



INSIDE



Using 'The Andy Griffith Show' to teach the Bible

◆ Page 5



Understanding proposed amendments to the Alabama Constitution

◆ Page 9



'Associational mission strategist' suggested as new title for DOMs

◆ Page 11



Photo by Grace Thornton

Because they come from pieces of hundreds of donated T-shirts, the dresses made by the We Sew Love ministry at Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, are all different. They also make other clothing items for children in Haiti, Africa and other places where there are needs.

'God has provided'

T-shirt dresses become worldwide ministry for Huffman Baptists

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Linda Johnson says that about a year ago when her friend Linda Jacobson asked her if she was ready to see God do big things, she said yes. She was excited. "But I've thought a thousand times since then that I never could've imagined what was coming," Johnson said.

Since it started last year, the We Sew Love ministry at Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, has sent hundreds of clothing items

made from old T-shirts to children in Uganda, Zambia, Haiti and other places around the world.

They've made crib pads for children's homes. They've made burial gowns for children who pass away in hospice facilities.

Starting small

And with about 40 volunteers and nearly an entire wing of the church dedicated to the ministry, they're only getting bigger.

"God has provided, and it's growing by leaps and bounds," Johnson said.

As it often goes with good ideas, the ministry started small. Jacobson said she kind of stumbled into it when she was on a trip to California to visit one of her daughters a couple of years ago.

"My daughter had some school T-shirts that she wanted me to convert into dresses for her girls," Jacobson said. "She also wanted me to try

making the girls some comfy underwear."

So with a little creativity, Jacobson took those T-shirts and turned them into fabulous, bright-colored little dresses — the kind little girls love to wear. She used some of her stretch-knit pajamas and made the underwear, which quickly became favorites.

She figured it was a one-time thing.

But then back in Birmingham, a granddaughter who lives locally was over at her house one day and playing in the yard, and Jacobson sprayed her with the hose.

"She loved it, but I didn't think that through," she said with a laugh. "She was drenched and had no extra clothes along."

Jacobson got her in some dry clothes, but she had to make her a pair of underwear from one of her shirts.

"Her mom called me a few days

later and said, 'Can you make her some more? She refuses to take them off because they are so much more comfy than her other undies.' So I made her 17 more," Jacobson said.

Resounding yes

And with those 17 pairs of underwear, it seemed her calling was sealed.

Not too long after that, she met a missionary from Birmingham who serves in Haiti at a hospice center for children.

"I asked her if she could use some dresses or underwear there like the kind I was making," Jacobson said. "I just wanted to give her the idea — I never thought I'd be the one to make them."

The missionary's answer was a resounding yes — they needed as many as they could get.

So on a weekend not too long after, Jacobson traveled with her
(See 'God-ordained,' page 3)

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

Tell All of Your Story

Your church fellowship is a caring fellowship, I am sure. But how would you communicate that to someone who is considering joining your church?

Would you tell them how many hospital visits the pastor averages each week? Would you tell them about the prayer board in the church office that lists all those in the hospital or with special prayer needs? Perhaps you would tell them how the church is organized into care groups and that everyone receives a quarterly checkup from the care group leader.

All of these are important facts about your caring church, but few people are convinced by facts in today's world.

Today more people make decisions based on story than any other form of communication, researchers contend. Perhaps they always have. Story creates a shared experience. It touches our emotions. People identify with a story at different points.

A story is remembered long after facts are forgotten. And while people can argue over facts, there is little room for arguing about a story — about one's personal account. A story helps build community, not conflict. A story captures the imagination. It inspires and forces us to interact.

Perhaps that is why Jesus used storytelling for much of his ministry. One author contends that Jesus taught through stories more than one-third of the time.

A personal story

Telling a single story about how you or another church member were cared for during an illness or crisis may communicate more about your church's caring fellowship than all the facts one could muster.

Your church's story is worth telling. Your church is unique. No other church has the same history, the same experiences, the same personalities. No other church has the same victories or the same heartaches.

Don't be shy or embarrassed by your church's story. God has been at work in your congregation for a long time, and what He has done and what He is doing is worth telling. Sometimes we



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

just have to open our eyes and see all that God is about.

Tell your unique story as best you can. Tell people about worship services that inspire people for Christian living. Tell them about Bible studies that anchor the heart in the word of God. Tell them about events that fortify children and youth with Christian courage. Tell them about your church's compassion illustrated by ministry and service.

People will remember the stories because stories touch the heart. They will remember many of the facts because the facts are woven into the flow of the story.

Make sure the stories convey an accurate impression of your congregation. Sometimes it can be tempting to shade stories to make one's church what we want it to be rather than what it is. But false stories told with good intentions are still false stories. Jesus said truth is what sets us free (John 8:32), not some form of manipulative propaganda.

Telling stories is not limited to a particular medium of communications. Stories work equally well with legacy mediums like print or with the latest digital media.

Even the church's logo should tell a story, for branding is just another way to get people to

identify with the story that is represented by the logo.

Also make sure you tell all of the church's story. Your story is more than what happens in your local church or community. Your story is more than the missions trip the youth took or the volunteers who work with the disaster relief unit.

Your church's story reaches across Alabama and around the world.

Your church's story includes helping hundreds of children memorize large portions of the Bible through Bible Drill competitions. It includes helping to lead more than 1,600 college students to Christ through campus ministry on Alabama campuses. Your church played a part in 170 children finding care and Christian nurture at Alabama Baptist-sponsored group homes. Your church helped 10 of those children go to college.

Your church's story includes helping to start more than 1,000 churches in underserved areas of the United States during the past year. It includes helping to resettle refugees and help for other internationals assimilating into American culture.


Your church's story includes helping to share the gospel with 872 different people groups around the world through more than 3,500 international missionaries.

There is so much more that is a part of your church's story. You help educate those called into vocational Christian service. You help feed the hungry and care for the elderly. You help take the gospel to the public square so people know what the Bible says about moral and ethical issues.

The CP story

If someone asks how a church like yours can do all of this, tell them the story of the Cooperative Program (CP). Tell them how Baptists in Alabama and across the nation give to missions and ministries beyond themselves so the gospel's impact can be felt in Alabama, the nation and the world.

Tell them how half of all funds given to missions through the CP goes beyond the state's borders and half of that goes to international missions. Tell them how Baptists have learned it is better to do things together than it is to be concerned just about "my church."

So tell your church's story. Tell it as best you can to as many people as you can. And be sure to tell all your church's story including how you are ministering to the ends of the earth through the CP. 



**October is
CP Month.**

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

SOCIAL JUSTICE

After reading the editorial "Detraction or Demonstration" in the Oct. 4 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* I had to wonder whether the editorial was designed to detract or distort.

John MacArthur, with the help of more than a dozen others, penned "The Statement on Social Justice &

the Gospel," which outlines grave concerns with the social justice movement. None of them addresses Sav-A-Life, thrift stores or food ministries, all of which are all models of Christian involvement and service.

Space will not allow me to print the 14 affirmations and denials, but it would serve all Baptists and con-

cerned Christians well to visit statementonsocialjustice.com and read the statement for themselves. There are tares among the wheat. There are wolves among the flock. There are false teachers and

(See 'Letters,' page 12)





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc. is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-879-6026. **Website:** www.thealabamabaptist.org. **Email:** news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

**PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION RATES**
Church Budget — \$13.75
Individual — \$22.25

**DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTION RATES**
Church Budget — \$8.50
Individual — \$14.95

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR**

Jennifer Davis Rash
Editor-elect

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Jessica Ingram
Editorial Assistant

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
*Director of Circulation
and Public Relations*

NEWS SERVICES
Baptist Press (BP), Baptist News
Global (BNG), Religion News
Service (RNS), Forum 18 (F18),
Morning Star News (MS).

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE
Send old and new addresses,
and name of church to:
Subscription Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge,
all of the ads in *The Alabama
Baptist* represent legitimate
companies and offerings.
However, one should always
exercise normal business
caution in responding to ads.

**Full member of
Alabama Press Association**

Accredited member of
Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability



**'Nation's Top Regional
Christian Newspaper'**

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,
2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017
as judged by Associated Church Press,
Baptist Communicators Association,
Evangelical Press Association or
Religion Communicators Council

God-ordained momentum

Huffman sewing ministry breathes new life into church, world

(continued from page 1)

husband to a college football tournament with things on her mind other than football. While he was at the games, she stayed back at the hotel and cut enough pieces to make 500 pairs of underwear for the children at Real Hope for Haiti.

Jacobson was now into this type of upcycling in a big way. Grace Klein Community, a nonprofit ministry in Vestavia Hills, began bringing her bags filled with cast-off knit clothing and T-shirts on a regular basis.

"I was overburdened with all the T-shirts at my house," she said. "Then my daughter Stacey mentioned that this kind of sewing could be an opportunity for the women at Huffman Baptist Church during their summer break. She invited me to bring all my supplies and let the women help."

Infectious excitement

Jacobson didn't hesitate. She filled up a classroom at the church with her supplies, and the women got to work. In eight weeks, they cut countless shirts into parts for dresses, underwear and shorts.

"The excitement among the women was infectious," she said.

The men noticed the growing excitement and told Jacobson that if she would bring her ministry up there to stay, they would make room for it.

What happened next breathed new life into a mostly unused preschool wing that had been empty as the church has transitioned in recent years, Johnson said.

"We're without a pastor and most of us are older," she said. "This ministry has been a wonderful thing for our church to be a part of."

And it has given new momentum to the church's women's ministry. Every Wednesday and Thursday like clockwork — and other days of the week here and there too — women gather for Bible study, then head over to the sewing suite to work on T-shirt clothes.

What they do has spread by word of mouth, and people bring them bags and bags of T-shirts. Volunteers — both men and women — wash and dry the shirts in a dedicated laundry room or in their homes, then move them into the harvesting room.

In that room, they cut the T-shirts into different pieces like neckbands, pockets, bodices, hem bands and hemmed sleeves — pieces that save them time when they're putting the dresses together.

They've found ways to make nearly every inch of a T-shirt usable. Nothing goes to waste.

Then they put all those pieces in the inventory room in color-coordinated bins. Volunteers can go shopping in the bins to find the pieces they want to use to make the clothes, then they put them together in the sewing room, a room with two tables full of sewing



Photo courtesy of Huffman Baptist Church

A young girl in Haiti wears one of the T-shirt dresses made by members of the We Sew Love ministry at Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham

machines, and get to work on the clothing.

The result is hundreds of unique dresses, boxers, panties, shorts and other articles of clothing that can be easily laundered and re-worn.

"It's a running joke — we're a sewing ministry where there aren't many people who can sew," Johnson said with a laugh. "There's so much to do other than just sewing. I'm learn-

ing how to sew now, but I started out washing T-shirts and praying over them. It's so amazing to see them change from when you first get the T-shirts to the finished product. It just fills you up."

The volunteers pour their love into those dresses — and they share that joy with others too.

Expanding nationwide

As Jacobson has crossed paths with people — God ordained meetings, she says — she has told others about what they're doing and then taught them how to do it too. Because of that, groups are now doing the same thing in Tallahassee, Idaho and Iowa.

Johnson said We Sew Love has become bigger than they ever imagined. She says it's given her and so many others new purpose in ministry.

"This has gone beyond what one Baptist church can do," she said. "And as much as people want to learn to do this, we would love to teach them."

For anyone interested in seeing how We Sew Love runs their sewing suite at Huffman Baptist, the group will be hosting an open house Oct. 27 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Anyone is invited to drop by, learn how to make a dress or find out more about how to start their own sewing ministry.

And if you'd like to be a part of the lunch provided at noon, reserve a space by calling Johnson at 205-903-7609 or Huffman Baptist at 205-836-2294.

For more information about the ministry, search for the We Sew Love page on Facebook.

Widows find 'new purpose' in sewing ministry

One day a few months ago, as Hazel Cannon went to her Thursday morning Bible study at Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, she had a peace — but didn't know what was coming.

For decades, she and her husband had hosted a workroom for drapery designers. It was something they loved to do together. But when he passed away several years ago, Cannon didn't know if she wanted to keep doing it.

"I prayed about it for about a year, and then finally I called the designers and told them I wasn't going to do it anymore," she said.

But she didn't know what she was going to do.

When she got to Bible study that morning, they told her about a new ministry that had just moved in across the hall — a sewing ministry (see story, page 1).

"It was in the Sunday School room where I had taught my son in kindergarten, and now he's 60," Cannon said with a laugh. "When I walked in the door and saw all those little dresses they were making, I just fell in love."

Her sister, Ellen Logan, also had recently lost her husband and was struggling to find her feet, Cannon said.

"We both jumped in," she said. "I think God put me at that place at that time for a reason."

The timing was perfect — she hadn't lost any of her tables or sewing machines from the workroom yet.

"It's just blessed my heart, and I think I was meant to be here," Cannon said. "I think God had this in mind for me when He gave me a peace about quitting the drapery business. It's given my sister and me a new purpose in this season." (Grace Thornton)

First Priority Greater Birmingham named longest active chapter

By Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

The road hasn't always been easy for First Priority (FP) Greater Birmingham, but it has been fruitful.

On Oct. 17 supporters and volunteers of the organization gathered at Vulcan Park in Birmingham to hear the stories of God's faithfulness and power through programs happening at schools throughout metro-Birmingham.

Greg Davis, president of FP Alabama, announced FP Greater Birmingham, which he oversees, was recently recognized as the longest active chapter of FP, having been serving since FP America's creation in 1996.

"Thank you to all the volunteers, workers and staff that have been with us," Davis said. "I haven't found anything that reaches teenagers for the gospel better."

Fruitful labor

Davis said FP was created to reach students where they are. "There's just a small portion of teenagers in church," he said. "But they are all in school."

The desire for this type of ministry in schools was so great, they formed FP Kids a few years ago to reach into elementary schools. FP now produces Bibles explaining the gospel and the characteristics of God, and teaches kids how to share the

gospel with their friends and about the important tenants of the Christian faith.

But they've faced opposition. The Freedom from Religion Foundation has been trying to keep FP out of schools, but Davis said, "Everything we do is legal. We're going to continue to press forward."

Eunice Pickens, a FP campus coach for the Bessemer City School system, has served with FP for 26 years — for all of its existence.

"I told God if I was going to do this, I needed something tangible," she said. "I asked Him to help us get out of the red academically, get rid of the violence on our campuses and keep our teenagers from getting pregnant."

All of her prayers have been answered.

"First Priority is one of the most powerful campus clubs any school can have because lives are changed and lives are saved," she said. "It's forever."

Pickens even had a student tell her once that he didn't go to church anywhere, but "First Priority is my church."

Jacob Patton, a former FP student leader at Mortimer Jordan High School in Morris, said "I'm evidence of FP efforts being fruitful." He described the Christmas toy drives and the fundraisers that FP held at his school and the impact they had on the community and the world.



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

Dennis 'The Swan' Swanberg jokes with the crowd and reminds them of the joy of knowing Jesus Christ.



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

First Priority (FP) of Alabama President Greg Davis (right) introduces FP coaches (left to right) Uawanna Day, Jacob Patton and Eunice Pickens to share about what the ministry is doing in their lives and schools.

"I saw people that couldn't or wouldn't go to church come to FP where they heard the gospel," he said.

"Thank you for being here because it is people like you that made FP possible," Patton said to those in attendance. "And it is the reason why I am a follower of Christ."

'Great things'

Uawanna Day, campus coach at Abrams Elementary, said three children have already given their lives to Christ.

"God is doing great things all over this land," she said.

Dennis "The Swan" Swanberg refreshed those present with jokes and impersonations while showing the importance of the hope of the gospel. "It's refreshing when you have the hope that comes with a relationship with Jesus Christ," he said.

The FP volunteers have the chance each week to refresh the next generation with the love of God, he said.

"We can't all be [FP volunteers and coaches], but we can pray and we can give and the FP folks show up on our behalf," Swanberg said.

For more information about FP Alabama visit www.firstpriorityal.com.

Hurricane recovery continues after Michael

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) received more than 500 job requests in Alabama following Hurricane Michael. And Mark Wakefield, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions said everyone is "thankful for volunteers and looking forward to engaging many more trained and credentialed volunteers."

Since Oct. 11 several teams from Alabama associations have been at work in the area around Dothan and in neighboring counties that were in Michael's path. At least two churches in the area, Cottonwood First Baptist and Mount Enon Baptist Church, Dothan, received significant damage during the storm.

Hundreds of homes were affected by downed trees, Wakefield said, so chainsaw,



Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Facebook photo

Arkansas Baptist DR volunteers take a break from cutting trees to talk with neighborhood children affected by damage in southeast Alabama following Hurricane Michael.

feeding, heavy equipment, administration and chaplain teams are staying busy. Volunteers staged at Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan, continue to process requests

for assistance and direct teams to homeowners needing help.

Teams from St. Clair, Calhoun, Salem-Troy and Sand Mountain Baptist associations responded to

southwest Alabama. Volunteers from Southeast Alabama Baptist Association and Covington Baptist Association helped too.

Covington Baptist associational mission strategist Otis Corbitt said the team would eventually transition to helping out in Florida, where Disaster Relief teams from several states have moved in to help.

Several Florida beach communities received massive damage to communications systems, which continued to cause concern as officials searched destroyed homes for missing persons. The needs in Florida will be ongoing, Wakefield said.

"It is going to be a slow but steady response due to numerous logistical roadblocks. Please pray for all involved — the survivors and responders," Wakefield said in a Facebook post. "As we finish with the Wiregrass area, we will prepare to assist. There are already

plans to provide equipment to Florida when possible."

Wakefield urged Alabama Baptist DR volunteers to stay in contact with their associational coordinators for possible deployment opportunities.

Training opportunity

Alabama Baptist DR also announced an upcoming training Oct. 27 at the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Training Center in Prattville. The training will focus on mass feeding, a huge need in communities where utilities remain out.

The North American Mission Board reports that more than 45,000 meals had been served to storm survivors a week after Michael hit and volunteers would continue to serve the great needs of those recovering from the storm. (Carrie Brown McWhorter)

Mayberry

COMES TO CHURCH

How one Alabama Baptist uses 'The Andy Griffith Show' to teach the Bible

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Doug Rogers says you don't have to look far to find an episode of "The Andy Griffith Show," which has been on the air continuously for the past 58 years.

You don't have to look far for a gospel parallel either, he said. "Unlike many other programs, this one teaches morals, values and life lessons."

Rogers, director of communications and technology services at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), is an avid fan of the show, which is set in the fictitious town of Mayberry. He uses his hobby in the discipleship ministry at his home church, First Baptist, Montgomery.

"Our minister to adults, Chuck Ashley, led a Mayberry-themed discipleship class in 2009, which I attended," Rogers said. "Noticing my interest in the show, he asked if I'd be willing to take on the class, and I jumped at the chance. My wife, Lori, and I have led the class since that time. I teach, and she provides snacks worthy of Aunt Bee's kitchen."

Rogers said Joey Fann is credited with beginning the first Mayberry Bible Study back in 1998 and has since published a devotional book, "The Way Back to Mayberry — Lessons From a Simpler Time." Fann also founded barneyfife.com, a website where he shares lesson plans and Mayberry trivia.

Rogers said he started out using Fann's materials but also has written his own lesson plans. "I have close to 100 class outlines I've used over the last eight years," he said.

Rogers said he watches Mayberry episodes on television, DVD or online and sometimes thinks, "I've not used this one before." But he also has a working knowledge of all the episodes, so he can usually find one that illustrates a life lesson he wishes to teach.

'Hooked as a Mayberry fan'

Although he was familiar with the show at a younger age, Rogers said his interest didn't fully take root until he was a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in the mid-1980s.

"I'd come home at lunch or after class and watch the show in my down time and got hooked as a Mayberry fan," he said. "I do make one distinction, however. I like the black-and-white episodes better than the color ones!"

Since seminary days, Rogers has attended several fan events, including three visits to Andy Griffith's hometown of Mount Airy, North Carolina, home of the Andy Griffith Museum and the annual Mayberry Days festival.

He also attended the 35th Anniversary Mayberry Cast Reunion in Winston-Salem in 1995. He met the now-deceased actor



commons.wikimedia.org

'Unlike many other programs, ['The Andy Griffith Show'] teaches morals, values and life lessons,' says Doug Rogers.

Don Knotts twice, and a signed photo is part of his collection. And he had a special date with Betty Lynn, better known as Deputy Fife's girlfriend, Thelma Lou, whose last name was never mentioned on the show.

"Jim Clark, founder of The Andy Griffith Show Rerun Watchers Club, organized many events over the years, and he asked me at an autograph signing event in Mount Airy back in 2004 if I'd escort Ms. Lynn to her car so she could go back to her hotel and rest," Rogers said. "Of course, I was thrilled. As we were leaving the store, we passed an ice cream counter and she mentioned she hadn't had lunch and wondered if she could get an ice cream cone. So I have a photo of me escorting her out of the store as she's eating her ice cream cone."

Lynn is a "very nice lady," Rogers said. "She loves Mount Airy so much she relocated from West Hollywood around 10 years ago and lives there now at age 91."

In his class, Rogers often looks for current event tie-ins for his Mayberry discipleship lessons. For instance, after the 2017 solar eclipse, he chose an episode called "Barney's Replacement."

"Deputy Fife thought he was going to be replaced, though he wasn't," he said. "Sheriff Taylor had agreed to bring in an intern from the State Attorney's office for training. Barney got jealous since he was proud of his position. I used this episode to talk about what to do when we're eclipsed

by someone else who knocks us out of the spotlight — or how to deal with personal pride."

Rogers had a new experience earlier this year when he was a pulpit guest for Senior Adult Day at Liberty Hill Baptist Church, Clanton.

"I've not done this before," he said, "but I used several clips for my three points about cultivating the lifelong habits of remembering, learning and giving. Then we had a pot roast lunch Aunt Bee would be proud of. The church also gave sheriff's badges to all the senior adults to wear for the day, so it was great fun."

Simpler, less-hurried time

When asked about the appeal of "The Andy Griffith Show," Rogers said it takes us to a simpler, less-hurried time.

"The All Souls Church and Rev. Tucker were important to the community," he said. "The townspeople spent Sunday mornings in church and then relaxed the rest of the day. The rest of the time, the exploits of the characters are full of life lessons, often told in a lighthearted way."

Rogers said he has no idea if any programs from today might still be in reruns 50 years from now, but Mayberry has definitely stood the test of time.

"We pore over these episodes, study the good writing and laugh at the humor," he said. "Mayberry is unique in a way unprecedented in the history of television."✠

Retirement Reception

Dr. Bobby S. "Bob" Terry

president and editor of *The Alabama Baptist*



Tuesday, November 13 | 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

FBC Trussville, Second Floor (A200)

HORS D'OEUVRES | TEA | COFFEE

hosted by *The Alabama Baptist* board of directors

TAB
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BIRMINGHAM

► **Daniel Wilson** will be leaving the pastorate of **First, Pleasant Grove**, to become the lead church health strategist for the **Alabama State Board of Missions (SBOM)** effective Nov. 1. Wilson has served as pastor of First, Pleasant Grove, since 2015, and has been a pastor since 2001. He also served a previous stint in the area of evangelism at SBOM. In his new role, Wilson will



WILSON

serve in the office of LeaderCare and church health under office director Mike Jackson. ► **Jonathan Edwards**, member of **NorthPark Church, Trussville**, was licensed to the gospel ministry Sept. 30. He will be serving as director of development for **Serving You Ministries**. Bill Wilks is pastor.

DALE

► **New Hope Church, Skipperville**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary Oct. 28, 10:30 a.m. Rick Lance will be the guest speaker. Lunch will follow the service. Judson Waldrop is pastor.

CONECUH

► **Belleville Church** will celebrate its 200th anniversary Oct. 28, 10:30 a.m. Her-

bert Brown will be the guest speaker. A covered-dish lunch and time of fellowship will follow the service. After lunch there will be special music and singing. Richard Oswald is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Mount Olive Church, Coker**, will host Rodney Autry as he presents "A Bird's-Eye View of the Bible" on Nov. 4, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information call 205-339-2529. Tim Tindle is pastor. ► **Carrolls Creek Church, Northport**, will hold "Hell's Fury or Heaven's Glory" judgment house Oct. 26-27, 6:30-10:30 nightly. For more information call 205-339-1742. Alan Roggli is pastor.

WINSTON

► **New Hope No. 2 Church, Haleyville**, will hold a fall festival Oct. 27, 4-7 p.m. It will begin with a cake walk followed by a chili cook off, games and hayrides. Everyone is welcome. Ritchie Emerson is pastor. ► **First Church, Haleyville**, will hold a revival Oct. 26-28. The Friday night service will be part of 5th quarter and will begin 30 minutes after the local football game; the Saturday service will be at 6 p.m. and the Sunday service will begin at 11 a.m. Nathan Carroll is pastor. ► **First Church, Arley**, will hold a trunk-or-treat fall festival Oct. 31, 6-7:30 p.m. It will include inflatables, hayrides and face painting. Roger White is pastor.✝



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Ecclesiology Through Imagery

The Church as a Household

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

As we have seen in previous weeks, insights into the formation and function of a church can be gleaned from images such as a body, a bride and a building. This week Theology 101 adds another image — that of a household.

Ephesians 2:19 declares, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." With similar imagery, Galatians 6:10 admonishes, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." From these two passages we glean the dual truths that the Church is both a household of faith and the household of God.

In New Testament times a household was often comprised both of family members and servants. From this common makeup of a household we can glean the twin truths that the Church is composed of people who are at the same time servants of God and members of His family. By spiritual birth sinners become children of God. By personal commitment God's children choose to be His servants.

As children in God's household we are His heirs. By virtue of being an heir of God, we also are joint heirs with Christ. As Romans 8:16-17a says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Joint heirs

Herein lies a sense of security for members of God's family. Since we are joint heirs with Christ, the only way God could disown a true believer would be for Him also to disown His only begotten Son since we are inseparably united with Christ as fellow heirs in the household of faith.

The imagery of a household or family serves to call attention to the Church in the universal or collective sense of all God's children throughout all time

and in all places, whether already in heaven or still here below. This is evident in Ephesians 3:14-15 in the Apostle Paul's testimony concerning prayer, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

In this image is also the suggestion of the spiritual kinship that should be celebrated by every believer with all other believers. Under the fatherhood of God all His children are related. The hymn writer expressed this truth in the line, "Who serves my Father as a child is surely kin to me" ("In Christ There Is No East or West").

Such was the significance set forth in God's word through the Apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesian church. At that time the two major groups that were targeted by that word from God were Jews and Gentiles.

Spiritual family

In Christ, believers from each group found themselves children in the same spiritual family. Hence, in Ephesians 4:6 the Bible asserted then and continues to assert today there is "one God and Father of all," regardless of ethnic, racial, cultural or geographical differences.

Family love will always ideally be the badge of genuineness worn by every believer and the bridge that connects all God's children. Thus, a major distinctive that exists at the core of being the Church is the truth of spiritual kinship of all believers under the fatherhood of God.✝

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.



FBC Prattville sends gift bags to county schools



Photo courtesy of FBC Prattville

In September, members of First Baptist Church, Prattville, in Autauga Baptist Association, packed and prayed over more than 1,000 gift bags sent out to schools across Autauga County for teachers, administrators, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers and support staff. First, Prattville, is one of many churches to minister to local schools by delivering gift bags, supplies and baked goods to faculty and staff. Travis Coleman is pastor.

‘Faithsoaring’ churches

Vision of congregational development should be covered in prayer, Bullard says

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

George Bullard, associational mission strategist for the Columbia-Metro Baptist Association in South Carolina, believes churches must move from success to surrender as they determine what God wants their congregations to do.

“We must walk by faith, not by sight, as the Bible commands,” he said. “I call churches who do so ‘faithsoaring’ churches.”

Bullard was guest lecturer for the James A. Auchmuty Lecture Series at Samford University on Oct. 9. The event was hosted by Samford’s Center for Congregational Resources. Director Michael Wilson explained that the lectureship, established in 2005, has focused on chapel events in the past, but this year’s offering focused on a topic and a day-long training seminar based on Bullard’s 40 years of study and research.

Bullard, author of “Faithsoaring Churches: A Learning Experience Version,” said Leviticus 25 taught Israel to practice the sabbatical every seven years

and the Year of Jubilee after seven sabbatical cycles.

“This is my working theory,” he said. “A church grows in strength and maturity for a time and can ‘fall off the ledge’ in five to seven years when vision grows dim. Many churches seek to institute additional programming to revitalize ministry, but I’m convinced we need to take a sabbatical for prayer and reflection and re-dream our vision. Program must follow vision.”



BULLARD

To illustrate the importance of vision, Bullard used the analogy of an SUV.

“Vision needs to be the driver, and relationships need to be the navigator,” he said.

“Management and programming should be in the back seat. Sometimes vision needs to take a break and move to the back seat, then management or program-

ming take the wheel and believe this is where they were born to be!”

‘People over programs’

Bullard believes it’s unhealthy for vision to be asleep in the back seat.

“Proverbs 29:18 can be translated, ‘where there is no vision, the people drive around in circles,’” he said.



Unsplash.com

“We often think if we can just add programs and shame people into staffing them, we’ll be OK. But some of our programs need to be discontinued if there’s no purpose or if they’re not meeting needs in the community. We should elevate people over programs.”

Bullard shared a chart based on his understanding of the life cycle of congregational development. The chart begins with birth and infancy, and moves to adolescence, adulthood and what he called the plateau, or “prime” position.

“After this kind of prime position, the church can enter the mature state, and then the empty nest, old age and death phases,” he said.

Bullard explained the empty nest phase as a time of aging for the church, just as people age and send their children out into the world.

“There can be nostalgia, or the ‘do you remember when?’ questions,” he said. “Then there can be disappointment that things aren’t what they used to be and finally anger. People can’t get their hands on God when they’re angry, so often they get their hands on the pastor instead.”

Moving forward

Bullard said some churches resist change, seeing it as a bad word, but he insisted the phrase “how things used to be” is worse.

“Sometimes the church’s favorite verse is Hebrews 13:8 about Jesus being the ‘same yesterday, today and forever,’” he said with a laugh.

“But we must always be going forward and thinking about tomorrow. The only way to do this is to seek a new dream of

how God wants to lead us in the future.”

Bullard believes that congregations need not have the majority of members on board for re-dreaming the vision. His research shows that about 21 percent of the congregation can move the institution forward.

‘People of passion’

“The pastoral leadership, the people in leadership positions and what I call ‘the people of passion’ comprise this 21 percent,” he said. “They’re key to helping the church re-dream and relaunch as needed.”

Bullard encourages churches to take a “spiritual strategic journey” as they commit to this process of “re-dreaming” and “relaunching.” He said his advice is that church leaders gather in triplets and commit to pray for the church, its members and its future for 100 days.

“Things happen when people pray,” he said. “The relationship aspect is enhanced, of course, especially when homebound members are included in the triplets. And I believe God will lead His people to discover the new challenges they need to follow in order to be obedient.”

Bullard also counsels churches who go through the re-dreaming process to “adopt” other congregations and help them do the same.

“[The late] John Bisagno of First Baptist Houston heard our research and committed to help revitalize 100 struggling churches in his city before he retired,” Bullard said. “This is proper stewardship of resources since God uses all kinds of churches, large and small, to do His work.”

Rockford to host Fire in the Pulpit

For about three months, Jeff Fuller wrestled with something he felt like God was laying on his heart.

“There are a lot of small church pastors and bivocational pastors around here who don’t have the time or resources to get away to a big pastors conference somewhere,” said Fuller, pastor of Rockford Baptist Church in Central Baptist Association. “But they need that kind of feeding. So I began to mull over that.”

That idea grew and eventually led him to organize Fire in the Pulpit, a time of intense study for pastors and ministers set for Jan. 29–Feb. 1, 2019.

The conference will offer six intensive classes — conflict resolution, expository preaching, sermon preparation, pastoral care, time management and balancing family life — and participants will attend one class for all four days.

Class sessions will be held in the evening each day from 5–6:15 with a meal

included for all registered participants.

“This way they get a total of five intensive hours of training in whatever topic they choose,” Fuller said. “Each class will be led by an experienced minister with expertise or experience in the field of study.”

It will also be a great opportunity for younger pastors to connect with more seasoned pastors for the purpose of mentoring and discipleship, Fuller said. “I want to see that connection take place so that they will have someone to call when they have questions long after the classes are over.”

Then nightly at 7:15, everyone is welcome to attend a worship celebration featuring speakers such as Alabama evangelist Don Graham and Daniel Wilson, the new lead church health strategist for the State Board.

Early registration pricing ends Oct. 31. After Jan. 7, a late fee will be added to the registration price. (Grace Thornton)

For more information or to register, email rbccoosa@gmail.com or call Rockford Baptist at 256-377-4900, Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

To read more from Bullard, visit his blog at columbiametro.org.

Central Baptist to host church library conference

Church librarians and those interested in church history, Bible repair and upcycling will get lots of great information and some hands-on learning at the North Alabama Conference for Church Librarians on Nov. 3 in Decatur.

The theme for this year's conference is "The Reach of Church Libraries."

Joan Deneve of Prattville is the featured guest. Deneve is the author of three books of Christian romantic fiction in "The Redeemed Side of Broken" series published by Write Integrity Press.

Debbie Campbell of *The Alabama Baptist* will also be a special guest.

The conference will cover every aspect of church library work, including administration, collection development, processing, weeding, automation with Concourse and Atrium, classification and cataloging.

Tips for promoting the church library also will be covered.

General interest

The conference will also include sessions of general interest. Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, will lead two sessions on church and family histories. Bev League with the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board will present ideas for church reading clubs and using books for discipleship.

Other presenters include Sue Berthelot, Patty Easterling,

Sandra Fitts, Steve Gateley, Bill Jones, Allison Maynard, Sandy Shepherd, Amanda Thompson and Marty Woodall.

Additional topics to be covered in breakout sessions throughout the day include cardmaking as a ministry, using smart-cutting machines like the Cricut for promotions and upcycling, which is making something useful out of useless materials.

A LifeWay bookstore also will be available.

The North Alabama Conference for Church Librarians will be held at Central Baptist Church, 2801 Highway 31 South in Decatur.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., with the first general session beginning at 8:30. The conference ends at 3:30 p.m. Lunch will be served.

Pre-registration is requested. To register, contact Eva Nell

Hunter by phone at 256-353-5912 or 256-303-7739; by email at enhunter1946@gmail.com or library@cbcdecatur.org; or by mail at Central Baptist Church, 2801 Highway 31 S, Decatur, AL 35603. Include your name, address, telephone number, email address (if available), church and association.

There is no deadline for registration, but reservations are requested by Oct. 31.

Registration cancellations are also requested.

More information about the conference, as well as a complete schedule and course descriptions, are available at the Display link at cbcd.booksys.net. (TAB)



Unsplash.com



Mount Moriah Baptist Church marks 150 years of ministry

On Sept. 16 the congregation of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Troy, gathered for a day of celebration and remembrance.

"It was a great day," member Barbara Harris said. "We were very pleased with how the celebration went."

Neal Hughes, associational mission strategist for nearby Montgomery Baptist Association, was the speaker for the service.

Interim pastor Clifford Matthews shared memories from his previous time as pastor of Mount Moriah Baptist, and Ellen Dewberry from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and Ken Baggett, associational mission strategist for Salem-Troy Baptist Association, presented certificates of recognition to the church. (Jessica Ingram)

Hillview celebrates 125 years

On Sept. 16, Hillview Baptist Church, Forestdale, in Birmingham Baptist Association, began its 125-year celebration with a special service of music and testimonies. During the service Charles Carter, pastor of Hillview Church from 1960 to 66, shared memories and words of inspiration. After a short break the second service began with everyone joining the choir in singing "Victory in Jesus." Pastor Gene Carver introduced the guest preacher, Randy Atkinson, another former pastor.

Debbie Campbell, representing the Alabama

Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a plaque. Butch Henderson, church/community

missions specialist with Birmingham Association, also presented a certificate to honor the church's dedication to the Lord.

"It was a beautiful service," church secretary Martha McDonald said. (TAB)



Photo by Debbie Campbell

Friendship Baptist Church holds centennial celebration

On Sept. 23, Friendship Baptist Church, Jasper, celebrated its 100th anniversary with a special service featuring former pastor Arthur Middleton and special music by Jerry Key and Meagan Westbrook.

Judy Best presented a brief history of the church, and a printed history of the church was handed out to those in attendance.

"It was a wonderful day with wonderful fellowship," she said.

Johnie Sentell presented the church a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. David Miller, associational mission strategist for Walker Baptist Association, also presented the church with a certificate. (TAB)

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB



ACCELERATE YOUR MINISTRY - REFRESH YOUR SOUL

Gateway Seminary's Doctor of Ministry

Online Option requires only one 10 day trip to our Pacific Northwest Campus

DMin@gs.edu for more information

Application Deadline: December 30, 2018

www.gs.edu/dmin

LEEDS STAINED GLASS & CHURCH FURNITURE

SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679

AL local: 205.699.9679

Call for **FREE** on-site consultation

Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner

information@LeedsStainedGlass.com

Visit www.LeedsStainedGlass.com

for an online gallery of windows and church furniture!



Cast your vote

Proposed amendments to Alabama Constitution deal with Ten Commandments, sanctity of life

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**
The Alabama Baptist

When Alabamians go to the polls on Nov. 6, two amendments on the ballot will be of special interest to many voters in the faith community.

Statewide Amendment No. 1 deals with displays of the Ten Commandments. According to a sample ballot on the website of the Alabama Secretary of State, the amendment will affirm that a person is free to worship God as he or she chooses and that a person's religious beliefs will have no effect on his or her civil or political rights.

The amendment also makes it clear that the Ten Commandments may be displayed on public property so long as the display meets constitutional requirements, such as being displayed along with historical or educational items.

In support

Dean Young, an Orange Beach businessman who has promoted a Ten Commandments amend-

ment for 17 years, says 73 percent of Alabamians support such an amendment. He is leading the movement to pass Amendment No. 1.

"It puts the Ten Commandments back into the school houses and gives the right to display the Ten Commandments along with other historical documents in the schools across the state of Alabama," Young said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Alabama opposes the amendment, stating that it "serves no useful purpose."

'One nation under God'

The Ten Commandments Amendment PAC disagrees. On its website, the organization promoting the amendment says that public display of the Ten Commandments serves "as a powerful reminder that the United States is indeed 'one nation under God.'" Debra Barnes, a member of Washington Park Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, in Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association, agrees.

"Within the Ten Commandments are contained all the heart of our Father, so that our society can be blessed and have order, not chaos," Barnes wrote in a letter to *The Alabama Baptist*.

Eric Johnston, president and general counsel of the Southeast

Law Institute (SLI), a nonprofit organization that specializes in public policy issues including religious freedom and the sanctity of life, says he supports the proposed amendment but the religious freedom element of the text is not significant.

In an SLI Educational Update, Johnston wrote that "for some, the posting of the Ten Commandments continues to be an important issue, ... [however] the fact that citizens of Alabama pass a constitutional amendment stating this right will not preempt the U.S. Constitution and its interpretation by SCOTUS (U.S. Supreme Court). ... While (the amendment) may be an incentive for some public officials to make historical displays, it does not give them any greater rights than they have already."

Statewide Amendment No. 2 deals with sanctity of human life.

The proposed amendment provides that it would be the public policy of the state to recognize and support the importance of unborn life and the rights of un-



Unsplash.com

born children, including the right to life.

Amendment No. 2 would also make clear that the state constitution does not include a right to abortion or require the funding of an abortion using public funds.

Nikki Richardson, executive vice president of the Alabama

Policy Institute (API), a conservative nonprofit research and educational organization that promotes limited government and champions strong families, says Alabama must vote yes on Amendment No. 2 to show the world just

**"Within the Ten
Commandments are
contained all the heart
of our Father ..."**

**Debra Barnes
member, Washington Park
Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals**

how strong pro-life values are in Alabama.

"Alabamians should wholeheartedly support this amendment because we, as a state, overwhelmingly believe in the sanctity of life," Richardson said in an API statement. "For many of us, this belief stems from our Christian values. King David reminds us in Psalm 139 that God knits each of us together in the womb. We are unable to ignore that reality. We also acknowledge the truth described in Genesis, that humans

bear the imago Dei — the image of God — and are worthy of dignity and respect."

For those who are pro-life because of a non-religious understanding of the value of life, the proposed amendment increases not only protection of the unborn but also "those recently born, children and individuals with disabilities — because of their humanity," Richardson said.

Thanks to pro-life groups in Alabama, "a significant number of regulations have been passed that reduce the number of abortions and protect women's health care, as much as legally permitted, from the substandard care they receive in abortion clinics," Johnston said.

Strategic move

Amending the Alabama Constitution will not undo Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, Johnston said. But it is a "very good strategic move in the fight to protect unborn life."

Richardson also noted that while the proposed Amendment No. 2 will not ban abortion in Alabama, "its unqualified passage will signal to the nation and the wider world that abortion is unacceptable, morally repugnant, and, as many like to say, on the wrong side of history." ✠

**Know someone wanting
a career change?**

**The White Shirt book
is a must-read.**

"Michael offers powerful nuggets of inspiration and clear instruction about how to choose the right path for you."
— The Alabama Baptist, Editor of the Book

**THE
WHITE
SHIRT**

*Find Your Peaceful & Life-giving
Career at Any Stage of Life*

MICHAEL ALAN TATE

To purchase the book
or for more information, visit
whiteshirtbook.com.

November 1-4, 2018

Public Shopping

OVER 700 BOOTHS!

Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex

(205) 836-7173

Call for Ticket Info or visit
www.christmasvillagefestival.com

Christmas Village Festival

An Alabama Tradition
arts, crafts & gifts show



Pastor Charles Lewis
recommends Jimmy Dixon



The Benefits of a Reverse Mortgage

- Get cash
- Erase mortgage payments
- Start a growing line of credit
- Purchase a home

Contact Jimmy Dixon

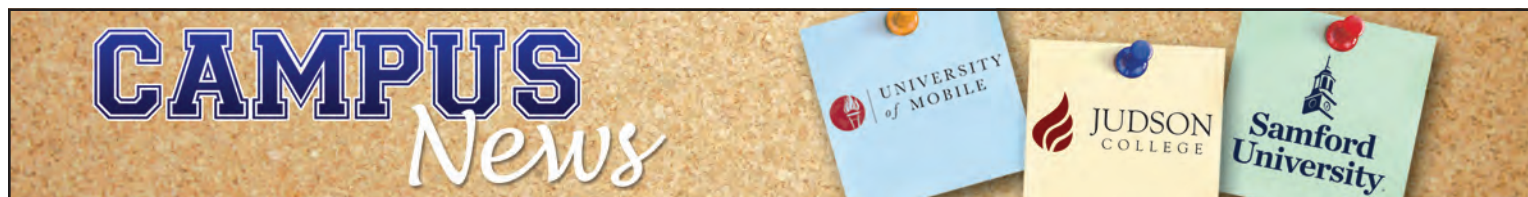
205-567-4800

jdixon@mcgowinking.com



NMLS #207518

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our state
helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Spafford to Perform at JMU:** Jessica Spafford, Judson College's newest assistant professor of music, performed at James Madison University (JMU) Oct. 22–23 as a guest artist at the 38th annual Contemporary Music Festival.



SPAFFORD

Spafford is an alumna of JMU. She joined the music faculty at Judson in August 2018. Spafford and Cindy St. Clair, Judson's music department chair, will collaborate Nov. 13 for a joint faculty recital. The duo also will present a recital at Auburn University in February 2019 and perform at the Music by Women Festival at the Mississippi University for Women in March 2019. ► **Judson College to Host Preview and Scholarship Day on Nov. 10:** Prospective Judson students and their families are invited to visit the Judson campus in Marion for Preview and Scholarship Day on Nov. 10, beginning at 9 a.m.

Prospective students may explore the college's academic programs, meet current students and faculty, and participate in campus tours guided by Judson Student Ambassadors. Testing and auditions for scholarship opportunities

in academic and fine arts areas will be held that day. Athletic tryouts will be held Nov. 9.

More information and a registration form are available at www.judson.edu or by contacting the admissions office at 800-447-9472. ► **Organist Henley Performs at Judson:** The Judson College Music Department hosted organist Christopher Henley on Oct. 11. Henley serves as the organist and music associate of First United Methodist Church of Anniston. In 2016 he was inducted into The Diapason journal's "20 under 30" in recognition for his leadership in the field of organ and choral music.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UM Online Degree in Early Childhood Education Recognized:** University of Mobile's online master of arts in early childhood education has been named No. 3 in the nation using cost metric, academic and online metrics by Affordable Colleges Online.

The master's program offers tracks in early childhood and elementary education, and is one of many graduate programs offered through the university's School of Education at umobile.edu/schoolofeducation. ► **Torch Society Offers Decorating Program:** Diane Cashen, owner of Diane Cashen Interiors, will share her interior design expertise at the November meeting of University of Mobile's

Torch Society on Nov. 8, 10–11:30 a.m. in Ram Hall. Cashen will present tips on creating holiday tables for Thanksgiving through Christmas.

The Torch Society is a service organization that raises funds for college scholarships for UM students. For information call 251-442-2226 or RSVP online at umobile.edu/torchsocietyevents.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford Journalism Program Named No. 1 in Alabama:** Samford University's journalism and mass communication (JMC) major was named the number one journalism program in Alabama for the fourth year in a row by College Factual.

The program was also named the 35th best program nationally, up from 54th in last year's rankings. Additionally, Samford's JMC major was named 4th best journalism program in the Southeast, 5th best journalism program at a Christian college or university nationally and 17th "best value" program nationally.

The JMC program features four study concentration areas in print journalism, broadcast journalism, public relations and advertising. The department also houses two minors in film production and sports media. ► **Dante Scholar Cachey to Speak at Samford:** Samford University will host distinguished scholar Theodore

J. Cachey Jr. for a public lecture, Mapping Hell, on Oct. 26 at 4 p.m. in Reid Chapel.

Cachey is author of several books, a professor of Italian and the Albert J. and Helen M. Ravarino Family Director of Dante and Italian Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

Cachey's lecture at Samford is part of the university's Biennial Teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition Conference, which will focus on the medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri this year. ► **Vanhoozer to Speak at 30th Annual Reformation Heritage Lectures:** Samford University's Beeson Divinity School will host Christian theologian Kevin J. Vanhoozer for the 30th annual Reformation Heritage Lectures on Oct. 30–31.

Vanhoozer, a professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, is widely known for his award-winning books. His most recent book on the Reformation, "Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity," won the best theology/ethics book in 2017.

Lectures are open to the public.✝



VANHOOZER



(augmented reality)

Follow these instructions

1 Download the HP Reveal app from your app store.

2 Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.

3 You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.

4 Look for *The Alabama Baptist (TAB)* augmented reality logo (example shown above). Hold your device over the logo and watch the paper come to life.

5 If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.

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

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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.

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

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

YOUTH PASTOR

Flint Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama. This will be a part-time position. Send resumés to: flintbaptistchurch@att.net.

MINISTER TO STUDENTS

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

MUSIC MINISTER

New Hinson Baptist Church near Slocomb, Alabama, seeking part-time music minister. Call or text resumé to: 334-200-2613, ATTN: Wayne Barrentine. wayneb539@centurytel.net.

BUSINESS

ELROD MOBILITY — GREAT PRICES

Stair-lifts, walk-in tubs, lift-chairs and lightweight take-apart scooters. Saving people a lot of money on walk-in tubs, stair-lifts and showers. Our lift-chairs and scooters are near internet pric-

ing. A+ rating with BBB. We serve Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Sign Services — a Christian operated, full service, lighted sign company located in Pelham, Alabama, for 23 years — is ready to help you expand your church sign ministry. From digital message boards to traditional signs, Reliable Signs will design, fabricate and install statewide. www.reliablesigns.com. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

Title may change, mission the same

'Associational mission strategist' suggested as new title for DOMs

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

It's possible your association's director of missions (DOM) might be going by a different title soon, if he isn't already. A group of nearly 250 DOMs from across the nation who make up the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders (SBCAL) voted unanimously back in June to approve a recommended change from the title DOM to "associational mission strategist" (AMS).

Leading up to the June meeting, a study team surveyed church leaders, DOMs, laypeople and others to get a feel for how associational work was viewed.

The result was a consensus that the new title better fit the contemporary role of a DOM.

Rick Wheeler, study team leader and lead missional strategist for Jacksonville Baptist Association in Florida, said the report was offered "not as a mandate to follow, but as a resource that was shaped by describing how associations are effectively assisting churches to better accomplish the Great Commission."

In addition to associational mission strategist, they also offered "mission strategist" and "lead mission strategist" as possible variations.

The singular word "mission" in the title "conveys the singular focus we have of serving churches to engage with one Great Commission," the report stated.

Neal Hughes, DOM for Montgomery Baptist Association, was one of the 250 who voted in favor of the new title.

He says he knows some DOMs who have chosen to adopt the AMS title or a variation

of it right away. Others, he said, might take longer or choose not to make the switch.

For Hughes it's going to be a subtle transition, he said. He may start phasing it in through a joint title — something like director of missions/associational mission strategist — and give people time to absorb the change.

That's what Rick Barnhart, director of the office of associational missions and church planting for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he is doing in his correspondence as well. He's using a combo title for a few months, then shifting solely to AMS.

But even though that is how he will shift his language from the state level, Barnhart affirmed that it's each individual association's decision as to whether they want to adopt a title change.

"Associations are not only autonomous but they are self-funded," he said. "The associations' executive committees or leadership

have full responsibility to walk alongside their associational missionary to assist them in accomplishing the objectives of that particular association."

That includes developing missions strategies and deciding on the titles of their leadership, Barnhart said.

'Passion for leading'

Mel Johnson, DOM for Autauga Baptist Association, said his association has decided to switch to one of the variations — lead mission strategist.

"I appreciate the term 'lead mission strategist' since it better reflects my passion for leading rather than directing," he said.

To read the full report from the SBCAL visit www.sbcassociations.org/report.



Photo by Doug Rogers

Mel Johnson (right) says he's decided to switch from his former title as director of missions of Autauga Baptist Association to 'lead mission strategist,' a title he believes better fits his role as someone who leads churches to participate in missions. Here, he talks with Pastor Carmelo Medina in Puerto Rico while on a recent trip to find missions opportunities in the country.

Johnson said he serves to equip churches and coordinate missions and the new title fits "hand in glove" with that.

"While ministries of the association are not dependent upon a title, I do feel it better reflects and communicates the unique role that I play in support of our local churches," he said.

Thomas Wright, executive DOM for Mobile Baptist Association, said that for a while now, he's been going by "associational missionary" among his churches but "executive

director of missions" out in the community. The first communicates missions partnership, and the second communicates function and responsibility, he said.

He says he feels the new title fits both. And he appreciates the emphasis on Great Commission strategy.

"Each affiliation of local churches will benefit from including cooperative plans to more effectively reduce the population of hell and impact the community through meeting needs," Wright said. ✝



Photo by Jim Oakley

Anna Speir (right) from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presents Scott Peters, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Brent, a plaque for the church's 200th anniversary.

Brent's Bethel Baptist holds bicentennial celebration

The sanctuary at Bethel Baptist Church, Brent, in Bibb Baptist Association, was full as the church celebrated its 200th anniversary Oct. 14. More than 150 people gathered to recognize this milestone in the church's history.

Bob Terry, president and editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, brought greetings for the service.

Anna Speir presented the church with a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Pastor Scott Peters spoke briefly from 1 Peter 2:4. "For a while our congregation has been largely adults, but we've recently started

some children and youth classes. This has put us in a better position to reach the surrounding community," he said.

Former pastors Al Finch and Reuben Compere shared memories from their time at Bethel Baptist.

Minister of music Danny Russell and the church's choir were joined by Lydia and Philip Fikes, Tanya McLemore and Collins Compere for the service's special music.

A historical presentation,

Remembering Bethel's Past, included members in period costumes sharing stories from the church's historical records.

Bulletins boards that featured old photos of the church and its members were on display.

"Bethel Baptist has a rich history and solid foundation, but is still here to reach one more person," Peters said. (TAB)



Photo by Anna Speir

LETTERS



(continued from page 2)
there are those who are creating distractions and deceptions under the guise of social justice. And it is not John MacArthur.

Perry Green
Troy, Ala.

APPRECIATING WITH FORGIVENESS

The recent helps in *The Alabama Baptist* on Pastor Appreciation Month were excellent, especially those written by Denise George.

I also would like to add the importance of forgiving the pastor for basic human faults and mistakes. Pastors struggle with odd personality traits and weaknesses just like we all do.

We should show grace to our pastor just as we do to family members, friends and others instead of letting the pastor's shortcomings cause hard feelings and affect our attitude, worship and church life.

A little forgiveness would be good for us all, right?

Jerry Wilkins
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

WORSHIP LEADERS NEEDED

One of the greatest needs for many of our Alabama Baptist churches is bivocational or part-time worship leaders. I receive at least five calls or requests each week from churches needing someone to lead worship in their church.

Because of this we at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions would like to develop a resumé database for part-time worship leaders to address the challenges.

Up to this point our office has resourced requests by word of mouth, personal relationships and directing requests toward associational missionaries, Baptist Campus Ministry centers and our Baptist schools. But those methods are not sufficient for the number

of requests we are now receiving. Most bivocational and part-time worship leaders, male and female, fall into these categories:

- ▶ Retired full-time worship leaders
- ▶ School musicians (band directors, choral directors and music teachers)
- ▶ College students
- ▶ Church members who have grown up in a music ministry but do not have formal training.

If you are open to the possibility of serving as a part-time or bivocational worship leader, then please contact me at khibbs@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217.

A resumé form can be downloaded from ALBaptistStaffing.org.

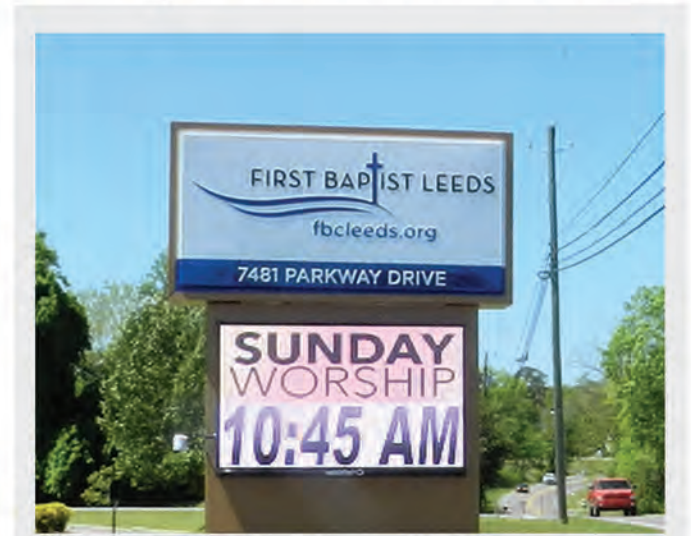
Keith Hibbs
Director of Worship Leadership,
State Board of Missions

Got a good story idea you think TAB readers would enjoy?

Call 1-800-803-5201 ext. 122 or email news@thealabamabaptist.org.



DIGITAL SIGNS



"We were in desperate need of a new outdoor church sign. We reached out to the good folks at Reliable Signs and we found their price quote to be very competitive and their sign quality excellent. What compelled us to go with Reliable Signs was their on-site customer service! If your church needs a new sign, I can't recommend anyone higher than Reliable Signs! Great folks, great price, outstanding personal service!"

-Dr. Steven Weems, Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church
Leeds, AL

www.reliablesigns.com
1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955



2018 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

Monday, November 12, 2018
First Baptist Church, Trussville

"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

1 CORINTHIANS 2:2

Guest Speakers

- Dr. Robert Smith Jr.**
- Dr. Kevin Hamm**
- Nathan Daniels**
- Dr. Reginald Calvert**
- Dr. Timothy George**
- Tom Richter**
- Dr. Hershael York**
- Dr. H.B. Charles**

PRESENTING SPONSOR



CO-SPONSORS



TECHNOLOGY SPONSOR



'Refreshed and encouraged'

Pastors Conference to be packed with encouragement from start to finish, Watkins says

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Daven Watkins has a lot to say about this year's Pastors Conference, but one of his main points is this — you don't want to miss a single second.

Be refreshed

"I want to encourage every pastor to carve out the time to come Nov. 12 and be refreshed and encouraged," said Watkins, Pastors Conference president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham. "Right from the beginning of the morning, we'll be starting strong with Dr. Robert Smith, and all day long you'll hear from dear brothers who love the Lord, love preaching and are gifted at what they do."

The conference, set for

Nov. 12 at 9 a.m. at First Baptist Church, Trussville, will feature Smith, Christian preaching professor at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, and seven other men who will bring messages on the topic "Preaching Christ."

"I wanted to try to put together a conference that is beneficial to pastors and one that would

be very inspiring, encouraging and helpful," Watkins said. "I was thinking through the idea of preaching Christ — in every text our goal as a preacher is

to preach Christ and Him crucified."

Speakers

During the day, speakers will walk through eight genres of Scripture from the Pentateuch to the Psalms, then through the New Testament concluding with

the Book of Revelation.

"Each one who is preaching is going to give us an example of what preaching Christ in that genre looks like," Watkins said.

► Smith will kick off the conference with "Preaching Christ in the Pentateuch."

► Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Baptist Church, will preach Christ in the Psalms.

► Nathan Daniels, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Andalusia, will preach about Christ from the prophets.

► Reginald Calvert, pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church, Bessemer, will preach from the Gospels.

► Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School, will preach Christ through the parables.

► Tom Richter, pastor of First

Pastors Conference schedule

Morning Session — 9 a.m. to noon

9:30 a.m. Message: Robert Smith

10:25 a.m. Message: Kevin Hamm

11:20 a.m. Message: Nathan Daniels

Afternoon Session — 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1:35 p.m. Election of Officers

1:55 p.m. Message: Reginald Calvert

2:50 p.m. Message: Timothy George

3:50 p.m. Message: Tom Richter

Evening Session — 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

6:50 p.m. Message: Hershael York

8:05 p.m. Message: H.B. Charles

Christ in the epistles.

► H.B. Charles, pastor-teacher of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, will preach Christ from Revelation.

Also during the day, Brett Fuller, worship pastor at First, Pelham, will lead worship, and a combined choir from churches in the Birmingham metro area will lead the evening session.

'Recharged'

"All of us need to get away from time to time to get rejuvenated and recharged," Watkins

said. "This will be a place to hear some phenomenal preaching of the gospel and walk away motivated to say, 'Yes, this is what I do and why I do what I do.'"

For more information, visit alabaptistpc.com.

Various annual meetings set for November in Trussville

Each year prior to and during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, various groups across Alabama Baptist life meet to connect and conduct business. Meeting alongside this year's annual meeting, which will be held at First Baptist Church, Trussville, on Nov. 13-14, are:

► **Alabama Church Planter Network** — The Alabama Church Planter Network will have a dinner Nov. 11 on the fourth floor of Cooney Hall at Samford University, 4:30-8:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Kenny Grant, senior pastor at Calvary Baptist Temple in Savannah, Georgia, and a planter of churches in Savannah and Brunswick, Georgia. Grant's teaching ministry has extended to a wide range of groups and events throughout the United States. Child care will be provided. For more information or to register, visit plantalabama.org.

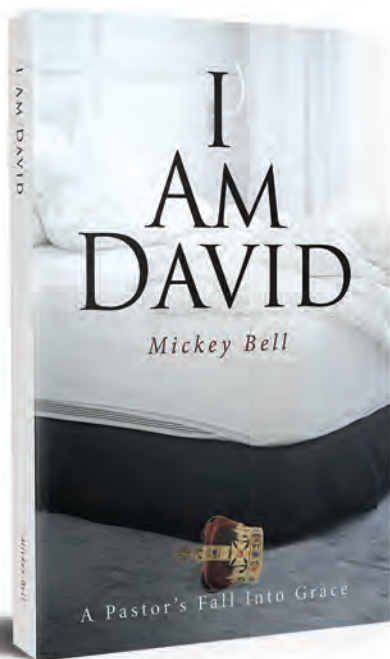
► **Alabama Network of Christian Community Ministers (ANCCM)** — ANCCM will meet Nov. 12 at First Baptist Church, Indian Springs, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Lunch is included. Guest speaker will be Robyn Mitchell from

MannaMarket Organics, which serves families all over the metro area with organic products. For more information, contact Kristy Kennedy at kkennedy@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, ext. 311. Kennedy requests that those attending would RSVP by Nov. 9.

► **Directors of Missions and Mission Belles** — The Alabama Conference of Directors of Missions (DOM) and Mission Belles will hold its annual meeting Nov. 12 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Several speakers will share prior to the 11:45 a.m. lunch, and Tim Smith, president of University of Mobile, will speak after lunch. The Mission Belles will hold separate meetings prior to and following lunch.

Deadline to register is Nov. 8. For more information or to register, email Barry Cospers at barry@bessemerbaptist.org and Randall Stoner at mbadom@charter.net. Send payment for the meeting to Barry Cospers, c/o Bessemer Baptist Association, 1630 Powder Plant Road SW, Bessemer, AL 35022.

► **Pastors Conference** (see story, this page). (Grace Thornton)



"A Must Read"

"What a story, read and listen as the man of scriptures becomes the man in the mirror.

Be blessed as you read an encouraging finish to a challenging story."

Johnny Hunt

Pastor, FBC Woodstock, GA

"Pastor Mickey hit the ball out of the park with his latest book, I Am David! I began reading it one evening and could not put it down. His brutal honesty and transparency about personal struggles and storms are both refreshing and challenging. If you are tired of living with discouragement and defeat and desire freedom...real freedom...God's freedom...do yourself a favor and read, I Am David!"

Kevin Hamm

Pastor, FBC Gardendale, AL

In Christian Bookstores or online now at
IAmDavidTheBook.com

Mickey Bell
Author, I Am David



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 28

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

WITH OBEDIENCE James 1:19-27; 2:1-4

Heeding (1:19-21)

James is a wise and loving pastor. He desires the best for the people of God as they press forward from their faith into their sanctification as witnesses of the resurrection. For this reason, James commands believers to listen quickly, speak cautiously and remain cool-tempered.

Too often we are quick to speak and slow to listen, especially in this digital age where opinions are the currency we exchange on social media. In God's economy the opposite is valued — someone who listens more than they speak, someone who intently hears the word of God, the counsel of godly believers and the experience of all people, whether they weep or rejoice (Rom. 12:15).

Listening has the power of diffusing tension and dousing anger. Such practices are avenues to maintaining a loving community and true witness of God's own character. In fact, it is the goal of every believer to display the character of God to the world. This is why James commands believers to rid themselves of "moral filth and evil," the exact opposite of our morally perfect and good God.

Doing (1:22-25)

Here is one of the most well-known sayings in the book of James. The Christian life does not exist apart from action, being stirred to good works like reconciliation, discipleship and evangelism. Often as believers in the reformation tradition, we approach an active faith with uncertainty. After all, are we not "justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28)? Yes, and amen! For it could not be any other way. But justification is only the beginning. As regenerated sons and daughters of God, we embark on a life of Spirit-em-

powered sanctification, which enables us to be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

The Apostle Paul reminds us, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). The reformer John Calvin put it this way: "It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone." Our faith always precedes our works, but our works ought to always follow our faith. Otherwise, James warns, we deceive ourselves, like a person who, after viewing themselves in a mirror (i.e. in light of their new identity in Christ's "perfect law of freedom"), walk away and forget that they are now Spirit-empowered doers for the glory of the Lord.

Loving (1:26-27; 2:1-4)

What does it look like to be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only? Submitting ourselves to the lordship of Christ in all things, from our speech (i.e., controlling our tongues) to our concerns for true justice (i.e., caring for the oppressed, like orphans and widows) and abstaining from favoritism. If we are honest with ourselves, these three commands are difficult to follow. The root cause is our hearts.

The Lord Jesus taught that what is stored in our hearts overflows from our mouths (Matt 12:34; Luke 6:45). Our hearts would rather see ourselves cared for before the orphan and widow. Favoritism rises up from our hearts when we act on our belief that favoring someone will get us what we want.

In all these things, James is implicitly asking a difficult question: To which frequency is our heart tuned? Have we tuned our hearts to sin, speaking and acting in a way that reflects our most hidden, ungodly desires? Or have we tuned our hearts to the Father's heart, speaking and acting in a way that reflects His proclaimed desires? ✠

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

A PRAYER OF SURRENDER Matthew 6:10-11a; James 4:6-10,13-17

One of the most intriguing aspects of the New Testament is the fact that the Gospels give us four pictures of who Jesus is rather than just one.

One of the important results of having four pictures of Jesus is that we can see how one Gospel places emphasis on a particular message while another emphasizes something different. We see this especially in the way Mark and Luke preserve Jesus' teaching on the end times.

When Jesus prepared to ascend to heaven in Acts 1 the disciples asked, "Is this the time when You will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

The disciples had been devastated by Jesus' death. They had been shocked to see Him raised again. Now they wondered if the time had come for Jesus to finally bring God's kingdom to earth.

Mark's Gospel tends to share the outlook expressed in the disciples' question. Writing just before the time when Rome would come and destroy Jerusalem, Mark naturally felt that it must be the crisis moment that would lead to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Luke's Gospel approaches matters from a somewhat different angle.

Writing in the years on the other side of Rome's destruction of Israel, Luke had come to understand that Jesus would indeed return, but it would be a while before He did. This led to the important question, "So how should we live now?"

For Luke the answer was simple: We should live now as if God's kingdom were already here among us. While we wait for Jesus to return and establish His physical kingdom, we should start living out now the values of His spiritual kingdom.

Pray with a heart of surrender and submission to the Lord. (Matt. 6:10-11a)

It is just this sentiment that Jesus expresses in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come ... on earth as it is in heaven." He instructs them to pray that the values of God's heavenly kingdom will begin to flourish on earth in the same way they are exercised perfectly in heaven. As Jesus expresses it, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Humbly surrender to the lordship of Christ. (James 4:6-10)

Living out God's kingdom here on earth requires first and foremost humility on the part of those who claim to be His followers. The values of God's kingdom revolve around notions of submission to God and treating other people as being more important than ourselves.

We cannot love God with all our hearts, souls and strength, nor can we love our neighbors as ourselves, if we are concerned primarily with our own pride of place. This is why James insists that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." For God to extend His kingdom through us, we must humbly surrender our own pride.

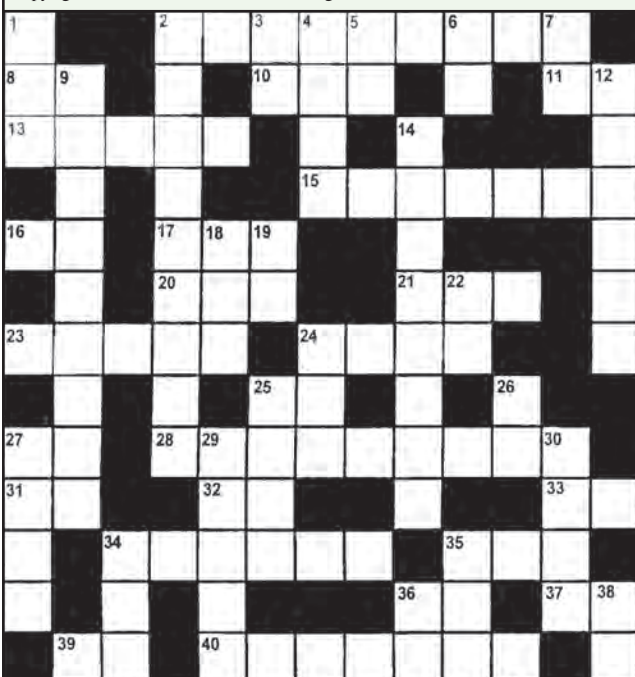
Humbly surrender your plans to God's plans. (James 4:13-17)

When we surrender to God, our hearts and hands will become ready instruments for living out God's kingdom. Instead of looking out solely for what we want, we will begin to internalize the aspects of God's law that urge us to put others first and serve others.

Like Jesus, we will begin to seek out the stigmatized and oppressed, the sick and the poor, and we will begin to extend the embrace of God's love to them in the same way God extended His love to us. ✠

Christian Crossword

Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- ___ of Judea. (Matt. 2:1)
- They rose ___ early. (Num. 14:40)
- Oxford English Dictionary. (abbr.)
- Emergency Room. (abbr.)
- Melchisedec, king of ___. (Heb. 7:1)
- Ahab called ___. (1 Kings 18:3)
- This is the way, walk ye in ___. (Isa. 30:21)
- That we may ___ and believe. (Mark 15:32)
- For by ___ were all things created. (Col. 1:16)
- The ___ appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself. (Prov. 27:25)
- Temptress.
- Decays.

25. ___ and Ma.

- ___ the cross.
- Who smote ___ the son of Jerubbesheth? (2 Sam. 11:21)
- ___ it not written? (Mark 11:17)
- ___ angel of the Lord. (Judg. 6:11)
- Each. (abbr.)
- Saul of ___.
- Ye seek me, ___. (John 6:26)
- Either/___.
- This was ___ of whom I spake. (John 1:15)
- I in them, and thou in ___. (John 17:23)
- Abraham took a wife, and her name was ___. (Gen. 25:1)

Down

- Liquid of decay.
- In the wilderness of ___. (Gen. 21:14)
- ___ and fro.

4. David was one.

450. (Roman)
- Hello. (informal)
- Without ___ ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)
- ___, and Medes. (Acts 2:9)
- Belonging to the son of Bani. (Neh. 3:17)
- Rachel ... called his name ___. (Gen. 30:8)
- Masculine object. (German)
- Printer's measure.
- ___ ye have ... received Christ Jesus. (Col. 2:6)
- A ___ caught in a thicket. (Gen. 22:13)
- Sewing fasteners.
- Before Christ. (abbr.)
- Olive and sunflower.
- The son of Abinoam. (Judg. 4:6)
- Sidon ... and ___.

(Gen. 10:15)

- Open ___ door.
- National Rifle Association. (abbr.)
- This ___ that.
- For example. (abbr.)





Media reviews

DOCUMENTARY

Kirk Cameron's 'Connect' tackles parents' concerns about kids, smartphones

By Michael Foust
The Alabama Baptist

Kirk Cameron's latest project wasn't birthed in the mind of a Hollywood filmmaker. It began when he and his wife bought their six children smartphones, believing that the devices would help with schoolwork.

Instead his children were spending an excessive amount of time on the devices. Cameron then saw a story in the news about a predator who found a child through social media, and he knew he had to act.

The result was "Connect," a documentary in which Cameron interviews experts and even smartphone addicts in a quest for answers about the role of technology among children. His goal is to help parents navigate childrearing in an age of social media, smartphones and tablets.

Available now

"Connect" is available on DVD and is now streaming through Netflix.

"The concern among parents is universal," he told me. "I wanted to wrap my mind around this whole subject to help my wife and our kids but also everyone else."

Cameron said he wants to assist families in learning how "they can use [technology] for good rather than it being used for evil."

Question & answer

The Alabama Baptist spoke recently with Cameron about "Connect." Following is a transcript, edited for clarity:

Question: What dangers are you referencing when you discuss a tween girl or boy having a smartphone?

Cameron: When we gave our kids smartphones, there were the obvious immediate concerns: Wow, you're spending a lot of time on your phone. Hey, you're not talking much. What kind of content are you viewing on your phone?

But I wanted to really get to the bottom of things, which is why I interviewed five experts (including) a neuroscientist to understand biologically what's actually happening in the formation of the brain.

I also talked to a psychologist, a family counselor, a technology entrepreneur and a minister to examine the spiritual side of things. And some of the more surprising concerns I found on the neurological side is that kids are physically addicted to their phones. There are chemicals be-



Photo courtesy of Provident Films

ing released, called dopamine, which cause an addictive behavior similar to alcohol and drugs. And kids are spending hours each day on their devices.

What we need to understand is that these phones are actually designed to be addictive, and you can hear this out of the mouth of several of the developers and designers. They're designed to make you addicted to them so that they can consume as much of your time as possible. That's how they make their money.

Question: What concerns do you have with social media?

Cameron: Although kids are more connected today to followers and friends through social media, experts are saying that this is the loneliest generation of kids ever because of the technology. That's a result of them lacking personal relationship skills that are developed by meeting and spending time face to face. That's left them with this sort of virtual

phony substitute for a friend. It's also left them ill-equipped to be successful in the real world, to hold down a job, to have a strong marriage, to be able to have good personal human relationships.

At what age?

Question: The million-dollar question that lots of parents ask is: "When should my child get a smartphone?" What do you say?

Answer: I would say that your kids have been entrusted to you by God, not to your public school, not even to your church. Your children have been given to you as their first line of defense and their protectors. So I would say it's whenever you as their mom or dad think they're ready for it. I can't tell you the age because I don't know your kids.

I know some kids who are far more capable of handling freedom than other kids are. And it doesn't have really much to do

"Experts are saying that this is the loneliest generation of kids ever because of the technology."

Kirk Cameron

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.

with their age. I would say it's when you as a parent decide that they're ready for one and that they can be responsible with that kind of freedom. I think "Connect" will help you to determine that.

Question: What's in your future?

Cameron: I'm actually producing my very first talk show. That's going to be coming out in 2019. We don't have the final title for it yet, but it's going to be a really cool talk show — kind of active and on the move and a talk show with a twist. It's going to have a lot of heart and faith at the center of it. It's going to be on the Trinity Broadcast Network. And then I'm going to be producing a couple other movies.✝

101.5 · 97.5
THE RIVER
Safe For **YOUR** Family

YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC
in the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.

www.wrvfmtheriver.com

'Missionary dogs'

Labrador retrievers put their paws on the gospel

Johnny Morgan's life has really gone to the dogs, and he couldn't be happier. "I'm getting to use a passion of mine for God. It's a blessing to use my Labrador retrievers to teach about obedience, and present the gospel of Jesus Christ in a unique way," said Morgan, founder of the ministry Obedience 2 Death.

The nonprofit organization, based in Denham Springs, Louisiana, uses dogs as visual illustrations, and blends timeless biblical truths with humor to show the power of obedience in a believer's life.

Morgan named his ministry after Philippians 2:8: "Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross."

"We have to die to ourselves," Morgan said.

An avid hunter, Morgan was raised around hunting dogs. While growing up he trained and hunted with rabbit dogs, coon hounds and squirrel dogs. He is amazed at the quirks and turns in his life that opened the door to a ministry where dogs help lead people to the Lord.

"God can use anything we have if we make ourselves available. It's very humbling to me that God is using a country boy and his dogs for His glory," Morgan said.

Obedience 2 Death ministry was birthed in July 2013.

Morgan, pastor of Live Oak Baptist Church, Denham Springs, since April 1 of this year, served as the student minister and associate pastor of the church from 2004.

When a tornado ripped the roof off the worship center in 2008 the congregation started meeting in a local high school gym.

In May 2008 the church invited Hank Hough, founder of Kingdom Dogs Ministry in Houston, to make a presentation.

Led by the Holy Spirit

After that event, Morgan and Hough became friends, and eventually Morgan became a presenter for Kingdom Dogs Ministry.

By 2013, Morgan knew the Holy Spirit was leading him to start his own dog evangelism ministry, and through a group of generous friends Morgan was able to purchase his first dog, a chocolate Labrador retriever.

Morgan calls the dog "Glory" when giving commands. But the canine, a dual champion in land and water competitions, is officially registered under a different name — a name that spoke personally to Morgan.

"When I asked Hank what Glory's registered name was, he told me and I got real quiet. Glory's registered name was Psalm 46:10. That's my life verse. It was like God had ordained Glory to be my first dog in this ministry," Morgan said, explaining that Hough uses Scripture to register his ministry dogs with the American Kennel Club.

It is a practice Morgan has continued with the purchase of his two other dogs. Zach, a 4-year-old chocolate Labrador retriever, is registered as "Proverbs 3:5-6." Morgan calls his 18-month-old yellow Labrador Trinity, but registered the retriever as "2 Corinthians 13:14."

"The curiosity about the dogs' registered names has sparked conversations that have led to salvations," Morgan said.

Morgan has traveled all over with his dogs, visiting churches for youth events, men's retreats and revivals and, appearing at a number of schools under the umbrella of the Fellowship of Christian Students — sometimes with the entire student body present.

During the last five years, Morgan said, the

Obedience 2 Death ministry has reached out to more than 120,000 people, with more than 13,000 people accepting Christ.

During his presentations Morgan shares his testimony and tells how Matthew 6:24 — that no man can serve two masters — relates to him. He says there was a time in his life when he entered beagle dogs in competitions all over and it consumed his life.

He gave that up, but God gave him a new passion in training dogs for gospel presentations.

As the "missionary dogs" listen to his voice to find a hidden stuffed sheep or go to fetch a "bumper" that Morgan has tossed, he communicates the simple and profound truths found in the word of God. The dogs demonstrate obedience in a variety of ways, much to the delight of audiences young and old.

"My heart is for people to come to the Lord and be disciplined," Morgan said. "I want to be obedient and go where the Lord leads." (BP)



BP photo

Johnny Morgan is aided in his evangelism ministry during a day camp in May in Zachary, Louisiana, by Zach, a 4-year-old chocolate Labrador retriever, and Trinity, an 18-month-old yellow Labrador.



Bethlehem mayor criticizes Netanyahu

BETHLEHEM — In an opinion piece published Oct. 15 in Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper, Bethlehem Mayor Anton Salman suggested Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is using Israel's Christian community for political purposes.

Salman was responding to comments made by Netanyahu on Oct. 14 at the Christian Media Summit in Jerusalem, a gathering of Christian journalists from around the world.

In his speech Netanyahu criticized treatment of Israeli Christians by the Palestinian Authority, noting that Bethlehem's Christian population has shrunk from 80 percent to 20 percent since the city was transferred to Palestinian control. Netanyahu said the change happened because "Christians are being constricted, pressured ... [and] persecuted," *Haaretz* reported.

In his response, Salman, a Palestinian Christian, said Bethlehem has been cut off from Jerusalem by illegal Israeli settlements. He said Netanyahu's use of the Bible to justify Israeli occupation continues to rankle Palestinians, and is part of a "dangerous trend that aims at turning a political question into a religious war." (TAB)

Terrorists vow to hold Sharibu a 'slave for life'

DAPCHI, Nigeria — A terrorist group holding Christian schoolgirl Leah Sharibu hostage has vowed to keep her as a "slave for life."

The Islamic State West Africa Province, a faction of Boko Haram, has held 15-year-old Sharibu since Feb. 19, 2018, when she was among 110 girls abducted at the Government Girls' Science and Technical College in Dapchi. The other girls were later released, but Sharibu, the only Christian in the group, was kept because she refused to renounce her faith.

Nigeria's online news source The Cable reported Oct. 15 that Boko Haram executed Hauwa Leman, a 24-year-old midwife and aid worker with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Leman was one of three humanitarian workers abducted by Boko Haram in March 2018. Another of the hostages, Saifura Ahmed, was executed in September. The third woman, Alice Ngaddah, a Christian who works with UNICEF, will also be kept as a slave, the group said. (TAB)

Christian bakers win UK 'gay' cake case

LONDON — In a case very similar to one in the United States, the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom has ruled in favor of a Northern Ireland bakery that refused to bake a cake and decorate it with a slogan supporting same-sex "marriage."

The U.K. case pitted an LGBT rights activist against the bakery, whose owners cited their Christian beliefs barring gay "marriage" when they canceled the cake order.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom where same-sex "marriage" is not permitted, but a lower court ruled against the bakers. They then took the case to the U.K.'s highest court, which ruled in a unanimous decision that the bakers' refusal to bake the cake was based on opposition to the requested wording not discrimination against the customer.

Peter Tatchell, a British gay rights activist, welcomed the ruling, writing that "in a democracy people should be able to discriminate against ideas with which they disagree." (RNS)

More Catholic bishops defrocked for abuse

VATICAN CITY — On Oct. 13, Pope Francis defrocked two more Chilean clergy accused of sexually abusing minors and signaled more openness concerning clergy sex abuse of children.

The Vatican issued a detailed statement announcing the removal of Jose Cox Huneus, a former archbishop, and Marco Antonio Ordenes Fernandez, a former bishop. The statement made clear the two were defrocked for abusing minors with evidence so overwhelming that a canonical trial was unnecessary.

The Vatican said the move could not be appealed. (TAB)