



The Alabama Baptist

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March 14, 2019

Vol. 184, No. 11
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



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aging well —
Part 2

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— LaGrange, Ga.

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ministering to
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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."



Photo by Doug Rogers

Volunteers at Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, sort food donations at the relief distribution center set up at the church following the March 3 tornadoes.

Rallying together

Alabama reeling after devastating tornado in Lee County

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

As volunteers and donations poured into Lee County following a deadly tornado outbreak on March 3, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) teams joined volunteers from several agencies in the recovery effort.

"I've seen a tremendous number of volunteers out here helping from the community and from far away,"

said Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief strategist Mark Wakefield. "That's not uncommon after a storm, but the number of deaths has touched people deeply, and they've rallied from many places to help."

Community devastation

Wakefield said the destruction in the Beauregard community of Lee County is "as bad as anything I've ever seen." Preliminary data from the National Weather Service (NWS) indicates six tornadoes struck on March 3: the EF-4 tornado that hit Beauregard/Smiths Station with winds up to 170 mph; an EF-2 tornado in Macon/Lee counties with winds up to 115 mph; two EF-2 tornado touch-

downs in Barbour County; and EF-0 tornadoes that touched down briefly in Autauga and Bullock counties.

Twenty-three people were killed in Beauregard, and 91 were injured, according to the NWS report. Alabama Power reported on March 6 that crews had restored power to all homes that could receive it, but an official estimated that at least 116 homes were destroyed or so severely damaged that crews cannot restore power until they are repaired or replaced.

Disaster relief teams from the local area worked throughout the week, Wakefield said. Chainsaw units cleared trees (See 'Deeply,' page 10)

Judson College names new president

Judson College has named W. Mark Tew as the institution's 23rd president.

A Birmingham native, Tew is both a product and practitioner of Baptist higher education.

He holds bachelor of science



TEW

and master of business administration degrees from Samford University, as well as master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Tew has served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, since 2007. He spent the first 20 years of his career at Judson, beginning in 1987 as a religion professor and later serving as chief finance, development and academic officer.

Tew and his wife, Ann Marie, have three daughters, all of whom are Judson graduates.

A welcome reception for the Tews will be held in the Gladys Hale Dunkin Parlors of Jewett Hall on April 5 from 3 to 5 p.m. (Judson)

If your subscription to *TAB* is part of a group or church, then be sure to read this article

April will bring two changes related to your group subscription to *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*) so we want to help explain what is coming.

As you think through the adjustments, please know we understand if you need to take a few weeks or months to make the transition because of the changes coming in the second quarter of a new budget year.

We will work with you however needed to ensure your access to the content and community network provided by *TAB* stays intact.

One adjustment is a **five cent (per issue per week) increase**, the first price increase since early 2014. The new group rate for five or more subscriptions is \$16.25 per year per household, which is an annual in-

crease of \$2.50. The annual amount includes all taxes and breaks down to be 32.5 cents per issue per week.

A group subscription can be a church, a Sunday School class, a small group, an extended family, etc. There are no limits as long as one point person is communicating with our team and sending in one payment for the group.

Can now pay online

And great news for those of you wanting to pay for your group subscriptions online through a credit card. We are adding this helpful option with our coming changes.

Many of our churches have asked for this option for years and we are now able to make it happen thanks to our new billing and circulation management partner, Cambey & West.

Cambey & West has a long history of assisting faith-based publications with their circulation management and we are excited to add them to the *TAB* family as we look forward to new days of improved customer service, growth and expansion.

Because Cambey & West is lo-

cated in Congers, New York, mailed invoices will have that return address and your checks will now be mailed there as well.

Everything related to the production of *TAB* remains the same including the office's headquarters in Birmingham.

The second adjustment coming in April is a **move to quarterly billing in advance**. Groups have traditionally paid for subscriptions after the subscription period is over, so the first invoice received under this new system will include two subscription periods — the one just completed and the quarter ahead.

Because the first invoice will be higher than normal we will work with your group to catch the amount up in payments if needed.

A letter should arrive soon detailing this more fully but please let us know if you don't receive the letter and/or have additional questions.

Bill Gilmore is our director of sales and will be working with each church as needed. Email Bill at bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-777-6307. (*TAB*)

If you pay for your subscription to *TAB* yourself, then read here

Five and a half cents per week is the increase you will notice when it's time to renew your subscription — if you go ahead and sign up for three years. If you prefer to stay with an annual subscription the increase is only a little more — 15 cents per issue.

Bottom line: \$24.95 per year for a three-year subscription (50 cents per week) and \$29.95 for a one-year subscription (60 cents per week).

Your subscription to receive the content and community provided by *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*) now includes all forms of *TAB* — print, digital and full web access to the more than 40,000 articles archived at www.thealabamabaptist.org.

No action is needed at the moment. We only want to alert you to the updated subscription pricing so when your renewal notice arrives you will be informed.

You will be able to renew online

through a credit card or by mailing in a check.

If you renew through the mail the notice will come from our new billing and circulation management partner Cambey & West out of Congers, New York, so do be aware of that change as well.

Cambey & West has a long and successful history of assisting faith-based publications with their circulation management, and we are excited to add them to the *TAB* family as we look forward to new days of growth and expansion.

Thank you for being part of the *TAB* family as well.

Your partnership not only connects you to the statewide network of believers known as Alabama Baptists but allows us to continue serving the network. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Email subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-870-4720. (*TAB*)



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

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(augmented reality)

- Download the HP Reveal app from your app store.
- Tap the  icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 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.
- 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.
- Each week when *TAB* arrives, look for the AR logo to watch the video extras through the app.



MY RASHIONALE

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief

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Community spirit, local heroes shine brightest in tough moments

The true heart and soul of a close-knit community always shine in the wake of a tragedy. Everyone counts everyone else as the same and God's commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" takes forefront.

Helping and healing supersede anything and everything else. A determination to care for the people most affected tops the list of priorities.

And the local community comes together in a special way that only they understand.

The outside help is always desperately needed and most definitely appreciated, especially when the help shows up with the specific skillsets needed.

The outpouring of love from countless people across hundreds and thousands of miles encourages those pushing through exhaustion.

It is inspiring to everyone involved to experience how those with compassionate hearts care for one another in a crisis.

While many times it is the outside teams who get the majority of credit for the work being done because they are able to think about photos and sharing information, their efforts do create momentum. Their ability to share the stories is helpful because it keeps those outside the area informed and reminded of ways they can help.

But I'm always drawn to those from the area who likely won't get as much attention for their efforts. They are purely focused on how to help each other survive what has just taken place.

Whatever the tragedy may be, the local community members are connected because of geography but also for so many more reasons. It might be family relationships or close friendships. It could be church membership, serving with the same community organization or being part of the same school.

When the March 3 tornado hit Beauregard in rural Lee County, the community spirit didn't fail.

Church volunteers, school officials, business leaders and service providers of all types were on the move immediately. They combined forces to organize, di-

vide and conquer; and the community is the better for it.

One resident described how she could hear sirens in the near distance even as she huddled in her closet while the deadly storm passed over.

The volunteer fire department was already running when the strike happened, she said.

Another resident who survived the storm happened to be taking an afternoon nap when it hit. She didn't realize what had happened at first. But her son, who lives more than three hours away, was watching news

reports of the devastation in the area and couldn't get her to answer the phone. After a few minutes the son knew just who to call and those friends didn't hesitate to make their way to his mother's home to check on her.

The stories of neighbor helping neighbor as well as the depth of pain from the loss are countless.

Once the shock and initial relief efforts settle down, life will find routine again even amid the flattened and debris-littered landscape. And the hearts and souls of the Beauregard community will forever be bonded. 🌈

WHAT'S NEW WITH TAB?

Slight increase coming of basically 5 cents per issue per week — less than one restaurant specialty coffee or soda per year

Basic housekeeping updates are rarely interesting but usually important for the family.

You are family, so I wanted to share background related to the upcoming minor price increase.

The current cost to print and mail *TAB* is about 28 cents per issue per week. That doesn't include the cost of the computers and software to develop and manage the product nor the cost of researching and producing the content, photos and graphics.

And even if there were no printing and mailing costs, there would still be all of the software and content development costs plus what is needed to produce video and audio clips, the podcast and all that goes into maintaining an active digital presence with an online publication, website and

various forms of social media.

Of course, there also are staffing and basic operational costs but we are committed to keeping the subscription price manageable and are looking to find other avenues of revenue for complete funding.

Less than a postage stamp

For those subscribing as a group, we are able to continue providing the weekly and daily content and community of this 176-year publication and media network for about half the cost of a first-class stamp.

And for those subscribing individually, the price is about the same as a first-class postage stamp.

We are able to keep the prices as low as they are thanks to the contribution *TAB* receives from Alabama Baptists' faithful giving through the Cooperative Program.

A positive change in all of this is that each subscription now includes all forms of *TAB* — print, digital (pdf version with hotlinks) and full web access to the more than 40,000 articles archived at www.thealabamabaptist.org.

Some may prefer digital only. If so, then we ask that you share your print edition with a neighbor or friend. Help us spread the word about *TAB*. In fact, we need all of you spreading the word. Share an article or an entire issue.

New travel section

On a lighter note, we are launching a new quarterly travel section in this issue called Go, Taste and See based on Psalm 34:8. Let us know what you think about the new feature.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



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

Faith-based films need box office support

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

The president of a Hollywood production unit says movie studios are making more faith-based films than they have in the past — but they will continue to do so only if the faith-based audience watches them.

“It really is ... about the community supporting the movies and coming to see the films,” said Glenn Ross, the president of Universal 1440 Entertainment, which

is a production entity of Universal Pictures Home Entertainment.

Universal 1440 Entertainment was involved in the production of “Unbroken: Path to Redemption” but also had a hand in mainstream releases such as “The Land Before Time” and “Bring It On.”

Ross made the comments during a meeting with faith-based media prior to the release of “Unbroken: Path to Redemption.”

“We believe that the faith-based audience wants a better-quality

product that’s better produced,” Ross said. “The studios know how to do that, and I think it’s a matter of just letting the studios know we want these movies.”

In addition to “Unbroken: Path to Redemption,” Ross worked with the first two VeggieTales movies.

“We have three more scripts in development right now that are faith-based stories that we’re hoping to be able to make,” he said.

Blockbuster movies always will be the studio’s “bread and butter,” Ross said. But that doesn’t mean the faith-based crowd is being ignored. In fact, Ross said, it’s the opposite.

“If you look, whether it’s Universal or Sony or Focus [Features], more and more films about faith are being made because Hollywood has realized that there was an audience out there for it. And more importantly there’s an audience out there that’s craving quality production, quality storytelling,” Ross said. “So I actually think Hollywood is finding its way more toward faith-based films and quite frankly, the more the faith-based community supports the films, the more the studios are going to be encouraged to do it.”

EDITOR’S NOTE—Michael Foust is a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. His blog, www.michaelfoust.com, includes reviews of movies and entertainment, as well as faith-based observations about family life and parenting.

Without abortion, there would be no Planned Parenthood because, according to their own president, it is their ‘core mission.’

Russell Moore
President
Ethics & Religious
Liberty Commission,
SBC

I do not believe in the idea that anyone with any addiction has a disease and will be an addict for life. I have seen God heal me in this area as well as many others.

John Doyel
CovenantEyes.com

Fifty-four percent of pastors say fewer than 10 people indicated a new commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior in 2018, including 8 percent who had none.

LifeWay Research
January 2019 survey

Discipleship is the calling of every believer, and it is accessible to every person who comes to your church.

From “Building a Culture of Discipleship”
Building Church Leaders

My Jesus Story

Lord what were you thinking?” My first sign of anger since my husband Jerome’s passing in 2009 took me by surprise.

Not only had a deadly brain tumor interrupted Jerome’s new ministry as director of missions, it had turned our lives into a rollercoaster ride of physical and neurological changes, treatments, surgeries and MRIs giving hope, then disappointment.

I’d believed God for a miracle. Yet the tumor had taken Jerome’s life after a vigorous battle. My life was shattered.

In denial I’d pushed aside the “good” expressed in Jerome’s life verse, Romans 8:28. In my outburst, God’s word surfaced: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My

ways” (Isa. 55:8). I, however, wanted to know His thoughts.

Waiting for an answer I remembered to trust God even in His silence, and healing began.

In the years following Jerome’s death I’ve come to know Jesus’ presence, love and comfort more deeply. He has supplied financially and relationally, opened new doors of service and helped me learn new skills and tackle new projects. Jesus is always with me, true to His promises, continually working all things together for my good because He has called me to His purpose.

Frances King
Dawson Memorial Baptist
Church
Birmingham, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“Our hearts go out to those who lost their lives in the storms that hit Lee County.”

KAY IVEY
Governor of Alabama

Annie [Armstrong] was a living example of Colossians 3:23, which says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” Annie took her calling seriously, and she poured her heart and soul into WMU. She worked tirelessly, sacrificing her time and efforts to see WMU succeed — and it worked. Annie’s commitment to the work God gave her resulted in an organization that has impacted thousands of missionaries for more than a century.

Selah Ulmer
WMU.com

We can and should celebrate God’s faithfulness in joy and thanksgiving, but ... joy and thanks-

giving can become exhausted, even cynical, when we disregard the more “negative” emotions in the Christian life. Indeed, more than a few have turned away from the faith altogether because they felt it had no place for their feelings of hopelessness, anger and fear.

J. Todd Billings
“Can Anger at God be Righteous?”
Christianity Today

This is an “all hands on deck” and “all family members on their knees” moment for the Southern Baptist Convention. I commit to offer my hands, bend my knees, humble my heart, and open my ears. And I pray we will each do so in order for the

hurting to be loved, children to be protected, churches to be strengthened, and Christ to be exalted.

Mike Stone, Chairman
SBC Executive Committee

With children we sometimes use the five finger prayer. Each digit reminds us to pray in certain ways. Beginning with the thumb we Praise God. The second finger tells us to Confess Sins. Next is a reminder to Thank God. Pray for Others goes with the fourth finger. Lastly with the tiny finger we Pray for Me.

Kaye LeCompte
Children’s Director
Providence Baptist Church
Opelika, Ala.



Photo by SBOM

Rick Lance is executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Preventing child abuse

Recently on my blog at Ricklance.com, I wrote an article titled “Helping Our Churches to be Safer Places.” This has been a decades-long goal of your State Board of Missions as we seek to help Alabama Baptist churches with child abuse prevention.

For the past several months your state missionaries have been planning a key conference: the “Is Your Ministry Safe?” workshop, which will take place March 26, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., at Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery. The event is designed for key leaders — both staff and volunteers — in your Alabama Baptist congregation.

Attorney Kimberlee Norris of MinistrySafe will lead the workshop. She is a strategic thinker and expert in legal standards of care related to child sexual abuse. Participants will be taught Skillful Screening Training and Awareness Training to recognize individuals who may not be appropriate to work with children or youth.

I hope many Alabama Baptist leaders will be able to avail themselves of this critical, timely training. State Missionary Lee Wright can answer questions about this event at 800-264-1225, ext. 241, or lwright@alsbom.org.

—Rick Lance

From the *Twitterverse*

@ricklance

Praying for the many who lost loved ones in [March 3] storms. Praying also for the Yellow Shirt Army of Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers as they minister to hurting people.

@WhiteHouse

President Trump’s message to those affected by the tornadoes in the Gulf states: “We grieve by your side and we pledge our unwavering support to help you rebuild from the very depths of this horrible tragedy.”

@kevinwilburn

Envy poisons your judgment.

@RELEVANT

This is what Lent does: It allows us to see the parts of ourselves we’d rather leave covered up. It

asks us to drag our full self into the light of day no matter how dark it may be.

@pastorTstawp

Im not going to post the video of students from Spain Park HS in Hoover, AL making anti-Semitic & racist comments. But it’s horrible!! Its a small glimpse of why we need to preach a gospel that addresses racism, ethnic supremacy, beauty in diversity & more. Church Stand Up!

@C__Truett

If I share the good news with many, some will believe! Be a sharer!!!! Who will you share Jesus with today?

@TrevinWax

Failure to see the grandeur of God squashes our hope in what

He can accomplish through us. A distorted vision of God leads to a diminished view of ourselves. In the end, we no longer think we are capable of doing what God has called us to do.

@AlabamaChildOrg

OXFORD || Area Director for Northeast Alabama, Amber Albright, says, “They strive every day to provide hope and wholeness to those who feel hurt and broken and, without them, our work could not be complete!” #SOCIALWORK-MONTH #socialwork #fostercare #OxfordAL

@ValleydaleSBC

How many blessings can you count in 60 seconds? God has given his children every good thing. Take a few moments to express your thankfulness.

David George (center) says he and his wife Allyson (left) made the decision to move to a senior living community to be near his mother Jackie and to open the door for services they might need in the future.

At what cost?



Photo courtesy of the Oaks on Parkwood

Most adults not financially prepared for costs of long-term health care

By Martha Simmons
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Most Americans look forward to longer life spans but haven't prepared for the high likelihood they'll need a lot of help to live at least some of those extra years.

Research says that almost 7 of every 10 of us will need long-term care at some point in our lives and for an average of three years. Yet few of us have any idea of what that might cost nor have we saved or otherwise prepared for it.

High price tag

Drawing from more than 15,500 surveys in 440 regions throughout the United States, the annual Genworth Cost of Care Survey 2018 indicates there's a high price tag on long-term care even in the home. (See the graphic "Annual cost of health care options," page 7.)

While Alabama's long-term care seems a bargain compared with national costs, it's important to note that the median annual income here is lower too: \$48,123 in our state versus \$60,336 nationally, according to the U.S. Census in 2017.

That said, how do any but the wealthiest families afford to pay for a year of long-term care, much less the average three years ... or even more?

The three primary sources of funding for long-term care are the following:

1. Long-term care insurance

Long-term care (LTC) insurance is available but at a significant price, according to AARP.

"Premiums for LTC policies average \$2,700 a year, according to the industry research firm LifePlans," AARP writes. "That puts the cover-

age out of reach for many Americans. (One bright spot for spouses: Discounts for couples are common — typically 30 percent off the price of policies bought separately.)"

2. Medicare

According to Genworth, Medicare will cover 100 percent of your costs for only the first 20 days in a skilled nursing facility, hospice care or home health care, and then only if you:

- ▶ Had a recent hospital stay of at least three days

- ▶ Are admitted to a Medicare-certified nursing facility within 30 days of the hospital stay
- ▶ Need skilled care such as physical therapy or nursing.

For days 21–100, you pay your own expenses up to \$167.50 per day and Medicare pays any balance. Af-

ter 100 days you're on your own.

3. Medicaid

If you have a low income and limited personal financial assets you may qualify for Medicaid to pay for health services and nursing home care.

"For eligible beneficiaries Medicaid pays the full cost of room and board in a nursing facility, plus any therapies that are part of the nursing home's regular resident care.

"Medicaid's payment also includes personal care items such as incontinence supplies and toiletries, as well as services such as bathing, grooming and laundry," according to www.caring.com. "There's no time limit on Medicaid nursing home coverage. And the Medicaid beneficiary has no co-payments to make."



First Person: George says 'too soon' is better than 'too late' to make senior housing decisions

David George, president of WMU Foundation, and his wife Allyson recently moved to the Oaks on Parkwood, a senior living community in Bessemer. Here he talks about what went into making that decision.

I have learned it is better to move too soon than too late. We had hoped my dad and mom could have moved together into independent living. Unfortunately his dementia had progressed to the point we had to move him

into memory care without Mom. It was the right decision ... but if they had moved a year or two earlier they could have made the move together.

Thankfully a year or so after Dad died, Mom was able to move to independent living at the Oaks and has been here for about eight years now. Eight good years!

Last year I realized that life was moving faster than I could handle for my wife and me and we had a decision to make.

The first thing I considered was a

campus that had all levels of care from independent living, assisted living, memory care to skilled nursing care.

We made the decision to move into an independent home here too. It allowed us to downsize (actually right size) to a beautiful home that is within walking distance of my mom's independent living apartment and opened the door for the services and resources that my wife and I need now and into the future. 🌈

Special rules for these situations apply. For details download a copy of "Tips for Applying for Institutional (Nursing Home) Medicaid" (<https://TABOnline.org/2>) and other forms on <http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov>. 🌈

Having the conversation

Talk about health care wishes before a crisis occurs, experts suggest

As parents or other loved ones age financial questions about their future care can loom large. They loom even larger if you’ve never been able to have a conversation about what their financial situation is like or what their wishes are for the future.

If you’re in that boat you’re not alone — most people avoid this conversation until they have to. For the children it may be an attempt to dodge conflict or avoid seeming greedy or bossy. For the parents it may be hard to admit they need help or aren’t financially prepared for the future, if that’s the case.

Strong data

But PBS reported in 2017 that there’s good, strong data to support having this conversation as early as you can. For one, it helps with emotions — you can pick a time when your loved ones are happy and

relaxed, not stressed or forced into making decisions. More than 80 percent of long-term care decisions are made during a medical crisis, and usually in these situations some type of long-term care is needed.

But not only does having the talk in normal times make for a better conversation — it helps with preparation and the need for preparation is staggering. Half of nursing home expenses are paid out-of-pocket by families these days, with adult children contributing an average of \$10,000 a year to their parents’ care, according to eldercare expert Barbara McVicker.

It’s worth talking as early as possible about how your family will

afford that. With that in mind consider these things as you start the conversation:

1. Approach the topic in love.

If at all possible have the conversation in person. PBS recommends starting the talk with a request like, “I know this might be difficult for you to talk about, but I care enough about you to want to make sure you’re taken care of as you age. Can we find a time to discuss what plans you have made and how I might be able to help you in making sure everything is taken care of?”

Framing the question this way shows them you care and also gives them time to process what you’re asking.

More than 80 percent of long-term care decisions are made during a medical crisis, and usually some type of long-term care is needed.

2. Take your time.

If you start having financial conversations early enough, you won’t have to get all your questions answered at one time. Engage in shorter conversations spread out over time rather than one long conversation where emotions can get high or the topic can get overwhelming.

3. Slowly cover the important things.

Talk through your loved ones’ expenses and find out what plans they may already have in place. Then work together to build a strategy for how to care for their living expenses and medical needs as they come up. Do they have insurance that could help them cover the costs of staying home as they age? Are they open to moving to any type of retirement community with continuing care?

As you ask these questions along the way find out how to locate their important documents if they’re ever needed — things like their doctors’ contact information, will, health insurance or Medicare information, birth certificates, power of attorney, advanced directives and mortgage information.

4. Get some help if needed.

Have they got a fixed budget, or have they planned ahead for their long-term care? These are some questions you’ll eventually need the answer to, but if it gets uncomfortable or you would like some help figuring out what’s needed, consider reaching out to a financial coach or someone local who’s an expert in fiduciary matters.

Help from an attorney

For Terry Finch that meant talking with an eligible attorney as he helped his mother, Sylvia, make plans.

“One of the things ... that was most helpful was to meet with an elder care attorney to get our questions answered about how and when to utilize private funds and how qualifying for Medicare/Medicaid would impact Mom,” said Finch, whose mother now lives at the Oaks at Parkwood, a Noland senior living provider in Bessemer. (TAB)

Annual cost of health care options		
TYPE OF CARE	ALABAMA	NATIONAL
Homemaker services: 44 hours/week for 52 weeks	Cost: \$38,896 Five-year annual growth: 1%	Cost: \$48,048 Five-year annual growth: 3%
Home health aide: 44 hours/week for 52 weeks	Cost: \$38,896 Five-year annual growth: 1%	Cost: \$50,336 Five-year annual growth: 3%
Adult day health care: 5 days/week for 52 weeks	Cost: \$9,100 Five-year annual growth: 7%	Cost: \$18,720 Five-year annual growth: 2%
Assisted living facility: Private, one-bedroom for 12 months of care	Cost: \$39,252 Five-year annual growth: 5%	Cost: \$48,000 Five-year annual growth: 3%
Nursing home — semi-private room: 365 days of care	Cost: \$75,347 Five-year annual growth: 3%	Cost: \$89,297 Five-year annual growth: 3%
Nursing home — private room: 365 days of care	Cost: \$79,935 Five-year annual growth: 3%	Cost: \$100,375 Five-year annual growth: 4%

Lots to do in LaGrange

Georgia getaway offers variety of family-friendly entertainment options

By **Connie Pearson**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

What kind of short trips do you enjoy most often? Weekend getaways? Adventures with friends? Kid-friendly attractions for families?

Amazingly you are likely to find something to fit all of these categories in LaGrange, Georgia, less than 20 miles from the Alabama state line, almost dead center

between Atlanta and Montgomery. Where else could you go to experience an authentic Sabbath meal, stay and play in a giant indoor waterpark and resort, tour the gardens and mansion built for the Callaway family or enjoy a lunch of Southern favorites in a converted Methodist church building?

Biblical History Center

With all the attention given to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Kentucky I was happy to find the impressive Biblical History Center much closer to home. This is not a theme park with a Disney atmosphere. Instead it's a place for both serious learning and entertainment.

The stated purpose of the center

is to educate visitors about the daily lives and activities of people described in the Bible, and they use an Archaeological Replica Garden, a Biblical Artifacts Gallery and a Biblical Meal Room to accomplish that. You'll find a threshing floor, a replica tomb and objects used by guides dressed in period clothing to explain the life of a shepherd, farmer and villager of the time.

The Kid's Dig, Shepherd's Bread Experience and special Easter and

Christmas-themed events will likely offer the biggest appeal to children.

The artifacts gallery displays more than 250 objects on loan from the National Treasures of Israel, and the Biblical Meal Room allows visitors to participate in a four-course meal reminiscent of Passover or the Last Supper. The meal incorporates 15 different food items and is narrated with explanations of cultural etiquette and symbolism.

The center is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, but reservations are required for the meal and some of the activities. Be sure to check the website and call the center for details and prices.

Since it opened in May of 2018, Great Wolf Lodge is attracting fami-

For more information go to VisitLaGrange.com



Photo courtesy of LaGrange Chamber of Commerce

The indoor water park at Great Wolf Lodge has a wave pool, a water playground for smaller children and several exciting water slides for taller kids and adults. The resort also includes an ice cream parlor, doughnut shop and arcade.

lies and youth groups from across the South. Unlike Six Flags, where you go for a few hours or a day and then leave, Great Wolf Lodge is for overnight guests. Suites accommodating four to 12 guests are offered, and 10 dining options are on-site.

Pools, water slides, bowling, miniature golf, arcade games, a climbing wall and much more await guests in this huge indoor facility. It is entirely possible to park once and be entertained for several days.

Hills and Dales Estate encompasses 35 acres and is open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays. The 13,000-square-foot mansion, completed in 1916, was built for Fuller E. Callaway, his wife Ida Cason Callaway and their two sons. It is considered one of the finest homes in America.

Stunning gardens

Ferrell Gardens, surrounding the estate, have been cultivated continuously for more than 175 years. A beautiful new visitors center and gift shop recently opened at the entrance to the property.

Christmas decorations during the holidays are carefully crafted to reflect those found in the mansion during the many years when members

of the Callaway family lived there.

The gardens are especially stunning in the spring so tour hours are extended to Sundays from March until June.

Dining sanctuary

Be sure to consider having lunch at Taste of Lemon while you explore LaGrange. You will think you've driven into a church parking lot because the building, dating back to 1892, formerly housed the Second Methodist Church. A restaurant has been in this spot since 1982. Open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, Taste of Lemon's signature dish is pineapple casserole, but the daily meat-and-three specials are popular choices.

If you venture out a few miles from LaGrange, you'll find great fishing and hiking around West Point Lake and a street lined with quaint shops in the neighboring town of Hogansville. The hummingbird is the adopted symbol of Hogansville and a fun family activity is following the Hummingbird Trail for colorful photo ops.

Few towns the size of LaGrange have so much to offer visitors so you'll find plenty to "Go, Taste and See" in LaGrange. 🌿



Photo courtesy of LaGrange Chamber of Commerce

In the Archaeological Replica Garden, children push a millstone like one that might have been used to crush olives or grain during biblical times. Judges 16:21 describes Samson turning a millstone to grind grain while in prison.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Insights through questions

Questions about Salvation

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

These questions have been the doorway through which we think about theological topics such as the nature of Christ, the nature of man and the nature of truth. This week's question is actually two questions — questions that cause us to think about salvation.

The first of these questions was put to Jesus by His disciples in the aftermath of His encounter with the rich young ruler. Jesus commented on the rich young man's sorrowful departure with the comment about it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom. The disciples' question was, "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19:25)

Multiple Bible passages are quite clear and unanimous with the answer. One of the most memorized and quoted verses in Scripture is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

'Whoever believes'

The answer to the disciples' question about who can be saved is simply "whoever believes." In like manner Romans 10:13 declares, "For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" Again the answer to the question about who can be saved is "whoever." No one is beyond the reach of saving grace.

The second question about salvation makes the issue personal.

A jailer in Philippi voiced this question when he asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?"

The crucial movement in the two questions about salvation is the movement from "who" to "I," thus making the question about salvation a personal matter. The answer given was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

Recapture the experience

We might summarize the biblical responses to these questions about salvation in four parts. First, we must recognize the need for salvation. Second, we must respond to the gospel by accepting the good news that Christ came into the world to save sinners. Third, we must repent of our sins and choose to turn from sin to the Savior. Fourth, we must receive Christ by faith, trusting Him in our hearts and confessing Him with our mouths (Rom. 10:9-10).

Most of us who will be reading these words have long since answered for ourselves the questions about salvation. However, it serves us well to go back and recapture the personal experience of embarking upon the Christian life.

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.



Reaching millennials is about relationships, McFarland says

The tables in the fellowship hall quickly filled as people arrived at the Pastors, Staff and Wives Banquet held Feb. 25 in conjunction with the 2019 Alabama Baptist State Evangelism Conference at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

The topic of discussion this year: strategies for reaching millennials. Alex McFarland, speaker, writer and advocate for Christian apologetics, was the guest speaker for the banquet.

"Everyone wants to know 'How do we reach millennials?'" McFarland began. "One of the strategies I see working is mentorship. They are very, very relational."

It's important to remember effective evangelism is about investing the time, McFarland said.

"Evangelism in the 21st century is spelled relationships."

McFarland discussed the idea of "tribe mentality" in millennials.

"Millennials can be raised in

the church and make a profession of faith, and yet go to college and begin to doubt biblical commands and standards."

And why do they do this? According to McFarland, because they are looking for acceptance, significance and security, and "they aren't going to do anything that will set them against the tribe."

Breaking down those barriers may seem like a tall task, but it must be done.

'True and living God'

"We don't need to change the message," McFarland said. "We don't need to improve on perfection. We just need to recommit ourselves to the family and the family of God."

So invest time and build relationships, he said. "The great thing about the Church is that the true and living God is living within us." To watch videos

from this year's conference visit alsbom.org/event/state-evangelism-conference-2019. To see photos go to <https://bit.ly/2EFqgv4>. (Jessica Ingram)



McFARLAND



FBC Birmingham reaches women and children



Photo by Jessica Ingram

The ladies of FBC Birmingham make 60 blankets for the Lovelady Center. They took the blankets to the center mid-February and read to the children. "It's our outreach for the year," Suzanne Hopkins, wife of FBC Birmingham's minister of music Joe Hopkins, said. "We've done teas and stuff, but we thought we needed to reach out into the community."

‘Deeply touched’

Response to Lee County tornado devastation has been overwhelming

(continued from page 1)
and tarped roofs in Lee and Barbour counties, and volunteers assisted March 4–5 with feeding units set up by the Salvation Army. Chaplains were embedded with various teams and at the family reunification center and temporary morgue. And when local emergency management officials realized the great need for laundry services, ABDR set up laundry units and got to work washing clothes.

“This community is like most in Alabama,” Wakefield said. “Everyone has rallied to help each other.”

Wakefield praised the efforts of Providence Baptist Church, where ABDR set up headquarters for the week.

‘Phenomenal job’

“[Pastor] Rusty Sowell and that church have done a phenomenal job of supporting the community through the receiving and giving of donations, providing meals and getting other recovery agents in,” Wakefield said.

Sowell noted the professional expertise of many in his congregation and how they were already equipped to help in a crisis. “We moved quickly to get organized and then I

got out of the way to let everyone take care of their assignments,” he said. “We have a committed group of people here at Providence. I’m very proud of all their hard work.”

President Trump visited Providence Baptist on March 8 to pay his respects to the victims and their families and thank those involved in disaster relief work.

Because of the multiple-agency disaster response in the area, a statewide call-

out of disaster relief teams was not necessary, but Wakefield said he was grateful for the willingness of volunteers throughout the state to come to the area.

He also noted that some associational teams were being asked to aid Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association in mudout and flood recovery work following heavy rains throughout North Alabama that led to flooding in neighborhoods in Tusculumbia and Muscle Shoals.

As the immediate disaster relief response in Lee County winds down, Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association director of missions Bill King said the next phase is uncertain.

“Honestly, we’ve not been able to think that far down the road,” he said at press time.

Donations for disaster relief efforts may be sent to the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions or made online at sbdr.org/donate.



Photo by Doug Rogers/SBOM

On March 3, six tornadoes struck Alabama, including one that ripped through Lee County leaving 23 dead, 91 injured and hundreds of people without homes.

King said donations to the association have allowed them to help displaced families, including the family of A.J. Hernandez, the youngest victim of the tornado.

How to help

Gift cards are especially helpful in disaster relief situations because they allow families to buy for their specific needs. Gift cards for Lee County disaster relief may be sent to Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association, 2110 Gateway Drive, Opelika, Alabama 36801.

Donations for disaster relief efforts in Lee and Barbour counties, may

be sent to the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Attn: Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief, P.O. Box 681970, Prattville, Alabama 36068, or made online at sbdr.org/donate.

If you would like to give directly to the Alabama Baptist church serving as the command center, then visit Providence Baptist’s website at providencealive.com and click on the “donate” button on the home page.

In addition, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief has several upcoming training opportunities for volunteers wishing to become credentialed. For more information or to register, go to <https://www.alsbom-gm.org>.

Retired Illinois carpenter builds, delivers crosses for tornado victims

After being in his workshop for more than 30 hours straight Greg Zanis’ job was done.

According to a news report by WSFA 12, he loaded up his truck with 23 crosses — each personalized with the name of a victim of the March 3 tornado in Lee County — and drove nearly 1,000 miles from Illinois to Providence Baptist Church, Opelika.

Zanis, with Crosses for Losses, has made crosses for more than 26,000 lives lost in natural and man-made disasters, including

Columbine High School, Sandy Hook, the Boston Marathon and the Campfire Fire. “I do this because this is exactly what Jesus would do if He were alive today,” Zanis told WSFA 12 News.

A group of chaplains gathered around his truck to pray over the victims of the tornadoes and the ministry efforts taking place. Then Zanis gave them specific instructions.

“Don’t carry this over your shoulder,” he said. “This is a representation of someone’s family member. Hold the cross facing forward anyway you want to carry it.” (TAB)



Photo by Nick Wells

Spiritual oasis

Former grocer works to eliminate Alabama's food deserts — and wants churches' help

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

James Harris knows what it's like to eat a meal and not be full at the end of it.

He had four siblings and money was tight. Then after his mom died when he was 11 they moved in with family and there were even more mouths to feed.

"We know what it's like to grow up in an environment where you eat what's in front of you and if it fills you, fine, and if not you have to wait until the next meal," he said.

So to say Harris has empathy for the hungry is an understatement. That's why he has a heart for Alabama, a state where many people struggle to put food on the table.

"There are a lot of food deserts in Alabama," he said. "We want to change that."

Community access

Food deserts are low-income communities without ready access to healthy and affordable food — for instance, urban areas without supermarkets in reasonable walking distance or rural areas without a store nearby.

Harris is hoping Harvest Community Charities will be an oasis in those deserts.

The Birmingham-based ministry focuses on food, but it does a different kind of work than food pantries, Harris said. It doesn't work with donated food — it seeks to build up ways for a community to access and afford healthy, nutritious food directly from grocery suppliers.

One of those programs uses church-based pantries as a way to sell supermarket-quality food to the community at heavily discounted

prices. Harris achieves this by working with grocery wholesalers to buy food and ship it straight to the churches' pantries.

Long-term program

Another program called the Power of U mobilizes church members to patronize a grocery store in their area in order to keep it thriving and open for the community to buy food in the years to come. The store then gives back a small percentage of its promotional dollars to Harvest Community Charities to support its programs, and the ministry turns right around and uses those funds to buy fresh food from the store to use in local pantries.

It's a cycle that helps everyone, Harris said. "What we do is not a giveaway; it's a long-term, sustainable program to get good quality food into a community."

And Harris knows his stuff.

Because of his family's need for food when he was growing up, he started working at a Safeway supermarket as a teen and worked his way up through the ranks. By 22 he owned his own grocery store.

And over the past four decades he's learned the ins and outs of the corporate food business at the executive level.

He's putting that to use now in his work with Harvest Community Charities.

And he and ministry partner Sammy Campbell — formerly a church planting specialist for Birmingham Metro Baptist Association — both agree the end goal is an eternal one.

"We're trying to eliminate food deserts in the state, reduce food



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

In Alabama nearly 17 percent of the population is food insecure. James Harris (left) and ministry partner Sammy Campbell use Harvest Community Charities to 'eliminate food deserts in the state, reduce food hardships and see folks saved.'

hardships and see folks saved," Campbell said. "We want to bring them in, feed them, organize them into churches and establish relationships that make all the difference."

In Alabama nearly 17 percent of the total population is food insecure with the rates in some counties as high as 32 percent, according to Feeding America.

Harris said at the end of the day, it's about meeting people at their place of need, both with accessible food and the love of Christ and even with help finding a job so they can better afford food in the future.

As one of the ministry's many ways of helping a community get on its feet, Harris wants to help train up people to earn careers in the grocery business just like he did.

"I was one of those people in the system — I know what it's like," he said. "We want to offer them an off-ramp from the system."

Kristy Kennedy, an associate in the associational missions office of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said she loves the way the ministry's main objective is the

life transformation that comes from meeting Christ.

"They seek to meet the hunger needs of fellow Alabamians while sharing the hope that Christ gives," said Kennedy, who also serves as a board member for Harvest Community Charities. "They are a true group of visionaries who seek to provide nutritious food to help people be able to live the abundant life that Christ provides."

The ministry is also hoping to partner with more and more churches who could adopt an area of their city or state with food access problems.

'Great opportunity'

Harris has a variety of creative ideas of how they could help, from financial support to community farming to food distribution.

"I so want the churches to step into this great opportunity that would entice people to come to know Him. The most important thing is for people to come into relationship with Christ," Harris said. "What if God does something in Alabama that could become a template for use around the nation? I think we have an opportunity to do that."✝

For more information
visit hccharities.com

"What if God does something in Alabama that could become a template for use around the nation?"

I think we have an opportunity to do that."

James Harris
Harvest Community Charities



ESL Ministries Provide Way to Share Gospel

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ~Romans 10:14-15 (NIV)

The United States is home to approximately 44 million immigrants, and more than half are not fluent in English. That means more than 20 million people in the U.S. struggle to find work for themselves and a community to call their own. It's also likely that a significant percentage of these 20 million may have never heard the Gospel either because they haven't heard it in English or even their native tongue.

By Sydney Basden
SBOM Intern

According to State Missionary Kristy Kennedy, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are a tangible way churches can reach their communities and effectively communicate the Gospel with those around them.

"Sometimes, people talk about going overseas to share the Gospel with internationals, which is very important," Kennedy said. "Here's another opportunity to reach internationals, but it can be done in our own communities by simply driving across town or walking across the street."

ESL classes can be taught at any level and at a church of any size. Kennedy explained that the only things needed are one trained volunteer and a desire to "reach out to the foreigner" in need of English and of the Gospel.

Several churches across the state already have ESL ministries, such as First Baptist Church, Prattville.

First Prattville's missions pastor -- who is publicly identified only as L.J. because of frequent mission trips to closed countries -- said the church's ESL classes have more than 100 individuals from almost 20 nations. The classes, he noted, are a way to serve the community by providing training in a much-needed skill.

"English is necessary in America to live a life of opportunity," L.J. said. "Our ESL classes help internationals expand their horizons and can change their lives."



Also offering ESL ministry is First Baptist Church, Montgomery, where Charlotte Cearley and Ruth McKinney teach.

Both women are former international missionaries and said the work they do now is just as important as the work they did overseas. "I've learned languages as an adult, so I know how they feel," Cearley said. "Seeing them grow in ability and confidence, while allowing me the opportunity to share my faith with them, is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done."

First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has had an ESL ministry for approximately 35 years and currently offers classes twice a week.

Missions pastor Vial Fontenot said he has around 25 trained

volunteers who provide everything from childcare to the actual ESL instruction in the classes.

"As of right now, all of our lead teachers are certified, and we are working on ensuring our entire team has received their certification," Fontenot said. "It allows us to speak freely about our faith while honoring our commitment



Former international missionary Charlotte Cearley leads an ESL class at First Baptist Montgomery.

to teaching English at a high level."

The 11-hour certification course is provided several times a year through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

The training uses North American Mission Board resources and normally takes place over the course of two days. It covers everything from pronunciation to lesson planning while also teaching attendees the best ways to share the Gospel with ESL students. Most ministries require the certification to be an ESL instructor.

Kennedy said the training is vital to the ministry because it ensures internationals are receiving high-quality instruction and as a result hopefully will become regular attendees of the classes.

"Christ commands us to share the Gospel, and ESL ministry is a great avenue through which many internationals have heard the Word of God for the first time and have become followers of Christ," Kennedy said. "Our churches have the wonderful opportunity to share the Good News with

them, so we should make the most of that opportunity."

For more information on ESL training and ministries throughout the state, please contact State Missionary Kristy Kennedy at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 311, or (334) 613-2311, kkennedy@alsbom.org.



Darren Segura, a volunteer in First Baptist Prattville's ESL ministry, uses the Bible to teach an English lesson to a student.

Photos by Sydney Basden

'God is at work'

Church plants ministering to large unreached sector of Alabama

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Last year Lamar Duke was asked to pull together some numbers for a report.

He did — and when he finished he sat at his desk and wept.

"Since 2013 we've planted 85 churches," said Duke, church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "And when we did that study last year those 85 church plants had baptized 785 people and given \$754,000 through the Cooperative Program."

Those numbers are a sign of the amazing things God is doing through church planters around the state, Duke said. Their ministry is reaching into a segment of the population that nothing else is reaching.

'Skill and resilience'

"The system we've had (of established churches) is effectively reaching 40 percent of the population," he said. "We need to lay another system beside it that reaches into that other 3 million people who are unchurched or dechurched."

Church plants, Duke said, are like the SEAL teams going into that un-

churched 60 percent of the state's population and trying to find a way to reach them.

"To start a new church from scratch requires a lot of different skill sets and resilience," Duke said.

So the SBOM works hard to train and coach those new church planters.

Some church plants have been operating for several years now. Others are embryonic, he said.

"But they are reaching the unchurched," Duke said. "I tell people all over Alabama that if we have one church that can baptize 30

a year for the next five years, that's significant.

"But if that church can also plant churches that do the same thing, how many more people will come to know Jesus that way?"

His prayer for Alabama is that churches will plant churches that plant churches — and he prays that will never stop until Jesus comes back.

Rick Lance, executive director of the SBOM, said each church plant is a cause for celebration.

Like a new baby it "creates a sense of anticipation as to what our Lord will do in the future," he said. "All

**March 17 is
Church Planting
Emphasis Sunday.**



Photo courtesy of Lamar Duke

Church planters gather to pray to close out a recent seminar on international church planting basics in Mobile. The seminar offered tracks for Chinese, English, Korean and Spanish-speaking churches.

across our state, God is at work birthing new churches and reaching people for Christ. We are grateful for this blessing and we look forward to seeing more of it in the future."

Duke said he has seen the fruit in the numbers, and he's seen it personally too.

A while back he preached at a church plant in Enterprise — the Church on Boll Weevil Circle (see story, this page). After the service a woman came up to him and said,

"You don't remember me, do you?" Duke told her he was sorry, but he didn't.

"She told me, 'You baptized me in that church you planted years ago in Savannah, Georgia, and you and your wife got me through a very hard time in my life,'" Duke said. "Now she's in Enterprise and an active part of the church there. That just blew me away. God is at work."

For more information about church planting visit plantalabama.org.

They started with two, and now they're a church

A few decades ago Coffee Baptist Association conducted a community study and discovered there was a big need for a church on Boll Weevil Circle, the "main artery" that wraps around the middle of Enterprise.

Every assessment they did after that showed the same thing. And a few years ago they decided it was time to make a move.

"Somebody suggested that we just pull together a nucleus of people and start meeting with them while being careful not to pull people from other churches," said John Granger, current associational mission strategist.

Thriving church

So that's what Granger did. The first week the Church on Boll Weevil Circle met, it wasn't at Boll Weevil Circle — it was in

his office in New Brockton and it was just him and one other person. The next week that person's wife came too. And over the weeks that followed they slowly picked up a few more.

The church kept growing. It moved to some portable buildings and its small membership gave generously to buy property with frontage on Boll Weevil Circle. And now they're getting ready to start construction on a new building that

will house their growing congregation — a congregation with a thriving men's ministry, music ministry, young adult group and children's ministry.

'Be a light'

"It's a challenge when you start with nothing, but it's been a blessing," he said. "God has done so much through this loving and devoted congregation. We have great hope that we'll be able to continue

being a light to the community."

Lamar Duke, church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he loves seeing the way God has worked in what started as a church plant meeting in an office.

"John is doing a great job," he said. "He's on the front lines, and he's got a vision for seeing even more happen down there." (Grace Thornton)

Passion for Christ

Lowder warns of dangers of 'lukewarm church' at 2019 State Evangelism Conference

A little over a year ago, a gunman opened fire on a high school in Florida, killing 17 students and staff.

It was the worst mass shooting on a school campus in United States history, and Jay Lowder said one of the most memorable images from the crisis was this — Deputy Scot Peterson's strategy to remain outside the school as the shooting was unfolding.

Material dependence

"He was the only person on campus that day with a weapon," said Lowder, an evangelist and author from Wichita Falls, Texas. "This man from the sheriff's department, trained and equipped to defend, to protect and to rescue stood on the side of the building and did nothing."

The footage sent America into an uproar, Lowder said.

"He will go down in infamy as a man who was indifferent ... who stood by as carnage was unfolding. What a tragedy."

Lowder told those present at the Alabama Baptist State Evangelism Conference at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Feb. 25, the image of Peterson was a good one to keep in mind as they looked at the "lukewarm" church of Laodicea in Revelation 3.

A lukewarm church could be seen as the same type of tragedy — standing by while people die all around them.

Lowder said he believes a variety of factors can make a church lukewarm. People's dependence on their own prosperity is one. Lack of depth is another.

Laodicea was a significant banking center, a fashion center and a city of medicine. They produced an eye ointment that was exported around the world.

And the church there

"was not a hot church," Lowder said. "They were also not cold. ... What Jesus said they were was lukewarm."

They went to church, they sang the songs, they knew the lingo, but they were lukewarm."

No greater danger

They had lost their passion for Christ, just for being in His presence, Lowder said.

"So many churches today are dead as a hammer."

There is no greater danger for Christians, he said, than being close to the truth

and being unmoved by it.

"There's got to be a new kind of repentance,"

Lowder said.

"God says, 'Let me heal your blindness, your lack of clarity.' So many pastors believe their greatest days of ministry are in the rearview mirror. What is your vision? What are you

trusting God to do?"

To watch videos from this year's conference visit albom.org/event/state-evangelism-conference-2019.

To see photos go to <https://bit.ly/2EFqgv4>. (Grace Thornton)



LOWDER

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CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Seventh Street Baptist seeks God's man to serve as a bivocational pastor for a traditional service. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search, 513 Seventh Street South, Bessemer, AL 35020.

PART-TIME INTERIM WORSHIP LEADER

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

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

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

RECEPTIONIST/MINISTRY ASSISTANT

First Baptist Church of Birmingham is seeking someone for the front desk position. Duties include answering the phone, membership, attendance, publications and assisting the associate pastor. Part-time, 29 hours a week. Please send resumé to: cjames@fbcbbm.org.

CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

FBC Centre, Alabama, is looking for a full time children's director. This person will have a calling to share the gospel with children, he or she will oversee programs for birth to 11 years old, and recruit and organize volunteers. Please send resumé to: FBCCentreKids@gmail.com.

STUDENT MINISTER

FBC McCalla is seeking a part time student minister. Church is located in the western part of Jefferson County, close to McDodory High School. Send resumé to PO Box 268, McCalla, AL 35111, or email it to tdjproductions1@gmail.com. We will accept resumes through March 31.

MINISTER OF MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

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'Power & passion'

'Old time gospel preaching' offers unchanging message to changing world

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Harold Fanning says it doesn't matter whether it's a big church or a small, rural church in Morgan County, the sight of the pulpit still gets to him.

Just standing there it preaches a message all by itself, he said.

It lets the whole room — and whole world — know the preaching of the Word is central.

"After all these years I still get this holy fear every time I look at that pulpit," said Fanning, a retired pastor who now serves as prayer meeting pastor and in the area of transitional pastoral counseling for Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville. "The privilege that God has given me to stand behind it and speak for Him, that's something I'll never take for granted."

That's the essence of a kind of preaching he calls "old time gospel preaching" — where a man passionately proclaims a message not just about Christ but on behalf of Christ.

"As a preacher you know you're a dying man preaching to dying people. You believe what you're saying," Fanning said. "We have a word from God for the people, and we preach a message with such passion that the congregation really is convinced that we believe what we're saying."

A pure kind of preaching

Robert Smith, professor of Christian preaching and Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, said it's a pure kind of preaching. The heart and soul of the message never changes.

"Old time gospel preaching must be based on what Paul said to the Galatians — if an angel from heaven comes and preaches any of the gospel than that which I have brought to you, then let even the angel be accursed (Gal. 1:8)," Smith said.

It's saying the same thing — the tenets and foundations of the gos-



Photo courtesy of Harold Fanning

A preacher is a 'dying man preaching to dying people,' says retired pastor Harold Fanning. Preaching is a privilege Fanning says he will never take for granted.

pel — in fresh new ways, he said.

"It's like having chicken," Smith said. "My mother was a tremendous cook, but she would always cook more chicken on Sundays than we needed."

Then the rest of the week the Smith family would see that chicken served over and over again in different ways — chicken cordon bleu, chicken soup, chicken and dumplings and more.

"But it was always the same chicken, the same basic thing is the chicken," Smith said. "It's just pre-

sented again and again in ways that are fresh, inviting, invigorating and engaging so that people see and feel the passion behind it without losing the core of what it is."



SMITH

Starts with learning

For it to be what it's supposed to be there has to be some learning, burning and yearning, he said.

The learning comes from opening and studying the Scriptures, he said. The burning isn't emotionalism but it is a feeling that your heart has been touched and changed by the truth.

The yearning, he said, is the overwhelming sensation that you can't help but share the truth you've been given.

Roger Willmore, associational mission strategist for Calhoun Baptist Association and a former pastor, said that kind of passion comes from a strong relationship with God.

"Passionate preaching is something that we derive from our relationship with Him," he said.

You can be calm and quiet and still preach with passion, Willmore said. "I don't think it's so much about style as an unction, an anointing that comes upon a man when he's preaching."

And just as Smith mentioned the learning coming from the Word, Willmore reiterated that when a sermon unpacks a passage of Scripture, a man becomes God's mouthpiece to speak His word.

A waning tradition?

Willmore said he fears that kind of preaching is beginning to wane in importance across the church landscape.

"I'm very concerned about that fact because God intended that the preaching of the Word be the means by which the world heard the gospel," Willmore said.

In the typical Baptist church the pulpit is centrally located and that's by design, he said.

"It is the central focal point — that's not out of mere convenience," he said. "It's a picture of the centrality of the preaching of the Word in the life of the church."

Fanning agreed. He feels the weight of the pulpit's importance and noted that he too has noticed old gospel preaching is harder to come by these days.

"The old time preachers compel their people to action," he said. "Right now I think preachers are facing a challenge to proclaim an unchanging Christ in a changing world."

"But I think we're living in the last days and the message of Christ has got to be proclaimed in power and passion." 🌈

Samford's preaching institute to train pastors who can preach

The Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School aims to enhance the teaching of preaching at Beeson by providing resources to students and serving as a continuing education center for pastors and ministers.

Smith, the institute's namesake, is a long-time faculty member of Christian preaching who holds the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity. The institute is led by Mike Pasquarello, who

formerly served on the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He also has 18 years of pastoral experience.

Smith said he feels unworthy to have his name attached to the institute but hopes it will do exactly what it sets out to do — train pastors who can preach "to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively and efficiently," he said. (Grace Thornton)



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Missional ambition

Evangelism requires power of Holy Spirit, passion for God, Bowman says

Kie Bowman said the report was one he thought he'd never see.

"I had to look twice to make sure it wasn't click bait," he said.

But it wasn't. It was a Barna report with this statistic — 47 percent of young adult Christians in

America now believe it's wrong to evangelize.

But 94 percent of them still said the best thing that could happen in someone's life is for that person to find Jesus, he said.

"It sounds incomprehen-

sible," said Bowman, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist and The Quarries Church, Austin, Texas.

But that's the reality the Church lives in today, he

told the crowd present for the evening session of the Alabama Baptist Evangelism Conference at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Feb. 25.

Christians have always faced a world that doesn't want the gospel, but now they also face a Church who doesn't want to offer it to them, he said.

It's a tragedy, Bowman

said, but what's lacking in the Church today is an ambition for the mission.

"We applaud young people with academic ambition, but when it comes to the gospel, we often think ambition is bad," he said.

Preaching from Romans 15:17-24, he said the Apostle Paul was a man on a mission and everywhere he went the gospel spread until the whole area had heard.

Power from God

Bowman said two things are needed to possess that kind of missional ambition:

1. Power from God.

The New Testament is full of evangelism and conversions, but sometimes people today may shrug and say that's because those evangelists had seen Jesus in the flesh. They say our motiva-

tion to share the news of the gospel today might be greater if we had gotten to

see one of Jesus' miracles or His resurrection in person.

But Bowman said that just isn't true.

"Do you know how many conversions were recorded in the New Testament between the resurrec-

tion and Pentecost? Zero. There's not one conversion," he said.

The difference wasn't that they had seen Jesus — it's that they had the power of the Holy Spirit.

"After the Holy Spirit falls there's a 10-minute sermon with 3,000 baptisms," Bowman said.

"What we need today is more power. Why in the world would we ever do evangelism in the power of our own strength when we have the power of the Holy

Spirit available to us?"

2. Passion for God.

If you go without the Holy Spirit you go without power; but if you go without a passion for God you don't go at all, Bowman said.

"Evangelism doesn't happen by accident," he said. "It takes a person filled with a passion for God and filled with the Holy Spirit to get up off their blessed assurance and walk across the street and tell somebody about Jesus."

Just go do it

Christians eventually have to stop preaching about evangelism and debating about it and just go do it, Bowman said.

"God, give us ambition for the mission and a burden for lost souls."

To watch videos from this year's State Evangelism Conference visit alsbom.org/event/state-evangelism-conference-2019. To see photos from the conference visit <https://bit.ly/2EFqgv4>.

Next year's evangelism conference will be held Feb. 24-25 at Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery. (Grace Thornton)



BOWMAN

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THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

3 stories

you should know



Photo by Seth Holloway/TheCutoffNews.com

The ladies of Crossroad Baptist Church, Hueytown, in Mud Creek Baptist Association, hosted more than 100 girls from their community at the fourth annual Princess with a Purpose Party on Feb. 22. The young guests enjoyed themed table decorations, photos with their favorite princesses and dinner while learning how they are part of God's royal plan. The church began the party as a winter community outreach effort, said Stephen Hess, associate/worship pastor.

Thieves steal catalytic converters in Cullman

A rash of catalytic converter thefts off church vans and buses caused the Cullman County Sheriff's Office to issue a warning to churches to keep an eye on their vehicles.

About a half dozen cases have been reported, according to Sheriff Matt Gentry, who said his department will closely patrol church neighborhoods. However, he advised that churches might want to take preventive action, perhaps by moving the church van or bus to a member's home.

Catalytic converters, part of a vehicle's exhaust system, are popular targets for thieves who are looking to sell the metals in the devices to scrap yards. Buses, vans and trucks are popular targets as the converters are easy to reach from under the vehicle. (TAB)

LifeWay's Waggoner to be interim president

LifeWay Christian Resources Executive vice president Brad Waggoner has been named acting president and CEO of the Southern Baptist entity following the retirement of Thom S. Rainer, a LifeWay news release announced March 4. Since 2010, Waggoner has served as LifeWay's executive vice president and COO, overseeing daily operations and helping provide strategic leadership of the organization.

"LifeWay is in an incredible time of transition but also a time of great opportunity," Waggoner noted. (BP)



WAGGONER

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Former Coosa River DOM James William Casady dies at 88



James William Casaday, former director of missions (DOM) for Coosa River Baptist Association, died March 1. He was 88.

A native of Notasulga he earned degrees from Samford University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



CASADY

In his 65 years of ministry he served as pastor of 12 churches and served 14 years as Coosa River Association DOM. At the time of his death, he was serving as pastor of Cartersville Baptist Church, Childersburg, and as a volunteer chaplain for the Childersburg community work center.

Randy Hagan, associational mission strategist for Coosa River Association, called him "a gentleman and humble servant of the Lord."

"He believed in missions, and under his leadership the churches he pastored gave generously to

missions," Hagan said. "He mentored many and was loved by all who knew him."

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Ann; sons, Bill and Allen; daughter, Cindy; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. (TAB)

Colorado baker reaches agreement with state over LGBTQ cakes



LAKEWOOD, Colo. — The legal battle between Colorado baker Jack Phillips and the state of Colorado is over after both agreed to end litigation.

Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado, dropped a lawsuit against the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which he said was harassing him for refusing to make LGBTQ-themed cakes. The Commission agreed to halt its proceedings against Phillips as well.

Phillips has long contended that baking such cakes would violate his Christian beliefs and that his rights to freedom of speech and religion protect that decision. Phillips' legal fight began in 2012, according to the *Denver Post*, and made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in June 2018 that some members of

the Civil Rights Commission exhibited hostility toward religious beliefs. However, the court ruling fell short of addressing the First Amendment issues of the case.



Alliance Defending Freedom photo

In a statement Phillips said he will continue to treat customers with "love and respect" and serve "everyone who comes" into his shop but added he "simply can't celebrate events or express messages that conflict" with his beliefs. (TAB)

Former Butler Baptist Association DOM 'Brother Allen' Winn dies at 66



Emory "Brother Allen" Winn Jr., retired director of missions for Butler Baptist Association, died March 4. He was 66.

A native of Brunswick, Georgia, he earned degrees from Mobile College (now University of Mobile) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

News near you

BETHEL

► **Linden Baptist Church** will host the Bethel Baptist Association accompanist banquet March 19 at 6:30 p.m. Anyone involved with the music in a church — and spouses — are invited. Call 334-295-8805 to reserve a spot. Deadline to register is March 15. Mike Snow is associational mission strategist.

BIBB

► **Rehobeth Baptist Church, Lawley**, will hold its 200th anniversary celebration March 17 from 10 a.m. to noon. Lunch will follow the service. Pictures and memorabilia will be displayed, and the church's 200th anniversary cookbook, "Recipes of Yesterday and Today" will be on sale. Kirk Smith is pastor. ► **Bethlehem Baptist Church, Centreville**, will host its fifth Sunday singing March 31 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Tom Conroy is pastor.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its regular third Sunday night singing featuring Joyful Hearts on March 17 at 6 p.m. For more information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CAREY

► **Benjamin Curlee** is the new pastor of **Lineville Baptist Church**. He will begin at Lineville Baptist on March 31. He previously served as pastor of students and outreach at Eastaboga Baptist Church. Curlee holds a degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to Shelby.



CURLEE

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association** will host Samford University's Ministry Training Institute (MTI) class "Introduction to the New Testament." Classes will begin March 25 and run through May 13. Classes will be held Monday nights from 6 to 9 at the association office. Corey Cochran will be the instructor. Classes will be available for ministers and church lay people. Participants will receive a biblical studies certificate upon completion of the course. To register visit www.samford.edu/go/mti. For more information call 256-382-7021. Kevin Blackwell is executive director of MTI. Eddy Garner is associational mission strategist.

FRANKLIN

► **First Baptist Church, Russellville**, will host a church security training event March 25 at 6 p.m. It will be led by Mark Wakefield, disaster relief and chaplaincy ministries strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. The training is open to all churches in the Franklin Baptist Association. For more information call 256-332-2065.

ETOWAH

► **First Baptist Church, Gadsden**, will host a revival March 18–20 featuring guest speaker Clint Pressley. Services will begin at 6 each night. Child care and a children's revival will be available each night. Mat Alexander is pastor.

MARSHALL

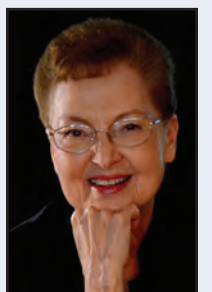
► **Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz**, will host "Grief Share" beginning March 20 from noon to 2 p.m. The 13-week grief support class is open to anyone who has lost a loved one. For more information call 256-593-9496 or 256-593-7762. Mike Goforth is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, Berry**, will host a revival featuring Shannon Knight on March 18–20 at 7 nightly. Shane Smith is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Ryans Creek Baptist Church, Bremen**, will host its annual spring fellowship March 19 at 6 p.m. Rosalie Hunt will be the guest speaker. Hunt is an author and missionary to Asia. She and her husband, Bob, spent 30 years serving in eight Asian countries, including China, Taiwan and Myanmar. Hunt will be available to sign books. The covered-dish dinner will begin at 6 p.m. in the Family Life Center, and Hunt will speak at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Brandon Stripling is pastor. 🌈



HUNT

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Prior to his decade of service in Butler Association, Winn was pastor of Spring Creek Baptist Church, Honoraville. Upon his retirement in June 2018 Winn said he accepted Jesus as a 10-year-old in Sunday School after hearing the story of the woman who wept and kissed Jesus' feet. He felt the call to ministry while a high school student and said he remained faithful to his calling by making himself available for whatever service God would have him do and by prioritizing his alone time with God.



WINN

Winn was preceded in death by his wife of 31 years, Susan. He is survived by daughters, Melanie, Ashley and Robin; and five grandchildren. (TAB)

Nigerian government failed to protect Christians and should act, court rules



ABUJA, Nigeria — The government of Nigeria failed to protect people massacred by Muslim Fulani herdsmen in

predominantly Christian areas of Benue state in 2016 and should prosecute those responsible, a West African court has ruled.

On Feb. 26, in a unanimous verdict of three judges, the Economic Community of West African States Court of Justice ordered the government to investigate the attacks that killed more than 300 Christians and destroyed property in the Agatu area. The government also was ordered to identify and prosecute the perpetrators and redress victims.

The court also ordered Nigeria's government to take urgent measures to protect Christians in the area by deployment of soldiers and police personnel to the affected communities. The suit states in the past three years, Muslim Fulani attacks have killed 1,000 people and destroyed property in 15 counties, including the Agatu area.

Nigeria ranked 12th on Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution. (MS)



Wikipedia photo

Judson Baptist Association pastor Kevin Lee Freeman dies at 49



Kevin Lee Freeman, pastor of Camp Springs Baptist Church, Columbia, died Feb. 27. He was 49.

A native of Dothan, Freeman graduated from Ashford High School and The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville.

He served as youth pastor of Webb Baptist Church, where he was a long-time member, then served as education director at Southside Baptist Church, Ozark.

Freeman later served as pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, Ashford, and Cowarts Baptist Church before moving to Camp Springs Baptist.

He also taught at Bethany Divinity College and Seminary in Dothan, where he earned two master's degrees and a doctorate.

Freeman is survived by his sons, Jared and Jon Sullivan; daughters, Alyssa and Emmalee; and his fiancé, Samantha Peters. (TAB)



FREEMAN



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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.

MARCH

- 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 **Transitional Pastor Training**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Mike Jackson, ext. 210, or Debbie Dickey, ext. 218
- 8-10 **Fulfill (formerly Senior Adult Retreat)**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 11 **North Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, East Highland, Hartselle, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 11 **South East Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Ridgecrest, Dothan, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 11 **South West Regional Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament**, Tillman's Corner First, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 12 **Pastor-Spouse Date Night**, Grace, Fayette, Mike Jackson, ext. 210, or Debbie Dickey, ext. 218
- 12-14 **Deaf Men Zone**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311
- 13 **State Disaster Relief Shower & Laundry Unit Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 14 **Palm Sunday**
- 14 **Cooperative Program Sunday**, Lori Lockett, ext. 304
- 14 **North Central Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Meadow Brook, Birmingham, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 14 **South Central Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Prattville First, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 15 **South West Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Spring Hill, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 15 **West Central Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Fairhaven, Demopolis, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 15-17 **Interlink Youth Ministers Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 16 **North East Regional Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Mt. Zion, Alexandria, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 19 **Good Friday**
- 21 **Easter Sunday**
- 26-28 **OneVoice Tour**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Keith Hibbs, ext. 217
- 27 **State Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament**, Montgomery First, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 30 **Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Sandy Harmann, ext. 266

MAY

- 3-4 **Church Weekday Education (CWE) Leadership Training**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Linda Hicks, ext. 263, or Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 4 **State Pinewood Derby Race**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 4 **North Alabama Spring Library Workshop**, Shoal Creek, Deatsville, Marty Woodall, 334-569-3854
- 5 **Senior Adult Sunday**, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 6 **Senior Adult Evangelism Conference**, Lakeside, Birmingham, Amy Nelson, ext. 258
- 7 **Church Insurance: Protecting People and Property**, Dale Baptist Association Office, Ozark, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 12 **Mother's Day**
- 12 **Children's Homes & Family Ministries Sunday**
- 12-18 **Christian Home Week**, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 14 **Church Insurance: Protecting People and Property**, Northbrook, Cullman, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 27 **Memorial Day**

Transitional Pastor Training Meeting the Needs of Alabama Baptist Churches

This event is for pastors and associational missionaries who are interested in working with churches during a transitional period to provide wise counsel and experienced leadership through the stages of transition between the end of one pastor's ministry and the beginning of another's.

APRIL 8-10, 2019 ▼ SBOM Facility, Prattville

MONDAY, 1 P.M.-5:30 P.M.

TUESDAY, 8:30 A.M.-5:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, 8:30 A.M.-NOON

SPECIAL GUESTS: *Henry Webb*, LifeWay consultant, transitional pastor ministry
J. Marcus Merritt, Lead state missionary, church minister relations, Georgia Baptist Mission Board

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For more information, contact State Missionary Mike Jackson, 1.800.264.1225, ext. 210, mjackson@alsbom.org, or Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey, ddickey@alsbom.org, at (334) 613.2218.

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



LeaderCare
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Building a foundation

Samford's Christian ministry program gives students practical ministry prep

Every week Scott Guffin has a small group of students show up in his office. They're there for what he hopes is something foundational for their life and ministry.

They're there to be disciplined.

Guffin, executive director of Christian ministry at Samford University in Birmingham, heads up the school's new Christian

ministry program, a degree track that offers classes on topics like discipleship, leadership, exegesis, missions, worldview and apologetics.

Practical elements

"The distinction with us is that our entire program is focused around the hub

of the Great Commission," Guffin said.

And those classes have a practical element, he explained. For instance, with the discipleship class students are disciplined by a faculty member for the first semester, then expected to disciple others the next semester.

"Disciple making, evangelism and missions are the centerpiece of our program," he said. "We want to tackle

the big theological issues, but we want to also know how to apply those practically from Monday to Saturday."

The program's courses are designed for two groups of people — those who want to earn a degree in Christian ministry and those who are pursuing

other vocations but are passionate about ministry and missions. Students can major or minor in Christian

ministry or they can choose to take classes a la carte as electives.

"We're hoping we'll have students who are studying business, arts, education, health care and other disciplines interact with us in some way," Guffin said.

Additional faculty

Guffin, a Gardendale native who had a 32-year career in church ministry before joining the Samford

staff, is also joined by these faculty members:

► Galen Jones, a former church planter, missionary and faculty member at Oklahoma Baptist University, and

► J.D. Payne, a former Baptist seminary professor, staff member at the Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and author of 13 books

on missions and evangelism.

The program is wrapping up its first full year this spring.

An added benefit to the program, Guffin said, is its partnership with Samford's

Ministry Training Institute (MTI), an adult education program for ministers.

Continuing education

Graduates of the Christian ministry program will be able to take continuing education classes through MTI. And not only that, MTI students will be able to take summarized versions of classes offered through the Christian ministry program.

For more information about Samford's Christian ministry program visit samford.edu/arts/christian-ministry. (Grace Thornton)

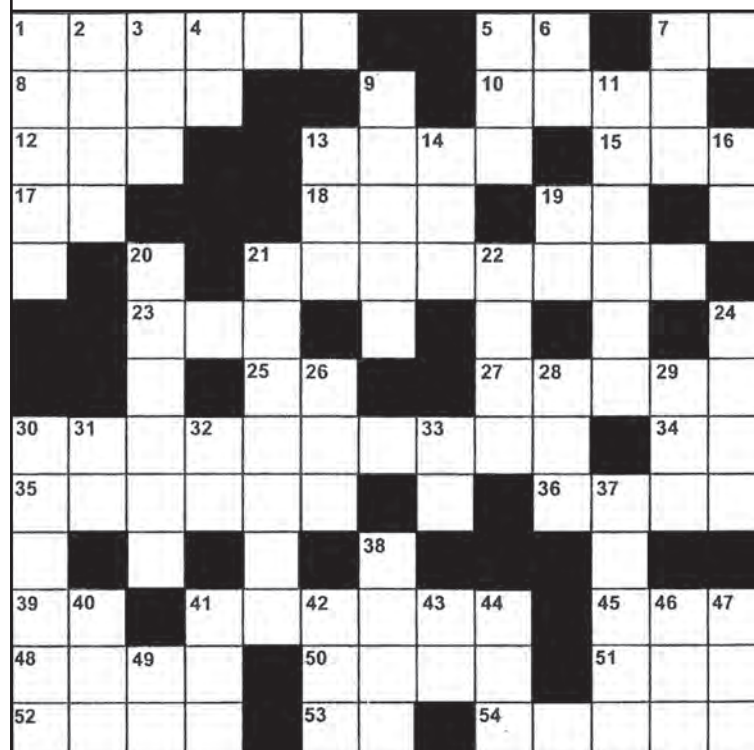
For more information about Samford's Christian ministry program visit samford.edu/arts/christian-ministry.

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

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Across

1. Hannah's son. (1 Sam. 1:20)
5. For ___ persecuted they the prophets. (Matt. 5:12)
7. Spirit of the Lord came up ___ David. (1 Sam. 16:13)
8. John also was baptizing in ___ near to Salim. (John 3:23)
10. The promise is ... to all that are ___ off. (Acts 2:39)
12. An explosive.
13. The ___ of God. (Ps. 46:4)
15. A great ___ dragon. (Rev. 12:3)
17. Whose son is ___? (Matt. 22:42)
18. How long is it ___ since this came unto him? (Mark 9:21)
19. Either/___.
21. Hated.
23. A little bear.
25. ___ it not written? (Mark 11:17)
27. I have never ___ any thing common. (Acts 10:14)
30. That they might have life more ___. (John 10:10)
34. To be ___ a certain place.
35. The director ___ the play.
36. A carnivore ___ meat.

39. Printer's measure.
41. Call for the elders of the ___. (James 5:14)
45. A torn-up piece of material.
48. The Thin Man's wife (Nick and ___).
50. In ___ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
51. Poetic for before.
52. Walked.
53. I am (contraction).
54. ___ them that love us in the faith. (Titus 3:15)

Down

1. Belonging to Adam's son.
2. English princess.
3. A witty saying.
4. United Nations (abbr.).
5. Take no thought ... what ye shall ___. (Luke 12:11)
6. A man ___ God.
7. Metal from mining.
9. He that is ___ days old. (Gen. 17:12)
11. To capture a lawbreaker.
13. A yellow car in New York City.
14. Also.
16. Authority to ___ these things. (Mark 11:28)
19. Firstlings of thy herds ___ of thy flock. (Deut. 12:17)
20. ___ not a servant unto his master. (Prov. 30:10)
21. Now ___ faith, hope, charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)
22. A spool of film.
24. Industrious insects.
26. He was ___ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
28. Yes (nautical).
29. Sat down to ___ and to drink. (Ex. 32:6)
30. Slight variation in speech patterns.
31. Sheep's sound.
32. New Testament (abbr.).
33. ___ have and ___ hold.
37. ___ with thine adversary quickly. (Matt. 5:25)
38. Type of train.
40. Neither/___.
41. A heel.
42. Bezaleel the son of ___. (Ex. 38:22)
43. 900 in Roman numerals.
44. A witch is an old ___.
46. He is, they ___.
47. And so ___ them up out of the land. (Ex. 1:10)
49. Rosemary (nickname).

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 17

Explore the Bible

By Robert E. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



UNITES Mark 3:23–35

Undivided House (23–30)

This segment is the first example of Mark's intercalation or sandwiching of one primary story (Jesus' family coming to get Him) with another story that makes a similar point.

Both Jesus' family and the religious leaders were wrong about Jesus. His family thought He was out of His mind. The scribes thought He was possessed by Beelzebub.

The teachers of the law were sent from Jerusalem to discredit Jesus, who was operating outside their traditions and religious establishment. How can they explain His power in casting out demons? The only way they know to undermine His ministry is by claiming He is sent from Satan.

Jesus does not respond to His challengers with direct statements. Using parables He shows the absurdity of their accusations. Jesus is announcing that He is the one Isaiah 49:24–26 points to who will overcome the strong man and save the captives. Conversely the religious leaders are the ones with hardened hearts resulting in alignment with Satan.

He also declares that those people who attribute God's work to Satan and deliberately scorn the power and forgiveness of God are guilty of unpardonable blasphemy.

C.S. Lewis, in discussing the claims of Jesus, said: "A man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. ... You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or else a madman or something worse."

Misunderstood by Family (31–32)

Jesus' earthly family traveled to seize Him forcibly (see 3:21). They, like the religious leaders, were wrong about His mission. Obviously Jesus' family initially thought He was mad and was

throwing His life away. Unlike the scribes His earthly family would eventually understand and embrace Christ's call. In fact Jesus' half-brother, James, would become a leader in the early church.

From this passage we are reminded devotion to Jesus often results in persecution and misunderstandings. Even family and close friends will not always grasp your choices as you follow Jesus.

My dad went to college in preparation for taking over the family business. Instead God called Dad to preach. His father was furious and cut off all college funds; he thought it made more sense for Dad to serve as a Christian businessman. Only years later did the family understand that Dad wasn't "crazy" leaving a comfortable salary and position to follow Jesus' call.

United by Purpose (33–35)

We have often heard, "blood is thicker than water" in referring to family ties. In biblical times this statement would have been even truer than today; the family unit was elevated above all other relationships. In other words a person's identity couldn't be separated from his or her family.

Jesus redefines family beyond biological kinship. He is not rejecting the importance of kinship. Instead He is elevating the family of God. The messianic order of family has now come and it supersedes even the closest of relationships.

Christians are to see ourselves as part of a larger family united with the purpose of sharing Christ with a lost and dying world. This news is tremendous in a day and age when loneliness has become the norm. God's family is seen as an ever-increasing body of Christ with a goal to lovingly bring in people from every tongue, tribe and nation. Being a part of Christ's family is exciting. 🌈

Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of New Testament, Samford University



THE PROBLEM WITH WISDOM Ecclesiastes 2:12–17; 7:23–29

Last week the teacher (the narrator in Ecclesiastes) took the persona of Solomon and spoke of an experiment he conducted to learn if success in many areas would bring him pleasure. He built monumental projects in Jerusalem, amassed wealth, exploited human beings and indulged every appetite. And he found that he was partly right; accomplishing both great and base things did bring him pleasure. On the other hand the pleasure was fleeting and, contrary to appearances, "there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (2:11).

Today we learn of a second experiment: What is the value, the teacher asks, of amassing wisdom rather than pleasures?

Wisdom has its advantages, but by itself it is not enough. (2:12–17)

Only the king can do what the teacher describes in verses 1–11, but God's wisdom is available to all. Verse 14 shows the teacher is familiar with the opinion that the wise prosper in this life whereas the foolish suffer; hence wisdom is better than folly. The teacher, however, has reached a different conclusion. Yes, "the wise have eyes in their head while fools walk in darkness," but there is no worldly advantage to being wise, he says. All, whether wise or fools, suffer the same fate in death. Moreover all will be forgotten.

Here is another bit of irony. For 3,000 years people have celebrated Solomon's buildings and wisdom. He has not been forgotten. Perhaps this is why the teacher will abandon this persona. His readers may be more sympathetic to hearing one of their own say such things as, "in the days to come all will have been long forgotten" (v. 16) and "so I hated life" (v. 17).

Read the rest of this chapter. Notice the shift here: the pleasure that he found in his toil (v. 10) has

turned to loathing (v. 18). Both wise and foolish die and long after Solomon is gone, both wise and foolish will enjoy the buildings, gardens, parks and pools he ordered to be built. Both wise and foolish endure pain and suffer vexation. Both sleep restlessly.

Wisdom has its limits in our finite minds. (7:23–25)

After chapter 2 the teacher speaks no longer as Solomon but as a common Israelite.

"All this" in verse 23 refers to verses 15 through 22 in which the teacher talks about moderation. A person should seek to be neither too righteous nor too wicked. Avoidance of wickedness seems self-evident, but why eschew excess righteousness? The teacher is saying that no one can achieve perfection. While doing good, do not forget your capacity to sin. Starting in verse 23 he speaks of how elusive even that bit of wisdom is.

The wisdom we need comes from pursuing God and living righteously. (7:26–29)

In verse 26 the teacher is not disparaging women but speaking of folly as if it were a person. In Proverbs both wisdom and folly are personified as women who call out to people. Wisdom is a divine teacher (Prov. 8:1–36) whereas folly is a seductress (Prov. 7:1–27, 9:13–18). In verse 28, 1 in 1,000 is virtually equal to 0 in 1,000. The point comes in verse 29: human beings violate their God-given purpose.

For our conclusion let us return to verses 24–26. Given all he has said the teacher concludes wisdom is worthless, right? Certainly not. Even if it produces no lasting reward wisdom is of God.

Accordingly, the teacher says, rather than grand accomplishments and hedonistic indulgences let us enjoy the most basic of God's gifts: to eat, drink and work shoulder to shoulder with our fellow Christian believers. 🌈

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!



MOVIES

Media reviews

'Animals with Cameras' leads March's family-friendly spotlight

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Nature documentaries always rank among my family's favorite programs — whether it's the BBC's splendid "Planet Earth" and "Frozen Planet" series or PBS' marvelous and time-tested "Nature" programs.

But those documentaries have their limits. The camera operators can't go everywhere.

For example they can't swing through the trees with chimpanzees, dive down a burrow with meerkats or ride the back of a cheetah as it hunts for food.

Until now.

Up-close look

A new three-part mini-series, "Animals with Cameras," follows small and big animals alike through their natural habitat as they carry lightweight cameras wherever they go.

The series was released in 2018 by the BBC and PBS and is streaming now on Netflix. It's a nature documentary unlike anything you've seen.

In Episode 1 we go underground with meerkats and explore 300 feet of tunnels. We swing through the trees with a chimpanzee in a scene straight out of a Hollywood film. And we dive under the water with penguins as they search for food.

The series has its critics but the host explains each time how the cameras are benefiting the animals and conservation efforts.

The chimpanzee, for instance, had been orphaned and its caretaker was needing to know if it could survive in the wild. The camera provided the answer.

Also worth watching this month:

► **"Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy"**

— In theaters for three nights only (March 14, 16 and 19), this gripping documentary

follows filmmaker Timothy Mahoney as he explores a central question of Bible scholarship: Who wrote the first five books of the Bible, also known as the Pentateuch?

Conservative scholars say it was Moses, while others say it was written hundreds of years later and cannot be trusted.

The issue isn't trivial, as it gets to the foundation of whether the Bible is God's word. Mahoney, if you're curious, lands on the side of conservatives.

► **"Basketball documentaries"** — March is the month for "madness" in college basketball, and Amazon Prime and YouTube are home to a plethora of basketball documentaries and videos to whet your appetite. Amazon Prime is



Photo courtesy of PBS

'Animals with Cameras'

the best platform for NBA documentaries (keyword: "NBA"). YouTube is the best source for college basketball clips.

Try these YouTube keywords: "March Madness buzzer beaters" and "college basketball documentary."

► **"Ancient Roads from Christ to Constantine"** — St. Patrick's Day is March 17.

Why not learn about the real Patrick — and other heroes of church history too?

One of my favorite church series is PBS' "Ancient Roads from Christ to Constantine," now streaming for free on Amazon Prime.

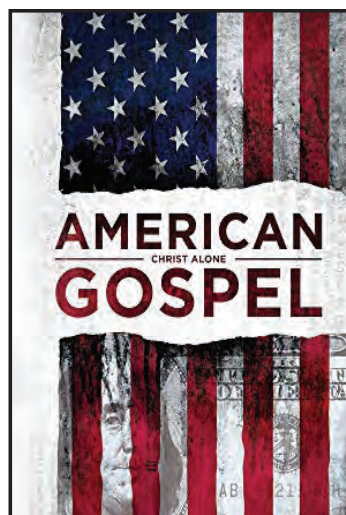
Historian Jonathan Phillips explores the many sites of Jesus' miracles and then follows the steps of the first Christians as detailed in the Bible.

Another good one is A&E's "Christianity: The First Two Thousand Years," which is free on YouTube.

Don't let the PBS and A&E labels frighten you: Both docu-

mentaries presuppose that the Bible is true.

The faith-based streaming service PureFlix.com has dozens of documentary programs on this topic as well. Try these keywords: "church history" and "Christian history."



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.

► **"American Gospel: Christ Alone"** — This documentary critiques the Prosperity Gospel and Word of Faith movements asserting that their defenders — such as Benny Hinn — are promoting a message that is harming the Church and is antithetical to Scripture.

It can be rented or purchased on Amazon, YouTube and other streaming platforms. 📺

‘Community home’

Phoenix ‘church at the box office’ reaches millennials at local cineplex

A church plant that meets in one of the theaters in a cineplex may not be big news.

Except when a church plant impacts so many millennials that it never plans to leave.

Jeremiah Semmler and CityView Church, Phoenix, have seen more

than 350 people land in their theater seats and connect with the church family. Instead of watching a new release many soon meet Jesus and become released to a new life in Christ.

“Every Sunday in the theater more than likely there is somebody that does not know Jesus,” Semmler said. “We do not ever plan to leave the theater.”

Semmler is an Arizona native planting a church near where he grew up. He served for many years as a student pastor before becoming a church planter, launching CityView in September 2015.

Nsikan is one example of a millennial who has connected with Christ at CityView. Nsikan came to the AMC movie complex to see a movie. One of CityView’s greeters went over to welcome him and his friend and invited them to church.

Semmler encouraged the two



BP photos

In a Phoenix cineplex Jeremiah Semmler is leading CityView Church to take root, seeking to reach people who are ‘looking for a community home.’

friends after worship, “If you like it here come back next week.”

Nsikan returned and first connected with CityView members. Soon, at a Panda Express, one of the members shared the gospel with Nsikan and he gladly received Christ.

‘Stand-up follower’

“I would like to get baptized,” he said. Nsikan is now one of many who has made the move from being a sit-down acquaintance to a stand-up follower of Jesus.

Semmler understands millennials and knows how to speak their language with 25- to 35-year-olds

comprising the largest sector of the growing church.

“Our main focus is on people who are searching,” Semmler said. “We identify with people who are looking for a community home. One of the coolest things is to see someone on their way to the movies end up at church to give their life to Christ.”

CityView Church may decide to move to a different location in the next 10 or 15 years. Or this “church at the box office” might stay. With a big vision they are aiming to venture anew into church planting in the next few years.

Stay tuned for the sequel. (BP)

How to pray:

► Pray for more people to come to CityView Church and hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

► Pray for the CityView Church ministry teams as they go into the community to serve and share the love of Christ. (TAB)



CityView Church’s volunteers gather for prayer at a Phoenix cineplex prior to their Sunday morning worship.