94.99+tax  
 King Suite: \$104.99+tax  
 2 Queens Suite: \$109.99+tax  
 Ask for group code ABC  
 Reserve by October 29

**Drury Inn & Suites Birmingham Lakeshore**

160 State Farm Parkway, Birmingham  
 205-940-9500  
 5% rate discount  
 Free WiFi and breakfast buffet  
 Ask for corporate code 324960

**Drury Inn & Suites Birmingham Grandview**

3510 Grandview Parkway, Birmingham  
 205-967-2450  
 5% rate discount  
 Free WiFi and breakfast buffet  
 Ask for corporate code 324960

**Courtyard Marriott**

3665 Roosevelt Blvd., Birmingham  
 205-661-2280  
 Free WiFi  
 \$109 + tax  
 Reserve by October 21

For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention).

**FOCUS on One Mission**



# Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

**YOUR GIFTS HELP SUPPORT THESE GREAT COMMISSION MINISTRIES:**

- ALABAMA WMU
- DISASTER RELIEF
- CHURCH PLANTING
- PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS
- CHURCH REVITALIZATION



**If** your church observed the Week of Prayer for State Missions September 9-16, thank you.

**Your prayers are already being felt in so many ways.** If you haven't had a state missions focus this year, remember that the Week of Prayer materials are undated, to allow you to plan your own emphasis at any time. Just visit Myers-Mallory.org for ideas and resources.

In addition to your prayers, your gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering will make a huge difference as well. Just as last year's gifts allowed us to be prepared to respond following several disasters this year including

tornadoes in Jacksonville, Ala., during the spring and now Hurricane Florence in the Eastern U.S., so also this year's gifts will allow us to minister more effectively next year when disasters strike.

Of course, this is in addition to the impact your prayers and gifts will have on the Great Commission Ministries of Alabama WMU, Church Planting, Partnership Missions and Church Revitalization.

Remember that your 2018 gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering can be given until the end of the year.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT MYERS-MALLORY.ORG.**



Alabama Baptist  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

**State Goal:**  
**\$1,000,000**



**ONE MISSION:** The Great Commission **ONE PROGRAM:** The Cooperative Program **MANY MINISTRIES:** Great Commission Ministries



*Share a gift of love and the Gospel with a child in need this Christmas.*

**BACKPACKS** will be distributed through compassion ministry sites and church plants in **6 states**.



**ALABAMA BAPTISTS** are challenged to provide **AT LEAST 7,000 BACKPACKS**, bringing the Gospel to many who have never heard.

**OPPORTUNITIES** are available to assist with **backpack distribution** and/or long-term ministry site partnerships.

**2018 COLLECTION WEEK:**  
**October 29 - November 3**



For more information and collection sites: [AlabamaWMU.org/backpacks](http://AlabamaWMU.org/backpacks)

Saturday, November 3  
 Central Baptist Church,  
 2801 Highway 31 South, Decatur

# NORTH ALABAMA CHURCH LIBRARY CONFERENCE

*Theme:* THE REACH OF CHURCH LIBRARIES

Breakout conferences will include every aspect of church library work—administration, collection development, weeding, processing, Bible repair, automation with Concourse and Atrium, promotion of all sorts, and classification and cataloging. Church history, cardmaking, the Cricut machine, and making something useful out of useless materials will also be offered. A LifeWay book store will be available.

Joan Deneve, author of three books in *“The Redeemed Side of Broken”* series, will be our guest speaker. The day begins with registration at 8 a.m., general session at 8:30 followed by breakouts. We’ll dismiss at 3:30 p.m.

*For more information or to register, visit [cbcd.booksys.net](http://cbcd.booksys.net), or contact Eva Nell Hunter at (256) 353-5912 or (256) 303-7739 or [enhunter1946@gmail.com](mailto:enhunter1946@gmail.com).*

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

# Senior Adult Singin'

Tuesday, March 12, 2019  
 Eastmont Baptist Church,  
 Montgomery

Come to Eastmont to sing and worship with friends you know and the new friends you will meet! Frank Jones will lead us in singing hymns – some that you may remember from years gone by.

**ONLINE INFO AND REGISTRATION:**  
[alsbom.org/senioradultsingin](http://alsbom.org/senioradultsingin)

*For more information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, [emitchell@alsbom.org](mailto:emitchell@alsbom.org).*



ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

**STUDENT MISSIONS Weekend**  
 WORLDSONG COOK SPRINGS  
 January 18-19  
 ♦♦ 2019 ♦♦

BIBLE STUDY with Chris Mills  
 WORSHIP with Andrew Clingan, Zeke Hughes and “The Band”

# TRUE NORTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
 800.264.1225 ext. 226  
[lglass@alsbom.org](mailto:lglass@alsbom.org)  
[alabamawmu.org/smw](http://alabamawmu.org/smw)  
 #ALSMW2019

**FOCUS on One Mission**



# RENEW

a day away with friends

FEBRUARY 23, 2019

NorthPark Baptist Church  
Trussville, Alabama

\$35 per person (includes lunch)  
Register by February 14

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
AlabamaWJU.org/Renew  
800.264.1225 ext. 325  
khelms@alsbom.org



Featured Speaker  
**LARA WILLIAMS**



Worship Leader  
**KIM THWEATT**



Missionary  
**ERIN BISHOP**



RENEW WILL FEATURE:

- Outstanding Bible teaching
- Moving worship
- Missions focus
- An environment for spiritual renewal
- Time with friends
- AND BACK AGAIN THIS YEAR - The WorldCrafts Store

#ALRenew2019



# Fulfill

Monday - Wednesday,  
April 8-10, 2019  
Shocco Springs

**Fulfill** is a special time for senior adults at Shocco Springs: a time of renewal and worship. We will worship together through hymns and prayer. We will hear messages from God's Word. We will participate in some new, fun activities. Be sure to read Focus in the coming months for more details about the leaders who will be with us.

**Registration:** shocco.org or 1-800-280-1105

**For more information,** please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



# Complete

A GATHERING FOR TEEN GIRLS

**MARCH 1-2, 2019**  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

#ALCOMPLETE2019

For more information: Shannon Mayes  
smayes@alsbom.org | 800.264.1225 ext. 226

*Come and bring your girls  
for a weekend of*

SOLID BIBLE MISSIONARY AUTHENTIC  
TEACHING TESTIMONIES WORSHIP

RELEVANT BREAKOUTS  
FOR TODAY'S CULTURE

**and more!**

**\$35 PER PERSON**  
INCLUDES REGISTRATION,  
LUNCH, & T-SHIRT

**CHELSEA KELLUM**  
Bible Study Leader

**JORDYN BOYER**  
Worship Leader



**Fall Missions Festival** for adults

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15

OCTOBER 23, 2018  
WORLDSONG MISSIONS PLACE

We'll hear from missionaries, pray together and spend time learning about what God is doing throughout our world. The Fall Missions Festival for Adults is open to adults of all ages.

For more information, visit [AlabamaWMU.org/FMFforAdults](http://AlabamaWMU.org/FMFforAdults) or contact Kathryn Helms at 800.264.1225 ext. 325 or [khelms@alsbom.org](mailto:khelms@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



# FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN

October 12-13, 2018  
or October 19-20, 2018

Children will hear from missionaries and learn about living out the Great Commission among refugees. Participants will experience another culture through food, customs, crafts and other fun activities.

Plus you get to experience the fun and adventure that beautiful WorldSong has to offer!

Begins Friday at 5:00 PM • Concludes Saturday at 3:00 PM



For more information, contact Sandra McKenzie at [smckenzie@alsbom.org](mailto:smckenzie@alsbom.org) or 800.264.1225 ext. 223.

## Bible Drill Retreat



FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JANUARY 25-26, 2019  
SHOCCO SPRINGS

**Theme:** *Reelin' in God's Word*

Join us as we explore how to Reel in God's Word! Conferences will be designed for children, youth, high school drill participants and their leaders.

Participants will be learning God's Word and the importance of it in our lives. Leaders will have the opportunity to learn more about Bible Drill and how it can be an effective ministry in their churches. Bible Drill in a Box, a make-and-take conference that provides more than 35 activities to use in their classrooms, will be offered.

Online Registration: [shocco.org](http://shocco.org)

Online Info: [alsbom.org/bibledrill](http://alsbom.org/bibledrill)

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225; State Missionary Belinda Stroud, ext. 271, [bstroud@alsbom.org](mailto:bstroud@alsbom.org) or Ministry Assistant Julie Smith, ext. 255, [jsmith@alsbom.org](mailto:jsmith@alsbom.org).

# Responding to rape



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## How to address sexual assault and protect children, adults within your church

By Denise George  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**S**exual assaults and rape are rampant in today's society. Even though sexual violence in the U.S. has fallen by more than half since 1993, rape continues to be a major problem, a humiliating crime that degrades and devastates its victims.

Every day more than 570 people experience sexual violence, and an estimated 17.7 million women have been victims of rape since 1998, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN).

Experts estimate that each year, 321,500 Americans in the general public (ages 12 and older) and 60,000 children are sexually assaulted or raped.

Statistics also show that 1 in 5 women — and 1 in 71 men — have been raped during their lifetime, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

### Reactions

Almost half of those were sexually assaulted by someone they know.

Victims of rape fill our church pews in every worship service, most often sitting in shameful silence, feeling humiliated, alone and hurt.

“Because sexual assault is a form of victimization that is particularly stigmatized in American society, many victims suffer in silence, which only intensifies their distress and disgrace,” wrote Trillia Newbell, director of community outreach for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Among the many emotional and psychological reactions of Rape Trauma Syndrome, victims may feel:

- ▶ Wounded physically, mentally and emotionally (and spiritually, if the rapist is a pastor, deacon or member of the church).

- ▶ Angry with those who violated them.

- ▶ Outraged that their rapists usually go free. (Ninety-nine percent of rapists walk free, receiving no punishment or jail time for their offense, according to the Huffington Post.)

- ▶ Disgusted by people's attitudes (for instance, when people view rape as a woman's fault for wearing provocative clothing, flirting or using “bad judgment,” such as jogging at night alone).

- ▶ Worried about sexually transmitted infections and possible pregnancy.

- ▶ Shamed, degraded, dirty, hopeless, alone and guilty, leading to other problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, self-harm, substance abuse, fear, eating and sleep disorders and thoughts of suicide, according to RAINN.

As ambassadors of Christ, you and your church can be a sanctuary of healing and comfort, offering encouragement and hope to those victimized by rape, sexual abuse and violence.

What are some practical ways the Church can help victims of sexual abuse?

First, make church grounds and buildings safe.

- ▶ Install lights in parking lots and hire visible security guards.

- ▶ Hire reputable teachers and leaders and insist upon reference and background checks. Provide

ongoing training for staff and volunteers.

- ▶ Install windows in classroom doors.

- ▶ Develop strong relationships with local police departments.

- ▶ Have an emergency plan in place to deal with assault crimes.

- ▶ Invest in two-way radios.

- ▶ Create a single entrance into the church.

Another way you can help victims is to look for the common signs of someone who may have been sexually violated:

- ▶ A happy, positive person who suddenly becomes sad, depressed, angry and cries often for no explainable reason.

- ▶ A major lifestyle change happening in a person's life — for instance, an organized, hardworking person who suddenly

becomes lazy and unmotivated, misses appointments or stops functioning at work or school.

- ▶ A socially active person who withdraws from church, family and friends.

- ▶ A person who exhibits unusual behavior — such as being restless, easily agitated, frightened or startled more than usual, unable to relax or concentrate, emotionally numb, experiences loss of memory or panic attacks or shows self-destructive behavior.

### Respond immediately

When you suspect or hear about a possible rape, respond immediately:

- ▶ Make sure the victim receives proper medical care, and accompany them to report the crime to law enforcement.

- ▶ Avoid asking details about the crime.

- ▶ Help financially, if needed. Most rape kits (forensic exams) are free and are available through

local law enforcement, and by law, you are not required to report the assault to law enforcement in order to receive a rape kit that can be used for later reporting.

- ▶ Arrange counseling with a Christian professional in your church or community who specializes in sexual assault and rape.

- ▶ As a congregation, encourage members to show the victim unconditional love and acceptance, listening to and valuing him or

her, believing the person's story and keeping confidences. Assure the person that he or she is the victim, not the criminal, and is not at fault. Walk with the person through the stages of the grief process, praying with and for him or her.

- ▶ Ask spiritually mature women in the church, perhaps also survivors of past sexual abuse, to befriend female victims, serving as advocates, jointly praying and reading Scripture, sitting together in worship services and offering encouragement and hope. Ask spiritually mature men in the church to befriend male victims of rape.

### Statistics to note

*Rapes happen most often at these places:*

At or near victim's home — 55%

In enclosed public areas (parking lot, garage, etc.) — 10%

In open public places — 15%

On school property — 8%

At or near a relative's home — 12%

*48 percent of victims are sleeping or doing something at home when sexual crime occurs.*

*29 percent are traveling to and from school, work, etc.*

Source: RAINN

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- ▶ Make your church a safe place to talk about sexual violence and rape. Preach and teach about the sanctity of life and how our bodies, a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, ought to be honored.

It also is important to educate your congregation about sexual assault:

- ▶ Organize a support/educational group for girls, youth and women, teaching them to protect themselves against sexual predators, to understand the biblical rules for dating and marriage and how to help and respond to other women who are victims of rape.

### Speak frankly

- ▶ Educate the boys, youth and men in your church, teaching them to protect themselves from rape (10 percent of adult rape victims are men) and to relate to girls and women with respect.

- ▶ Speak frankly to your church's college-aged men and women about protecting themselves from rape on campuses, a trend that has become epidemic. Female students ages 18–24 are three times more likely than women in general to experience sexual violence, according to RAINN. Male students ages 18–24 are five times more likely than non-students of the same age to be a victim of rape or sexual violence.

- ▶ Raise social awareness in your church and community by inviting professional speakers to address the epidemic of rape in our society.

Another important step is to teach the youth, men and women in your church the steps to take if they or someone they know is raped:

- ▶ Call 911 if in immediate danger.

- ▶ Contact the local police department. Visit a medical center. Report the crime. Ask to have a sexual assault forensic exam (collects DNA evidence).

- ▶ Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-656-4673) to talk with a counselor about procedures, reporting, etc.✝

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Thank you to everyone who made a Grace Gift to Alabama Baptist Children's Homes. To learn more about Grace Gifts or how to make one, visit [alabamachild.org/give](http://alabamachild.org/give) or call 205.982.1112.

# in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

## Samuel W. Davidson

### Seventh Street Baptist pastor dies at 70

Samuel W. Davidson, pastor of Seventh Street Baptist Church, Bessemer, died Sept. 10. He was 70 years old.

At the time of his death, he had been faithfully serving Seventh Street Baptist for the past 19 years.

Barry Cospers, associational missionary/director of missions for Bessemer Baptist Association, said Davidson "had such an evangelistic heart that was complemented by his commitment to missions."

"Bro. Sam was a dedicated man of God who loved his Lord, his family and his church," Cospers said. "He was such an inspiration not only to his church but also to the Bessemer Baptist Association. He will be greatly missed by his community as well as the Bessemer Baptist Association."

Davidson is survived by his wife, Brenda; sons, Danny and John; daughter, Lori; and 10 grandchildren. (TAB)

# Samford MTI offers online certificates in church planting, disciple making

The Samford University Ministry Training Institute (MTI) has new online certificates in church planting and disciple making designed to help pastors, staff members and lay people further develop their leadership skills in these areas.

"These new certificate offerings are designed to provide affordable and accessible high-quality training opportunities for church leaders," said MTI director Kevin Blackwell.

The Certificate in Church Planting is designed and taught by Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

"The need for church planting is prevalent anywhere there are lost people. In other words, everywhere," Duke said. "We are seeking to impact students with principles for church planting that are transferrable to any new ministry start-up."

The Certificate in Disciple Making was birthed out of several disciple-making events offered by Daniel Edmonds, SBOM director of the office of Sunday School and discipleship, that highlighted the desire in Alabama Baptist churches for a disciple-making



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movement. Robert Mullins, pastor of Crossroads Community Church (formerly Mount Hebron Baptist), in Elmore, will lead the disciple making certificate program. The focus of the program is to lead

Christians to be disciples who make disciples, Blackwell said.

"It is my utmost prayer that God uses this certificate to equip church leaders and

lay people to spark multiplying movements of gospel explosion in their communities," Blackwell said.

The Certificate in Church Planting and Certificate in Disciple

Making, along with the Certificate in Pastoral Leadership and the Certificate in Worship Leadership, all offer the flexibility of online classes combined with expert teaching, theological framework and practical knowledge in the subject areas, Blackwell said.

Each online certificate program requires completion of four courses. The courses do not have to be taken in sequence, however. Registration is available for individual courses as well as for the full program in each subject.

Registration is now open for the 2018 Fall B session, which runs Oct. 23–Dec. 17.

In addition to the online offerings, many courses are offered in face-to-face classes throughout the state. (TAB)

**For more information on MTI programs or to register online, go to [www.samford.edu/go/mti](http://www.samford.edu/go/mti) or call the MTI office at 205-726-4055.**

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# Bethabara sees souls saved 17 weeks in a row

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Kevin Morrison says he's not sure what made him ask God for a sign, but in 2017 he did — twice.

"I was comfortable at the church where I was, but I felt God leading us away from there," he said. "And I said, 'God, if you want me to leave, please show my wife too.'"

The next Sunday was Easter, and as they pulled into the parking lot, his wife looked at him and said, "This is between you and God, but I was just wondering — have you ever felt like God was calling you to go somewhere else?"

Morrison was floored.

"I started crying," he said. "The following Sunday, I stood in front of the church and I told them that I felt God was leading me to go somewhere else."

The deacons told him if a church called him to fill in, even if it was before his notice was up, he



Photo courtesy of Kevin Morrison

Pastor Kevin Morrison of Bethabara Baptist, Northport, in Sipse Baptist Association, baptizes Hope Miller on Sept. 23.

should follow God there.

"I had no idea where God was leading us," he said. "But that Thursday I got a call from a church."

That church — Bethabara Baptist, Northport, in Sipse Baptist

Association — asked if he could fill in the next Sunday. He did, and the next one too, and the next several after that.

"Once they got us there, they kept us," he said. "And on the first Sunday in July, they were going to vote for us to stay and for me to become their pastor. I asked God for confirmation — to see a soul saved that morning. I don't know why I did that."

But when Morrison gave the invitation that day, a man came to the altar and gave his life to Jesus.

That same thing happened for the next 16 Sundays.

"For 17 Sundays in a row, we

had somebody get saved," Morrison said.

The church building holds about 300, but at that time they were running about 40 in attendance on Sundays.

"One of the guys at the church said, 'I've never seen this happen, 17 weeks in a row where somebody was going forward and pouring out their heart to God at the altar,'" Morrison said.

In November 2017 they baptized all 17. Now they're running 90 on Sunday mornings, and just recently on Sept. 23 they baptized six more.

"The church members are amazing — people are just answering the call," Morrison said. "It's awesome to see how different ministries have grown and how people have stepped up and are going out into the community. I give God the credit."

## 'On fire'

He said it's exciting to go to church each week and see what God's going to do.

Gary Bonner, associational missionary/director of missions for Sipse Baptist Association, said the church has had "a great, great year."

"Kevin is a bivocational pastor, and he's had a tremendous time in ministry there," he said. "It's a church that's on fire."✠

***"It's awesome to see how different ministries have grown and how people have stepped up and are going out into the community."***

**Pastor Kevin Morrison, Bethabara Baptist Church, Northport**

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org). Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### SENIOR PASTOR

Seeking a senior pastor for contemporary and/or traditional services for Sherwood Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama. Send resumés to: Dr. Sam Cooke, 513 Hermitage Wood Dr., Huntsville, AL 35806, [DrHSamuelCooke@yahoo.com](mailto:DrHSamuelCooke@yahoo.com).

#### PASTOR

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

#### PASTOR

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

#### MUSIC DIRECTOR

New Hope Baptist Church in Skipperville, Alabama, is searching for a part-time music director. Email resumés to: [judwaldrop@yahoo.com](mailto:judwaldrop@yahoo.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

Goodman Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational youth minister. Please forward resumé to: 6561 Co. Rd. 625, Enterprise, AL 36330. ATTN: Youth Minister Search Committee.

#### MINISTER TO STUDENTS

Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, is seeking a full-time student minister. Please send resumés to: [search@hbcm.net](mailto: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 biblically-based programs and activities. Email resumés to:

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**6** Each week when *TAB* arrives, look for the AR logo and hold your device over the noted articles to watch the video extras.

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## My JESUS Story

By Jenni Ingram  
First Baptist Church, Gantt

Everything changed with the birth of a child.” Yes, this statement can and should remind us of the birth of Jesus found in Luke 2, but in this particular instance, the story I’m about to tell is about the birth of my first granddaughter.

My daughter married at 18 and was pregnant at 19. We were estranged and although I saw her around town, we did not have the relationship I had envisioned when she was a child. I prayed every day for her health, safety and happiness, but only after learning of her pregnancy did I repent of my part of the problem and ask for God’s forgiveness. I

also asked Him for the opportunity to speak with her and ask her forgiveness.

This is what Scripture tells us to do in Mark 11:25: “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

The closer the baby’s arrival came, the more we began to heal our relationship. I was blessed to be there when my beautiful, perfect granddaughter was born. I had never known a more perfect, pure, all-consuming love. I believe God gave me a taste of how He feels about us. That is why He was so willing to give His life for us — that immeasurable love.

I would gladly give my life for my granddaughters. Yes, He has now blessed me with two, and they, along with my daughter and son-in-law, live 83 feet from me so I get to be with them every day. See — God heals, God provides and God restores. ✝



**SPEAK UP** on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

**Remember to:**

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

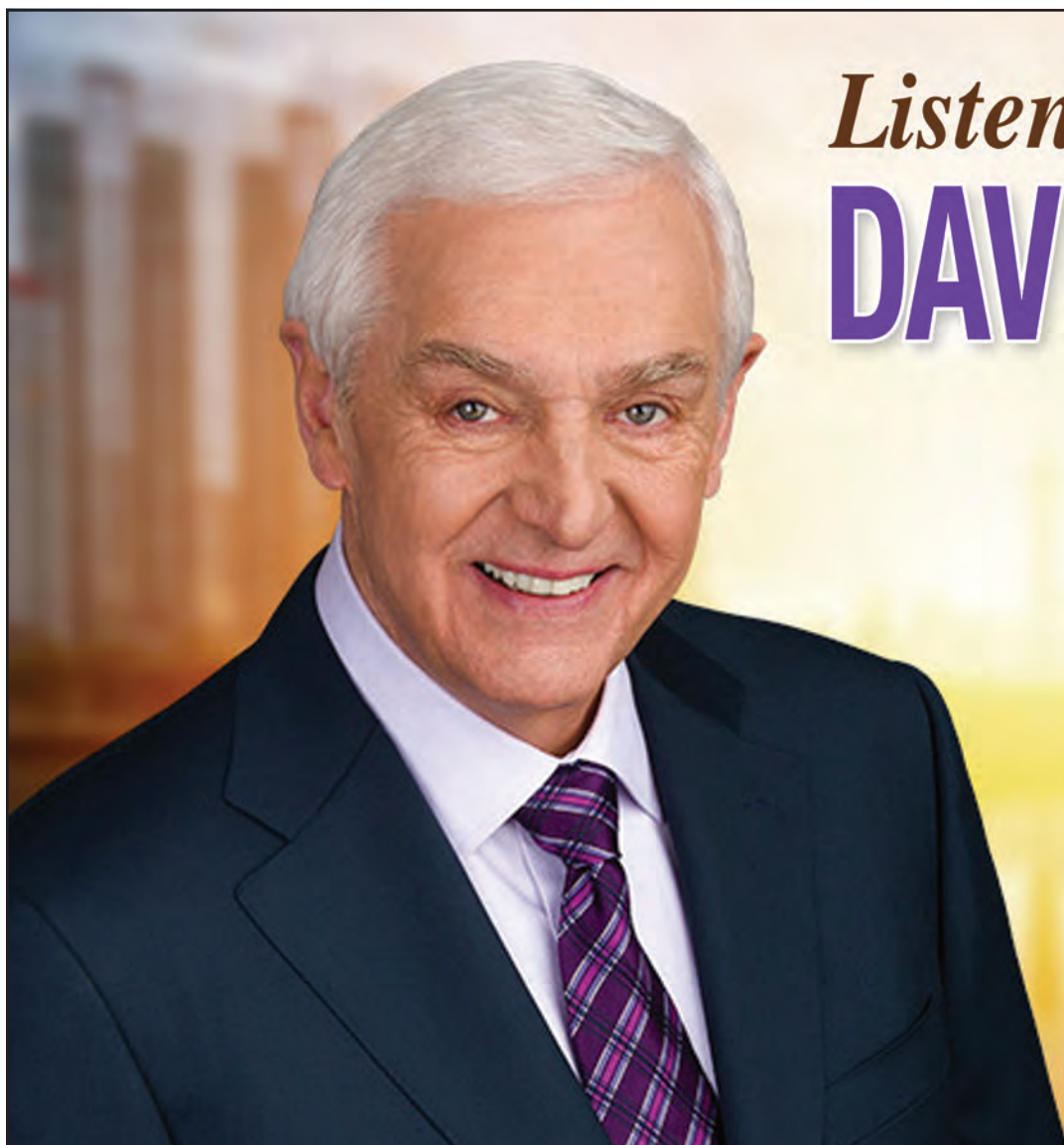
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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 7

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

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

**TRUE FRUIT**  
**Galatians 5:13-26**

**Freed (13-15)**

God delights in redemption. People that He redeems worship and bring Him glory in their love for Him and for their neighbors. God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt so they could worship Him and love Him with all their heart, soul and might (Deut. 6:5). "Let my people go," God demanded of pharaoh, "so that they may worship Me" (Ex. 9:1). As believers in Jesus, we are no different. God liberates us from the prison of sin and its condemnation, so that we might glorify God through worship in our new freedom. "For freedom Christ has set us free," Paul declares over us (Gal. 5:1).

So if sin was our captor and Christ liberated us from sin, why should we want to emulate the enemy who abused us? We are redeemed by Christ — who walked in perfect obedience and bore our burdens — so that we may emulate our sin-conquering hero. Apparently, some believers in Galatia were using their new freedom in Christ as a license to carry on sinning while others were walking the Christian life in isolation, absent true community.

**Controlled (16-18)**

If we are redeemed emulators of Christ, we ought to walk by the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. Even our obedience in following Christ is a work that God does through us. We can't do it on our own because there is an internal conflict within us. We are pulled between two competing visions of our future — the Spirit's vision of our sanctification and sin's vision of our death. Behind Paul's command to walk by the Spirit is a promise that the Spirit-empowered walk leads us further away from the captor and into the countryside of God's kingdom. The question becomes

one of control. Are we controlled by our flesh, which leads back to captivity, or by the Spirit, who leads us to life and liberty in Christ?

**Abandoned (19-21)**

If we are unsure of whether we are led by the flesh or Spirit, we need only look to the works that are present in our life. Paul is careful not to merely compare the works of the flesh to the works of the Spirit, as if he were comparing mirror opposites. Instead, Paul shows us that the flesh and Spirit produce different things altogether. A flesh-led life causes us to perform the works of sin-laden vices. These works are the result of our fallen nature. We are the ones that do the work. The list that Paul gives describes a person whose heart is so bent inward that they sin against themselves (whether or not they realize it), others and God. The fruit of the Spirit, however, is different.

**Produced (22-26)**

Paul tells us that the Spirit-led life leads to fruit, not works. Just like we cannot cause a tree to grow fruit, we cannot cause spiritual fruit to grow in our lives. This is why the Holy Spirit is so important in the life of a believer.

The Spirit causes fruit to grow in our lives, and we are the joyful recipients of the Spirit's cultivation of that fruit. Also, it is important to note that Paul says fruit, not fruits. A Spirit-led life is one that bears the fruit of the Spirit (e.g., love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). These are all the fruit of the Spirit; they are not separate fruits. We do not pick and choose some over the others. We are not loving without patience nor faithful without self-control.

To be a Spirit-led believer is to bear the fruit of His cultivation in our lives — every last bit of it. †

**GOING OUT**  
**Acts 16:6-15**

In the opening chapter of the book of Acts, we find the disciples learning from Jesus during the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension. Having recovered from the terrible shock of the Messiah's death and finally grasping the implications of His resurrection, the disciples now wondered if this was the moment when Jesus would establish His kingdom here on earth. Was this the moment He would restore the kingdom to Israel?

Jesus' response to the disciples' question was essentially to tell them that they had other matters to attend to first. Before the kingdom would be restored in Jerusalem, the message of the good news of Jesus must first leave Jerusalem and head out to the broader world. "You will be my witnesses," Jesus commanded, "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We see this charge fulfilled step-by-step in the ministry of the disciples. Having received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Jesus' messengers first proclaimed Him to their Jewish brothers and sisters in Jerusalem.

This good news then began to reach out to the surrounding region of Judea, first gradually as people heard of miracles performed by the apostles (Acts 5:16) then suddenly as believers persecuted in Jerusalem fled to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-4). When Philip preached in Samaria, men and women came to faith there, just as they had in Jerusalem.

For the gospel's journey to what the King James Bible calls "the uttermost part of the earth," God pressed into service a man who had originally been a sharp critic and even persecutor of the early Christians: Saul, better known as Paul.

**Persevere in your efforts to reach others for Christ. (6-8)**

Almost from the very moment he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul was a man on a mission. In the same chapter that he was called (Acts 9) he was already proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God and urging others to embrace Him. With Barnabas, Paul would take the gospel into Asia Minor, and when these two parted company he would work with Silas and Timothy to continue to spread the word.

Paul, Silas and Timothy are pressing onward, this time trying to take their message into Asia. So determined were they that the Holy Spirit twice has to forbid them to move further in that direction. God's plan to spread the gospel to the world would run through the west rather than the east.

**Embrace the opportunities before you to represent Christ. (9-10)**

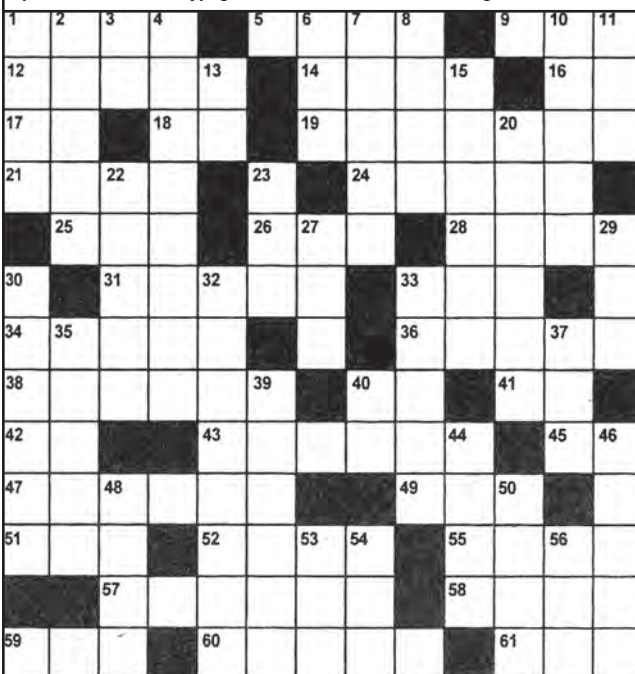
Having been stopped by the Holy Spirit from going into Asia, they received a new calling. In the night, Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia, urging him to come and help the people there. Paul did as the vision instructed him and immediately set out to take the message to the people of Europe.

**Share Christ with those you encounter. (11-15)**

Among the first in Europe to hear Paul's message were individuals from the city of Philippi. When Paul found a group of worshippers gathered for prayer by the riverside on the Sabbath, he shared with them the gospel. It was Lydia, a seller of purple goods, who was first to respond, and her family followed suit. These would not be the last though. Countless more followers, from the first century to the 21st, would join Lydia as her spiritual descendants, embracing the same message of Jesus that would soon reach every corner of the world. †

## Christian Crossword

By Teresa Zeek Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



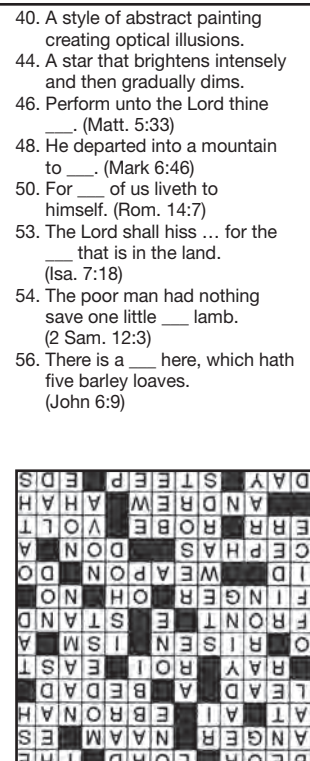
**Across**

1. Balaam's father. (Num. 22:5)
5. God the Father and in the \_\_\_ Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 1:1)
9. \_\_\_ Lord bless thee. (Num. 6:24)
12. Mine \_\_\_ is kindled against them. (Hos. 8:5)
14. One of Caleb's sons. (1 Chron. 4:15)
16. A suffix used to form certain plurals.
17. I fell \_\_\_ his feet as dead. (Rev. 1:17)
18. Joshua sent men from Jericho to \_\_\_. (Josh. 7:2)
19. They removed from Jotbathah and encamped at \_\_\_. (Num. 33:34)
21. And \_\_\_ us not into temptation. (Matt. 6:13)
24. Hadad's father. (Gen. 36:35)
25. Nickname for Raymond.
26. King. (French)
28. Wise men come from the \_\_\_. (Matt. 2:1)
31. The Lord is \_\_\_ indeed. (Luke 24:34)
33. A suffix meaning "devotion to."
34. Joab saw that the \_\_\_ of the battle was against him. (2 Sam. 10:9)
36. \_\_\_ therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. (Eph. 6:14)

**Down**

1. A son of Joel. (1 Chron. 5:45)
2. \_\_\_ into His gates with thanksgiving. (Ps. 100:4)
3. The King of Bashan.
38. Jesus wrote on the ground with His \_\_\_. (John 8:6)
40. \_\_\_ let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end. (Ps. 7:9)
41. \_\_\_ man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)
42. Identification. (abbr.)
43. Every man having his \_\_\_ in his hand. (2 Chron. 23:10)
45. \_\_\_ good to them that hate you. (Matt. 5:44)
47. Jesus' name for Simon meaning "stone." (John 1:42)
49. Nickname for Donald.
51. If any of you do \_\_\_ from the truth. (James 5:19)
52. And they put on him a purple \_\_\_. (John 19:2)
55. The unit of electromotive force.
57. Simon Peter's brother. (Matt. 4:18)
58. Aholibamah's mother. (Gen. 36:14)
59. The evening and the morning were the first \_\_\_. (Gen. 1:5)
60. The herd ran down a \_\_\_ place. (Luke 8:33)
61. Editors. (abbr.)

- (Num. 21:33)
4. Preparing.
6. Bear ye \_\_\_ another's burdens. (Gal. 6:12)
7. Title interpreted as Master. (John 1:38)
8. For a good man some would even \_\_\_ to die. (Rom. 5:7)
10. The seven \_\_\_ are seven mountains. (Rev. 17:9)
11. One of Saul's sons, \_\_\_ -baal. (1 Chron. 8:33)
13. Rhode Island. (abbr.)
15. That women adorn themselves in \_\_\_ apparel. (1 Tim. 2:9)
20. Captain of the host of the King of Syria; leper. (2 Kings 5:1)
22. Moses' brother. (Ex. 4:14)
23. Blessed \_\_\_ the meek. (Matt. 5:5)
27. That no \_\_\_ of you be puffed up. (1 Cor. 4:6)
29. A little child. (esp. a boy)
30. The \_\_\_ of a midwife. (Ex. 1:16)
32. As good \_\_\_ of the manifold grace of God. (1 Pet. 4:10)
33. Hammoleketh's son. (1 Chron. 7:18)
35. I will break in pieces the chariot and his \_\_\_. (Jer. 51:21)
37. Cain dwelt in the land of \_\_\_. (Gen. 4:16)
39. \_\_\_ ye thither unto us. (Neh. 4:20)





# Media reviews

TV/MOVIES

## Marvel's 'Black Panther' leads newest online streaming options

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

We've grown accustomed to superheroes misbehaving in the Marvel and DC universes — whether that's Iron Man acting like a playboy, Wonder Woman spending the night with a companion or the Avengers constantly making snide remarks about one another.

Then there's Black Panther. He's not a womanizer, and he doesn't ridicule his friends on a whim. He's also altruistic and wants his country to share its knowledge and riches with the world.

In other words, he's the kind of superhero you'd want to speak to your child's class.

The movie "Black Panther" (PG-13) rightly received rave reviews when it was released in theaters earlier this year as the first Marvel movie with a largely African-American cast.

But the film stood out for other reasons too. For example, the film's primary character —

T'Challa/Black Panther — is more mature and serious than the average superhero. As the leader of the fictional African country of Wakanda, he doesn't have time for juvenile jokes. The movie differentiated itself by having less language (about eight words and no profane uses of God's names) and less sexual content (unless you count stomach-revealing costumes) than most Marvel films. It's one of my favorite superhero movies of all time.

This doesn't mean that the film is for small children. The violence is excessive, with more gun fights, close-up punches and deaths by spearing than seen in many superhero movies.

"Black Panther" also includes ancestral worship. Families who watch it can discuss what God requires: He alone is to be worshipped (Ex. 34:14). Jesus is our lone intercessor (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

The film offers tons of positive messages, including ones on self-sacrifice, mercy and helping the poor. Also streaming this month:

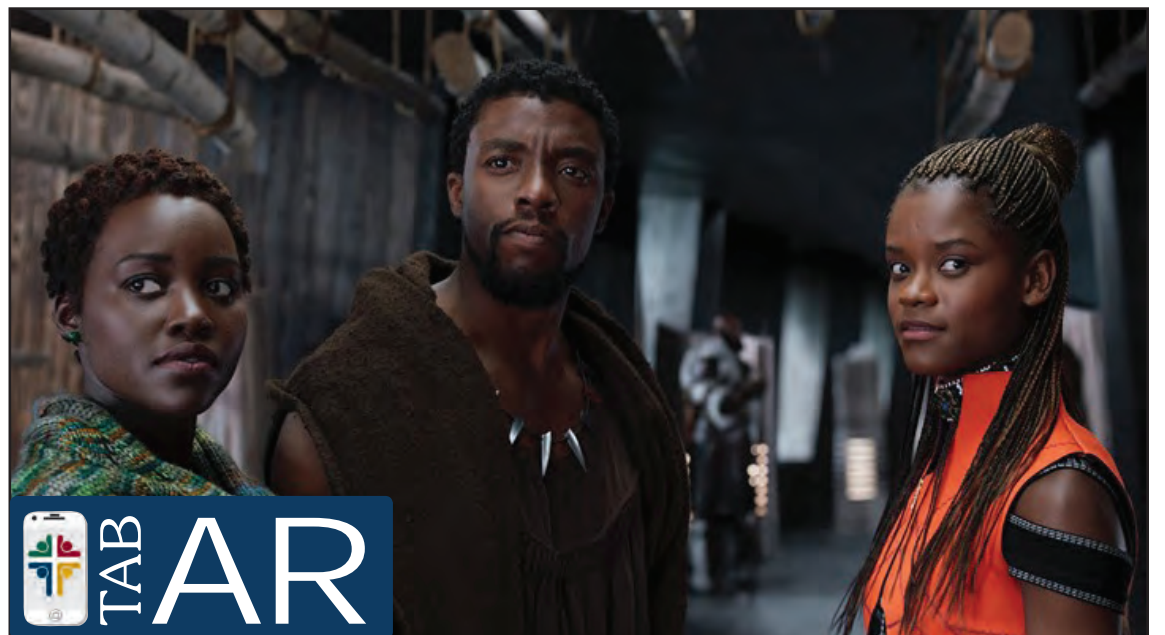


Photo courtesy of Marvel Entertainment

### 'Black Panther'

#### Netflix

► **"Spider-Man 3" (PG-13)** — This 2007 film depicts our masked hero affected by an other-worldly black goo that makes him aggressive and mean. Eventually, he junks his "good guy" reputation and seeks revenge on an enemy. It's darker than other Spider-Man films. Rated PG-13 for sequences of intense action violence. It has mild language too.

► **"Call the Midwife: Season 7" (TV-14)** — The BBC/PBS series spotlights a group of midwives serving the public during the 1950s and 60s and has been applauded by some pro-lifers for its storylines. But a few of the episodes — including one in Season 7 — involve illegal abortions. Caution is advised.

► **Disney's "A Wrinkle in Time" (PG)** — This fantasy film was based on the Madeleine L'Engle book that featured several Christian themes. Sadly though, the movie removed all the Christian elements. The film tells the story of a girl who crosses the universe looking for her long-lost father. Rated PG for thematic elements and some peril.

Also notable: "Nacho Libre" (PG), "The Ant Bully" (PG), Disney's "Lilo & Stitch" (PG), Disney's "The Emperor's New Groove" (G).

#### Hulu

► **"Field of Dreams" (PG)** — This baseball fantasy classic follows a farmer who builds a field to attract baseball stars from the past (that is, ghosts). Starring Kevin Costner, it includes several good lessons but is marred by some strong language.

► **"Grace Unplugged" (PG)** — An 18-year-old Christian singer drifts from her parents and her Christian background to try to become a Hollywood star. It's a faith-based modern retelling of the parable of the prodigal son. Rated PG for thematic elements and brief teen drinking.

#### Amazon Prime

► **"A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures" (unrated), "A Turtle's Tale 2: Sammy's Escape from**

### 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.

**"Paradise" (unrated)** — In the first film, a sea turtle hatchling is abandoned by his companions and must learn to survive. In the sequel he gets stuck in an aquarium. Both movies received the Dove Seal of Approval for all ages.

► **"Grace Unplugged" (PG)** — See above. †



'A Wrinkle in Time'

Photo courtesy of Walt Disney Pictures

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Zach Hedges

Photo courtesy of Tennessee Smokies

# Showing God's love

## Tennessee Smokies pitcher plays for 'Audience of One'

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Tennessee Smokies pitcher Zach Hedges likes to give what he has received. "I love showing people encouragement and I love being positive in that sense and having a smile. I love being able to connect with people wherever they are and letting them know they are loved. God loves them as much as He loves everyone. I love being able to do that and just love on people," said Hedges. "It blows my mind of how God shows his love to me in every way."

A Christian ministry major with sports emphasis at Azusa Pacific University, Hedges wanted to be a witness to his team and on campus.

"I realized through the things I do day in and day out, I will show and prove who I want to be in life. Hopefully it will show there is something different. I don't think I am better than anyone else. I realize that I am not. That is why I have this relationship with Christ. I need Him in my life."

When Hedges was about 4 or 5 years old his sister Lindsay began talking about "this guy named Jesus. She was good friends with Him. I was like, 'Dude who is this guy?' I want to be like Him. My sister is the one who encouraged that to me. I realized at a young age I wanted Christ in my life, to have someone to lean on and to give me strength and encouragement during hard times," he said.

When he was about 8 or 9 years old his faith became "really tangible." When his parents divorced, his mother, Laurie, raised him and his sister.

His faith grew stronger. Through the hard times he developed a passion for sports which allowed a "super connection" to people.

During his freshman season at Azusa Pacific in 2012 he was 7-0 with a 3.30 ERA. He had the lowest ERA (2.74) at Azusa Pacific during the 2014 season. At the end of the 2014 season Hedges was chosen by

the Cubs in the 26th round of the Major League Draft.

He played rookie ball in Mesa, Arizona, in 2014, and spent the 2015 season in South Bend, Indiana. He struck out 80 while going 8-8 with a 4.16 ERA.

At Myrtle Beach in 2016 he was a Mid-Season Carolina League All-Star. He was 7-8 with a 2.89 ERA and 63 strikeouts.

Being an all-star was "huge" and his biggest thrill along with being drafted.

But he remembers where his talent comes from. "I want to go out there and glorify Him in baseball. I always write 'Audience of One' behind the mound before my first pitch," he said.

Who God created him to be is a process that Hedges continues to figure out, he said.

"As of right now it's to be a baseball player," he said. "Knowing that God has brought me here for a reason, and I can play baseball well and showcase that and try to find ways to show what God has done in my life every day."

### 'Opened my eyes'

During the summer of 2013, Hedges went to Haiti, working in Port-au-Prince and in rural areas in the country.

"That really opened my eyes. People who had absolutely nothing were so joyous. There was this church in a tent city. It must have been 105 degrees in this place. It was a metal-sheeted roof. People were dancing and singing and laughing. To see that was unbelievable — how God can do that for us. That was cool," said Hedges.

Hedges attends The Bridge Church in Chino, California, and says staying connected to his faith is important.

"Faith has been such a deep thing in my life for a long time. If that had not been there I feel like there would have been a void, something missing in my life."✝

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Panel says pastor/judge's removal unjust

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A state government commission tasked with investigating claims concerning the ethical conduct of judges filed formal charges Sept. 20 against six members of the Arkansas Supreme Court for their handling of a case involving a Little Rock judge who also serves as a Baptist pastor.

The Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission found probable cause that the justices violated canons of judicial ethics in 2017 when they barred Judge Wendell Griffen from all cases involving the death penalty because he had attended a vigil against capital punishment with members of his church.

Griffen, pastor of New Millennium Church in Little Rock, signed an order in April 2017 granting a pharmaceutical company's request to block the state from using its drugs as part of Arkansas' execution by lethal injection protocol. Later in the day, Griffen and church members attended a Good Friday prayer vigil protesting the state's plan to execute eight men in 11 days.

The Arkansas Supreme Court reacted by barring Griffen from hearing any cases that involve the death penalty or the state's execution protocol. Griffen contends that his personal views against the death penalty, while widely known, have nothing to do with his ability to rule impartially on matters of law. For him, he says, it's a matter of religious freedom. (BNG)

### Moore takes on family 'prosperity gospel'

NASHVILLE — American Christians have adopted a version of the prosperity gospel when it comes to their families, says Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

In his new book "The Storm-Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home," Moore says he saw a common theme in conversations with people in different states of marriage or parenting crises. They often withdraw from the church thinking something is wrong with them.

"We falsely believe if we love Jesus ... we will have nothing but peace and tranquility in family relationships," Moore said. That attitude "misunderstands what the Bible teaches about the family as an arena of spiritual warfare."

"The Storm-Tossed Family," released Sept. 15 by B&H Publishing Group, offers guidance on the family in the context of the atoning death of Jesus, spiritual warfare and the church, while addressing the topics of marriage, sexuality, divorce, children, parenting and aging. (BP)



### New website to share, promote sermons

CHICAGO — A new website, VitalSermons.com, is seeking to share noteworthy sermons beyond the walls of local churches.

The project is spearheaded by publisher David Murray, a veteran speechwriter who also owns *Vital Speeches of the Day*, an 84-year-old magazine that has long captured important addresses from figures in politics, the arts and elsewhere.

Murray said the goal is to "find a timely and widely engaging sermon every single week to put out in the world" and to promote the sermons to a public hungry for meaningful messages.

The home page of VitalSermons.com features an array of recommended sermons, curated from sources including YouTube, Vimeo and church websites.

Laura Truax, senior pastor of interdenominational LaSalle Street Church in Chicago, is a member of the new website's advisory board. She said there is a longing for meaning among the public, "a hunger to know your life matters."

Truax said the selection of messages for potentially new audiences is important as a "way to be introduced to new voices." (RNS)