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Pastors Conference focuses on 'Preaching Christ'

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Children's Honor Choir showcased, marks 20 years since first audition

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Strong Tower Pastor Terrence Jones charges pastors to faithful endurance

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New officers

Tim Cox elected state convention president, follows in father's footsteps

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Tim Cox said his dad has long been his hero. He grew up under his preaching, and his dad was there when he surrendered his life to Christ. His dad also preached his wedding.

"The big markers in my life have always had Dad in place," Tim Cox said.

That's why it was even more special when Tim Cox was elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 14. He was following in the footsteps of his father, Henry Cox. Both men served as the convention's second vice president for two terms, then first vice president for two terms, then president — the first father-son duo ever to serve through the ranks that way.

Henry Cox was the one to nominate his son for the position — just like Tim Cox nominated his father for re-election in 2005.

Henry Cox said he never imagined that would come full circle — that he would have the privilege of nominating his son. But Tim Cox "is a remarkable person" with a ser-

vant's heart, he said, and as a father he felt "unbelievably happy and indescribably blessed and honored" to nominate his son.

'Called of God'

Henry Cox told messengers that his son is a "man who's called of God."

He encouraged them to elect Tim Cox because he is "a God-called preacher of the gospel, a loving pastor and teacher who is a humble servant of Jesus Christ, a gifted leader who continues to serve you well and a man who knows and loves his Heavenly Father and walks in His ways every day."

Tim Cox, who has served as pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, since 1998,

said it's a comfort to him that he's not alone — that men like his father have gone before him and stand beside him, he said.

"I'm not out here by myself — we're doing this together," Tim

"I hope to be an encourager to our state missionaries and fellow officers and people called Alabama Baptists."

Tim Cox newly elected president, Alabama Baptist State Convention



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Tim Cox (center) was elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 14. Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, said his service will be 'about fanning the flame of the Great Commission.' Messengers to the convention also elected Buddy Champion (left), pastor of FBC Trussville, as first vice president. Morgan Bailey (right), pastor of Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer, was elected second vice president.

Cox said. "It's not about me — it's about fanning the flame of the Great Commission."

Giving back

Over the course of his life, Tim Cox has been invested in by Baptists — he earned degrees from University of Mobile and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Now he said he's excited for the op-

portunity to give back and invest in others.

"I hope to be an encourager to our state missionaries and fellow officers and people called Alabama Baptists," he said.

Also elected unanimously during the state convention annual meeting were first and second vice presidents, who both — like (See 'Authentic,' page 6)

To watch the videos from this week's issue, visit our YouTube channel or use the HP Reveal app on your phone or tablet and hover over the segments marked "AR."



COMMENT

A Time of Encouragement

The weather outside was miserable — cold, constant rain, sometimes in downpours. But inside First Baptist Church, Trussville, the atmosphere was warm and bright as Alabama Baptists met Nov. 12–14 for their annual meeting and related activities.

The weather may have played a part in the attendance. Messenger registration was only 782, down 17 percent from the 941 registered messengers the last time the annual meeting was held in the Birmingham area in 2014. But this year's messenger count still topped each of the last three years when the convention was held in Daphne (748 messengers), Montgomery (735) and Huntsville (760).

Interestingly 359 churches or 11 percent of the 3,270 cooperating Alabama churches sent messengers to the 2018 annual meeting. That is the same number of churches represented last year in Montgomery.

But the weather could not dampen the spirits of those attending the various meetings. From beginning to end the atmosphere was encouraging as Baptists rallied around two themes dear to their hearts — preaching Christ and faithfully serving Him.

Pastors Conference

“Preaching Christ” was the theme of the pre-convention Pastors Conference. Pastors Conference President Daven Watkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, featured six Alabama Baptists among the conference's eight speakers. Everyone was a hit. Styles of preaching varied widely but the content provided a spiritual and theological banquet for participants.

While pastors enjoyed the conference in the church auditorium, in the chapel the State Board of Missions was receiving good news from Ex-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

ecutive Director Rick Lance. After several years of failing to meet the state convention budget, he told board members this year's receipts are likely to surpass the 2018 budget goal and may reach to the 2019 budget goal.

Cooperative Program receipts

At the end of October budget receipts were running 3.28 percent ahead of the pace to meet the 2017 budget goal of a little more than \$1 million. If Cooperative Program (CP) receipts during each of the last two months reach the 10-month average of \$3,184,444, Alabama Baptists will experience an increase in annual CP giving for the first time in several years, according to information shared with board members.

But the calendar is not on the side of reaching that goal. Most churches forward their missions giving through CP on a monthly basis. Since the last Sunday of December is Dec. 30, many churches will not forward their December gifts in time to be counted before year's end.

Still, surpassing the CP budget goal for the first time in several years will be something to celebrate. We cannot stop the drop in CP giving until we arrest the decline and that may happen this year.

Tuesday morning the annual meeting itself began, but it was hard to tell any difference from the atmosphere of the previous day. In the display area, pastors and church leaders eagerly talked with program and entity leaders about new ideas to help their various churches. Unlike in some past years there was little whispering about a pending business item or campaigning for one's favorite candidate.

At this annual meeting, business and elections took a backseat to entity reports and times of inspiration. There were no miscellaneous business items introduced and messengers offered no resolutions that had not been submitted ahead of time. In the first hour of the convention the agenda was 30 minutes ahead and by the end of the morning session, it was almost an hour ahead of schedule. That same pattern repeated in the afternoon session and the Wednesday morning session.

The president and two vice presidents for the

coming year were elected without opposition and the resolutions prompted minimal discussion.

What brought messengers into the auditorium at First, Trussville, were the times of inspiration. Convention President John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, captivated the congregation with his interpretation of the convention theme “Faithful” by challenging pastors to “preach the Word.”

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler, Tuesday evening's featured speaker, and Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, who delivered the convention sermon, did not disappoint.

One of the more emotional moments of the annual meeting was during the theme interpretation by Ken Allen, associational mission strategist for DeKalb Baptist Association, who shared about God's faithfulness during an auto accident in which his daughter, Abby, was seriously injured. His words reminded us all of times God has been faithful to us during times of special needs.

There were other emotional moments. Messengers saw a letter from Adoniram Judson, Baptists' first missionary from America; were introduced to Jimmie and Martha Harris, who have served as house parents for Alabama Baptist Children's Home for 34 years; met Roy Ciampa, chairman of Samford University's religion department, who was saved as a college student under the ministry of Bobby Welch, an Alabama native and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The special moments just kept coming from every part of the program and every session of the annual meeting.

Participants seemed to leave the annual meeting with a sense of unity, a sense of encouragement, a sense of time well spent. Certainly the members of the host church went out of their way to be helpful to all. Every church that hosts a major Alabama Baptist meeting seems to go the extra mile but the efforts by the members of First, Trussville, are unsurpassed.

Retirement reception

In closing please indulge a personal word. The directors and staff of *The Alabama Baptist* sponsored a retirement reception for me during the hours between the Tuesday afternoon and evening session. It was a wonderful time for me. I am indebted to all who made the reception possible and grateful to the hundreds of friends who took time to come by and encourage me as I enter a new phase of my life.

So for me, and I believe for most who attended the 2018 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, the annual meeting and related activities was an encouraging experience and time well spent. 🙏



Check out our photo gallery from the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting.

Visit <https://tab.photoshelter.com/galleries>



"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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'Worthy of celebration'

SBOM report highlights generosity of giving, future convention goals

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

From reaching budget goals to achieving new highs in offering giving to making plans for the long-range future, Alabama Baptists have a lot to get excited about, said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

This year the state reached a 50/50 split of Cooperative Program funds between the state's budget and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) for the first time. It's a goal Alabama Baptists have been working toward for several years — and reached five years early.

State Baptists also met their \$1 million goal for the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering on the Friday before convention — a goal that had been raised from \$750,000 the year before.

All of that is "worthy of celebration," Lance said at the beginning of the SBOM report to messengers attending the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13.

During the meeting messengers approved a \$37.5 million budget for 2019, to be split 50/50 with the SBC. They also approved a recommendation that the SBOM executive committee work alongside SBOM staff to develop initiatives for BEYOND 2020, which will be presented at the 2019 annual meeting in Daphne.

BEYOND 2020 will "refresh our look" and "refocus on the Great Commission in important ways," Lance said.

Also during the report, the SBOM presented the Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Messengers adopt a \$37.5 million Cooperative Program budget for 2019, which is a \$500,000 increase over the 2018 budget and a step back toward the previous budgets of \$40 million and more. All CP funds flowing through Alabama's convention office are allocated equally between the missions and ministry efforts of the state convention and the SBC.

Health Award, which broke from the norm this year. Usually the award honors the pastor of three types of church — a new work, a bivocational work and an established work.

Convention theme

"Because of the convention theme 'Faithful,' we chose to do something a little different," said Mike Jackson, director of the

SBOM office of leadership and church health.

The award was presented to two pastors who had served their churches for more than 30 years — James Mercer, pastor of Hollinger's Island Baptist Church, Mobile, and Jacky Connell, pastor of Eden Westside Baptist Church, Pell City.

The SBOM also inaugurated the Tommy (See 'Volunteers,' page 7)

Lance urges messengers to believe Great Commission is possible

The Great Commission might seem out of reach at times, but it's not an impossible task, said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

To drive that point home, Lance walked on stage to begin his Nov. 13 report to the Alabama Baptist State Convention in a pair of Tom Cruise-like sunglasses while the "Mission: Impossible" theme song played.

"I want to take a refreshed look at what we call our one mission — the Great Commission," he said. "Let's think about mission impossible being made possible."

Lance noted four defining factors of the Great Commission:

1. Intentional

The first charge of the Great Commission — found in Matthew 28:19-20 — is to "go there-fore."

"You can't take the 'go' out of the gospel or the Great Commission," Lance said. "As you go, make disciples. There's an intentionality about the Great Commission as we seek to share the risen Christ."

2. Missional

Believers in Jesus Christ have the unique imperative to share Him with the world, Lance said. "This means that we are to go out and make disciples — the Great Commission spells that out in concrete language."

As a church minister it's easy to end up spending all of your time with other Christians, he said. "There's nothing particularly wrong with that, but we intentionally need to be seeking out that one person — and more than one — as we look forward to be missional for the cause of Christ."

3. Directional

The Great Commission extends to all people and all nations, Lance said.

"It's for all peoples, all nations," he said. "You and I do not have to be reminded that the nations have come to our neighborhood."

4. Celebrational

Before Jesus gave the command to go and make disciples, He started with a promise — that He would be with us always. That's worth celebrating, Lance said.

And God is at work in ways that are also worth celebrating, he said. Churches are being planted and revitalized.

"Our theme is being faithful to the Great Commission," Lance said. "As long as God gives us breath, may we be that kind of people, now and in the future." (Grace Thornton)



Photo by Tracy Riggs

SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance wows messengers with a 'Mission: Impossible' style entrance Nov. 13 at the Alabama Baptist State Convention. 'Let's think about (Great Co)mission impossible being made possible,' he said.

PASTORS CONFERENCE

Everything points to the gospel

Pastors Conference speakers demonstrate how to preach Christ through whole Bible

By Grace Thornton and Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

Imagine a husband who tells his wife he doesn't love her anymore. Then imagine that he tells her not to worry, nothing will change — he'll stay there, pay the bills and provide for the family.

"This is what happened at the church at Ephesus," said H.B.

Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida. "They were at a point where they said, 'Lord, I don't love you like I once did.' If there was ever a time in your life where you loved Jesus more than you do now, beware."

The church at Ephesus had busy feet, clean hands and an upright heart — but its soul was adrift, said Charles, preaching from Revelation 2 to those gathered at the evening session of the 2018 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

"The church had abandoned its first love, and it was on a collision course with disaster," he said.

But Christ didn't leave pastors without help, he noted. Charles pointed out that in

Revelation 1:20, Jesus said the seven stars were the angels of the seven churches — and some believe those angels could signify the pastors. Then in chapter 2, Jesus said he holds those seven stars in his right hand.

"This signifies protection and authority," he said. "Jesus has you in His firm grip. Restore your first love. Remember the

aftermath of grace in your life and repent."

Charles was one of eight pastors who led those gathered at the Pastors Conference through the theme of Preaching Christ, offering sermons showing what it looks like to preach Christ through the whole Bible.

That was Daven Watkins' vision for the conference, held Nov. 12 at First Baptist Church, Trussville — that it would give an example of what it looked like to preach about Jesus from every genre of Scripture.

Watkins, conference president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, said the sermons were "a tremendous blessing."

Charles finished in Revelation what Robert Smith, preaching professor at Sam-



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Daven Watkins, president of the 2018 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference, welcomes participants.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

A combined choir from Birmingham-area churches led by Brett Fuller, worship pastor at FBC Pelham, leads worship during the evening session of the 2018 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference at FBC Trussville Nov. 12.

ford University's Beeson Divinity School, began that morning in Genesis.

Sacrificing everything

Preaching from the story of God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, Smith shared how right away in Scripture there's a picture of a God who loves His people intensely but requires that they sacrifice everything to follow Him.

Misery and mercy intersected at Mount

Moriah just like they did at Calvary, he said. A substitution was offered — and faith was required.

"Abraham's response must be ours — 'here I am,'" Smith said. "Abraham might not have known the 'how,' but he knew the 'Who.' If you want to be able to follow Him, you have to be willing to lose your life."

Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Baptist Church, said God stays trust-

'If we can't talk about struggles with sin in church, where are we?'

God is still using me."

As Brandon Watkins told his story of sexual addiction and recovery during the 2018 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on Nov. 12 that message of hope and grace rang through the sanctuary.

Watkins encouraged those in attendance to do two things: show grace, not condemnation, to those in their church struggling with sin; and open up about how they each are personally struggling.

"The Church should be a safe place where people can talk about their struggles," he said. "If we can't talk about struggles with sin in church, where are we going to talk about it?"

According to a 2016 study by Barna Group, more than 50 percent of pastors admit they currently struggle or have

struggled with pornography, sexual addiction or infidelity at some point in their life. Watkins, a former worship pastor in Alabama, was one of them.

"I was scared that if I talked about it, I would lose my career and my family," he said. "And ironically, because I didn't talk about it that's exactly what happened."

Watkins believes that more churches need to build a culture of confession among the congregation and the staff.

"What if I would've sought out help?" he said. "What if I would've talked to my pastor before (my sin) got to the point that it did?"

What kept Watkins silent? Fear. Fear of consequences and fear of con-

demnation. And pride. He hoped he could get through his struggles on his own — but he couldn't.

"You can't fix the problems you're dealing with," he said. "What if I would've taken the mask off and stopped feeling the pressure to make everybody think I've got it all together?"

Watkins hopes Christians can start showing other people the unconditional love that Jesus gives.

"Stop trying to fix them and point them to Jesus," he said.

"The gospel is what fixes people."

No matter what the sin or the struggle, God can redeem everyone, even pastors, Watkins said.

Watkins admonished those in the crowd

to confess their sins, whatever they may be and seek help.

God used Celebrate Recovery to rescue Watkins and he believes many others need that kind of help.

'There is hope'

"There is hope in Jesus today," he said. "May we be humble enough to allow the gospel that we preach and grace we declare to affect our lives as well."

And God wasn't done with Watkins. He now serves as pastor of worship and evangelism at Bagdad Baptist Church in Kentucky.

For more information on Celebrate Recovery or to find a group near you, visit www.celebraterecovery.com. (Jessica Ingram)



WATKINS



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Robert Smith, preaching professor at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, connects the story of Abraham and Isaac to the gospel during the opening message of the 2018 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

worthy through pastors' storms in life. Preaching from Psalm 124, he said the Lord is on their side through it all.

"God says to us, 'I know you've been hurt, I know you've been disappointed, but I want to remind you that I'm your strong tower. I'm your protector; I'm your Savior,'" Hamm said. "Sometimes we focus too much on our problems and we forget to step back and remember what God Almighty has done through Jesus Christ."

Nathan Daniels, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Andalusia, showed Christ in the Prophets through Jonah.

"Multiple times in His ministry, Jesus likens Himself to Jonah, even though Jonah doesn't always seem like someone who has it all together," he said.

Jesus is "the better Jonah" — the embodiment of the message of the Book of Jonah, Daniels said. Jonah refused to preach to the Ninevites, but Jesus fulfilled His mission.

"Jesus doesn't flee, but says, 'Yes, Father' and accepts His task to go live among the deplorable — namely you and me," Daniels said.

After Jonah reluctantly sacrificed himself to the sea to avoid Nineveh and to calm the storm he was thrown up by the fish. After Jesus willingly died for our sins on Calvary He burst forth gloriously from the tomb.

'There's mercy available'

"We need a better Jonah because we are Jonah," he said. "We run away from God, but there's mercy available for everyone. That's why Jesus compares Himself to Jonah. Because the message of the Book

of Jonah is that there is mercy enough for me and you."

Reginald Calvert, pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church, Bessemer, had the assignment of preaching Christ from the Gospels, but he said he let Jesus do it for him — he preached on Jesus preaching Jesus in Luke 4:16-30.

'God is here'

There in the synagogue in Nazareth the minister brings Jesus the Book of Isaiah, and He reads aloud from Isaiah 61 — that He has come to bring sight to the blind and bind up the brokenhearted. Then He tells them the Scripture has been fulfilled right then and there, Calvert said. "Here He makes His messianic claim. He's letting people know that God has come to town, that God is here."

Then in Luke 7:22, when John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus if He is the Christ, Jesus quotes the prophets again — the blind can see and the lame are healed.

"With the words of the prophets, He takes John the Baptist's question mark and straightens it out into an exclamation point of His messiahship," Calvert said.

From there, Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity

School, talked about how Christ is preached in the parables. He said that often Christians see themselves as the subject of the parables — they try to glean a moral lesson from them. But the point of a parable is often Christ Himself, George said.

"If we make ourselves the Good Samaritan, we miss seeing how Christ is the Good Samaritan and how we are the wounded man in the ditch, unable to rescue our-

selves, broken and empty and unable to lift a finger," he said. "We miss how dramatic our need is. And we miss seeing how Jesus' way of giving is so different from ours. We help people out of our surplus, and He goes the extra mile every time."

The proper lens for reading the parables is not as fables or morals and often not allegories, he said. The parables are a view of who Christ is and what life can look like without Him.

Tom Richter, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cullman, said Peter also gave a picture of who Christ is through his first sermon in Acts 2.

It was right on the heels of Pentecost — the Holy Spirit had come, and now the fire that signified God's presence, the fire that descended on Mount Sinai, lived in them, he said.

"That fire that would've been fatal now lives inside them — inside you," Richter said.

And not only that — Jesus' followers had begun speaking in tongues so that everyone there could understand in their own language. That was hugely significant, Richter said.

"It would be like the gospel being preached in impeccable mandarin by Uncle Si from 'Duck Dynasty,'" Richter said. "It signified something incredible — when the gospel was first preached, it was preached in every language at one time so that no culture could ever pull rank. God doesn't speak a language — He speaks people. Every tribe, tongue and language is equally treasured in the kingdom of God."

And Peter, now filled with the Holy

Spirit, preaches a message full of Scripture, full of Christ and full of grace, Richter said. "It's like a light bulb had gone off and Peter couldn't help but see how every Scripture points to Christ."

Hershael York — pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church, Frankfort, Kentucky; and dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Preaching at Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky — said marriage can be another way God preaches His gospel to the world.

He preached out of Ephesians 5 on how a godly marriage should reflect the love between Christ and the Church.

"Marriage matters because it points to Christ and the Church," York said.

A godly marriage should imitate the joy between a Christian and the Savior in our homes, he said. "When we make Christ the

center of our lives and our marriages, the world looks and says 'I want to know that God.'"

'Rich day of worship'

Watkins said he prayed that everyone in attendance left motivated and encouraged to preach Christ in every text and topic. He also expressed gratitude to the volunteers and staff of First, Trussville, for hosting the conference, as well as to the worship team and combined choir from Birmingham-area churches, led by Brett Fuller, worship pastor at First, Pelham.

They, along with the preachers, provided a "glorious, rich day of worship and learning," Watkins said.✠



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Tom Richter, pastor of FBC Cullman, speaks on Preaching Christ in Acts during the afternoon session.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Pastor Reginald Calvert of New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, Bessemer, speaks on the Gospels.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The 2019 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference will be Nov. 11 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne. Officers for 2019 are (l to r): Treasurer Richard Richie, pastor of Blue Springs Baptist Church, Somerville; President Stuart Davidson, pastor of Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne; President-elect Nathan Daniels, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Andalusia; and Vice President Blake Kersey, pastor of FBC Decatur (not pictured).

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Constant immersion

Thweatt urges pastors to 'preach the Word' during annual meeting's presidential address

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

John Thweatt says he remembers stepping into the pulpit at First Baptist Church, Boaz — the church where he grew up — and feeling the fingerprints where Pastor Earl Chumley had held onto the pulpit.

"He had Parkinson's (disease), and he steadied himself with both hands on that pulpit for 20 years," Thweatt said.

It was that pastor's faithful preaching — even when he suffered — that impacted Thweatt and drew him into a life of ministry.

"God used his faithfulness in my life," he said. "And we too stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We have a responsibility to preach the Word. If we're going to be faithful we have to learn to preach the Word."

That was Thweatt's presidential message to those gathered at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13 — preach

the Word. To close out his time as convention president, Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, shared Paul's challenge to Timothy from 2 Timothy 4.

"You and I are Kingdom citizens plucked from this world, called by God to proclaim His message," Thweatt said. "We draw others in by preaching His word."

He challenged pastors to be sober-minded — that is, not get pulled into watering down their message because people will no longer "endure sound teaching," as verses 3–4 say.

'Deeper river'

"Don't let (their preferences) get you so intoxicated that you stop preaching the Word and start lessening what you do so that you can attract a crowd," he said. "I believe a deeper river will sooner or later get wider, but a wider river might never have depth."

Pastors are the "designated drivers" of their churches, soberly keeping them on course in the Word, Thweatt said.

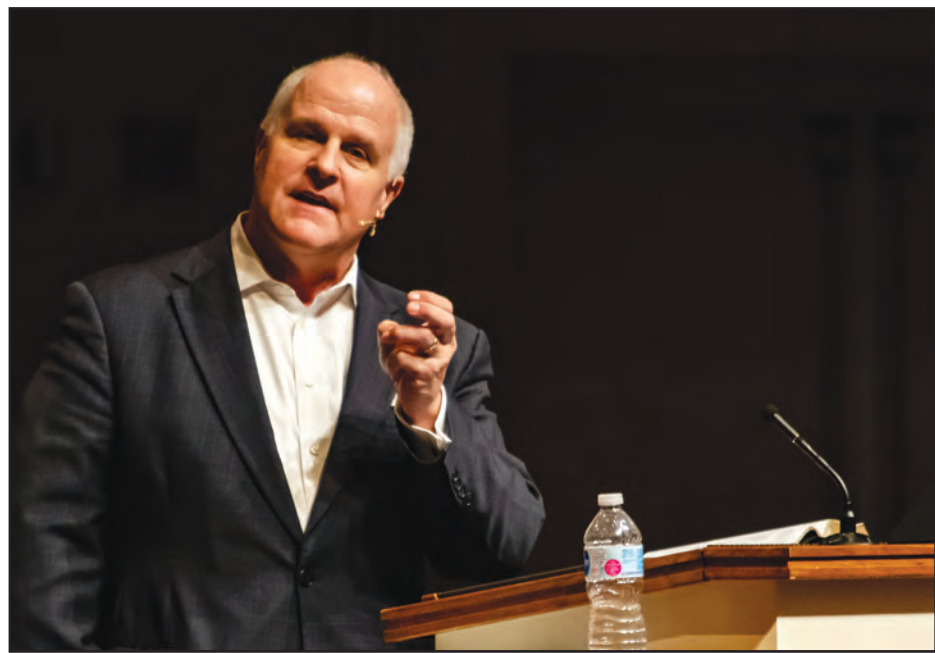


Photo by Tracy Riggs

Convention president John Thweatt reinforces the importance of holding fast to sound teaching of the word of God. 'A deeper river will sooner or later get wider, but a wider river might never have depth,' Thweatt said.

That means exhorting people with Scripture, reproofing them and rebuking them when necessary, he said. It means being ready to preach the Word at any time by constantly immersing yourself in the study of the Word and staying

in prayer through the Holy Spirit, he said.

It also means persevering in the face of suffering, whether that means opposition in your church or opposition by the world, Thweatt said.

"Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Keep your focus, and don't lose your passion," he said. "At the end of my life, if they say nothing else about me, I hope they will say, 'He gave me a steady diet of the Word of God.'" ✠

'Authentic, Christian leaders' chosen to lead state convention

(continued from page 1)

Tim Cox — ran unopposed.

Buddy Champion, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trussville, was elected first vice president.

Blake Kersey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Decatur, nominated him, calling him a genuine and authentic Christian leader.

"He is the same man of God on Tuesday in staff meeting or Thursday in his office as he is Sunday in the pulpit," Kersey said. "He walks with such humility before his congregation and displays genuine love to his family, staff and congregation."

Morgan Bailey, pastor of Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer, was elected second vice

president. He was nominated by Travis Coleman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, and a former convention president.

Coleman said Bailey has proven himself a leader as a pastor for more than three decades and in his work as chairman of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). He said Bailey has a passion to lead his church and state Baptists.

'Seasoned leader'

"He is a seasoned leader ready to serve our state convention and assist Dr. Rick Lance in carrying out the mission of the Alabama Baptist State Convention," Coleman said.

Messengers also re-elected Billie Davis as the recording secretary and Bobby DuBois as statistical secretary and registration secretary. Davis serves in the SBOM executive director's office. DuBois is the SBOM associate executive director. ✠

Jimmie and Martha Harris honored for service to children



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Rod Marshall (right), president and CEO of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, presents Jimmie and Martha Harris with the House Parents of the Year award, a national honor given by the Coalition of Residential Excellence, during the entity update segment of the Tuesday afternoon session. Russell Klinner (left) also gave an update for Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, Ray Burdeshaw (back, center) spoke about Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers and Candace McIntosh (back, right) gave updates for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union.

Messenger registration for the 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention was 782, the highest in the past three years.

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

Cooperative Program Budget for 2019

(Approved by convention messengers Nov. 13)

	2018 BUDGET	2019 BUDGET
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES		
SBC Executive Committee	18,500,000	18,750,000
Total for Southern Baptist Convention Ministries	18,500,000	18,750,000
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS MINISTRIES		
<i>EVANGELISM/DISCIPLESHIP (27 full-time employees)</i>		
Evangelism	106,938	108,383
Sunday School and Discipleship	307,862	312,022
Collegiate and Student Ministries	96,427	97,730
Evangelism/Discipleship Salaries/Housing	1,640,839	1,663,012
Evangelism/Discipleship Travel/Field Services	164,345	166,566
<i>LEADERSHIP RESOURCE (7 full-time employees)</i>		
LeaderCare/Church Health	371,866	376,891
Worship Leadership/Church Music	86,940	88,115
Leadership Development Salaries/Housing	523,462	530,536
Leadership Development Travel/Field Services	51,867	52,568
<i>MISSIONS MOBILIZATION (10 full-time employees)</i>		
Associational Missions & Church Planting	756,652	766,877
Global Missions	209,353	212,182
Missions Mobilization Salaries/Housing	679,485	688,668
Missions Mobilization Travel/Field Services	67,325	68,235
<i>MISSIONS SUPPORT (16 full-time employees)</i>		
Executive Director		
A. Director's Office	22,734	23,041
B. Disaster Relief	1,000	1,014
C. Supplemental Aid	1,000	1,014
D. Strategic Initiatives		
D. Partnerships	1,000	1,014
Financial/Facility Services		
Director's Office	352,000	356,757
Accounting & Human Resources	2,285,000	2,315,878
Facility Services	1,328,018	1,345,964
Cooperative Program & Stewardship Development	32,390	32,828
Communications & Technology Services	323,090	327,456
Missions Support Salaries/Housing	1,604,124	1,625,801
Missions Support Travel/Field Services	158,943	161,091
Subtotal for State Board of Missions Ministries	11,172,660	11,323,642
GuideStone Church Retirement Plan	790,338	801,140
GuideStone: Mission Dignity	9,000	9,000
Subtotal for GuideStone	799,338	810,140
Total for State Board of Missions Ministries	11,971,998	12,133,782
STATE CONVENTION ENTITY MINISTRIES		
Christian Higher Education Ministries		
A. A. Earl Potts Scholarship	111,761	113,271
B. Board of Aid to Students	354,110	358,895
C. Judson College	1,038,163	1,052,192
E. University of Mobile	2,627,728	2,663,238
Other Entities and Commissions Ministries		
A. Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries	253,625	257,052
B. Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center	544,943	552,307
C. <i>The Alabama Baptist</i>	552,673	560,141
D. The Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers	186,125	188,641
E. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama	132,251	134,038
F. The Christian Life Commission	24,475	24,806
G. The Education Commission	3,230	3,273
H. The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission	127,775	129,502
Auxiliaries and Other Ministries		
A. ALCAP	65,354	66,237
B. Alabama Woman's Missionary Union	505,790	512,625
Total for Convention Entity Ministries	6,528,002	6,616,219
GRAND TOTAL COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET	37,000,000	37,500,000
SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS		
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering	12,000,000	12,000,000
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering	6,100,000	6,000,000
Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries	3,000,000	2,800,000
Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering	1,000,000	1,200,000
Alabama Baptist World Hunger Offering	800,000	800,000
Total for Special Offering Goals	22,900,000	22,800,000



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Mark Wakefield (left), disaster relief strategist, awards the inaugural Tommy Puckett Award for Excellence to David Hendon (center) of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper. Hendon's wife, JoAnne, joined him in accepting the award. Rob Mayes (not pictured) also was honored.

Volunteers recognized as 'key players' in state's DR work

(continued from page 3)

Puckett Award for Excellence, named in honor of Puckett, a long-time Alabama Baptist men's ministry and disaster relief strategist who died in February.

Mark Wakefield, current disaster relief strategist, presented the award to two disaster relief volunteers who have been "key players" in the state's work.

They are David Hendon of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper, and Rob Mayes of First Baptist Church, Prattville.

Mayes thanked the SBOM for honoring Puckett through the new award.

"If it wasn't for Tommy, I wouldn't be standing here today," he said.

Also during the SBOM report:

► Messengers approved the auditor's report of SBOM.

► Messengers affirmed the special offering goals for 2018 — Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$12 million; Annie Armstrong

Easter Offering, \$6 million; Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, \$2.8 million; Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, \$1.2 million; and Global Hunger Offering, \$800,000.

► The 2018

annual was dedicated in memory of David Potts, former president of Judson College in Marion, and Mike McLemore, former executive director of Birmingham Baptist Association.

► The training room at the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Center in Prattville was named after Puckett.✝

NEWLY ELECTED STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS OFFICERS

► **Chair Mike Goforth,**
pastor of Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz

► **Vice chair Greg Corbin,**
pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Mike Jackson (left), director of the SBOM office of LeaderCare and church health, presents the Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Award to Jacky Connell (center), pastor of Eden Westside Baptist Church, Pell City, and James Mercer (right), pastor of Hollinger's Island Baptist Church, Mobile.

'Worship experience like no other'

Children's Honor Choir sings at state convention, marks 20 years since first audition

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Jane Burdeshaw says that every single year of Children's Honor Choir has been special. She gets emotional talking about it.

But some years stand out, she said — like the year she got a letter from one particular little girl.

"She said that as the choir was singing 'I Am His Lamb' at one of the concerts, it really dawned on her that she was His lamb," Burdeshaw said, noting that other children also came to know Christ in a new way through the choir. "I was so moved by that and I knew we had to do the song again the next year."

So they did — the next year and the next year and the one after that. "I Am His Lamb" became the signature song of the honor choir. And dur-

ing the years there's been story after story of lives being touched through it.

"I think of that song and I think of some sisters from Athens whose uncle passed away, an uncle they were so close to. They sang that song at his funeral," Burdeshaw said. "And I think of another young man from Boaz who went to an Auburn game

one Saturday with his grandmother and died in a car crash, and they played the song at his memorial service."

The song has "really ministered" to people over the years, and that's why they sang it as the benediction of the Tuesday night service at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13.

The members of the Children's Honor Choir — as many as they could gather from around the state on a school night — led worship at the

service, along with alumni members from previous years and a few members of the Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women.

The special choir was to mark the 20th year since the dream for the Children's Honor Choir was born. The first auditions were held in 1998, with the first choir touring in 1999.

'Of the Lord'

It was birthed out of a burden that Ray Burdeshaw, then director of the office of worship leadership and church music for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said God laid on his heart.

"I felt like it would be a wonderful ministry for the children of our state, and I bounced it off a few people and they loved the idea," he said.

In the past two decades, more than 3,000 fourth through sixth graders have gone through the choir.

"I believe the idea was of the Lord and that's why it's still flourishing today," said Ray



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The Children's Honor Choir leads worship during the ABSC evening session on Nov. 13. The choir has been touring annually since 1999 and includes members from around the state.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Children's Honor Choir members provide sign language interpretation during worship at the Nov. 13 evening session of the ABSC.

Burdeshaw, who now serves as president of Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers.

specialist in the SBOM office of worship leadership and church music.

Passing the baton

His wife, Jane Burdeshaw, served as the choir's director until several years ago when she passed the baton to Karen Gosselin, an associate and music

Jane Burdeshaw said the choir gives children — especially those from smaller churches — a unique opportunity to sing with a large group and challenge themselves musically. The choir, which is auditioned and capped



"I believe the idea was of the Lord and that's why it's still flourishing today."

Ray Burdeshaw, retired director, office of worship leadership and church music, SBOM

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Photo by Tracy Riggs

Members of the Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women join the Children's Honor Choir for a special presentation during the Nov. 13 evening session of the state convention.

each year at 158, sings challenging pieces with up to five-part harmony.

"We wanted to raise their appreciation for music and their experience with it," she said.

And in a way the Burdeshaws were pioneers — when they first started the Children's Honor Choir no other state had a similar program.

"We were making a journey that had never been made," Jane Burdeshaw said. "A lot of prayer

went into it — everything was unknown."

Other programs

In the years since other states have used the choir as a model to start their own. And it expanded into other programs in Alabama too. As the children got older Ray Burdeshaw created similar choirs for youth.

Ashley Holmes, who now serves as minister of preschool and children at Parkview Baptist

Church, Decatur, in Morgan Baptist Association, grew up through the choirs and said it was a life-changing experience for her.

"For me, the best part of it was the friendships and the relationships I built," she said. "When I was a kid, social media wasn't what it is now and I only got to see those friends once a year."

Because of that, when her senior prom and the choir fell on the same weekend it wasn't a hard decision to make.

ed an opportunity for the massive public preaching of the gospel."

"Faithfulness is multifaceted," he said. Christians must hold to theological faithfulness, moral faithfulness, evangelistic faithfulness and congregational faithfulness, he explained.

'Mark of a church'

Whether a pastor, a church or a convention, we can't possibly be faithful in any other aspect if we are not theologically and doctrinally faithful, Mohler said. "The gospel is at stake. ... The first mark of a church is not the building, but the preaching of the word of God."

Because we are morally redeemed, we are morally accountable, he said.

"The moral witness of the church is where many churches are failing," Mohler said. "We cannot act like we don't know what God's plan for humanity is."

Evangelism is not just something Christian's should do, but it is who we are.

Quoting the Apostle Paul in

Mohler thanks Alabama Baptists, encourages continued faithfulness

By Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

"Thank you." That is the phrase Albert Mohler repeated to Alabama Baptists in his message during the Nov. 13 evening session of the state convention annual meeting.

"Thanks for your encouragement and thank you for your generosity," he said.

"I have never received anything that hasn't been provided by Southern Baptists and in so many ways Alabama Baptists. The biggest single donor to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is the Alabama Baptist State Convention."

Mohler, who has served as president of Southern Seminary for the past 25 years, spoke on the importance of faithfulness among Christians and in churches as he preached from Acts 20.

"Paul was in haste to reach Jerusalem where he would likely face imprisonment or martyrdom," Mohler said. "But he was faithful to the call he had received from God, and Jerusalem present-



Photo by Tracy Riggs

"The real secret to the SBC is that there are people in our churches who ... give. And they pray," said Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, speaking during the Nov. 13 evening session.

verses 26-27 — "I declare to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God" — Mohler noted the blood. He said it is his prayer for himself, for the denomination and for our churches that

on the day of judgment we have no blood on our hands.

Importance of missions

"It will only be true if we are evangelically faithful," he said. "It will only be true if we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. ...

"[Children] leave every year with a different appreciation for who God is and for music and what it does."

Karen Gosselin
associate and music specialist for the office of worship leadership and church music, SBOM

"I skipped my prom and went to choir, and I never second guessed it," she said. "I still keep up with the friends that I made even back in fourth and fifth grade back when I started."

Lifelong relationships

Keith Hibbs, now director of the SBOM office of worship leadership and church music, said those lifelong relationships are just one of the markers of the Children's Honor Choir.

"Another byproduct of the choir is it broadens their horizons as far as seeing how God works on a broader scope across the state, not just their own church," he said. "It's a formative step for them to understand that God has gifted them, and what better way to serve Him than use those gifts that He's given."

Gosselin also said the song lyrics themselves teach important biblical truths that will be embedded in the children's minds.

"We do Scripture songs with basic foundational truths so that when they get in those times of doubt and confusion in the teen years they have these foundational truths that will come

back and speak louder than the world," she said. "They leave every year with a different appreciation for who God is and for music and what it does."

Hearing the choir sing is "a worship experience like no other," Gosselin said.

The choir has already been selected for this year and will rehearse and tour March 1-3, 2019. 🎵

To find out how to audition for the 2020 Children's Honor Choir, visit alsbom.org/chc or contact Karen Gosselin at 334-613-2318 or kgosselin@alsbom.org.

THEME INTERPRETATION

Allen shares testimony of God's faithfulness, trustworthiness

A picture of a wrecked and mangled car scrolled onto the screen. Gasps escaped from the audience. On stage Ken Allen choked back tears.

Allen, associational mission strategist for DeKalb Baptist Association, shared his story of God's faithfulness to those in the crowd at the Alabama Baptist State Convention during the Nov. 13 morning session.

In February 2018, Allen's daughter, Abby, was in a car wreck. She was placed on a ventilator and suffered seizures, a brain bleed, and leg and neck injuries. Abby was sent to Shepherd's Center in Atlanta for rehabilitation, where she spent four months in rehab — both inpatient and outpatient.

In May, Abby was able to return home and Allen gives all credit to God for His faithfulness in Abby's recovery.

"When I saw Abby's car on that wrecker, I was very aware of the nearness of God," he said. "God is the One we can go to in times of trouble."

Allen preached out of Psalm 46 on the faithful God who is worthy

of our trust. "It is my aim that we will completely trust the God who is able," he said.

In times of trouble and heartache, like Abby's car accident, Christians must trust in God. God is absolutely faithful.

"There are times of desperation when we need to cry out to Him, and I was crying out to the Lord," Allen said. "I was crying out for mercy. I was crying out to Him for Abby's head in that moment."

It's about crying out in complete desperation for the Lord, Allen continued. "But we are too concerned about what others may think when we do. We need to

logically run to our Savior and plant ourselves there and stay there."

God is worthy of our trust because His presence is absolute, His provision is abundant and His power is ageless, Allen said.

"When we trust in Him absolutely, we will not fear," he said.

Christians don't need to carry their struggles and concerns alone. God is the ultimate refuge, Allen said. "Stop battling in your own strength. Trust the Lord. God has the power and it has been

proven over and over again."

Referencing Francis Chan's analogy from his book "Letters to the Church," Allen described the need to hand everything over to God. We wouldn't play basketball with Lebron and hog the ball, he said. "We would let Lebron do what he does best ... No matter our outward circumstances, pass the ball to the King of kings and the Lord of lords," Allen said. "Come and behold. Watch in awe at what He will do."

Amid the chaos of life and the storms that come, "God is our constant," Allen said. "Stand on the ground that God is faithful to finish what He started in us." (Jessica Ingram)



KEN ALLEN

Photo by Tracy Riggs



Theology 101
will return next week.

Messengers adopt six new resolutions

Alabama Baptists adopted six resolutions during the 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) held Nov. 13-14 at First Baptist Church, Trussville.

Resolutions No. 4 and No. 5 honored the ministries of two men who each gave more than two decades of their lives in service to Alabama Baptists.

Resolution No. 4, On Gratitude for the Life of David Potts, recognized the 28 years of service the late David E. Potts gave as president of Judson College. The resolution noted the "high standard of excellent curriculum" Potts promoted at Judson during his tenure, as well as Potts' commitment to "people living in poverty, especially those who make their home in Alabama's Black Belt."

Resolution No. 5, On Appreciation for Bobby S. "Bob" Terry, recognized Terry's 23 years as editor of *The Alabama Baptist*. Terry, and his upcoming retirement. Terry has been in Southern Baptist newspaper ministry for 50 years. The resolution asked Alabama Baptists "to pray for God's continued

blessings and guidance upon Bob and Pat Terry in their new season of ministry, as well as the continued ministry of *The Alabama Baptist*."

Messengers also approved:

Resolution No. 1, On a Call for Prayer and Unity, calling for Alabama Baptists to commit to pray for government leaders at all levels and to advocate for freedom of speech and religious liberty. The resolution also called on Alabama Baptists to participate in the National Day of Prayer on May 2, 2019.

Resolution No. 2, On Christian Parenting for All Children, calling on Alabama Baptists to stand for the family as the "scriptural pattern for living and the foundation for a positive civic life."

Resolution No. 3, On Affirming the Move of the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Resolution No. 6, On Appreciation, thanking First Baptist Church, Trussville, for the use of their facilities during the 2018 ABSC and expressing gratitude to all those who helped. (TAB)

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

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

FULL-TIME PASTOR

College Heights Baptist Church, Glencoe, is searching for a full-time pastor. Send resumés to: College Heights Baptist Church, 411 Rabbittown Road, Glencoe, AL 35905.

PASTOR

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

PART-TIME INTERIM MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER

Seeking part-time interim music worship leader. Send resumés to: jenny.russell@parkviewdecatour.org. This is a paid position.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Walton County Baptist Association in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, is seeking resumés for a director of missions. Please email resumés to: wbbaptistassoc@panhandle.rr.com.

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Letters from Adoniram Judson



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Lonette Berg (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission shares how the Special Collection at Samford University came to be the curator of a treasured set of letters from Adoniram Judson, America's first foreign missionary. During this time Bob Terry (second from right) presented for *The Alabama Baptist*, and representatives from Christian Life Commission, The Baptist Foundation of Alabama and Alabama Citizens Action Program also spoke.

Alabama Baptists tapped for service

During the 196th annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Baptists from across the state were elected to serve on the governing boards of convention-related entities. Also approved by messengers were individuals to serve on the committees of the convention.

The Committee on Boards and Commissions nominates members to serve on the executive committee, the State Board of Missions (SBOM) and convention entities. The Committee on Committees names members to convention committees. The following is a complete list of individuals approved for service during the annual meeting. The list was provided by SBOM. An asterisk (*) before the name indicates a layperson.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Tim Cox

District: Scotty Hogan, Mat Alexander, *Bobby Bailey, Larry Cummings, *Ronnie Marshall, Mark McCullough, Stuart Davidson, Dee McGuire, James Nichols, Jesse Reeder, Morgan Bailey, Britt Green

Members at large: *Becky Head, Mack Amis, Buddy Champion, Mike Goforth, Mel Johnson, *Judith Cooley, *Judy Conaway, Rusty Sowell

Ex-officio members: SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance, Chairman of SBOM Mike Goforth, State Convention President Tim Cox, First Vice President Buddy Champion, President of Alabama WMU *Melissa Bowen

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Terms to Expire 2021: Sam Tate, Alabama-Crenshaw; Matt Helms, Barbour; *Joe Fowler, Bibb; David Awtrey, Buddy Champion, *Judith Cooley, Ronald Pate, Birmingham; *Ross Smith, Blount; *Kyle Curington, Bullock; W. Mack Amis Jr., *Ben Character, Scott Smith, Calhoun; Jerome Key, Chilton; *Jimmy Thompson, Choctaw, *Teresa Lacewell, Coffee; Gregg Woodard, Colbert-Lauderdale; Mike Snyder, Coosa River; *Glen Gaines, David Chambers, East Cullman; Robert Heard, Escambia; Earl Mitchell, Matt Wethington, Etowah; Chuck Oliver, Fayette; Bruce Spivey, Geneva; Terry Herald, Madison; *Carren Quinn, Mobile; Teman Knight, Montgomery; Charles

Time, place, preacher report

The 2019 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting will be held at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, on Nov. 12–13.

The convention preacher for the 2019 annual meeting will be Rick Marshall, retired pastor from Montgomery.

Alternate preacher is Jeff Meyers, pastor of First Baptist Church, Opelika.

Messengers voted for the 2023 annual meeting to take place Nov. 14–15 at First Baptist Church, Montgomery. (TAB)

Autery, Pine Barren; Dan Wiggins, Pleasant Grove; *Judy Conaway, Randolph; Matt Simmons, Salem Troy; Larry Wise, Sardis; Guy Anderson, Selma; Darryl Wood, Shelby; Joshua Posey, Tennessee River; Joseph Fain, Rusty Sowell, Tuskegee Lee; Brad Philbeck, West Cullman; Ritchie Emerson, Winston

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Terms to Expire 2022: *Teresa Noell, Golden Springs, Anniston; *Don McMillian, Siloam, Marion; *Chris Roberts, First, Tuscaloosa; *Arthur Williams, First, Jasper

BOARD OF AID

Terms to Expire 2022: Randy Johnson, First, Gulf Shores; Charles Teague, Canaan, Bessemer

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Terms to Expire 2022: Bob Gladney, Spring Hill, Mobile; *Helen Lee Fisk, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; Paul Thompson, Calvary, Dothan; *Winston Wilks, Henagar

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2022: *Cathy Gibbs Cospers, Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; Otis H. Corbitt, Westview, Opp; *Marcille Dutton, Slackland, Leesburg; Steven W. Loggins, Beechwood, Mount Olive; Matt Smith, East Side, Cullman

EDUCATION COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2019: *Laurie B. Barnett, First, Prattville

Terms to Expire 2022: *Mary Sue Bennett, First, Tuscaloosa; Barry Cospers, Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; Harrell R. Cushing, First, Montgomery; Neal Hughes, Heritage, Montgomery

BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Terms to Expire 2022: Chuck Ashley, First, Montgomery, *Sid Crosby, First, Jackson; *Larry E. Newman, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *Boles Pegues III, First, Opelika; *Alan Taylor, First, Trussville

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2022: *Dalton Campbell, Olive Branch, Evergreen; *Ellen Dewberry, First, Eufaula; *Anna Speir, First, Selma; Joe Teal, First, Athens

RETIREMENT CENTERS

Terms to Expire 2020: Bill Hand, North Shelby, Birmingham

Terms to Expire 2022: *Martine Bates Fairbanks, Central, Decatur; Jim O. Griffin, First, Tallasahatchie, Alpine; Earl Lee, First, Gulf Shores; *Ed Short, First, Andalusia, Jim Tate, Memphis, Dothan

JUDSON COLLEGE

Terms to Expire 2022: David Byrd,

Northside, Jasper; *Patricia B. Compton, First, Montgomery; Ed Cruce, Fairfield Highlands, Midfield; *Judi Favor, Hayneville, Hayneville; *Anne Williamson Shumaker, First, Centre; *Leigh Hayes Wiatt, First, Montgomery

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

Terms to Expire 2022: James W. Pruett, Gilliam Springs, Arab; *Tommy Robinson, First, Gulf Shores; Fred H. Wilson, Redemption, Mobile

SHOCCO SPRINGS

Terms to Expire 2022: *Ricky Barber, First, Talladega; *William Stacey Gunn, Carrville, Tallassee; *John C. Hubbard, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Robert L. Minor, First, Pell City

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Stuart Davidson

Chairperson 2019–2020:

Ben Bowden

Terms to Expire 2020: Gary W. Linville, Shoal Creek, Decatur; *Judy Roden, Sardis, Boaz; Mike Snyder, Eastaboga; Greg Hyche, Ladonia, Phenix City; *Rob Adams, First, Union Springs; Ben Bowden, First, Enterprise; *Kim Heard, Brooks Memorial, Atmore; *Kay Crosby, First, Jackson; Clarke Skelton, Valley Grande; Scott Davis, First, Fayette; *Donna Garner, Woodmont, Florence; Sammie Reid, Mount Zion, Warrior; Mel Johnson, First, Prattville

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Jay Knight, Shades Mountain, Birmingham

Term to Expire 2019: Jamie Jackson, First, Prattville

Terms to Expire 2021: *Rick Gibson, First, Tuscaloosa; *Ben F. Kelley Jr., First, Montgomery

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2018–2019:

*Rusty Melnick, First, Opelika

Terms to Expire 2021: *Mike Colquett, Mexia; Reyn Norman, First, Montgomery

TIME, PLACE, PREACHER

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Nic Seaborn, Raleigh Avenue, Homewood
Terms to Expire 2019: Roland Brown, Golden Springs, Anniston; David Byrd, Northside, Jasper; Dwight Everett, Calvary, Scottsboro; Mike Newman, Pepperell, Opelika; Donnie Payne, Forest Lake, Tuscaloosa; Nic Seaborn, Raleigh Avenue, Homewood; Jerry Roberson, Chatom

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Allan Murphy, North Shelby, Birmingham
Terms to Expire 2019: Dave Burns, First, Prattville; Gary Cardwell, Meadow Brook, Gadsden; *Nancy Gill, Thomasville; Allan

Thweatt names committees

Two committees, the Credentials Committee and the Tellers Committee, were appointed during the state convention's opening session Nov. 13. The Committee on Committees also was named during the Tuesday sessions.

State Convention President John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, announced the appointments 30 days prior to the annual meeting in accordance with bylaw requirements, but messengers had to ratify the appointments during the meeting.

The convention Credentials Committee helps with problems regarding registration and seating of messengers.

Serving as chairman of the committee was Dwayne Norman, Bush Memorial, Troy; Adam Brewer, Glory Fellowship, Jasper; Mark C. Gainey, First, Fultondale; Jason Seales, Christ Central, Calera; Brad Smith, Spring Valley, Springville; Steven Weems, First, Leeds; Jeremy Williams, Greensport, Ashville.

Tellers Committee members helped convention officers tabulate convention votes.

Jamie O'Dell, First, Trussville, served as chairman. Other members were Ric Camp, Ridgecrest, Trussville; Blake Kersey, First, Decatur; Dee McGuire, Greensboro; Robert Mullins, Crossroads Community, Elmore; Nic Seaborn, Raleigh Avenue, Homewood; Clayton Speed, First, Hartselle.

The following also were elected to serve on the Committee on Committees until 2021: Daniel Atkins, Taylor Road, Montgomery, chair in 2021; Charles Autery, Christian Way, Camden; Jonathan S. Jenkins, Sister Springs, Tyler. (TAB)

Murphy, North Shelby, Birmingham; *Anna Speir, First, Selma

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Rob Jackson, Eastern Shore, Daphne

Terms to Expire 2021: Derek Gentle, First, Tallassee; Chip Starnes, First, Bay Minette; Ryan Whitley, CrossPoint, Trussville

RESOLUTIONS

Chairperson 2018–2019:

Craig Carlisle, Twelfth Street, Gadsden

Terms to Expire 2019: Michael Brooks, Siluria, Ababaster; Craig Carlisle, Twelfth Street, Gadsden; Travis Coleman, First, Prattville; *Rosemary Colvin, First, Jackson; Bill King, Providence, Opelika; Matt Simmons, Henderson, Troy; *Karen Watkins, West End, Clanton

CONVENTION SERMON

Faithful endurance

Hold on to your love for Jesus, Jones urges

Terrence Jones says there's something upside down about the landscape of the church in America these days. "American Christianity is messed up," he said. "We forget that Jesus is the prize, that reigning with Him and being with Him is the reward."

The gospel has become something completely different, said Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, as he preached the convention sermon Nov. 14 to close the annual meeting at First Baptist Church, Trussville.

Chasing tranquility

People "chase tranquility and comfort" as the goal, but nothing this world has to offer will ever compare to the eternal treasure found in Jesus Christ Himself, he said.

"We have to recapture the idea of faithful endurance."

The ministry has a set path, he said — it's a cross, then a crown. Christians walk through suffering here with endurance and then gain the reward of Christ in eternity.

That's what Paul reminded the young pastor Timothy as he wrote to him from death row — that if we have died with Christ, we will also live with Him, and if we endure with Him, we will also reign with Him.

It's a trustworthy saying that Paul offers in 2 Timothy 2:11-13 — one of five "trustworthy sayings" that Paul gave in his epistles.

Jones said all were written to pastors, perhaps "because Paul knew pastors would be prone to doubt and wonder, 'Is God really with me?'"

From this particular "trustwor-

thy saying," pastors can draw three conclusions, Jones said: commitment to Christ comes with a great reward, lack of commitment leads to great peril and ultimately God wins because He cannot deny Himself.

No comparison

"Nothing we can lose in this life can compare to what we will receive," Jones said. "It is, however, possible to be characterized as having perseverance but still need a warning."

Looking at Revelation 2, Jones said the story of the church at Ephesus shows us something important — that walking away from Christ is a possibility.

Both that passage and the verses in 2 Timothy "remind us that abandonment is something we need to be sober minded about," he said.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

"Even when we are faithless, God is faithful," Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, reminds those gathered for the final session of the 2018 ABSC.

Pastors have to fight to endure and hold on to their love for Jesus. But a bit of good news — "even when we are faithless, God is faithful," Jones said.

All Christians have had seasons where they are faithful and seasons where they are faithless.

He recounted the story of how several months ago his family's home was broken into, robbed and vandalized.

"People wonder how we're able to stay, how I'm able to walk across the driveway and share the gospel with the person I know robbed our house. The answer is

I see myself in all of these categories," said Jones, explaining that he identifies with people who deny Christ.

God is always at work

"There are moments where I endure and there are moments where I'm faithless."

Yet God is always at work, he said.

"If we stumble He will carry us. And if we rebel He will push us to the side and use somebody else to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. So we march on." (Grace Thornton)



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Photos by Tracy Riggs

Terry delivers final report, honored with reception

The 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting and related activities marked a significant moment for Bob Terry.

Terry, outgoing longtime editor of *The Alabama Baptist*,

delivered his final report to convention messengers Nov. 13 (top photo).

And that evening several hundred people attended a retirement reception in his honor (bottom photo). (TAB)



'Our faithfulness must increase as our ... spiritual walks progress'

The weather outside was cold and brisk, but passion and excitement radiated warmly inside the sanctuary at First Baptist Church, Trussville, during the final session of the 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 14.

Jimmy Jackson, pastor emeritus of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, opened the final session by preaching on believers' faithfulness to God.

"We all have sinned. We are not perfect in our faithfulness," he said.

Jackson preached out of Psalm 13 and Ephesians 3. Psalm 13:5 says, "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation."

God's love is dependable and it is determined, Jackson said.

"His love will not go away. His love is immeasurable and it cannot be removed from us," he said. "God is determined to accomplish His will. God stayed faithful to His task.

"Because we are all sinful creatures, we fail in our faithfulness daily," Jackson said.

"None of us are capable of being as faithful to God as He is



Photo by Tracy Riggs

JIMMY JACKSON

faithful to us. He could not be the God of the Bible if He were not holy and He couldn't be holy if He were not faithful."

Resources provided

God's faithfulness is innate, "but as infallible beings we did not have faithfulness coming into this world."

"We have the resources for faithfulness if we trust in Jesus," Jackson said.

"Faithfulness is an acquired characteristic of our life. ... We got it at our new birth and it has to be developed.

"It is the spirit of God in our

lives that makes it possible for us to serve Him. ... The solution that God has given us is the Bible, for our faithfulness is meditation on the word of God," he said.

"Our faithfulness to God is inspired and it is instilled," according to Jackson. "We love Him because He loves us," he said. "And it is instilled when the Holy Spirit comes into our life and seals us with Him forever and ever."

Ephesians 3:19 says, "That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

"We must concentrate, meditate and evaluate the love of God," Jackson said. "This is the key. If we were filled with the fullness of God, you and I would be faithful."

Get alone with God and thank Him for loving you, Jackson said. "Go to the cross. He still loves us in the same way.

"Our faithfulness must increase as our lives and our spiritual walks progress," he said.

While the world is going backward instead of forward, the Church must go forward instead of backward.

"If there's a time that we need to be more faithful in our walk with God it's now," Jackson said.

"God put us here at this time in His own providence and sovereignty because He knows if we seek after Him, we can see victory in this world." (Jessica Ingram)

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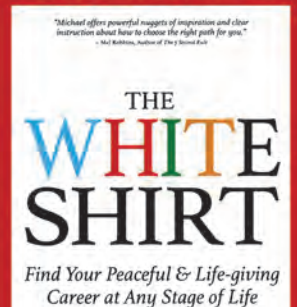
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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 25

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

WITH ANTICIPATION James 5:7-9, 13-20

Patience (7-9)

Apparently one of the sources of contention among the church to whom James wrote was rich people oppressing the less fortunate. The beginning of James 5 is an admonition against the rich for placing their faith in their temporary, material wealth while simultaneously withholding proper wages from their workers.

On the heels of chastising selfish rich people — for there is a selfless way the wealthy can please the Lord — James turns to those who were being oppressed. His advice: Be patient. Although they were going through trials beyond their control, the Lord Jesus will come again soon to right all wrongs. In our fallen world sin subjects everyone to trials, whether rich or poor. We are all simultaneously victims and victimizers, oppressed and oppressors, lost in the midst of various trials.

When all seems hopeless James casts our eyes forward to the coming of the Lord. His judgment is perfect and His power is absolute. He will come to abolish trials forever, having experienced the pinnacle of oppression on the cross, yet raising victoriously over death three days later.

Are you experiencing a season of trial? Never forget that the Lord Jesus, who dwelt among humanity, sympathizes with your suffering having been tempted and tried like us yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). And that very same Lord Jesus is coming again. Ultimately our capacity to accept or tolerate suffering depends on our faithful anticipation of Christ's return. The Christ who suffered is coming to those who suffer to destroy suffering forever.

Prayer (13-18)

How do we endure suffering and sustain our faithful anticipation of Christ's return?

Through prayer. James instructs us on the importance of prayer, especially for those suffering illness and guilt over sin. As an example James reminds us of the prophet Elijah, who prayed in part that the "people will know that You, the Lord, are God and that You have turned their hearts back" (1 Kings 18:37). Whether in illness or guilt, prayer is a reminder that God is in control and that He desires our hearts.

Are you facing some illness or burdened by the illness of a loved one? Let your prayers be framed with the firm understanding that God holds all things together in His hands, that "all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). Illness and suffering have an expiration date at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Are you burdened by the guilt of sin? Frame your prayers in the kind of repentance that turns your heart back to God who, in His mercy and grace, is always willing to embrace you as a son and daughter once again.

Protecting (19-20)

What if our prayer is not for our own sin but the sin of others? James continues his instruction with the reconciliation of wayward brothers and sisters who for one reason or another have wandered from the truth. It is important to note that James is not advocating for the possibility of losing salvation, for we know that "He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). Instead James is concerned for the protection and health of the community. He wants to ensure that Christians are constantly on guard for the safety of one another so that they might flourish in the love and grace of Christ. Specifically James instructs those who have strayed and returned from error to recognize the graciousness they received from their concerned brothers and sisters.✠

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

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING Psalm 138:1-8

My beloved grandfather, a man of deep faith who passed away a little more than a decade ago, was well known for finding humor in the truths of everyday life. One of his humorous nuggets of wisdom ran something like this: Don't ask for the sausage recipe unless you plan to change it. What he meant by this was that however tasty sausage might be in the end, the truth is that you probably wouldn't want to know what parts of the pig went into making it.

It strikes me that there are probably a great many aspects of daily life that work just the same way. My sanity is likely better preserved by not knowing when that airplane's engines were last inspected or whether a mouse took a nibble of my cookie or whether that person's cough was contagious. To dig too deeply into some subjects is only to invite worry and trouble.

Prayer may well fall into this same category. There is an inherent irrationality in thinking that words spoken by a person like me could ever impact the intentions of an all-knowing, all-powerful God. If God truly knows everything, and He surely does, what possible influence could my utterly limited thoughts add to the divine conversation.

Why then do we pray? To ask the question is to look behind the curtain of a very difficult dilemma.

I confess that I do not believe there is a fully satisfactory intellectual answer to this problem.

As with all of the other cardinal doctrines of Christianity — the Trinity, Jesus' divinity and humanity, sovereignty and free will — prayer is a matter of faith. We pray as the ultimate act of trust that there

is a God and that He is moved by compassion toward those who cry out to Him.

Thank God for His love and truth. (1-2)

Few psalms exemplify the act of trust involved in prayer as readily as does Psalm 138. In the opening verses of the psalm the psalmist gives thanks to God, sings His praise and bows in worship toward His temple because of God's steadfast love and faithfulness. The Hebrew term for this "steadfast love" is *hesed*, a word that refers primarily to a love marked by loyalty. It is the kind of love that remains true and devoted no matter what the circumstances of life might be. As an act of faith the psalmist determines that no matter what, he will trust in God to remain loyal in His love toward him.

Thank God that He provides all we need. (3-6)

In the next section of the psalm the songwriter illustrates the kind of steadfast love he knows God shows toward His people. He is the God who in love answers His people's prayers. He is the God who protects the weak, chastening kings so that even they come to worship His greatness. He is a God who lives out His love toward His children.

Thank God that He keeps us and protects us. (7-8)

In verse 7 the psalmist echoes the words of the 23rd psalm. The fact that the psalmist is so confident in God's loyal love makes the last line of the psalm all the more interesting. Though he trusts that God will work out His perfect will, he is still bold enough to believe that his urgent words will have an impact. His prayer, like all prayers, is an appeal from one heart to another, from his heart to God's. It is a prayer born of a trust that God hears us when we call to Him.✠

Christian Crossword

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Across

- He ___ for apples.
- Little drink.
- The sons of Merari ... Zaccur and ___ (1 Chron. 24:27)
- Great amount. (2 words)
- Belonging to a girl.
- Thou art ___, O Lord. (Ps. 119:151)
- And a certain centurion's servant, who was ___ unto him, was sick. (Luke 7:2)
- Indian dress.
- From Shepham to Riblah on the east side of ___. (Num. 34:11)
- The voice of the Lord divideth the ___ of fire. (Ps. 29:7)
- For there is no work, nor ___ in the grave. (Eccles. 9:10)
- Good time.
- Descendant of Eri. (Num. 26:16)
- And Ahab told ___ all that Elijah had done. (1 Kings 19:1)
- By faith ___ ch was translated. (Heb. 11:5)
- Pitch.

Down

- Cast the ___ away. (Matt. 13:48)
- Bullfight cheer.
- Eggs.
- To ___ such an one unto Satan. (1 Cor. 5:5)
- Accepted belief.
- Teacher's organization.
- Harsh.
- Sought how they might take him by ___, and put him to death. (Mark 14:1)
- Pod vegetable.
- ___ avis: rarity.
- Bringing gold and silver, ivory, and ___(s). (1 Kings 10:22)
- Calendar entry.
- What the little engine said. (2 words)
- Pasture.
- And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in ___. (Gen. 2:8)
- As the twig is ___, so grows the branch.
- Noah entered the ___. (Gen. 7:7)
- Foolish man built his house upon the ___. (Matt. 7:26)

- Feather scarf.
- I am in a ___ betwixt two. (Phil. 1:23)
- Let your light so ___ before men. (Matt. 5:16)
- That is. (Latin)
- To offer for acceptance.
- Mad.
- First cast out the ___ out of thine own eye. (Matt. 7:5)
- It is a ___ thing that the king requireth. (Dan. 2:11)
- Spring flower.
- Frozen water.
- Bethel ... was called ___ at the first. (Gen. 28:19)
- Let us love ... in ___ and in truth. (1 John 3:18)
- Sea eagle.
- String instrument.
- Glass container.
- This is now ___ of my bones. (Gen. 2:23)
- So shall we ___ be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:17)
- Not early.
- Beverage.
- There shall be no more thence an ___ of days. (Isa. 65:20)
- Former serviceman/woman.
- Golf peg.

37. Avoids.

- Be swift to hear, slow to ___. (James 1:19)
- Away in a manger, no ___ for a bed.
- And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a ___. (Ps. 19:5)
- The children of Dishan ... Uz, and ___. (Gen. 36:28)
- In this manner.
- Each.
- Modern form of name of Lamech's wife. (Gen. 4:19)
- ___ virgins; ___ lepers.
- He that endureth to the ___ shall be saved. (Matt. 10:22)





(augmented reality)

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

Alabama Church Planters Network Dinner focuses on maximizing God-given abilities

By Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

Some prayed silently, some raised their hands and sang along quietly, but everyone worshipped. As the worship team from New Beginnings Fellowship, Trussville, played, those at the Alabama Church Planters Network Dinner praised the Lord for what He is doing in their communities.

Held Nov. 11 at Samford University in Birmingham, the Alabama Church Planters Network Dinner provided a time of encouragement and inspiration for church planters and their wives.

The dinner was the first of many events hosted in conjunction with the 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13–14 at First Baptist Church, Trussville.

Guest speaker Kenny Grant, pastor of Calvary Baptist Temple, Savannah, Georgia, and a planter of churches in Savannah and Brunswick, Georgia, preached from Matthew 25. He used the parable of the talents, where a master entrusts his property to his servants, to encourage church planters to embrace what God has given them individually and not compare themselves to others.

Watch and work, Grant said.

“We must be working with what the Lord has given to us,” he said.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

“Every single thing we have is given to us by God not to own it but to manage it for His honor and glory. We own absolutely nothing.

“What we’ve been given is not important. What’s important is what we do with what God has given, since everyone is created differently with unique abilities and opportunities,” Grant said.

He spoke on the abilities, possibilities, responsibilities and accountability that come with what God has gifted each of His children.

“God has given each one of us abilities,” Grant said, which He “issues out according to His sovereign plan.”

And because of that there should be no complaining, no competing and no comparing, he said. “Let’s just worship and honor the Lord.”

Surrender to God

Grant used Fanny Crosby as an example, sharing that though she was blind from a young age God used her to write hundreds of hymns that would continue to

touch people’s lives for centuries.

“The possibilities are endless when what we have is surrendered to God,” he said.

Each person is responsible for the gifts God has given them, he said. “We must realize what we’ve been given, then utilize it and maximize it for God’s glory,” Grant said.

Just like the servants had to explain to their master how they handled what he gave them, everyone will be held accountable for what he or she did with what God gave them. “You are going to give an account of the privilege of ministry that He’s given you,” Grant said.

The event also included separate breakout sessions for the pastors and the pastors’ wives.

Grant stressed the importance of the call of God to the pastors and planters. “It is an upward call,” he said. “God didn’t call us to greatness. He called us to Himself.”

Thais Jones, wife of Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, spoke to the pastors’ wives out of John 11 on the importance of being vulnerable.

God is safe, she said. “Others might hurt us but we know that we are 100 percent loved. He is doing something bigger than us.”

And that’s why pastors’ wives must be vulnerable in their churches — to show that God perfects His power through our struggles — “His grace is sufficient,” she said, referencing 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Lamar Duke, church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, was excited to host the event.

“God is doing amazing things in Alabama,” he said. ✝

Education-related entities give updates



Photo by Tracy Riggs

During entity updates Nov. 14, (l to r) Bobby Hopper from the Education Commission, Rob Jackson from University of Mobile, Scott Bullard from Judson College, Andrew Westmoreland from Samford University and Randy Johnson from the Board of Aid to Students in Church-Related Vocations give brief presentations on the ministries they represent.

Life at convention

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TRUSSVILLE

Below: The 2018 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting was held at First Baptist Church, Trussville, Nov. 13-14.

Photo by Doug Rogers



Below: Rick Lance recognizes former state convention presidents during the opening session of the annual meeting.

Photo by Tracy Riggs



Left: Church planters line up across the front of the sanctuary to be recognized Nov. 13.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Left: Ben and Laurie Barnett enjoy reading a copy of *The Alabama Baptist* at the retirement reception for Editor Bob Terry.

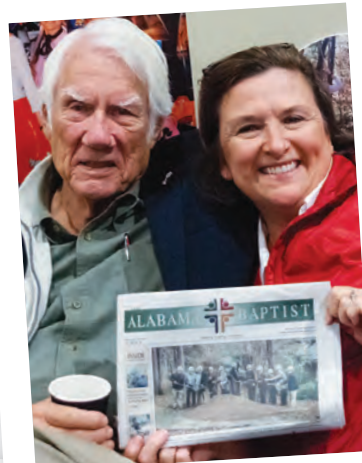


Photo by Tracy Riggs

Below: Pamela Strong, member of the Hunter Street Baptist Church choir, accompanies the Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Right: Daven Watkins (left), president of the Pastors Conference, presents TAB's Bob Terry with a thank you/retirement gift.



Photo by Tracy Riggs



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Above: Kris Courson interprets for the hearing impaired during the Monday Pastors Conference.

Above: Representatives from state Baptist ministries talk with people about their organizations and hand out information and swag in the exhibit hall.



Photo by Tracy Riggs