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Photo by Doug Rogers

Dewayne Rembert, youth pastor at Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, and leader of the Flatline Movement, shares with football players at Lee High School.

‘Kingdom legacy’

God weaves story of young Montgomery man, aging church together

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Growing up, Dewayne Rembert’s life was fatherless. It was mostly motherless. And as far as he was concerned, it was godless.

God didn’t make it into the dark recesses of his community, and when He did, He didn’t look any different from anyone else, Rembert said. As a teen growing up in Linden, he knew people who went to church, but it

didn’t seem to change their lives.

“It was a jacked-up situation,” Rembert said.

The world around him was a cocktail of fatherlessness and poverty, which led to petty crimes, small-town gangs, drugs and anger. His earphones served up that mix on repeat too.

“In that culture the music that’s created cultivates that anger and makes it bigger than what it is,” he said. “The devil glorifies their hurt and injects wrath into a child who’s been neglected by his father.”

Rembert got a daily dose of wrath. It grew him up into an angry and resentful man. He wouldn’t get his first taste of the gospel until years later.

And he had no idea that one day his story would be to inject God’s light back into a neighborhood that was a lot like where he grew up, or

that he would set out to clean up its music — and build a friendship with a tiny, aging white church that sat right in the middle of everything.

At 19, Rembert looked like he was doing OK from the outside. He moved to Montgomery, enrolled in school and got two jobs, one at a restaurant and one at a hotel.

‘My flesh ruled my life’

“I was climbing the corporate ladder, but I was still angry and doing petty illegal things on the side,” he said. “I didn’t know any better. My flesh ruled my life.”

That’s what first brought him through the doors of a church seven years after he moved there — the chance at some more money. A co-worker who was a Christian was getting a promotion, and he wanted her to give him her old job.

“I wanted to impress her, so I thought, ‘The next time she invites me to church, I’m going to say yes,’” he said.

She asked. Rembert went. And God surprised him — He lit up the heart of a man who had been walking in darkness for 26 years.

“God rocked my life and changed me,” Rembert said. “He freed me from an addiction to porn and everything else in my life. I went to church trying to get more money, and God said, ‘No, I’m going to meet you right there instead.’”

Because of that, Rembert — who now serves as youth pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery — doesn’t get upset these days when high school kids come to his Bible studies with “jacked-up” motives. Every Thursday, he meets (See ‘New,’ page 4)

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

A Pastor's Partner

The fairly new volunteer leader in the church was skilled at pricking people with his “verbal needle.” His pastor was a frequent target. On this day the young man was “teasing” the pastor about working only a day and a half each week — Sundays and Wednesday evenings.

You know the kind of things he said. “Easy job.” “How can you accept a check with any kind of integrity?” “What do you do with the rest of your week?” “I wish I had such a lush position.”

Instead of defending himself or crawling into a corner and sulking because he wasn't appreciated, the pastor invited the young man to join him for a typical day in the life of a pastor.

The day began with a 5 a.m. visit to the surgery unit of the local hospital where a member was scheduled for a serious surgery. At 7 a.m. there was a discipleship breakfast in a local restaurant where the pastor led a discipling group.

At 8:30 the pastor and the young leader arrived at the church office for a brief meeting with the church secretary to make sure everything was being readied for mid-week activities.

After making a few calls, the two men were back in the car headed to a local funeral home to review plans for the funeral of an elderly member whose funeral was the next day. Then they made another stop at the home of the family of the deceased for prayer and grief support.

A busy day

At every stop, there were impromptu interactions. People wanted to ask the pastor a question or get his advice about a situation. The pastor inquired about how someone's family member was doing with recovery. The pastor seemed to know the names of countless people. He knew their family members and their situations.

The pastor seemed to pivot continuously from comforting the grieving to caring for the anxious to counseling the confused to celebrating with the joyful. He moved back and forth from representing the church to the community to directing the internal work of the church. He did it all almost effortlessly.

The day was a busy day. The pastor did not get home until after stopping by the local ballfields that evening to encourage the men playing on the church league softball team.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

The young church leader had bailed long before then. He left shortly after lunch at the local hamburger place. But the young man left a wiser person.

Never-ending care

His pastor did not just preach on Sunday or teach the Bible on Wednesday. His pastor was busy about the Lord's work all day long. The young man had seen the pastor turn casual conversations into evangelism opportunities by reminding people of the importance of trusting Christ. He had listened as the pastor used visits at the hospital and at the funeral home to teach the truths of God's never-ending care.

The young man had watched his pastor empower lay leaders with his counsel. He had observed the smoothness with which administrative decisions about the church were made and implemented. He had seen the pastor reach out into the community in the name of Christ and the name of the church he served.

According to the story, the young man never applied his verbal needle to the pastor again. Instead he became an outspoken supporter of his pastor. He even worked for a raise in the pastor's salary.

Not that unusual

While this story is about a particular pastor in a particular situation, the story is not that unusual.

Many are the pastors and other church staff members whose work is never done. They are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They slip between roles as evangelist, counselor, en-

courager, problem solver, relationship mender and more with each phone call or knock on the door.

Is it any wonder that one study by Fuller Institute of Church Growth found 50 percent of pastors felt they were unable to meet the needs of their churches? Is it surprising that 70 percent of responding pastors reported a lower view of their abilities and self-esteem than when they started in ministry?

Pastors did not complain about their long days, but 90 percent of them did say they felt inadequately trained to cope with all the ministry demands.

And in the midst of all these demands the pastors felt alone. Seventy percent reported not having someone they considered a close friend, someone who shared their vision for ministry and was willing to get involved with them.

Some pastors even expressed reservations about being leaders because leading a church requires risk. Preaching against sin invites criticism from a member with a different view-

point. Lead the church to make a decision that a prominent donor disagrees with and watch the offerings dry up. Initiate a ministry outreach and watch someone attempt to stir up opposition.

How can one lead when every sermon is dissected and every decision second guessed? How can one

lead when concerned about the well-being of one's family or one's future in ministry? No one can lead a people whom they fear.

Prayer support

October is Pastor Appreciation Month on the denominational calendar. Hopefully Pastor Appreciation services are times when verbal needles like that of the young man in the story are put away and church members acknowledge the important roles their pastor and other church ministers play in the life of the church, the lives of church members and the community.

Hopefully the occasion will be a time marked by appreciation, affirmation and prayer support for the pastor and lessening of any negative emotions that might prevent a positive and healthy relationship between pastor and people.

Having a Pastor Appreciation Month is a good thing. It reminds us not to let a good deed go unnoticed. Even so, appreciation, affirmation and prayer support are needed every day.

This year, make sure your pastor knows he can count on you to be his partner in the work of the church and that he can count on you as a supporter and friend. ✚

“This year, make sure your pastor knows he can count on you to be his partner in the work of the church and that he can count on you as a supporter and friend.”

**October
is Pastor
Appreciation
Month.**



"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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Feeding the hungry

Global Hunger Sunday provides opportunity to learn and give

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Croustons and crackers isn't much of a supper. But near the end of last year's fall festival at First Baptist Church, Woodstock, in Bibb Baptist Association, that's all that was left. And it was what a man and his grandson ate instead of leaving hungry.

The incident pricked the hearts of church members who witnessed it, said church member Pat Shadrick, and soon she and others were formulating a plan to provide a free meal each week for community members who might not have much food at home.

"We had a new family life center, and it hit us that this building was not just for games," Shadrick said. "We needed to be doing something in this family life center that was going to reach the lost."

The ministry was named The Master's Kitchen, and on the first day organizers asked for volunteers, 43 people signed up. The first meal was served in June, and since then an average of 100 or so folks come out each Monday to have a meal.

Each night features a message or music too — a way to share the gospel and a little encouragement with those who come, many of whom are not in church. A different team prepares and serves the meal each week, and volunteers spend time in conversation and prayer during each meal.

"People open up to us," Shadrick said. "It means the world to them that someone will take the time right there to get on their knees and pray."

The Master's Kitchen is just one of several hunger ministries in Alabama Baptist churches. These ministries might be weekly meals or food pantries, but the goal of each one is the same — to meet the physical needs of community members and open the door to meeting spiritual needs as well.

Almost 800 million people around the world live with constant hunger, and 1 in 6 in North America are undernourished, according to Global Hunger Relief, an initiative of Southern Baptists that seeks to combat hunger in North America and around the world.

Informing churches

Global Hunger Sunday, observed the second Sunday of October each year, is a day many churches set aside to inform and equip church leaders about the global hunger crisis and to receive a special offering to help the cause. Seven Southern Baptist organizations partner together in Global Hunger Relief, and 100 percent of donations are directed toward hunger needs through partner ministries.

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Mis-



Photo courtesy of Pat Shadrick

Volunteers at The Master's Kitchen prepare and serve an average of 100 meals each Monday night. The ministry of FBC Woodstock in Bibb Association receives funding assistance from the gifts to Global Hunger Relief.

sions (SBOM) receives some of the funds to use in Alabama. Kristy Kennedy, SBOM associate who provides leadership of hunger ministries, says the need is significant in Alabama.

**"The need is
great but our
God is greater."**

**Kristy Kennedy
SBOM associate**

"The SBOM partners with 65 different ministries that are feeding people," Kennedy said. "The Alabama Hunger Offering for Global Hunger Relief is a great opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those who struggle in providing food for themselves and their families."

Though the ministries use a variety of means to provide food using hunger funds, the goal is the same, Kennedy said — to share the love of Christ with those who may have never heard the gospel.

And decisions happen weekly around the state at ministries who receive hunger funds.

Since The Master's Kitchen began in June, eight people have made decisions for Christ, Shadrick said. Two have been baptized. One who accepted Christ was a 70-year-old man.

Linda Sheppard, director of the ministry centers for Judson Baptist Association, said the food banks in Headland and Abbeville see decisions for Christ almost weekly. An 81-year-old man who has been coming to the Headland center for years was saved just a few weeks ago.

"He had been shared with before, but this time, when the interviewer asked him, 'Do you know when you die that you're going to heaven?' he said he didn't. That day he was ready," Sheppard said.

A man in his late 50s and a 76-year-old woman are recent believers too, Sheppard said. She credits the open spiritual doors to the relationships built between clients and ministry volunteers.

Food banks

"Our food banks have an impact because they are touching people who would never go to any of our churches," Sheppard said. "But they'll come here and talk and open up with our volunteers because they know them."

Kennedy urges churches and individuals to pray about how they can give to help alleviate hunger in their communities, state and around the world. She noted that there will be another emphasis on Feb. 17, 2019. Churches also can give year-round through the SBOM at www.cooperativeprogramresources.org/hunger.

"The need is great but our God is greater," Kennedy said. 🙏

**Global Hunger
Sunday is Oct. 14.**

**For more information or
resources to promote Global
Hunger Sunday, contact Jim
Swedenburg at 1-800-264-
1225, ext. 283 or [jswedenburg@
alsbom.org](mailto:jswedenburg@alsbom.org).**

Henryette Bailey (left) talks with Ruth Post during the fellowship time of the Sept. 23 morning service at Chisholm Baptist Church, Montgomery. Chisholm's congregation is small now, but the tight-knit family believes God still has things in store for their church.

New life



Photo by Grace Thornton

Flatline Movement partners with Chisholm Baptist to reach its neighborhood

(continued from page 1)

with some high school football players to eat pizza and have a two-hour apologetics Bible study that digs deep into the foundations of the faith.

"Some of them just show up for the food, but I don't care about that," he said. "That's what Jesus did. He ate with people, and then He gave them the gospel."

That's Rembert's story too. And much like his story, once those boys hear the truth of the Bible, their lives start to change, he said.

"The school's administrator tells me that they are changing the culture of the school," he said. "Some of them were failing and now they are B and C students. We go to the athletes first because they are often the most influential and get them to raise their standards. You get the athletes and you get the whole school — then you get the home, the neighborhood and the whole city."

Sharing Christ's love

In two years, Rembert has given away more than 1,000 apologetics Bibles. He's discipling football players to go out and engage the community with love rather than anger. They walk around sharing the gospel in an area known for its crime.

"There's no fear in my heart, that's how I know the Lord sent me there," Rembert said.

And someone else was there too, right in the middle of all that darkness — the 20 people who attended Chisholm Baptist Church.

The small aging church sits "right in the middle of where everything goes down, the killings and the drive-bys," Rembert said.

But that doesn't stop 91-year-old Henryette Bailey from coming to church.

She's been a part of Chisholm Baptist for 85 years, ever since she and her sister started walking there during the Depression. She was there when a tornado destroyed the church buildings in 1945 and they had to be rebuilt.

And she was there in 1949 when a revival preacher gave a sermon that changed her and her husband's lives.

"I'd gone to a different church when I was really little, and that teacher had told us that if we were good, we would go to heaven. That stuck with me," Bailey said. "But this

revival preacher told us that Jesus was coming back and we had to be right with Him or we wouldn't get to go. I told my husband that was different from what I'd heard as a child."

She and her sister — and later she and her husband — had only attended church here and there. They were more like semi-regular visitors, Bailey said.

"But that night, my husband and I went home and started reading the New Testament," Bailey said. "We saw what that preacher said was true, and we gave our lives to the Lord."

From then on, the Baileys didn't miss. Her husband was the church treasurer for 40 years. Once when a snowstorm blew through, she and her family

were the only ones other than the preacher and maybe one other church leader who slogged through the snow to get there.

And over the years, the church boomed. So did the nursery, and Bailey was the baby whisperer. If a child was inconsolable, another nursery worker would bring that baby to Bailey to calm down. Former Chisholm Baptist members still joke that she was the one who taught their kids to walk.

"It was a full nursery back then," she said. "Now we're all seniors, except the pastor's grandson."

Tight-knit group

And 3-year-old Elijah sits with her. "He sits in my lap while his grandmamma is in the choir, then when it's time for the fellowship hymn, he leads me around by the finger to speak to everyone," Bailey said.

But there's only a handful of people there to speak to these days. They're a tight-knit group — on a recent Wednesday night, Bailey fixed chili dogs for Pastor Daniel Edmonds' birthday, and she put trick candles on his cake. It was the kind of party you'd expect with relatives.

"The group that goes there now are like family, we're so small," she said. "But to see the church empty the way it is now — it breaks my heart. I don't want to see the doors close."

In its heyday, the church had hundreds.

"There's no fear in my heart, that's how I know the Lord sent me there."

Dewayne Rembert youth pastor, Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery



Photo by Grace Thornton

Charles Rodgers (center) shares with Pastor Daniel Edmonds (right), Martha Leach and the dozen others gathered Sept. 23 for Sunday School — the church's only class. The group is like a family — many have been at Chisholm Baptist Church for decades.

But the reality of a changing neighborhood and a shrinking congregation brought Chisholm to the decision a year or so ago to call Montgomery Baptist Association and ask about their options.

They had several.

And one of them led straight to Rembert.

When Neal Hughes, associational missionary/director of missions for Montgomery Association, got the call from Chisholm Baptist, he knew God might just have something special in mind.

Praying for new ministry

"I asked them, 'What if somebody else leads the charge and y'all carry out the ministry you have now and pray for the new ministry?' I encouraged them to explore that idea," Hughes said. "And I felt the Holy Spirit saying to me that I should go to Dewayne."

At the time, Rembert's ministry with area high schools had grown into something he called the Flatline Movement — the "flat line" representing how people are dead in their sin until God brings them to new life. He was seeing people from the darkest corners of the neighborhood saved.

And he wanted to redeem something else too — the music that had fueled his anger.

"We believe most of the secular music out here right now is calling our people to commit genocide," he said, explaining that it leads them to misuse their bodies to the point where it's killing them physically and spiritually. "Satan has really weaponized music and entertainment. We attack that by putting out Christian rap music."

It's quite the story how that's come together, he said. The guy who helped produce songs for major rap artists like T.I. got to be friends with Rembert. He came to Christ. Rembert officiated his wedding. And when he decided to move overseas, he offered to sell Rembert his recording studio equipment for a really good price.

"The music scene in Montgomery respects us, and we're planning to offer to produce any secular artist's EP (short album) for free if they will sign a contract saying they won't curse or promote ungodly sex or violence," Rembert said. "That way, we clean up the music in the area. And of course, hopefully with them being around Christians in the studio, God will use us to rub off on them."

(See 'Always,' page 6)

Is your church transitioning?

You've got options, resources through SBOM, local Baptist association

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Daniel Edmonds said he hopes that the good things happening at Chisholm Baptist Church, Montgomery, can “paint a picture of what other churches can do in the future” (see story, page 1).

Churches that are facing decline “can still be churches that have an impact toward the future,” said Edmonds, Chisholm’s pastor and director of the office of Sunday School and discipleship for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). “They can still take care of those people God has given them and also reach the neighborhood around them. We as state leaders want to ask — can we intercept a church that’s in decline before the doors are closed and allow God to do a new work in that church?”

How do you know your church is in decline? A few things to consider are your numbers — have you plateaued, or are you losing membership? Have you closed off a wing or a building at your church because it’s not in use anymore? Is your membership struggling to hold the budget up?

Neal Hughes, associational missionary/director of missions for Montgomery Baptist Association (MBA), says that a church in decline doesn’t have to end as a tragedy — it can turn into something that’s celebration worthy, with the right partnerships.

“When churches think of ‘closing,’ they go through so much guilt,” he said. “We need to rethink our theology of life cycles of churches.

As one season fades, with the right stewardship, it can be the start of something new. Instead of an ‘oh’ story, it can be a ‘wow’ story.”

You don’t have to wait until your church is nearing a critical point before you reach out to see what your resources are, Hughes said. He and others offered some steps church leaders can take if they see their congregation beginning a decline.

1. Touch base with your association and the SBOM.

Edmonds said that when he and the members of Chisholm Baptist realized they needed partners to help them move into the future, MBA was the most logical place to start.

Variety of possibilities

The church — a once-thriving congregation now shrinking in size — had never heard of Dewayne Rembert and the work he was doing in their area through his Flatline Movement. Hughes was able to make that connection for them and get the ball rolling.

“Neal was able to say, ‘Here’s a variety of possibilities,’” Edmonds said. “Then God opened some doors of opportunity for us to work together toward replanting a new church with Dewayne at Chisholm Baptist.”

It’s hard to know how you might partner with someone else when you don’t know who’s there, Edmonds said. Your association can help with that broad perspective, and so can Rick Barnhart, director of the office of associational missions and church planting for the SBOM.

Self-evaluation

“Sometimes there is a fear of self-evaluation or of bringing someone in to help you evaluate, but that’s what Nehemiah did in his approach — he prayed and surveyed the situation,” Barnhart said. “Just because we need to adjust our trajectory doesn’t mean we’ve failed — we’ve just moved to another era of opportunities.”

Many churches in transition desperately want revival but are asking the wrong questions for the resources they have, he said. “For instance, so many are asking, ‘How do we reach millennials?’ when what they should be asking is, ‘How do we reach our community for Christ with the resources available to us?’”

Edmonds agreed. “So often churches think their future is dictated by the resources they have within their four walls. They forget that they are part of the body of Christ and there are many more resources available to them.”

Barnhart and your local Baptist association can come in and help you know what those resources are.

And if you can, contact them before you’re nearing the point where you have to make a decision based on cost — that will give you more options and a longer runway for a transition, Edmonds said. “Too many of our churches wait until they have to make a quick decision. If you’re already there or close to that point, you need to reach out quickly.”

2. See what your best option is.

For some churches, they may be nearing the point where they are ready to hand over the keys to a new work. But for others, they may just need a high-capacity leader to come in as a transitional pastor and give the church some momentum, Hughes said.

“Bringing in some legacy pastors could help give them some good, new direction, and all of a sudden the story changes,” he said.

For other churches who are in the middle like Chisholm — in need of a new season for the church but also carrying on as an existing, faithful congregation — they can be a part of something that’s a blend of both



Photo by Grace Thornton

Across the state, churches like Chisholm Baptist Church, Montgomery — led by Pastor Daniel Edmonds (right) — face questions about the next season. Associational and state offices offer resources to help navigate those transitions.

church planting and church revitalization.

That can be a big blessing for new congregations who don’t have the means to buy or rent a building and could get their start under the roof of your church, sharing space with your congregation, Barnhart said.

“Typically when we think of church planting, we’re thinking of a large launch-type thing with a self-sustaining church. But with our new work — especially in ethnic communities — we’re finding you’re not going to get them self-sustaining within the first couple of years,” Barnhart.

That’s why it’s a huge win for existing churches to take new congregations under their wings, like Highland Gardens Baptist Church, Montgomery, is doing with a new congregation growing up among the Mixtec people in the area, in partnership with MBA and First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

“Churches have the opportunity to teach the community to steward the property and their resources as they become new churches under their roof,” Barnhart said.

But if your church does feel it’s getting close to closing its doors, Hughes said he can’t stress enough the importance of letting your associational and state leaders help you broker the process of turning over the building.

“We’ve got a lot of churches that are in a Chisholm moment right now, and just remember that you don’t stand in isolation,” he said. “You have brothers and sisters in Christ who can help you make that transition to someone who will continue the vision of your church in your neighborhood.”

He said he’s seen churches sometimes turn the keys over to other ministries or businesses thinking that what they were doing was their best option, and then when

the keys were turned over the next time, the buildings ended up being used for something far from the original purpose.

“I know a church whose building, in the third generation, was turned into a pornography store,” Hughes said. “We want to prevent church members from having to go through that kind of pain and also keep the resources of those buildings in the family of God if at all possible.”

3. Move to action — in the right timing.

Timing is everything when it comes to church revitalization. As Edmonds said, it’s important that you call as soon as possible, just so you can properly prepare for your church’s future.

Getting on the same page

Barnhart agreed. “Don’t wait until you’re at the point where you can’t take care of your building anymore,” he said. “Don’t let your facilities go to the point that they would need to be torn down. Fix the things that need to be fixed. Keep things at a point where your church buildings are retrievable and usable.”

But at the same time, give your congregation time as you move through the process.

Edmonds said for Chisholm, it was important to move forward in consensus and unity. It wasn’t just a majority vote — it was taking the time for everyone to pray and get on the same page about what God was doing.

“Pray until God brings you together,” he said. “Get together and consider your buildings that aren’t being used and what you can do to make sure they’re being used after you’re gone. Consider how you might fill them with people again for the glory of God.”

Always seeing community through 'missional eyes'

(continued from page 4)

He had another idea in mind too — to start a church in the area for all these new believers who had nowhere to go.

Hughes knew that, and he made the connection.

"I just thought there might be room for Dewayne to start another church in the Chisholm building while the congregation that's there now still continues to use it as long as they want to," he said. "Those precious church members want to live to see the day the church is filled again, but they know they aren't the ones who can fill it. I can't imagine that congregation rapping, but I can imagine them rejoicing that there were baptisms, weddings, discipleship and Sunday School classes filled with children again."

So he floated the idea. He asked both Rembert and Chisholm Baptist to pray.

And pray they did. They had been praying long before they had ever picked up the phone and called Hughes. For months, from the pulpit and in private discussions, Edmonds had been helping the church walk through the process of prayerfully imagining the future.

"I asked them at one point, 'What would we do if we had 10 children come next week?' They said we would do the best we could — which we would," Edmonds said. "But we recognized together that we need partners if we are going to be a church for the community."

They considered some options. Some doors closed. Some doors didn't seem like the right thing.

'Emotional decision'

"It's not a business decision — it's an emotional decision," Edmonds said. "It's tough. They would like to believe they could do it again, but the question was how — how do we invest our lives? How can we redream the dream?"

And then God brought Rembert and began to stir in their hearts. While it took

some time to nail it down, over time the story just fit.

Hughes said the people of Chisholm have "absolutely fallen in love" with Rembert.

"There's a respect there," he said. "They love him like their grandson. And the neat thing is Dewayne sees that part of town through missional eyes."

'Abundant fruit'

Both Rembert and the church see themselves as brokers in a great work that God is doing — a new day for the church, Hughes said. "It's a picture of the abundant fruit of living their life on mission in their community. It's an amazing Kingdom legacy."

Edmonds said it's been something that's breathed new life back into the church.

"We want to give other churches hope that might be in the same situation as us — you don't have to close your doors," he said. "You can be a partner in planting."

Bailey said she's excited about the way Rembert has become "one of us" at Chisholm Baptist — the way God brought along just the man they needed.

"He's part of the family," she said. "And we're hoping that through him we can reach some

of the people around us. We can't do it at our age, but we definitely want to keep the church going. I'm looking forward to seeing the church full again."

Chisholm Baptist might not be set up for 10 children at the moment, but it definitely isn't failing the one who's there.

"One Sunday recently I got to teach Elijah in Sunday School about how God cares for his sheep," Bailey said. "I told him that means God cares for him, and he said, 'But I'm not a sheep.'"

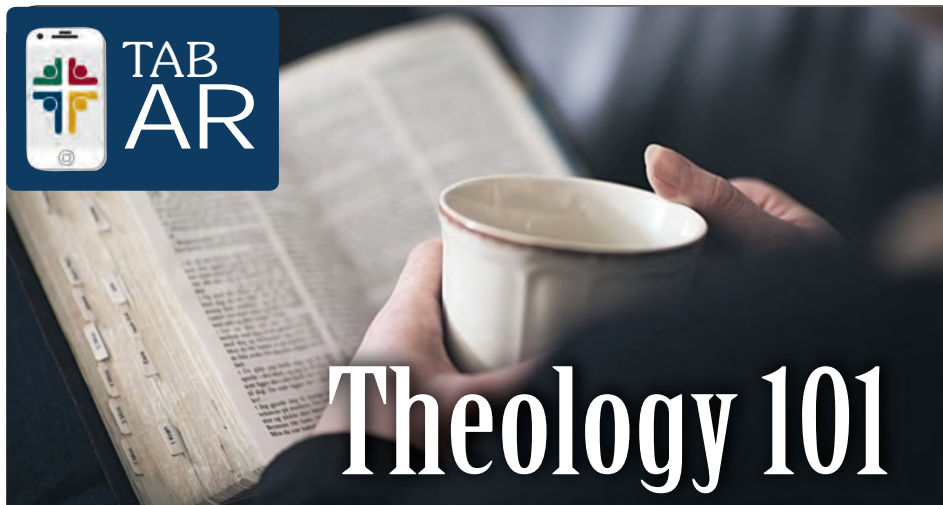
She laughed hard. And as she gathered him on her lap for the service, she said, "God calls us His sheep. And that means He's going to look after us. We can count on that." ☞



Photo by Doug Rogers

Dewayne Rembert's ministry is aimed at reaching the influencers in high schools and changing the school's culture for the sake of the gospel.

To read the book Dewayne Rembert wrote about his journey to faith and current ministry, search for his name or "Flatlined 2 NGauge" at Amazon.com.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Ecclesiology Through Imagery

The Church as a Bride

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

This week we continue considering images about the Church, or "Ecclesiology Through Imagery."

In a more common expression these sessions might be thought of as "Insights Through Images." This variety of common images serves to help us understand more about the formation, function and future of the Church.

We began last week with the image of the Church as a body, specifically as the "body of Christ." This week the image is that of a bride, specifically the "bride of Christ."

Those who have come to saving faith in Christ are betrothed to Him and from henceforth are awaiting the heavenly marriage supper. This is the image with which the Bible draws to its grand conclusion in the final four chapters of the Book of Revelation.

In Revelation 19 we read this exhortation: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready" (v. 7). This is followed by the benediction, "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (v. 9).

Then in the climactic vision of the New Jerusalem, an angel issues an invitation, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife" (21:9). In the Bible's concluding chapter we read of God's final invitation saying "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" (22:17).

Beloved by Christ

These references to the Church as Christ's bride are foreshadowed by the extended analogy of Christ and the Church in terms of a husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-33). Not only are we betrothed to Christ, this earthly illustration of human marriage yields several other spiritual truths about the Church as a bride.

For example, the Church is beloved by Christ, as suggested by the instruction, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave

Himself for her" (v. 25). Without doubt or controversy, Christ loves those who comprise the Church. We are loved by His self-sacrificing, all-forgiving, life-restoring love displayed through His death on the cross.

Not only is the Church betrothed to and beloved by Christ, we also are protected by Him. In an ideal earthly marriage a husband is the protector of his wife and his family.

Christ's protection of those who are His beloved and betrothed is forcefully set forth in His well-known declaration in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

A good earthly husband also is the provider for his family, given the mental and physical capability of doing so as well as having an opportunity to work.

This imagery is a reminder that Christ seeks to be the Provider for His bride, the Church. He provides spiritual food for our nourishment and growth. If we allow Him the opportunity, Christ will nourish us on sound doctrine just as a husband provides physical and emotional nourishment for his wife: "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the Church" (Eph. 5:28-29).

So, the Church ideally devotes herself to the study and digesting of Holy Scripture in order to be nourished and built up by sound teaching. ☞

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.



Reach out

How to show your pastor appreciation, support during Pastor Appreciation Month

By Denise George
Special to The Alabama Baptist

During October's Pastor Appreciation Month, give your pastor six priceless gifts that only you can give him and that he will truly appreciate:

1. Pray fervently for him, his family and the church. Let him know you are praying for him. As a spiritual leader he carries a heavy load of around-the-clock work. Pastors are on call day and night, 24/7 for their members.

He may also have responsibilities as a husband, father and son. Scripture affirms that "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16b). More than anything else, your pastor needs your unceasing prayers for him, his family and the church.

2. Renew your commitment to attend worship services regularly. Dedicated church attendance means much to today's pastor. It shows a congregation's support and appreciation of him and his hard work. It is disheartening for a pastor to stand in the pulpit and preach Sunday after Sunday to only a small portion of his people. Be consistent — and on time — in your attendance.

Give regularly

3. Renew your commitment to tithe and give generously to special church missions emphases. The pastor depends on a member's tithes to pay regular church bills and staff salaries.

Lost, hurting and hungry people depend on your church's devotion to contributing to the Southern Baptist Convention's in-

ternational and domestic missions, Global Hunger Relief, the Cooperative Program, etc. Give regularly and unselfishly as a way to show your pastor that you and your family appreciate him.

Practical gifts

4. Give practical service gifts. While pastors might appreciate another new book for their libraries, another silver serving tray or another restaurant gift card, most pastors need and relish a church member's gift of service, a helping hand. Offer to assist your pastor in ways he can truly appreciate. For instance:

- ▶ Accompany and/or help him with hospital and member shut-in visits.
- ▶ Volunteer to help with church evangelism and missions outreach programs.
- ▶ Teach a Bible study class or substitute teach for a regular teacher who is away.
- ▶ Help create, plan and lead various church-wide projects and events.

- ▶ Offer to catalog and organize the books in his personal library.
- ▶ If you have the necessary skills, help repair broken objects in the church and help maintain the building.
- ▶ Donate time to beautifying the church grounds.
- ▶ Volunteer to assist ministry teams and help with clean up efforts in the community.

Ask your pastor how you can best serve him and the congregation in some practical ways, then roll up your sleeves and go to work.

5. Show love, respect and kindness to him and his family. Encourage your pas-

"More than anything else, your pastor needs your unceasing prayers for him, his family and the church."

"When you give your pastor and his family these six special gifts you will bless him, the congregation, the community and the world."



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tor, his spouse and his children in kind, loving and respectful ways. For instance:

- ▶ Whenever possible, include the pastor's family in your own family's dinners, activities and vacations.
- ▶ Show special gratitude for everything the pastor's family does for the church and community, work that most members are not even aware they do.
- ▶ Give the pastor's family the gift of uninterrupted family time together.
- ▶ Say a heartfelt "thank you" often during the year, showing the pastor and his family your appreciation for both the big and small tasks they regularly do.
- ▶ Remember the special days in the pastor's family year: birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- ▶ Celebrate the family's important rites of

passage: a teenage son passing his driver's license test, a daughter's graduation from high school or college, the birth of a baby, an engagement or marriage, etc.

▶ Speak about your pastor to others using edifying words, words that highlight his character, mission, leadership, work and dedication to Christ. Never say or post on social media anything about your pastor that is disrespectful or inappropriate. If you have an issue with your pastor's personality or leadership style, take it up with him privately.

6. Respect your pastor's need for solitude. Pastors need ample solitude time to study God's word, prepare sermons and Bible studies, plan special ministry proj-

ects and pray for their family, congregation, community and world.

Here are some suggestions for protecting your pastor's personal quiet time:

- ▶ Except for emergencies, keep interruptions to a minimum.
- ▶ Be respectful of the Sunday morning hours before your pastor preaches, allowing him quiet time to pray and study before delivering God's word to the congregation.

▶ Value your pastor's time. Make appointments (not unexpected drop-by visits) to discuss business, personal and church matters.

▶ Email or text your pastor, making fewer interruptive telephone calls. Southern Baptist church members are generous people who love their pastors, are devoted to their church congregations and sacrificially give their time, service, and spiritual and financial gifts.

When you give your pastor and his family these six special gifts you will bless him, the congregation, the community and the world. You can reach out to him and others with the love of Christ and priceless gifts that will keep giving to him and his family far beyond the last day of Pastor Appreciation Month.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Denise George is author of 30 books, including "What Pastors Wish Church Members Knew" (Zondervan). She is married to Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University.✠



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New Orleans Seminary's Kelley announces retirement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) President Charles S. "Chuck" Kelley Jr., announced his plan to retire at the end of the current academic year during Founders' Day chapel Oct. 2.

Kelley will continue to lead the seminary through July 31, 2019.

"This is the biggest decision of my life in a lot of ways," Kelley said in an interview. "I have been a part of almost half of the 100-year existence of NOBTS, it is very much the fabric of my whole life, and it has been a joyful, wondrous journey."

The public announcement came during Kelley's Founders' Day presentation called "A Walk through the Presidents."

After much prayer and several years of planning, Kelley said the conclusion of the centennial celebration offered a great opportunity to announce the transition.

Kelley notified trustee chairman Frank Cox, senior pastor of North Metro Baptist Church in

Lawrenceville, Georgia, of his retirement plans in a written statement Sept. 24.

Cox praised Kelley's leadership following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when the school faced its greatest challenge.

The board has great appreciation for Kelley's accomplishments at NOBTS, his commitment to evangelism and the many contributions he and his wife, Rhonda, made to the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole, Cox said.

The trustees enacted the seminary's presidential search protocol during their fall meeting Oct. 3.

"By making the announcement now the trustees have a reasonable chance to have someone in place by the start of the next academic year," Kelley said.

The board of trustees unanimously elected Kelley as the eighth NOBTS president in 1996. A professor of evangelism at NOBTS since August 1983, Kelley assumed the office of president March 1, 1996. (BP)



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Upcoming state convention meeting to focus on faithfulness

John Thweatt says that as he looks across the landscape of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, the thing that keeps coming to mind is God's faithfulness. He sees it in the way God has provided financially for mis-

sions, both here and beyond. And he's seen it in the way God has brought people to himself through those ministries.

"He has been good to us," said Thweatt, convention president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, in St. Clair Baptist Association.

With that in mind, when Thweatt thinks about the convention's upcoming annual meeting, he said he is "looking forward to hearing about God's faithfulness over the last year."

Time is now
Faithful — that's the theme of this year's annual meeting, set for Nov. 13–14 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association.

All throughout the meeting, Alabama Baptists will be encouraged to celebrate God's faithfulness — and live a life of faithfulness themselves, said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

"If there has ever been a time in our world and in the life of our nation when Christians should be faithful, that time is now," Lance said.

The annual meeting offers a time for Alabama Baptists to gather as a family and rally around that kind of faithfulness, he said. The Tuesday evening session will feature Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. It also will feature worship led by an intergenerational choir made up of the Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir members (both current and alumni) and

members of the Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women.

On Tuesday morning, Thweatt will give his president's address, and Wednesday morning the convention sermon will be given by Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association.

Lance said he also looks forward to highlighting different state Baptist ministries, including the Yellow Shirt Army of Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers.

"Even now many of them are deployed, or have been recently, in North Carolina, which is still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Florence," he said.

During the meeting, the SBOM also will present the budget and audit, as well as a motion to offer direction in future ministry priorities known as Beyond 2020. (Grace Thornton)



THWEATT



MOHLER



JONES

With that in mind, when Thweatt thinks about the convention's upcoming annual meeting, he said he is "looking forward to hearing about God's faithfulness over the last year."

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AUTAUGA

► **White Pond Church, Marbury**, will hold a revival Oct. 21–24. Sunday services will begin at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Monday–Wednesday services will be held at 6:30 nightly. Jimmy Simpler will be the guest speaker, and Ed Cleveland will be the guest musician. Donnie Burns is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Mountain Brook Church, Birmingham**, will host Fisher Humphreys, professor of divinity, emeritus, at Samford University in Birmingham, for a public lecture series on “The Purposes of God” on Oct. 17, 6 p.m. He also will lecture at Samford on Oct. 16, 3 p.m. and Oct. 18, 10 a.m. For more information call 205-871-0331. Doug Dortch is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Whitewater Church, Elba**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 14, 10:30 a.m. Former pastor Richard Collier will be the guest speaker.

CENTRAL

► **Weogufka Second Church** will celebrate its 99-year anniversary with a homecoming service Oct. 14, 10 a.m. Lunch will be served following the service. Brandon Baird is pastor.

GENEVA

► **New Hinson Church, Slocomb**, will hold “Trail of Truth 2018: Lost and Found” on Oct. 14, 4 p.m.; Oct. 24, 6 p.m.; and Oct. 28, 2 p.m. Bryan Klobe is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **Spring Hill Church, Millry**, will hold a homecoming service Oct. 14, 11 a.m. Kenneth Henson, pastor emeritus, will speak. Lunch will be served at noon.

OTHER

► **Mount Moriah Fellowship Church, Monterey**, will celebrate its 190th anniversary with its once-a-year homecoming service Oct. 14, 11 a.m. George Farnell will be the guest speaker.✠

DR teams see God at work after Hurricane Florence

Jamie Baldwin gets emotional when he talks about it. As he and others with Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) have been in Hope Mills, North Carolina, helping with cleanup after Hurricane Florence for the past couple of weeks, they’ve seen story after story of God’s provision.

In one such story, he put in the address of a lady named Mary who needed help with tree removal.

“When we knocked on her door, she just hugged me and cried and said she’d just gotten up from praying that God would send her someone to help,” said Baldwin, an associate in the office of Sunday School and discipleship for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Later back at the command base, they got a call.

“It was Mary checking on us — she said we had never showed up,” Baldwin said. “I said, ‘Ma’am, we just

came from your house,’ and she said, ‘No, you didn’t.’”

Turns out Baldwin had transposed the numbers and gone to the wrong house — another Mary who had been praying for God to send help.

In another “divine appointment,” Baldwin’s team also was able to buy a water pump for a young father in his early 30s with stage four cancer.

“We were able to do that for them because of the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering,” he said. “It’s such a blessing to see where the money

that people give is going.”

Hurricane Florence relief also was the first deployment for the Clarke Baptist Association DR team, formed only a few months ago.

“The team is tired but it’s a good kind of tired,” said Roger Van Vyck, Clarke DR coordinator. “They’ve worked hard, seen God move and had a great experience.” (TAB)

For more information on training and Alabama Baptist DR, visit www.sbdr.org. To donate to Hurricane Florence DR efforts, go to www.sbdr.org/donate.

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. 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.

SENIOR PASTOR

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

PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Glencoe, is in search of a full-time Southern Baptist pastor. Send resumés to: FBC Glencoe Search Committee, P.O. Box 5305, Glencoe, AL 35905 or email to: fbcgsearch-committee@gmail.com. For more information, see our ad on 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 or P.O. Box 307, Foley, AL 36536.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Ohattee First Baptist Church at 2090 Spring Road, Ohattee, AL is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé/questions to: Beth Nance, church secretary, at be2str@aol.com.

FULL-TIME WORSHIP PASTOR

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

MUSIC DIRECTOR

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

YOUTH MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Opp, Alabama, is currently seeking a full-time youth minister. Resumés

should be sent to the Youth Minister Search Committee at fbc@sppcopp.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@hbc.net. Dr. Teman Knight is the pastor.

OTHER POSITIONS

FINANCIAL MINISTERIAL ASSISTANT

Demopolis First Baptist Church has a full-time opening for financial ministerial assistant. Church experience preferred. Excellent work environment and hours, holiday/vacation/sick leave and other benefits. Salary is negotiable. Email resumé to: cmpugh@wildblue.net or call 334-289-8997 or mail to: Marsha Pugh, P.O. Box 783, Demopolis, AL 36732.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER DIRECTOR

Gilliam Springs Baptist Church in Arab, Alabama, is seeking a full-time CDC director. Our center is open five days per week and we currently have 70 children, ranging from birth–five years of age. We have an excellent facility and are committed to the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental development of children. Applicants should be a committed Christian. Applicants should have a background in early childhood education and a degree in that area is preferred. Resumés or recommendations should be sent to: rlamon@gilliamsprings.org.

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SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

Refusing to give in to cynicism

The path leads one of two ways I was told — in our service through Christian communications, the only options are to become deeply pious or doggedly cynical.

I couldn't quite grasp what my mentor was saying. After all I had only recently stepped into my first position with *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper and was still warming up to the fact that I did have a calling in the area of communications.

How that would look over time I did not know, but I knew I would give it everything I had at every point. For me, it has always been a calling to the concept and goal of communications — specifically within a faith-based arena — not necessarily to a position.

The positions have been there and I'm always grateful for them, but the heart of what we do in striving to effectively connect people, build relationships and share information is what has kept me motivated.

Now I can look back and see what my mentor meant all those years ago.

Developing an attitude of cynicism is a real danger — not only because we work in an area where we often see behind the curtain of ministry life but also because of the endless opportunities to be hurt by others. Of course, this isn't necessarily different than any other area of work or life.

The fight to keep optimism alive and to stay positive is sometimes hard enough on our own, but when we are called to motivate and lead others to do the same, then it truly requires digging down deep and staying

intimately connected to God to make it happen.

Think about how many people in your circles regularly complain, show frustration or spew angry sentiments. And think about how much energy you use absorbing all of it.

While we can technically be cynical without being ugly, cynicism typically brings a negative attitude and general “what's the use” spirit. After all, everyone is out for him- or herself, right? There's no hope left for humanity, right?

Distrust, suspicion, disgust and frustration are related feelings. When these traits are present, peace and joy get squashed and overshadowed — and our general presence definitely is not winning any popularity contests.

Without peace and joy, we start down a path of negativity, selfishness and maybe even ugliness.

Many of us say we are tired of the divisive culture we've found ourselves in, but what are we doing to change it? Are we willing to evaluate our hearts first?

It is sometimes hard to love others and to believe in them, but think about the possibilities if we keep trying. 🙏

By Jennifer
Davis Rash
Editor-elect



Towards a less angry politics

By Parker Snider
Alabama Policy Institute

When angry, count to 10 before you speak; if very angry, count to 100.”

If only we followed the advice of the Founding Fathers.

Thomas Jefferson, who expressed this sentiment, knew first-hand how politics can lead to indignation. Today, one glance at cable news or Twitter affirms that we too are accustomed to an angry politics.

What Jefferson also understood, and what I am worried we too often forget, is that anger in politics is to be avoided and tempered, not embraced and weaponized.

In most spheres, we attempt to tame this emotion. For some reason, however, we give anger in politics an out. We should not be so accommodating.

Why? For one, anger is inherently selfish. According to Aristotle, anger is “a desire, accompanied by pain, to take apparent revenge for apparent insult.” Anger arises when we feel personally wronged, and it seeks revenge, not resolution.

Since we are inherently selfish beings who regularly feel mistreated, anger is easy to provoke. It is no secret that human anger is incredibly fickle — simply being cut off in traffic (perhaps a three-second delay) elicits a bombastic reaction from many of us. Knowing our tendency toward irrational and unhelpful behavior when angry, we ought to reject our instinct to be led by anger in politics.

Another reason we should work toward

a less angry politics is because we know history. We know that it is the anger of native Germans against Jewish success that drove the Holocaust. We witnessed the rage of jihadists against the United States in the attacks on 9/11. The simple ability for anger to propel such evil, as demonstrated by these events and countless others in history, should give us pause before we let this emotion into our politics.

James, the brother of Jesus, seems to confirm the problems with human anger when he writes that “the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” Many biblical authors, in fact, echo this sentiment. Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes that “anger lodges in the heart of fools,” and Paul, in his letter to the church at Colossae, implores believers to eliminate anger from their mouths.

As evident by the current political atmosphere, anger creates bitterness and divides, making change of the whole impossible. Anger turns people off, makes ideas easier to reject and does little more than rile up bitterness from those who think similarly.

Martin Luther King Jr. knew what I hope we soon learn — that anger has never changed a heart.

Even so, politics will always engender anger. What matters is what we do with it. Will we let what is meant to be a temporary emotion permanently consume us? Or will we transform that anger into action that is tempered, unifying and able to drive change in this mad world?

“For life is mostly edges. It is small — like a postage stamp ... and I liked the middle of my stamp more than the edges ... the middle is safe. Only the edges are dangerous, but it's also where we learn life's greatest truth: joy rarely erupts in the safe centers of our lives ... Joy lies only along the edges.”

The late Calvin Miller
Excerpt from his memoir
“Life Is Mostly Edges”

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Jesus was a good and faithful employee for God. Through the process of kenosis he gives us a model of how we can thrive and maintain our self-worth as a faithful employee in the marketplace. First, do our job. Second, do our job as if we are working for God, by adding value and achieving quality. Third, stay focused on God's will. And finally, do our job ethically by doing what we “ought” to do, in tough times and prosperous ones, with honor.

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Irving G. Walley

Former Bethel DOM dies at 91

On Sept. 19, Irving Gene Walley, former associational missionary/director of missions for Bethel Baptist Association, died. He was 91.

Walley was a graduate of Richton High School, Mississippi; William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; and attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was ordained Sept. 12, 1948, at First Baptist Church, Richton, Mississippi.



WALLEY

Walley lived in Alabama for more than 50 years and pastored several churches in Alabama and Mississippi. He also served as associational missionary/director of missions of Bethel Baptist Association for 15 years.

In 2003 he retired and moved back to Richton to do interim work. He recently served as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, McLain, Mississippi.

Walley is survived by his wife of 70 years, Virginia; sons, Dan and Steve; daughter, Jeannie; 10 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. (TAB)

FAMILY MEMBERS VERIFIED THAT SHE ONCE TALKED NON-STOP DURING A 5-HOUR ROAD TRIP TO FLORIDA.



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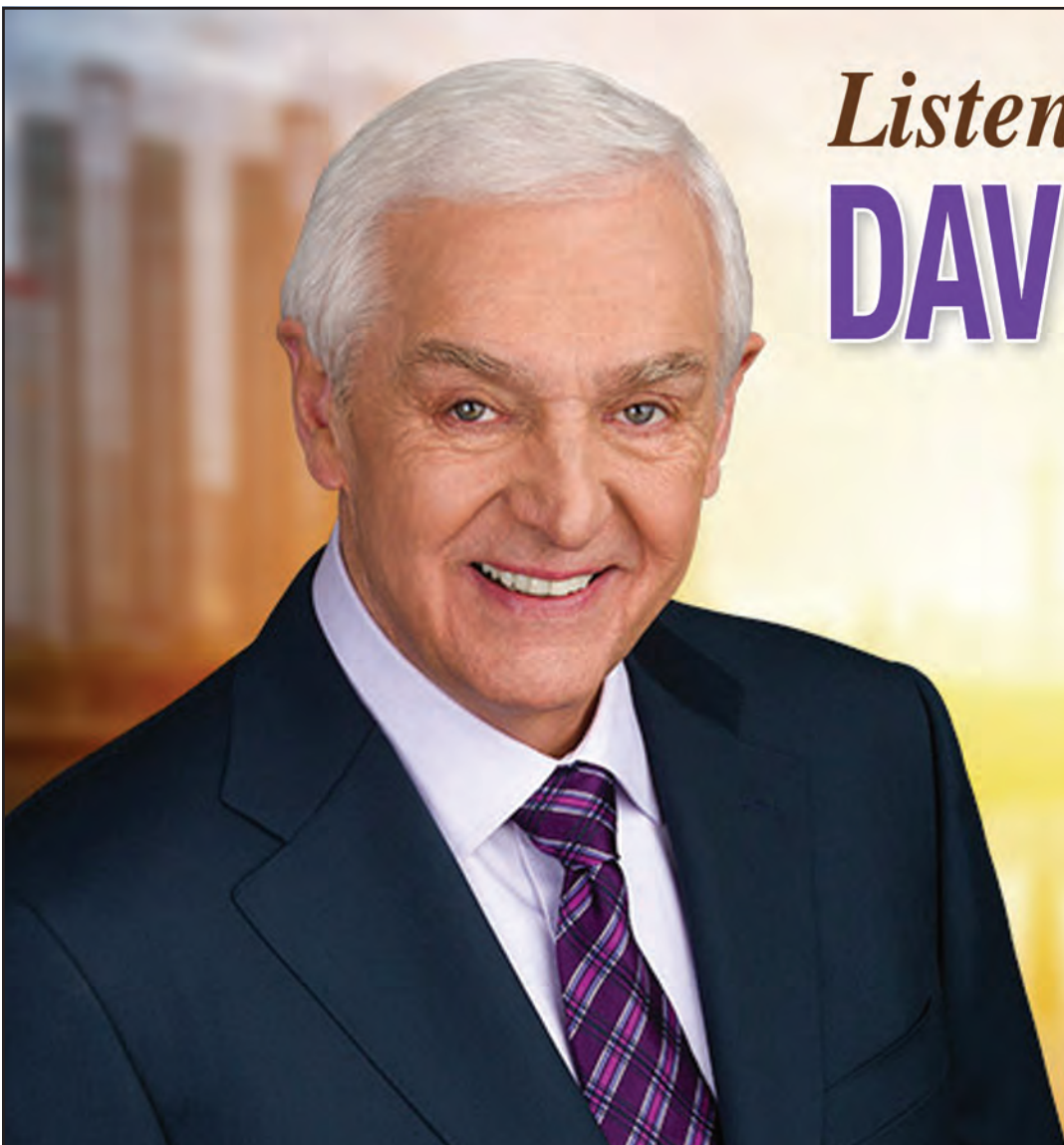
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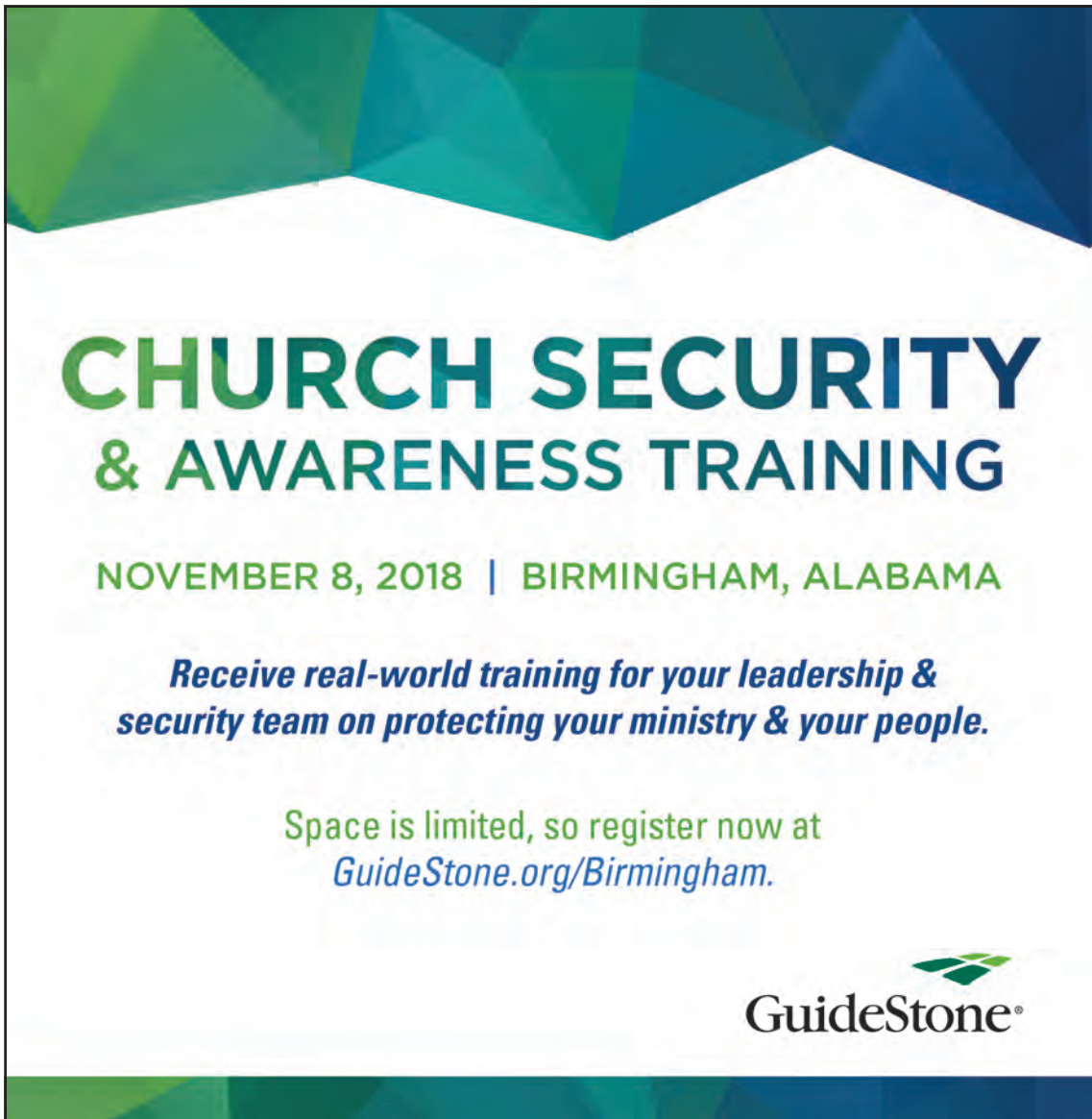
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Constructive living in 'age of outrage' topic of seminar

Author, pastor and Christian missiologist Ed Stetzer will be the featured speaker at "Christians in the Age of Outrage," a seminar to be held Oct. 23 in Birmingham at Samford University's Brooks Hall Auditorium.

Stetzer is the author of several books, including "Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst," released Oct. 2.

In his latest book Stetzer asserts that "there are too many examples of those claiming to follow Christ being caustic, divisive and irrational, contributing to dismissals of the Christian faith as hypocritical, self-interested and politically co-opted."

Using new research on evangelical attitudes, Stetzer examines the relationship between evan-

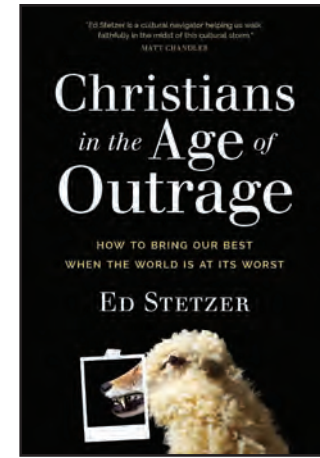
gelicals and the age of outrage and "offers a constructive way forward."

Stetzer holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission and Evangelism at Wheaton College in Illinois, and serves as executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton.

He will speak in two sessions during the 3-hour seminar and answer questions with a panel of guests in the final session.

More information, including a link to online registration for the event, can be found at <https://www.samford.edu/programs/ministry-training-institute/>.

The event is sponsored by Samford's Ministry Training Institute, Christian Ministry Department, Center for Congregational Resources, Beeson Divinity School and *The Alabama Baptist*. (TAB)




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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 14

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

TRUE COMPASSION Galatians 6:1-10, 14-15

Guards (1-5)

Throughout the book of Galatians, Paul addresses communities of believers, not merely the individual people. In fact, it might help to know that Paul was talking to y'all rather than you.

As the redeemed people of God, we have a responsibility to live in biblical community with one another. This means that we are our brother's and sister's keepers. We are the kind of people who deeply care about the sanctification and Christian living of our brothers and sisters in the faith.

How quickly sin enters our communities in an attempt to spoil what the Spirit is renewing. And so often sin leads us to pride. Paul says that if someone thinks that he is "something when he is nothing," then he fools himself. Pride is the result.

Yet lest we misunderstand Paul, the apostle is not advocating that we sink into wallowing self-pity of our own nothingness. True, we are nothing on our own, but through faith, Paul has already declared that we receive a new identity as "heirs according to the promise" of God (Gal. 3:29). That is something, but it's not anything apart from Christ. We are nothing without Christ, and if we think otherwise, we fool ourselves into pride.

C.S. Lewis wrote that "humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." If you think of yourself less, then you think of others more, both about your Redeemer and your fellow redeemed community. The more you think of others, the more you grow concerned about seeing their restoration after succumbing to sin.

Stewards (6-10)

We live with one another as stewards of

the Spirit's fruit, enjoying the blessings that come from a community that is oriented toward the heart of Christ.

In a saying so famous that nearly everyone knows it, Paul reminds us that we reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7). If we sow in our flesh, then eternal death is the curse; however, if we sow in the Spirit, then eternal life is the blessing.

What then are you sowing in your life and in the life of your Christian community? Paul invites us to be good stewards of the blessings of God.

We ought to ensure that our pastoral leaders ("teachers") are supported so that they may continue their good work to do good liberally for brothers and sisters in the faith, and to serve all others in a way that would please the Lord Jesus. Only then will we be blessed in reaping what we have sown.

Proclaimers (14-15)

Why should we concern ourselves with humility, stewardship and the right living of our brothers and sisters? So that we can train the attention and admiration of the world onto us? Absolutely not. Instead, our goal is to glorify the Lord Jesus in His person and work.

When the world looks at us, they ought to see Christ. In humility, we boast in the cross of Christ, rightly declaring to the world that anything good they see is only because of Him.

Cross-exalters do not place their confidence in themselves, their works or even their best intentions. They completely rely on the finished work of Christ on the cross, His truly death-defying triumph over the grave and His ongoing work of restoration on its way toward His future return.

We owe everything to the cross and empty tomb, and for that reason we boast in Christ alone.✠

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

THE OBJECT OF OUR PRAYER Matthew 6:9a; Psalm 103:1-5, 11-13, 19-22

More years ago than I care to recall, I was able to spend a summer in Ivory Coast, West Africa, on a college missions trip.

As part of the trip I had the chance to put my meager linguistic skills to use by preaching a sermon in French in several of the churches we visited.

On one of these occasions a translator worked alongside me, taking what I said in French and turning it into one of the local Ivoirian dialects. I had practiced the sermon many times, so everything went just perfectly. Then they asked me to pray.

I froze. I could do the sermon just fine; I had practiced that. But praying wasn't something they had covered at the university where I had studied French. Ask me to order croissants or to get directions to the Louvre. Ask me anything. Just not to pray.

I tried to remember words I had heard others use in prayer. I managed to squeak out a phrase or two.

When I had nothing left, I muttered under my breath the simplest prayer to God I could. I said softly in French, "Aide moi!" "Help me!"

My translator, thinking I was speaking to him instead of to God, immediately picked up where I had left off and finished the prayer. I remain convinced to this day that this was the fastest answer to prayer in all of recorded history.

While this was a humorous moment, at least in retrospect, it also highlights a very real challenge we often face. Even those of us who have been believers for many years can still find it quite difficult to know just how to pray.

The Apostle Paul admitted to the same difficulty when he assured the Roman

believers that the Spirit intercedes for us "when we don't know how to pray as we ought" (Rom. 8:26). Jesus' disciples admitted to the same problem when they asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

Jesus' response to the disciples was to give them the prayer we now know as the Lord's Prayer.

This is the prayer that will be the focus of our lessons in the weeks to come. We begin with the simple words, "Our Father."

The One we pray to desires only good for us. (Ps. 103:1-5; Matt. 6:9a)

As our Father, God only desires what is good for us. Our Father is the One who forgives us, the One who heals us, the One who redeems us, the One who crowns us with love and mercy. Our Father is the One who satisfies us with goodness.

The One we pray to is our compassionate Father. (Ps. 103:11-13)

As we continue through the psalm, we are reminded that our Father also is the One who shows us compassion. Even when we go astray, our Father is the One who doggedly pursues us with mercy and grace, refusing to repay our sinfulness with the punishment our sin deserves.

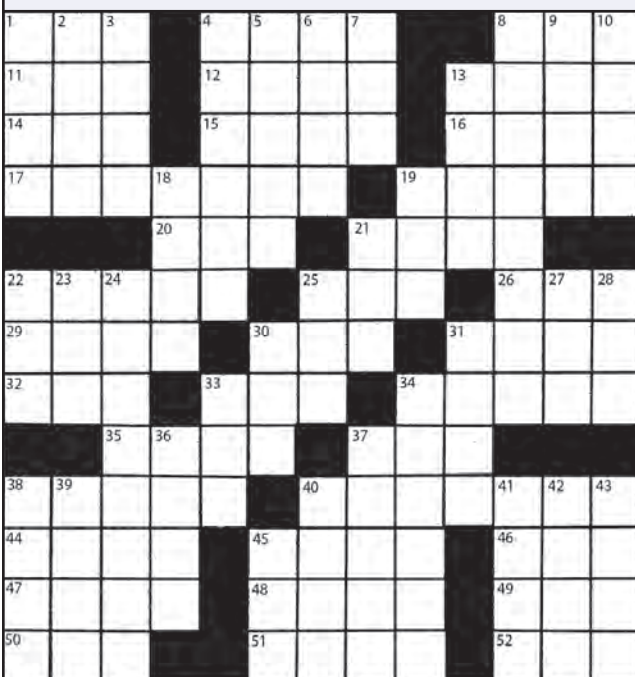
The One we pray to is Almighty God. (Ps. 103:19-22)

Our Father also is the One who exercises authority over us. He is gracious, but He also is the Almighty.

While we are dust that returns to the dust, grass that withers and wind that fades away, our Father endures forever.

This can be intimidating, but ultimately it also is comforting. As Father, God forgives His children when they go astray. And as Father, God protects His children when they are in distress. Might and mercy meet in Him.✠

Christian Crossword



Across

- "One like a son of ____." (Dan. 7:13)
- "No smell of ____ on them." (Dan. 3:27)
- Certain graduation document. (abbr.)
- Orifices.
- Oholibamah's father. (Gen. 36:25)
- He was in charge of the camels. (1 Chron. 27:30)
- Goal.
- Wading bird.
- Location of Kish's tomb. (1 Sam. 21:14)
- Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. (Dan. 1:1)
- Son of Ulam. (1 Chron. 7:17)
- Tyrannosaurus ____.
- Religious song.
- Burn with hot water.
- Prevaricate. (Dan. 11:27)
- Royal title in Acts 25:25. (abbr.)
- "My yoke is ____." (Matt. 11:30)
- "No other ____ can save this way." (Dan. 3:29)

- Shammah's father. (2 Sam. 23:11)
- KJV verb ending.
- "Wood that will not ____." (Isa. 40:20)
- Between violin and cello.
- Land map.
- He's mentioned in Nehemiah 7:47.
- The king was troubled by a _____. (Dan. 2:1)
- Meshach's Judean name. (Dan. 1:7)
- Tear apart.
- Painter Salvador ____.
- Chinese leader ____ Tse-tung.
- "Three times ____." (Dan. 6:13, two words)
- Grain storage facility.
- Abijah's son. (2 Chron. 14:1)
- Relative, for short.
- Agenda.
- "Was ____ into his presence." (Dan. 7:13)

Down

- "____ and the leaders of Ammon." (Dan. 11:41)

- Opera solo.
- SBC missions organization. (abbr.)
- Did not succeed.
- Desktop message center. (two words)
- Precipitation.
- Syllables of questioning.
- Azariah's Babylonian name. (Dan. 1:7)
- ____ monster.
- Family group.
- He's listed in 1 Chronicles 2:25.
- Annually. (abbr.)
- So long!
- "Tied and ____ themselves." (Dan. 10:7)
- "Open your eyes and ____." (Dan. 9:18)
- Feline.
- Chief court official. (Dan. 1:3)
- Abraham's nephew. (Gen. 11:31)
- Tillis or Gibson.
- Legume.
- "The king ____ up." (Dan. 6:19)
- Rizpah's father.

- (2 Sam. 3:7)
- Male sheep. (Dan. 8:3)
- "Was revealed to Daniel in a ____." (Dan. 2:19)
- Woman of refinement.
- Region mentioned in 2 Kings 12:20.
- Vampire's nickname?
- Overhaul.
- ____ a letter.
- He's listed in 1 Chronicles 7:35.
- "A nation at ____." (Jer. 49:31)
- "Carry his own ____." (Gal. 6:5)
- Died without issue. (abbr.)



TOP 10

best-selling Christian books in September

FICTION

- 1. The Hope Jar**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
- 2. To the Moon and Back**
By Karen Kingsbury (Howard)
- 3. The Book of Mysteries**
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
- 4. Amish Celebrations**
By Beth Wiseman (Zondervan)
- 5. The Shack**
By William Paul Young (Windblown)
- 6. A Place of Peace**
By Amy Clipston (Zondervan)
- 7. The Masterpiece**
By Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
- 8. Redeeming Love**
By Francine Rivers (Multnomah)
- 9. The Healing Quilt**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
- 10. The Hideaway**
By Lauren K. Denton (Thomas Nelson)

Source: Christian Book Expo

TAB AR

Media reviews

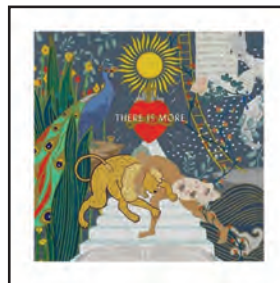
MUSIC



Hillsong Worship

There Is More: Studio Sessions
Hillsong, 2018

Hillsong Worship's six-song, same-named follow-up to the live, record-setting "There Is More" is worth it. It turns out, when recorded in the studio, the driving synth-pop strains of "You Are Life" sound even more at home on a Killers playlist. Other more polished offerings include the wonderfully worded "Who You Say I Am," "The Passion," "Be Still," "New Wine" and "Touch of Heaven" (or rather "Touch of Heaven — Reimagined"). You can't go wrong.



Koryn Hawthorne

Unstoppable
RCA Inspiration, 2018

When she ended her run on "The Voice" a few years back at just 17, you knew you'd hear her voice again. And you did. Frequently. Thanks mostly to the hit "Won't He Do It," Koryn Hawthorne's songs — most from her single self-titled 2017 EP — have been streamed more than 21 million times in just three years, a number that will surely skyrocket with her full-length debut from RCA Inspiration. "Unstoppable" is a 10-song, genre-blending blast of



gospel, rock and R&B made all the more powerful by what Hawthorne's management company aptly describes as her "relentless vocal energy." "Warriors," the album's opener, sets the creative tone, but beautiful ballads "You Still Love Me" and a new duet version of "Speak The Name" featuring Natalie Grant may end up being the most memorable.

The Martins

Still Standing
Gaither Music Group, 2018

Gaither "Homecoming" vets The Martins are back with their first record in four years. Longtime fans won't be disappointed. New fans will be made. Do you like country? You'll be hard-pressed to keep from nodding along right out of the

gate thanks to "Running." The album ends with a new version of the classic, ever edifying "Wherever You Are." The nine mostly mid-tempo songs in between are great and feature the tight, trademark harmonies you've come to expect from the sibling trio. Fair warning: The kids are going to ask you to play "Smell of Smoke," which tells the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, over and over. You won't mind.



All Sons and Daughters

The All Sons and Daughters Collection
Integrity, 2018

David Alan Leonard and Leslie Anne Jordan have parted ways but with a parting gift. You won't find any new material on their swan song, but the 15 songs (starting with the beautiful, cello-driven "Brokenness Aside") on "The All Sons and Daughters Collection" are obviously some of their best. The folksy sound they crafted over the past nine years working as co-worship leaders at Journey Church in Franklin, Tennessee, brought a much-heralded tenderness to praise and worship that has been rightly compared to The Civil Wars. And it's made an impact. The 12th track, "Great Are You Lord," won the Dove Award for Best Worship Song in 2013 and has become a Sunday standard for congregations across the country. They'll be missed. 🙏



Meet the reviewer

Jeremy Henderson reviews music for The Alabama Baptist. He is co-host of Rich and Jeremy in the Mornings on Wings 94.3 FM and editor of The War Eagle Reader.



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Photo courtesy of Bible Gateway

Valuable Scripture tool

Bible Gateway celebrates 25 years of Scripture access online

With more than 14 trillion views by people since it began in 1993, Bible Gateway has been a valuable Scripture tool for millions in its 25-year history.

The searchable format was created just as the World Wide Web was beginning as an internal Bible research computer tool for students at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Today it ranks number one on global search engines, is part of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc., and is home to more than 200 Bible versions in more than 70 languages — a trusted resource for people in more than 200 countries who rely on it every day for all their desktop and mobile device Bible reading, listening, studying, searching, comparing and sharing needs.

What people around the world search for on Bible Gateway varies throughout the year, but generally remains constant from year to year.

An interactive visualizing graph lets users explore how cyclical some queries are, often repeating every year around the same time each year (for example, the word “love” being searched in the Bible around Valentine’s Day in February).

Device friendly

Bible Gateway is device friendly, so that no matter what size device a person uses when visiting the site — desktop, tablet, smartphone — the screen is maximized for optimum viewing. And developers are working on a refreshed new design to the site, along with new formats for reading and viewing.

The just-released free Bible Gateway Bible

Audio App lets users listen to a variety of Bible translations, choosing from multiple audio narration styles; navigate quickly anywhere in the Bible; speed up or slow down playback to listen to the Bible at their own pace; and listen to the Bible while reading the very text that’s being narrated.

The long-time favorite Bible Gateway App for both Android and iOS allows people to read more than 90 Bible translations and listen to more than 20 audio Bibles, in addition to taking personal notes, highlighting text, starring favorite verses, following Bible reading plans, enjoying night mode Bible reading and much more. App users also receive the free Visual Verse of the Day and can easily share Bible verses with friends using social media and email.

The top-5 Bible verses searched and shared by users of Bible Gateway are:

1. John 3:16 — For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

2. Jeremiah 29:11 — “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

3. Philippians 4:13 — I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

4. Psalm 23:4 — Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5. Romans 8:28 — And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (TAB)

**Bible Gateway
has more than 14
trillion views by
people since it
began in 1993.**

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

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SBC 2019 hotel registration available

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Online hotel registration for the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting will open Oct. 12 instead of Oct. 1 as in previous years, the SBC Executive (EC) Committee has announced.

Changes in hotel room availability near the meeting site, the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC), necessitated the delay, the EC said.

Additional hotel rooms and a shuttle service and parking options are being studied to enhance attendees’ convenience, Bill Townes, SBC EC vice president for convention finance, said.

Birmingham, a central southern hub, remains an optimal location for Southern Baptist participation, Townes said. The 2019 meeting marks the first time the SBC will convene in Birmingham since 1941.

Registration and a list of available hotels will be accessible at 8 a.m. Central time Oct. 12 at sbcannualmeeting.net. (BP)

Lottie Moon reaches second-highest total

RICHMOND, Va. — With the books on the offering closing Sept. 30, the 2017–2018 Lottie Moon offering neared the national goal of \$160 million. In the 100th anniversary since Southern Baptists named their global mission offering in honor of missionary Lottie Moon, church members gave \$158.9 million to international missionaries worldwide — the second-highest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering ever received.

“We praise the Lord and thank Southern Baptist churches who have again generously demonstrated their faithfulness in undergirding the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth,” said Clyde Meador, interim president of the International Mission Board (IMB).

IMB trustees also appointed 66 new fully funded missionaries at a sending service Sept. 26 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia. (IMB)

BWA named among ‘top-rated’ nonprofits

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has been named a “2018 Top-Rated Nonprofit” by GreatNonprofits, a leading provider of user reviews of charities and nonprofits.

BWA unites the world’s Baptists in ministries of compassion, justice, theological education, unity and fellowship, missions and evangelism resulting in thousands of empowered churches working together across national and cultural divides in more than 100 countries around the world.

BWA General Secretary Elijah M. Brown said the organization is proud of its accomplishments this year, noting “an expanded effort to train youth and children’s church workers throughout our network” through a program called Horizons.

The Top-Rated Nonprofit Award is based on the rating and number of reviews that BWA received from volunteers, donors and aid recipients. (BWA)

Recession still impacts CP 10 years later

NASHVILLE — While total undesignated receipts of Southern Baptist churches have recovered from the Great Recession, total Cooperative Program (CP) giving has yet to rebound.

Total CP giving through state conventions was \$79 million less during the most recent fiscal year than in 2007–2008, according to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annuals. CP giving to SBC causes is rebounding — but giving is still more than \$6 million below 2007–2008 levels.

Ashley Clayton, the SBC Executive Committee’s vice president for Cooperative Program and Stewardship, said he is optimistic total CP receipts will begin trending upward, but it is a slow process. Whereas individuals may change their gifts often, churches seldom do, he said. (BP)