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Thweatt wrapping up time as state convention president

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Photo courtesy of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

A new church planted by the Hispanic congregation of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, holds its first service at FBC Fultondale on Sept. 9. It's continuing to meet every Sunday night at 5.

'A Godsend'

Dawson's Hispanic church plants congregation

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Mark Gainey says that long before he got to Fultondale, there were people with their hearts set on reaching the Hispanic community there.

And when he found that out, he was nothing but excited.

"Personally, my heart is for church planting. I was a church planter for nine and a half years before I came here," said Gainey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fultondale. "The demographics of

this area were one of the things that drew me here — it's so diverse. There's always been a heart for that community in our church long before I showed up."

The church had been running a van ministry for a while to bring in local children, and they were involved in helping local schools. They had also tried having a live translator at their services before.

'Church within a church'

But they had never had a Spanish worship service before.

That's where the vision of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, came into play. Since 1991 it's hosted a Hispanic congregation that functioned as a sort of "church within a church."

Through the years, the Hispanic church has held Vacation Bible Schools that drew in hundreds of Hispanic children, and they've taken international missions trips.

They're missions minded, said Hispanic pastor Bayron "Byron" Mosquera. As he and other staff members at Dawson began to consider the great need in Fultondale for a more permanent outreach, they began to talk to the leadership of First, Fultondale, about using their space to plant another Hispanic church.

"Our congregation wants to be obedient to the Great Commission and in order to do so we are committing ourselves to preaching the gospel of salvation to the people in north Jefferson County and establishing a church in their community," Mosquera said.

And as talks continued, it seemed to be a great fit, Gainey said.

"It was really a Godsend for us because we were wanting a way to better reach that community," he said. "We really sped up those conversations and put it on turbo.

(See 'It's,' page 8)

Is your church following all copyright laws?

By Margaret Colson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Does your church livestream its worship services? Play music when callers are put on hold on the telephone? Photocopy music compositions for choir use?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, then your church needs to consider if its copyright compliance is up to date and covers all copyright-protected activities of your church.

"Church leaders need to be much more aware of what types of works are copyrighted and that permission or licensing is required in order to legally use the works," said Susan Fontaine Godwin, founder and owner of Alabama-based Christian Copyright Solutions (CCS).

Eight works of authorship can be copyrighted: music, sound recordings, literary works, audiovisual, dance, dramas and architecture. United States copyright law gives copyright owners exclusive rights to reproduction, public performance, public display, distribution, derivative (adaptation such as an arrangement or translation) or performance of digitally transmitted sound recordings.

Why it is important

A church that infringes on a copyright, either knowingly or unknowingly, can potentially face a lawsuit, which is "an expensive outcome," according to Brad Radice, executive director of broadcast media in the marketing and communication division at Samford University in Birmingham.

Other outcomes for a non-copyright-compliant church are fines and punitive fees. If sued, a church may settle out of court but still face hefty financial fees to resolve the infringement issue. The "policing" of copyright compliance has become

(See 'Matter,' page 7)

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

Jerusalem and Judea

For the past 20 years a handful of Alabama Baptist churches have partnered with other churches from across the southeast in a ministry project focused on Perry County, Alabama.

The project is called Sowing Seeds of Hope (SSH). Samford University and Judson College also joined the partnership. Judson is located in Marion, the county seat of Perry County.

A recent article noted that “in partnership with SSH, Judson students now work in local schools tutoring students, remodeling classrooms and distributing children’s books.

“Students also volunteer in SSH’s home repair projects and health fairs, as well as assist parents in enrolling their children in AllKids, Alabama’s state-sponsored health insurance,” the article said.

Judson College helped bring the first dialysis clinic to Perry County and is now trying to bring the county’s first hospital to Marion.

Needs are great

According to local leaders, the people in Perry County don’t focus on what they lack. Instead they celebrate what they have. But that does not hide the fact that Perry County is one of the two poorest counties in Alabama. It has the second lowest per capita income in the state — a little more than \$13,000 annually. Forty percent of the people live below the federal poverty line, and more than 30 percent of Perry County residents are food insecure.

The leader of a SSH partner ministry called Communities Empowered and Transformed (C.E.T.) said of Perry County, “A lot of people are hurting. The first need I saw was nutrition, which plays a huge part in people’s lives and in education, period. I saw homes deteriorating. I saw elderly people not being attended to, youth that were lacking academically. I noticed that our community has gotten used to receiving and has forgotten that the true blessing is in the giving.”

Now C.E.T. Ministries sponsors a “displacement center” for women fleeing domestic violence and families who have endured fires or



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

eviction, a free clothing shop, bagged lunches and job training programs to empower people to earn a living through employment.

In 2017 the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights visited several places in the United States to focus on poverty in the developed world. After visiting two Black Belt counties, the UN representative was reportedly “shocked at the level of environmental degradation in some of rural Alabama, saying he had never seen anything like it in the developed world.”

The result of what the UN representative saw in some Black Belt counties was the return of parasites like hookworms, a parasite common in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa but thought to have been eliminated in Alabama a hundred years ago.

Hookworms are dangerous and can result in stunted physical growth and mental development. E. coli is another disease re-emerging in parts of rural Alabama.

Another startling statistic involves infant health. Nine out of every 1,000 infants in Alabama die before reaching their first birthday, placing the state’s infant mortality rate higher than places like Bahrain and Sri Lanka.

In Black Belt counties the infant mortality rate is much higher. This and several other health indicators place the area on par with Third World countries. All of this is part of the tangled knot of rural poverty, sometimes generational poverty, for

which no one has found an enduring answer.

As Alabama Baptists, we have a missions field in our own state. Part of our state suffers acute poverty. Part of our state lives with abnormally high food insecurity.

Part of our state lacks local access to proper health care. Part of our state endures extremely inadequate housing and sanitation. Part of our state offers substandard education. Part of our state provides little opportunity for employment.

This part of our state is the Black Belt.

Sowing Seeds of Hope is coming to an end after 20 years. What would happen if Alabama Baptists picked up the mantle of ministry to help Perry County and expanded the program to all the Black Belt counties?

What if Alabama Baptists repaired leaky roofs, installed handicap ramps, remodeled bathrooms and helped with other housing and sanitation needs? What if Alabama Baptists provided medical and dental clinics and, more importantly, helped make local access to health services possible?

What if Alabama Baptists supported improved educational opportunities? What if Alabama Baptists encouraged job training and used its influence to help bring job opportunities to depressed areas?

Would that not be a wonderful platform from which to share the gospel — to tell people about the love of God through word and deed and help them grow as Christian disciples?

No one argues that God has called His people to care for the hungry, the sick and the needy.

‘Hand out’ vs. ‘hand up’

Too often the church has understood that to mean by offering a “hand out” through charity rather than providing a “hand up” through community development. And along with these ministries goes sharing of the gospel. The two go together. They are inseparable. It is never a choice of one or the other.

The needs are great — greater than any local church can do alone. The opportunities demand a massive response. If Alabama Baptists were to catch a vision of service like the women of Judson College have, perhaps the vision of a statewide missions and ministry project could be translated beyond the Black Belt to some of the poverty centers in other parts of our state.

Personally, I am proud to be an Alabama Baptist. We are a missions-minded people. We give and we go to the ends of the earth.

In our giving and going, we dare not overlook the needs and opportunities in our own state. We need to care for the needy people in Alabama as we care for the needy people of distant lands.

After all, Jesus commanded us to minister in Jerusalem and Judea as well as to the ends of the earth. 🌿

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

CHARITABLE GIVING

In response to the articles “Charitable Generosity” and “Know The Impact” in the Oct. 18 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, I suggest we give greater exposure to QCDs — Qualified Charitable Distributions.

It is important to review all the rules concerning QCDs in IRS Publication 590b and by consulting a tax expert but the general guidelines are

that individuals over 70 1/2 years of age may distribute money directly from an IRA to a charitable organization.

The distribution does not count toward reportable income so no offsetting itemization is needed. Distributions from the IRA to the church (or other charitable organization) would replace gifts the individual would have made anyway by minimizing

the use of non-qualified funds.

The result could be the avoidance of additional income tax without having to itemize.

Gene Richard Hitchcock Jr.
Certified Financial Planner (R)
Trussville, Ala. 🌿



TAB
THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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'Much prayer,' 'much power'

Baptists offer support as Pittsburgh, nation reel from shooting

Anti-Semitism spouted by the man accused of entering a Pittsburgh synagogue and murdering 11 congregants is "a despicable lie of the enemy which we unequivocally reject," Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear tweeted following the Oct. 27 massacre.

Police arrested the shooter, 46-year-old Robert Bowers, and described his actions as a hate crime, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported. Bowers disturbed the Jewish Sabbath at the Tree of Life Synagogue and shouted, "All Jews must die," before opening fire that morning.

Those killed ranged in age from 54 to 97 and six were injured, according to news reports.

Bowers was armed with an AR-15 and three handguns, police said in multiple media reports, and is accused of having left a trail of anti-Semitic remarks on social media accounts. He was arraigned on a 44-count indictment, including hate crimes, in federal court on Nov. 1. In his social media posts, Bowers spoke ill of the HIAS National Refugee Shabbat, formerly the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, that today helps immigrants of various nationalities.

The Tree of Life Synagogue is located in the eastern Pittsburgh neighborhood of Squirrel Hill, the heart of Pittsburgh's Jewish community since the turn of the 20th century. Tree of Life is one of two conservative synagogues in the neighborhood. There are also multiple orthodox and reform synagogues in the neighborhood, which is just over one square mile wide.

Hours after the shooting, John Freeman, pastor of H2O City Church, Squirrel Hill, walked into the local Jewish Community Center and was at once on mission.

Freeman said the FBI was using the community center as a temporary hub where family members awaited news of victims who attended Tree of Life synagogue.

"I sat in there for a couple of hours, just listening to people, talking to people and comforting people, just being with them as they were waiting," Freeman said.

H2O City Church served coffee and provided hundreds of candles for an Oct. 27 evening vigil in Squirrel Hill, held an extended time of prayer in its Oct. 28 service and assigned members to pray hourly for the community.

"You can still feel the oppression. You can just still feel the weight walking through the neighborhood," Freeman said.

"We emphasize just being everyday missionaries and building relationships and running our missional communities. ... It's that everyday missionary work that you do to build relationship that prepares you to be a comfort-



RNS photo by Yonat Shimron

Sylvan and Bernice Simon both were killed in the Oct. 27 shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood. The couple was buried Nov. 1.

ing presence in a time of need like this."

Ric Worshill, executive director of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship (SBMF), said its 30-member congregations, 300 missionaries and small house churches are praying nationally.

"We're praying for the families all the time, because where there's much prayer there's much power," Worshill said.

Anti-Semitism is not new, he noted, but is spreading palpably.

"You look in the Middle East, you have this little tiny country called Israel, and it's about ... 85 percent Jewish in background ... and everybody

who lives around them hates them," Worshill said, noting that Satan drives the hate.

"He wants to destroy God's remnant, His chosen people," said Worshill, who became a Messianic believer at age 34. "[God] chose

**"Love is greater
than hate.
We're stronger
than hate."**

**Jeff Kipp
pastor, Congregation
Yeshua Ben David**

[Jewish people] for a purpose. ... He hasn't finished His plan with the Jewish people."

Chosen People Ministries (CPM), one of the Messianic groups the SBMF partners with nationally, has ministries in Pittsburgh.

Jeff Kipp, a pastor licensed with CPM, leads Congregation Yeshua Ben David, which is less than three miles from Tree of Life.

"This event happened while we were in the middle of our Shabbat service Saturday morning," Kipp said. "It was pretty shocking to all of us. We locked our doors and immediately stopped our service to tell everyone and went into a place of prayer and intercession.

"We ... do the best we can to tell Jewish people, 'We love you, we care about you, we're going to overcome this with you,'" Kipp told Baptist Press. "Love is greater than hate. We're stronger than hate. ... [We] just try to let Yeshua shine through us.

"We can't be overtly evangelistic," he said, "especially at a time like this. But we have to be, very much, wise as serpents and gentle as doves." (Compiled from wire services)

Southeastern Seminary highlights military

With more than 100 military community students, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) is seeking to bring awareness to ministry opportunities within the military community.

In September, affiliated SEBTS military personnel and students gathered for panel discussions and various meetings for the seminary's first Military Community Focus Week.

Mark Liederbach, SEBTS dean of students and vice president for student services, said discipling, training and caring for the military community is "strategic for long term global, gospel impact."

Topics included church planting near military bases and strategies for ministering in that context. A panel discussion was held for students interested in chaplaincy ministry. (BP)

‘Leader of leaders’

Thweatt wraps up time as state convention president

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

John Thweatt says that over the course of his life, meetings have never been his favorite. But as he wraps up two years of serving as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, he said he’s found he’s thoroughly enjoyed it — even the meetings.

“I never would’ve thought that I would’ve been president of Alabama Baptists,” said Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City. “I’m amazed I got this privilege.”

He noted a few highlights, lessons learned and things he would love for other Alabama Baptists to know.

Alabama Baptists have a lot of thriving, “incredible” ministries, and watching them at work was a good reminder to keep the Great Commission central and work together to accomplish it, Thweatt said. That means everything from disaster relief work to collegiate ministries.

“When you actually see state missionaries at work firsthand, and see the Cooperative Program through all the committees and other parts, it reminds you how important it is for all of us to be on board, for all of us to be team players,” he said.

Thweatt also said that one of his favorite parts has been getting to visit with churches around the state and getting to know pastors of all ages.

“It’s been great to get to know such a wide variety of pastors in other places that I wouldn’t have otherwise met,” he said.

Walking with pastors

As he walked alongside pastors going through hard times and heartaches of different kinds, he’s been encouraged by their commitment to Christ, to their churches and to the task Alabama Baptists are accomplishing together.

“It’s inspiring how even when things in their families’ lives are incredibly hard, they continue to love their churches and give their time for the state ministries,” Thweatt said.

As he has met with pastors, Thweatt said he’s also seen the importance of



Photo by Maggie Walsh

John Thweatt, pastor of FBC Pell City and president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, delivers the president’s address at the 2017 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville.



THWEATT

having both young pastors and seasoned pastors involved in the conversation.

“As a convention, we need to keep trying to find a way to continue to engage younger pastors,” he said.

“We need the fresh ideas and we also need that seasoned wisdom, that combination together,” Thweatt added.

He said his prayer is that as a state convention, Alabama Baptists will continue to work to bring a diverse set of people to the table.

“My prayer is that we will reach young pastors and do everything we can to reach across minority lines so we’re a better picture of heaven,” Thweatt said.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, called Thweatt a “leader of leaders.”

“All Alabama Baptists can be proud of how John Thweatt has stewarded his influence as president,” he said.

“His wise counsel has benefitted many people, including me. I have grown to appreciate even more his wisdom and wit as a person and as a leader during these past two years,” Lance added.

Thweatt has been “fair minded and balanced” in dealing with people, Lance said. And he said Thweatt leads his own church well too.

“John is a faithful biblical preacher who takes the task of proclaiming God’s Word very seriously,” he said.

“He is also a compassionate pastoral leader who sought to never neglect his flock while serving as president. He is loved and admired by his people.”

“John is a faithful biblical preacher who takes the task of proclaiming God’s word very seriously.”

**Rick Lance
executive director, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions**

Meetings set to coincide with upcoming state convention

► **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders** — The Unite event will be held Nov. 12 at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, 4–8 p.m. It will feature “Ted-talk” style presentations on a range of collegiate ministry issues, Q&A time and dinner. Guest speakers will be Linda Weir, Chase Abner, Scott Kindig and Michael Bozeman. For more information or to register visit www.bcmlink.org/unite.

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS)** — Southwestern Seminary will hold its alumni and friends luncheon Nov. 13 at Joel’s Restaurant, Trussville, 12–1:15 p.m. Guest speaker will be Kyle Scott, SWBTS representative. For more information email splatt@swbts.edu.

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary** — Southern Seminary will hold its alumni and friends luncheon Nov. 13 at Trussville Civic Center, 12–1:15 p.m. Guest speaker will be R. Albert Mohler. Tickets may be purchased at www.eventbrite.com/e/sbts-alumni-friends-lunch-at-the-alabama-baptist-convention-tickets-50190720797

► **Children’s Honor Choir 20th Year Celebration** — The Children’s Honor Choir will hold its 20th year celebration Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, 3:30–8 p.m. For more information email cparrish@alsbom.org.

► **Samford University** — Samford University will hold its alumni and friends breakfast Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, 7–8:30 a.m. Andrew Westmoreland will be the keynote speaker. To register visit www.samford.edu/alumni/events.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary** — New Orleans Seminary will hold a luncheon Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, 12–1:30 p.m.

► **Passion Tree Ministries** — Passion Tree Ministries will hold a luncheon Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, beginning at noon.

► **The Alabama Baptist (TAB)** — *The Alabama Baptist* will hold a retirement reception for Bobby S. “Bob” Terry on Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church, Trussville, 4:30–6:30 p.m. Terry has served as president and editor of *TAB* for 23 years and has worked in state Baptist papers for 50 years. He will retire on Dec. 31. For more information call 205-870-4720. (*TAB*)

“When you actually see state missionaries at work firsthand ... it reminds you how important it is for all of us to be on board, for all of us to be team players.”

John Thweatt, pastor of FBC Pell City and president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention



Facebook screen capture

Bob Cox, a line worker for Pea River Electric Cooperative in Ozark and pastor of Spring Hill Baptist Church, Clio, leads a gathering with a group of coworkers called Co-Ops for Christ.

'Let your light shine'

Clio pastor 'keeps the light on' for co-ops through weekly Bible study

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

About a year and a half ago, Bob Cox realized God was tapping him on the shoulder.

"I told a coworker, 'You know, we have our briefing meetings. We should have prayer before,'" said Cox, a line worker for Pea River Electric Cooperative in Ozark.

So they did, for anyone who wanted to participate. It was a blessing, Cox said. So he decided he wanted to take it even further.

The next day he started a Bible study.

"I went before our board and

asked if we could do it, and they said as long as it wasn't connected to the company, we could," he said. "I knew God was burdening me to do this."

So Cox — who also serves as pastor of Spring Hill Baptist Church, Clio, in Barbour Baptist Association — has been gathering with a group of coworkers every Wednesday morning at 6:30 for the past year and a half.

Co-Ops for Christ

They call it Co-Ops for Christ. Sometimes they have special speakers and sometimes Cox leads it. They pray. They read a passage of Scripture. They talk about how to apply it to their

lives. They encourage each other.

And they webcast it to anyone else who would like to be a part.

"We share it live every week through our Facebook page," he said, noting that you can find it by looking up Co-Ops for Christ on Facebook. Their page has a white logo with a cross in the middle.

"In the time since we've started, we've been able to tell crews in other states about it as we've gone there to help after a storm," Cox said. "We have some people in South Carolina who participate and some from North Alabama who watch too. We've had anywhere from 100 views to 2,000 views on any given week."

On one recent week as the East

Coast was bracing for Hurricane Florence, he read the passage about Jesus calming the storm and they prayed for people who were in the hurricane's path to know the peace Christ offers. On another week, he taught the Three Circles method of sharing your faith with others.

"It's been a blessing to be a part of," Cox said. "I enjoy it. Our main goal in our job is to keep the lights on, and that's our main goal as Christians too."

That's why they chose Matthew 5:16 as their group's theme verse — "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Don Hatcher, associational mission strategist for Barbour Association, said Cox is always looking for ways to share the gospel.

Reaching the lost

"He works with a group of men who respect his consistency in his Christian walk," he said, noting that Cox told him his burden was to reach the lost and encourage believers at his workplace.

"Bob is making an impact by planting the seed of God's Word, watering it and believing that God will honor his efforts to make an eternal difference in the lives of the men to whom he ministers," Hatcher said. ☞

REFLECTIONS



Maplesville's Mulberry Baptist Church celebrates 200 years in ministry

Three years ago a team from Mulberry Baptist Church, Maplesville, started planning the church's year-long "Serving the Savior for 200 Years" celebration.

On Oct. 14 all the planning and celebrating culminated in the 200th anniversary service.

The church building overflowed with people from across the country, including Virginia, Illinois, Missouri, Texas and Tennessee.

The worship service started with the ringing of the church bell, which was renovated for the celebration.

Special music was brought by the LeCroy Sisters. The choir and organist Annette Veazey also performed.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, was the guest speaker for the service. He also presented the church with a certificate commemorating the milestone.

Lonette Berg, from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Larry Felkins, associational mission strategist for Chilton



Photo by Lonette Berg

Baptist Association, presented the church with certificates recognizing its years of ministry.

A re-creation of the Mulberry Meeting House was on display, as well as photos and antiques.

"2018 was a banner year for Mulberry Baptist Church celebrating 200 years. The celebration impacted not only our church, but our community, county and beyond," member Sherrell White said.

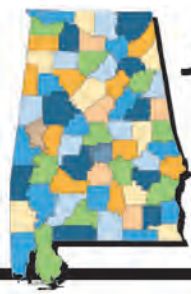
The church also held several other events in honor of the anni-

versary throughout the year.

In April the church hosted Old-Fashioned Day, a community event attended by more than 500 people. In August they held a Mulberry Creek baptism and picnic at a nearby creek.

A special service for elected officials and first responders was held in September. On Oct. 6, they held the bicentennial banquet and fireworks show.

The church also will be publishing a book on the church's 200-year history soon. (Jessica Ingram)



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BIBB

► **First Church, Woodstock**, will host a concert featuring The Blackwood Brothers Quartet on Nov. 10, 7 p.m. Steven Hicks is pastor.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its third Sunday singing Nov. 18, 6 p.m. featuring Boys of Alabama. For more information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Bradley McVay** is the new pastor at **Beulah Church, Muscadine**. Previously he served several churches as student pastor, including Greenbrier Road Church, Leatherwood Church and Iron City Church, all in Anniston. McVay was ordained Nov. 4 at Greenbrier Road. He will begin at Beulah on Nov. 11. He and his wife, Jadah, have six children.



MCVAY

CHOCTAW

► **Choctaw Association** will hold a Thanksgiving "Singspiration" service Nov. 20, 6 p.m. at Calvary Church, Butler. Terry Long is associational mission strategist.

ETOWAH

► **East Gadsden Church** will hold a Veteran's Day service Nov. 11, 10:15 a.m. honoring all veterans, active service personnel and first responders. Congressman Robert Aderholt will be the special guest and U.S. Army Chaplain Pete Cuison will speak. Jonathan Wilburn and Daniel Akin will bring special music. John Dickinson is pastor.

LAMAR

► **Calvary Church, Vernon**, will hold a revival Nov. 11, 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Gary Bonner, associational mission strategist of Sipsey Association, will be the guest speaker. Jerry Ray is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Moffett Road Church, Mobile**, will celebrate its 75th anniversary Nov. 18, 10 a.m. Former pastor Terry Cutrer and former youth minister Craig Walker will be the guest speakers. A covered-dish lunch will follow the service. For more information call 251-342-9563. Steve Walter is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host a revival Nov. 18, 10:30 a.m. and 6:15 p.m. Junior Hill will be the guest speaker. A Thanksgiving meal will be served at 5 p.m. in the Christian Life Center. Herb Thomas is pastor. ✠



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Ecclesiology Through Imagery

The Church as an Assembly

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

The actual Greek word used for church is *ekklesia*, a term that was commonly used for any kind of assembly or gathering. The gathering could be a political assembly of local citizens. One such notable gathering is described in Acts 19:21–41 when Paul's preaching of the gospel in Ephesus precipitated a riot among the silversmiths because their trade in silver shrines of the pagan goddess Diana was put in jeopardy by the advance of the gospel. The uproar resulted in a mass gathering in a theater. When the citizens had gathered in the theater the description of that assembly was captured in these words: "Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly (*ekklesia*) was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together?" (Acts 19:32). Finally, the city clerk quieted the mob with the declaration that if the silversmiths had a legal quarrel with those who proclaimed the gospel, "It shall be determined in the lawful assembly" (Acts 19:39).

Local church

Inasmuch as this Greek term was picked up to speak of a gathering of Christ's followers, it has particular reference to a local church or assembly. It also has furnished the theological world the formal name of "ecclesiology" by which to refer to the doctrine of the church — a theological way of expressing our theme over these several weeks as "Ecclesiology Through Imagery."

As just noted, when the Bible speaks of the Church as an *ekklesia* or assembly, the reference is most often to a local gathering of church members. For example, Matthew 18:15–17a uses this term for a church in a local sense to refer to a gathered assembly in a particular place at a particular time, saying, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him

alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church." Clearly, the church in the local sense describes a gathering of the believers who constitute its membership among whom specific disagreements and contentions might be resolved.

Heavenly future

While the idea of an assembly commonly refers to a local gathering, the image of an assembly is nonetheless used also to speak of the gathering of all believers at the end time. Thus the Church as an assembly can have a universal sense that refers to a glorious assembly of all the redeemed in a heavenly future. It is with this sense that Hebrews 12:22–23a says, "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven."

The takeaway application of the imagery of the church as an assembly is that found in Hebrews 10:24–2: "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching." ✠

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.



Dollar General dedication



Photo courtesy of Lawrence Brooks

Lawrence Brooks (front, right), pastor of Big Creek Baptist Church, Adger, in Mud Creek Baptist Association, leads a dedication of a new Dollar General store in Alliance. Many employees of the store including manager Missy Edgett (front, second from right) and district manager Greg Livingston (back, third from right) were at the dedication. "I feel this is a plus for our area as well as for the Mud Creek Baptist Association," he said.

‘Matter of integrity’

Understanding, following copyright laws important for church ministry leaders

(continued from page 1)

better with technology, Radice warned.

And ignorance of the copyright law is no defense if a church is found to be non-copyright compliant.

In addition to financial repercussions for a church that is non-copyright compliant, if a church’s electronic posting is discovered not to be compliant, the posting may be silenced or shut down. This negates the church’s efforts to expand its gospel witness, Radice explained.

Keith Hibbs, director of the office of worship leadership and church music for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), added that copyright compliance is “a matter of integrity.”

“When you use copied material or stream/broadcast without acquired permission you are stealing artistic property from composers, lyricists, publishers and producers,” he said.

Doug Rogers, SBOM communications director, agreed. “I always remind churches that we should set the standard in this area, rather than look for shortcuts, plead ignorance or ask ‘Who’s going to know?’”

Beyond these negative outcomes, Su-

san Fontaine Godwin believes, “Church copyright compliance helps support and promote the creation of new music and resources for the use of the Church.

“(Even though) copyright compliance is often confusing and complex ... copyrighted materials we use in worship and ministry are available to use because someone was called by God to create them, took the time and care to craft them and used their resources to share them with the world,” said Godwin, who teaches a copyright class at University of Mobile. “Making sure these creative individuals are paid for their work allows them to continue in their ministries and allows our ministries to continue to be blessed by their work.”

Ensuring copyright compliance

When it comes to copyright compliance, it’s better for churches to “be proactive, rather than reactive,” said Ed Landers, director of the media center in the marketing and communication division at Samford.

United States copyright law does have a Religious Service Exemption that allows churches and other religious organizations to perform or play music or a nondramatic



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literary work during a religious service at a place of worship without permission. Beyond that one exemption, however, churches must secure licensing for their use of copyrighted materials.

One of the confusing issues related to copyright compliance is the difference between a performance license, which allows a church to play or publicly perform a piece, and a reproduction or copying license, which allows a church to record a live performance or photocopy musical compositions.

One copyright license does not cover all of a church’s copyright compliance needs. To simplify a church gaining appropriate copyright coverage, several blanket licenses are available.

Godwin explained, “In the Christian community a blanket license provides pre-approved authorization for your church or ministry to use a particular group of copyrights for very specific uses or rights. In most cases a group of copyright owners and a third party have developed a licensing solution to simplify the legal use of copyrights and assure royalty payments are disbursed to the correct copyright owners.”

A blanket license frees a church from having to get copyright permission each time it wants to use a copyrighted work.

Rogers added that he has had churches ask if these licenses are a gimmick. “I’m quick to explain that they’re really a blessing. They make the task of legally using copyrighted materials much simpler. Can you imagine how difficult it would be to have to secure permission for each song individually?”

To be fully compliant, some churches may need just one blanket license, while other churches may need several, Godwin said. The costs of blanket licenses are tiered, based on congregational size, and are affordable for most churches.

Blanket licenses

“There isn’t a one-stop licensing solution,” Godwin said. However, two companies that provide blanket licenses for churches are Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) and CCS, with each providing distinctive services. These two companies provide blanket licenses that should cover the “majority” of copyright

coverage needed by churches, Godwin said. There is little overlap in the copyright licenses offered by the two companies.

Generally, CCLI offers a blanket copyright license to reproduce, distribute and, to a limited extent, make audio reproductions or derivative works. CCS, on the other hand, offers blanket performance licenses. Although the Religious Service Exemption allows churches to perform within the confines of a worship service, any other performances, such as performing publicly, live-streaming worship services, posting songs to the internet, recording a worship service for shut-ins or even playing Christian copyrighted music in a church exercise class or as people who call the church are put on hold, require copyright licensing.

“The key is to consider how your church uses copyrighted music and to put together the mosaic of blanket licensing that is right for you,” Godwin advised.

Several online resources, such as copyright fact sheets, a copyright quiz and a church copyright toolkit, are available at christiancopyrightsolutions.com to help churches determine their coverage.

Legal counsel

“A part of our mission is education,” Godwin explained. “Churches may need to obtain legal counsel from a copyright or entertainment attorney regarding specific situations or questions.”

In addition to CCLI and CCS, Church Video Licensing International (CVLI) allows churches to show approved films and videos for specific uses. For example, a video clip may be used to illustrate a sermon point or an entire movie may be shown at a special church movie night event. However, this license does not extend to a church retransmitting the video on the internet.

EDITOR’S NOTE — The information provided in this article is for educational purposes only and should not be construed as legal counsel. Because church copyright compliance is a complex issue, The Alabama Baptist is committed to further exploration of this topic in upcoming issues. If you have specific questions related to church copyright compliance, please send them to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

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





Photo courtesy of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

A new Hispanic congregation in north Jefferson County holds a fellowship time before its first service Sept. 9. It was one of four churches that had a kickoff service that day.

'Red-letter week'

Week of Prayer sees boom in church plants

Lamar Duke says that if he could have every week go the way the Myers-Mallory Week of Prayer for State Missions went this year, he'd be dancing for joy.

"That entire week (Sept. 9–16) we had a red-letter week in church planting," said Duke, church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

On the first Sunday of the week, four churches had a kickoff service. A new Hispanic congregation in north Jefferson County was one (see story, page 1).

Tapestry Church, which meets at the

Embassy Suites in Hoover and is led by Pastor Deric Thomas, saw more than 300 attend its first service.

Redeemer Church in Helena, led by Pastor Chase Rogers, had a strong start too, Duke said, as did Union Church, a new plant in Auburn led by Pastor Chris Brister.

On the Monday that followed Duke met with six new church planters and their wives for a two-day assessment retreat. And on Thursday that week he met with Derrick Millirons, who had recently planted Mercy Baptist Church in Russell Baptist Association.

"God is doing some great things in church planting across our state. It's great to be a part of it," Duke said. "Pray that the Lord of the harvest would continue to send laborers. That's my recruiting plan and rarely does a day go by that I don't get a phone call, text or email from someone who wants to plant a church in Alabama."

But even so, he said he believes there's a lot more to be done.

"I believe our greatest potential for church planters are still sitting in the pews, they just don't know where the on-ramp is to get started," Duke said.

His office at the SBOM can offer guidance, resources and support for anyone looking to start a church. (Grace Thornton)

For more information about the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering or the annual week of prayer, visit myers-mallory.org. For more information about church planting, visit plantalabama.org or contact Duke at 334-613-2332 or lduke@alsbom.org.

'It's about the Great Commission'

(continued from page 1)

"To see the excitement in our people was so refreshing."

On Sept. 9 the new church held its first worship service in the youth worship room at First, Fultondale. More than 80 people came. It's continuing to meet every Sunday night at 5, and the church is already preparing to hold its first baptismal service in the main worship center.

"The fruit is already there," Gainey said. "I'm just so excited to see God work."

To partner with Dawson in this way "is exciting," he said. "It's about the Great Commission — about making disciples."✠

Someone You

Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett

Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Ben Bowden

Ben Bowden, 38, has been in ministry 15 years. He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University, and master's and doctorate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He is now pastor of the very church where he came to know Jesus as his Savior 20 years ago. He serves on the board of directors for The Alabama Baptist and teaches New Testament classes at a local community college and at a seminary in East Asia.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION: Senior pastor

CHURCH NAME: FBC Enterprise in Coffee Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you." (Psalm 63:3)



BOWDEN

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.

A: Preaching and making disciples. Preaching is God's ordained means to grow a healthy church. But a powerful preacher is going to be a personal pastor. Therefore I spend a lot of time meeting with people in smaller groups throughout the week to pray and to read and discuss the Bible.

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

A: It was the summer I turned 21. I was working at JH Ranch in northern California as a river guide. For my birthday a friend and fellow staff member gave me John Piper's "Desiring God." At that time I was clueless about John Piper. For all I knew, he was related to Rowdy Roddy Piper (which would've given him much cred in my mind). I read the book and scratched my head. It was the deepest book I'd ever read. I re-read it and was struck by how Piper helped me see that following God and experiencing joy are not two separate paths, but one in the same. As Piper says, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." This truth has shaped my teaching and preaching ever since.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: My wife and I just had our sixth child. My oldest is eight years old. No twins. (#insane) God has been teaching me the blessing of a godly wife and the freedom in parenting.

► **The blessing of a godly wife.** She's got sauce. She's the cat's meow and then some. She can dance back-

wards while carpooling, snack-packing and pastor-wife-ing — and she does it all with a smile on her face and gleam in her eye. Unsurprisingly, God was right: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing."

► **The freedom in parenting.** Nothing brings me to my knees quite like parenting. John Wilmot's quip has become reality for me: "Before I got married I had no children and six theories; now, I have six children and no theories." However discouraging this quote may sound, it's actually freeing. Many young Christian parents today are overthinking it. There seems to be an endless supply of Christian parenting books that give us a plethora of advice. Interestingly, the Bible has very little to say about specific parenting techniques other than, "Feed 'em; love 'em; don't drive 'em crazy and point 'em to Jesus."

Q: If there was one thing you could tell your younger self about faith, what would it be?

A: I got saved when I was 18. I would love to take my 18-year-old self by the collar and plead with him to memorize more Scripture. Of course, read books, study theology, work ferociously at Greek while in seminary, enjoy the ride, go fishing with Daddy more because he's not going to be around much longer, etc. But above all else, hide God's word in your heart! No other discipline has kindled my heart with affection for Christ quite like memorizing Scripture.✠

Sense of community

As feelings of disconnectedness persist, people need biblical community

Too late to try?

William and Stephanie have been small group leaders in their church's college and career department for several years. Their town has two colleges and a large population of young professionals, so the makeup of their groups change from semester to semester and year to year.

Though they have enjoyed working with college students tremendously, William and Stephanie have begun to feel their relationships with others outside their small group have become superficial. Amid caring for their kids, assisting their parents, working and serving, they long for a more consistent and supportive group of friends their own age — friends who can truly understand the stage of life they are in.

They know their group members value the community they've nurtured for them. Is it too late for William and Stephanie to find a community for themselves?

By Lisa Keane, MAMFC, LPC-S, NCC
Pathways Professional Counseling

Sitting in my office week after week, I hear stories of hurt, betrayal and unimaginable grief. One of the first things I do to connect with a new client during the assessment phase is to ask about their community in their day-to-day life. I want to know what their social support network looks like, if they have the support of a local church and if they have people in their life that will love and support them through whatever difficult time they might be facing.

Feeling disconnected

Sadly, more often than not, I hear stories of how people feel disconnected, don't feel seen or heard and certainly don't have people with whom they feel they can be vulnerable and share their deepest needs.

A true sense of community is often difficult for people to find and cultivate in a day and age when having the perfect Instagram photo and a perfect-looking life on Facebook

seems to be more valued than being honest and vulnerable about the real struggles people are facing.

Society tells us it is all about putting up a perfect façade. Not being real in our struggles prevents us from developing real community because we never allow people to really know us. However, as believers we must strive to value community and cultivate it for ourselves in order to reverse these trends.

I wish I could say community is easy to create: "Just follow these three, simple steps to get there!" But what I know from personal experience is that when we first looked for community in our city, it was a daunting task. The idea of finding a new faith family that we could engage with on a deeper level seemed overwhelming to us.

We knew we needed it. We knew we wanted it. But the idea of vulnerability, the time investment to connect and the awkwardness of getting there were not stages we were looking forward to. My husband and I had both been in amazing faith communities at different points in our lives. So we knew what we were missing. We were missing accountability. We were missing others to come alongside us in times of trial and joys, and people to surround us when we didn't think we could go on.

The faith community we all need

as believers takes both time and investment. God created us to know others and to be intimately known by others. God calls us to community because He knows it is what we need. He created that need within us.

Unfulfilled need

As a mental health counselor, I often see this need go unfulfilled. For believers, community typically comes in the form of a church body or small group. The truth is without that community and support, we are not likely to be emotionally or spiritually healthy.

Hebrews 10:24–25 says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

As I read these passages in Scripture, I can't help but imagine that in order to stir (See 'Iron,' page 10)



'Iron sharpens iron'

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."
Proverbs 27:17

Stronger, deeper relationships improve spiritual, mental health

(continued from page 9)

one another up or sharpen each other, we need a deep sense of community, vulnerability and time investment with others.

God's word calls us to community that allows us to best glorify Him.

We also can face negative emotional consequences as a result of not engaging in community with one another. Barna Research Group has reported that "10 years ago, slightly over 1 out of 10 Americans self-identified as lonely. Today, that number has doubled — a paradoxical reality in the full swing of the social media age."

We may say we feel connected. We may have more than 1,000 friends online. But we are experiencing feelings of loneliness at a much higher rate today than we did in the years before social media existed.

As a therapist, I can easily see the reason. There is a major difference between having people you know on the surface versus having people you know intimately, who know you deeply and who you trust wholeheartedly.

How do we stop having shallow relationships or stop the overwhelming

feelings of loneliness we experience? First we have to acknowledge that we need connection in order to survive and thrive in this world. You cannot go at life alone.

We know from multiple forms of research that people who feel more connected have lower levels of depression and anxiety. God is calling us to connect, and



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in turn research shows it supports our mental health. Next we have to make an effort to connect with people. Just attending church or communicating with people online will not fulfill

your need for community. You have to step out of your comfort zone and sacrifice time in order to truly get to know people.

Lastly you must be willing to be vulnerable. What is vulnerability? It is the practice of sharing with others what you are feeling and experiencing even if it feels scary to do so. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear

one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." This is why counseling is so helpful to the life of an individual struggling with community. A counselor offers an empathetic ear that brings no judgment and allows people to be seen and heard in very deep ways.

Commitment and courage

As the Church and body of Christ, we must listen to one another, support one another when in need and allow ourselves to be known by other people when struggling. Surface relationships and casual acquaintances will not be helpful to your spiritual or emotional health.

These steps seem pretty simple to "check off" and help us cultivate the community that we need. Building Christian community takes commitment and courage, but it is so worth it.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lisa Keane is clinical director for Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. †

10 ways to cultivate deep biblical community

1. Invest time. As Scripture says, do not neglect to meet with one another regularly.

2. Be willing to sacrifice for others. If someone needs help with a project or needs a listening ear, be willing to step out of your normal routine to meet them where they are.

3. Cultivate vulnerability by having time and space to share deep struggles, losses and joys.

4. Be willing to ask for help. When you are struggling, ask for accountability, prayer or wisdom from your community.

5. Invest in ministry opportunities together. Community that serves together grows together.

6. Have meaningful times of contact and conversation. Be willing to set aside social time to dive deep into what is going on in each other's worlds. Be willing to ask the hard questions and answer them honestly.

7. Study God's word in depth together. Through the reading of God's word, His spirit can stir you up together.

8. Remember — community is all about long-term relationships. Don't expect it to happen overnight!

9. Don't walk away when things get tough. Be willing to stick around through hard times.

10. Ask God to show you where you might be limiting community in your life. If you can't seem to work through this on your own, contact a local counselor to talk through the roadblocks you might have to vulnerability and community.

Source: Lisa Keane

"Surface relationships and casual acquaintances will not be helpful to your spiritual or emotional health."

Connecting in a digital world



123rf.com

Humans were created for community by an inherently relational God

By Dayton Hartman
Special to The Alabama Baptist

We are an incredibly connected society. We “like” one another’s pictures of our kids, our coffee cups and our devotional reading on Instagram. We argue ideas and post ridiculous memes on Facebook. We retweet one another.

Texting has become so common and accepted that there are no longer boundaries on the appropriate times of day to text. Most people even expect you to reply to their text within a matter of seconds. I’ve spoken with multiple people who suffer mild anxiety over the seemingly long intervals between exchanged texts with a friend or significant other.

We’ve never experienced this level of connectivity in human history and yet we are increasingly lonely.

Rise of loneliness

Recently I read a BBC article that documented the rise of loneliness across all generational lines but noted its marked presence among the youngest and most social media savvy generation: 16- to 24-year-olds.

How is it possible that in a social media driven world, we are somehow less “social?”

If you observe the societal landscape, most people are staring at their phones instead of engaging with other humans.

Rather than giving attention to what the people in front of us are saying or doing, we are far too consumed with what other people are saying and doing on social media. It is bizarre.

The supposed purpose of social media is to increase human connectivity. Instead it has the opposite effect.

Our interaction with our screens is inherently lonely because it is not accomplished in community.

Additionally social media perpetuates human deception which makes living in meaningful relationship nearly impossible. Think about it: How honest are people on social media? Not very. We only post our wins, our victories, our happy moments and our best pictures. We do not offer our true selves on social media. We put forth a sanitized version of reality instead.

Moreover, our connectivity fosters human pride, another relationship killer. When you find yourself tagged in a group picture, who do you look at first? Your friends or your family? No, you look at the person you love most: You. If you look good, it’s a great picture, and you leave the tag in place. If you look bad, even if everyone else looks great, you untag the picture because it is a bad picture.

Our pride causes us to not only curate the sanitized versions of our online persona but to believe that the myth is reality.

All of this drives us away from a biblical concept of community and instead pushes us toward uniformity, where we all like the same things, have the same interests and celebrate the same things.

So what do we do? Well we’ve got to reclaim the biblical concept of the imago dei, the image of God present in humanity. Genesis 1:26–27 tells us, “God said, ‘Let

us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’ So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.”

Theologians have written mountains of material explaining all the nuances of what it means to be created in the image of God, but one

of the clearest explanations is that we were created for community by an inherently relational being.

There is one God and that one God is eternally three persons, a perfect community of relationships. Each person of the Godhead is equal in deity and attributes. However, each is distinct in their relational interactions. The Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Spirit.

We were made for relationship with this triune God and with one another. As a result our relationships with one another are inherently dynamic. In other words they do not breed sameness but instead there is an ebb and flow of ideas, interests, hopes, fears and gifting. We equally bear the im-

“The supposed purpose of social media is to increase human connectivity. Instead, it has the opposite effect.”

age of God and yet we are relationally distinct.

A purely digital existence provides a form of community but it will ultimately turn into a community typified by a pursuit for uniformity which is not true community. Biblical community is distinguished by shared personal experiences, selfless acts of love and genuine diversity (Eph. 2–3).

True community

We see examples of this in Acts 2:42–47 as the first Christians lived their lives together. They regularly ate meals together (v. 42), they would sacrificially use their resources to meet the pressing needs of others (vv. 44–45), they worshipped together (v. 46) and they lived their everyday lives on mission (v. 47). This kind of community can only be found in the Church.

All humans need and even crave what only the Church can provide: true community. Our hyper-connected world has not aided our pursuit of living out the relational aspects of the imago dei. Instead it has supplied us a faux experience that leaves our longings and cravings unfulfilled.

Spend less time pursuing connectivity in the digital world and more time living in community in the real world. After all a denial of our need for true community is a denial of our full humanity.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Dayton Hartman is an adjunct professor of religious studies at Judson College. †

A choir and orchestra made up of members from Central Baptist, Decatur; FBC Decatur; and Tabernacle Baptist, Carrollton, Georgia, sing for senior adults at the LeConte Center.

'Unifying event'



Photos courtesy of Phil Waldrep Ministries

Decatur choirs sing for former President Bush at Celebrators Conference in Pigeon Forge

By **Martine Bates Fairbanks**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The excitement was evident. A full two hours before the doors were scheduled to open, people were lined up waiting to get in. An hour later, the lines were wrapped around the building and far down the street. Buses with church logos on their sides lined up near the LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, after discharging their passengers. Choirs from three churches, along with Charles Billingsley and the group Veritas, were inside preparing to perform for a crowd of more than 8,000 people from 22 states and Canada, and a special guest: former president George W. Bush.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for all of us," enthused Clint Kimmel, worship leader at Central in Decatur. "Singing for that many people and a former president ... that's huge."

After getting the invitation from Phil Waldrep, president of Phil Waldrep Ministries, Kimmel invited fellow worship leaders Matt Rouse from First Baptist Church, Decatur, and James

Kimmel from Tabernacle Baptist in Carrollton, Georgia, to join their choirs with Central's to make a total of 150 voices and orchestra members. The three ministers of music planned the music together, then took turns leading the choir and orchestra in 30 minutes of sacred music, followed by patriotic songs during the main service.



Orchestra members perform patriotic songs to celebrate veterans.

The Celebrators Conference is an annual multiday event sponsored by Phil Waldrep Ministries for senior adults. This year's conference was held in Pigeon Forge on Oct. 22-25. The final evening session Oct. 24 featured a patriotic celebration honoring veterans and a "chat" with the former president. President Bush has spoken at Celebrators before, in 2009, 2011 and 2013, but

this was his first time in Pigeon Forge.

"It's a unique opportunity any time an organization gets to host a president, especially when a former president is joining you to honor those who served our nation," said Waldrep.

The evening was planned with "no politics and no policy talk," according to Waldrep.

'Unifying event'

Speaking before the event, Waldrep said, "Politics can be divisive. We want tonight to be a unifying event. We want to talk about what we can agree on: that this is the greatest country in the history of the world. We want to talk about what's good and right and honor those who served."

After Blake Kersey, pastor of First, Decatur, opened the service with prayer, the choirs and musical guests performed songs

like "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America." The service included a tribute to the armed forces, a presentation of medals to veterans and recognition of attendees who had served in each branch. Challenger, the bald eagle used at presidential inaugurations and other historical events, was present for the celebration.

Instead of giving a speech, the former president suggested an interview format. Waldrep and Bush sat in comfortable chairs on the front of the stage and talked for about 45 minutes, covering topics ranging from the former first ladies (his wife and his mother) and the influence of his father to the impact of 9/11 and his newest hobby — painting.

Bush entertained the audience with humor interspersed with serious observations. When asked

about a typical day in the presidency, Bush said he always started his day by reading the Bible.

"Serving God is important in life," Bush said.

Graham's influence

Bush also talked about the influence of Billy Graham, who helped him quit drinking more than 30 years ago. He said what he missed most about the presidency was the pampering, which included valets tasked with making sure the president was well cared for. He noted that the pampering stopped the day after he left the White House.

"I was waiting for someone to bring my breakfast when Laura told me to make the coffee," Bush said.

Phil Waldrep Ministries, based in Decatur, also hosts Women of Joy, Gridiron and Pastors' Encouragement Retreats. ✝

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SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

Live a life worthy of the sacrifice

The retired serviceman's sincere, straightforward approach to his time in the military intrigued me. And the more I thought on his words, the more I realized the depth and intensity of what he was saying.

"When I've been in uniform throughout my career, random people have walked up to thank me for my service or buy my lunch," he said. "There also have been times when applause broke out as I walked through a restaurant or an airport.

"While I appreciate their appreciation, what I really wanted to say was, 'Don't thank me. Don't buy me lunch. Don't applaud me. Just live a life worthy of living so my service and the sacrifices I made for you were not in vain.'"

The U.S. military was officially established by Congress at the urging of President Washington in 1789.

With hundreds of thousands of people serving in the early days and more than 2.5 million combined active and reserves serving today, my mind can't quite grasp exactly how many individual people have dedicated their lives during these past 229 years.

Each of those men and women served sacrificially. Many saw and experienced horrific events that they carried or will carry for their entire lives. Most choose to protect the rest of us from the worst of the details and are hesitant to even admit how heavy the load really is.

In many cases, those who served are now sentenced to a life of attempting to manage post-traumatic stress disorder, continual nightmares and/or difficulty assimilating back into civilian life. Alcoholism, drug

addiction and suicide rates among former military personnel continue to climb. Family relationships and friendships will never be the same for them. Some find a way to push through and quietly battle their internal demons while balancing a loving and caring relationship with family who could never understand. Some do better in isolation or at least by keeping a defined distance from others.

By Jennifer
Davis Rash
Editor-elect

Millions of our fellow Americans stood in the gap for us in past years. Millions more are serving right now or are within days, weeks or months of taking their turn to serve. They have protected and continue to protect the freedoms and way of life we enjoy as U.S. citizens.

But how often do we really think about the sacrifices so many have made for us?

Military families are typically the best at honoring those in service, caring for those returning and being sensitive to the reality of the situations. And most of us likely have a family member, at least an extended family member, who has served at some point.

(Continued at top of next column)



Celebrate Veterans Day – Nov. 11

(continued from Rashional Thoughts column)

It is good to honor those who have served on Veterans Day.

We also remember those who died in service on Memorial Day.

Most often the 4th of July includes a shoutout to our current military and Lee Greenwood's famous "God Bless the USA" is sung with sincere gusto.

But outside of those three holidays, how often do we remember the men and women who fought and in some cases died for our freedom? Do we actually grasp and respect the concept of true freedom?

Are we living lives worthy of all those who sacrificed for us?

Are we making the United States

better because we are citizens?

And for those of us who are believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, do we fully grasp the sacrifice He made for us?

Are we living lives worthy of Him? Do we allow His love and grace to shine through us as He describes in Matthew 5:14–16?

Does our faith journey showcase the fruit of the Spirit outlined in Galatians 5:22–23 — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control?

Being an eternal citizen of heaven along with our current citizenship in the U.S. both bring great privilege and blessings and with both come great responsibility. 🇺🇸

When a church (or ministry) knows its mission and keeps its focus, three things will happen.

1. Satan will turn up.
2. Leaders will rise up to serve others and make disciples.
3. God will show up.

Pastor Bill Wilks
NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville
Preaching from Acts 6:1–15

@StephanieRodda

Don't give the devil any opportunity to work. (Ephesians 4:27) I believe we can position ourselves for a miracle. I believe we can also position ourselves for disaster. Where have you positioned yourself? Be careful who you are allowing to deposit into your Spirit. #ponderthis

@rayortlund

The great thing about being body-slammed with a life-altering catastrophe is that, from then on, your life can be explained only in terms of God's powerful care. You find that the disaster was the beginning of your real life. Before that, in comparison, was child's play.

It's tempting to charge someone we disagree with of being unbiblical and unfaithful when the debate we're having is actually within the circle of evangelicalism — whether the matter is spiritual gifts, the doctrine of the Trinity or counseling. All of us, of course, are unbiblical and unfaithful to some extent, unless we want to say that our doctrine is perfect. Beware of charging that someone is outside the bounds of orthodoxy when in fact the only issue is that they disagree with you.

Thomas Schreiner
Excerpt from "Beware Theological Dangers on Both Left and Right" blog post on TheGospelCoalition.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Schreiner is the James Buchanan Harrison professor of New Testament interpretation and associate dean for Scripture and interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

'Justice has prevailed'

Pakistani court acquits Christian mother facing execution for blasphemy charges

On Oct. 31, Pakistan's Supreme Court acquitted Asia Bibi, also known as Aasiya Noreen, a Christian mother condemned to death for alleged blasphemy.

"Today justice has prevailed and Bibi will soon be a free woman," her attorney, Saiful Malook, said.

Malook said Bibi was "happy but also in a state of disbelief" that after nearly nine years in jail, she would soon be able to reunite with her husband, Ashiq Masih, their two daughters and her three stepchildren.

Religious liberty advocates globally expressed jubilation and pleas that Pakistan's military protect Bibi.

Renewed death threats against the court, other leaders and Bibi should be taken seriously, advocates say.

The entire Christian community is considered in danger in the nation that is more than 96 percent Muslim.

Danger is not over

"The danger for this Christian mother of five is not over," the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) said in a press release.

Bibi's current location has not been disclosed. At least two countries have offered her asylum, CNN reported. Government protection is critical to Bibi's safety, ACLJ representative Shaheryar Gill said.

"She cannot be released openly," Gill said. "If she is, there's no doubt, no question about it, that her life will be in jeopardy."

The ultra-extremist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), called on its supporters to "be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the honor of Muhammad if the court frees the 'blasphemer (Asia).'"

The group's leader threatened repercussions against army generals and judges if Bibi was acquitted.

In the past 10 years at least two prominent supporters of Bibi have been killed.

Bibi was the first Christian woman sentenced to death under Pakistan's blasphemy laws.

The allegations against Bibi were that she made three "defamatory and sarcastic" statements about Muhammad on June 14, 2009, during an argument with

three Muslim women while the four of them were picking berries in a field in Sheikhpura District in Punjab.

Bibi was asked to fetch water but the Muslim women objected, saying that as a non-Muslim she was unfit to touch the water bowl.

The women later went to a local cleric and accused her of blasphemy against Muhammad.

The prosecution had claimed that Bibi "admitted" making the blasphemous statements at a "public gathering" on June 19, 2009, "while asking for forgiveness."

Sentenced to death

A trial court convicted her for blasphemy in November 2010 and sentenced her to death. An Islamist cleric also put a \$5,000 bounty on her head.

The Lahore High Court upheld Bibi's conviction and confirmed her death sentence in October 2014.

She took her case to the Supreme Court, which stayed her execution in July 2015 and admitted her appeal for hearing.

The top court initially took up the appeal in October 2016 but postponed the matter without hearing until October 2018.

Soon after the high court announced its decision to acquit her, violent protests broke out in several cities across the country.

Thousands of angry Muslims blocked roads and main highways in several cities of Pakistan, including Rawalpindi, Karachi and Hyderabad in protest of Bibi's acquittal. All markets and trade centers were shut down in Islamabad, as well as in Punjab and Sindh provinces.

Bibi's case sparked widespread outrage in the international community over the country's blasphemy laws and the strict

enforcement of them, but all appeals to abolish them have been rejected so far.

While Pakistani law carries the death penalty for blasphemy and offenders have been sentenced to death, so far no one has ever been executed.

If Bibi's appeal had been rejected, she would have become the first Christian and first woman to be executed on blasphemy charges in Pakistan.

Human rights officials worldwide praised the verdict and urged Pakistani officials to protect religious minorities.

Pakistan is ranked fifth on Christian support group Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS, BP)

"She cannot be released openly. If she is, there's no doubt, no question about it, that her life will be in jeopardy."

**Shaheryar Gill
American Center for Law
and Justice representative**



BIBI
Photo courtesy of BP

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ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Hogan retires after 18 years at Westmeade Baptist Church

Scotty Hogan says that serving as pastor of Westmeade Baptist Church, Decatur, for the past 18 years has been “an amazing journey.” “God has done wonderful things in me personally and for the church,” he said. Missions has been at the forefront. People have been saved. The spirit of revival has swept through, he said.

And Oct. 14 — the same Sunday that Westmeade Baptist celebrated its 50th anniversary — Hogan retired and passed the baton to the church’s minister to students, Justin McAlpin, who will serve as the church’s new pastor.



HOGAN

“Bro. Scotty Hogan has been a stalwart leader at his church and in our association,” said Ken Blackwood, associational mission strategist for Morgan Baptist Association. “He has earned the respect of his fellow pastors and his flock at Westmeade because of his faithful preaching of the word of God, his humble leading of the flock to take the gospel to their neighbors and to the nations and his wise leadership in our association.”

And as Hogan and his wife, Kathy, have led their church to focus on missions, “God has used their example as a ministry couple to challenge others to remain faithful in ministry,” Blackwood said.

To start the next season the Hogans will spend January and February serving as volunteers at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, a site that is considered by some to be the place where Jesus was crucified and buried. Through the years the Hogans have led more than a dozen trips to Israel, and they volunteered at the Garden Tomb for a month in 2014.

“We fell in love with Israel and the people there,” he said. “The Bible comes alive before your eyes.”

After they return, they will spend time with children and grandchildren and are “open to whatever the Lord has for us,” he said. (Grace Thornton)

Pianist, organist mark 50 years together at Eagle Creek

When Debbie Brewer was 11 the pianist at Eagle Creek Baptist Church, Dadeville, retired and Brewer started playing for the church.

When she was 13 the church got an organ and she started playing that — and 11-year-old Vicky Patterson took over the piano.

“I lived down the road on one side of the church and Debbie lived down the road on the

other side,” Patterson said. “We would ride our bicycles up to the church to practice in the summer.”

This carried on for years and years, and the women both grew up and raised their families at Eagle Creek in Tallapoosa Baptist Association. Brewer said there’s been very few Sundays they haven’t both been there.

“We’ve learned to almost read each other’s minds because we’ve played together for so long,” she said.

On Sept. 30 the church recognized them for 50 years as the church’s accompanists.

Pastor Tim Thompson said the church is blessed to have them.

“I don’t think you’ll ever find two more faithful people serving God with their gifts as those two. If you think about over 50 years, the number of people’s lives and the way people have been influenced by their witness — it’s a big impact,” he said. “It’s so wonderful for our young people to see that kind of ... faithfulness in a day where people often only commit for six months or a year. What a faithful witness they’ve been.” (Grace Thornton)



Patterson and Brewer

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CHURCH POSITIONS

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PASTOR

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PASTOR

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

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'Lives are being changed'

St. Clair Association helps county's first charity health clinic get started

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Chris Crain says he got to see associational life from the perspective of a pastor for 23 years. And he loved it.

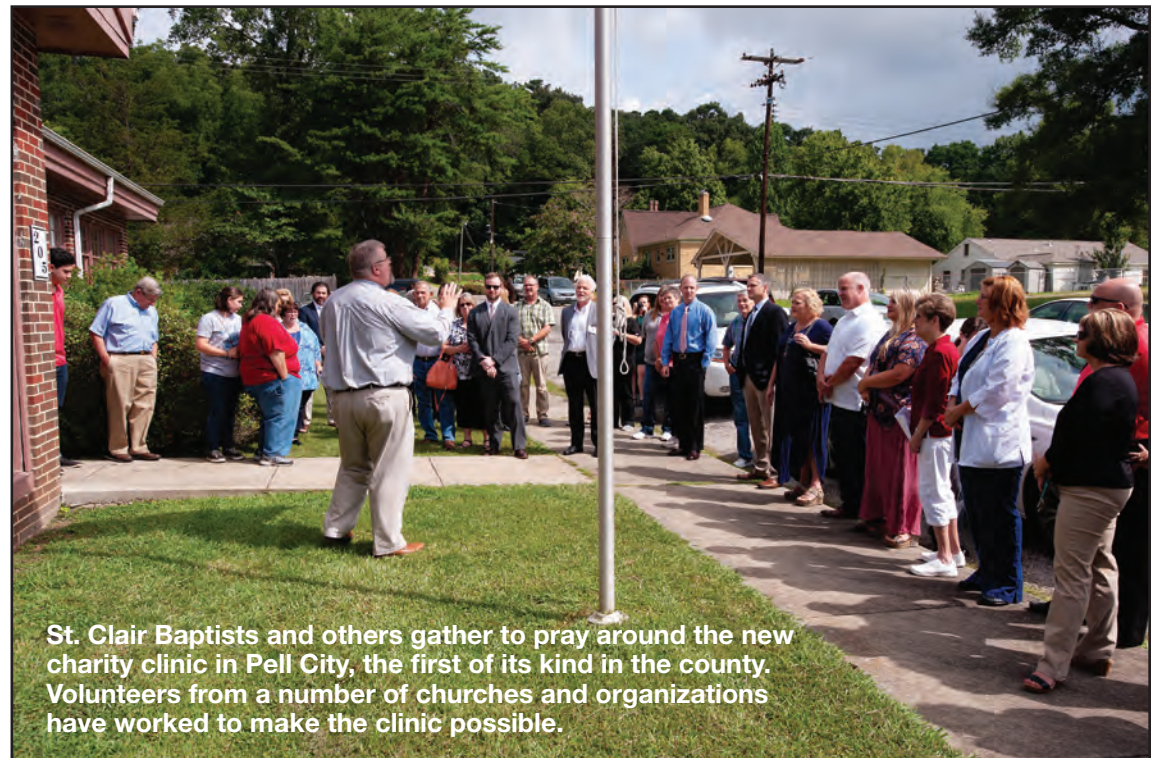
But now that he is serving as associational mission strategist for St. Clair Baptist Association, he's enjoying seeing Baptist work from a 30,000-foot view too. He's seen the associational disaster relief team do amazing work. He's seen churches come together to build

wheelchair ramps for people who have needed it. He's seen missions teams make a tremendous impact.

'First of its kind'

And most recently he's been excited about the fact that St. Clair County got its first and only charity health clinic, and St. Clair Baptists were able to help get things rolling.

"When I first started here as a DOM, it was hard not having anywhere to refer people," Crain said. "We are very proud that we have gotten to be one of the founding



St. Clair Baptists and others gather to pray around the new charity clinic in Pell City, the first of its kind in the county. Volunteers from a number of churches and organizations have worked to make the clinic possible.

Photo by Wally Bromberg

partners to help establish a free medical clinic in Pell City, the first of its kind."

Before the clinic opened in July, the rapidly growing county had nowhere for uninsured people to get medical care. Their only option was to go to the emergency room or drive to another county.

"We're just one piece of the puzzle," Crain said. "It's been a real community effort."

The effort began when Dr. Cristy Daffron, program director for the nursing program at Jefferson State Community College in Pell City, began talking with Easter Seals and the nursing department

at Samford University in Birmingham about ways they could meet needs together.

"We have about 12,000 people in our county who are totally uninsured," Daffron said.

Coming together

They began to pull in other partners like St. Clair Association and worked to renovate some building space offered by the City of Pell City. Area churches, including First Baptist, Eden, Westside Baptist and Cropwell Baptist, pulled together to work on the facility. Numerous churches from a variety of denominations have come to-

gether to help staff the clinic with volunteers all the way from doctors to greeters.

"We're just partners together in working on the building and staffing it with doctors and other medical volunteers," Crain said. "It's a dream — patients are being seen, lives are being changed and the gospel is being shared."

Daffron said St. Clair Association and its churches have been "absolutely amazing."

"There's really not been a need that we have stated that Chris hasn't immediately worked to resolve for us," she said. "It's been a wonderful partnership." ✝



"It was a pleasure working with Danny and his crew. We were given a variety of options, and Danny was patient with us as we worked through what would work best for us. We couldn't be happier with the entire process. Many people have commented on our sign, and others have made inquiries for their own displays. I have recommended Reliable Signs without reservation."

-Todd Clippard, Pastor of Burleson Church of Christ
Hamilton, AL

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 11

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

WITH CONTROL
James 3:1-12

When Teaching the Truth (1-2)

Teachers of God's word are given an incredibly important task. As stewards of hearts and minds, they prayerfully pull together study, wisdom, counsel and pastoral insight to expound on the living word of God, the Bible, for the purpose of calling the lost, rebuking the wayward and encouraging the saints of God.

For this reason James cautions any would-be teachers to think twice about desiring the office. This warning is not meant as a discouragement, for as Paul says, "If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble work" (1 Tim. 3:1). Rather James is clearly highlighting the weighty responsibility of teaching, which requires use of the tongue. We know from the Lord Jesus that "the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart" (Matt. 12:34).

In other words, the teacher is someone whose heart is constantly displayed before the people. The people will follow the teacher wherever his heart leads.

So, teacher, is your heart oriented to our true north — Christ?

When Influencing Others (3-6)

James reminds us that we all stumble because of our speech. This is especially true in our digital age when so much of our teaching is recorded, distributed globally and added to a permanent record on the internet. (We might even build on James' teaching to say that our thumbs are small members, yet they boast of great things.)

For this reason James does not caution merely teachers to watch their tongues (or any means of communication). He cautions the same for all believers as well.

He gives two analogies, bits and rudders, to show how small parts play signifi-

cant roles in controlling the destination of things much larger, for both the ship and horse are used for transportation.

Notice that in both analogies, with the horse and the ship, there are actually three elements: the mode of transportation, the small steering device and the person in charge, i.e., the horse rider and ship's captain.

This leads us to reflect: Who is in control of us and where are we headed?

When Offering Praise (7-12)

The tongue is a powerful thing. It is the conduit that brings what lurks in our hearts out into the open. As the people of God who have been given a new heart by faith in Christ, our tongues should bring blessings to people. After all, James argues, how can springs and trees produce water and fruit of other kinds? Dogs don't give birth to cats; that would be unnatural.

This is precisely James' point. It should be unnatural for a Christian's tongue to produce anything other than blessing, for as Paul proclaimed, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17). So often though curses that echo from our old hearts come rushing to our tongues. Worse yet we then praise God with the same tongue.

Because people are made in the likeness of God (Gen 1:26), any time we curse them, we are in a roundabout way actually cursing God Himself. How then can we praise God while cursing God's image bearers? Christians ought to act according to their new nature in Christ, not their old nature in death.

True faith synchronizes our beliefs and behavior, changing what it means for us to act "by nature." By faith, our new "natural" is love toward both God and neighbor, fulfilling the greatest commandment

(Matt. 22:36-40).✠

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

PRAYING FOR OTHERS
Matthew 6:11; John 17:11-23

The period of the judges was a dark and difficult time in Israel's history. With each transition from one judge to the next, the nation's leadership grew less effective and the prospects for the nation's future grew less hopeful. In the minds of most of the people the problem seemed to be one of politics.

With a king the nation would surely be more successful. However, Samuel, Israel's last and greatest judge, knew that political change would only scratch the surface of the challenges facing the nation. Israel's problems were not political but religious.

A king could marshal an army and defend the borders, but only genuine fidelity to God could bring lasting stability to the nation.

Sadly Israel opted not to follow Samuel's warnings about establishing a monarchy. Although God had warned the people that their choosing a human king was tantamount to rejecting Him as King, the people pressed on and got the king they had demanded. And yet Samuel did not abandon his people. What he did instead was pray for them.

In his farewell address the aged judge and prophet did not mince words. He charged the people, "You have done all this evil" (1 Sam. 12:20).

And yet he did not stop with this accusation. He also told them not to be afraid; he urged them to serve the Lord with all their hearts and to take confidence in the fact that God would never cast away His people.

And as for himself, Samuel said this: "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you" (v. 23). Although the people had sinned grievously, Samuel remained convinced that it was his duty to pray for them.

Pray for the protection of others.
(Matt. 6:11; John 17:11-16)

In the so-called "High Priestly Prayer"

of Jesus in John 17, we see Jesus similarly committed to pray for the welfare of those under his charge. The disciples had certainly given Jesus reason to leave them behind. They rarely understood the heart of Jesus' message. Indeed they often acted in ways that were directly contrary to His teaching. They were often selfish and self-centered.

When Jesus' most trying moments would arrive, they would sleep rather than pray, run away rather than defend and finally even deny that they had ever known the One who was their master. Rather than reject these broken men, Jesus chose instead to pray for them. He urged the Father to protect them.

Pray for the spiritual growth of others. (John 17:17-19)

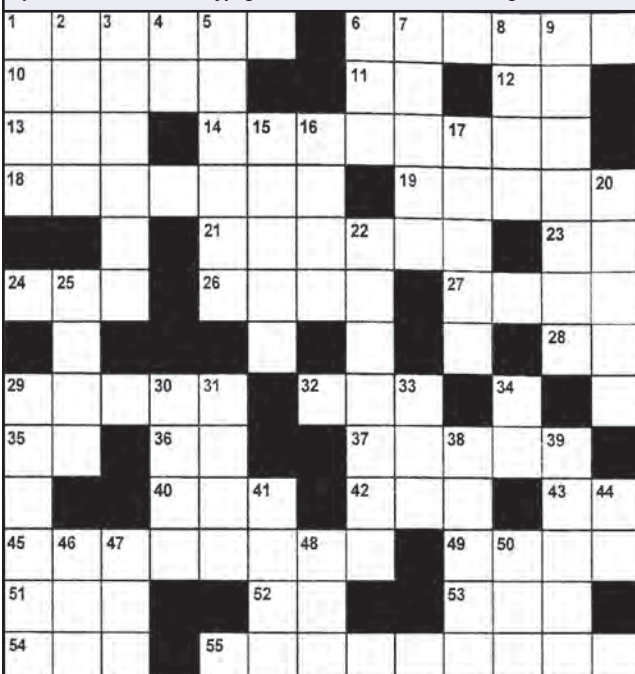
Jesus also asked the Father to help His disciples grow. What they had not learned under His own teaching, Jesus asked the Father to give them. Jesus asked the Father to carry on the disciplines of spiritual growth that He had begun with them. Jesus knew what the disciples really needed was not punishment and abandonment but discipline, the kind of discipline that results in long-term spiritual growth.

Pray for the unity of believers, a unity that points to Christ.
(John 17:20-23)

As the final aspect of His prayer for the disciples Jesus asked the Father to give them unity. The result of this unity, Jesus knew, was that the world would come to understand Him better as they saw His life and message vividly lived out in His followers. Jesus had every reason to turn away from His disciples and leave them to their own devices. Instead, He chose not to give up on them, not to cast them aside as He might have done. Because of His great love for them, even when they were unlovable, Jesus chose to pray for His disciples.✠

Christian Crossword

By Deborah Justice Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. Ahiam the son of _____. (2 Sam. 23:33)
6. _____, whose name was Belteshazzar. (Dan. 2:26)
10. She bare unto Amram _____ and Moses, and Miriam their sister. (Num. 26:59)
11. Bring _____ offering, and come into his courts. (Ps. 96:8)
12. Glass. (abbr.)
13. Compete.
14. And they following _____ helped him. (1 Kings 1:7)
18. And _____, and Gibbethon, and Baalath. (Josh. 19:44)
19. I bear up the pillars of it. _____. (Ps. 75:3)
21. Confounded be all they that serve graven _____. (Ps. 97:7)
23. Negative.
24. Doctor of Dental Surgery. (abbr.)
26. Created.
27. Salt Lake City is the capital.

28. Not applicable.

29. Daniel, _____, Joel.
32. If the _____ be on the fleece only. (Judg. 6:37)
35. Associated Press. (abbr.)
36. In the twinkling of _____ eye. (1 Cor. 15:52)
37. There came two angels to _____. (Gen. 19:1)
40. Samantha. (nickname)
42. A little water _____ vessel. (1 Kings 17:10)
43. A tool with a sharp blade.
45. And the lot fell upon _____. (Acts 1:26)
49. Pointed piece of metal.
51. A period of time.
52. Tensile strength. (abbr.)
53. Crown. (abbr.)
54. His father saw him, and had compassion, and _____. (Luke 15:20)
55. The twentieth to _____. (1 Chron. 24:16)

Down

1. And to _____ that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)
2. And there followed _____

and fire. (Rev. 8:7)

3. The governor under _____ the king. (2 Cor. 11:32)
4. Nickname for Rosemary.
5. A people great, and many, and tall, as the _____s. (Deut. 2:10)
6. Why did _____ remain in ships? (Judg. 5:17)
7. Of mint and _____ and cummin. (Matt. 23:23)
8. _____ the son of Nathan. (2 Sam. 23:36)
9. _____ the son of Jaareo-regim. (2 Sam. 21:19)
15. And _____, greet you. (Col. 4:14)
16. Jamin, and _____, and Jachin. (Ex. 6:15)
17. God's Son.
20. Sent unto _____ king of Hebron. (Josh. 10:3)
22. _____, Exodus, Leviticus.
25. To let fall.
29. A hand tool used for pounding or driving in.
30. Opposite of west.
31. _____ the daughter of Zibeon. (Gen. 36:2)

33. Gained victory.
34. _____ the Mount of Olives. (Luke 22:39)
38. A time to mourn, and a time to _____. (Eccles. 3:4)
39. Northern state.
41. Til thou hast paid the very last _____. (Luke 12:59)
44. Extra large. (abbr.)
46. And Pispah, and _____. (1 Chron. 7:38)
47. Light yellowish brown color.
48. A type of tree.
50. Prepared an _____ to the saving of his house. (Heb. 11:7)





Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

Faith-based film 'Indivisible' leads family-friendly entertainment options

By **Michael Foust**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Darren Turner is a husband, father and seminary graduate who feels called by God to be a military chaplain.

His wife, Heather, senses a calling to military life too. So they settle at Fort Stewart, Georgia, in 2007, assuming life will be easy for a few months or even years until he is deployed.

But life rarely goes as planned.

Darren gets called to Iraq for a 15-month tour, leaving his wife, Heather, at home to care for three children.

Young and perhaps naïve, they are confident they can keep their marriage strong with video chats, letters and an occasional phone call.

Soon a crack develops in their relationship, and it only worsens when Darren returns home as a changed man.

Instead of playing with the children, he now sits alone outside, contemplating the horrors of

war and the friends he lost.

The patient and loving person Heather once knew has been replaced with someone who is uncaring, short-tempered and argumentative.

True-life story

Finally after one frightening episode in front of the kids, he is asked to move out ... perhaps for good. Can their marriage be salvaged?

The faith-based movie "Indivisible" (PG-13) opened in theaters Oct. 26, telling the true-life story of a military couple who had to fight to save their marriage because of the stresses of war.

It stars Justin Bruening ("Grey's Anatomy") as Darren and Sarah Drew ("Grey's Anatomy,"

"Mom's Night Out") as Heather, and also features Madeline Carroll ("I Can Only Imagine") as a military wife.

"Indivisible" does a nice job portraying the stresses of military service on a family — and the determination and faith that is needed to keep it together.



Photo courtesy of Provident Films

Based on the true story of a military chaplain and his wife who had to fight to save their marriage because of the stresses of war, the faith-based film 'Indivisible' has a message of forgiveness.

It's a film that has positive messages about forgiveness and reconciliation for military and non-military families.

The movie is rated PG-13 for some thematic material and war violence, so it might not be appropriate for small children.

Also playing

► **"The Chosen" Pilot** —

This impressive 23-minute story about the birth of Christ is available free at VidAngel's website (VidAngel.com/thechosen) and could be changing how faith-based projects are funded.

Director Dallas Jenkins and his team posted the pilot online and asked viewers to donate money if they wanted to see a full-fledged series like it. The result: more than \$5 million raised through crowdfunding.

Producers say "The Chosen" will not be a documentary or a mini-series but a television series about Christ.

► **"Manifest"** — This Monday night NBC series is entertaining, although it comes with a major caveat.

The story follows a group of airline passengers who take off in 2013 and land five years later, in 2018. It's a science fiction show mixed with — believe it or not — faith.

Romans 8:28 is a major theme of the first two episodes. This isn't a squeaky-clean series though. It may be best for older family members. ✝

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.



Photo courtesy of Provident Films

'Indivisible'

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Photo courtesy of Amos Lee

About 200 Chinese Baptist pastors, leaders and family members attended the 2018 biennial conference cruise of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the USA and Canada aboard the Carnival Inspiration.

'Refreshed spiritually'

Chinese Baptists enrich next-gen ministry

The Chinese Baptist Fellowship added a next-generation ministry leader to its executive team at its 20th Biennial Conference, enriching ministry to second- and third-generation Chinese Americans.

William Eng, who retired in 2016 from the pastorate of Chinese Baptist Church of Orange County, California, joins the executive committee of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the USA and Canada in the new post of vice president for Next Gen Ministry. Eng has more than 30 years of experience leading and discipling Chinese Americans born in the United States.

About 200 Chinese Baptists and their family members attended the conference Sept. 24–28 aboard the Carnival Inspiration cruise ship, boarding in Long Beach, California.

"The conference on board a cruise ship was meant to be a time for participants to take a break from ministry and be refreshed spiritually and have something to take home to help them in ministry," Amos Lee, executive director of the fellowship, said. "We praise God for His grace that made it happen."

The group of more than 300 churches adopted helping churches become healthy, training and

coaching church planters and achieving holistic ministry as priorities, Lee said, in addition to reaching the next generation. The group adopted a two-year budget of \$208,000 to support fellowship ministries.

Canadian-American Old Testament scholar Daniel Block was the keynote speaker at the conference focused on Proclaiming the Kingdom. He is a professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College in Illinois, and was previously the John R. Sampey professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Joining Block as speakers were financial adviser and retired United Commercial Bank CEO Sau Wing Lam and Ting Yik Leung, associate senior pastor of Crosspoint Church of Silicon Valley in Milpitas, California.

In addition to biblical exposition, the conference included workshops on preaching, financial management, leadership succession, next-generation ministry and Baptist heritage. All sessions were well attended, Lee said, with special activities designed for ministry spouses.

The 21st Biennial Conference, set for September 2020 in San Francisco, will mark the fellowship's 40th anniversary, Lee said. (BP)

"We praise God for His grace that made it happen."

Amos Lee, executive director, Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the USA and Canada

"The conference on board a cruise ship was meant to be a time for participants to take a break from ministry and be refreshed spiritually."

Amos Lee, executive director, Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the USA and Canada

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Muslim extremists kill 2 Christian teachers

NAIROBI, Kenya — Islamic extremists suspected to be Al Shabaab militants killed two Christians on Oct. 10 in northern Kenya.

More than 20 suspected Somali rebels affiliated with Al Shabaab, an ally of Al Qaeda, detonated an improvised explosive device in a community along Kenya's border with Somalia where non-local teachers live. Two teachers were killed instantly. One was a member of the Catholic Church and the other a member of the East Africa Pentecostal Church, local sources said. Two other teachers living in the housing block escaped.

The attack was not random or accidental, since no local teachers, workers or students were killed. An area church leader said the attack targeted Christians and said his church members are fearful of future attacks.

Kenya ranked 32nd on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

Sudan authorities torture, release Christians

DARFUR, Sudan — After torturing them and threatening to charge them with serious crimes, authorities in Sudan have released 13 Christians arrested in the Darfur Region, sources said.

Personnel from Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) released 12 of the Christians on Oct. 21 and freed another the next day, all without charges. NISS authorities did not give any reason for the arrests.

The 13 Christians from four different house churches were worshipping together Oct. 10 in Nyala, capital of South Darfur State in western Sudan's Darfur Region, when NISS officers disrupted the service and arrested them.

Christian church buildings have been bulldozed, and foreign Christians expelled from Sudan since 2012 when government leaders vowed to adopt a stricter version of Islamic law.

Sudan ranked fourth on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

Christians forced to vow to limit faith

MANDALAY, Myanmar — Hundreds of minority Christians in Myanmar say they were forced to sign statements vowing to limit their faith and not pray in churches after being detained near the country's border with China by a China-backed militia group.

The Union of Catholic Asian News reported Oct. 10 that 92 ethnic-Lahu Christians were being held. Rev. Lazarus, general secretary of the Lahu Baptist Convention, said those held would have no other choice than to also sign the documents. Lazarus called the situation "worrisome," noting that five churches had been destroyed and 52 churches shut down. The United Wa State Army (UWSA), a militant group that grew out of the Communist Party in Burma, has announced that all churches built after 1992 were illegally constructed and must be destroyed. The UWSA has banned the construction of new churches and requires that priests and workers in churches be locals, not outsiders. (TAB)

Dozens killed in attack on Nigerian market

JOS, Nigeria — Muslims attacked a market in Kaduna State in north-central Nigeria on Oct. 18, killing dozens of Christians and burning a church building, sources said.

Area residents said a Muslim at the market in Kasuwan Magani, 22 miles south of the city of Kaduna, raised a false alarm about a thief in the market, which caused a stampede. Other Muslims began chanting jihadist slogans, and then they attacked Christians and burned houses and shops belonging to Christians in the town, an area resident said.

Kaduna Gov. Nasir El-Rufai visited the site in the Kajuru Local Government Area on Oct. 19 and said 55 people had been killed.

Nigeria ranked 14th on Open Doors' 2018 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution. (MS)