



The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 1-800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

February 7, 2019

Vol. 184, No. 6
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



A look at mass incarceration in Alabama — ninth in a series

◆ Pages 6–7



When it comes to children's use of technology adults set the rules

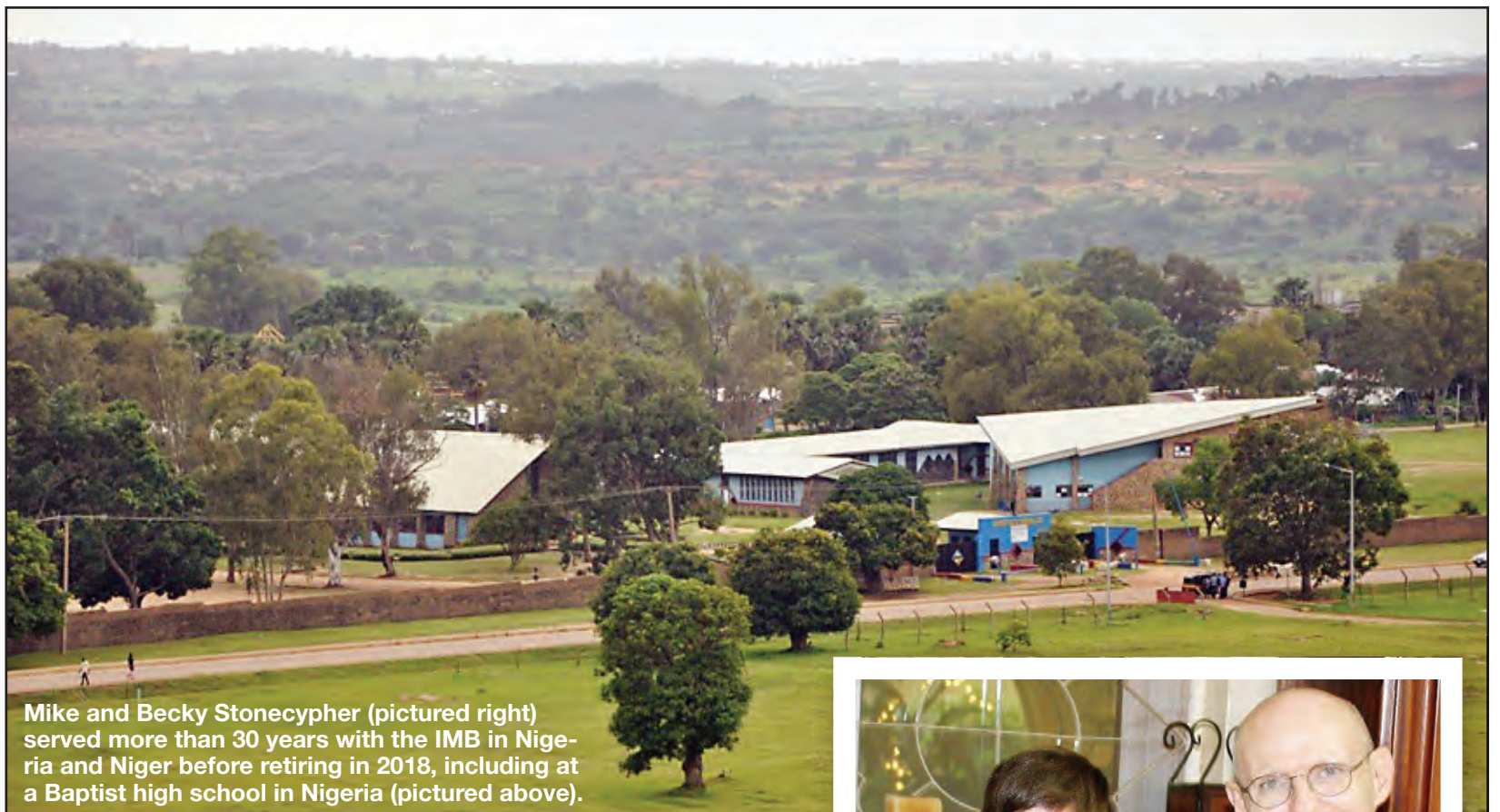
◆ Page 9



7 ways to pray for the nation's unborn children

◆ Page 10

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."



Mike and Becky Stonecypher (pictured right) served more than 30 years with the IMB in Nigeria and Niger before retiring in 2018, including at a Baptist high school in Nigeria (pictured above).

Photos courtesy of the Stonecyphers



Faithful servants

FBC Glencoe honors long-time missionaries with 'welcome home' reception

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Mike Stonecypher proposed through the mail — from Nigeria. And it was a long, anxious and hopeful wait until Becky's letter made it back from Indiana with a "yes" a month later.

"It was an unusual kind of

getting together," Mike said.

In the months and years leading up to Mike's question the couple had swapped a lot of letters and found they had a lot in common — not least of which was a love for Jesus, missions and Africa.

Becky, a pastor's daughter, had felt like God was calling her to Africa since age 12.

Right after college she served in Nigeria for two years as a journeyman with the International Mission Board (IMB), then came back to the U.S. to work on her master's degree.

The year she left Nigeria — 1982 — Mike showed up

there as an IMB missionary.

"I'd grown up in a church that really taught us about missions and got us excited about it," he said. And over time God called him to Africa.

The rest is history

But the couple didn't meet there. That didn't happen until Mike was back in the U.S. on his first furlough.

Some mutual friends realized the two had Nigeria in common and decided they should meet. The rest is history.

"We married in January 1988 and two and a half months later we were back

in Nigeria serving together," Mike said.

And 31 years later First Baptist Church, Glencoe — the church where they got married — threw them a "welcome home" reception as they retired from a long career of missionary service.

"It was an exciting, adventurous life, and God blessed us in so many ways," Mike said.

In Nigeria, Mike worked with Baptist schools and Becky worked with special education programs and raised their two children, Rachel and John David.

(See "Stonecyphers," page 11)

Ways to experience TAB content digitally

Are you on the go often? Do you prefer to receive your news content in the palm of your hand? Do you enjoy the convenience and accessibility of social media? *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) gives you options for how you can experience TAB.

Along with the print issue of the paper delivered weekly to readers' mailboxes, TAB also offers a digital edition that is emailed weekly to digital subscribers.

Anywhere and anytime

The digital edition contains the same content as the print edition — except it's in full color — but you can view it anywhere and anytime as long as you have email access.

For information on the digital subscription, contact us by emailing subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org.

TAB also offers TAB Preview, which provides a sneak peek of the weekly stories featured in TAB. The weekly newsletter is distributed by email, and it is interactive with links to the top stories and easy access to TAB's social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

It also features ads that are clickable and link directly to websites. To sign up for TAB Preview email news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Readers also can interact with TAB by visiting its social media sites on Facebook and Twitter. These sites allow readers to leave comments, share content and give feedback on the news published by TAB every day.

"We are excited to continue growing our social media and hope our Facebook and Twitter feeds will give us a chance to interact directly with our readers," editor Jennifer Davis Rash said.

The team at TAB wants to hear from its readers. Email news@thealabamabaptist.org and have your voice heard. Who knows?

You may find yourself featured on the new Your Voice spread found weekly on pages 4 and 5.

Another way readers can experience TAB digitally is through the new TAB News podcast.

'Fun and informative'

The TAB News podcast provides content from *The Alabama Baptist* each week in a radio-show-style format for listeners to download and listen to at their convenience.

A host will guide the show, along with several readers and guests who will be invited in to talk about some of the story topics in depth.

TAB News also includes a "Reader's Digest"-style audio version of the paper with some of the stories featured in the print edition read by TAB staff members.


"I love being a part of TAB News each week," Debbie Campbell, director of communications, said. "It's such a fun and informative time, and I'm happy we can provide our content in this new and fresh way."

Listen to the TAB News podcast anywhere you get your podcasts, such as iTunes or Stitcher, or visit www.thealabamabaptist.org/explore/podcasts. New episodes are released weekly. (TAB)

For more information on any of the services described, email news@thealabamabaptist.org.



(augmented reality)

- 1** Download the HP Reveal app from your app store.
- 2** Tap the  icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 3** You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.
- 4** Look for *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) augmented reality logo (example shown above). Hold your device over the logo and watch the paper come to life.
- 5** Each week when TAB arrives, look for the AR logo to watch the video extras through the app.



Connect with us

>>>> **ONLINE** <<<<

 thealabamabaptist.org

 facebook.com/thealabamabaptist

 twitter.com/alabamabaptist

 THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Special TAB sponsorship section

Thanks to **Unclaimed Baggage** in Scottsboro, Alabama, for helping sponsor the recent Servant/Leader Appreciation Night events in Montgomery, Athens, Scottsboro and Gardendale.



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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201.

Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org

Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Group Rate per issue — \$13.75
Individual — \$22.25

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Group Rate per issue — \$8.50
Individual — \$14.95

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cynthia Watts <i>Executive Assistant</i>	Janet Erwin <i>Executive Editor</i>
Carrie B. McWhorter <i>Content Editor</i>	Debbie Campbell <i>Director of Communications</i>
Lauren C. Grim <i>Creative Services Manager</i>	Bill Gilmore <i>Director of Sales</i>
Jessica Ingram <i>Production Manager</i>	Melanie McKinney <i>Advertising Manager</i>
Grace Thornton <i>Special Assignments Editor</i>	Pam Holt <i>Sales Representative</i>
Hannah Muñoz <i>Digital Editor</i>	Susan Stevens <i>Sales Representative</i>
James Hammack <i>Digital Services Manager</i>	Linda Harrison <i>Financial Administrator</i>
Haley Piersol <i>Digital Services Associate</i>	Deb Lowery <i>Financial Assistant</i>
Sarah Gill <i>Customer Relations</i>	Richard Maddox <i>Computer Services</i>
Amy Hacker <i>Customer Relations</i>	Correspondents and Interns

NEWS SERVICES

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

POSTMASTER

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

ADDRESS CHANGE

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

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

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional Christian Newspaper'

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

MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
President and Editor-in-Chief

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
[@RashionalThts](https://www.instagram.com/RashionalThts)



So what's your story? Better yet, what's your super power?

I'm not used to telling my story because I'm typically the one asking the questions and exploring the many layers that make up a person or situation.

I like stories. I like to hear them, read them, watch them and write them. And whether the story is to inform, educate, inspire or explain, accuracy and clarity are a must. Other helpful aspects of storytelling are transparency and authenticity as well as descriptors that show rather than tell — and a dash of brevity for good measure.

When it comes to telling someone's personal story, I try to figure out what makes the person tick — what motivates him or her. And I love to dig deep enough to find the unique gift inside people that if set free could make the world around them a better place.

In fact if I could have a super power, then I would love for it to be exactly that — helping others find and harness their own super power.

It's important to me to always leave a place better than I found it, and I can think of no better way to do that than to encourage everyone I'm privileged to meet to be the best version of themselves.

God gifted each of us uniquely and we all have a part to play in this messy, exhausting journey called life. Some days take us down, no doubt, but on the other days we can pull deep from within to make up for lost time, push through the darkness and brighten the world around us.

In doing this it is important to keep our eyes on Jesus and

allow His strength to carry us. I don't know about you, but I can't seem to remember this lesson no matter how many times God demonstrates His power.

So often I want to attempt all that is in front of me in my own strength. Once I'm exhausted and finally willing to concede defeat, then I give it to God. That's when the cool stuff happens. Why I can't remember to start there instead of end there still baffles me.

I love Jesus and have dedicated my life to serving Him but so often that equates to me going and doing on my own rather

than sitting still at His feet and absorbing what He wants to share with me.

I love activity and being part of as many things as humanly possible but sometimes that means I fail to rest properly — and it always interrupts any attempt at exercise (of course, I'm not too sad about that one).

Problem solving and trouble shooting are fun for me. Helping others find peace within themselves and the frustrations surrounding them energizes me.

And brainstorming — I'm always ready to brainstorm.

I probably like it more than I should. In fact, it has gotten me in over my head a few times when I thought I was only helping a friend think through all the options. Come to find out, my friend took my animated assistance as volunteering to take care of the issue. Yikes!

Overall I am an eternal optimist saturated in idealism. Will we achieve all that my imagination might dream up? Most likely not.

But I have no doubt we will get much closer to the goal than we would have by deciding to settle for less than our best. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

Is it fair to be having this much fun? #tabtrouble team of Jennifer Rash, Debbie Campbell hope to see you soon

The first six weeks in my new role at *The Alabama Baptist* has been so much fun. In fact, we launched into our new schedule and style at *TAB* before the first of the year with a variety of experiences.

Along with all that goes with the holiday season, Debbie Campbell, *TAB*'s director of communications, and I (known as #tabtrouble) burned up the roads in December before taking a break for Christmas.

We made our way to Saraland and University of Mobile, Daphne to stop by Eastern Shore Baptist Church and Phenix City to be part of Summerville Baptist Church's senior adult event.

We also found our way to various places in the Birmingham area, at the State Board of Mis-



sions facility in Prattville and in the middle of the 15th annual Rock Run Country Christmas Parade in Cherokee County.

Debbie and I experienced firsthand how the parade route of a little more than a mile shuts down County Road 29 near Piedmont for several hours while roughly 175 floats make their way from Rock Run Baptist Church to Union

Grove Methodist Church. And how a small congregation of Baptists warms the hearts of hundreds of people with an afternoon of Christmas spirit.

I won't spoil the rest of the story (coming later this year), but the photo shown here might give you an idea of how much fun we had that day.

January offered an equal amount of excitement with a kickoff transition retreat time for our staff at FBC Birmingham and visits to Bibb and Carey associations.

We also ended up at Crossroads Community Church, Elmore; Dalraida Baptist, Montgomery; Lindsay Lane Baptist, Athens; Calvary Baptist, Scottsboro; and Gardendale FBC on Feb. 7.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

Racial Reconciliation Sunday is Feb. 10

God's Word calls us to confront the horrible sin of racism. We know that slavery was once defended on the basis of biblical injunctions. For many decades, segregation was regarded as a divinely appointed way of life.

We dare not forget this history, for it continues to shape our attitudes and actions in ways that are sometimes hidden from our own conscious awareness.

The late James M. Washington wrote that "demons thrive best in the dark intervals of human history." True healing and reconciliation will begin only when we are able to identify and exorcize the demons that hang like vampires on our own

souls. The transforming gospel of Jesus Christ is essential to racial reconciliation.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has both a propositional and an incarnational dimension: "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14, NIV). For too long, Christians have emphasized one aspect of the gospel to the exclusion of the other.

Sometimes we have preached an exclusively "other-worldly" message, a pie-in-the sky theology concerned only with heaven, the world beyond, and privatized religious experience, to the neglect of the real rough-and-tumble realities of the world here and now.

Others have reduced the gospel to

a "this worldly" program of political and social concerns. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," Paul said (2 Cor. 4:5). We do this because we believe that the brokenness of the human condition is so severe, the alienation so deep, that only the sovereign grace and transcendent power of God revealed in Jesus Christ can bring real healing and restoration.

Of course, racial reconciliation in our society cannot be limited to church activities and words from the pulpit. It must extend to our schools, courts and prisons; it has social, political and economic implications that require a reordering of national priorities and cultural mores.

But we believe that little of lasting value on these fronts will take place until the church of Jesus Christ begins to live out the meaning of the message it proclaims: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself ... entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ ... We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:19–20, NRSV).

EDITOR'S NOTE — Adapted from "A Mighty Long Journey: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation," edited by Timothy George and Robert Smith Jr., both of whom will speak at Samford University's upcoming conference on racial reconciliation Feb. 12–13 (see article, page 14).

Letters to the Editor

Sometimes you don't appreciate what you have until you lose it. This could be true of our local LifeWay Christian Stores.

It has been my privilege to be a frequent customer of our local LifeWay stores. Since last fall, I have also had the joy of serving in a part-time job in the Hoover location.

LifeWay stores are more than a place to get a Christian book or gift; they are places where ministry happens every day. I have seen people who are hurting find a needed resource, a listening ear and a prayer-filled voice.

Christian bookstores, as well as secular bookstores, have had a hard time surviving against the growth of internet-based resources and online sales. LifeWay has worked hard to stay viable, but the challenge is significant.

Now is the time for the Christian community and especially our Southern Baptist churches to support LifeWay. If more believers would make it a point to stop by and purchase a needed item, it could make a huge difference.

Pastor Steve Potts
Westwood Baptist Church
Birmingham, Ala.

We must do our best every day to help [our children] know God more clearly, to love God more dearly and to serve God more wholeheartedly.

Christian Phan
Author of *Basic Theology for Children*, available for free download at www.abcwa.org/resources

[New Mexico's proposed assisted suicide bill] is really sad. This is a very devastating bill to the sanctity of life and the teachings of Scripture.

Jay McCollum
Chairman of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico's Christian Life Committee

Slavery still exists. All of those girls are in this situation because of something that has happened in their life in the past. No little girl grows up and says, 'I want to be a prostitute when I grow up.'

Shawn Wood
4Sarah, Inc. volunteer

God has called us to do more and to be more at all ages and stages of life for His Glory.

Larry Hyche
Associate for men's ministry, SBOM
www.alabamamen.org

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“What are you doing to increase your abilities and use them for the good of others?”

GEORGE YATES

Church health strategist, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM)

There is a crucial and subtle difference between a faith-oriented approach to teaching Bible (“This is what you should know and this is what you should believe”) and a literacy-based intellectual and academic approach (“This is what you should know about because this is part of your literary inheritance”).

Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin
“We need more biblical literacy in America” (RNS)

When our children fail in the area of technology, we need to welcome them like Jesus. If we tear into them, if we tell them how awful that was, how disgusting that was, how terrible they were for doing it — if we’re harsh, do you think they’re ever coming to us again when they

fail? So when our children fail, we welcome them. We teach them the Gospel and we help them to walk in repentance.

Brian Jennings
Middle school pastor
FBC Woodstock, Ga.

This [podcast — “Evangelism with Johnny Hunt”] is another hook in the water of lostness to remind us, inspire us, instruct us and convince us that if the evangelistic spirit is to return, it’s up to us.

Johnny Hunt
Senior vice president
of evangelism and leadership,
North American Mission Board

If I’ve been given any privilege in whatever situation, I’m going to le-

verage that not for self but leverage it to lift others up.

J.D. Greear
President, SBC

When you focus on someone else for a few moments, long enough to come up with something nice to do for them, you get outside your own head and refocus your thoughts onto another person’s needs. Bringing them a moment of joy can be contagious. A word of encouragement, a compliment, a cup of coffee, or even a small gift will go a long way to make someone else’s day. After all, you never know how much that person may have needed that small bit of encouragement.

Natalie Cone
www.nataliecone.com



Photo by Pat Musselwhite

Lonette Berg is the executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC).

Stories are important

Have you ever told a story that started something like this: When I was your age...? Perhaps it was a little exaggerated for emphasis: *When I was your age, I had to walk to school, 7 miles, with no shoes, in the snow, uphill there and back!*

If you haven’t told a story like this, maybe you have heard one. We often tell stories of our personal and family experiences to preserve our family history, pass along information and provide encouragement and support.

But how often do we preserve and share our faith stories? The Bible calls us to remember and retell the stories of God’s action and faithfulness. The stories of God’s work in our lives and in the lives of our churches are a continuation of His grand story of love and faithfulness. They deserve to be told well and often.

Through audio and video recordings, by writing them down and by telling them to others, God can use our testimonies — our faith stories — to transform lives, to encourage those who are struggling and to bring joy.

The Historical Commission would love to help you be a good steward of your faith stories. Let’s take care of the precious stories God has given us.

—Lonette Berg

From the *Twitterverse*

@M_Y_Emerson

Pro-life advocates believe that taking another’s life, no matter how small, is out of the question in every circumstance. In this view there is a morally significant difference (between) taking another’s life and allowing death to happen by refraining from taking that life.

@jerryvines

Attended Bailey Smith’s memorial service today. Really a celebration service. Thankful for such a mighty preacher and soul winner. “He that winneth souls is wise.”

@DarylMolyneaux

I have always claimed I would rather burn out than rust out ... only to come to discover that both are equally devastating/destructive. Living a well rounded life that strives for spiritual, mental, physi-

cal, emotional and social health is what truly honors the Lord.

@BGEA

Prayer for the day:
Even my handicaps can be used by You, Lord Jesus. Like the Apostle Paul, let me rise above them for Your glory. #amen

@scottdawson

The hardest part of faith is trusting when you don’t see, walking when you don’t know and resting when you don’t feel like it. Faith isn’t a fairy tale wishing on a star, but a steadfast assurance in God’s Word. I may trust a few individuals, but my faith rests only in Christ.

@D_B_Harrison

In 1619, the first Africans were brought ashore as slaves in James-

town, Virginia. Four hundred years later, in 2019, in Virginia, human beings, though unborn, are still being regarded as property under the guise that they possess no inherent value either from God or to society.

@Tedashii

Note to self: Don’t look back — you’re not going that way.

@sherriburgess

“I am my own worst enemy, and though I am the problem, I am not the solution.” —Rick Burgess

@ValleydaleSBC

There are days when being a parent can feel impossible. Redeem some time spent on social media today and spend the next minute praying for the parents in our church. It’s always a good time to pray.

'Free indeed'

Inmate seminary program brings Christ behind prison walls in Bibb County

By Martha Simmons
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

There's a God Squad living behind bars and concertina wire at Bibb County Correctional Facility.

Wearing starched prison whites stenciled with their surnames are 10 men who recently graduated from Alabama's first prison seminary program — the Birmingham Theological Seminary (BTS) Prison Initiative — and another 11 students enrolled in the second class.

Their goal is simple: To bring Christ behind the walls of cinder-block and steel and to offer His healing touch to the broken men serving time there.

Depending on whether they enter the course with a qualifying bachelor's degree, inmates successfully completing their 2-year studies can earn either a master of arts or a certificate in biblical studies, said Thad James Jr., BTS vice president. Those achieving a master's degree do about twice the work that the certificate students do, but the 2-year program is rigorous for both, taught by the same BTS professors who instruct free-world seminarians.

The seminary credentials don't make a whit of difference in how



Photo by Martha Simmons

Birmingham Theological Seminary professor Richard Trucks teaches the New Testament to students in Cohort 2, the second prison seminary class at Bibb County Correctional Facility.

long the inmates' sentences are, however.

"They won't get something put into their jacket that will help them be considered for early parole," James said. Rather, they want to study the word of God in order to set

their own souls free and be trained to minister to others. "He who has the Son is free indeed," James said, referencing John 8:36.

In fact, inmates accepted into the program must have at least 7 years left to serve on their sentences in order to complete the 2-year seminary program and serve another 5 years in ministry. Some of them even plan to return to prison ministry once they have completed their sentences.

James expressed deep gratitude to Alabama Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn for initiating the program and remaining supportive. The program receives no state dollars, however. It is funded entirely through faith-based donations, with Briarwood Presbyterian Church, which serves as BTS headquarters, contributing substantially

to the \$50,000 per year cost to equip students and classrooms with books, computers and the like, and to pay the adjunct professors who teach the inmates each weekday in the prison chapel.

Plans are in the works to expand the program's reach beyond Bibb County Correctional. Each seminary graduate has drawn a partner and there are plans to "send them out two by two," James said, transferring them into other state prisons so they can minister to inmates

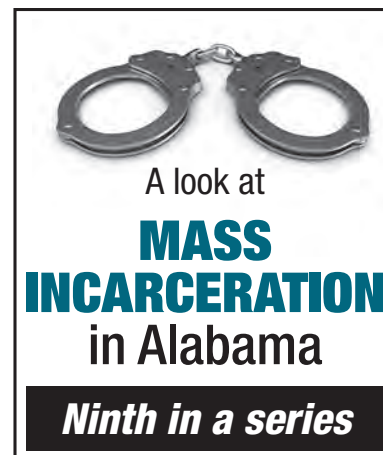
there. But such things take time. Meanwhile, their ministry bears fruit behind the walls of the Brent prison.

In addition to serving as teaching assistants and mentoring to current BTS students, the graduates minister to the general population by providing Bible studies, doing open-air preaching in the prison yard and



Photo by Martha Simmons

Marvin Hancock (foreground) hopes to extend God's reach by taking what he's learned in seminary out to thousands of other prisoners.



providing one-on-one discipleship opportunities with other inmates. They have rescued fellow inmates from violence, sat up with inmates overdosing on drugs and even paid off a debt owed by one prisoner to another, telling the debtor, “Like Christ paid the ransom for us, we paid the ransom for you,” James said.

Being the first such class comes with extra responsibility, the inmates recognize.

“All eyes are on us,” said Michael Morgan, emphasizing that the seminary students and graduates must demonstrate fundamental transformation of themselves if they are to be believed and emulated by others. “If you don’t change, you’re doomed to repeat. You have to heal from within. You have to want it in here,” he said, placing his hand on his heart. “It’s got to be real.”

Learning to trust

Trust comes slowly, especially in prison, but both fellow inmates and prison officials are coming to trust that the seminary graduates are, as teaching assistant Russell Booth said, “living for and as Christ.” Their influence is felt in the peaceful environment in their dorms, and their positive influence on other inmates.

John Tolbert was, he said, “tore up from the floor up” when he started doing time. However, at some point he decided it was time for him to start serving others.

“I thank God for using us to minister to the people in this campus and to eventually go out into other campuses,” he said.

Tolbert said seminary taught him four keys to successful living that he wants to share with his fellow inmates:

- ▶ Reject passivity
- ▶ Accept responsibility
- ▶ Lead courageously
- ▶ Invest eternally

“That’s what we’ve been really called to do,” Tolbert said. “Pour into them what was poured into us in the seminary.”

HOW TO HELP

Volunteers and donations from other churches and denominations are needed to support and expand the BTS Prison Initiative. Anyone interested in donating or becoming involved may contact James at tjames@briarwood.org or 205-776-5386.

In their own words

Inmate seminary students talk about their spiritual journey

By **Martha Simmons**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Here’s what the inmates in the Birmingham Theological Seminary Prison Initiative at Bibb County Correctional have to say about their walk with God while behind bars and what they want people in the free world to know.

Why they study the Word

“When I first came to prison I didn’t know myself. The gospel of Jesus Christ saved my life. I now have a burning desire to become a minister.”

—Victor Allen

“I’ve known Jesus Christ as my personal savior since childhood. But I had a lot of questions. I wanted a deeper understanding. I’m seeking a higher theology so that I can lead others in the right direction and have the knowledge to do that with as little error as possible.”

— Ben McCool

“I wanted to change myself to help others younger than me to do the right thing. I’ve influenced younger guys to do the wrong thing. Now is my chance to change that.”

— Cornell Nobles

“I was a believer in the street, but I wasn’t rooted in God. This is my opportunity to get rooted, to get grounded in the faith. This prison environment ... whew! It’s difficult. But it’s not impossible in Christ.”

— Herbert Oliphant

“I know we’ve hurt people on the outside but we’re hurting too. Those hurts need to be healed. We need that restoration.”

— Unis Parker



Photo by Martha Simmons

Birmingham Theological Seminary Vice President Thad James Jr. chats with inmate Patrick Johnson, a graduate of the first seminary class who now serves as a teaching assistant for the second class.

What people of faith should know

“I want to be a positive leader in my community and give back to my neighborhood. When we get out a lot of us will have to mend relationships. These guys here in the seminary program are my brothers. We’re going to need that (same kind of brotherhood) when we get out.”

— Patrick Johnson

“I had a solid faith before I got here, but I let Christ down. Prison can be a pretty hopeless place. I want to be someone people could look to for a solid hope in Christ.”

— Emmanuel Yarbrough

“Love and compassion are things I never saw on the street or when I was a prisoner in jail. Now I think

of the song, ‘They know me by my number, but Jesus knows my name.’”

— Kenneth Skelton

“God created us to live in community. When you isolate us in prison, there’s a ripple effect in our families and in the community. Be patient. Real change takes time. Have hope for us.”

— Unis Parker

“I had to lose everything I had before God could touch me. I hope people can judge me in good faith and let me build up accountability and responsibility. All believers are called to have acceptance of people. In God and Christ all things are possible and people do change.”

— Michael Morgan

“We want believers to not judge us from our past sins but consider who we are now. We serve a God who can redeem all people, not just some.”

Wardell McClendon



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

A CALL TO CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Last fall, I received a call from State Missionary Mike Jackson asking if I would consider returning to the State Board of Missions to work in the area of church revitalization. I prayed and sought godly counsel as I wrestled with this decision. After all, I loved the pastorate and I loved the church I was pastoring. However, I was well aware of the great need for church revitalization across our denomination. Ultimately, I felt this was something of a "Macedonian Call" in my own life.

By Daniel Wilson
State Missionary



The first question I had to answer was this: "What is church revitalization?" What do we mean when we say that a church needs to be revitalized? In Webster's Dictionary, in the definition of the word "revitalization" was the word "revival." When we talk about a church needing to be revitalized, we are literally talking about a church needing revival!

Ezekiel 37 is perhaps the clearest demonstration of God's reviving power in all of the Bible. God takes Elijah out to a valley full of dry bones and asks, "Can these bones live?" Elijah answers, "O Lord God, You know."

Elijah was saying only God knows if the bones can live again, because only He can cause the bones to live again. Whether we are talking about dry bones coming alive or a church being revived, it has to be the work of God.

But how does God do it? Ezekiel 37:4 says, "O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." Then, verse 9 says the breath of God blew upon the bones. In other words, the dry bones were revived by God's Word and the breath of God's Spirit. The foundation for church revitalization is the same. Revitalization comes only from the reviving power of God's Word and God's Spirit.

I am honored and excited to be working with church revitalization at the State Board of Missions. But to put it more plainly, I am excited to be praying and working for revival to come to our churches across our state.

One more thing: I'd love to meet you at the **CHURCH REVITALIZATION/REPLANT CONFERENCE** on Monday, February 25, at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham. Mark Clifton is speaking, and we're giving away 300 copies of his book, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches*. Then plan to stay for the State Evangelism Conference that starts that evening in the same location.

Mark Clifton



To register for the Church Revitalization/Replant Conference, please visit alsbom.org/crconference. For more information about church revitalization among Alabama Baptists, please contact State Missionary Daniel Wilson (lead church health strategist) at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 343, or (334) 613-2343, dwilson@alsbom.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Event and location is followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613-2 + the extension, or visit alsbom.org.

FEBRUARY

- 10 **Racial Reconciliation Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 11-17 **Focus on WMU Week**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 12 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 14 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Tennessee River Baptist Assoc. Office, Scottsboro, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 15-16 **Parish Nurse Training I**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 16 **Children's Ministry Day**, Trish Jackson, ext. 224
- 17 **Hunger Sunday**, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 283
- 19 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Northport BC, Northport, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 21 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Calhoun Baptist Association Office, Anniston, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 21-23 **Alabama Church Planting Basics**, Southeast Alabama Baptist Association Office, Dothan, Lamar Duke, ext. 332
- 22-23 **Pursue Conference**, Eastmont, Montgomery, Mike Nuss, ext. 276
- 22-23 **Together at the Springs**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 23 **Renew...a day away with friends**, NorthPark, Trussville, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 25 **Church Revitalization/Replant Conference**, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham, Daniel Wilson, ext. 343
- 25 **Pastors and Wives Banquet**, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham, Lori McGough, ext. 245
- 25-26 **State Evangelism Conference**, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham, Amy Nelson, ext. 258
- 26 **Ministers' Wives Luncheon**, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 28 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Andalusia First, Linda Hicks, ext. 263

MARCH

- 1-2 **COMPLETE... A gathering for teen girls**, Birmingham First, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 1-3 **Children's Honor Choir Tour**, Panama City, Florida & Enterprise, Alabama, Karen Gosselin, ext. 318
- 8-10 **Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**, Coosada BC, Coosada, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311
- 3-10 **Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering**, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 7 **Uplink on the Road**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 7-8 **Public Safety Chaplaincy Training**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 8 **Uplink on the Road**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 8-10 **Parish Nurse Training II**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 9 **State Disaster Relief Admin Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 9 **State Disaster Relief Child Care Training**, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 9 **State Disaster Relief Communications Training**, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 10 **Daylight Saving Time Begins**
- 10-13 **Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Conference**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 12 **2019 Singin'**, Eastmont, Montgomery, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 17 **Substance Abuse Prevention Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 21-23 **Spanish Alabama Church Planting Basics**, Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association, Northport, Lamar Duke, ext. 332
- 22-23 **Adventure Weekend**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 26 **Ministry Safe Workshop**, Heritage, Montgomery, Lee Wright, ext. 241, or Linda Hicks, ext. 263

APRIL

- 4-6 **State Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 5 **State Disaster Relief Cleanup/Recovery Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 5-6 **State Disaster Relief Mass Feeding Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 5-6 **State Disaster Relief Chainsaw Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 5-6 **Mom & Me Spring Fling**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8-9 **Church Planter Assessment Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Lamar Duke, ext. 332, or Lynn Graham, ext. 244
- 8-10 **Fulfill (formerly Senior Adult Retreat)**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 13 **State Disaster Relief Shower & Laundry Unit Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267

Smartphone Savvy

When it comes to children's use of technology, adults set the example

By Michael Bozeman
M.A.C.E., MA, LPC
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Parents seem to have a love-hate relationship with the internet. It can be an amazing tool that helps children learn, and let's face it, it also can be a great "babysitter" at times.

Tips for Parents

▶ Be willing to educate yourself on things you do not know. Parents are often at a disadvantage in the technology arena, as their kids have grown up in a more technologically advanced environment.

▶ Set house rules with your child's help and enforce them at any cost.

▶ Teach your children how to protect their privacy when they are online. This will probably be something parents will have to learn themselves.

▶ Monitor your own social media, making sure you are not setting a double standard for your child.

▶ Keep computers in locations in the home that are easily monitored.

▶ Seek out software that will help you in your fight to keep your children safe online. (Michael Bozeman)

Although having the internet readily available on most devices can be convenient, it is crucial that parents understand how dangerous it can be when they are not vigilant to monitor their children's activities. Understanding the risk is key. So is educating yourself to the ever-changing climate of technology.

Talk with your kids about what you expect from them when it comes to how to use the internet in a safe and appropriate way.

Keep control

Handing your child a device that has internet potential without teaching them the best ways for them to be safe is setting them up for failure. All too often parents are shocked when they find out how their children are utilizing their devices and admit they have never had conversations with their kids concerning their expectations for using devices.

Make sure you keep control when it comes to the way the internet is filtered in your house. Parents can purchase great programs that will allow them to control things like time management on the internet, sites that are available to the child and times of day the child can be on the internet.

Parents need to be consistent in checking in with their children on how they are utilizing the internet. Those who take a proactive approach to all things concerning the



Pixabay

internet help promote healthy online behavior in their kids and help protect them from the dangers of the internet.

When setting boundaries for screen time, allow your kids to have a voice. This will help your child feel part of the process and will make it much more manageable when you have to correct behavior.

Parents also need to lead their family in using social media appropriately.

Parents should set the standards on what is appropriate to post on social media sites.

The truth is that something posted on any social media site has the potential to reach not just those people you want to reach but also many

people you never intended to reach.

With that in mind parents always need to be mindful about what they are posting and tagging their children in across all social media platforms.

For additional Faith & Family resources on protecting children in an age of technology visit www.thealabamabaptist.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Faith & Family is a monthly look at important spiritual, cultural and relational issues facing today's families.

For more articles on contemporary topics like these, go to PathwaysProfessional.org/blog.

Michael Bozeman is a Licensed Professional Counselor serving in central and northeast Alabama for Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) signs Reproductive Health Act (RHA) into law Jan. 22, legalizing abortion until birth for the mother's 'health,' which is not defined.

Pray for the Unborn



Flickr photo from Gov. Cuomo's press office

7 ways to pray for the nation's unborn children as states expand abortion laws

By Denise George
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The lives of our nation's unborn children are now at an even greater risk since Jan. 22 when Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law New York's new Reproductive Health Act.

State senator Liz Krueger, the bill's enthusiastic sponsor, told the cheering New York crowds: "Today is just another of many very good days to come for democracy in the state of New York."

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist

Convention (SBC), asked: "Who could cheer the potential to stop the beating hearts of children who are in some cases — just weeks away from birth?"

The bill's passage marks another sad chapter for Christians who value human life and who believe the psalmist's words: "For you [God] created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb ... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Ps. 139:13, 16).

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade* on Jan. 22, 1973, giving a woman legal right to an abortion, more than 60 million unborn children have been aborted. In just 46 years more unborn human beings have been destroyed than the total current population of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and five other southeastern states combined.

'Right to life'

Some wonder if other states will follow New York's example and also opt for more lenient abortion laws. Fortunately some states, like Alabama, are becoming stricter with abortion policies.

In fact Alabama was the first state in the nation to enshrine what opponents call a fetal "personhood clause" in its constitution, recognizing "the rights of unborn chil-

dren, including the right to life."

Almost 60 percent of Alabama voters supported this amendment.

Several years ago the Alabama Legislature further affirmed unborn human life when it passed a capital

punishment update making it a death penalty offense to kill a pregnant woman because it meant two persons were killed.

"Person" is defined by Alabama law as "a human being, including an unborn child in utero at any stage

of development, regardless of viability."

In 2000, Alabama had 13 clinics that regularly provided surgical and medical abortions.

Only three abortion clinics now remain in the state, located in Huntsville, Tuscaloosa and Montgomery.

How can Alabama Christians and churches address the increasing atrocity of abortion?

They can do many things, including voice an opinion; speak up for the rights of the unborn; support pro-life agencies, organizations and churches that minister to women and families; and pray.

Here are seven distinct ways to pray for the nation's unborn children:

1. Pray for the United States, its leaders and its lawmakers. Pray for the nation's pro-life advocates as

they continue their fight against cruel abortion laws. Pray that they may be heard and that their voices will reach the ears of the nation, helping to decrease the number of abortions.

2. Pray for pro-life organizations, agencies and clinics that work with pregnant women, encouraging and helping them to bring unborn babies to term.

Increase efforts

3. Pray for Alabama's churches to increase their efforts in ministries to unwed, teenaged, impoverished and other mothers who may be considering abortion.

4. Pray for Alabama's families to be strong, nurturing supporters to the young pregnant women in their care. Dr. Alveda King calls abortion "an attack on the family and the humanity that unites us all."

5. Pray that mothers who are tempted to end their unplanned pregnancies will consider adoption instead of abor-

tion. Each year 9,000 women in Alabama face an unplanned pregnancy. Many have no emotional, medical or financial support to carry their babies to term.

6. Pray for unborn babies, nestled in their mothers' wombs, that they may be saved and granted the basic human rights of life.

7. Pray for women who have chosen to undergo abortions in the past. Pray for their relationship with God, His forgiveness and their future peace. 🙏

Pray for unborn babies, nestled in their mother's wombs, that they may be saved and granted the basic human rights of life.

For information on pro-life efforts in your community, visit www.chooselifealabama.org.

NY's new abortion law

New York's recently passed Reproductive Health Act (RHA):

- ▶ Allows abortions to take place after the previous 24-week limit if the baby will not survive the birth or if necessary to protect the mother's life or health. Mother's "health" is not defined.

- ▶ Decriminalizes abortion by regulating it under the public health law, not penal law.

- ▶ Expands who can perform the abortion procedure from beyond just physicians to any licensed, certified or authorized health care practitioner. (Denise George)



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Biblical Imagery

The Bible as a Hammer

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

Jeremiah 23:29 combines two common images for God's word: fire and hammer. It says, "Is not my word like a fire?" says the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Theology 101 considered the first of these images several weeks ago. This week the focus is on the second of these images: a hammer.

Whatever hammer blows resounded from the carpenter shop in Nazareth could not hold a candle to the resounding hammering of divine truth as Christ spoke. Such was the impact of His words that even His enemies had to acknowledge, "No man ever spoke like this man" (John 7:46). His words still carry a hammer-like power as they have been extended through the four Gospels.

Uncompromising truth

How then is the whole Bible as God's word like a hammer? A hammer is a strong image for the Bible. Having been tempered in the fire the head of a hammer possesses uncommon strength. As God reminded Jeremiah, a hammer "breaks the rock in pieces." A hammer can crack a rock as well as drive a spike or nail. It can tear down what is old or useless.

That which makes the Bible strong like a hammer is its uncompromising and pure truth. Divine truth is powerful. It crushes all pretenses to truth that might be espoused by human

reasoning or resisted by stubborn unbelief. Sinners do not so much as break divine commandments as does divine truth break hardened sinners.

God's word is hammer-like in that it is not only mighty to condemn but also mighty in building up. The good news of redeeming love has been breaking through hardened hearts for centuries by driving saving truth deep into the hearts of repentant sinners.

Thus the Bible as a hammer is both an instrument of destruction but also one of construction. Divine truth is indeed God's master tool for building a life that is meaningful now and endures for eternity. God's word is His power for building us up here, as well as securing us in His presence forever.

Must be put to use

We do well to note that a hammer is a means to an end. To be effective it must be taken from the toolbox and put to use. The Bible simply displayed on a table or shelf cannot do its hammering work. It must be taken in hand, opened, read and put into practice. Such is our challenge in the course of this New Year. ☞

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.



Stonecyphers encourage ongoing missions support

(continued from page 1)

For a while, the couple's role also included researching and engaging the area's unreached people groups — about 200 groups in total.

Then in 2011 the couple moved to Niger, where only 2 percent of the population claimed to follow Christ.

Both countries had their challenges and their blessings, Mike said.

He remembers one struggle in Nigeria — a day when everything that could go wrong did.

"The Baptist high school was devastated by a windstorm, and Becky went into early labor with John David," Mike said. "I had to stay there at the school, and she had to go down country to the hospital."

In the end the school was rebuilt, and John David was born healthy.

"In everything God was always more than faithful," Mike said.

Captivated by Christ

During the years in Nigeria the Stonecyphers also faced the reality of occasional fighting between groups in the area. And soon after arriving in Niger the new school where they were working flooded, forcing them to find a place for classes to meet for the rest of the year.

But even so God provided and people heard the gospel.

"As I think back on our time in

Africa, I see faces," Mike said. "I see the faces of people who were captivated by and caught up by Christ and changed and transformed in beautiful ways so that they became lights in the world that are helping other people experience that same transformation."

Vince Whittington, retired pastor of First, Glencoe, said working alongside the Stonecyphers on a missions trip to Nigeria in 2004 was the "highlight missions experience" of his life.

"Mike and Becky Stonecypher rank high on the list of God's servants in my estimation,"

he said. "They have been faithful, devoted, dedicated, persevering, trusting servants of the Lord."

Mike says he's just grateful for God's faithfulness and for the support of Alabama Baptists who over the years prayed, visited on missions trips and gave faithfully through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program, which fund the IMB's missionary force.

"Southern Baptists and Alabama Baptists have made it possible for us to fulfill a dream that God gave us for our lives and it's been a most wonderful life," he said. "We just want to say 'thank you' and encourage people to keep on keeping on with supporting the work of missionaries around the world." ☞

To contact the Stonecyphers about speaking at your church, email them at stoneymike517@gmail.com.



Photo courtesy of the Stonecyphers

Vince Whittington (left), retired pastor of FBC Glencoe, speaks at the reception honoring Mike (right) and Becky Stonecypher as they retired in 2018 from long careers of missionary service with the IMB in Nigeria and Niger.

MAKING A LASTING IMPACT

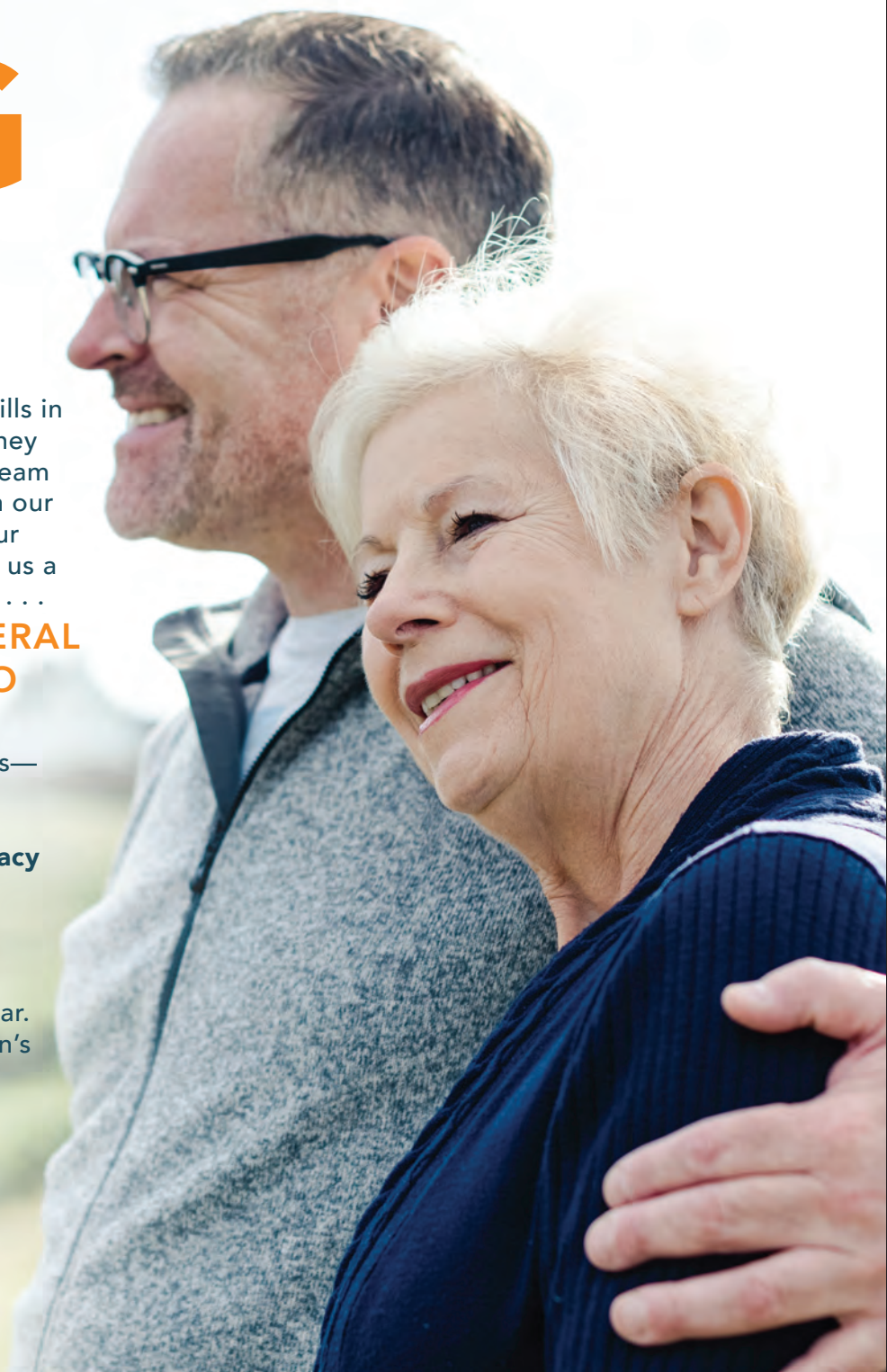
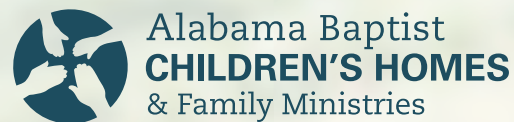
For years, Kerry and Tarrie Love discussed the need to have wills in place, but they didn't seem to have an avenue to do so until they learned about PhilanthroCorp. They shared, "We found their team of experts to be so great to work with! They were patient with our lack of knowledge, and made sure that they explained all of our options . . . Going through the estate planning process taught us a lot. We learned a considerable amount about charitable trusts . . .

WE KNEW WE WANTED TO GIVE TO SEVERAL CHARITIES UPON OUR DEATHS, BUT ALSO WANTED TO PROVIDE FOR OUR FAMILY.

PhilanthroCorp helped us create a great plan that fit our needs—something that we would not have thought to do, otherwise."

With help from PhilanthroCorp, you can ensure that the legacy you leave behind benefits the ones you love and the causes you care about with 100% certainty. Starting with a phone interview, they will guide you through a simple process resulting in wills and estate documents that reflect your values and leave a lasting impact on loved ones and charities you hold dear. Their services are provided to you by Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, free of charge.

To learn more, call Susan Wylie from PhilanthroCorp at (719) 955-2125, or text "legacy" to (719) 917-0045 to request a time for PhilanthroCorp to call you.



GRACE gifts

Memorials are listed below (the name of the deceased is bolded).

- Bice, Charles, Pell City:** Mary Ann Short
- Bice, Doris, Mountain Brook:** Mary Ann Short
- Bridges, Mike, Bessemer:** Concord BC of Bessemer
- Colbert, Charles, Monroeville:** Eastwood BC of Monroeville
- Dinnen, Martha, S. Florida:** Mt. Springs BC of Tusculumbia
- Fuller, Bill S., Jr., Birmingham:** Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
- Harris, Carole W., Birmingham:** Fred & Patricia Hollis
- Knight, Terrell, Alpharetta, GA:** Mary Ann Short
- McKinley, Mr. Hollie, Franklin:** Eureka BC of Franklin
- Maness, Moody, Sr., Monroeville:** Eureka BC of Franklin
- Salter, John & Katherine, Bay Minette:** Faye & Wayne Parker
- Sanders, Brooks, Birmingham:** Marjorie Kay Nix, Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
- Short, Donald, Norcross, GA:** Mary Ann Short

- Sligh, H.A., Jr., Bessemer:** Concord BC of Bessemer
- Stokes, Ms. Wynell Glass, Linden:** Providence BC of Gallion
- Taylor, Jean, Jackson:** Forest Avenue BC of Jackson, Ladies SS Class of Forest Avenue BC
- Verner, Marjorie, Fairhope:** Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
- Whitlow, James Thomas, Opelika:** Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
- Wray, Bette C., Butler:** Mr. & Mrs. James D. Evans

Honors are listed below (the name of the honored is bolded).

- Abbott, Bro. Bill & Susan, Southside:** Zoe Benefield
- Gibson, J.D. Family, Butler:** Sarah A. Gibson
- Gibson, Joe & Teresa, Butler:** Sarah A. Gibson
- Gibson, Samuel G., Jr., Berea, KY:** Sarah A. Gibson
- Hall, Joe & Marjorie, Gadsden:** Zoe Benefield
- Lowery, Bob & Anne, Gadsden:** Zoe Benefield
- Sharpless, Carlton, Atmore:** Brooks Memorial BC of Atmore Rebekah SS Class
- Smith, Charles & Polly, Gadsden:** Zoe Benefield

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who made a Grace Gift to Alabama Baptist Children's Homes. To learn more about Grace Gifts or how to make one, visit alabamachild.org/give or call 205.982.1112.

Leading the way

Small church sets college students free to dream, sees ministry grow

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Thomas Fletcher said he knew something was different about First Baptist Church, Livingston, from the Sunday he preached in view of a call.

“They told me I was going to meet with the deacons, the staff and the search committee — and also the college students,” Fletcher said.

It was then he learned that the small church, in Bigbee Baptist Association, located about a mile from the University of West Alabama (UWA), gets about a third of its congregation from college students.

Rebuilding

“We average 100 on Sundays, and probably 30 of those are college students,” said Fletcher, who became the church’s pastor in September 2017. “We lean heavily on them to help lead the church.”

It hasn’t always been that way though, Fletcher said. The church doesn’t have a college minister, and the year before Fletcher arrived, a lot of the college ministry’s leaders graduated.

That’s what it was like when

Stephanie Metzler came back for her sophomore year at UWA.

“It was a rebuilding year for us,” said Metzler, now a senior.

Brady Gaither agreed. When he first showed up at First, Livingston, only five college students were attending. Metzler was one of them.

“We knew we needed a revival around here,” he said. “So we started praying and God really began to work.”

The church’s college committee gave Metzler, Gaither and other student leaders the keys to the church and offered them the freedom to dream.

“That committee

has had such great dedication to the college ministry and really believed in what they do,” Fletcher said.

And with the committee’s support and blessing the students prayed for weeks about what to do.

They changed the name of their college ministry to The Awakening, named after the Great Awakening, the revival that swept through the country in the 1730s and 1740s.

Metzler said they wanted to see that kind of fresh wind sweep their town.

“We see our generation at the point where it’s got head knowledge of the gospel but not heart knowl-

For more information visit [facebook.com/TheAwakeningLivingston](https://www.facebook.com/TheAwakeningLivingston).



Photo by Brady Gaither

About 100 students from University of West Alabama enjoy a home-cooked meal and student-led worship each Wednesday night at FBC Livingston.

edge,” she said. “We feel like there’s a lot of people in our generation who are asleep to the power of the gospel. We want to see our small town wake up.”

So they prayed some more.

And the first Wednesday they kicked off The Awakening, 80 students showed up. Now they run about 100 on Wednesday nights for a meal cooked by church members followed by worship.

They also host an English class for international students. Gaither said he loves the diversity of the group.

“We have college students from all denominations and ethnicities,” he said. “We tell them, ‘We’re just here to tell you what Jesus is all about.’ We just want people to know the gospel, understand what they believe and back those beliefs up by reading the Bible.”

Gaither and others sometimes preach on Sundays. They help with worship and they teach the church’s Sunday School classes. And they help with missions projects, both around Livingston and overseas.

“They headed up our Operation Christmas Child this year and packed 700 boxes and took them to the collection site,” Fletcher said.

“They’re integral to our church.”

And Fletcher said he doesn’t mind giving those students a place to grow, then sending them out.

“We don’t anticipate more than 3 out of 100 to stay after they graduate, but you can really impact a lot of different places by how they become hungry for the

Word and ministry and reaching lost souls for Christ,” Fletcher said.

Try new things

Metzler said if a church is looking to grow its college ministry, it should be willing to try new things — but not be discouraged as they continue to be faithful where they are.

“There are seasons of growth and seasons of digging before the planting even comes, or before a harvest ever comes,” she said. “At First Baptist we had people who were faithful when there were only a few of us. That’s just how ministry is. Stay faithful.”

“They’ve got a lot of raw talent, and they’re ready to go to work for God.”

**Thomas Fletcher
Pastor
First Baptist Livingston**



Photo by Brady Gaither

The Awakening, the college ministry at FBC Livingston, is impacting local students and sending them out into the world to reach lost souls for Christ.



Photo courtesy of Mark Byrd

Living Faith Quartet (pictured above) hosted and sang at the first North Alabama Quartet Convention, a gathering featuring more than 20 gospel groups and more than 1,600 participants.

Quartet convention brings gospel groups together

More than 20 southern gospel groups sang and more than 1,600 people were present at the first ever North Alabama Quartet Convention on Jan. 18–19. Living Faith Quartet, which just entered its 25th year of ministry, hosted the convention held at Temple Baptist Church, Cullman.

The groups gathered not to put on shows but to worship and that's what they did, Mark Byrd, a member of Living Faith Quartet, said.

'Great success'

"We are thankful to say that the event was a great success," he said. "We are so grateful to Temple Baptist Church for sharing their wonderful facility with us,

the support of some great sponsors and a lot of wonderful volunteers."

Because of the success of this year planning for next year's North Alabama

The groups gathered not to put on shows but to worship and that's what they did.

Quartet Convention has already begun, and "with God's help it will be a very special time for everyone that is involved," Byrd said. "The event showcases so many different groups at one time making it helpful for churches looking to book groups for their services."

For more information about or to book Living Faith Quartet for a church or civic event call Mark Byrd at-256-303-0983, visit www.livingfaithquartet.com or email livingfaithquartet@gmail.com. (TAB)

Phil & Teresa Glisson
901-324-3459 or visit philglisson.org



It is a joy to work with pastors in revivals, special Sundays and other events.

Our desire is that the Lord's churches might be edified (Eph. 4:11-12).

If we can ever be of service to you, let us know. Have a blessed 2019.



TAB CLASSIFIEDS

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Vernon, Alabama, is searching for a senior pastor. Please submit your resumé to: office@vernonfirstbaptist.org.

PASTOR

Camellia Baptist Church, 201 Woodvale Rd, Prattville 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. Resumes with photo, may be mailed Attn. Pastor/Search. www.cbcprattville.org.

PASTOR

Young, energetic candidate needed to help small church grow in Marshall County. Seminary desired, but not required. Salary small, outside job needed. 3-bedroom parsonage, not utilities. Call Jeff at 256-582-1301 or e-mail butler.bob.120@att.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Wayside Baptist Church is looking for a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Chris Baker 2935 Campground Road Alexander City, AL 35010 or email to search4pastor@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP

Sisters Baptist Church is searching for a minister of worship. Sisters is a conservative Southern Baptist church in central Georgia. The position involves planning and leading worship services, as well as the other music ministries of the church. He will work closely with the pastor and other staff members. Resumes along with a cover letter may be sent to: SBC Search Committee, 1807 E. McCarty St., Sandersville, GA 31082 or office@sistersbaptist.org.

WORSHIP LEADER

Bethel Baptist Church, Dora, Alabama, is searching for either a full-time or part-time worship leader to lead blended worship services. Please email resumé to: secretary@bbc-dora.com, or mail resumé to: Music Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 7000 Bethel Road, Dora, AL 35062.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Hopewell Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational music minister. Send your resumé to: eedhart@yahoo.com or Hopewell Baptist, P.O. Box 423, Hanceville, AL 35077. ATTN: Ed Hart.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Anderson seeking bi-vocational

music minister. Please contact: Lindsey Dabbs, secretary, at 256-247-3871. Send resumé to Anderson FBC, P.O. Box 67, Anderson, AL 35610 or email fbcanderson@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Grandview Baptist Church in Anchorage, Alaska, seeks full-time, experienced minister of praise and worship. For more information please visit <http://www.gbcaak.org>.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Stowers Hill Baptist Church is currently accepting resumes for a bivocational music minister. If interested, please email resumé to stowershillbaptist@gmail.com or mail to 407 9th Avenue SW Attalla, AL 35954.

PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR

Beulah Baptist is seeking a part-time music director. Mail resumé to 5500 Lee Rd 270, Valley, AL 36854 or email to Ltodd3549@charter.net. For more information call 334-705-0538.

PART-TIME INTERIM WORSHIP LEADER

Seeking Part-Time Interim Music Worship Leader. Send resumé to jenny.russell@parkviewdeca-tur.org This is a paid position.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO STUDENTS

Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden, Alabama, is seeking an individual with experience to provide full-time leadership and ministry to students and student families. This person must be a self-starter, with strong organizational and administrative skills. He will work closely with the pastor and other staff members. Resumes may be sent to: Personnel Committee, Bellevue Baptist Church, 150 Nocalula Drive, Gadsden, AL 35904. Resumes may also be sent to: financebellevue@gmail.com.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR / YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Mount Zion Baptist Church is searching for a God-called associate pastor/youth and children's minister. This is a full-time position to lead our youth and children's ministries and to assist our Senior Pastor on an as needed basis. The preferred qualifications are: Formal academic degree and 3-5 years of experience in ministry to youth, children, and their parents. Please send your resume and references to Mount Zion Baptist Church 2427 Corner Road, Warrior, AL 35180 Attention: Dwayne Ehlers or you may email to mzbcyouth@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF OUTREACH & MISSIONS

FBC Vincent, Alabama, seeking part-time minister of outreach and missions. Will work with the pastor giving coordinating leadership to current mission endeavors. Design/organize/facilitate an outreach ministry to Vincent/Harpersville area. Minimum 20 hours per week. Send resumé to admin@fbcvincent.org.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

North Shelby Baptist Church, 4100 Belcher Drive Birmingham, AL 35242, is accepting resumé for the full-time position of business administrator. Responsibilities include overseeing the operations, maintenance and financial activities of the church. Candidates should have knowledge of church operations and physical facilities management as well as supervisory experience and education in business management. Qualified candidates can send their resumé to administrator@northshelbybaptist.org.

RESOURCES

MAKING HYMNS GREAT AGAIN

Life FM and the Blackwood Brothers Quartet have come together to promote and make hymns great again! Hi, I am Bob McClure founder of the Dove Awarded Life FM Radio Network, and a World War II Veteran US Navy, stationed in the South Pacific. I ended my service at the massive invasion of Okinawa in 1945 when the USA exploded the two atomic bombs over south Japan, which began the Atomic Era. By the way the Lord allowed me to build WWQK FM in Oak Ridge, TN (Knoxville area) where the two bombs were made called "Fat Boy" and "Little Man," and where the famous Oak Ridge Quartet originated. So I may be "Radio Active" Ha! Over the past seventy plus years I have seen a steady decline of use of hymns in the church. Billy Blackwood and the Blackwood Brothers Quartet have developed a program to promote the hymns during these last days (Rev 12:12). Do you want an event at your church? And at no cost to you? Email me - Bob@TheLifeFM.com.

TRAVEL/VACATION

MENTONE CABIN

In the woods atop Lookout Mountain. Approximately one mile from Mentone Village. All electric, wood burning fireplace and pet friendly. 4 nights, 4 people for \$300. Call Don at 205-903-4223.

Someone You

Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett

Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Jettie Kirkpatrick

At 96, Jettie Kirkpatrick of Cottondale is a busy woman. At her church she serves as church clerk, secretary-treasurer and Sunday School records keeper. The influence her life of service has had through the years is evidenced by the name given to one of the church's buildings — the Jettie McKinley Kirkpatrick Christian Life Center.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION: Service

CHURCH NAME: Wildwood Baptist Church, Cottondale, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." (Ps. 19:14)



KIRKPATRICK

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts?

A: Serving wherever needed.

Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?

A: My aunt and uncle who raised me. We had lost my parents by the time I was 8 years old. My aunt and uncle raised us. They always carried us to church. And they always taught us to do what was right and to treat other people right.

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

A: I've been involved in church work since I was 13. I was teaching my age group in Sunday School. My uncle helped me prepare the lesson. It gave me responsibility at an early age. I've felt a responsibility to contribute something wherever I was.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: I've been asking for patience. I'm not always as patient as I should be.

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

A: You can't ever have too much (faith). You grow in it every day.

Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?

A: I love music. I love the old hymns. My favorite would be "Amazing Grace." His grace is amazing.

Q: Does your church have any special traditions that mean a lot to you? What are they?

A: We major on children. We have a couple of vans, and we pick up children on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. They look forward to coming. Their parents don't come to church. A number of them have become Christians because of the influence they (get) at church. ✝

Samford to host racial reconciliation conference

Samford University's Beeson Divinity School and the Institute of Anglican Studies at Beeson will host the Racial Reconciliation and the National Covenant conference at Samford in Birmingham on Feb. 12-13.

This event will bring Protestants, Catholics and Jews together to answer the question, How does thinking about God change the way we think about race?

The conference will be jointly sponsored with The Institute on Religion and Democracy based in Washington.

Topics addressed

Talks at the conference will address covenant and race in the Hebrew Scriptures, exile and return from slavery, white supremacy, Martin Luther King Jr.'s appeal to the national covenant and many other subjects.

Speakers include former gang member and Pentecostal minister Eugene Rivers, Seymour Institute executive director on black church

and policy studies Jacqueline Rivers, economist Glenn Loury, former civil rights leader Robert Woodson and activist Alveda King.

'Continuing racial tension'

Beeson's renowned professor of homiletics Robert Smith Jr. will preach "I Don't Want No Trouble at the River," based on Joshua 22:9-34.

"This country suffers from continuing racial tension. We are convinced that the tension cannot be resolved by politics alone because our racial divides have vital spiritual, moral and cultural dimensions," said Gerald McDermott, director of Beeson's Institute of Anglican Studies and organizer of the event. "Our hope is that this new approach will help bring repentance, forgiveness and healing."

To view a full schedule of conference topics, biographies of speakers and registration information visit beesondivinity.com/events/Racial-Reconciliation-National-Covenant. (Samford)

REFLECTIONS



SENIORSPIRIT EXPO

Sponsored by
BH
BURKE HARVEY LLC



Jerry Tracey
Keynote Speaker
Chief Meteorologist
WVTM NBC 13



Clarissa Kenty
Event Emcee
Media Personality and
Host of Online Show
Ladies Room



Peggy Keebler
Special Guest Speaker
NASM Certified
Personal Trainer
Owner, PK Fitness, LLC



Rebecca Turner,
RDN, CSSD
Special Guest Speaker
Author of *Mind Over Fork*
Radio Host & TV Personality

Featuring **Shades Mountain Air** acoustic band.

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL AGES!

Enjoy **educational workshops, guest speakers** and **special entertainment**.
Browse through the exhibition area of more than **60 + organizations** with resources
on senior activities, lifestyle, wellness and more.

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 16, 2019

Hyatt Regency Birmingham
The Wynfrey Hotel

9am to 4pm
SeniorSpiritExpo.com

Thank You To Our Sponsors:



Reliable
SIGN SERVICES

**DIGITAL
SIGNS**



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

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

www.reliablesigns.com
1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955

Hobby Lobby's founder to speak at UM

Hobby Lobby founder David Green will be the keynote speaker for the 14th University of Mobile (UM) Scholarship Banquet.

The annual event, which raises scholarship funds for University of Mobile students, will be held March 21.

The banquet will kick off at 6:30 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center in downtown Mobile.

The evening will include entertainment from the Alabama School of the Arts at UM and a silent auction, hosted by the University of Mobile Torch Society, to raise scholarship funds.

Green built retail giant

Hobby Lobby from a home framing business to a retail giant based in Oklahoma City.



David and Barbara Green

Hobby Lobby is the largest privately owned arts and crafts retailer in the world, with sales totaling more than \$5 billion in 2018.

Hobby Lobby employs approximately 35,000 company-wide and operates more than 800 stores in a

47-state area, opening about 50 stores each year.

"We believe it is by God's grace and provision that Hobby Lobby has endured. He has been faithful in the past; we trust Him for our future," Green says of the business.

Green is the author of two books, "More than a Hobby" and his most recent book "Giving it All Away ... And Getting It All Back Again: The Way of Living Generously."

This latest book shares some of Hobby Lobby's Supreme Court battle involving the Affordable Care Act but also the larger story of family legacy and the power of generosity.

Family legacy

Green and his wife Barbara have received many awards and are actively involved at their church as well as many national and international Christian ministries and charities.

For more information about the scholarship banquet or to purchase tickets go to umobile.edu/banquet or contact UM's advancement office at 251-442-2587 or advancement@umobile.edu. (UM)

Mending kids' hearts

It's what we do best. Our team of more than 250 pediatric professionals is recognized for its excellence in providing world-class cardiac care in an environment best suited to the needs of our patients. From tiny babies to teens, we care for Kyin Harris and every child like our own.

- 24 board-certified physicians and surgeons
- 458 cardiac surgeries performed in 2018
- More than 700 cardiac catheterization and electrophysiology procedures performed in 2018
- 94% survival rate for the 35 heart transplants performed 2015-2018
- 97.77% survival rate for all surgical patients in 2017 and 2018
- 20 private CVICU rooms, 16 private CCU rooms, 2 CV operating rooms and 2 cath labs

Learn how you can help.
Visit www.ChildrensAL.org/heart.



Children's
of Alabama®



UAB MEDICINE
PEDIATRICS

For Children's Financial Assistance Information, call 1.844.750.8950 or visit www.childrensal.org/financial-assistance

3 stories you should know



AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary (RNS)

Pakistan's Supreme Court has dismissed a petition by Islamists to overturn the acquittal of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman previously convicted of blasphemy, freeing her to leave the country and join her daughters in Canada. The Jan. 29 ruling was a win for Christians and other religious minorities in the Muslim-majority country.

The judgment led to protests by radical Islamic parties. Bibi has been in hiding since she was exonerated in October 2018. (RNS)

Sanctity of life at issue in state legislatures

Legislators in Vermont and Virginia are considering bills that would expand abortion rights up to the point of birth, while New Mexico is considering an assisted suicide bill that would allow non-physicians to prescribe lethal doses of medication.

New York recently enacted the Reproductive Health Act, which broadens late-term abortion rights in the state (see "Pray," page 10). Pro-life advocates feared other states would follow suit.

Vermont's bill strips the unborn of any "independent rights," while Virginia's bill would give discretion for late-term abortions to a single physician and the mother.

Opponents of New Mexico's proposed assisted suicide bill say it lacks safeguards and does nothing to protect the vulnerable. (TAB)

Foster care agency granted exemption

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has granted a faith-based foster care agency in South Carolina an exemption to a regulation barring religious discrimination in federally funded foster care programs.

Miracle Hill Ministries serves Christian families. Lynn Johnson, assistant secretary for children and families at HHS, says the issue is a matter of religious freedom.

"The government should not be in the business of forcing foster care providers to close their doors because of their faith," Johnson said in a statement.

Civil rights organizations and non-Protestant religious groups are preparing for a court battle to determine whether service providers who receive federal funds can discriminate based on faith. (TAB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Immanuel Baptist Church music minister Smith retires after 50 years



Many a day, Anthony Copeland has walked into Immanuel Baptist Church, Hokes Bluff, and heard Will Smith playing the piano.

"A lot of times he would escape in there and just play," said Copeland, pastor of the Etowah Baptist Association church. "It was pretty neat to walk in and hear him. He has a deep love for music — he can play several instruments — and he's got a heart for folks."

Smith, the church's music minister, said the past 50 years have brought a lot of people across his path — and that's been one of his favorite parts of ministry.

"The Lord has blessed me," he said. "I love music, I love meeting people, and just to be able to do it and see the choirs accomplish something for the Lord, that's what I like."

On Feb. 3 the church held a celebration in his



SMITH

honor of his 50 years of ministry — 31 of which were spent at Immanuel Baptist. It was also the retirement celebration for him and his wife, Ginger. Copeland said he will be missed.

"It's been a joy to work with him," he said. "He's a very gifted musician and he's taught me a lot. The church is like family. He's made a lot of friends through the years." (Grace Thornton)

European homeschool ruling 'ignores' parents' rights



STRASBOURG, France — A European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled Jan. 10 that Dirk and Petra Wunderlich's human rights were not violated when German officials forcibly removed their four children from the family home near Darmstadt, Germany, for three weeks in 2013 because they refused to stop homeschooling.

Paul Coleman, executive director of Alliance Defending Freedom International, a legal organization that represents the Wunderlichs, called the decision "alarming" and "a step in the

wrong direction [that] should concern anyone who cares about freedom."

The Wunderlichs may appeal the decision, attorneys said.

A German court previously determined the children's level of education "was not alarming" and they did not face a risk of physical harm at home, according to the ECHR's ruling. Still, the Wunderlichs have no right to homeschool under the European Convention on Human Rights, the ECHR said.

Between 500–1,000 German families are believed to be homeschooling despite a 100-year old prohibition on the practice.

In a related case the Romeike family fled Germany for the U.S. in 2008 amid mounting fines and risk of losing custody of homeschooled children. The Romeikes requested asylum in the U.S. and lost their court battle, but in 2014 the Department of Homeland Security allowed them to remain in the country. (BP)



Photo by ADF International

News near you

BALDWIN

▶ **Charles Inman** is the new pastor of **Friendship Baptist Church, Bon Secour**. He previously served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Monahans, Texas. He also has served at Springfield Baptist Church, Lexington; York Terrace Baptist Church, Sheffield; Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster; and other churches in Tennessee and Texas. He holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Kathy, have four children.



INMAN

BLOUNT

▶ **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its monthly third Sunday night singing featuring “New Ground” on Feb. 17 at 6 p.m. Randy Burtram is pastor.

COFFEE

▶ **Newbia Church, Elba**, will host a concert featuring Safe Harbor on Feb. 17 at 6 p.m.

A love offering will be taken. For more information call 334-308-7510. Will Jordan is pastor. ▶ **First Baptist Church, New Brockton**, and **Calvary Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will hold a joint revival Feb. 17–20. Tim Cox will be the guest speaker. Craig Stringfield will lead worship. Feb. 17–18 services will be held at First, New Brockton, and Feb. 19–20 services will be held at Calvary Baptist. Sunday’s service will begin at 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday services will begin at 7 p.m. Nathan Sims is pastor of First, New Brockton, and Kerry Mitchell is pastor of Calvary.

NORTH JEFFERSON

▶ **Greg Davis** recently left the pastorate of **Beechwood Baptist Church, Mount Olive**, after more than eight years. He will return to working full-time as president of First Priority Alabama. He and his wife, Sandi, have two children.



DAVIS

MADISON

▶ **GracePointe Church, New Market**, will hold its monthly special needs support group Feb. 19 at 6:30. Supper will be served at 6 p.m. with a reservation. For more information or to sign up call 256-714-6533. This support group is held the third Tuesday of each month. Bobby Gordon is pastor. ▶ **Clements Baptist Church, Huntsville**, will host “Leading your people through change” featuring Jeff Iorg, president of Gateway Seminary, on Feb. 22–23. The event is sponsored by the Madison Baptist Associa-

tion. The Friday session will run from 6 to 9 p.m. and the Saturday session will run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration for the conference includes dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday. To register visit goo.gl/forms/Us2TBhUHd9aB1qA2. The deadline to register is Feb. 19. For more information call 256-536-0015. Tim Anderson is pastor of Clements Baptist, and Charlie Howell is executive director of missions for Madison Baptist Association.

SALEM-TROY

▶ **Lee Dymond** is the new interim pastor of **First Baptist Church, Troy**. Dymond currently serves as the Baptist campus minister at Auburn University at Montgomery. He and his wife, Holly, have two children.

ST. CLAIR

▶ **Nicholas Gandy** is the new pastor of **Friendship Baptist Church, Springville**. He previously served at London Church, Castleberry. Gandy is married to Mary. ▶ **Jon Glass** is the new pastor of **Cropwell Baptist Church, Pell City**. He previously served at McElwain Baptist Church, Birmingham; and churches in North Carolina. He holds degrees from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, and Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. He and his wife, Matthea, have five children.✝



GLASS

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Bulgaria rejects strict limits on missionary and evangelistic activities



SOFIA, Bulgaria — The Bulgarian parliament has rejected proposals that would have amended the nation’s existing Religious Denominations Act.

The proposals included restrictions on religious education, strict limits on missionary and evangelistic activities and a requirement that worship be held in government-approved facilities.

The legislation “would have immediately put 128 Baptist churches at significant risk of closure,” said Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Elijah Brown.

The controversy over the proposals showcased the power of Christian unity in the cause of religious freedom for all, Brown said. (BNG)

Noel Clayton Walker, longtime pastor, director of missions dies



Noel Clayton Walker, a longtime pastor and director of missions (DOM), died Jan. 19. He was 85.

Walker served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Texas for 28 years total. His last

position was as interim pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Wetumpka.

He also served as DOM for Tennessee River Baptist Association for 18 years and as DOM for Autauga Baptist Association for 12 years.

Walker came to faith in Christ at age 11 at First Baptist Church, Pratt City, and was called to preach at 15 at First Baptist Church, Sandusky. A graduate of Ensley High School, Walker served in the U.S. Army 101st Division during the Korean conflict.



WALKER

He earned a bachelor’s degree from Howard College (now Samford University), a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctor of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia.

James Jackson, pastor of Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville, said Walker was “a giant in the faith community of Prattville.”

“It was his vision that launched the church I pastor now,” Jackson said. “He was a teacher,

musician, writer, poet, artist and friend.”

Walker is preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, Jeannie. He is survived by his daughter, Sandy, and three grandsons. (Grace Thornton)

‘Who’s Your One?’ evangelism resources will be available Feb. 20



DURHAM, N.C. — Pastors will have another tool for evangelism when “Who’s Your One?” officially launches Feb. 20.

Developed by the North American Mission Board the materials are designed to help pastors equip church members to share their faith.

J.D. Greear, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said he hopes “Who’s Your One?” will be the catalyst for an evangelism movement among Southern Baptists.

Pastors and leaders can visit WhosYourOne.com to learn more. (BP)



Graphic by NAMB

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



STATE DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING

SBDR.ORG

Please note the dates and specific certifications below. All sessions will take place at the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Center, 118 Jesse Samuel Hunt Blvd. in Prattville (east of I65, exit 186). To register for any of these training opportunities, please visit sbdr.org or contact Ministry Assistant Ana Raymundo at (334) 613-2356, araymundo@alsbom.org.

March 9
Communications
Child Care
Admin

April 4-6
Chaplaincy

April 5
Cleanup/Recovery

April 5-6
Chainsaw
Mass Feeding

April 13
Shower & Laundry Unit



Sharing Christ in Crisis



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

This ministry is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

Crossing borders

Be your church's missions advocate, McIntosh says

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

This year Pam Ashberry's Acteens group is crossing borders for the first time. And by the grace of God, Canada will never be the same — and neither will the girls at Ino Baptist Church, Kinston, in Coffee Baptist Association.

She said it's been a journey that God has led them on for a while now thanks to Acteens, a missions organization for girls in grades 7-12.

Going farther

"We had been doing local missions for quite some time," Ashberry said. They've completed projects like hosting a tea for the widows and widowers in the church or collecting supplies for new mothers at Sav-A-Life.

And then they started go-

ing farther. After reading about a missionary in New Orleans through Woman's Missionary Union's (WMU) Christmas in August they decided to go spend a few days working alongside her.

And when they went to the last annual Acteens training meeting they were challenged to push their boundaries even further.

"My Acteens group has been wanting to go to Canada ever since learning about the work

there, and so I talked with Candace McIntosh and she set it up for us," Ashberry said. "We will go at the end of June and be there for Canada Day and help a church there with block parties to get to know the community."

Ashberry's daughter, Meredith, is one of those girls.

"She's had the opportunity to do more things," Ashberry

said. "The experiences she's had and the places she's gotten to go were opportunities given to her for leadership that she wouldn't have had otherwise. To me that's been wonderful to watch."

And McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU, says that's what WMU is all about.

"To me WMU is that group

of girls that's going internationally for the very first time. It's that young woman who,

when she was in Girls in Action, God spoke to her and now she's serving in a high-security area of the world," McIntosh said. "It's the woman who spends every day at 1 o'clock praying for that dark part of the world that the gospel hasn't made it to yet."

And, she said, it's women like Phyllis Talmadge, the

The SBC's Focus on WMU Week is Feb. 11-17.



Photo courtesy of Pam Ashberry

Brianna Bowers (left) and Jaylyn Parker (right) spend a few days working alongside a missionary in New Orleans with their Acteens group from Ino Baptist Church, Kinston.

"missions champion" of First Baptist Church, Enterprise, who led her church to "blow the roof off" their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal.

Involved in missions

If you don't have any kind of WMU-related missions group at your church, McIntosh said the first thing you can do is be a missions advocate.

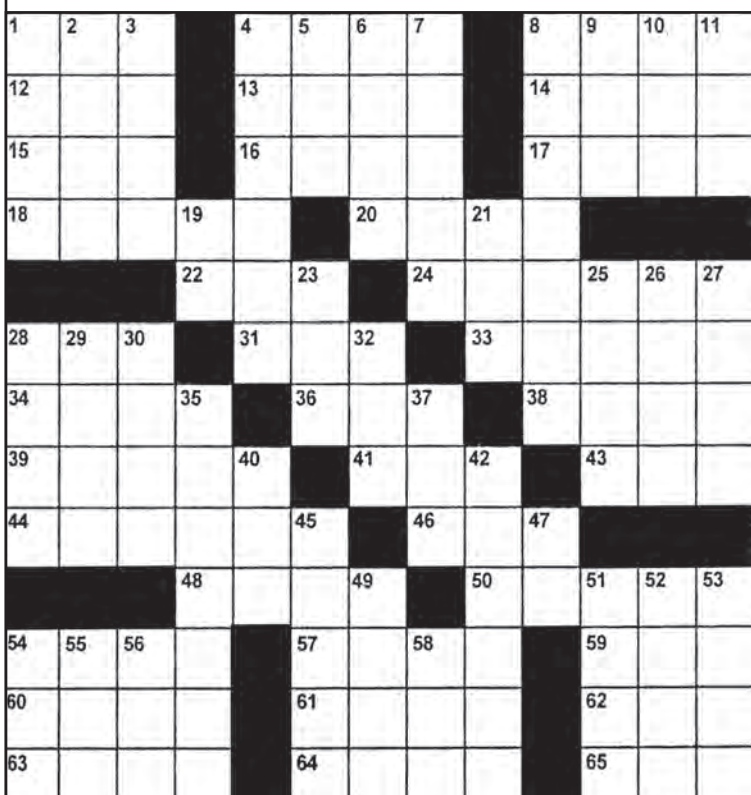
"Then call our office and talk that through — what does that look like for your church? How can we begin the process? You don't have to have a space to have a formal organization — there are a lot of ways you can lead your church toward being involved in missions," she said.

For more information call 1-800-264-1225 or visit alabamawmu.org.

Looking for the answers to this week's crossword? Those are now on page 2 so we can make the puzzle clues larger and easier to read. Happy puzzling!

Christian Crossword

By Mary Ann Freeman Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Pick up your _____. (John 5:8)
- Go _____ to thy friends. (Mark 5:19)
- Mary hath chosen that good _____. (Luke 10:42)
- Many _____ called. (Matt. 22:14)
- A garden eastward in _____. (Gen. 2:8)
- The Eranites came from _____. (Num. 26:36)
- Likened unto _____ virgins. (Matt. 25:1)
- Part of a necklace.
- The veil ... was _____ in twain. (Matt. 27:51)
- _____ Tots. (brand name)
- Turn and _____. (Isa. 22:18)
- For the sky is _____. (Matt. 16:2)
- The third day he shall be _____ again. (Matt. 17:23)
- Who Matthew would work for today.
- Harder to be _____ than a strong city. (Prov. 18:19)
- The Lord added to the church _____. (Acts 2:47)
- Lament.
- My _____ shall supply. (Phil. 4:19)
- Thy _____ is as the tower of Lebanon. (Song of Sol. 7:4)
- Scourge a man that is a _____? (Acts 22:25)
- In the beginning _____ the Word. (John 1:1)
- Nickname for Edward.
- That I may _____ unto you. (Rom. 1:11)

- Your yea be yea; and your _____. (James 5:12)
- Call me not Naomi, call me _____. (Ruth 1:20)
- Goodness and _____. (Ps. 23:6)
- In _____ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
- _____ was a cunning hunter. (Gen. 25:27)
- International Labor Organization. (abbr.)
- Worthy to _____ the book. (Rev. 5:2)
- Ireland.
- Country northeast of India. (abbr.)
- Belonging to Rachel's youngest son. (nickname) (Gen. 35:18)
- _____, why persecutest thou me? (Acts 9:4)
- The light of the body is the _____. (Matt. 6:22)

Down

- Gospel name. (abbr.)
- Length times width.
- Enlarge the place of thy _____. (Isa. 54:2)
- Nurse of the _____ women. (Ex. 2:7)
- Poem.
- Strong _____ belongeth to them. (Heb. 5:14)
- A familiar spirit at _____. (1 Sam. 28:7)
- Cyrus the _____. (Dan. 6:28)
- Ye _____ the branches. (John 15:5)
- Esau _____ to meet him. (Gen. 33:4)
- Explosive.
- A son of Judah. (Num. 26:19)
- He was _____. (Mark 10:22)
- A living _____ is better than a dead lion. (Eccles. 9:4)
- I lay in _____. (1 Pet. 2:6)
- Children, or _____ I die. (Gen. 30:1)
- Bring rams' skins _____ red. (Ex. 25:5)
- Father of Omri. (1 Chron. 9:4)
- No _____ for them. (Luke 2:7)
- Corn mush.
- _____ is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:2)
- Belonging to the captain of the king of Syria. (2 Kings 5:1)
- Bilhah's first son. (Gen. 30:5-6)
- National Rifle Association. (abbr.)
- Moses and _____ stood before me. (Jer. 15:1)
- All the _____ of the field. (Isa. 55:12)
- All _____ people. (Ps. 47:1)
- They which dwelt in _____ heard the word. (Acts 19:10)
- The harvest of the earth is _____. (Rev. 14:15)
- Hath not the potter power over the _____? (Rom. 9:21)
- My _____ is easy. (Matt. 11:30)
- Will a man _____ God? (Mal. 3:8)
- To mimic.
- Fishers of _____. (Mark 1:17)
- Islands east of Indonesia.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For February 10

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

TEMPTED Genesis 39:3–12, 19–21

Successful (3–6a)

Although hated, abandoned and sold into slavery by his brothers, the Scripture declares that “the Lord was with Joseph.” The theological centerpiece of the story is God, who was present and working on Joseph’s behalf. During the most uncertain time of Joseph’s life the eternal, faithful, covenant-keeping God of Israel was at work to fulfill His promises through Joseph.

In Potiphar’s house with the Egyptian culture and idolatry dwarfing him, Joseph was not alone. The Lord was with him to effect a mighty work for His covenant people and the blessing of the world.

Because of the Lord’s favor upon Joseph his work ethic did not go unnoticed. Potiphar could see something special in Joseph and promoted him from a lowly personal slave to the supervisor of his entire estate.

With Joseph in charge Potiphar prospered. The Lord blessed Potiphar’s house for Joseph’s sake, just as He had blessed Laban’s house because of Jacob.

Joseph made the best of his circumstances while remaining faithful to God, and God blessed him for it. He could have become angry and bitter toward God, but he continued trusting God and believing God’s promises.

Tempted (6b–12)

Joseph was at the pinnacle in Potiphar’s house. There was no doubt God was with him. Young, successful and extremely handsome, he caught the eye of Potiphar’s wife. She tempted him sexually.

The rationalizations were easy and logical. His hormones would have been at full force. He deserved it. No one would ever find out. As a slave his life was not his own. Sexual promiscuity was a daily part

of slaveholding households. And by giving in to Potiphar’s wife, he could enhance his career. What could be so wrong with a little “strategic adultery”? These were powerful, reasonable rationalizations.

Potiphar’s wife was relentless in pursuing Joseph, but Joseph did not give in to her constant sexual advances. Joseph refused to sin against the trust given him, the woman’s husband and God.

Joseph was faithful in all his relationships. He viewed his moral life as a unified, integrated whole. His faithfulness helped him reject this powerful temptation. We must understand that “little” sins lead to “big” sins, and Joseph was not about to compromise.

The greatest deterrent keeping Joseph from yielding to Potiphar’s wife’s advances was his awareness that God was with him. Joseph knew that God sees everything.

A sin no one knows about, committed behind closed doors in a dark room, is seen by the holy God. No one ever sins and gets by with it. Every sin will either be pardoned in Christ or punished in hell. And God does not overlook one sin.

Favored (19–21)

Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife and her sexual advances, but he left his garment in her hand as he quickly escaped. She fabricated a story and shifted the blame.

Potiphar responded in anger but did not have Joseph executed. Instead he imprisoned him where the king’s prisoners were confined. But Joseph was never separated from God’s presence or mercy.

Even in the prison the Lord was with him. Joseph experienced grace, receiving a position of trust and authority.

Joseph could not understand what God was at work doing in and through his life. Understanding can wait but obedience cannot. 🌿

A sin no one knows about, committed behind closed doors in a dark room, is seen by the holy God.

Bible Studies for Life By Jim Barnette, Ph.D. Samford University and Brookwood Baptist Church, Mountain Brook

WHEN MARRIAGE IS QUESTIONED Genesis 2:18–25

The marriage relationship was designed by God. (18–20)

At the end of the days of creation God looked at what He had made and He said, “It is good.” The first feature of creation that God deemed as “not good” was that man was alone. Following God’s example (see Gen. 1:5, 8 and 10) the man chooses a name for each of the creatures. In so doing he exercises his dominion over creation.

In a different way, however, the naming of the animals begins the portrayal of man as a social being made for fellowship. But the man needs another whom he can love on his own level. The woman will be presented wholly as his partner and counterpart. Nothing is yet said of her as a child bearer. She is valued for herself alone.

The term often translated “helper” or “helpmate” is notoriously difficult to translate. Some Jewish translations employ other terms like “sustainer” or “rescuer.” Whatever the chosen translation the next term illuminates the role of this person: to stand alongside the man. The New Living Translation explains what this “completing” counterpart means to the man: she is “a helper who is just right for him.”

Man and woman were created as unique genders. (21–22)

The wellbeing of the man calls for a fresh creative act of God. The emergence of woman is as stunning and unpredicted as the previous surprising emergence of the man. John R. Sampey, legendary professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, notes that this woman had the capacity to enter into responsible relations with

the man: “She is not made out of his head to rule over him; nor out of his feet to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, to be equal with him ... and near his heart to be beloved.” Now these two amazing creatures belong together.

Marriage is a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman. (23–25)

God Himself, like a father of the bride at a wedding, leads the woman to the man.

Adams’s joyful “at last” begins the first poetic couplet in the Bible, and his work of naming her “woman” is a triumphant conclusion with a title that echoes his own. She is just the right helper for him. His song affirms his unity with her, not their distinctions.

The union of the two in marriage is to be an exclusively monogamous one. At times in the Old Testament, polygamy is practiced. However, this passage asserts that monogamy was and is God’s original intention. The man and the woman are to cleave only to each other. Jesus interprets it so

in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7. The unexpected note that the two were “naked and unashamed” highlights the reality that at the moment the united couple had nothing of which they needed to be ashamed.

In spite of the present innocence of the two, their nakedness

also foreshadows the darker moment when they would lose that innocence and try to hide their shame.

Thankfully we worship a loving Creator who offers us the grace that delivers us from our shame. And even though all men and women are distanced from the garden, the last page of Scripture reminds us that one day all men and women who follow Jesus will be delivered to a garden where the curse of sin is no more! 🌿

God himself, like a father of the bride, leads the woman to the man. ... She is just the right helper for him.

The crossword has moved! It is on page 21 this week and can now be found on the page before the Sunday School lessons each week. Happy puzzling!



Media reviews

MOVIES

'Run the Race' leads February's family-friendly spotlight

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

Sports movies are never just about sports. In fact the best ones present so many lessons about life and eternity that even non-sports fans will enjoy them.

Such is the case with the faith-based "Run the Race," which releases in theaters Feb. 22 and tells the story of a high school quarterback named Zach who views football as his ticket out of his small town but is devastated when an injury sidelines him.

His girlfriend (Ginger) and his brother (Dave) — both Christians — encourage him but also help him gain an eternal perspective.

The PG-rated film was directed by Chris

Dowling ("Where Hope Grows") and written by Jake McEntire while the latter was a student at Dallas Baptist University. Tim and Robby Tebow served as executive producers.

"Run the Race" leads this month's family-friendly entertainment spotlight.

It is among the best and most inspiring sports films I've watched, with a few surprising twists and turns often not seen in the faith genre. It also is — as Robby Tebow called it — "gritty."

That also is a rarity in Christian films.

Most of all "Run the Race" is a movie with messages about persevering in life, supporting one another and clinging to the hope only Christ can provide.

Producer Trey Brunson, communications director at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, is encouraging youth groups and churches to watch it together. The film's lesson, he said, is this: "Whatever you're walking through, I'm going to walk with you. I'll be there."

"Life is falling apart and we need someone to walk with us, to give us hope and to give us help," Brunson said. "And I think this movie does that so well."

The film is rated PG for thematic content and

some teen partying. It contains no coarse language or sexuality. Learn more at RunTheRace.com.

Valentine's Day

Since it's February what better time to watch a clean romantic movie? Yes, they do exist and they're not always on the Hallmark Channel.

Among my favorite ones in the faith-based genre:

▶ "Christian Mingle" (PG, Netflix), which tells the story of a woman who pretends to be a Christian — and



TAB AR

Photo courtesy of Roadside Attractions

'Run the Race'

she's not one — to get a date.

▶ "Old-Fashioned" (PG-13, streaming on platforms for a fee), which follows a man and woman involved in a small-town, old-fashioned romance.

▶ "Forever My Girl" (PG, Amazon Prime), which tells the story of a famous country singer who falls for the girl he formerly rejected.

▶ "Fireproof" (PG), which remains one of the best faith-based films of all time.

Also worth watching this month:

▶ "*The Least of These*" — In theaters Feb. 1 it tells the true story of Australian missionary Graham Staines, who takes the gospel to India's leprosy patients despite laws prohibiting converting anyone from Hinduism to Christianity. He dies a martyr's death.

The movie was filmed in India and stars Stephen

Baldwin as Staines. Rated PG-13 for thematic elements/disturbing images.

▶ "*Cars, Coffee, Theology*" — Jerry Seinfeld popularized the car-chatting concept with his series "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee." But now pastors, professors and theologians are getting into the mix.

Jonathan Pennington, a New Testament professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, launched "Cars, Coffee, Theology" last year as a way to have "caffeinated conversations with thoughtful people."

He drives his Mazda RX8 around town as he and his guests discuss their life and work, and, of course, theology. Search for "Cars, Coffee, Theology" on YouTube or visit the website at CarsCoffeeTheology.com.

▶ "*Stand Up and Away! With Brian Regan*" —

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.

Clean comedy is about as rare as a \$2 bill, but there are some outstanding comedians in this genre.

"Stand Up and Away!" is a three-part series in which comedian Brian Regan combines his clean stand-up act with hilarious Carol Burnett-type sketches. My favorite: his skit showcasing old inventions (like contact lenses) in a Shark Tank-type scenario. 🙌

Recovery gospel

Kentucky church plant provides safe place for addicts to hear about Jesus

New Reality, a recent church plant in northern Kentucky, meets on Friday nights, not Sundays. Even more atypical New Reality is part of a Life Recovery Center in Erlanger, Kentucky, providing Christ-centered answers to those who are

struggling with addictions.

The church plant has grown quickly — from 20 people in May to almost 100 by the end of 2018.

Chris Hamilton, who leads New Reality, is a recovering alcoholic who has been sober for 10 years. After coming to Christ he felt called to preach “the recovery gospel.”

“I didn’t know what that meant at the time,” Hamilton said.

A key part of a recovery ministry, Hamilton said, “is to create a safe place where people with addictions can come and just be” and where they can find the resources, housing, assistance and support they need.

“To get to know Jesus, we want them to come to us,” he added.

New Reality meets on Friday nights because a large percentage of the people the center wants to draw are not necessarily churchgoers, Hamilton noted. New Reality also doesn’t want to conflict with other



Western Recorder

Chris Hamilton (right), who leads the New Reality church plant in Kentucky seeking to reach people struggling with addictions, is partnering with Pastor Shane Brewer of Fort Mitchell Baptist Church in the growing outreach.

church services “because the whole idea here is to be that jumping off point into knowing Jesus,” he said. “As people come in and we disciple them, we want them to be able to connect with their local church.”

Many of those attending are residents of the men’s and women’s treatment centers in the area.

‘Choosing to come’

“The beautiful thing is, it’s all voluntary,” Hamilton said. “These folks are choosing to come here.”

The vision is to take the Life Recovery Center model and plant other centers in communities that need the ministry across the region.

“We want to create a model that we can replicate,” Hamilton said. “The idea is to partner with the local church. We want to be a helping hand.”

Most churches don’t have the resources, the funds or the people who are experienced in dealing with addictions, he said.

“So the people in their church who are suffering with addictions may not be getting what they need,” Hamilton said. “If we can provide that and help them get healthy and whole again, and send them back to their own church, they can then be ministers in helping identify folks who need help.” (BP)

How to pray:

▶ Pray for addiction counselors like those at Life Recovery Center and for their clients.

▶ Pray for the leaders and members of New Reality to grow in their faith and to reach others with the gospel.

TAB



A typical Friday night at New Reality includes dinner served at 6, worship at 7 and an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting at 8.