



INSIDE



UM's Project Serve ministers to communities in Mobile, Baldwin counties

◆ Page 4



Theology 101 — The Church as a Flock

◆ Page 6



Alabama Baptist State Convention releases order of business for 2018 annual meeting

◆ Page 17



Students at Nazareth Baptist School have questions for the guest speaker visiting from the United States. Tour groups to the Holy Land led by *The Alabama Baptist* always include the school as one of the stops.

Photo by Bob Terry

# 'Faith comes by hearing'

## Nazareth Baptist School reaches young people of all faiths with gospel

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
The Alabama Baptist

A new school term officially kicked off in September, but the mission of teaching children and sharing the gospel of Christ goes on year-round at the Nazareth Baptist School (NBS).

The only Baptist K-12 school in Israel and the only evangelical school recognized by the country's education ministry, NBS offers

students a great education, said Roger Mardis, president of Friends of Nazareth (FON), a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that helps support the school. But students get much, much more.

"We get to share the gospel with them every day and see many of them come to know the Lord," Mardis said. "[The school] is an amazing evangelistic opportunity we Baptists have in the hometown of Christ."

Students from all religious backgrounds are among the more than 3,000 alumni of the school, which began in 1935 as an initiative of what is now the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1991 the school became a private evangelical Christian school under indigenous leadership.

"Families want their children to get into the school because of the education," Mardis said.

But whether Muslim, atheist or Christian, all students at the school attend required chapel and Bible study classes. In addition, students and community youth have the opportunity to participate in after-school clubs, camps, Vacation Bible School (VBS) and other activities that expose them to the gospel on a consistent basis.

### 'Trust the Lord'

"'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God,' so we give gospel opportunities and trust the Lord to do the work," Mardis said.

This summer NBS held VBS for three consecutive weeks. On the first day 260 students registered.

Week-long summer camps held at the Baptist Village near Tel Aviv also draw some 500-600 students. Both are terrific programs that rely on volunteers, many from the United States, Mardis said.

"Interns and teams from all over the United States and the world partner with us and local believers," he said. "It's an incredible opportunity. There are limitations in some places in Israel as to what you can share and evangelize. At Baptist Village, there are no limitations. Eternity is altered because of these camps and VBS opportunities."

Mardis, a former Alabama Baptist pastor, saw firsthand the great work being done through NBS two years ago when he served on a missions team from Agape Baptist Church, Scottsboro, in Tennessee River  
(See 'Sharing,' 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

## A Special Time of the Year

November 12–14 will be a special time of the year for Baptists in Alabama. The big event is the annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

But that is just one of the many meetings that will bring hundreds of Baptists from across the state to First Baptist Church, Trussville, for three days of important activities.

Monday will feature attractions for most everyone. The Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference is expected to draw the largest crowd of the Monday activities. Pastors Conference President Daven Watkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, has assembled an array of preachers charged to help pastors and others understand how Christ is proclaimed in various parts of the Bible.

### Christ proclaimed

Renowned Beeson Divinity School Professor of Preaching Robert Smith opens the day at 9 a.m. showing how Christ is proclaimed in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). The final message of the night will focus on preaching Christ from Revelation. In between, participants will learn about preaching Christ from the Psalms, the prophets, the Gospels, the parables, from Acts and from the epistles of the Bible.

A special resource available during the Pastors Conference will be the nearly 40 exhibits by services ranging from Christian literature options to church lending sources to building products and supplies. Most of these exhibits will be available only during the Pastors Conference so church leaders will want to spend part of the morning or afternoon seeing how the various resources might be helpful to their various churches.

While pastors are learning new insights into Scripture and discovering new resources for their churches, others will be involved in training and skill development. The Alabama Baptist Church Planter Network will meet at Samford University in Birmingham for a four-hour study time. The Alabama Network of Christian Community Ministers will meet at First Baptist Church, Indian Springs, to learn new ways to help needy families. Alabama's Singing Men and Women will gather



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

for final rehearsals before helping lead worship at the state convention meeting Tuesday morning.

Associational mission strategists also will have a focused time of learning featuring University of Mobile President Tim Smith.

Another important meeting on that Monday is the gathering of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). This board directs the activities of the staff of the SBOM and acts in behalf of the state convention between annual sessions in matters not assigned to other entities.

At the SBOM meeting primary attention is likely to focus on final preparation for the board's report to the convention which will be presented Tuesday afternoon.

So Monday will be a busy day, an important day, a special time for Alabama Baptists even though the ABSC annual meeting will not have begun.

If possible, plan to attend the Pastors Conference. It is open to everyone and promises to be a great experience. If you want to know more about how the state convention operates, SBOM meetings are open to all Alabama Baptists.

Tuesday begins two of the most important days of the year for the work Alabama Baptists do together. The annual meeting is the time when Baptists exercise their responsibility and stewardship for that work.

Yes, there will be times of inspiration. Tuesday evening usually focuses on inspiration and this year Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, will be the featured speaker. A Samford graduate, Mohler is celebrating his 25th year as president of Southern Seminary.

Other special times of inspiration will be the President's Address delivered by John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, and the convention sermon, this year delivered by Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washing-

ton Park in Montgomery. Many Baptists will remember Jones for his outstanding message during the 2018 Evangelism Conference in February.

But the annual meeting is also about business. New officers will be elected. Directors, trustees and commissioners will be approved to oversee the related entities of the state convention. An annual budget will be approved to support all that Baptists do together.

Usually election of officers is filled with suspense, but not this year. So far only one nominee each for president, first vice president and second vice president have been announced. While other nominees may yet appear, any serious challenges are unlikely at this late date, especially since the announced candidates are so widely known for their previous service.

After several years of declining budget goals, the proposed ABSC budget for 2019 will be an

increase of \$500,000 over the current budget for a total of \$37.5 million. In presenting the proposal to the SBOM in August, Executive Director Rick Lance said he was confident that for the first time in several years the proposed budget goal could be met.

Cooperative Program offerings since that time have probably increased Lance's confidence, since it now appears this year's offering may meet or surpass the \$37.5 million goal.

Whenever Baptists meet it seems something unexpected always happens. That is part of the experience of being Baptists. Any messenger from

any cooperating church can nominate someone for office or introduce an amendment to an SBOM recommendation or a resolution or motion.

It is always the churches — through their messengers — that decide what the state convention will do. Never does the convention tell churches what they must do.

### Pray and participate

That dynamic helps make the annual meeting a special time because no one ever knows what will happen when the president bangs the gavel calling Alabama Baptists into annual session.

If possible, be a part of this special time of the year. Come to the Pastors Conference or one of the other meetings. Attend the annual meeting of the state convention. You will find it really is a worthwhile effort. Above all, pray for Alabama Baptists as we gather to do the Lord's business during this special time of the year. 🙏

***“Be a part of this special time of the year. Come to the Pastors Conference or one of the other meetings. Attend the annual meeting of the state convention. You will find it really is a worthwhile effort.”***

Connect with us  
 >>>> **ONLINE** <<<<

 [thealabamabaptist.org](http://thealabamabaptist.org)

 [facebook.com/thealabamabaptist](https://facebook.com/thealabamabaptist)

 [twitter.com/alabamabaptist](https://twitter.com/alabamabaptist)



"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

# Sharing the gospel

## Alabama Baptist churches can help with mission of Nazareth Baptist School

(continued from page 1)

Baptist Association. He joined the FON board and began to talk to others in Alabama about the school and summer programs.

He also learned more about the operations of the ministry. Then on Jan. 4, 2018, the board elected him president of FON, a new position that focuses on establishing more and deeper relationships with ministry partners in the United States.

Mardis said he wants to bring "awareness and dollars" to help NBS expand its facilities and its reach. There are many opportunities and many needs, he said, especially for renovations at the school. Recent flooding made some renovations essential. But the school also needs more classroom space. The main school was built to accommodate 250-300 students, and the school has far out-paced that capacity.

### Ultimate goal

Mardis said the ultimate goal is to purchase additional property and build more classroom space. The school is licensed for up to 1,800 students, but space makes that number impossible — for now. That's why Mardis wants to speak to churches, missions conferences and organizations in Alabama and across the United States who might be interested in learning more about the NBS mission and helping the school financially.

**For more information  
about Friends of  
Nazareth and the needs  
at the Nazareth Baptist  
School, go to [www.friendsofnazareth.org](http://www.friendsofnazareth.org). To contact  
Roger Mardis to  
speak at your church  
or missions event,  
email him at [roger@friendsofnazareth.org](mailto:roger@friendsofnazareth.org)  
or call 256-599-6344.**



Photo by Roger Mardis

Students from all religious backgrounds are among the more than 3,000 alumni of Nazareth Baptist School, which began in 1935 as an initiative of what is now the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"To be able to grow and reach more people with the gospel, we need more campus space," Mardis said. "We've been in discussion with locals for several years to purchase property and we've got a spot that would be ideal. But to even begin discussions we need \$2 million. We're not there yet

but churches and individuals can help."

In the meantime, the mission of NBS continues and money won't slow it down, Mardis said.

"There are incredible people in Nazareth, godly people who love the Lord and have a heart for Christ," he said. "Sharing the gospel — that's who we are and that's what we are about." ✝

## Disaster relief continues in southeast Alabama, Florida

Volunteers with Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) are still at work in southeast Alabama.

Chainsaw teams continue to help people clear trees off homes and property. Because the workload in the Dothan area remains heavy, Alabama Baptist DR teams and trained individuals in admin and chaplaincy are still being deployed to southeast Alabama through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Though most jobs require training, some associations have requested volunteers who are able to help drag debris to the street.

In the Florida panhandle, where Hur-

ricane Michael knocked homes off their foundations and caused widespread power and utilities outages, disaster relief teams from Florida and other states also continue to work.

The recovery process in Florida will be "long-term," according to Lewis Miller, Florida Baptist Convention West Regional Catalyst. He said churches wishing to assist damaged churches through prayer and material support can contact him at [LMiller@fbaptist.org](mailto:LMiller@fbaptist.org) or 352-603-2570 to identify potential partnerships.

For more information or to donate to ongoing efforts, go to [SBDR.org](http://SBDR.org). (TAB)

## 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



UM students and professors cleared grass and debris from tombstones at Oaklawn Cemetery in Mobile as part of an effort to document graves of black WWII veterans buried there.

# 'Image-bearers of Christ'



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile

## UM's 8th annual Project Serve ministers to communities in Mobile, Baldwin counties

**P**aint stroke by paint stroke, the images began to appear. Mardi Gras masks. The USS Alabama. Magnolia blossoms. And "Home of the Tigers," the mascot of the James M. Seals Jr. Community Center in Mobile, where several recreational teams, including a wheelchair basketball team, play regularly.

Rhonda McDaniel, facility supervisor at Seals Community Center, said the mural has already gotten a lot of attention.

"Everybody, young and old, seems to like it," she said. "It enhances the gym area."

The center's new mural was just one of the projects University of Mobile (UM) students worked on Oct. 19 as part of the university's 8th annual Project Serve.

More than 1,000 faculty and staff volunteered at more than 60 sites in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Volunteers spread out to help at local food pantries and soup kitchens, at elementary schools and recreation centers and a variety of other community and ministry locations.

### 'Show off Christ'

One of the mural painters was UM student Caitlyn Boley, who said Project Serve is all about being imago dei, or image-bearers of Christ. The phrase was printed on the back of the red shirts Project Serve participants wore, and it's a reminder to the students, Boley said.

It's "the reason we come out into the community and paint murals and show off Christ and what He's doing in our school," she said. "We just want to represent Him well in all that we do."

Project Serve has been around

for a few years, but in the past couple of years, every Friday has been set apart as a Focus Friday — a day with no classes when students can engage in service projects.

Focus Fridays and Project Serve are all part of UM's culture of community service, said UM President Timothy Smith.

"It's an opportunity to continue our mission," Smith said. "Students get to go out every Friday to serve their community, but (Project Serve) is an opportunity for us to all go out together to fulfill our Great Commission calling."

Students regularly use Focus Fridays to volunteer locally, and

many spend fall and spring breaks traveling to inner cities across the nation to partner with churches.

When a natural disaster occurs, students are eager to support recovery efforts with manpower, donations and prayers.

But Project Serve is an opportunity for everyone to work together on a single day to make a difference in the university's backyard, organizers said.

This year's Project Serve began with an opening rally on the front steps of Weaver Hall

featuring a selection of music by RamCorps, UM's brass and percussion ensemble.

A prayer and commission by



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile  
UM students volunteer in local elementary schools during Project Serve 2018.

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](http://www.christmasvillagefestival.com)

**Christmas Village Festival**  
An Alabama Tradition  
arts, crafts & gifts show

Download  
Our Free  
Church-Bus  
Buyers Guide.

**THEBUSCENTER**.com  
Endorsed by LifeWay/OneSource

Know someone wanting  
a career change?  
The White Shirt book  
is a must-read.

"Michael offers powerful nuggets of inspiration and clear instructions about how to choose the right path for you."  
—Neil Robinson, author of The 360 Day Plan

**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](http://whiteshirtbook.com).

# Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

## Southern Seminary honors Mohler for 25 years as president

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's trustees presented a resolution of appreciation to R. Albert Mohler Jr. to celebrate his 25th anniversary as president of the institution during a special chapel service Oct. 9.

A sermon by Atlanta-area pastor James Merritt and reflections from Mohler, who became the seminary's ninth president in 1993, also were part of the celebration.

The resolution expressed appreciation to Mohler for his "unyielding commitment to God's word, his zeal for the Great Commission and his twenty-five years of visionary and effective leadership of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary." Trustees' noted Mohler's commitment to Scripture and "steadfast allegiance to the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and its confession of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message."

Under Mohler's leadership, Southern Seminary has grown in enrollment, with more than 5,500 students currently enrolled. More than 11,000 students have received degrees in the past 25 years and are now serving as pastors, missionaries and leaders in churches and organizations throughout the world. The seminary also has seen an increase in endowment funds, renovated its campus facilities and expanded online offerings. (BP)



MOHLER

## Sexual misconduct claims against Pressler, others dismissed

HOUSTON — Citing expiration of the statute of limitations, a Texas court has dismissed several defendants and multiple counts in a lawsuit alleging sexual abuse by retired Texas state district judge Paul Pressler, known as one of the engineers of the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The lawsuit filed by plaintiff Gerald Duane Rollins in October 2017 alleged sexual misconduct by Pressler and also sought to hold several other defendants responsible, including the SBC.

Harris County District Judge R.K. Sandill's Oct. 15 order granting summary judgment dismissed all claims against the SBC. Sandill's order applies to Rollins' allegations that Pressler abused him and also to related claims, including conspiracy and negligence, against Pressler; the SBC; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Fort Worth, Texas; former SWBTS President Paige Patterson; Houston's First Baptist Church; Second Baptist Church, Houston; Pressler's wife, Nancy; and Pressler's former law partner Jared Woodfill.

All defendants have denied all of the claims against them. (BP)

## Southwestern trustees move forward, uphold Patterson firing

FORT WORTH, Texas — In a meeting characterized by unity despite differences of opinion, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's (SWBTS) trustees voted to uphold the trustee executive committee's decision in May to terminate former president Paige Patterson.

Trustees revisited Patterson's termination at their October meeting because of a motion during the Southern Baptist Convention in June. The motion — "that the whole board of trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary consider revisiting their original decision concerning Dr. Paige Patterson."

Trustees convened for committee meetings and informal "working sessions" Oct. 16-17 that were closed to the public before holding one public, 45-minute "general session" Oct. 17, in which they voted without discussion on the matters considered in private sessions.

The board also heard a report from its presidential search committee. (BP)

## Presidential search committee named for New Orleans Seminary

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustee chairman Frank Cox named an 11-member presidential search committee Oct. 11 and called on Southern Baptists to pray through the search process.

The NOBTS bylaws call for the trustee chairman to appoint a committee with 11 voting members — including the board chairman, the immediate past chairman, one faculty member, one student and seven other board members. Cox said the committee represents the diversity of the seminary.

The search committee will begin formal meetings in November. After the initial meeting, the committee will release a list of qualifications for the type of leader they are seeking and will establish an avenue by which Southern Baptists can recommend qualified individuals for consideration, Cox said. (BP)

# Churches' employment practices allow 'ministerial exception'

By Michael J. Brooks  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Modern Baptists are like their colonial ancestors charged by the state with "dissenting religion," said Nashville attorney Jim Guenther.

Guenther, who shared during Alabama's Christian Life Commission (CLC) meeting in Prattville on Sept. 25, said, "Roger Williams came to Rhode Island and advocated for religious liberty. But down in Virginia, while Jefferson and Madison began their careers, Baptist ministers were languishing in prison because they were preaching without license by the state church.

"Therefore the First Amendment was necessary and I often speak of it as 'sufficient' in every instance to protect our churches," he said, noting society is changing its lifestyle.

With the changes comes one unresolved issue, Guenther noted, namely, how churches factor religion in their employment practices.

Institutions insist they cannot inculcate doctrine without insuring employees cooperate with the mission, he said.

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace discrimination, including sexual discrimination, and the statute has been used in complaints against religious institutions, Guenther said.

"Supreme Court rulings have found churches free to discriminate for ministerial jobs," he said. "This is the ministerial exception. ... Institutions must have

'substantial' control by religious bodies for the exception to occur. But it's left to government to deal with hiring issues for non-ministerial employees."

Guenther said "sexual" in Title VII is now broadened to include sexual identity, posing issues of concern to churches and other religious organizations.

## 'Benchmark' case

"In a case we handled, an employee at Oklahoma Baptist University vigorously advocated for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights and was counseled to cease," Guenther said. "He refused and was terminated. He filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), but it was dismissed due to 'permissible religious discrimination' under Title VII. The EEOC sided with our advocacy, but didn't give reasoning."

Guenther said this case could be a benchmark for similar cases that may come about when LGBT employees face adverse employment in religious institutions.

"The culture in America has moved," he said. "There is no pendulum that I can see. Same sex 'marriage' is here to stay and LGBT issues will continue. We have to be vigilant to protect our liberty to employ those in harmony with our mission."

Also sharing during the CLC meeting were state missionaries Jim Swedenburg and Kristy Kennedy and Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program. ☞

## REFLECTIONS

TAB BOARD MEETING - MAY 1995

"WELCOME, DR. TERRY. YOU'LL MAKE THE ALABAMA BAPTIST GREAT AGAIN!"

ONLY, DON'T BE MAKING ANY RASH DECISIONS!

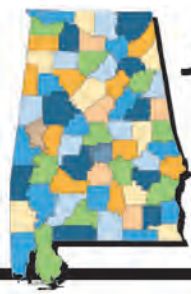
WE EXPECT YOU TO BE RASHIONAL IN ALL YOU DO!

DON'T RASHIONALIZE YOUR MISTAKES!

"JUST REMEMBER TO HAVE HART!"



AND OH, BY THE WAY, WE'VE NOTICED THAT ALL THE GREAT BAPTIST WEEKLIES HAVE CARTOONS! (CARTOONS MAKE A PAPER LOOK SO INTELLIGENT, DON'T YOU THINK?)



## Across ALABAMA'S Associations

### AUTAUGA

► **Boones Chapel Church, Prattville**, will hold its 80th homecoming celebration Nov. 11, 10:15 a.m. featuring Spoken For in concert. Mike Johnson will be the guest speaker. Phil Winningham is pastor.

### BALDWIN

► **Bayside Church, Lillian**, will hold a community-wide gospel singing featuring Lookin' Up Quartet on Nov. 4, 6 p.m. Refreshments and a time of fellowship will follow the concert. Tom Harris is pastor.

### BIRMINGHAM

► **Sheri Coon**, lifelong member of **NorthPark Church, Trussville**, recently celebrated 20 years of serving in the children's and student ministries. She and her husband, Gary, have one son. Bill Wilks is pastor. ► **Kevin Blackwell** is the new interim pastor of **First Church, Pleasant Grove**. He will begin Nov. 18. He also works at Samford University as assistant to the president for church relations and executive director of the Ministry Training Institute. He and his wife, Lorie, have four children.

### BETHLEHEM/PINE BARREN

► **Bethsaida Church, Pine Apple**, will hold a gospel singing Nov. 4, 3 p.m. Don Bell is pastor. ► **Steve Dunn** is the new associational mission strategist for **Bethlehem and Pine Barren associations**. He also serves as pastor of Eastwood Church, Monroeville. He holds a bachelor's degree from University of South Alabama and master's and doctorate degrees from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Deborah,



DUNN

have four children, six grandchildren and one grandchild on the way.

### BLOUNT

► **Michael Lackey** is the new pastor of **Hopewell Missionary Church, Arab**. He previously served as pastor of Plainview Church, Cullman, and Shady Grove No. 1 Church, Guntersville. He is married to Krickett.

### COOSA RIVER

► **Westview Church, Sylacauga**, will host Ride for a Cure on Nov. 10. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. All proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society. For more information call 256-487-1410, or visit wherefriendsbecomefamily.com. Jimmie Roberts is pastor.

### COFFEE

► **New Ebenezer Church, Elba**, will hold a homecoming Nov. 4, 10:30 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow the service. Randall Pearson is pastor.

### DALE

► **Mount Enon Church, Midland City**, will hold an "Old-Fashioned Sunday" on Nov. 11, 10 a.m. Bill King will be the guest speaker. He also will perform as Billy Bob Bohannon at 11 a.m. A covered-dish dinner will follow. Colt Hudson is pastor.

### FRIENDSHIP

► **Ricky Statham** is the new pastor of **Straight Mountain Church, Oneonta**. He also works as the library director at Oneonta Public Library. Statham holds a bachelor's degree from Athens State University. He and his wife, Kimberly, have two children.



STATHAM

### GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on Nov. 13, 11 a.m. Russell Clausell will be the guest speaker. For reservations call 334-684-9617. Teddy Ward is interim pastor.

### LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Mount Bethel Church, Gaylesville**, will hold the annual Lookout Mountain Children's Home Benefit Concert on Nov. 3, 6 p.m. Featured singers will be Point of Honor. Andy Kellett is pastor.

### MORGAN

► **Lebanon Church, Falkville**, recognized Pastor Appreciation Month and honored church pianist Harolyn Crow and organist Judy Dobbs with a luncheon Oct. 7. Randall Ashley is pastor.

### SOUTHEAST

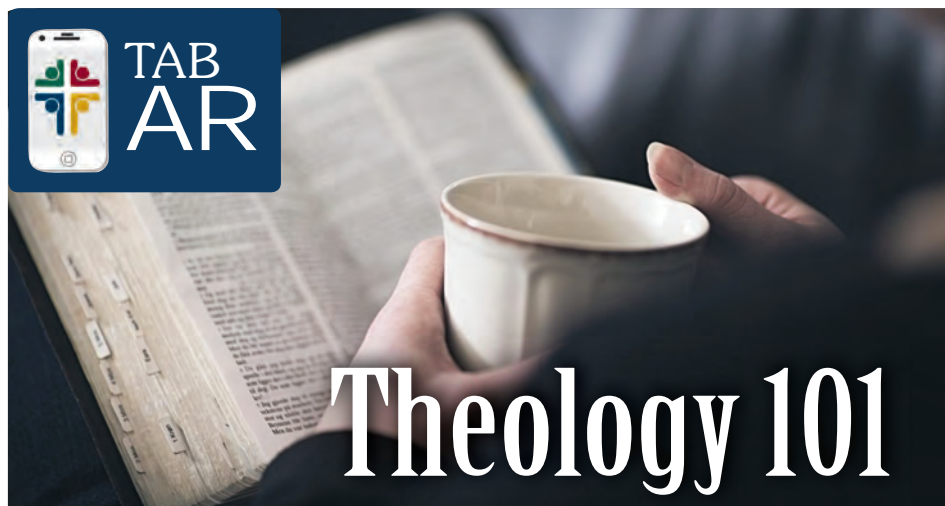
► **Smyrna Church, Dothan**, will hold its 153rd homecoming service Nov. 4, 11 a.m. Hosea Parker will be the guest speaker. Billy Womack is pastor.

### ST. CLAIR

► **Friendship Church, Springville**, will hold revival services Nov. 4-7. The Sunday services will be held at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday services will begin at 6:30 nightly. Sid Nichols will be the speaker. Musical guests will be featured 30 minutes prior to the evening services. Darryl Wood is interim pastor.

### TUSCALOOSA

► **New Hope Church, Buhl**, will hold a revival Nov. 4-7 at 7 nightly. The speakers will be Herb Thomas, Joel Fredrick, Herbert Brown and Tim Tindle. Irby Jackson is pastor. ► **Mount Olive Church, Coker**, will hold "Day of the Bible" featuring Rodney Autry on Nov. 4, focusing on the New Testament at 10:45 a.m. and the Old Testament at 6 p.m. Tim Tindle is pastor. ✠



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Ecclesiology Through Imagery

# The Church as a Flock

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

**T**o the diverse biblical images of the Church as a body, as a bride, as a building and as a household, Theology 101 this week adds the imagery of the people of God as a flock of sheep.

The prophetic Scriptures point toward this imagery in Isaiah 40:11 in which, through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord God promised the coming of a day when He would "feed His flock like a shepherd" and "gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom and gently lead those who are with young."

The coming of Christ ushered in the fulfillment of that ancient promise.

Perhaps the best-known analogy of a flock and a shepherd is found in the favorite and oft-read Psalm 23, with its opening words, "The Lord is my shepherd" (v. 1).

There then follows an enumeration of the Lord's care for His flock in terms of leading, restoring, comforting, protecting and feeding. Such divine spiritual provisions in the fullness of their meaning awaited the coming of Christ and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

When He came, one of the most memorable ways Christ referred to Himself was as the Good Shepherd. In like manner, the Bible refers to Christ's followers as a flock, specifically "the flock of God."

### Good Shepherd

In the instructions found in 1 Peter 5 as to how elders are to function as leaders of God's people, believers are referred to as a flock: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (vv. 2-4).

When we read about Christ as the

Good Shepherd in John 10, we also learn what it means to be members of God's flock.

As the Church we are people for whom Christ died. He said in reference to Himself, "The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (v. 11).

Having died for us, we are members of His flock because He sought us when we were astray. He kept seeking us until He found us. He never turned His back on us or left us.

Furthermore, as members of the flock of God under the shepherding ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ, we are people who are known to Him individually and personally, and in return get to know Him genuinely and personally as our Lord and Savior (v. 14).

### Assurance

As God's flock, the Church is thus composed of those who have heard His voice and decided to follow Him (v. 27).

True members of God's flock have the assurance of eternal life in heaven and will never perish. Members of the flock are secure in the hand of the Good Shepherd, from which no one can ever snatch them (v. 28). They are His forever.

As saved and secured members of God's flock, we are able to voice the witness of the Psalmist who testified, "The Lord is my shepherd," as well as proclaim to the Shepherd, as affirmed in Psalm 79:13, "We, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will give You thanks forever; we will show forth Your praise to all generations." ✠

*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.*



Alabama Baptist STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS



Focus on

1 MISSION

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

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

# Alabama Baptist Family Reunion

In less than two weeks, messengers and guests from across the state will gather at First Baptist Church, Trussville, for the annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.



as chaplaincy, feeding, childcare, cleanup and recovery, mudout, chainsaw and more.

Children's Honor Choir as well as Honor Choir alumni from 1999 to 2017.

**Gratitude**

Thanks to all who will work to make the State Convention a time of blessing and information for those who care about Great Commission Ministries. The Convention theme will be "Faithful," a much-needed emphasis for Christians in today's world.

You're invited to this special time for what is essentially a family reunion of Alabama Baptists. Hallway conversations, visiting in the Exhibit Hall and corporate worship in the Convention meeting are just a few of the opportunities for

fellowship that will be a blessing to those who attend.

**Motions and Ministries**

Beyond fellowship, messengers will hear recommendations from the State Board of Missions (SBOM) about the Cooperative Program budget, audits of the SBOM and Convention entities, and a motion about "Beyond 2020," which will propose to set ministry priorities for the next several years.

I am especially looking forward to a time of recognition for the Yellow Shirt Army of Disaster Relief volunteers. Needless to say, the past several weeks have been busy and vital times of ministry for those deployed to serve in such ministries

Each volunteer is a trained witness, and Disaster Relief is one of the strategic priorities of the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. In disaster relief and beyond, we have much to celebrate in Great Commission Ministries as Alabama Baptists.

By Rick Lance  
State Missionary



I'm especially grateful to Pastor Buddy Champion and the family of faith at First Baptist Trussville for their gracious help in planning for this Kingdom event and the hospitality they will provide for their fellow Alabama Baptists.

**Inspiration and Proclamation**

I'm looking forward to hearing speakers Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary; John Thweatt, our State Convention president; and Terrence Jones, Alabama Baptist pastor and church planter.

Tuesday evening worship will feature a special time of Intergenerational Worship led by the Alabama Singing Men, Alabama Singing Women, the

For more information on the State Convention meeting, please see the information elsewhere in this issue of "FOCUS on One Mission," and visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention).



I Corinthians 4:1-2



## Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY,  
COONEY HALL**

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

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

Currently, Kenny serves as the senior pastor at Calvary Baptist Temple, Savannah. Kenny's teaching ministry has extended to a wide range of groups and events throughout the United States. Kenny's wife, Shirley, "completes him." They are the parents of four children: Kenetha, Gina, Kenny, Jr., Kameron; and four grandchildren.

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



planters/pastors will be led by Kenny Grant. Dismissal is at 8:30 p.m. to pick up children from childcare.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION:**  
plantalabama.org/dinner

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

## IT'S A MATTER OF STEWARDSHIP, REALLY!



COURTESY OF WHNT19



COURTESY OF WHNT19

## The Five Points Baptist Church



in Huntsville had about a dozen people attending. They have had a great legacy in the past, and for that we are so thankful and appreciative.

Then on the other hand, Essential Church is only two years old and already has more than 300 attending on Sundays.

When one of the leaders at Five Points saw Tim Milner, pastor of Essential Church, baptizing outside in front of the office building where they meet, all that changed.

She said, "We need to give our building to them." And that is exactly what they did.

Tim Milner and Essential Church had gone through the assessment, training and coaching with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Tim Milner, the featured church planter during the inaugural Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and Week of Prayer for State Missions in 2016, says of the gift of the Five Points property, "It's unbelievable. It's a gift of a lifetime."

If your church is struggling with what to do with a building with which God has blessed your church – but is now not being used to the fullest – then perhaps you will consider the option of giving it to a new church so the legacy of the church in that location can continue strong.

By Lamar Duke  
State Missionary



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

# Bible Drill Retreat

# Reelin' in God's Word

1 Peter 1:25



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# 2019 CHILDREN'S MISSIONS EXPLOSION

"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." -Matthew 5:16

**FEBRUARY 2, 2019**  
Register by January 18  
First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove; Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia

**FEBRUARY 9, 2019**  
Register by January 25  
Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville; First Baptist Church, Prattville

For more information, including cost and other registration details call 800.264.1225 ext. 223, email [aarmstrong@alsbom.org](mailto:aarmstrong@alsbom.org), or visit [AlabamaWMU.org/cme](http://AlabamaWMU.org/cme)

Cost includes lunch and registration.

T-shirts may be ordered.

Make sure you register your entire group early because this event fills quickly!

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

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

## TRUE NORTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

800.264.1225 ext. 226  
[lglass@alsbom.org](mailto:lglass@alsbom.org)  
[AlabamaWMU.org/SMW](http://AlabamaWMU.org/SMW)

#ALSMW2019

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

# Faithful

## FEATURED SPEAKERS:



**Albert Mohler**



**John Thweatt**



**Terrence Jones**

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

**NOVEMBER 13~14, 2018**

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • TRUSSVILLE, ALABAMA

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

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

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

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

# It Just Makes Sense



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



**Stronger Together**

# Complete

A GATHERING FOR TEEN GIRLS

## MARCH 1-2, 2019

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

*Come and bring your girls  
for a weekend of*

SOLID BIBLE MISSIONARY AUTHENTIC  
TEACHING TESTIMONIES WORSHIP

RELEVANT BREAKOUTS  
FOR TODAY'S CULTURE

*and more!*

## #ALCOMPLETE2019

For more information, including cost  
and other registration details,  
call 800.264.1225 ext. 226  
or email [smayes@alsbom.org](mailto:smayes@alsbom.org)

**COST INCLUDES REGISTRATION,  
LUNCH, & T-SHIRT**



**CHELSEA KELLUM**  
Bible Study Leader



**JORDYN BOYER**  
Worship Leader

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



# Fulfill

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

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

**Registration:** [shocco.org](http://shocco.org) or 1-800-280-1105

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

# RENEW

a day away with friends

FEBRUARY 23, 2019

NorthPark Baptist Church  
Trussville, Alabama

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
including cost and other registration  
details call 800.264.1225 ext. 325 or  
email [khelms@alsbom.org](mailto:khelms@alsbom.org)  
[alabamaWMU.org/Renew](http://alabamaWMU.org/Renew)

Cost includes lunch.  
Register by February 14

Featured Speaker  
**LARA  
WILLIAMS**



Worship Leader  
**KIM  
THWEATT**



Missionary  
**ERIN  
BISHOP**



RENEW WILL FEATURE:

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

#ALRenew2019



# Mom & Me SPRING FLING



**APRIL 5-6, 2019**

**WORLDSONG MISSIONS PLACE  
COOK SPRINGS, ALABAMA**

For girls grades K-6 & their moms

Cost includes lodging & meals

Registration deadline: March 28

Camp runs Friday 4:00 p.m. through Saturday 3:00 p.m.

For more info or to register:


Visit [AlabamaWMU.org/SpringFling](http://AlabamaWMU.org/SpringFling)


Email [aarmstrong@alsbom.org](mailto:aarmstrong@alsbom.org)

or call 800.264.1225 ext. 223

Join us for an action-packed overnight camp that will:

 be filled with fun and adventure

 foster your desire to live on mission

 provide meaningful one-on-one time for you and your daughter

 **WorldSong**  
MISSIONS PLACE  
A ministry of Alabama WMU

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

## 2019 REGIONAL AND STATE BIBLE DRILLS

THEME: *Reelin' in God's Word*

"...but the Word of the Lord endures forever..." 1 Peter 1:25



**THURSDAY, APRIL 11**

**North:** East Highland Baptist Church, Hartselle

**South East:** Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan

**South West:** First Baptist Tillman's Corner, Mobile

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14**

**North Central:** Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham

**South Central:** First Baptist Church, Prattville

**MONDAY, APRIL 15**

**South West:** Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile

**West Central:** Fairhaven Baptist Church, Demopolis



**TUESDAY, APRIL 16**

**North East:** Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Alexandria

CHECK-IN TIMES FOR REGIONAL DRILLS:

**Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday Drills**

Check-in begins at 3:30 p.m.

Drills begin at 4 p.m.

**Sunday Drills**

Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m.

Drills begin at 2 p.m.

**STATE BIBLE DRILL AND SPEAKERS TOURNAMENT**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27,**

**2019** – First Baptist Church, Montgomery. **Check-in** will be at 12:30 p.m. followed by worship at 1 p.m. Drills and Speeches will begin at 1:15.

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Belinda Stroud, ext. 271, or (334) 613-2271, [bstroud@alsbom.org](mailto:bstroud@alsbom.org), or Ministry Assistant Julie Smith, ext. 255, or (334) 613-2255, [jsmith@alsbom.org](mailto:jsmith@alsbom.org).

# Senior Adult Singin'

**Tuesday, March 12, 2019**  
Eastmont Baptist Church,  
Montgomery

**Tuesday, September 17, 2019**  
University Baptist Church, Huntsville

Come to either or both of the Senior Adult Singin's in 2019. Worship with friends you know and the new friends you will meet!

Frank Jones will lead us in singing hymns – some that you may remember from years gone by.

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



FRANK JONES

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

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

**PASTORS, STAFF & WIVES BANQUET**  
WITH ALEX McFARLAND  
"Strategies For REACHING MILLENNIALS"  
Monday, February 25  
4:30 p.m.  
Registration required.  
[alsbom.org/SEC](http://alsbom.org/SEC)

FREE ADMISSION



**STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE**  
FEBRUARY 25 - 26  
MONDAY AT 6:15 P.M. • TUESDAY AT 8:45 A.M.



**2019**

CROSSOVER BIRMINGHAM  
DAWSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

featuring  
**JEREMY MORTON**  
CO-PASTOR WITH JOHNNY HUNT  
AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
Woodstock, Ga.



**SPEAKERS:**  
Kie Bowman  
Jay Lowder  
Russ Quinn  
Jeff Meyers  
David Eldridge  
David Burton  
Dennis Watson

CONCERT by  
**SANDI PATTY**

Musical Guest  
**Lynda Randle**



**For More Information,**  
contact Ministry Assistant Amy Nelson  
at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, or  
(334) 613-2258, [anelson@alsbom.org](mailto:anelson@alsbom.org)



**Alabama Baptist**  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

This conference is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

**Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries**

**57th annual conference**  
March 10-13, 2019  
Shocco Springs

THEME: *Do Everything in Love*

"Let all that you do be done in love."  
- 1 Corinthians 16:14

GENERAL CONFERENCE LEADER:  
Allison Wilks, Prattville

MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER:  
Jeremiah & Kirsten Ross, Paducah, Ky.

Make plans now to join us for a time of spiritual, professional and personal growth through worship, study, fellowship and educational breakout sessions.

For more information, go online to [alabamabaptistsecretaries.com](http://alabamabaptistsecretaries.com) or check out the Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Facebook page or please contact Dawn Chapman, **AABS President 2018-2019**, at (334) 285-4731, [dawn@millbrookbaptist.com](mailto:dawn@millbrookbaptist.com).



# Church ANNIVERSARIES



## Mount Pleasant marks 175 years

More than 200 people gathered at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Gordo, to celebrate its 175-year anniversary Sept. 23.

Guest speakers for the special service included Mike Owen, the son of a former pastor; Lyle Dease, associational mission strategist for Pickens Baptist Association; and Scott Manderson and Ray Martin from Faith Riders.

Special music was shared by minister of music Keith Mullenix, Tammy Hall and Jennifer Spencer.

Angie Cooper from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the church with a certificate.

A video of children depicting the historical beginnings of the church and audio testimonies of people who were baptized in the church's outdoor baptistry were played.

The church also acknowledged former pastors and the members of the church who have gone out from the church into full-time ministry.

"It was an awesome day with great memories," Pastor Glenn Sandifer said. (TAB)

## Bethlehem Baptist celebrates 150 years

In preparation for the 150th anniversary celebration at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Linden, in Bethel Baptist Association, members installed new siding and new carpet at the church.

And on Sept. 23 the church gathered together to celebrate.

Former pastor Don Newton was the guest speaker, and special music was brought by Betty Sue Gandy, Pastor Daniel Gandy and Greta and Troy Henderson.

Jerrold Hare, from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a certificate recognizing the anniversary.

Old photos and memorabilia were on display, and a history of the church was written by church member Mary Schroeder.

"It was a wonderful day. Getting to see former members was so special," Schroeder said.

Lunch followed the service. (TAB)



Photo by Lonette Berg

## Wildwood celebrates 25th anniversary

On Sept. 19, 1993, Wildwood Baptist Church, Cottondale, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association, was officially organized with 35 members.

At the celebration service Sept. 23, several charter members were present including the church's three pastors, Gary Youngblood, who was the first pastor; Clay Hahn, who served as pastor for more than nine years; and current pastor, Chuck Weaver.

The worship service began with the charter members receiving a plaque of commendation from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented by Debbie Campbell.

"It's exciting to come to church," said Annette Toxey,

one of the 25-year-old church's charter members.

"We are celebrating 25 years because God had a plan," said Weaver. "This building was once a cabinet shop. I am thankful to Wildwood Baptist Church for the vision they have of reaching the children with the love of Jesus."

Following the special music and sermon by Weaver, everyone enjoyed lunch in the Jettie McKinley Kirkpatrick Christian Life Center, named in honor of their clerk, who at 96, is still actively serving the Lord at Wildwood Church. (Debbie Campbell)

## Macedonia Baptist marks 125 years

In the afternoon of Sept. 30 more than 120 former and current members of Macedonia Baptist Church, Fayette, gathered together to celebrate the church's 125th anniversary.

Scott McCullar, pastor of First Baptist Church, Carbon Hill, was the guest speaker for the service.

Judith Cannon spoke on the history of the church and several former pastors shared briefly about their time at Macedonia. The state of Alabama sent a proclamation recognizing the church.

Angie Cooper presented the church with a certificate of commendation on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and associational mission strategist for Fayette Baptist Association John Killian was in attendance.

"The celebration was wonderful," church member Judith Cannon said. "Seeing all the people coming back for the celebration was a highlight." Casey Watkins is pastor. (Jessica Ingram)



(augmented reality)

- 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 Each week when TAB arrives, look for the AR logo to watch the video extras through the app.

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### PASTOR

Camellia Baptist Church, 201 Woodvale Rd., Prattville, AL 36067 prayerfully seeking God's choice for a full-time pastor. All applicants should have previous senior pastor experience and have earned a master of divinity. Resumés with photo, may be mailed ATTN: Pastor/Search. [www.bcbprattville.org](http://www.bcbprattville.org).

#### PASTOR

Enon Baptist Church is looking for a pastor. Reply to: Mitchell Harrison, 8393 Grissett Bridge Road, Atmore, AL 36502. Phone: 251-862-2527. Email: [brian.presley46@yahoo.com](mailto:brian.presley46@yahoo.com).

#### PASTOR

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

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

#### MUSIC DIRECTOR

Lincoln Baptist Church, Lincoln, Alabama, is searching for a part-time music director to lead blended worship services. Please email resumes to [Leaders@lincolnbaptist.org](mailto:Leaders@lincolnbaptist.org) or mail resumés to: Music Director Search Committee, Lincoln Baptist Church, P.O. Box 182, Lincoln, AL 35096.

#### MUSIC MINISTER

New Hinson Baptist Church near Slocumb, Alabama, seeking part-time music minister. Call or text resumé to: 334-200-2617, ATTN: Wayne Barrentine. [wayneb539@centurytel.net](mailto:wayneb539@centurytel.net).

#### YOUTH PASTOR

Flint Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama. This will be a part-time position. Send resumés to: [Flintbaptistchurch@att.net](mailto:Flintbaptistchurch@att.net).

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Moulton, Alabama, is seeking a full-time student pastor to plan, promote and lead activities for students 7th grade through college. Anyone interested in applying should send a resumé to: [uarome@bellsouth.net](mailto:uarome@bellsouth.net) or contact Jerome Porter at 256-565-5103.

#### YOUTH MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Opp, Alabama, is currently seeking a full-time youth minister. Resumés should be sent to the Youth Minister Search Committee at [fbc@spcopp.com](mailto:fbc@spcopp.com).

### 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 pricing. A+ rating with BBB. We service 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](http://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](http://www.paradisevista.net) to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

### FOR SALE

#### CHURCH VAN

Seventh Street Baptist Church, Bessemer, is selling their 1992 church van. Good condition and low miles. Please call Robert Mahan at 205-529-1441.



**Ron Herrod**

*Southern Baptist evangelist, pastor dies at 75*

Ron Herrod, a Southern Baptist evangelist and former Alabama Baptist pastor, died Oct. 9 after bone marrow transplant procedures. He was 75.



**HERROD**

Herrod, who lived in Knoxville, Tennessee, had been diagnosed in May with a bone marrow disease, MDS, leading to leukemia.

He served more than 35 years as a pastor of Baptist churches — including serving at Navco Baptist Church, Mobile — before launching Ron Herrod Evangelism Ministries Association in 1995.

Franklin Kirksey, who served on staff with Herrod at First Baptist Church, Kenner, Louisiana, said Herrod kept an “unflinching stand upon the divinely inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God.”

With Herrod “we always saw a harvest of souls,” Kirksey said. “Heaven has gained a jewel.”

Herrod earned a bachelor’s degree from William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; a master’s degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; and a doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia.

Herrod is survived by his wife of 55 years, Emily; a son, Joseph; two daughters, Dawn and Twila; and 11 grandchildren. (TAB)

# ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION PROGRAM

Theme: Faithful / Nov. 13–14, 2018 / First Baptist Church, Trussville

## TUESDAY MORNING 8:30–11:50

PIANIST ..... Frank Jones  
 WORSHIP LEADER ..... Keith Hibbs  
 8:30 Pre-session Music ..... Alabama Singing Men/Women  
 8:35 Prayer ..... Morris Johnson  
 8:40 Call to Order ..... John Thweatt  
 Greetings from Birmingham Association... Jim Cooley  
 Greetings from FBC Trussville..... Buddy Champion  
 Congregational Music..... Terry Davis  
 8:50 Enrollment of Messengers ..... Billie Davis  
 8:55 Committee on Order of Business..... Rob Jackson  
 9:00 Committee Appointments ..... John Thweatt  
 9:05 Memorial Service..... Mike Shaw  
 9:15 Ministers Benefit Society..... Mark Smith  
 9:20 Introduction of Resolutions ..... Jim Cooley  
 9:25 Congregational Music..... Michael Scarborough  
 9:30 Committee on Committees ..... Rick Marshall  
 9:35 Time, Place and Preacher..... James Nichols  
 9:40 **RECOGNITIONS**  
 Former Convention Presidents..... Rick Lance  
 New Pastors and Church Staff ..... Bobby DuBois  
 9:50 Audit Committee ..... Melissa Sahagun  
 Insurance Committee ..... Bobby DuBois  
 9:55 Special Music..... Alabama Singing Men/Women  
 10:05 **FAITHFUL** theme interpretation..... Ken Allen  
 10:30 Cooperative Program Recognitions .... Jim Swedenburg  
 10:40 *The Alabama Baptist*, Bob Terry; Alabama Baptist  
 Historical Commission, Lonette Berg; The Baptist  
 Foundation of Alabama, Barry Bledsoe; Alabama  
 Citizens Action Program, Joe Godfrey; Christian Life  
 Commission, Michael Brooks  
 11:10 Presentation of Convention President..... Rick Lance  
 11:15 Special Music..... Kim Thweatt  
 11:20 President's Address..... John Thweatt  
 11:50 Benediction ..... Rosevelt Morris Sr.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON 1:30–3:55

PIANIST ..... Frank Jones  
 WORSHIP LEADER..... Kirkwood Bullis  
 1:30 Congregational Music..... Kirkwood Bullis  
 1:40 Prayer..... Cedric Brown  
 1:45 Report of Executive Director ..... Rick Lance  
 2:05 Report of State Board of Missions along with  
 recommendations and convention recognitions  
 2:55 Alabama Baptist Children's Homes and Family  
 Ministries, Rod Marshall; Shocco Springs Baptist  
 Conference Center, Russell Klinner; Alabama Baptist  
 Retirement Centers, Ray Burdeshaw; Alabama Woman's  
 Missionary Union, Candace McIntosh  
 3:25 Miscellaneous Business  
 3:45 Resolutions Committee..... Jim Cooley  
 3:55 Committee on Boards and Commissions.... Rick Evans  
 Benediction ..... Gavin King

## TUESDAY EVENING 6:40–8:15

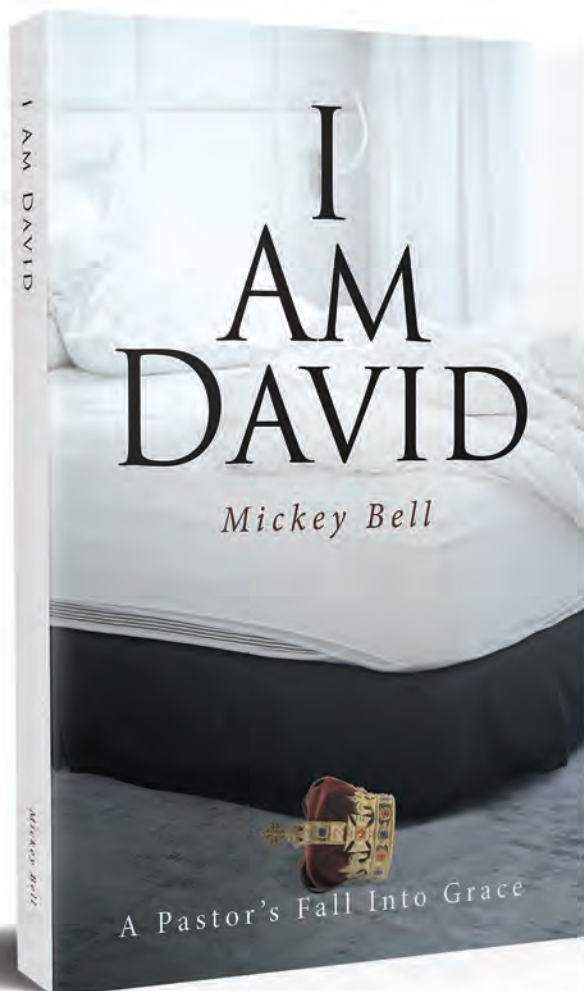
6:40 Pre-session Music ..... Frank Jones  
 6:45 Prayer..... John Thweatt  
 6:55 Recognitions ..... Rick Lance  
 7:00 Music Worship ..... Intergenerational choir consisting  
 of current Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir  
 and alumni as well as some members of Alabama  
 Singing Men and Women  
 7:30 Message ..... Albert Mohler  
 8:15 Benediction ..... Children's Honor Choir and alumni  
 led by Jane Burdeshaw

## WEDNESDAY MORNING 8:30–11:20

PIANIST ..... Frank Jones  
 WORSHIP LEADER..... Bryan Haskins  
 8:30 Congregational Music..... Bryan Haskins  
 8:35 Prayer ..... Daniel Woodcock  
 8:40 **FAITHFUL** theme interpretation..... Jimmy Jackson  
 9:05 Election of Officers  
 9:15 Previously Scheduled Business  
 9:45 Resolutions Committee Report..... Jim Cooley  
 10:00 Samford University, Andrew Westmoreland; University  
 of Mobile, Tim Smith; Judson College, Scott Bullard;  
 Education Commission, Bobby Hopper; Board of Aid to  
 Students in Church-Related Vocations, Randy Johnson  
 10:30 Congregational Music..... Bryan Haskins  
 10:40 Introduction of Convention Preacher and Alternate  
 Preacher..... John Thweatt  
 Special Music..... Bryan Haskins  
 Scripture..... Rick Marshall  
 10:50 Convention Sermon ..... Terrence Jones  
 11:20 Introduction of Convention Officers ..... Rick Lance  
 Benediction — Adjournment..... Carlos Gomez

## TO REQUEST MESSENGER CARDS

- ▶ Call Sandy Harmann: 1-800-264-1225, ext. 266
- ▶ Email: [sharmann@alsbom.org](mailto:sharmann@alsbom.org)
- ▶ Website: <http://cards.alsbom.org>



# “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



*Mickey Bell*  
 Author, *I Am David*

In Christian Bookstores or online now at [IAMDavidTheBook.com](http://IAMDavidTheBook.com)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 4

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

**WITH WORKS**  
**James 2:14-26**

**Dead Faith (14-17)**

“Wait a minute,” you might have just said to yourself. “I thought we were saved by faith alone absent works.” After all, the Apostle Paul was adamant that “a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law” (Rom. 3:28). How do we square away this seeming contradiction between James and Paul? The answer lies all the way back in the first verse of the first chapter of the Book of James.

This letter was written to a specific group of people: “the twelve tribes dispersed abroad (James 1:1),” i.e., Jewish believers in the Lord Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire. They struggled with how works related to their new-found faith in Christ, presuming a grace of forgiveness without the good works that follow. Paul, on the other hand, often wrote about works-based righteousness, a “Jesus plus” forgiveness and maintenance of salvation.

Paul and James were not at odds with one another as rivals; rather, they stood back-to-back, fighting different heresies as brothers. While Paul combated works-righteousness, James challenged inactive faith. The one thing that unites them both is belief in Christ as our reason, source and power for good works. James warns that a faith that doesn’t move is like a body that doesn’t move — it’s dead.

**Working Faith (18-19)**

So, what does active faith look like? “Perhaps,” thought James’ readers, “there is a kind of faith that saves even if we fail to act with good works.” Obviously that’s not the case and James says as much. After all what good is a faith based solely on a knowledge of God without the motivation to pursue after Him in word and deed?

As a reality check James points out the

obvious — demons have that same kind of faith and they’re certainly not saved. In fact Satan knows God well, much better than we can ever know Him on this side of eternity. Knowledge doesn’t save us. Our faith in Christ alone for salvation saves us and our knowledge follows.

The difference between us and the enemy is obedience; he will not obey God but by the power of the Holy Spirit we can obey God. Our faith cannot be separated from our living, lest we more closely resemble God’s enemies than His sons and daughters.

**Saving Faith (20-26)**

Again it seems like James and Paul are at odds but as we saw earlier that’s simply not the case. Instead, James is demonstrating to the Jewish believers that the forefather of their nation, Abraham, exhibited a faith that worked.

James casts our minds back to the story of Abraham who first believed God, which “was counted to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6; James 2:22-23), and then worked out of that faith (Gen. 22; James 2:21). What if Abraham believed without acting? Where would the story have gone?

James brings up a second example, perhaps for those Gentiles listening in to the conversation who have so far excused themselves from the instruction. Rahab, a Gentile prostitute, demonstrated the same kind of active faith that saves.

She believed in God and what He was doing. Using His name she confessed to the people, “I know that the Lord has given you this land” (Josh. 2:9).

Her faith motivated her to act, saving two spies in Jericho and securing a victory for Israel. What if Rahab believed without acting? Where would the story have gone?

Reflecting on this passage in James we ought to ask the same questions of our own faith. Do I believe without acting? If so, where does the story end?✠

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

**PRAYING FOR OURSELVES**  
**Matthew 6:11b; Isaiah 38:1-6, 15-17**

There is a temptation into which those of us who have been believers for many years can fall. As we’ve studied and reflected, reflected and studied, we can reach the point where we feel we have every theological “i” dotted and “t” crossed. When we reach this point though I wonder whether we venture into territory even the authors of the New Testament did not believe they had reached.

In his first letter to the believers at Corinth the Apostle Paul confessed, “For now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12). Even Paul, perhaps the greatest of the Church’s theologians, admitted that on this side of heaven we see only a dim reflection of the truth God has in store for us.

Nowhere are our theological limitations more evident than in the area of prayer. If God is sovereign, will He not do what He wills, regardless of our prayers? If God is omniscient, does He not know what He will do, regardless of our prayers? If God answers prayer only when we ask according to His will, will He not act according to His will, regardless of whether we ask?

Logically and theologically, the answers to all of these questions should be yes. And yet biblical authors repeatedly refuse to give in to these notions. As James insists, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

**Take your needs to God in prayer.**  
**(Matt. 6:11b; Isa. 38:1-3)**

We see the truth of James’ conviction lived out in the life of Judah’s King Hezekiah. Jesus instructed His disciples to ask of God, “Give us this day our daily bread.” For Hezekiah this act of praying for his own needs took the form of praying that God would heal him of a terrible disease. Isaiah

himself told the king that the Lord had pronounced his doom: “Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover.”

When God, the God who knows all, decrees all — and does not change His mind — declares, “You shall die, you shall not recover,” surely it is time to accept one’s fate and get one’s affairs in order. Hezekiah does no such thing. Instead he defies all theological logic and begs God to heal him.

**God graciously answers our requests in accordance with His will.**  
**(Isa. 38:4-6)**

Unexpectedly, God responds to Hezekiah’s prayer and relents from His earlier pronouncement. The same God who decreed, “You will not recover,” now decrees that Hezekiah will live and that he will enjoy 15 more years of life to boot. It is simply not possible to square the circle of these two notions without performing extraordinary feats of textual and theological gymnastics.

Thankfully it is not only impossible to square this theological circle, it also is unnecessary. Instead we are called to remember with humility that in this life, even Paul admits we will not understand everything there is to know about our Creator.

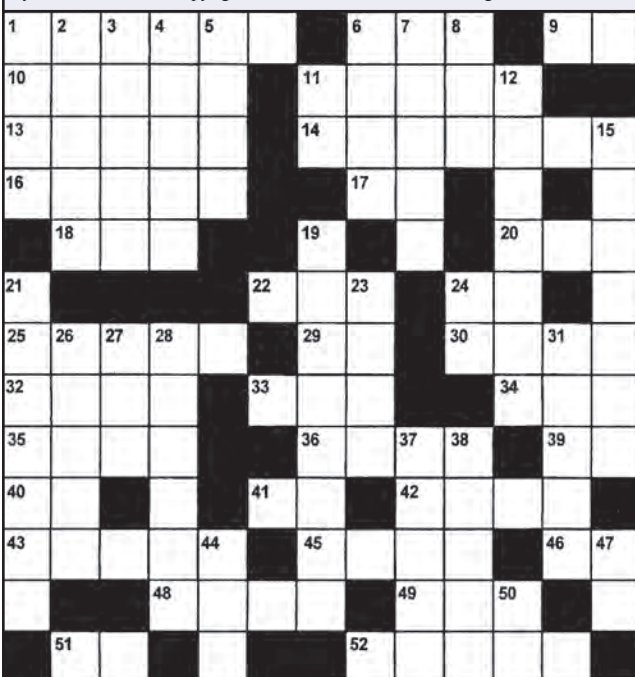
**God answers in a way that benefits and strengthens us. (Isa. 38:15-17)**

Our calling is not to understand but to trust, to trust that the God we serve “causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). As with Hezekiah, our task is not to explain God’s works but to praise them.

Jesus does not ask His Father where His daily bread is to come from or whether the Father would have supplied had He not asked at all. Jesus merely asks and gives thanks, and He invites us to follow His own example.✠

## Christian Crossword

By Joan F. Watt Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



**Across**

- When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 14:13)
- He came unto his \_\_\_\_\_. (John 1:11)
- Exist.
- Set thine house in \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Kings 20:1)
- Beam cross section.
- Come upon.
- Harbor.
- In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a \_\_\_\_\_ for me. (Ps. 142:3)
- Year. (abbr.)
- Fermented beverage.
- Loafer.
- Encountered.
- The men of Beth-el and \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezra 2:28)
- Turn yourselves from your \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 14:6)
- See!
- There shall come a \_\_\_\_\_ out of Jacob. (Num. 24:17)

**Down**

- Record.
- Short for James.
- First female.
- Louse eggs.
- Recedes.
- Short for Albert.
- Overhead transportation.
- Roman numeral four.
- A Hindu queen.
- Governing assembly.
- Greatest of them \_\_\_\_\_ to the least. (Jon. 3:5)
- Note in musical scale.
- The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no \_\_\_\_\_ of thee. (1 Cor. 12:21)
- Fuss.
- Direction.
- Wherewith one may \_\_\_\_\_ another. (Rom.14:19)
- Meter in London.
- Pertaining to Celts of Scotland.
- We ought to \_\_\_\_\_ God. (Acts 5:29)
- Come to me, all you who are \_\_\_\_\_ and burdened. (Matt. 11:28)
- Short rest.
- Part of verb “to be.”
- Person of Moab.
- Praise him with the \_\_\_\_\_ and dance. (Ps. 150:4)
- For I know whom I have \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Tim. 1:12)
- He was not that Light, but was sent to bear \_\_\_\_\_. (John 1:8)
- Laid it in his own new \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 27:60)
- Equally.
- Give us day by day our \_\_\_\_\_ bread. (Luke 11:3)
- Choose.
- Course of study.
- Assist.
- Man shall not live by \_\_\_\_\_ alone. (Matt. 4:4)
- Girl’s name.
- But ye have made it a \_\_\_\_\_ of thieves. (Matt. 21:13)
- His mother marvelled \_\_\_\_\_ those things which were spoken of him. (Luke 2:33)
- Coming from.



# TOP 10

best-selling Christian books in September

## CHILDREN'S

1. **Fiona the Hippo**  
By Richard Cowdrey (Zonderkidz)
2. **The Beginner's Bible**  
By Zondervan (Zonderkidz)
3. **The Jesus Storybook Bible**  
By Sally Loyd-Jones (Zonderkidz)
4. **God Bless You & Good Night**  
By Hannah Hall (Thomas Nelson)
5. **The Action Bible**  
By Sergio Cariello (David C Cook)
6. **Indescribable**  
By Louie Giglio (Thomas Nelson)
7. **The Winter War**  
By Priscilla Shirer (B&H)
8. **When God Made You**  
By Matthew Paul Turner (Waterbrook)
9. **Precious Moments: Little Book of Prayers**  
By Thomas Nelson (Thomas Nelson)
10. **Fearless Faith**  
By Melanie Shankle (Zonderkidz)

Source: Christian Book Expo



# Media reviews

## BOOKS

### Beyond Far

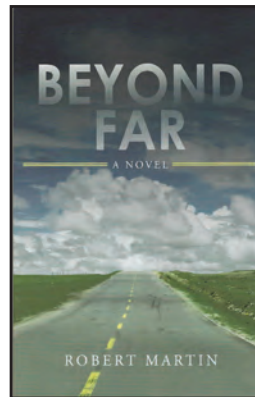
Robert Martin. Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2016. 252 pp. (Hardback).

Too often, the fiction books I get to review are in need of help. Often, they have a good storyline, but other elements are not well done. This is especially true of self-published books — many are in need of a book doctor, which frequently doesn't happen in self-publishing. If you go in with a badly done book, you come out with a badly done book.

What a delightful surprise "Beyond Far" was. After a few pages, I was all in, and remained engrossed to the end of the book. The book deals with issues that often are talked about only in hushed voices among Christians. It focuses on a young Christian woman who is in an abusive marriage and struggles with seeking God's will in the question of divorce and other moral and ethical issues.

Besides writing an engaging story, the author handled the sensitive issues exceedingly well. I'm not sure why people who love good preaching praise books for not being "preachy," but ... it wasn't preachy. The protagonist is a sympathetic character who comes at the problems she faces from a Christian viewpoint, earnestly seeking to do what is right while attempting to protect herself, always coming off as realistic — she could be any of us in the same circumstances.

Robert Martin is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and has worked in the pastoral ministry. He and his wife live in Mobile.



others outside God's kingdom by choice to whom God goes on offering His inclusive grace and for whom He has measureless compassion."

But why call the story "unfinished"? Many commentaries have noted that the parable leaves us with questions. Ultimately the answer is found in the paragraph above: The missing portion of the story is us and where we fit into God's family. Maybe not a hidden truth but certainly one worth considering.

Eli Landrum's name and writings are familiar to most Southern Baptists. He worked as an editor for LifeWay and continues to write for them in retirement. He and his wife live in Nashville.

### The Traveler's Summit

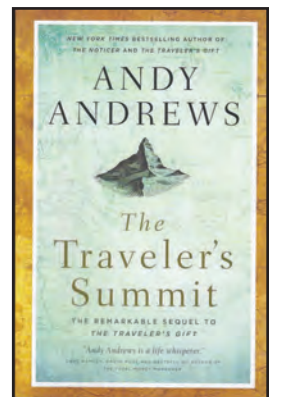
Andy Andrews. Nashville, TN: W Publishing, an Imprint of Thomas Nelson, 2018. 263 pp. (Paperback).

This is actually a reprint of a book Andy Andrews wrote in 2010, but he re-released it this year. I have read several of his books and am a fan, but with some reservations. I never know where reality stops and imagination starts in an Andrews book — not that it really matters, I guess. It is certainly reality that the author has gone from the pier he is said to have slept under to being a nationally recognized author and speaker and that he has an impact on those who read and hear him.

Now that I have gone through all of that, it was pretty clear that this book was not intended to be taken literally ... I'm pretty sure. One of the main characters was the Archangel Gabriel, and King David and Winston Churchill played prominent roles. Again, I'm not sure the fantasy/reality issue matters here. The main character is tasked with solving a two-word puzzle that will save the human race, and he has some really interesting help along the way.

Although this is a time traveler story (which I really don't care for), don't let the approach put you off. The take away from this book is as solid as the other books I have read by Andrews. I won't give it away, but the solution to the puzzle will probably stay with you for a long, long time.

Andrews lives in Orange Beach, Alabama. ✝

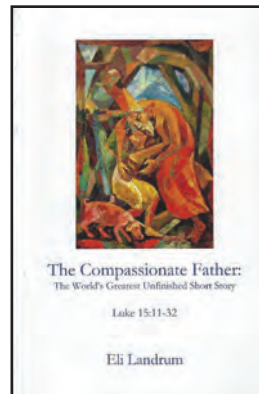


### The Compassionate Father: The World's Greatest Unfinished Short Story

Eli Landrum. Cleveland, TN: Parson's Porch Books, 2017. 128 pp. (Paperback).

I wonder how many sermons and Sunday School lessons I have heard (and taught) about the story of the prodigal son. I know that it's a lot, but here is another take on the story. But wait, there's more ... No, this is not a late-night commercial for a slicer and dicer. It's a pleasant reaction to the way Eli Landrum presents an old familiar story.

The author notes at the outset that he didn't start out to discover some previously hidden truth in the passage but to "explore its meaning for me, for people who have received God's amazing and incomprehensible love, and for



YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC

in the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.

www.wrvfmtheriver.com

### Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for The Alabama Baptist. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.



BookReviews@charter.net

# 'God's got this'

## Texas CWJC/CMJC leader affirms faith amid cancer battle

By **Trennis Henderson**  
WMU National Correspondent

**B**ecky Ellison knows what it means to live one day at a time. Since being diagnosed with cancer in 2010, she said a key question she seeks to live by is: "If I had one more minute and I wanted to live it like God wanted me to live it, what would that look like?"

For Ellison, part of that answer involves investing in the lives of Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps (CWJC/CMJC) leaders throughout the state of Texas.

Ellison, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Baylor University, has been involved in CWJC/CMJC ministries for 14 years. She began serving as a contract consultant with Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) of Texas in 2008. Six years later — and four years after her diagnosis — she was invited to serve as the state WMU's full-time CWJC/CMJC strategist. That role involves consulting with 56 ministry sites throughout Texas.

Recalling when National WMU Executive Director Sandy Wisdom-Martin, who was serving at the time as Texas WMU executive director, invited her to accept the strategist position, Ellison said, "The one thing I prayed about was, 'Lord, what do you want me to do in this role?'"

"He was really clear that He wanted me to minister to our leadership because they are in the trenches, they are the ones sacrificing so much day to day for the men and women who come through our doors.

"They're dealing with cancer, they're dealing with family members who have illnesses, they're dealing with crises," she explained, adding that her goal is "to be able to encourage them, to pray with them, to give grace when grace needs to happen."

Even when the ministry sites' coordinators, mentors and volunteers are in the midst of challenging days, Ellison said she seeks to remind them, "God gave you today. What are we going to do with it?"

Amid life's struggles, Ellison also is able to assure each of her leaders, "I know where you're coming from."

Her journey with cancer began in the summer of 2010 during a family outing. "You never know where God's going to take you," she noted. "We were just having fun playing on the water in our boat."

Thinking that she had hurt her back during the excursion, she went to an urgent care center to evaluate the back pain. The doctor ordered an MRI and told her they would call her in a couple of days with the results.

Instead, she recalled, "They called me back in two hours because a radiologist had called the doctor and said, 'Does this woman know she has cancer?'"

At that moment, Ellison thought, "Well, let's just see what God does with this journey," she reflected.

Affirming that God's promises and His word hadn't changed, she said, "I just knew it was going to be a new season. The blessing of that is the doctor on the phone with me said, 'Can I pray with you?' So this journey was bathed in prayer from the very beginning."

It took doctors 18 months after the initial diagnosis to determine what kind of cancer Ellison has — a rare form that currently has no approved treatment.

"It's slow growing which is a blessing," she emphasized. "But God has just been faithful through the whole thing. I tell people now, 'This has been the most blessed season of my life other than marrying my husband and having my child.' It's been a great faith journey."

Amid the ups and downs of dealing with the disease, Ellison's doctor told her in 2012 that with the tumors growing, she likely would be paralyzed within three months. She went back to her co-workers and told them, "You guys don't worry about this. God's got this."

"Of course, that was six years ago," she recounted with a broad smile. "God really did a miracle healing. I walked away from the hospital and was pain-free. I hike nine miles, I exercise, I ride bikes. I haven't been in treatment since then.

"I asked God to let this be a testimony of His still doing miracles and let me be a testimony of having faith to know that He lets us go through seasons. If this is my season and it ends with this, then I'm still blessed." ✠



**Becky Ellison**

Photo courtesy of Trennis Henderson

***"This has been the most blessed season of my life other than marrying my husband and having my child.' It's been a great faith journey."***

**Becky Ellison, CWJC/CMJC strategist**

**RELIGION**  
in *America*  
Compiled from Wire Services

### ***Number of clergywomen has grown in US***

NASHVILLE — A new study reports that in most mainline denominations, the percentage of clergywomen has doubled or tripled in the past 25 years, with some denominations reaching numerical equity between men and women.

Professor, author and academic entrepreneur Eileen Campbell-Reed compiled the report, "State of Clergywomen in the U.S.: A Statistical Update," in an effort to track how women are faring in ministry in American churches.

The report highlights dramatic growth in some areas. Women represent 32 percent of clergy and 27 percent of pastors leading mainline churches, a sharp increase from 15.5 percent of clergy in 1994 when the data was last compiled across denominations.

The analysis found an increase in the number of women of color going to seminary while the enrollment of white-identifying women is dropping, Campbell-Reed said. However, women are not well represented among seminary faculty and leadership. In 2017 women made up fewer than 25 percent of seminary faculty and deans, and only 11 percent of presidents.

Campbell-Reed used data, analysis and questions to complete her report. (RNS)

### ***Atheist group sues IRS over tax exemption***

WASHINGTON — An atheist relief organization has sued the IRS, claiming its tax-exempt status was unfairly revoked.

The Aug. 20 IRS revocation notice said Nonbelief Relief, the charitable arm of the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF), failed to file an "information return" — known as a Form 990 — for three consecutive years. In its complaint filed Oct. 11 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the charity said it "objects to having to file Form 990 while churches and church-related organizations do not."

Annie Laurie Gaylor, president of the charity and FFRF co-president, said the suit is "part and parcel" of an ongoing legal strategy of the Wisconsin-based atheist group that has challenged religious exemptions in the IRS code.

Another challenge by the FFRF, against tax-free housing for clergy, has been appealed to the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. (RNS)

### ***Atlanta agrees to settle with former fire chief***

ATLANTA — The City of Atlanta has agreed to pay a former fire chief \$1.2 million to settle a lawsuit alleging religious discrimination.

The City Council voted 11-3 on Oct. 15 to settle all claims in a federal lawsuit filed by Kelvin Cochran, fired as head of the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department in 2015 after writing and distributing a self-published book, inspired by a church Bible study, calling homosexuality a "perversion."

Both sides claimed victory when the decision came down, but the city attorney reportedly advised council members in executive session it was in Atlanta's "best interest" to settle the claim.

Cochran, a deacon at a Southern Baptist church, was suspended after providing copies of the book to between nine and 12 Christian subordinates before the president of the local firefighter's union read it and considered some of the passages disturbing. (BNG)

### ***Dead Sea Scroll fragments removed***

WASHINGTON — The Museum of the Bible has removed five artifacts found to be forgeries rather than authentic fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The museum had long suspected the fragments might be forged and a sign accompanying the exhibit said scholars had raised questions about their authenticity.

In late October the museum received scientific verification via digital and X-ray testing of the ink, sediment layers and chemical composition, which proved conclusively that the fragments were forged. (RNS)