



# The Alabama Baptist

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www.thealabamabaptist.org

April 18, 2019

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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# JESUS

*Paid it all ...*

all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.

“He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”

1 PETER 2:24



**EASTER SUNDAY IS APRIL 21.**

To watch the videos from this week's issue, visit our YouTube channel "TAB Media."

# First set of TAB staff members trained for Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief

Three members of *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) staff were trained in Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) on April 5-6.

This is the first group of TAB staff members to participate in ABDR training with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions — and it won't be the last. TAB encourages staff members to be trained and counts the time spent with disaster relief as work time.

## Exciting opportunity

"I'm excited to offer this opportunity to our staff," TAB's editor-in-chief Jennifer Davis Rash said. "We understand the need for trained disaster relief volunteers and this provides a chance for all of our staff members to be involved when disaster strikes — some providing news coverage and some working to assist those affected."

During the recent weekend training Susan Stevens, one of TAB's outside advertising representatives, and Janet Erwin, TAB's executive editor, were trained in mass feeding. Bill Gilmore, TAB's director of sales, was trained in mudout work.

"I was pleasantly surprised at



Photo by Jessica Ingram

the number of people attending, the variety of training offered and the multigenerational appeal," said Erwin.

"I survived a tornado in 1974 in a mobile home that was destroyed. While disaster relief teams were not in service at that time, I will always remember the help my church, friends and coworkers demonstrated to me.

"I could not have made it without them. I want to be the 'hands and

feet of Jesus' sharing that help and hope with other disaster victims," Erwin said. "I have worked alongside trained disaster relief people in four different local disasters but had never taken the time to attend the training," she said. "This time when I learned of the training opportunity, I knew it was time for me to attend."

For more information on how you can get trained with ABDR, visit [www.sbdr.org](http://www.sbdr.org). (TAB)

# State Board recognized by Prattville-area cleanup organization, being good neighbor

On Jan. 15, 2018, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) officially opened its doors at 1404 Fairview Avenue in Prattville after moving from the Montgomery location that had been its home since 1963.

Now at the 15-month mark since

the big move, the SBOM staff have adjusted well to the new facility.

"We are looking forward to many years of using this facility to resource our churches for Great Commission Ministries," said Bobby DuBois, SBOM's associate executive director and chief financial officer.

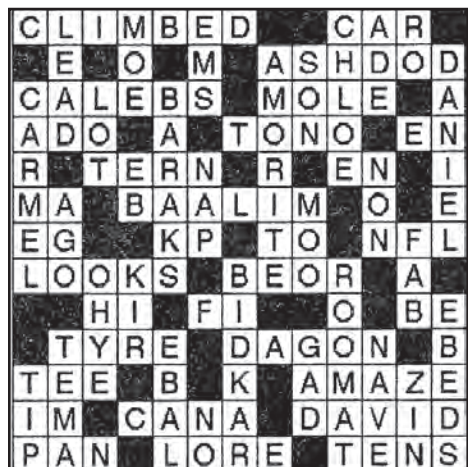
SBOM officials also are working hard to be good neighbors and help take care of the surrounding community.

On April 4, SBOM was recognized by Autauga County PALS



Cleanup, a joint initiative of Autauga County PALS, International Paper, the City of Prattville, Autauga County Commission and the Prattville-Area Chamber of Commerce, for its efforts in keeping the city and county litter-free.

SBOM's Wally Lacey accepted the honor on behalf of the SBOM staff. (TAB)



## TAB honored by Evangelical Press Association

TAB's print edition was recently recognized by the national media organization **Evangelical Press Association**. TAB earned an Award of Merit (second place) in the print newspaper category.



"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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## JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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

### POSTMASTER

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

### ADDRESS CHANGE

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

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

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



## 'Nation's Top Regional Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018  
as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council

# MY RASHIONALE

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

[jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)  
@RashionalThts



## Reflecting on the first 100 days and ready for 100 more

**A**pril 10 marked 100 days at the helm of *TAB*. Going into the role several mentors advised me to have a 100-day plan, share it with the staff and focus on implementing it.

In many ways I did have the plan, but outlining it happened more in 100-hour increments. We moved quickly into transition mode on day one (Jan. 1) and made initial staffing and responsibility updates.

An out-of-the gate staff retreat allowed for vision casting, brainstorming, team building and learning. Special guests challenged and encouraged us while time spent prayer walking the *TAB* building reminded us to lift up each other as well as the work we do in prayer.

The board of directors, especially the officers and committee chairs, played a significant role in the transition and worked hard to set our team up for success. The March 2 board meeting provided our first opportunity to truly reflect on all the moving parts.

The weekly deadlines for the print edition, digital PDF version and podcast continued as a backdrop while the daily web updates and social media posts kept us present in the moment.

We also immediately updated each of the content areas such as simplifying and freshening up the look of the print edition, stepping up our social media engagement and improving the functionality of our website.

Keeping up with the finances — along with the intensity of the annual audit — and manag-

ing the day-to-day operations of running the business typically happens without much fanfare. However we decided to implement new processes and assessments so there has been a little more activity than normal.

Offering an improved level of customer service and enhancing the opportunities for our churches, associations and other partnering groups is a major move made during these first 100 days. The conversion process took serious focus and a good bit of extra attention and work from our staff and Cambey & West, but we pulled it off within the timeframe we had hoped.

The final tweaks are currently being made and we will spend the next 100 days becoming proficient in our new system. We also plan to finalize the de-cluttering effort taking place throughout the building.

We reworked the staff's individual office spaces in January and are repurposing a few areas for current needs that will carry us into the future.

A few other items from the first 100 days are a new concert series sponsored by *TAB*, networking and training offered to churches and associations for developing their digital pres-

ence and increased involvement in Alabama Baptist life by *TAB* staff members.

We are adding continuing education and training opportunities to keep our staff sharp and growing, and we are striving to continually update areas that are falling behind.

It has been exciting and sometimes overwhelming to sort through all the ideas and opportunities. Thank you again for your support and encouragement. Please continue to pray for our team as we seek to serve our Lord and you with purpose and excellence. 🌟

## RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

### Congrats to upcoming Class of 2019 graduates — you did it! For ministry-related underclassmen scholarships are available

**G**raduation cards and gifts have been on the shopping list this month. Several friends are prepping for their children's upcoming graduations.

Two staff members at *The Alabama Baptist* are about to become empty nesters as their college kids receive their diplomas. And one staff member is helping her high school senior prepare to enter college.

#### Every dollar counts

Alongside all the excitement about graduation comes the conversations about how to pay for or now pay off college expenses.

I remember wrapping up college and being so thankful for the scholarship money I was able to piece together to cover tuition, books, etc.

Every scholarship dollar makes a difference and some scholarships are available that many people miss.

For instance, in Alabama Baptist life, if a student plans to enter a church-related vocation and attend one of the Alabama Baptist colleges scholarships are available for them.

One of those scholarship opportunities is provided by the Board of Aid for Students in Church Related Vocations.

The goal of the Board of Aid is to award scholarship aid amounting to at least 12.5 percent of tuition.

To qualify for aid students must be an Alabama resident and actively involved in an Alabama Baptist

church. From there students are asked to fill out an application with information related to need, income, indebtedness, etc.

Along with the application qualifying students will need a recommendation letter from their home church and a letter of testimony.

The letter of testimony should detail the student's personal calling to a church-related vocation. Students are interviewed each semester by Board of Aid members during the institution's registration process.

For more information contact Bonnie Bailey at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions at 800-264-1225, ext. 233 or [bbailey@alsbom.org](mailto:bbailey@alsbom.org).

—Jennifer Davis Rash



# Your Voice



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

## Easter: time to put aside secular for spiritual

By **Jenni Ingram**  
Gantt Baptist Church

As Easter approaches I think about all the secular events this season encompasses: the arrival of spring, planting of gardens, anticipation of my granddaughter getting out of school for the summer, shorts, flip-flops and barbecues.

I also think about how easy it is to get “lost” from fellowshiping with

our church family and remembering the reason for Easter.

Easter is not about hunting eggs or bunnies or finally being able to wear white shoes. Easter is about the foundation of our faith. It is about the resurrection of Jesus.

Let me tell you about the year I wondered if Jesus was real.

I was 17 years old and my baby had just died. I had prayed and

prayed that Jesus would rescue us, but this time His answer was no.

In my immature mind I didn’t understand why I was unworthy for Him to grant my prayer. I went to church every time the doors were open. I said my prayers dutifully. I even went to a high school where religion was taught every day. What more did He want from me?

It took me many years of pain and growing up to realize that He wanted from me the same thing He wants from all of us every day — our repentance, our acceptance of Him as our Savior, our admission that we are nothing without Him and our firm belief and confession that He is Lord.

He wants us to read and re-read His love letter to us — the Holy Bible. He wants us to study His Word. He wants a close, personal relationship with us.

When Jesus was in the garden before His arrest He knew the pain He was about to suffer. He knew so much detail in fact that His intense anxiety produced sweat like “drops of blood” (Luke 22:44). He did so much for us because of His all-encompassing love.

As we celebrate His resurrection this Easter let us put aside the secular things and concentrate on the spiritual — Jesus’ love.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Jenni Ingram is a frequent contributor to “My Jesus Story,” a regular feature of The Alabama Baptist.*

A majority of practicing Christians (76 percent) believes they have offered unconditional, joyful forgiveness to another person who had hurt, upset or sinned against them (or someone they love). Nearly one in six (15 percent) says they have never offered this level of forgiveness.

**Barna Research**  
**Barna.com**

An authentic Christian is someone who understands you can be holy without being holier-than-thou, righteous without being self-righteous, authentic without being arrogant. 1 John 3:1–10

#TheRealDeal  
**Rob Paul**  
**robpaul.net**

Sometimes the road we travel can seem like the worst possible path we could have taken. That is unless God wants to do the miraculous on our journey!

**Diane Mann**  
**leanintojesus.com**

In this age of individualism, men and women are doubly compelled to tune in to the gospel’s corporate call.

**Bronwyn Lea**  
**bronlea.com**

## Letters to the Editor

An atheist group from Wisconsin called the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) has threatened to sue more than 40 Alabama school systems, local governments and elected officials in recent years over what they claim are violations of the Constitution’s ban on the establishment of religion.

The organization is often successful. Many give in after calculating potential attorney fees and the uncertain outcome of drawn out lawsuits.

But perhaps it’s time Alabamians recall our state motto and “Dare Defend Our Rights” by standing up to some of the more frivolous of these challenges.

We have a common culture in Alabama. Central to our culture is a Judeo-Christian heritage that’s

often, and without harm, reflected in many of the traditions that buttress our public gatherings and official symbols.

To completely ban these traditions and symbols from the public square doesn’t separate church from state as much as it separates citizen from culture.

That’s not good.

There are bullies on both sides of this issue, pushing and shoving us around, either wanting to make people feel like outcasts or wanting to burn our traditions to the ground.

The reasonable among us must stand against these bullies. And the best way to deal with bullies ... is to push back.

**J. Pepper Bryars**  
**Senior fellow**  
**Alabama Policy Institute**

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

# “Why do people burn black churches?”

CHRISTINA EDMONDSON

Dean for Intercultural Student Development at Calvin College

Few things in life are more needed but more neglected than the power of fervent prayer. Prayer changes things. At its core, prayer is intimate communion with our Almighty Creator who is the one true God. Great movements of God are preceded by fervent prayer. As believers, we should practice the spiritual discipline of fervent prayer often and with others.

**Pastor Bill Wilks**  
NorthPark Baptist Church  
Trussville, Alabama

Can people have meaningful Facebook conversations? I think the simple answer is no, or at least only rarely. Think about it. How many times have you changed your political, religious or an ethical posi-

tion because of a Facebook meme, diatribe or a shared news or opinion article? ... Online conversation is limited. More than ever, we need face-to-face conversations that humanize one another.

**Alan Rudnick**  
Associate executive minister  
DeWitt Community Church  
Syracuse, New York

The prosperity gospel is alive and well in sub-Saharan Africa as is Islam and African traditional religions, animism. ... To see Ugandan Christ followers being equipped to challenge those false teachings ... helped me know that we're on the right path here.

**Paul Chitwood**  
IMB president

Writing is an exhausting endeavor and we cannot do it effectively when the well is dry. We also can't do it when our focus is on the wrong things. So how do we fill the well and sharpen our focus? I do it by moving closer to God.

**Edie Melson**  
Author

Often I struggle in prayer. These things seem to help:

1. Write my prayer in a journal.
2. Take a walk or jog outside.
3. Pray the psalms.
4. Sit in a chair and think.
5. Lay face down in my closet.
6. Listen to a worship song (or read a hymn) and pray the lyrics.

**Jeremy Morton**  
FBC Woodstock (Georgia)

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @gracefortheroad

When it comes to prayer, “there is not one magic bullet but a thousand pinpricks that draw us into a spiritual journey or pilgrimage.” Don't hunt for a feeling. Just get to know God a little more all the time.  
@\_PaulEMiller

### @dukekwndc

Let's be clear: We will be judged on the last day according to our care of the hungry/stranger (Matt 25), yet not “as the foundation of a new justification to be obtained then, but as signs, marks and effects of our true faith and of our justification solely by it” (Turretin).

### @harold\_fanning

There are many churches spending precious time searching for some way to fill the old wine skins of past tradition with the new wine

of modern change. It's amazing how some churches are attempting to power the space shuttle with a Model-T engine!

### @DrStevenJLawson

Jesus calls. Jesus redeems. Jesus reconciles. Jesus propitiates. Jesus rescues. Jesus saves. Jesus satisfies. Jesus transforms. Jesus preserves.

### @SEBTS

When you wrap your mind around the fact that your ministry is a gift from God, you can give it away and don't care who gets the credit as long as Jesus gets the glory. @tctaylor711 #SEchapel

### @bshelburne

Talked to @SenCamWard about fixing Alabama prisons. Why is this so hard in our state? “It's a tough on crime mindset, regardless

of the outcome,” he said. “I would say this. We profess to be a strong Christian state. The Bible tells us a lot about caring for those inside of prisons, even those who are not perfect, even those who have fallen, those who need the love of man. Justice should include punishment but also love of fellow man and rehabilitation.” #cjrreform #prisonreform

### @RevKevDeYoung

There's a kind of doubt that looks for answers, and a kind of doubt that never stops looking for questions.

### @plattdavid

God, help us to choose life and to spread life for the glory of Jesus Christ. May we learn from the foolishness of those who have gone before us. #praytheword



Photo courtesy of WMU

Sandy Wisdom-Martin is executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union.

## Fair trade benefits all

Recently I went on a missions trip to Peru and came home with an early birthday present — a cooking pot made by a local community member.

The process of making these pots starts with one family spending a day of extremely hard labor crushing rocks into powder to form the clay base. The pots are dried in a home-made kiln. Handles are added and a glaze is applied.

We saw people from three families involved in the process. For their work families will get about \$.33 for each pot they sell to a middle man who markets their products in Lima.

No one likes a bargain more than I, but not when it comes at the expense of those in poverty. God's word says in Proverbs 14:31, “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

Helping the poor is a common theme throughout the Bible. More than 2,000 WorldCrafts artisans worldwide depend on WorldCrafts orders to provide shelter for their families, purchase food and pay medical bills and school fees.

For gifts you need on any occasion consider WorldCrafts. You will honor the gift receiver. You will honor the artisans. You will honor God.

—Sandy Wisdom-Martin

# Baptisms

# Cooperative Program Receipts

## FOR CHURCHES (PART 3)

More than 3,200 Alabama Baptist churches report CP receipts, designated offerings, baptisms

Calhoun	Baptism	CP	Designated
Alexandria	0	\$6,960.89	\$3,045.50
Angel Grove	7	\$12,408.91	\$9,310.12
Anniston First	1	\$16,300.45	\$9,604.20
Antioch Bynum	0	\$0.00	\$100.00
Antioch Oxford	46	\$70,249.20	\$12,342.75
Asberry	0	\$0.00	\$3,400.00
Bethlehem	1	\$1,113.59	\$1,433.59
Blue Mountain	0	\$3,642.65	\$3,526.00
Boiling Springs	7	\$200.00	\$200.00
Bonny Brook	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bynum	4	\$4,448.83	\$3,179.89
Calvary	7	\$2,933.37	\$2,836.00
Cedar Springs	1	\$1,417.70	\$2,116.56
Cheaha	0	\$1,511.00	\$1,640.00
Chosea Springs	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Coldwater	0	\$4,196.08	\$1,513.00
Duke First	0	\$1,658.00	\$900.00
Emmanuel	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Eulaton First	3	\$2,178.54	\$2,049.50
Fairview Heights N'side	7	\$2,762.31	\$1,448.00
Faith	0	\$2,181.53	\$1,645.00
Friendship	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gladeview	0	\$9,880.13	\$2,969.00
Golden Springs	30	\$273,230.16	\$163,587.96
Grace	0	\$4,200.00	\$2,560.00
Greenbrier Road	13	\$1,800.00	\$4,119.83
Harmony	4	\$7,258.12	\$2,965.54
Hatcher Avenue	0	\$0.00	\$565.00
Hebron	0	\$200.00	\$999.40
Hill Crest	97	\$84,386.02	\$37,085.88
Holley Cross Roads	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Holley Springs	0	\$0.00	\$250.00
Iron City	14	\$11,615.69	\$16,636.33
Jacksonville First	44	\$89,499.93	\$46,009.35
Lakeview	1	\$1,100.00	\$3,483.13
Leatherwood	28	\$25,200.00	\$9,748.32
Living Stones	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lloyds Chapel	0	\$67.28	\$0.00
Mamre	0	\$2,776.33	\$0.00
Meadowbrook	5	\$58,458.00	\$42,318.56
Mt Gilead	0	\$4,516.00	\$839.00
Mt View	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Zion	57	\$44,154.58	\$25,581.86
Nances Creek	0	\$10,043.39	\$5,800.00
New Haven	0	\$6,938.27	\$7,840.00
New Hopewell	0	\$1,200.00	\$480.00
New Liberty	0	\$0.00	\$1,100.51
New Oak Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Northside Piedmont	0	\$0.00	\$1,100.00
Oak Bowery	2	\$2,787.00	\$2,806.70
Oak Grove	0	\$3,602.01	\$4,361.61
Oak Hill	0	\$300.00	\$100.00
Oakridge	0	\$0.00	\$180.00
Ohatchee First	0	\$3,862.39	\$5,218.31
Orchard Fellowship	0	\$5,200.00	\$0.00
Oxford Deaf Church	0	\$973.16	\$2,223.16
Oxford First	15	\$71,025.02	\$52,650.40
Parker Memorial	37	\$139,315.73	\$98,111.84
Parker DeArmanville		\$291.67	\$0.00
Pelham	0	\$0.00	\$550.00
Philadelphia	1	\$0.00	\$2,569.80
Piedmont First	12	\$71,816.09	\$10,181.52
Pleasant Ridge	0	\$0.00	\$730.00
Pleasant Valley	0	\$2,400.00	\$8,957.00
Plum Springs	1	\$1,657.20	\$3,078.00
Post Oak Springs	12	\$3,041.00	\$4,166.25
Profile		\$783.36	\$865.02
Rabbittown	1	\$2,172.60	\$0.00
Roberts Chapel	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ruhama	0	\$3,317.02	\$500.00
Saks First	10	\$74,524.00	\$31,807.49
Southside	0	\$0.00	\$50.00
Sunny Eve	0	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Ten Island	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
United Fellowship Valley	3	\$0.00	\$605.00
Wayside	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Weaver First	5	\$30,839.56	\$5,891.00
Wellington First	15	\$3,662.00	\$11,656.50
West Anniston	0	\$100.00	\$450.00
West Park Heights	4	\$12,024.64	\$4,660.26
West Point	8	\$14,437.00	\$1,050.00

### TOP CHURCHES IN 2018

1. Central Coosa Cowboy Church, Central.... 1 to 1.50
2. Primera Iglesia Bautista, Winston ..... 1 to 1.55
3. Emeus, West Cullman ..... 1 to 2.05
4. Fresh Rain, Autauga ..... 1 to 2.07
5. Pleasant Hill, Russell ..... 1 to 2.50
6. Calvert, Mobile ..... 1 to 2.54
7. Liberty, Colbert-Lauderdale..... 1 to 2.76
8. Three Rivers, Baldwin..... 1 to 2.78
9. Marvel, Bibb ..... 1 to 3.00
- Mable Hill, Madison..... 1 to 3.00
- Azalea, Mobile ..... 1 to 3.00
10. Antioch, East Liberty ..... 1 to 3.33
11. Triune, Etowah..... 1 to 3.52
12. New Life, DeKalb..... 1 to 3.75
13. Smith Lake, West Cullman ..... 1 to 3.82
14. Sweetwater Fellowship, Madison..... 1 to 4.09
15. Vernon, DeKalb..... 1 to 4.17
- First Flint River, Madison ..... 1 to 4.17
16. Westside, Coosa River ..... 1 to 4.25
17. Good News, Tallapoosa ..... 1 to 4.38
18. Society Hill, Tuskegee Lee ..... 1 to 4.44
19. Concord, Fayette..... 1 to 4.60
20. Faith Rock, Marshall..... 1 to 4.67
21. Mision Hispana de Robertdale, Baldwin .... 1 to 4.75
22. Davis Creek, Pleasant Grove..... 1 to 4.83
23. Gordon First, Southeast ..... 1 to 4.89
- Restoration Church, Mobile ..... 1 to 4.89
24. Larkinsville, Tennessee River..... 1 to 4.90
25. Beaverton, Lamar ..... 1 to 5.00
- Liberty, Madison ..... 1 to 5.00
- Oasis Church, Baldwin ..... 1 to 5.00
- Bible Baptist, Butler ..... 1 to 5.00

*Source: Annual Church Profiles for the Association Year*

West Side	0	\$11,123.00	\$3,780.25	Big Springs	1	\$3,722.38	\$3,923.41
West Weaver	0	\$9,557.25	\$6,549.10	Bowden Grove	0	\$1,848.64	\$3,032.43
Westwood	7	\$17,669.39	\$3,162.00	Clairmont Springs	1	\$1,603.15	\$502.00
White Plains First	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Concord	0	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Whites Gap	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Corinth	4	\$2,072.96	\$5,287.44
Woodland Park	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	County Line	0	\$8,724.64	\$0.00
<b>Calhoun Totals</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>\$1,257,168.04</b>	<b>\$704,440.99</b>	Cragford	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
				Delta	0	\$4,827.15	\$3,716.57
<b>Carey</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Hatchett Creek	0	\$250.00	\$350.00
Ashland First	1	\$31,450.47	\$8,260.00	Horn's Memorial	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Barfield	14	\$4,333.30	\$9,604.97	Liberty	0	\$2,261.00	\$2,045.00
Bellview	1	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lineville	4	\$37,314.03	\$24,815.80

Lystra	2	\$0.00	\$600.00
Macedonia	0	\$250.00	\$250.00
Mellow Valley	1	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Millerville	6	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Moriah	5	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Olive	0	\$0.00	\$3,500.00
Mt Pisgah	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Zion	13	\$6,000.00	\$34,610.00
New Fellowship	0	\$2,040.00	\$1,900.00
New Hope West	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Oaks Chapel	2	\$2,400.00	\$2,626.00
Olive Branch	9	\$0.00	\$6,372.20
Rock Springs	0	\$1,417.68	\$1,061.63
Sardis	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Shiloh	0	\$0.00	\$2,400.00
Spring Hill	0	\$0.00	\$133.00
Union Motley	0	\$2,504.15	\$1,000.00
<b>Carey Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>\$113,019.55</b>	<b>\$119,990.45</b>

Central	Baptism	CP	Designated
Bethesda	0	\$990.00	\$987.00
Bluff Springs	0	\$0.00	\$900.00
Candler Mountain	5	\$0.00	\$4,175.00
Central Coosa Cowboy	6	\$2,001.05	\$400.00
Concord	0	\$1,062.00	\$212.19
Goodwater	1	\$2,204.90	\$3,507.50
Grimes Chapel	1	\$3,350.00	\$2,675.00
Hollins	2	\$5,086.81	\$2,161.08
Kellyton	5	\$12,804.00	\$10,549.00
Macedonia	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Moriah	0	\$2,092.96	\$3,398.00
Mt Olive	0	\$1,380.00	\$439.76
New Providence	0	\$900.00	\$2,297.00
Newsite	1	\$3,522.00	\$1,538.00
Poplar Springs	4	\$0.00	\$0.00
Providence	2	\$9,787.96	\$3,304.73
Ray	10	\$2,982.04	\$1,761.50
Rockford	3	\$13,512.50	\$9,683.04
Sardis	0	\$4,685.83	\$13,103.67
Union	1	\$4,417.53	\$4,533.08
Weogufka First		\$0.00	\$0.00
Weogufka Second	0	\$4,161.98	\$4,827.00
<b>Central Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>\$74,941.56</b>	<b>\$70,452.55</b>

Cherokee	Baptism	CP	Designated
Alexis	3	\$418.97	\$726.50
Bethel	0	\$300.00	\$0.00
Calcedonia	1	\$0.00	\$40.00
Cedar Bluff First	0	\$15,407.09	\$12,543.92
Centre First	21	\$77,268.99	\$30,619.19
Dailey Street	1	\$1,947.87	\$2,292.61
East Centre	4	\$3,646.26	\$3,360.50
Enon Grove	1	\$2,422.29	\$2,839.64
Fair Haven	1	\$2,432.00	\$185.00
Faith, Gaylesville	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Faith, Piedmont	5	\$0.00	\$0.00
Farill	0	\$100.00	\$300.00
Friendship	1	\$6,448.33	\$1,635.00
Gaylesville First	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Liberty	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Melrose	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Moshat	0	\$1,162.63	\$690.00
Nazareth	0	\$356.25	\$861.00
New Bethel	2	\$500.00	\$2,107.50
New Prospect #2	1	\$3,772.28	\$3,932.00
Noah	0	\$864.06	\$3,404.89
Parkers Grove	2	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pilgrim Rest	2	\$338.40	\$315.00
Pine Grove	14	\$17,980.44	\$17,399.74
Pisgah	2	\$4,600.00	\$1,280.00
Pleasant Arbor	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Providence	3	\$640.00	\$319.00
Rock Run	5	\$0.00	\$335.00
Round Mountain	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
Salem	0	\$5,884.55	\$1,075.00
Sand Rock	11	\$20,616.07	\$750.00
Sand Valley	1	\$600.00	\$5,400.00
Sandy Creek	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Servants Heart	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Shady Grove	0	\$2,539.70	\$2,690.00
Shiloh	5	\$6,400.00	\$32,419.00
Slackland	1	\$14,445.30	\$9,190.15
Tates Chapel	3	\$5,700.00	\$5,084.21

# CHURCH REPORT FOR 2018

Church	Baptism	CP	Designated	Church	Baptism	CP	Designated	Church	Baptism	CP	Designated
Unity Hill	5	\$0.00	\$0.00	Good Hope	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Olive	0	\$3,057.42	\$350.00
<b>Cherokee Totals</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>\$196,791.48</b>	<b>\$141,794.85</b>	Gosport	0	\$600.00	\$2,630.00	Mt Pleasant	0	\$23,584.60	\$14,670.36
<b>Chilton</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Grace	0	\$3,210.66	\$2,325.00	Mt Zion	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Alpine	1	\$2,030.00	\$1,859.62	Grove Hill	3	\$10,000.00	\$11,859.87	New Brockton First	1	\$2,745.16	\$2,090.00
Bell Lane	10	\$18,568.51	\$11,771.19	Horeb	0	\$600.39	\$0.00	New Ebenezer	0	\$2,716.31	\$0.00
Bethsalem	4	\$25,691.10	\$23,160.41	Jackson First	5	\$60,000.00	\$17,006.90	New Haven	0	\$2,137.37	\$745.00
Cane Creek	0	\$1,737.30	\$1,263.50	Liberty	0	\$6,878.56	\$5,435.70	New Home	6	\$21,562.99	\$19,803.62
Center Hill	0	\$1,150.74	\$1,722.33	Midway	0	\$14,239.89	\$4,478.52	New Hope	0	\$1,600.00	\$4,161.00
Chestnut Creek	10	\$6,355.58	\$1,588.81	Mt Gilead	7	\$300.00	\$1,553.84	Newbia	9	\$3,238.29	\$5,203.89
Clanton First	2	\$106,217.97	\$84,028.11	Mt. Vernon	1	\$3,747.96	\$2,141.68	Open Door	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Collins Chapel	0	\$12,161.32	\$3,704.86	New Faith	0	\$2,184.18	\$162.00	Park Avenue	0	\$2,966.02	\$2,561.77
Concord	0	\$7,227.00	\$3,627.00	New Prospect	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Roeton	1	\$0.00	\$500.00
Corinth Missionary	0	\$140.00	\$1,309.10	Oak Grove	0	\$1,456.05	\$664.26	Shiloh	0	\$1,075.00	\$1,547.00
Ebenezer	3	\$22,209.00	\$17,787.34	Peniel	0	\$9,080.88	\$2,090.00	Union Grove	0	\$3,193.14	\$2,868.76
Faith	4	\$7,527.00	\$9,549.00	Pineview	13	\$35,080.27	\$12,651.00	Victoria	0	\$3,893.94	\$820.00
Floyd	3	\$813.00	\$1,115.00	Pleasant Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Westside	1	\$0.00	\$1,260.00
Friendship	4	\$3,644.45	\$2,413.91	River Hill	0	\$1,173.77	\$0.00	Westview	0	\$5,574.53	\$6,564.99
Highland	0	\$6,778.97	\$9,429.95	Rockville	2	\$13,058.00	\$5,445.89	Whitewater	5	\$1,169.26	\$10,573.34
Hillcrest	3	\$17,666.67	\$6,047.70	Round Hill	0	\$1,500.00	\$1,183.00	Woodland Grove	1	\$1,279.79	\$1,682.91
Jemison First	1	\$44,749.14	\$10,678.00	Salem	4	\$2,816.57	\$0.00	Zion Chapel	1	\$6,457.07	\$2,927.23
Liberty Hill	5	\$32,106.00	\$11,743.44	Slave Creek	26	\$6,000.00	\$4,347.93	<b>Coffee Totals</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>\$599,804.34</b>	<b>\$423,644.05</b>
Lomax First	2	\$2,997.23	\$1,450.00	Thomasville	5	\$79,127.39	\$24,370.84	<b>Colbert-Lauderdale</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Macedonia	1	\$11,408.19	\$9,429.47	Tompkins	13	\$32,500.00	\$12,394.04	Anderson First	5	\$20,717.37	\$8,393.30
Maple Springs	0	\$1,200.00	\$500.00	Ulcanush	0	\$4,423.50	\$1,250.00	Asphalt Rock	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maplesville	0	\$12,742.97	\$2,813.00	Union	0	\$7,388.52	\$17,132.10	Barton First	10	\$9,000.00	\$8,865.00
Mars Hill	5	\$4,765.28	\$14,660.10	Union Grove	1	\$2,019.00	\$741.00	Bethel	10	\$7,822.12	\$8,529.25
Mineral Springs	9	\$27,389.38	\$8,406.46	West Bend	0	\$7,482.41	\$2,095.00	*Broadway	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mount Bethel	5	\$4,733.96	\$500.00	Witch Creek	0	\$200.00	\$300.00	Calvary	2	\$16,429.16	\$3,037.67
Mount Carmel #2	1	\$5,087.44	\$4,003.78	<b>Clarke Totals</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>\$358,174.04</b>	<b>\$178,431.84</b>	Center Star	8	\$23,487.50	\$10,832.17
Mountain Creek	1	\$2,931.06	\$2,050.17	<b>Clay</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Central	1	\$2,332.06	\$1,755.00
Mt Carmel #1	0	\$3,732.51	\$6,895.36	Bethel North	0	\$0.00	\$1,300.00	Central Heights	0	\$23,625.00	\$15,505.00
Mt Pleasant	0	\$2,629.54	\$8,756.97	Center West	0	\$0.00	\$100.00	Cherokee First	0	\$3,269.47	\$3,385.22
Mulberry	20	\$20,582.87	\$5,010.85	McCollum	0	\$50.00	\$106.00	Christian Fellowship	11	\$100.00	\$0.00
New Cedron	1	\$1,100.00	\$2,650.84	Mt Olive	0	\$0.00	\$275.00	Cloverdale First	1	\$3,021.89	\$0.00
New Covenant	0	\$0.00	\$800.50	New Prospect	0	\$0.00	\$209.23	Colbert Heights First	54	\$33,067.30	\$9,006.50
New Harmony	0	\$711.86	\$949.14	Pleasant Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Corum Chapel	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
New Salem	4	\$800.00	\$2,696.50	Union Delta	0	\$0.00	\$100.00	Cross Brand	6	\$0.00	\$0.00
Northside	0	\$451.00	\$895.53	Clay Totals	0	\$50.00	\$2,090.23	CrossRoads	0	\$10,301.50	\$6,559.38
Oak Grove	1	\$1,147.95	\$12,961.09	<b>Cleburne</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	East Colbert	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Old Macedonia	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Ai	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Evergreen	2	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pates Chapel	1	\$21,718.27	\$4,503.00	Beason Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Fairview	0	\$6,172.46	\$1,649.53
Pilgrim Rest	0	\$2,557.75	\$5,010.41	Berea	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	First Southern	1	\$6,184.32	\$9,829.32
Pleasant Grove #1	14	\$12,144.13	\$11,073.79	Bethsadia #1	0	\$1,210.00	\$1,162.00	Florence First	0	\$82,026.24	\$20,318.75
Pleasant Grove #2	0	\$2,678.00	\$2,606.00	Beulah	5	\$1,068.20	\$2,478.09	Ford City	1	\$8,358.84	\$14,658.51
Pleasant Hill	1	\$4,046.95	\$561.00	Calvary	0	\$300.00	\$0.00	Forest Hills	3	\$25,826.22	\$5,841.00
Pleasant Valley	1	\$4,602.00	\$3,116.00	Camp Creek	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Friendship	0	\$3,622.18	\$4,547.18
Poplar Springs	3	\$4,338.55	\$1,955.00	Cedar Creek	5	\$1,500.00	\$1,594.00	Grace	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Providence #1	4	\$17,463.30	\$14,592.53	Chulafinnee	0	\$11,431.48	\$11,180.11	Grace Christian	0	\$5,557.44	\$1,389.39
Providence #2	4	\$17,680.00	\$15,783.01	Concord	0	\$360.00	\$0.00	Grace Life	0	\$4,800.00	\$9,223.00
Refuge	2	\$970.00	\$300.00	East Heflin	24	\$550.00	\$2,029.00	Greenhill First	5	\$26,183.31	\$14,613.80
Rock Springs	3	\$846.11	\$176.54	Edwardsville	2	\$1,940.00	\$1,127.50	Hampton Heights	4	\$0.00	\$1,370.00
Samaria	2	\$600.00	\$600.00	Freedom	23	\$1,150.00	\$1,706.11	Happy Valley	0	\$1,742.60	\$0.00
Sardis	0	\$2,348.51	\$1,306.50	Friendship	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Harris Chapel	0	\$6,650.18	\$12,193.15
Shiloh	0	\$1,033.00	\$7,292.00	Fruithurst	7	\$0.00	\$684.00	Hatton	0	\$15,488.00	\$838.00
Thorsby First	4	\$38,561.76	\$20,432.79	Happy Hill	5	\$1,529.00	\$3,416.00	Highland	39	\$125,958.00	\$50,668.15
Union Grove	3	\$11,842.00	\$11,008.00	Harmony Grove	0	\$0.00	\$75.00	Highland Park	68	\$83,333.37	\$145,734.33
Union Springs	3	\$23,847.37	\$35,000.84	Heflin	3	\$19,120.84	\$17,460.00	Hook Street	0	\$6,216.13	\$2,805.00
Verbena	1	\$8,325.64	\$8,050.42	Hepsabah	0	\$1,200.00	\$1,336.00	Isbell Chapel	0	\$471.57	\$0.00
West End	23	\$104,985.81	\$43,772.10	Macedonia	100	\$62,500.75	\$46,814.75	Johnson Crossroads	0	\$727.08	\$0.00
<b>Chilton Totals</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>\$701,774.14</b>	<b>\$475,368.96</b>	Mountain View	0	\$280.00	\$0.00	Killen First	0	\$37,800.00	\$29,312.00
<b>Choctaw</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Muscadine	1	\$400.00	\$744.00	Lane Springs	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Black Creek	0	\$2,798.85	\$1,230.00	New Harmony	0	\$900.00	\$246.22	Launch Pointe	0	\$2,196.96	\$941.56
Bladon Springs	0	\$500.00	\$2,100.00	New Hopewell	3	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lee Heights	6	\$28,647.32	\$7,984.03
Butler First	5	\$58,389.36	\$16,911.77	Oak Grove	3	\$0.00	\$0.00	Leighton	9	\$36,000.00	\$19,653.10
Calvary	1	\$4,833.34	\$6,583.41	Oak Hill	1	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lexington First	0	\$12,395.05	\$8,601.02
Chappell Hill	0	\$666.84	\$6,803.40	Old Hopewell	1	\$0.00	\$200.00	Liberty	29	\$8,484.54	\$10,071.54
Christian Fellowship	1	\$175.00	\$310.00	Pilgrim's Rest #1	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Little Bear Creek	4	\$800.00	\$510.00
Clear Creek	0	\$0.00	\$1,944.50	Pilgrim's Rest #2	0	\$1,627.00	\$1,476.00	Littleville First	0	\$357.50	\$113.50
Corinth	0	\$0.00	\$300.00	Pine Grove	3	\$9,292.76	\$1,151.25	Mountain Springs	0	\$880.00	\$1,300.00
Cullomburg	1	\$11,121.92	\$3,310.82	Pinetucky	16	\$1,200.00	\$4,275.00	Mt Moriah	1	\$3,600.00	\$7,288.00
Ebenezer	0	\$6,204.30	\$5,003.10	Pleasant Hill	0	\$0.00	\$525.00	Mt Pleasant	3	\$5,072.00	\$8,452.00
Eureka	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Ranburne First	2	\$5,916.82	\$1,837.00	Muscle Shoals	0	\$10,410.22	\$8,923.07
Gilbertown	1	\$18,711.78	\$10,626.34	Rock Springs	3	\$0.00	\$0.00	New Bethel	11	\$2,125.00	\$350.00
Hickory Grove	1	\$1,135.78	\$1,811.62	Church/Pleasant Grove	5	\$1,164.92	\$0.00	New Hope	2	\$1,000.00	\$1,366.00
Hopewell	1	\$4,447.63	\$6,415.00	Union Hill	4	\$0.00	\$1,158.00	New Sockwell	0	\$1,147.00	\$235.00
Hurricane	2	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	Verdon Chapel	0	\$0.00	\$55.00	Nitrate City	0	\$443.65	\$1,190.88
Isney	9	\$17,781.39	\$10,569.00	<b>Cleburne Totals</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>\$124,641.77</b>	<b>\$123,561.03</b>	North Highland	0	\$1,200.00	\$1,350.00
Lusk	1	\$2,809.00	\$8,559.00	<b>Coffee</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Parkview	8	\$3,600.00	\$1,200.00
Morgan Chapel	0	\$3,424.26	\$2,883.00	Alborton	2	\$3,133.47	\$2,260.79	Pride	0	\$837.80	\$0.00
Mt Pisgah	3	\$600.00	\$0.00	Basin	16	\$0.00	\$2,012.05	Ransomed Community	0	\$600.00	\$0.00
Mt Sterling	10	\$4,342.93	\$28,975.84	Bethany	4	\$7,854.40	\$5,643.00	Rogersville First	12	\$43,916.25	\$24,349.57
New Life Fellowship	0	\$7,758.58	\$6,160.05	Bethel	0	\$0.00	\$300.00	Sheffield First	6	\$17,546.82	\$3,953.29
Pleasant Hill	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Bluff Springs	0	\$0.00	\$400.00	Spring Valley	0	\$6,260.03	\$7,218.82
Red Springs	2	\$1,200.00	\$2,815.00	Brooklyn	0	\$1,200.00	\$1,447.00	Springfield	0	\$310.49	\$2,483.92
Rock Springs	0	\$947.85	\$2,851.90	Calvary	4	\$12,873.88	\$6,639.50	Bridge Fellowship	3	\$6,693.21	\$2,106.00
Silas First	0	\$7,540.56	\$4,232.00	Boll Weevil Circle	1	\$2,924.00	\$572.00	The Village	0	\$464.15	\$123.03
Spring Bank	0	\$7,280.21	\$3,121.00	Cool Springs	0	\$3,342.23	\$3,246.12	Three Forks	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tallawampa	6	\$4,208.00	\$400.00	County Line	4	\$36,618.63	\$35,734.50	Tuscumbia First	2	\$26,953.82	\$21,983.00
Toxey	5	\$5,310.68	\$6,726.72	Damascus	8	\$8,354.94	\$2,715.00	Underwood	32	\$69,299.35	\$16,813.78
Womack Hill	0	\$3,591.00	\$5,674.27	*Dorcas	0	\$0.00	\$3,151.85	Valdosta	0	\$2,994.01	\$2,497.95
<b>Choctaw Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>\$176,979.26</b>									

# Cover your city with **Scripture**

## 7 Alabama cities host Bible Reading Marathons for National Day of Prayer

**A**labamians will gather again soon at several locations across the state to read the Bible nonstop. The around-the-clock readings are in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer on May 2.

Interested in getting involved this year to help cover your city with Scripture? Check out the information below for your nearest Bible Reading Marathon:

**Birmingham** — Starting Thursday, May 2, 9 a.m. and ending Sunday, May 5, 5 p.m. Held at The Abbey coffee shop in Avondale at 131 41st Street South. To sign up visit <http://tinyurl.com/Biblereaders>. For more information call Ninfa Austin at 205-602-7056 or Sheila Wright at 205-213-0508.

**Heftlin** — Starting Sunday, April 28, 5:30 p.m. and ending Thursday, May 2, 11:30 a.m. Held at Ross Park near the Cleburne County Courthouse. To sign up visit <http://signup.com/go/AHXmWFi> or call Cleburne Baptist Association at 256-463-8811.

**Montgomery** — Starting Thursday, May 2, 8:30 a.m. and ending Sunday, May 5, 8:30 a.m. Held at the State Capitol building. For more

information visit [hisvessel.org/bible-reading](http://hisvessel.org/bible-reading).

**Oneonta** — Starting Thursday, May 2, 8 a.m. and ending Sunday, May 5. Held at the Blount County Courthouse. For more information visit the Facebook page: Oneonta Blount County Bible Reading Marathon.

**Ozark** — Starting Sunday, April 28, 3 p.m. and ending Thursday, May 2, noon, followed by a Day of Prayer service. Held on the Dale County Courthouse lawn. Volunteers needed for nighttime hours. For more information call Dale Baptist Association at 334-774-2713.

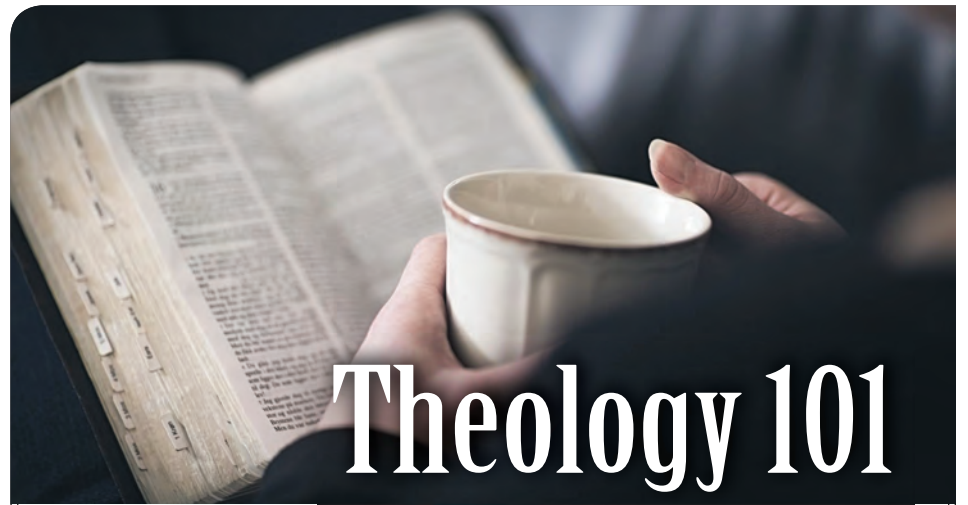
**Troy** — Starting Sunday, April 28 with music and prayer at 6 p.m. and Bible reading at 7 p.m. and ending Thursday, May 2, noon. Held in downtown Troy on the square. For more information call Salem-Troy Baptist Association at 334-566-1538.

**Tuscaloosa** — Starting Sunday, April 28, 2 p.m. and ending Wednesday, May 1, noon. Held in front of the chapel of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, at 721 Greensboro Avenue. For more information or for a link to sign up visit [hope4mycity.com](http://hope4mycity.com). (TAB)



Photo by Linda Adams

Alabamians will soon gather at seven locations throughout the state to read the Bible around the clock over their cities in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer on May 2. Check out the listing above for your nearest Bible Reading Marathon.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

*Insights through questions*

## A Question about Eternal Life

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

**L**ong ago a wise man made the observation that “God has made everything beautiful in its time.” He also bore witness about both God and His creation of human beings by continuing, “He has put eternity in their heart” (Eccles. 3:11). As the eternal God, He did this by creating man in His own image and likeness.

It also was long ago that Job asked a vital question: “If a man dies shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). Long afterward God Himself answered the question by raising His only Son from death to life, thereby dramatically demonstrating the potential of life after death.

We celebrate that answer at Easter. As part of the lead-in to another Easter observance Theology 101 gives thought to the biblical teaching about eternal life.

### ‘Everlasting life’

The idea of eternal life indeed speaks about the duration of human life. If words carry any meaning at all eternity is a long time any way we look at it. Hence the term is often translated as “everlasting life.”

However, eternal life is about much more than the endless duration of life. It is about a unique quality of life. We are blessed when we realize the life of eternity is far more than a matter of endlessness. Though we almost automatically tend to think of endlessness when we think of eternal life. God, however, has in mind a

quality of life that surpasses human imagination.

Eternal life speaks of life that is full and abundant. Christians have the potential of tasting abundant life while living out the redeemed life here and now. Jesus declared that He came so His followers might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

### ‘For those who love Him’

As we learn how to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit we begin to get a foretaste of what eternal life will be like.

Furthermore, with the resurrection of Christ we get an indication that the life of eternity promises to be not only abundant life, but also embodied life. As embodied life it will be life in which we are both recognizable and conversant.

We get a preview of this at the transfiguration of Christ when Moses and Elijah appeared talking with Him and were identifiable as well as conversant.

When we have gleaned all the Bible points toward about eternal life we still must confess with 1 Corinthians 2:9, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”✠

*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.*



## Holy Week Scripture readings

### PALM SUNDAY

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:6–9).

### HOLY MONDAY

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem (Matt. 21:10).

### HOLY TUESDAY

Jesus addresses false teachings as He speaks to the crowd (Matt. 23).

### HOLY WEDNESDAY

Judas conspires with the Sanhedrin to betray Jesus (Luke 22:1–6).

### MAUNDY THURSDAY

Jesus and His disciples eat their last supper together (Luke 22:19). As a symbol of love Jesus washes His disciples' feet (John 13:5). He also prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, is betrayed by Judas and is arrested (Luke 22:39–65).

### GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus is crucified on Golgotha (Mark 15:22–25). He dies on the cross, saying: "Father! Into your hands I commit my spirit!" (Luke 23:46).

### HOLY SATURDAY

Jesus' body is placed in the tomb, sealed and protected by guards (Matt. 27:57–66).

### EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus arises from the tomb — a victorious celebration of hope for all Christians (Matt. 28:1–10).

(Source: Denise George)

# Teaching children at *Easter*

## Preparing children's hearts for the agony, glory of Easter

By Denise George  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**E**aster — the time each spring when we pause to remember Jesus' agony and death, and celebrate His victorious resurrection — proves the very heart and foundation of our Christian faith. As parents and grandparents we can help spiritually prepare the hearts of our children for Easter in some simple, beautiful and creative ways.

Prayer is essential. Pray with your child regularly throughout each day. Teach children that conversation with God is essential to the Christian life. In the prayers ask God to help ready each child's heart for Easter.

Opportunities for prayer include:

▶ **In the morning.** As your children are waking up ask God to protect them — body, mind, emotions and spirit — throughout the coming day.

▶ **At mealtime.** Before eating breakfast pray your children will represent Christ that day in all their words and actions.

▶ **On the drive to school.** Pray for teachers and classmates. Pray their minds will be focused on Christ and showing love to and compassion for everyone they meet.

▶ **After school and before supper.** Take these afternoon and evening opportunities to pray for individual family members and friends, for their needs, safety, health and spiritual lives. Prayer walk your neighborhood. Showing love for others through intercessory prayers helps children understand Jesus' command to love one another.

▶ **Before bedtime.** During the Easter season, take time to read Easter-related Scriptures together and talk about what they mean. Before going to sleep and every time you share a quiet moment together say a "thank you" prayer to God. Remember to take time to sit still



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and listen as God speaks gentle whispers to your hearts.

Once you have prayed for and with your children, consider these additional ways to prepare your children's hearts for Easter:

**1. Read Easter-related Scripture:** During Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday) read and focus on those Scriptures that describe the words, actions and events in Jesus' life. Explain to your child what each Scripture means and what happened on that particular day (see 'Holy Week,' this page).

**2. Attend worship:** Attend as many church and special services as possible during the Lenten season. After each service encourage children to retell what they learned about Jesus — His life, death and resurrection.

**3. Sing hymns:** Before and/or after daily prayer times sing Easter hymns together, taking time to explain the hymn's theology.

**4. Read books:** Find biblical, age-appropriate books on Easter for your children. Create special times when your family can read them together.

**5. Recount your Easter traditions and stories:** Children love stories. Share meaningful stories of Easter from your childhood, describing older family members and significant Easter traditions.

**6. Engage in fun activities:** Children love hands-on activities. Set aside time to dye eggs and write Scripture verses on each to read before meals. Or insert small symbols of Easter inside colorful plastic eggs and hide them. Allow children to find the eggs and then discuss what each symbol means.

Another good activity for young children is to make Scripture puppets with wooden popsicle sticks, pieces of fabric and markers. Encourage children to "perform" parts of the Easter story with their puppets.

Take advantage of sunny spring weather by planting an Easter garden. Prepare the soil, plant flower and/or herb seeds and keep the seeds watered. Talk with your children about how they also can plant "seeds" of Jesus' resurrection in people's hearts, introduce them to Christ and watch them grow in Him.

During this Easter season we have many teachable opportunities to help our children better understand Jesus' love, life, death and resurrection. These moments help prepare young hearts to celebrate the victory of the resurrection, teaching them to love and trust the One who offers them a place forever in His family.✝

# Timely progress

## U.S. Department of Justice gives Alabama 49 days to fix 'broken,' 'inhumane' prisons

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

Alabama's state prison system — considered the nation's deadliest — is "broken" and conditions are so inhumane they violate the Constitution's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) asserted in a letter sent to Gov. Kay Ivey on April 2.

### Chronic problems

Following a two-and-a-half-year investigation by the Civil Rights Division and Alabama U.S. Attorneys' Offices, DOJ issued a scathing 62-page report giving the state 49 days to correct the overcrowding, understaffing and other unsafe conditions contributing to the high rates of prisoner-on-prisoner violence and sexual abuse at the state prisons for men.

Failure to make adequate and timely progress could result in a federal lawsuit, a circumstance with which Alabama prisons are far too familiar. Chronically overcrowded and understaffed, Alabama state prisons currently house about 16,000 male prisoners in varying custody levels and are frequently the subject of federal lawsuits and court orders.

"The Department of Justice's



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The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and Alabama U.S. Attorneys' Offices carried out a two-and-a-half-year investigation into conditions in the Alabama prison system, which is considered the nation's deadliest prison system.

Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Northern, Middle and Southern Districts of Alabama ... concluded there is reasonable cause to believe that the conditions in Alabama's prisons for men violate the Eighth Amendment of the

U.S. Constitution," the DOJ stated in a news release. "The Department concluded that there is reasonable cause to believe that the men's prisons fail to protect prisoners from prisoner-on-prisoner violence and prisoner-on-prisoner sexual abuse, and fail to provide prisoners with safe conditions."

U.S. Attorney Richard Moore accused Alabama officials of "flagrant disregard" for the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution.

"The failure to respect the rule of law by providing humane treatment for inmates in Alabama prisons is a poor reflection on those of us who live and work in Alabama," Moore said. "We are better than this. We do not need to tarry very long assessing blame, but rather commit to righting this wrong and spare our State further embarrassment."

As an example of the systemic violence and conditions they found in Alabama's state prisons, the DOJ report recounted an eight-day period in September 2017 (see 'A week,' page 11).

As horrific as the number of violent incidents reported that week were, DOJ investigators said the rate of violence throughout the system was in all likelihood much higher. DOJ accused the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) of routinely underreporting incidents and even attributing deaths by violence to "natural causes."

### 'Positive changes'

Ivey and ADOC responded in a news release April 3 noting that DOJ recognized in its report that Alabama "has begun to make some positive changes," such as plans to build new prisons with enhanced security, better medical and mental health services and safer environments for inmates and staff.

"Our primary objective is to ensure each facility provides a humane, secure and safe environment for inmates, and that reforms already in place and proposed bring about positive, tangible changes throughout the prison system," ADOC Commissioner Jeff Dunn



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In early April the Department of Justice, headquartered at the Robert F. Kennedy Building in Washington, issued a report on the 'inhumane' practices in Alabama prisons.

said. “Efforts for the improved hiring and retention of correctional staff have been bolstered with the Legislature’s \$86 million funding appropriations in 2018 and 2019 for hiring additional correctional and health services staff.

“These efforts continue with a \$31 million request for ADOC’s proposed 2020 budget, which would help the department hire 500 new correctional officers and increase the pay scale for all security personnel,” Dunn said.

### Too little, too late

Improvements at the prisons have come too little and too late, however, to save the lives of an extraordinarily high number of inmates who die behind bars as a result of murder, violence or suicide.

“The combination of ADOC’s overcrowding and understaffing results in prisons that are inadequately supervised with inappropriate and unsafe housing designations, creating an environment rife with violence, extortion, drugs and weapons,” DOJ investigators found.

“Prisoner-on-prisoner homicide and sexual abuse is common. Prisoners who are seriously injured or stabbed must find their way to security staff elsewhere in the facility or bang on the door of the dormitory to gain the attention of correctional officers.

“Prisoners have been tied up for days by other prisoners while unnoticed by security staff. Prisoners are often found in unauthorized areas. Some prisoners sleep in dormitories to which they are not assigned in order to escape violence. Prisoners are being extorted by other prisoners without appropriate intervention of management. Contraband is rampant,” DOJ reported.

“The totality of these conditions poses a substantial risk of serious harm both to prisoners and correctional officers.”

To read the DOJ report on Alabama prison conditions, go to <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1150276/download>.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on mass incarceration in Alabama and the ministries working in state prisons visit <https://tabonline.org/prisons> and download “A look at mass incarceration in Alabama.”

# A week in Alabama prisons

## FRIDAY

**Bibb Correctional Facility, Brent:** A prisoner is stabbed by two other inmates in an open dormitory and bleeds to death.

**Staton Correctional Facility, Elmore:** A prisoner is stabbed multiple times and taken by helicopter to a nearby hospital.

## SATURDAY

**Elmore Correctional Facility, Elmore:** A prisoner is beaten and injured by four other prisoners.

**Ventress Correctional Facility, Clayton:** Officers pat down a prisoner and find 17 cigarettes laced with drugs, a plastic bag of methamphetamine and a bag filled with hallucinogenic drugs known as “cookie dough.”

## SUNDAY

**St. Clair Correctional Facility, Springville:** A prisoner asleep in a dormitory reserved for inmates with good behavior awakens when two prisoners start beating him with a sock filled with metal locks; he is injured so severely he has to be transported to an outside hospital for emergency treatment.

**Ventress Correctional:** A prisoner is punched so hard in the eye by another prisoner that he is sent to an outside hospital. Another prisoner is stabbed by two other prisoners with homemade knives. Yet another prisoner is punched so hard in the face by prisoners with shirts covering their faces that he is transported to an outside hospital for treatment.

**Staton Correctional:** A prisoner threatens a correctional officer with a seven-inch knife. Another prisoner reports he has been sexually assaulted.



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As an example of the systemic violence and other conditions found in Alabama’s state prisons, the report issued by the Department of Justice recounted the events of an eight-day period in September 2017 in Alabama prisons.

## TUESDAY

**Fountain Correctional Facility, Atmore:** A prisoner awakens when another inmate sets his blanket on fire and a fight ensues.

**Ventress Correctional:** Officers searching a dormitory find 12 plastic bags of an unknown substance, 79 cigarettes laced with drugs, two bags containing the “cookie dough” hallucinogen and a bag of methamphetamine.

## WEDNESDAY

**Easterling Correctional Facility, Clio:** A prisoner is sexually assaulted inside of a segregation cell by an inmate; only four days earlier, this same prisoner had been forced at knifepoint to perform oral sex on two other prisoners.

## THURSDAY

**Ventress Correctional:** An inmate is so severely assaulted by four other prisoners he has to be transported to an outside hospital. Another prisoner reports being sexually assaulted.

**Bullock Correctional:** A prisoner is found unresponsive on the floor by his bed and later dies of a drug overdose.

## FRIDAY

**Ventress Correctional:** An officer finds an inmate bleeding from the shoulder due to a stab wound; the prisoner is transported to an outside hospital for treatment.

(Source: U.S. Department of Justice)

**“The totality of these conditions poses a substantial risk of serious harm both to prisoners and correctional officers.”**

Department of Justice report

The Alabama Theatre, located at 1817 Third Ave. North in downtown Birmingham, was built in 1927 and has been a popular venue for movies, concerts, weddings and more.

# ‘Historic year’

## What to know about the upcoming SBC annual meeting

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

It’s a historic year for Alabama Baptists — possibly the first time the state has hosted the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in your lifetime, or at least since you were old enough to go.

Thinking about going to Birmingham to see what it’s all about while it’s so close to home? Here are some things you need to know:

### ► **Schedule**

The main SBC meeting will stretch throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, June 11–12. Morning sessions will run 8 a.m.–12:15 p.m. both days, and afternoon sessions will run 2:30–6:15 p.m.

### ► **Location**

The meeting will be at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC) in downtown Birmingham at 2100 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. North. To find out more about the venue visit [bjcc.org](http://bjcc.org).

### ► **Registration**

Two ways to attend are as a messenger or as a messenger’s guest. Messengers to the meeting get to vote and have a part in determining the direction of the SBC.

To become a messenger your church must cooperate with the SBC and it must vote to send you as its representative. Contact your pastor to find out how that’s handled at your church.

Anyone can attend the meeting as the invited guest of a messenger, but you still

must register your attendance and obtain a badge.

Both messengers and guests are encouraged to preregister at [sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19](http://sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19) and bring your confirmation email or preregistration number to the registration area at the BJCC when you arrive at the meeting.

For messengers especially this saves a lot of time — you can print out your messenger card and bring it with you instead of standing in a long line and then filling it out manually on the day of the meeting.

### ► **Child care**

Preschool child care is offered for a fee, along with a kids’ event for ages 5–12 directed by Giant Cow Ministries. You must preregister for both ahead of time — no onsite registration will be available. May 25 is the registration deadline for the kids’ event.

Register at [sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth](http://sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth).

### ► **Youth**

If you’ve got teens Youth on Mission will provide hands-on missions projects June 11–12 for grades 7–12. Register and pay at [sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth](http://sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth).

### ► **Submitting resolutions**

During the meetings, messengers can present motions from the floor for the SBC to consider. A motion is a call to action, according to the SBC website. A resolution, on the other hand, isn’t a directive — its intent is to communicate something. Resolutions have “traditionally been defined as an expression of opinion or concern.”

If you’re interested in submitting a resolution for consideration you can do that at [sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/resolutions](http://sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/resolutions) up



Photo courtesy of the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Opened in 2013, Regions Field is the home of the Birmingham Barons, the local minor league baseball team. It is adjacent to Railroad Park at 1401 First Ave. South in downtown Birmingham.



Photo courtesy of the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

until 15 days before the meeting starts.

### ► **Related events**

A variety of other gatherings will be happening in conjunction with the annual meeting, ranging from seminary alumni fellowships to a panel on sexual abuse.

To find out what’s available and when and where these meetings are happening visit <http://www.sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19/events>.

One connected event is the Pastors Conference, which will be held on the Sunday night and Monday before the SBC annual meeting (June 9–10) at the BJCC’s Legacy Arena.

To read about the event and the lineup of speakers visit [sbpc.net](http://sbpc.net).

For more information about the 2019 SBC annual meeting go to [sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19](http://sbcanualmeeting.net/sbc19).



### WEEKDAY MORNINGS ON WXJC

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# Retirement benefits

## Don't opt out of Social Security, experts advise

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

**Y**ou've heeded the call to the ministry and have been called to a church. So far, so good.

Now you hear what one pastor termed "the siren's song" to opt out of paying into Social Security. Should you? Most experts say no.

### Special provision

Southern Baptist minister William Thornton addressed the issue in a 2016 article for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Voices blog, noting that new ministers are often advised to avoid paying Social Security taxes by

taking advantage of special IRS provision for ministers. Thornton recalled his own experience in the early days of his ministry.

"Way back when I started out in a small church with a total package of under \$15,000 annually (plus an old farm house as a pastorium and a pretty good pile of free groceries provided by the wonderful congregation), I opted out of Social Security due to a combination of influence from certain people and a heavy dose of plain stupidity."

Thornton recognized the error of his ways and took advantage of an opt-in window granted by Congress,



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paying self-employment taxes for nearly four decades.

Now semi-retired, he said, "I get a modest Social Security deposit every month."

The temptation is strong for young ministers to sign away their Social Security right or obligation, depending on one's outlook.

The required opt-out declaration states:

"I am conscientiously opposed to, or because of my religious principles I am opposed to, the acceptance (for services I perform as a minister ...) of any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age or retirement; or that makes payments toward the cost of, or provides services for, medical care."

This declaration, signed under penalty of perjury, is a key part of "IRS Form 4361," the application for exemption from self-employment taxes for ministers and certain specified others.

Sign it, submit it and one is forever free from paying quarterly federal self-employment taxes into Social Security on ministerial earnings.

But in gaining freedom from Social Security a minister may be chaining himself — and his family — to

an unwise financial decision bearing repercussions for the rest of his life.

Plus the signer of the declaration might be lying to the federal government.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC, addressed the opt-out issue in a 2010 response to a young Baptist minister asking whether it was ethical for him to avoid paying into the system by claiming to be a conscientious objector.

### Jesus' command

"As you make this decision ask yourself whether you plan to preach and teach your people that participating in Social Security (as payer or recipient) is a sin against God. If the 'opt-out' provision

were revoked would you willingly go to prison rather than pay the tax?" Moore wrote.

"If the answer to these questions is 'no' ... then you are not a conscientious objector to Social Security taxes. To then 'opt out' of paying them would be to refuse to do precisely what Jesus commands us to do: pay taxes.

"By turning a protection of conscience into a political statement or a pragmatic economic benefit it would

imperil religious liberty provisions."

Pulling the trigger on the Social Security opt-out provision is, according to GuideStone Financial Resources, an irreversible "decision of a lifetime."

Congress has allowed ministers to opt back in only three times in the last 40 years, and no such provision is in place at this time.

Opting out of Social Security could mean forfeiting:

- ▶ Federal retirement benefits
- ▶ Subsidized Medicare
- ▶ Disability benefits
- ▶ Survivor benefits for loved ones

Most ministers who opted out ultimately regret it, Thornton said, quoting a GuideStone staffer who deals with low-income ministers in the firm's charitable Mission: Dignity program.

### Sufficient resources

"In 20 years of assisting retired ministers on low incomes I have met quite a few who opted out of Social Security at a young age. In spite of good intentions savings were never set aside and these ministers reached retirement without sufficient resources," the GuideStone employee said.

"Not one of our Mission: Dignity recipients has ever told me, in retrospect, that opting out of Social Security was a good idea."✠

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Photos by Tracy Riggs

TobyMac and Jeremy Camp brought the Hits Deep Tour to the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex on April 6. Mandisa, Aaron Cole, We Are Messengers, Jordan Feliz and Ryan Stevenson joined them as guest performers.

# TobyMac and friends rock Birmingham concert

By Tracy Riggs  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**T**obyMac came out “swinging” when he took the stage of Birmingham’s BJCC Legacy Arena on April 6.

Surrounded by smoke and lasers TobyMac opened with the title track from his newest album “The Elements.” The lyrics, “I’m a go down swinging, if I go down,” helped establish a theme for the night — God is fighting for us and with us in the battles of this world.

“Our scars either lead us into the darkness of isolation or into the light of community,” TobyMac told the crowd.

It was the Hits Deep Tour’s next-to-last stop, and surprise guest Mandisa joined TobyMac on “Lose My Soul.” Another number, “Hello Future,” based on the Voyage of Life artwork by Thomas Cole, featured

the famous paintings in the background. A clip of a speech by Martin Luther King Jr. preceded several songs about unity, including

“Starts with Me,” which proclaims, “We can be free and it starts with me.”

The jam-packed evening of music began with Aaron Cole who got the crowd singing and on their feet with songs like “Don’t Worry.”

We Are Messengers kept the excitement going with “Point to You” and “Maybe It’s Okay,” songs that affirm how God’s love is unconditional.

Jordan Feliz rocked the arena with hits like “I’ve Been Changed,” “Can I Get a Witness?” and “You are Beloved,” while Ryan Stevenson slowed things down

with an acoustic set that included “Eye of the Storm” and “No Matter What.”

## ‘I Still Believe’

Jeremy Camp spoke and sang about the difficult loss of his first wife to cancer when she was just 21 and how music helped him get through that dark time.

Camp also announced that Birmingham-based filmmakers Jon and Andrew Erwin are planning a movie about his life story, “I Still Believe.”

A representative from ministry partner Food for the Hungry, a Christian international relief organization, shared about child sponsorship opportunities and work being done to improve access to health care, education and hope among impoverished families in developing countries.

The Hits Deep Tour made its final stop of 2019 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, on April 7. 🇺🇸



TOBYMAC



JEREMY CAMP

# TAB CLASSIFIEDS

## CHURCH POSITIONS

### PASTOR

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

### 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.

### MINISTER OF MUSIC

Westview Baptist Church, 809 Damascus Hwy, Enterprise, AL 36330 is prayerfully seeking resumés for a part-time minister of music. Please send resumé to church address, marked ATTN: Personnel Committee. For additional inquiries call 334-494-2336.

### MINISTER OF WORSHIP

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

### STUDENT AND MUSIC PASTOR

Mount Gilead Baptist Church in Bethel Springs, TN, is seeking a full-time student and music pastor. We are a growing church with a heart for people all over the world. Please email your resumé and/or dvd’s to: mlarue2020@gmail.com or mail to: Mount Gilead Baptist Church, 6185 Rowsey School Road, Bethel Springs, TN 38315, ATTN: Search Committee. For questions call 731-607-1000.

### WORSHIP LEADER/ YOUTH MINISTER

Center Hill Baptist Church in Hamilton, MS, is seeking a full-time worship leader and youth minister. Please contact Roland Whigham at roland@mspeanut.com for additional information.

### YOUTH MINISTER

Farley Community Church in Huntsville, Alabama, is seeking a dynamic, spirit-filled person to serve as our full-time youth minister. Christ-focused discipleship is at the heart of all of our ministries. A bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution or semi-

nary and previous youth ministry experience are required. Please submit resumés to: personnel@farleycc.org.

### PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Concord Highland Baptist Church (Bessemer Assn.) is looking for candidates to re-start the youth ministry. Please mail resumés to: Youth Search Committee, Concord Highland Baptist Church, 105 Concord Highland Drive, Bessemer, AL 35023.

### MINISTER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES

FBC Dadeville is looking for a full-time minister of children and families. Only candidates called to long term ministry to children should send a cover letter and resume to Dr. Ben Hayes at bhayes@fbcdadeville.com or P.O. Box 308, Dadeville, AL 36853.

### PIANIST

Belgreen Baptist Church is seeking pianist for Sunday morning worship. Paid position. Contact matthew\_payne@bellsouth.net.

## BUSINESSES

### NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

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# Persecuted church

## Christian mother in Pakistan forcibly converted, married, tortured

Returning home from a night shift at a call center on the outskirts of Islamabad, Pakistan, on Feb. 25, Naveed Iqbal learned from his sons that a local criminal and three other men had taken his wife away, he said.

He filed a report at the Khana police station. Iqbal said officers took no action — except to alert the suspect, Muhammad Khalid Satti, that he had filed a report against him for abducting his wife, Saima.

“On March 5 police informed me that Saima had been found, but that she had converted to Islam and married Satti,” Iqbal said.

Police took her to a women’s shelter in Rawalpindi.

After her release from the shelter the next day Iqbal said his wife told him how she had been abducted, raped, tortured and forced to sign

the marriage certificate by Satti.

“Fortunately the conversion and marriage certificates are fake, as they do not contain a cleric’s signature,” he said, noting that he has challenged the documents in court. Iqbal said his wife is suffering from post-traumatic stress.

“She is not the same person now, but I have faith that the Lord will heal her spirit with time,” he said.

Pakistan ranked fifth on Christian support organization Open Doors 2019 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian.

### In related news:

▶ A house church host in Uttar Pradesh state remains in hiding nearly two months after more than 20 Hindu extremists burst into his home Feb. 7 and attacked those present.

The extremists beat the 39 adults

of the fellowship, kept them from medical care and stood outside the police station threatening to kill them if they filed a complaint.

Though fearful, some of the Christians want to meet for worship again. Police have told the Christians to register the church and warned them not to meet in homes, he said.

India is ranked 10th on Christian support organization Open Doors 2019 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian.

▶ A police raid in March on a Baptist worship service in Kazakhstan is the latest reported incident in a long string of religious liberty violations in the Central Asian country.

The raid brought the total to three Baptist churches invaded and fined in the city of Taraz in a seven-week span, according to news sources.

Anti-terrorism police forces have filmed, photographed, fingerprinted and threatened church members, and five people have been levied large fines of one or two months’ wages.

Government officials say they are coming after the churches because they are meeting without government permission.

Such religious liberty violations are a continuing trend, and Baptists aren’t the only ones being targeted, according to Forum 18 news service.

In 2018, 165 people, organizations and religious communities were prosecuted for their faith, including some Muslims who did not pray correctly, according to police.

Kazakhstan ranked 34th on Christian support organization Open Doors 2019 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS, BP)

### Famous Christians from previous centuries

## Heroes of the Faith

### 2019 marks 450 years since death of Bible translator

Miles Coverdale (1488–1569) produced the first complete translation of the Bible into English.

This year marks the 450th anniversary of his death.

He was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1488. He studied at Cambridge and was ordained as a priest in Norwich in 1514.

He joined the Augustinian friars at Barnwell Priory at Cambridge.

After 1526, Coverdale left the monastery to be a preacher. It is unclear where he was in the late 1520s and early 1530s. In 1534 he was in Antwerp, Belgium. He assisted William Tyndale in his revisions and partial completion of his

English version of the Bible. Coverdale is responsible for the translation of four Bibles.

The Coverdale Bible was published Oct. 4, 1535. Coverdale used Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament and Tyndale’s translation of the Pentateuch and Jonah. Coverdale translated other Old Testament books from Martin Luther’s German translations and the works of others. Printed in Antwerp his Bible was the first one to be translated into English.

In 1538, Coverdale was in Paris overseeing the printing of the Great Bible, which was published in 1539.

Henry VIII commanded the clergy to place one of the Great Bibles in every parish church.

The Geneva Bible was published in 1560. Queen “Bloody” Mary I, a Roman Catholic, persecuted Protestants and had their Bibles removed from churches. Many Protestants, including Coverdale, left England and settled in Geneva. Coverdale and John Knox published

the New Testament in 1557. The entire Geneva Bible was finished in 1560. It was not printed in England until 1576. When Elizabeth I became queen in 1558 the Great Bible was reinstated in the churches.



COVERDALE

### By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor’s degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M–Commerce) and a master’s degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



Coverdale became Bishop of Exeter in the Church of England in 1551, but after Queen Mary’s reign he lost his position. He eventually returned to England in 1559, but he was not reinstated as bishop because of his Puritan views.

He became rector of St. Magnus the Martyr in London in 1564. He resigned in 1566 but continued to preach.

He died Jan. 20, 1569, immediately after standing in for a preacher at a church. He was buried in St. Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange in London. In 1840 his remains were moved to St. Magnus the Martyr Churchyard.✠

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



**R**outinely when I'm traveling, I enjoy seeing church signs. It seems some churches invest a good bit of money, time and thought on effective signage.

Recently I saw a church sign that captivated my attention with a simple message: "Love lives here."

As we consider Easter, we understand that because of the love of God through Jesus Christ who was resurrected from the grave, we can honestly say within the life of each believer, "Love lives here." And we want to share this love with others.

There are many ways of doing that. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the risen Christ. What better time to show a neighbor, friend or family member who needs Christ that love lives here.

As we look forward to summer, we're able to think about Vacation Bible School and loving children and others in the name of Jesus Christ, extending a word of witness to them.



By Rick Lance  
*State Missionary*



During the month of June, as we welcome our Southern Baptist family to Birmingham for the SBC annual meeting, I hope they'll realize, that among Alabama Baptists and the people of Birmingham, love lives here.

Alabama Baptists, we are a loving people. Let us continue to love others in the name of Jesus.



  
JOHN 15:5

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# ‘It’s been a **privilege**’

## Two women honored for investing lives to build new generation of missionaries

Jane Burdeshaw says it’s not easy for a whole church full of women to keep a secret, but a few weeks ago they succeeded. And it was definitely worth the effort.

The Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) group at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, recently surprised two women — Ann Cushing and Mary Ruth Wolf — with bricks in their honor in WMU’s new Walk of Faith brick garden. The garden, built on New Hope Mountain in Birmingham, recog-

nizes missions heroes past and present.

Burdeshaw, the church’s WMU director, said Cushing and Wolf are exactly that — Wolf a “missions model” and Cushing a “missions legacy.”

**“They just exemplify missions in the most beautiful, godly way.”**

**Jane Burdeshaw**  
FBC Montgomery  
WMU director

“They just exemplify missions in the most beautiful, godly way,” Burdeshaw said. “These are the ladies we want to honor and have as an example to the next generation.”

And both women, she said, have been just that.

Cushing grew up learning about missions through

WMU programs at church and felt God calling her to vocational ministry. She met her husband, Harrell, her senior year in high school, and ever since their wedding in 1953 the couple has been active in church ministry and missions work together.

“One of the ladies in our WMU ministry now was a college student years ago,” Burdeshaw said. “She talked about how Ann had been such a prayer warrior and prayed for everyone around the world.”

### ‘In my DNA’

Cushing put feet to those prayers too — she has led people to Christ from Alabama to Hong Kong.

And she passed it down. The Cushings’ daughter, Charlotte Cearley, served 33 years in Africa with the International Mission Board and one of their granddaughters served overseas for six years. Their other children and grandchildren have



Photo courtesy of Jane Burdeshaw

Jane Burdeshaw (right) and the Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) group at FBC Montgomery surprise Ann Cushing (left) with a brick on the WMU Walk of Faith in honor of her faithful missions work.

served in ministry at home and all over the world too.

Wolf says she got a similar gift from her parents — missions was “kind of in my DNA.”

So when she and her husband, Jay — now pastor of First, Montgomery — moved to Alabama’s capital city in 1991 she got her feet on the ground and started working.

“The church just let me be who I was and that was to

teach children,” she said.

She started teaching Girls in Action (GA), and more than 25 years later she’s still the church’s GA director.

### ‘Love of missions’

“Our church is so supportive. We seek to just pour the love of missions into these young girls,” Wolf said. “How blessed I am to have this church and this group of girls that we can pour into.”

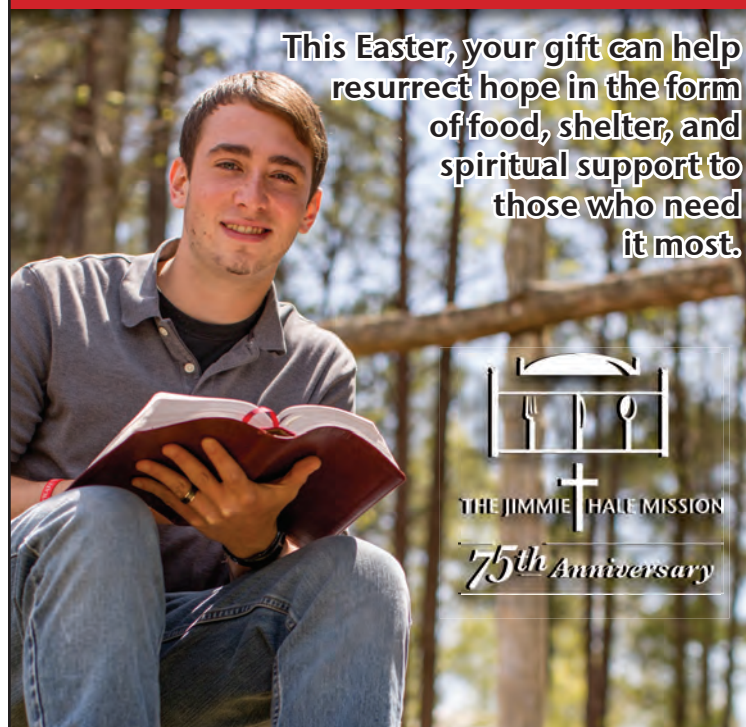
Burdeshaw said the church feels blessed to have Wolf and Cushing — and they had no idea how to sum all of that up on two bricks.

“When the WMU ladies found out that I only had five lines each with 14 characters to each line, they burst into laughter,” she said. “They knew there was no way I was going to fit in everything we wanted to say.”

For more information on how to honor a missions hero with a brick on the Walk of Faith visit [wmu-foundation.com/walkoffaith](http://wmu-foundation.com/walkoffaith). (WMU Foundation)

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# 3 stories you should know



Photo by Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office

A 21-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the burning of three predominantly black churches in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana. Three fires within a span of 10 days was considered suspicious from the start of the investigation, said Butch Browning, Louisiana state fire marshal. The churches are historically black congregations in the same parish, all more than 100 years old. They burned on March 26, April 2 and April 4, respectively. (TAB)

## Former imam beaten after following Christ

Sheikh Hassan Podo, a 28-year-old imam in eastern Uganda who converted to Christianity, was interrogated and then beaten by family members after missing mosque prayers for three consecutive weeks and attending church.

He had kept his faith in Christ a secret, but a Muslim neighbor saw Podo enter a church building and went straight to Podo's parents and brothers to report him.

When Podo arrived at the house that evening his family interrogated him about where he had spent the better part of the day.

They then began to beat him with sticks, calling him an infidel and an enemy of the Muslim religion, Podo said. His wife and two children managed to escape to the home of a nearby Christian neighbor, he said. (MS)

## SBDR volunteers aid asylum seekers in NM

At the request of city and federal agencies faith-based organizations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, including the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, are helping to house and feed more than 400 asylum-seeking migrants from South and Central America.

Ira Shelton, director of New Mexico Baptist Disaster Relief said the people are "hungry and they're confused. If we can bring hope, help and healing then that's what we need to do."

Over the past several weeks hundreds of asylum-seeking migrants have entered the United States along the El Paso, Texas, sector of the country's border with Mexico.

As of March 27, U.S. Customs and Border Protection had more than 12,000 migrants in custody. (BP)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### SWBTS removes windows depicting prominent conservative leaders



The stained glass windows featuring leaders of the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention that have been in the MacGorman Chapel of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) since 2013 have been removed.

SWBTS spokesperson Colby Adams confirmed the windows' removal, but no reason was given. A letter to "ministry partners" from Kevin Ueckert, chairman of the SWBTS board of trustees, said the board, "after much prayerful consideration and discussion," concluded removal of the windows was "in the best interest of the institution." Ueckert said the windows would be stored for now.

Many called for removal of the windows following Paige Patterson's firing in May 2018.

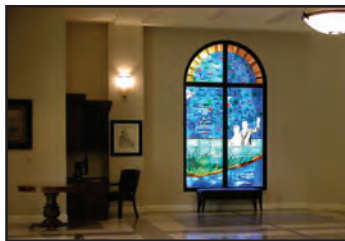


Photo by Don Young Glass Studio

Patterson and his wife, Dorothy, were pictured in a window.

Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for the Mobile Baptist Association and president of the SWBTS Alabama Alumni Association, noted that observers can only speculate about the reasons for the decision to remove the windows.

"Southwestern has not commented specifically on why the McGorman chapel memorial windows are being removed," Wright said. "It is appropriate for history to document the impact that individuals made during the crucial conservative resurgence transition. Perhaps some of the window subjects illustrate why institutions tend to memorialize those whom history has confirmed finished well. Some would contend we are best served remaining focused on biblical heroes of faith and practice." (TAB)

### Faith-based bills advance in Texas in defiance of 'almighty dollar'



State Sen. Charles Perry recently stood on the floor of the Texas Senate in Austin defending a bill that would let

state license holders assert their religious beliefs when providing — or denying — certain services.

He told lawmakers the bill would not undermine state or federal anti-discrimination laws but would simply give attorneys, nurses, counselors and others a "voice," instead of "being silenced through state-sponsored discrimination policies and laws."

The religious refusals bill passed in the Senate on April 3 after lengthy emotional debate and now moves to the Texas House of Representatives.

Some faith and business community leaders say the measure and others like it would simply allow someone to use faith as a shield to deny services such as counseling, plumbing and even towing a car.

To them such laws would be a license to discriminate and undermines faith and trust in public institutions, said Rabbi Nancy Kasten of Dallas. (RNS)



Photo by Texas.gov

# News near you

## AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

▶ **White Pond Baptist Church, Marbury**, will host the Living Last Supper on April 18 at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 334-361-8345. Donnie Burns is pastor.

## BESSEMER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Southeast Baptist Church, Bessemer**, is hosting a weekly grief support group Sundays at 6 p.m. in the Family Life Center. For more information call 205-428-7128. Scott Bush is pastor. ▶ **Cannan Baptist Church, Bessemer**, will host the Family First Summit on April 28 from 4 to 6 p.m. It will include eight topics to strengthen families and two breakout sessions. Morgan Bailey is pastor.

## BETHEL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Linden Baptist Church** will host a wild game supper April 25 at 6 p.m. Rick Burgess from the Rick and Bubba Show will be the guest speaker. For more information on tickets call 334-295-4278.

## BIBB ASSOCIATION

▶ On March 17 former and current members of **Rehobeth Baptist Church, Lawley**, gathered in honor of an anniversary that almost never happened. More than 13 years after the

2006 church burnings in Bibb County, Rehobeth Baptist — one of the churches affected by the fires — celebrated its bicentennial anniversary.

Former associate pastor Johnny Mount and former church members shared their favorite memories. Pastor Kirk Smith welcomed the congregation and closed the service.

Church member Linda Barton shared the church history, and Emily Green Burdick and Stewart Creel sang solos. Former member Felicia Creel Olson was the guest pianist.

Lonette Berg, from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Lee Wright, with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, presented certificates to the church. Bill Russell, director of missions for Bibb Baptist



Photo by Lonette Berg

Association, brought congratulations from the association.

Photos and memorabilia from the military, weddings, Sunday School and Woman's Missionary Union were on display. The church cookbook was available for sale. Dishes prepared from the cookbook were part of lunch.

"Everything was bathed in prayer," Barton said. "God paved the way and gave us a wonderful day. He gets all the glory."

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

▶ **The Cross at Clay, Pinson**, will host a concert featuring the Voices of Lee on April 27 at 6 p.m. The doors will open at 5 p.m. Voices of Lee is a 15-member a cappella group that has

performed at Carnegie Hall, Christmas at the White House, Good Morning America and much more. A love offering will be taken. For more information call 205-245-5097.

## CAHABA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Hopewell Baptist Church, Marion**, will celebrate its 197th homecoming April 21. Worship will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will include special music and a brief presentation of the church's history. Joe Bob Mizzell, who served as pastor of Hopewell Baptist for almost 15 years, is the guest speaker. George Washburn is interim pastor.

## SHELBY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Steve Layton** is the new pastor of **Riverchase Baptist Church, Hoover**. He previously served as discipleship minister at Brentwood Baptist Church, Tennessee.

He also has served as associate pastor of teaching and discipleship at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville; minister of Christian education at Lake-side Baptist Church, Birmingham; associate pastor and minister of education at First Baptist Church, Alexander City; and minister of education and youth at Fultondale First Baptist Church. He also worked as a church consultant for LifeWay Church Resources.

He holds degrees from Samford University in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Melinda, have five children and three grandchildren. ✠



LAYTON

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### 'Unplanned' film inspires pro-life candlelight vigils in 38 states



Thousands of activists attended pro-life prayer vigils outside Planned Parenthood clinics in 38 states April 13, inspired by the movie "Unplanned," vigil organizers said.

"'Unplanned' has become a call to action for the pro-life movement," Mark Harrington, executive director of Created Equal and event co-director, said. "Thousands have been inspired by this movie to get actively involved in the pro-life movement for the first time."

Abby Johnson, author of the book on which the movie is based, applauds the activism occurring just two weeks after the film's March 29 release.

"God is moving in people's heart after they see the film," Johnson said.

"Unplanned" brought in \$12.9 million through



BP photo

April 8 on as many as 1,516 screens, according to Box Office Mojo. The film is still in theaters. (BP)

### ERLC, other advocates speak at UN to defend religious liberty worldwide



The Southern Baptist Convention's religious freedom entity and other advocacy organizations expressed concern to the United Nations regarding the Malaysian government's continued refusal to protect the right of all citizens to practice their faith.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) joined Alliance Defending Freedom International and the World Evangelical Alliance in a March 5 statement regarding the Muslim majority country to the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

The ERLC and its allies responded to Malaysia's newly elected government's decision to reject previous UNHRC recommendations, which has led to "the deteriorating situation" for freedom of belief in Malaysia.

The statement said the organizations are

"highly concerned" the Malaysian government is only willing to protect religious liberty within its constitutional framework and not to the international human rights standards that include the freedom to change religion or belief. (BP)

### IMB communications director Alford decides 'he's not the right fit' for role



After two months on the job in the newly created role of vice president for communications at the International Mission Board (IMB),

Roger Alford has left the position. IMB President Paul Chitwood announced Alford's departure in a March 29 IMB staff meeting, saying Alford, a career journalist, "feels that he's not the right fit" for the position. Chitwood said the IMB will continue to evaluate its communications strategy.

Prior to taking the position at IMB, Alford served five years as director of communications for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. (TAB)



ALFORD



## Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

**THANK YOU,  
Alabama Baptists**  
for giving more  
than \$1,260,000 to the  
**2018 Myers-Mallory  
State Missions  
Offering!**

*Be watching for 2019  
materials, available this June.*



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STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS



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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.

#### APRIL

- 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, Rita Goldman, ext. 231

#### MAY

- 2-4 **Alabama Church Planting Basics**, Birmingham Baptist Association, Lamar Duke ext. 332  
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

#### JUNE

- 5 **Crossover Birmingham Training**, various locations, Amy Nelson, ext. 258  
6 **Small Church Tax Conference**, CrossPoint, Trussville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263  
6-7 **Missions Adventure Camp for Mom & Me (One Night)**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223  
6-8 **Missions Adventure Camp for Mom & Me (Two Nights)**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223  
8 **Crossover Birmingham**, various locations, Amy Nelson, ext. 258  
9 **WMU, SBC Celebration/Annual Meeting**, Birmingham, Candace McIntosh, ext. 222  
10-14 **Missions Adventure Camp for Girls & Teen Girls**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223  
11-12 **Southern Baptist Convention**, Birmingham, Debbie Oliver, ext. 242  
16 **Father's Day**  
17-21 **Missions Adventure Camp for Girls & Teen Girls**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223  
20 **Small Church Tax Conference**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263  
24-28 **Missions Adventure Camp for Girls & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223  
25 **Church Administrative Guidelines**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 241, or Linda Hicks, ext. 263  
30 **Citizenship & Religious Liberty Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289

# ALCAP considers ethical issues facing Ala. lawmakers

**Michael J. Brooks**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) Executive Director Joe Godfrey saluted members of the ALCAP board at their annual meeting on April 2, voicing his gratitude for their support in these days of “moral onslaught.”

Godfrey said the Alabama Legislature’s special session in March dealing with the gasoline tax took a lot of attention away from several proposals in the current session that contain ethical and moral concerns.

## A few bills to watch

House Bill (HB) 151 and Senate Bill (SB) 77 propose to privatize the Alabama Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Board stores. Godfrey said Alabama is one of 16 states that control liquor sales, although the state is a “hybrid” with some private sellers who operate under the control of the ABC Board.

The issue is not that the state is in the business of selling alcohol, he said, but the state controls the sale of alcohol.

“Alabama ranks among the highest in revenue from these sales, but we also rank among the lowest in consumption, and the consumption

rate is what concerns us most,” he said.

HB 168 gives local governments power to mandate Sunday alcohol sales through their city councils or county commissions without a vote by the people.

HB 243 seeks to expand the use of medical marijuana. Godfrey noted the legislature passed Carly’s Law in 2014, a bill ALCAP supported because it authorized the University of Alabama at Birmingham to conduct a clinical study on the effects of cannabidiol (CBD) oil (found in the marijuana plant) on children suffering from epileptic seizures.

A separate marijuana bill, SB 98, seeks to reduce the penalty for marijuana possession from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Another bill Godfrey is monitor-

ing is SB 69, which proposes to eliminate marriage licenses in the state.

“There’s been a lot of angst among the probate judges in our state, many of whom don’t want to sign licenses for same-sex ‘marriages’ due to personal conviction,” ALCAP legal counsel Eric Johnston said. “This bill is probably about the best we can expect. It allows couples to marry with the signature of two witnesses and without a traditional license.”



Photo courtesy of Michael Brooks

ALCAP executive director Joe Godfrey (right) congratulates Chris Crain (left), executive director of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association, for being elected board chairman at the April 2 meeting.

Godfrey said the major spotlight this session is likely to be HB 116, a lottery bill.

The proposal as written includes not only the possibility of a statewide lottery, but also video lottery terminals (VLTs) at dog tracks and bingo halls, he said.

“The VLT is actually a slot machine,” he said. “Many legislators

have told me they don’t necessarily support a lottery but they think the people should decide. After the gas tax increase passed during the special session, ‘letting the people vote’ has become a weak argument since the people didn’t have opportunity to vote on the gasoline tax.”

Johnston said if the bill becomes law, the Alabama Poarch Creek Indians, according to the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, can demand the state sign a compact allowing “full-fledged” casino gambling on their properties.

Godfrey reminded board members that ALCAP provides periodic legislative updates and interested citizens can sign up at the organization’s website, [www.alcap.com](http://www.alcap.com). He also noted that many free resources can be found at [AmericanCharacterBuilders.org](http://AmericanCharacterBuilders.org).

## Other business

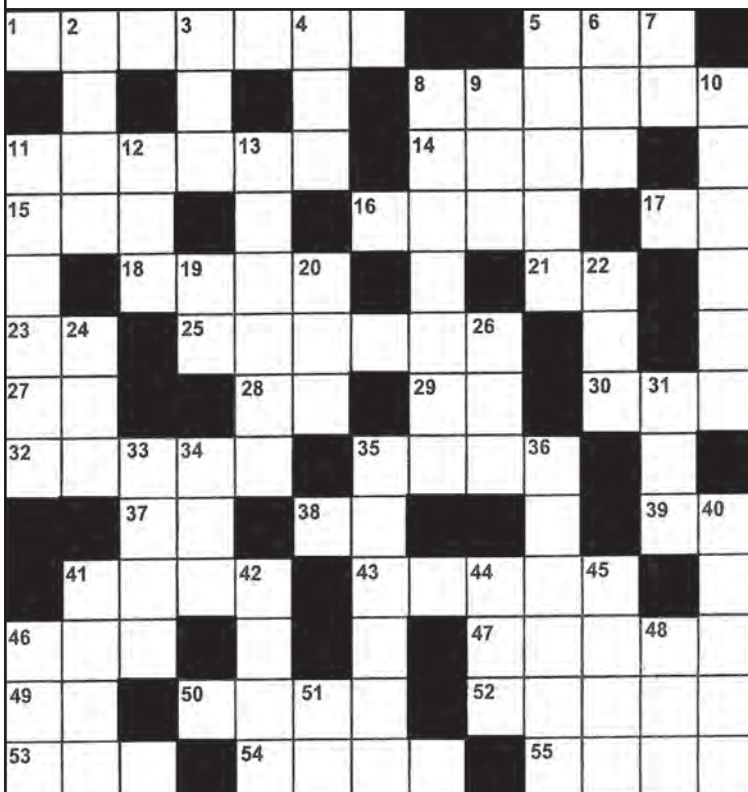
In other business the board elected five new members and Chris Crain of the Birmingham Metro Baptist Association as board chairman to succeed the late Mike McLemore.

The board also adopted a 2019 budget of \$430,144, a slight increase from 2018. ✝

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

- Jonathan \_\_\_ up upon his hands. (1 Sam. 14:13)
- Automobile.
- The Philistines took the ark ... to \_\_\_. (1 Sam. 5:1)
- Belonging to the son of Jephunneh. (Num. 13:6)
- Lizard, snail and \_\_\_ are unclean. (Lev. 11:30)
- Much \_\_\_ about nothing.
- He is up \_\_\_ good (two words).
- Printer’s measure.
- Sea bird.
- Prefix meaning into.
- Mother.
- Thou hast followed \_\_\_. (1 Kings 18:18)
- For example.
- Duty every soldier hates.
- Take thy neighbor’s raiment \_\_\_ pledge. (Ex. 22:26)
- National Football League. (abbr.)
- Good \_\_\_ are not everything.
- Bela the son of \_\_\_. (Gen. 36:32)
- Hello.
- Fe, \_\_\_ Fo, Fum.
- To exist.
- The strong hold of \_\_\_. (2 Sam. 24:7)

- To offer a sacrifice unto \_\_\_ their god. (Judg. 16:23)
- What holds up a golf ball.
- To surprise someone.
- I am. (contr.)
- There was a marriage in \_\_\_ of Galilee. (John 2:1)
- He killed Goliath.
- A meat offering baked in a \_\_\_. (Lev. 2:5)
- Ancient wisdom.
- Rulers of \_\_\_. (Ex. 18:21)

### Down

- I \_\_\_ in the way of righteousness. (Prov. 8:20)
- Curley and \_\_\_.
- Emergency Medical Service. (abbr.)
- Them which are of the house of \_\_\_. (1 Cor. 1:11)
- A sweetened fruit drink.
- Rosemary. (abbr.)
- Thy father was an \_\_\_. (Ezek. 16:3)
- This is my beloved \_\_\_. (Matt. 3:17)
- Spoken of by \_\_\_ the prophet. (Matt. 24:15)
- The excellency of \_\_\_ and Sharon. (Isa. 35:2)
- \_\_\_ sat in the gate of Sodom. (Gen. 19:1)
- Belonging to the son of Abinoam. (Judg. 4:6)
- Ebenezer. (abbr.)
- Just a little rest.
- Prefix meaning not.
- Lost three days \_\_\_. (1 Sam. 9:20)
- What a cow says.
- Fabulous.
- \_\_\_ of little faith. (Matt. 6:3; two words, var.)
- The king carried the people captive to \_\_\_. (2 Kings 16:9)
- Said Jehu to \_\_\_ his captain. (2 Kings 9:25)
- Joseph and Mary looked for a \_\_\_ an inn. (Luke 2:7; two words)
- Belonging to Gaal’s father. (Judg. 9:30)
- Son of Ishmael. (Gen. 25:13, 15)
- Joshua built an altar in mount \_\_\_. (Josh. 8:30)
- Moses gave unto ... \_\_\_ the kingdom of Sihon. (Num. 32:33)
- Part of a cathedral.
- Given for good service.
- Ye rebelled ... in the desert of \_\_\_. (Num. 27:14)
- Not yes.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 21

## Explore the Bible

By Robert E. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### SAVES Mark 15:27–39

#### Crucified (27–28)

Leading up to Jesus' crucifixion was a mock trial. Law after law was broken by the religious leaders. For example, their law stated that Jesus must have witnesses to speak in His defense; however, no one was allowed to defend Him.

Their law stated the prosecution's witnesses must be airtight, but their testimonies were contradictory. According to their law, Jesus should have been released. If Jesus were guilty of blasphemy, which He wasn't, their law dictated He should be stoned to death.

Why did the religious leaders seek death by the cross? The Scriptures taught that anyone who hung on a tree was under God's curse.

In other words not only did they desire Jesus to suffer, but they also reasoned that the cross would discredit Jesus. According to the religious leaders, God would not let the Messiah be cursed.

Desiring His death on the cross they further broke their law by delivering a Jew over to the Gentiles to be killed.

Yes they wanted our Lord to suffer in every way imaginable, so our Lord was crucified, the Righteous One surrounded by two unrighteous criminals.

#### Mocked (29–32)

Placing Him on the cross wasn't enough. In their sinfulness they taunted Jesus to come off the cross. He could have jumped down, proven His identity and then put Himself back on the cross. In so doing the priests and religious leaders would have been shamed.

But Jesus didn't come down. He waited on God's vindication. The Lord suffered and humbled Himself even enduring the mockery of people He created. What a tremendous lesson. The next time we are mocked or falsely accused, let us look to Jesus' example and allow God to vindicate us.

### Forsaken (33–36)

Darkness.

The One who is the Light of the World is now engulfed in darkness. This darkness is connected with sin. Jesus became sin and bore our curse on the cross so we might live. Jesus died as our substitute. Amazing!

It wasn't just the religious leaders who were law breakers; we all have gone astray but our Savior died for us.

Fully God and fully man, Jesus felt forsaken by the Father and cried out to Him. Misunderstanding Jesus someone rushed to prolong His life to see if Elijah would come and rescue Him. They didn't realize Jesus was willingly dying so that everyone who believes in Him might be forgiven of sins and set free.

Jesus was forsaken for you and for me.

#### Victorious (37–39)

Jesus died with a cry of victory. The sanctuary curtain was torn from the top to the bottom as a sign that all people who believe now have access to God through the victorious Christ. Even the centurion who witnessed this execution remarked, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

As Charles Spurgeon so beautifully states, "Keep a smile on your face! Live near your Master ... for soon, when your time has come, you will rise up to where Jesus sits and reigns at His right hand; and all because the Lord Jesus was made, 'to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.'"

Jesus' curse has become your glory. The cross and Christ's death is not the end. The tomb is empty! He is alive at the right hand of the Father and He is coming again in glory. Everyone who believes this truth is saved.

Praise be to God. Our Lord is alive! 🌈

## Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of New Testament, Samford University



### YOU'LL NEVER DIE John 11:25–27; 20:24–29

In our second in a series of lessons on some of Jesus' difficult teachings we look at resurrection in the Gospel of John. Resurrection from the dead has been difficult for many Christians to accept almost since the beginning (see 1 Cor. 15:12–20).

John may have been writing to a group of believers that included Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles. Some Jews (for example, Martha in John 11:24; also Pharisees and Essenes) had a doctrine of resurrection, but Gentiles whose thinking was influenced by some branches of Greek philosophy may have had a hard time understanding how a body could revive and live forever.

Today some members of your class may also find the various ways Jesus talks about resurrection difficult to grasp.

#### Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will never die. (11:25–27)

The full passage is John 11:1–44. In it we encounter three ideas of resurrection. The first is "the resurrection on the last day" which Martha and Jesus talk about in verse 24. That was a common Jewish idea that has survived in both Judaism and Christianity.

The resurrection of Lazarus is a second type. This miraculous resuscitation was temporary and an act of compassion by a grieving Jesus. The third kind of resurrection is the new life Jesus offers His believers in verses 25 and 26.

One of the many "I am" sayings in John, "I am the resurrection and the life," is Jesus' claim that He Himself is God's gift of a new existence. In verse 26 and the famous 3:16, Jesus says those who believe will not die.

But of course they will die as have all of Jesus' followers up to the present. What Jesus is talking about is a new kind of life God grants believers. We may think of

it as beginning after our body dies, but Jesus indicates that "eternal life" is activated by our faith. Our eternal life begins now.

#### Resurrection can be difficult to accept as reality. (20:24–25)

Read all of chapter 20. If Martha gives us an example of stalwart faith, Thomas shows us how Jesus deals with doubt in one of His followers. "I will not believe unless ..." resonates for much of what we claim about Jesus can seem outlandish. We are no more likely than Thomas to rely on someone else's claims about Jesus. We want our own encounter with the living Lord and that is what Jesus offers.

#### Jesus backed up His promise of eternal life by rising from the dead. (20:26–29)

Jesus responds to Thomas, not by scolding his lack of faith or by offering well-reasoned arguments or scriptural prooftexts. Instead Jesus offers Himself to Thomas in bodily form. Then he addresses both John's original audience and us in 2019 Alabama: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Class members who became Christians later in life might be able to share how they came to faith because they encountered the living Jesus. Those who have been in the church from the cradle may be able to tell how their encounters with that same Jesus kept them within the fold when they were tempted to leave.

Unlike Thomas, Jesus does not offer His resurrected body to us. Like Thomas, however, Jesus offers His living self, both to those who doubt and to those who believe. I think this explains the language, "I am the resurrection and the life." Through the Holy Spirit (see John 14:25–31; 15:26–16:15), our living Lord and God lives with us. And because He does, we live a new, eternal life. Thanks be to God. 🌈



# Media reviews

**MOVIES**

## Hit film 'A Quiet Place' leads April's streaming lineup

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

I don't watch many horror movies. In fact I typically avoid them. My reasoning is simple. I enjoy sleeping peacefully at night. I like being able to walk into a dark room without creepy thoughts lurking in my mind. And most significantly I believe many horror films glorify violence. Simply put I don't find them entertaining.



Photo courtesy of IMDb

en most of the population. However, one heroic family has thrived hidden away out in the country. They know sign language because their daughter is deaf so they don't have to speak.

But now their very existence is threatened because the mom is pregnant — and will deliver a crying baby any day. "A Quiet Place" ranks among my favorite horror/thriller films because it's not graphic. Most of

the scares and thrills are implied. It's also void of coarse language (not even a "heck") and sexuality (not even a kiss).

It also ranks among my favorite scary films because of its positive messages about parenting, family and love. Most importantly it has a pro-life message — a loud pro-life message — that you can't miss.

Also streaming this month:

### For adults/teens

**"Nate Bargatze: The Tennessee Kid" (Netflix)** — If you like clean comedy then you'll probably love Bargatze, who is so talented he's appeared on "The Tonight Show Starring

Jimmy Fallon." His comedy is dry, smart and hilarious. It's also mostly rated G. It began streaming March 26.



'A Quiet Place'

Photo courtesy of Paramount

**"You vs. Wild" (Netflix)** — Adventurer Bear Grylls travels the globe and puts the viewer in control in this interactive series based off his popular "Man vs. Wild" program. "You're in charge here. ... You decide," he says. No doubt viewers will learn a lot about survival and have a great time exploring this interactive series.

**"Valkyrie" (Netflix)** — At least six assassination attempts were made on Hitler's life. This film tells the story of one of them by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg. Of course it also raises ethical questions about war. Rated PG-13 for

violence and brief strong language.

**"Rick Steves' Europe: Complete Season 10" (Hulu)** — The PBS traveling personality takes us to Scotland, Portugal, England and Greece, among other locations. He offers travel tips for each place and Europe in general and shows the top places to visit.



Photo courtesy of IMDb

**For children**  
**"Spy Kids" (Netflix)** — Carmen and Juni Cortez learn the spymaster ways of their mother and father — and in this first installment, help rescue their parents too. A few OMGs and a misuse of "shiitake mushroom" keep this one from

### 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.

being 100 percent family-friendly. Rated PG for action sequences.

**"Happy Feet" (Hulu)** — A young penguin who can't sing learns to survive in a world where singing is essential. This animated film won an Oscar. Caveat: Some parents may find some of the song choices inappropriate for children. Rated PG for some mild peril and rude humor. 🌈



Photo courtesy of Rick Steves

# ‘Every day is a gift’

## Diana Lewis maintains strong missions commitment amid highs and lows of life

By **Trennis Henderson**  
WMU National Correspondent

**M**issions has been a driving force in Diana Lewis’ life for almost as long as she can remember.

As a member of Girls Auxiliary (now Girls in Action) during her

### How to pray:

► Pray for Diana Lewis as she continues serving and sharing the gospel through her various ministries.

► Pray for those impacted by Diana Lewis and that God will open their eyes and their hearts to Him. (TAB)

grade school years she recalls taking Christmas to a single mom and her children who lived in an old chicken house with holes in the wall.

Diana’s later work and ministry experiences ranged from her role as a pastor’s wife and Acteens leader to being a home health social worker. She then served 20-plus years in community ministries with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and North American Mission Board.

Life took an unexpected tragic turn in 2007 when Lewis’ husband, John, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The Lewises, who had been selected the previous year as featured missionaries for that spring’s Week of Prayer for North American Missions, found out about his cancer shortly before the annual prayer emphasis.

“The day that we went to find out where else it was in his body and



WMU photo by Pam Henderson

Among Diana Lewis’ many ministry outlets is creating quilts embellished with Scripture passages for friends and acquaintances coping with grief or illness.

how bad it was, was the day that we were on the Week of Prayer,” she recounted. “That was a really hard day but ... I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that one of the reasons that God lined this up the year before was so we would have people praying for us.”

### New opportunities

John lived just a few months after his diagnosis.

“It’s been a difficult journey at times, but God has blessed me with wonderful friends, wonderful family who have walked with me along the way,” she said.

He also has guided her to new ministry opportunities as diverse as volunteer missions projects in Peru, helping provide leadership for a local pregnancy resource center and constructing intricate quilts for friends and acquaintances who are grieving or ill.

Reflecting on her longtime missions philosophy amid the high and lows of life Lewis said, “All that I have is God’s and that’s the only way I know to approach my life. ... I really have especially learned through the loss of John way too early in life that every moment is precious and every day is a gift.”

Photo courtesy of Diana Lewis



Diana Lewis (center) visits with a group of children during one of her missions trips to Peru.