



# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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Pro-life bills advancing in Alabama and across U.S.

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Burroughs inherited passion for performance from his grandparents

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Photo courtesy of Birt family

Brothers (from left) Titus, Ezra and Micah Birt gained a little sister, Phoebe (second from right), when their parents, Nate and Julie Birt, adopted her as an embryo through Snowflakes Embryo Adoption. Her embryo had been frozen for almost 10 years.

## ‘Snowflake’ babies

### Birt family adds a daughter through embryo adoption

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Nate Birt remembers his wife’s reaction when he told her he thought it might be a good time to have a fourth baby. It wasn’t a “no.” But it also wasn’t an absolute “yes.”

His wife, Julie, had done some research on endometriosis during her master’s

program, specifically working with people who study infertility. She had gained a lot of new knowledge from that experience, but she also had come away with a deepened respect for the earliest stages of life, Birt said.

“So when I asked about having another baby she was already at the point of thinking that embryo adoption was what we needed to do,” he said.

She couldn’t get past the fact that more than a million frozen embryos are currently in storage nationwide, with less than 10% eligible for adoption.

Daniel Hurst — curriculum and research director for the Cahaba-UAB Family Medicine Residency in Centreville — says most of those embryos have been frozen in the course of in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment for people struggling with infertility.

#### ‘Pro-life perspective’

“The IVF process takes an egg and sperm and combines them manually outside of the woman, then the researcher or physician can insert them back into the woman,” said Hurst, who also serves as an associate research fellow with the Southern Baptist Ethics &

Religious Liberty Commission. “It’s a very expensive treatment, and most of the time if they have leftover embryos they will freeze them in order to insert them later.”

As the years continue if a woman is not able to give birth to all of her frozen embryos she has a choice to make, he said. The options are to keep them frozen indefinitely, donate them for scientific research, donate them to an adoption agency or have them destroyed.

“From a pro-life perspective, these are human beings,” Hurst said, noting that calling (See ‘Gift,’ page 8)

To watch the videos from this week’s issue, visit our YouTube channel “TAB Media.”

# TAB staff members participate in Bible reading marathons across the state

As Bible reading marathons took place across the state members of *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) staff joined in and read Scripture at every location and at all times of the day.

▶ Executive assistant **Cynthia Watts** kicked off TAB's participation by reading at the Dale County Courthouse in **Ozark** in the early morning hours of April 29. Dale County's marathon was hosted by the Dale Baptist Association.

Watts also read in **Troy** on the downtown square. Troy's marathon was hosted by Salem-Troy Baptist Association.

▶ Content editor **Carrie Brown McWhorter** read in **Heflin** at Ross Park. The Heflin marathon was hosted by Cleburne Baptist Association.

▶ Digital editor **Hannah Muñoz** and her brother **Ben** read at First Baptist Church, **Tuscaloosa**, on May 1. The Tuscaloosa marathon was hosted by Hope 4 My City.

▶ On May 2 financial administrator **Linda Harrison** read outside the Blount County Court House in **Oneonta**. The Oneonta marathon was organized by Terri Nelson.

▶ Digital services manager **James Hammack** read on the steps of the state Capitol in **Montgomery** on May 3. The Montgomery marathon

TAB advertising manager **Melanie McKinney** (second from left) spends time with the ladies running the Birmingham location.



Photo by Jessica Ingram



Photo by Stella McWhorter

The northeast side of the state was covered by TAB content editor **Carrie Brown McWhorter** who read at Ross Park in Heflin.

TAB digital editor **Hannah Muñoz** (right) and her brother, **Ben**, read the Bible outside FBC Tuscaloosa.



Photo courtesy of Hannah Muñoz

was hosted by His Vessel Ministries.

▶ Executive editor **Janet Erwin** read outside The Abbey coffee shop in the Avondale neighborhood of **Birmingham** on May 5. The Birmingham event was organized by Ninfa Austin and Sheila Wright.

Other staff members reading in Birmingham were **Watts**, production manager **Jessica Ingram**, director of communications **Debbie Campbell**,

customer relations representative **Sarah Gill**, financial assistant **Deb Lowery**, advertising manager **Melanie McKinney**, digital services associate **Haley Piersol**, outside sales rep **Susan Stevens** and editor-in-chief **Jennifer Davis Rash**.

All the Bible readings were held in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer on May 2. (TAB)

## Another TAB staff member trained in disaster relief

*The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) encourages staff members to be trained in Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) and counts the time spent helping with disaster relief as work time.

On April 25–27 another TAB staff member, executive assistant **Cynthia Watts**, was trained

in ABDR, this time at Valleydale Baptist Church, Birmingham. **Watts** was the fourth staff member to go through disaster relief training, following **Susan Stevens** and **Janet Erwin** in mass feeding, and **Bill Gilmore** in mudout work.

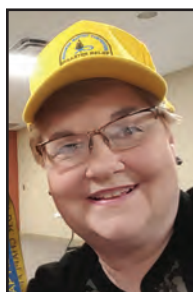
**Watts** was trained in chaplaincy and is looking forward to serving the citizens of Alabama the next time disaster strikes.

"I am so excited to be trained in disaster relief and to be able to

minister to and share the hope of Christ with those affected by natural disasters," **Watts** said.

Disaster can strike without warning, and when it does teams are ready and waiting across Alabama — and across the country — to jump into action and provide for any possible needs whether physical, spiritual or emotional.

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



WATTS



### Fresh front steps, sidewalk

Thank you to our friend Jonathan for volunteering to pressure wash the sidewalk and front steps of our building in Homewood. We are shining brighter now thanks to your kindness.



THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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### NEWS SERVICES

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

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Birmingham, AL 35209

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Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:  
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# MY RASHIONALE

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

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[@RashionalThts](https://www.facebook.com/RashionalThts)



## I can't imagine life without a team of mamma bears in my corner

It only took 8-year-old Wesley about three seconds to share what he appreciates most about his mom, Natalie.

“Although she does not get very much rest, she always likes to take care of us,” he said with a slight grin as he peeked over at his mom.

You can sense the special relationship Wesley and his mom have by the way they communicate with each other. The deep love and mutual appreciation is obvious.

I know other families with similar relationships; and I know some who only dream of such.

Every family dynamic is different and each of us carry many of the aspects of those dynamics into our everyday lives and other relationships.

With Mother's Day approaching on the calendar it shifts all of our minds to our own mothers and the relationship we have or had with her.

Sometimes the memories are painful; sometimes they are warm and sweet.

I know I have neglected so many opportunities to thank my mom for how amazing she is — and she is pretty amazing.

If you know her, then you know she is quiet, sometimes a little shy and definitely avoids public speaking at all costs.

So yes, I know what you are thinking — I must take after my dad. And in many ways, I do indeed. But my mom is certainly the best of all of us.

She has the fiercest love and compassion for her family and friends than any extrovert you can put in front of her.

My mom cares deeply and constantly looks for ways to help make all of our lives better and less stressed.

Along with her huge heart, she is smart, kind, gracious, cooperative, flexible and models a strong work ethic.

She has spent her life cheering my brother and me on at everything we have ever attempted to do. She shows no difference for our spouses.

The grandchildren, my brother's kiddos, also know she will always be there rooting for them as well.

So many others have been blessed by her through the years as well, and I hope that one day I can learn to give away as much of myself as she does.

God has allowed me to walk through a few special seasons that gave me the opportunity to feel a smidgen of what it is like to truly love unconditionally and give a large chunk of myself away.

Somehow I fumbled my way

through those moments and knew that the best way I could operate would be to emulate my own mom. So that's what I did.

I've followed her lead in so many other parts of life as well and have been blessed to have an army of mother types (mother-in-law, aunts, grandmothers, mentors, older friends) and a special bonus mom to be there for me through the years.

My mom is super strong but I'm sure she has appreciated the help in raising me along the way. And pulling from the best of what each has to offer is an extra bonus for me. 🌈

## RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

### 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat ... I was a stranger and you invited me in ... I was in prison and you came to visit me'

Circling the block one more time, I decided I might actually make it to the meeting on time when I saw the car pull out of the spot directly in front of the building.

It meant I would have to parallel park though — not my best skill. The other option was to drive another four blocks to the lot with my kind of parking spots — straight on.

Parallel parking won out and I actually pulled off a respectable parking job.

Right on time, I bounced out of my car and headed to the meter, only to discover I had no change to feed it. Not one dime, nickel, quarter, nothing.

My momentary win with the parking saga quickly faded into frustration as I hurriedly plun-

dered the console in my car, looked between the seats and scanned the sidewalks.

How could I have not thought to bring change for the meter? Why did I not give myself more time so I could have walked from the free parking area?

On and on I went scolding myself until a man with a gentle spirit passed by me on the sidewalk.

Two quarters would make everything OK in that moment so I swallowed my pride, got his attention and asked if he might cover the price of my meter.

He didn't hesitate nor did he linger. He put the two quarters in the meter, turned the knob and challenged me to do the same for someone else in need.

I thanked him and accepted his challenge — but I also determined

I would take it one step farther.

Instead of having to be asked, I determined I would strive to be so aware of my surroundings and those around me that I can sense when there is a need.

My friend Janet advocates for this type of kindness as one way to share the Light inside us.

It might be letting the person with only two items go in front of you in the grocery line or allowing the car stuck behind the stalled vehicle back over into the flow of traffic, she says.

Maybe it is leaving a larger than normal tip. Or maybe it is feeding two quarters into a stranger's meter.

Whatever it might be, our simple, kind gestures will always leave a lasting impression.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

# Your Voice



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

## I sure wish I could call my mama now

By **Bill King**  
Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association

After I was grown, married and living away from home, my mama used to constantly say two things to me.

Every time I went to see her, she reminded me how long it had been since I had been to see her. Then she always said, “I wish you would come more often.” Every time I called, she always said, “Well, I haven’t heard from you in a while.”

I might say, “Mom, I called you only a couple of days ago.” She

would say, “Are you sure? It sure does seem like longer than that.”

Before I hung up she would say, “Don’t forget to call and come when you can.”

She used to say she wished I would bring my guitar when I came and sing her a song. The funny thing was, when I was a teenager playing some good ol’ rock and roll on the red electric guitar, she constantly said, “Would you please quit banging on that guitar or at least turn it down.”

Your mom did, or does, those same things too? They aren’t try-

ing to be nagging parents; they just love us and miss us.

One mother showed her daughter a picture of herself waiting by the phone that never rings. Not long afterwards, her daughter called one day and got her mom’s answering machine. The recording said, “If you are a salesperson, press one. If you are a friend, press two. If you are my daughter, who never calls, hang up and call 911 because the shock of you calling will probably give me a heart attack!”

I realize that Mother’s Day is a day of mixed feelings and emotions for some. Some never knew their mother and unfortunately some may wish they hadn’t known theirs.

Some, myself included, had a great mother who loved them dearly but now she is gone. Mine has been gone for 17 years and I still miss her greatly. I can still enjoy sweet memories and laugh at some of the things she used to do and say.

Some of you are blessed enough to still have yours. If so, have you called your mother today? Better yet, go see her if you can.

Thank you, moms, for all the love, sacrifice and wonderful things you do. I hope you have a blessed and wonderful Mother’s Day.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Bill King is associational mission strategist for Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association and a Christian humorist.*

I do believe God is using the passage of this very offensive state law [expanding abortion rights] to awaken the conscience of many New Yorkers.

**Terry Robertson**  
Executive director  
Baptist Convention  
of New York

Our churches are all praying and even our associated churches that are not a part of our Baptist network have joined in too.

**Michael Carlisle**  
Director of missions  
San Diego Southern  
Baptist Association

Religious liberty is an inherent good and an inherent right, and it is inherently good for ... a nation and nation leader to embrace this.

**Sam Brownback**  
U.S. ambassador at large  
for international religious  
freedom

If the Lord puts a burden on your heart, don’t hesitate to respond.

**Pastor Danny Sinquefield**  
Faith Baptist Church  
Bartlett, Tenn.

## Letters to the Editor

The article “A Glimpse of God” in the April 11, 2019, issue of *TAB* notes there are “evangelicals who are eager for a more nuanced approach to science — one that accepts the findings of evolution, for example, while also regarding the Bible as a source of ultimate authority.”

According to innumerable biblical scholars, pastors, scientists and students of the Bible, if the Bible is the “ultimate authority” because of its being accepted as God’s inerrant Word, then no evolutionary doctrine of origins could be considered.

God plainly states His method of Creation throughout the Bible

and no evolutionary paradigm is found there. If life evolved from elements on a sterile Earth, one would reason that scientists who now have the best laboratories, chemicals and sources of energy, could produce life-forms from sterile components.

Yet after centuries of such experimentation, no success is found. The basic problem for biological evolution is the absence of any true scientific evidence supporting life’s origin.

It is surprising this article was printed in *TAB*, as it could dissuade some readers from the absolute truth of biblical origins.

Jerry Akridge  
Arab, Ala.

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# “During times of transitions God still challenges us to go and be on mission.”

RYAN BROOKS

*Baptist campus minister, University of Alabama*

There is an appropriate and necessary anger that must be nurtured in our hearts toward the sin in others and in ourselves. As we channel our anger in this way — as we correct and rebuke one another, not as with a sword to destroy but as with a scalpel to heal — we become channels of God’s love to one another.

**Scott Sauls**

**Author, “Irresistible Faith: Becoming the Kind of Christian the World Can’t Resist”**

It is only when I am completely vulnerable before God that I find true freedom. I am not in control. I am not invincible. I am not superwoman. When I can stand totally stripped and vulnerable before God,

He becomes the wind in my face, the power on which I ride, and I become a conduit for His work through me. In Psalm 104, the psalmist sings the praises of the Lord’s creation and providence. ... Being vulnerable before God makes me able to walk on the wings of the wind with Him and experience the freedom that comes with complete surrender.

**Terri Stovall**

**Dean of women and professor of women’s ministries  
Southwestern Baptist  
Theological Seminary**

According to Leslie Leyland Fields in “The Myth of the Perfect Parent,” Bible-believing parents have imbibed the philosophy of

John B. Watson, an early 20th-century psychologist who boasted he could train any child. Christians often follow the same kind of behaviorism, giving it a Christian veneer with selected Bible verses. And yet many children in evangelical homes are not “turning out” the way we hope or expect. Our expectations of parenting are clearly off-kilter and need to be rethought.

**Stan Guthrie**

**Author, Christian Bible Studies  
ChristianityToday.com**

There are a thousand things you can do and be. Ask God to be your everything, and then in His leading, go find them and do them.

**Grace Thornton**

**GracefortheRoad.com**

## From the *Twitterverse*

**@jdgrear**

On this #NationalDayOfPrayer, asking God that he would make our nation a more kind, civil society. Praying we would assume the best, give the benefit of the doubt, & extend grace to the level Jesus did for us on the cross.

**@museumofBible**

The Bible is saturated with prayer with praise, prayer and praying mentioned over 500 times! As you engage with the Bible on this #NationalDayofPrayer, you’ll discover the prominence given to prayer in every aspect of this book of books!

**@doogilla**

Pastors, spend more time in the Word than on social media, more time with your family than seeking to win wars on Twitter, more

time shepherding the flock amongst you than scrolling through memes, more time protecting your members from error than trying to correct everyone online.

**@billineastala**

Was reminded this morning that today is the eighth anniversary of one of the most stressful days of my life, and everything turned out well. God answers prayer.

**@SHoddeMiller**

Aspiring women leaders, the gravitational pull of your ministry will always be “to be encouraging,” but what the church desperately needs is women who are prepared to name evil and face off with it.

**@rayortlund**

Never give up. Someone else needs you. They need your weak-

ness, anguish, bewilderment. They need to see a buffeted Christian go to Christ and hang on for dear life and make it through. They need that from you today, and they will need the memory of it years from now. Hang on!

**@newsomblake**

On the need for humble ministers, Lloyd-Jones: “You read the old records of the activities of God’s greatest workers, the great evangelists and others, and you observe how self-effacing they were. But today we are experiencing something that is almost an exact reversal of this.

**@DrPaulChitwood**

“You don’t have to have a passport to join the @IMB\_SBC strategy to reach the nations. Prayer is a crucial part of our strategy” @JToddL #1Tim1:2



Samford photo

Andrew Westmoreland is president of Samford University in Birmingham.

## ‘First thoughts’

On the first day of each month since arriving at Samford in 2006, I’ve shared with students via email “First Thoughts,” an accumulation of matters that are rattling around in my brain. I suspect the percentage of students who automatically delete the messages is rather high, but sometimes I manage to break through the clutter. Such was the case with these points:

- ▶ I need to listen carefully.
- ▶ I need to guard and limit my own speech, spoken and written.
- ▶ I need to extend grace to others even if I feel I have not received grace from them.
- ▶ I need to find happiness in the fleeting moments of the day.
- ▶ I need to apologize — quickly and without qualifying conditions — when I have been wrong or when I have hurt someone.
- ▶ I need to recognize the loneliness I sometimes feel is actually shared by everyone.
- ▶ I need to take a walk when I’m stressed, even if it is raining and — perhaps — especially if it is raining.
- ▶ I need to remember that every person I see today is made in the image of God.
- ▶ I need to remember to love the Lord with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding.

—Andrew Westmoreland

# Baptisms

# Cooperative Program Receipts

## FOR CHURCHES (PART 6)

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

Salem Troy	Baptism	CP	Designated	<b>Sardis Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$20,878.80</b>	<b>\$21,480.17</b>	Shelby First	2	\$10,810.25	\$17,164.88	Pine Forest		\$2,089.70	\$597.50
Ansley	5	\$512.19	\$490.00	<b>Selma</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Siluria	7	\$17,859.05	\$9,093.94	Pinedale First		\$300.00	\$300.00
Antioch	3	\$689.00	\$2,515.00	Benton	1	\$10,592.00	\$21,111.00	South Shelby	14	\$41,844.50	\$10,370.26	Piney Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Banks	0	\$1,967.11	\$2,309.41	Carlownville	0	\$1,786.45	\$400.00	Southside		\$0.00	\$0.00	Pleasant Grove		\$0.00	\$0.00
Bethel	0	\$833.53	\$326.51	Cornestone	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	*Southside Montevallo		\$0.00	\$0.00	Pleasant Valley		\$0.00	\$0.00
Bethlehem	2	\$1,000.00	\$1,062.00	Elkdale	7	\$77,674.37	\$38,537.50	The Branch		\$840.00	\$1,575.00	Poplar Springs	0	\$3,099.10	\$619.82
Burning Bush		\$80.00	\$0.00	Fairview	0	\$9,062.75	\$5,991.00	Chelsea-Westover	11	\$41,029.82	\$3,000.00	Prescott		\$0.00	\$0.00
Bush Memorial	11	\$30,165.00	\$13,640.80	Freedom	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Underwood		\$0.00	\$1,101.46	Providence		\$0.00	\$0.00
Calvary	0	\$2,191.24	\$1,471.07	Gateway Ministries	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	University		\$0.00	\$0.00	Ragland First	2	\$2,496.93	\$891.80
Ebenezer	0	\$27.00	\$81.00	Hope	0	\$43.00	\$350.00	Vincent First		\$12,939.77	\$12,126.00	Red Hill	6	\$0.00	\$0.00
Enon	1	\$3,600.00	\$5,916.00	Marion Junction	0	\$1,445.00	\$929.70	Westwood	43	\$5,000.04	\$30,408.27	Reeves Grove		\$0.00	\$2,401.01
Fleetwood	2	\$8,816.39	\$0.00	New Bethel	0	\$400.00	\$7,009.94	Wilsonville	3	\$20,052.85	\$10,783.24	Refuge		\$0.00	\$0.00
Good Hope	1	\$3,650.00	\$8,161.00	Northside	5	\$16,821.17	\$27,104.40	Wilton	0	\$12,050.04	\$2,538.66	Restoration		\$150.00	\$0.00
Goshen	1	\$6,933.36	\$10,207.39	Orrville	3	\$10,136.04	\$4,985.00	<b>Shelby Totals</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>\$1,507,671.20</b>	<b>\$722,627.05</b>	Riverside	1	\$3,663.33	\$7,423.67
Hales Chapel	1	\$0.00	\$0.00	Plantersville	1	\$6,041.26	\$1,991.00					Seddon	45	\$7,500.00	\$0.00
Harmony	6	\$219.82	\$580.40	Pleasant Hill	1	\$1,000.00	\$4,085.00					Son Rise Missionary	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Henderson	4	\$6,544.63	\$10,925.60	Safford	2	\$3,690.78	\$695.00	<b>Sipsey</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Spring Valley	3	\$31,424.08	\$16,903.21
Hephzibah	8	\$5,699.69	\$7,770.00	Selma First	4	\$98,384.00	\$61,188.94	Arbor Springs	7	\$6,686.47	\$8,333.87	Springville First	6	\$27,000.00	\$10,792.00
Monticello	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Shady Grove	4	\$3,912.49	\$2,855.87	Bethlehem	1	\$150.00	\$450.00	St. Clair Springs		\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Moriah	1	\$0.00	\$0.00	Siloh	3	\$27,221.78	\$9,780.44	Bevan Chapel	1	\$500.00	\$3,500.00	Steele	2	\$10,009.62	\$10,580.23
Mt Pleasant		\$0.00	\$0.00	Sister Springs	1	\$6,965.46	\$6,618.00	Big Hill Missionary	2	\$664.00	\$15,165.00	Sulphur Springs	4	\$5,150.00	\$7,400.00
Northside	0	\$4,520.00	\$1,771.00	Summerfield	0	\$2,223.53	\$1,037.25	Cross Roads	2	\$0.00	\$2,186.00	Taylors	0	\$100.00	\$939.18
Old Lebanon	0	\$0.00	\$345.00	Valley Grande	11	\$32,441.79	\$10,794.89	Dunn's Creek	3	\$4,023.78	\$6,633.69	<b>St Clair Totals</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>\$804,176.55</b>	<b>\$806,862.58</b>
Orion		\$0.00	\$0.00	Water Avenue	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Hopewell	0	\$0.00	\$0.00				
Richland	0	\$1,994.59	\$540.00	West End	0	\$2,678.40	\$2,360.00	Macedonia Missionary	0	\$100.00	\$490.00	<b>Sulphur Springs</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Riverview	5	\$0.00	\$0.00	Westwood	1	\$25,437.58	\$8,208.77	Moores Bridge	3	\$3,759.60	\$5,963.44	Aiken Grove	0	\$120.00	\$600.00
Salem	0	\$9,442.02	\$1,391.00	<b>Selma Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$337,957.85</b>	<b>\$216,033.70</b>	Mt Hebron	0	\$1,132.00	\$693.00	Antioch		\$0.00	\$0.00
Shady Grove	4	\$2,110.98	\$1,573.98					New Hope	21	\$7,316.83	\$3,595.77	Bethel	10	\$68,599.26	\$10,964.25
Shiloh	3	\$5,572.00	\$1,436.00	<b>Shelby</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Rock Solid Missionary		\$0.00	\$0.00	Calvary	4	\$10,393.00	\$1,777.00
Southside	13	\$42,537.41	\$6,712.00	Alabaster First	13	\$144,712.28	\$70,274.09	Spring Hill	1	\$500.00	\$646.00	Cane Creek	8	\$0.00	\$202.00
Spring Hill	5	\$4,579.31	\$6,535.31	Aldrich First	0	\$1,893.99	\$170.00	Peoples Church	4	\$0.00	\$0.00	Elvester		\$360.00	\$0.00
Springfield	0	\$2,395.71	\$2,595.00	Antioch #2		\$0.00	\$0.00	Zion Community	0	\$100.00	\$50.00	Empire		\$0.00	\$0.00
St. John	0	\$5,316.74	\$3,919.79	Antioch at Columbiana	1	\$11,930.00	\$4,232.00	<b>Sipsey Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>\$24,932.68</b>	<b>\$47,706.77</b>	Good Hope	3	\$801.34	\$801.34
Troy First	0	\$56,648.98	\$41,238.86	Arkwright	1	\$2,750.45	\$1,500.00					Harmony	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
White Rock	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	BC at Lay Lake	2	\$753.98	\$520.00	<b>St. Clair</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Kilgore		\$0.00	\$0.00
Zebulon	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Bay Springs		\$7,774.05	\$2,164.35	Arbor	0	\$15,803.77	\$14,931.77	Little Vine		\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Salem Troy Totals</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$208,046.70</b>	<b>\$133,514.12</b>	Bethel		\$9,600.00	\$3,899.00	Argo	2	\$216.00	\$2,880.00	Mt Brook	0	\$0.00	\$3,500.00
				Bethlehem	0	\$5,822.68	\$1,119.00	Ashville First	10	\$157,698.00	\$36,586.80	Mt High	0	\$322.28	\$2,016.89
<b>Sand Mountain</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Beulah	0	\$9,747.21	\$1,735.00	*Awake		\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Hope	1	\$700.86	\$400.00
Bethany	4	\$4,181.62	\$2,815.82	Calera		\$14,155.71	\$4,574.30	Bethany	1	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt View	0	\$0.00	\$2,698.17
Bethlehem	0	\$1,801.60	\$442.26	Calvary		\$550.00	\$0.00	Bethel	33	\$25,000.44	\$15,340.76	New Canaan	0	\$0.00	\$700.00
Calvary	0	\$1,080.00	\$786.00	Chelsea Village		\$1,233.30	\$0.00	Broken Arrow	0	\$573.20	\$307.00	New Temple	10	\$33,490.95	\$8,077.40
Corinth	1	\$5,400.00	\$3,267.69	Christ Central		\$3,592.83	\$0.00	Calvary	12	\$19,840.20	\$5,388.40	Pisgah		\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Dutton	9	\$4,737.47	\$3,089.00	Columbiana First	9	\$52,042.49	\$57,686.45	Cedar Grove	6	\$14,261.25	\$18,839.76	Porter		\$0.00	\$0.00
East Brow	6	\$5,328.87	\$10,100.27	Community	0	\$60,386.29	\$0.00	Central	0	\$33,510.34	\$35,333.24	Sulphur Springs		\$0.00	\$0.00
Ebenezer	0	\$15,650.01	\$14,041.39	Concord		\$3,600.00	\$0.00	Chandler Mountain	6	\$4,999.45	\$5,526.55	Temple Hill	2	\$3,558.06	\$450.00
Five Points	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Crossbridge	7	\$20,003.53	\$5,315.00	Cook Springs	1	\$3,130.10	\$1,484.00	Union	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Flat Rock First	1	\$949.00	\$300.00	Crosscreek		\$0.00	\$0.00	Cool Springs	2	\$1,934.00	\$4,377.73	<b>Sulphur Springs Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>\$119,545.75</b>	<b>\$32,187.05</b>
Freedom	1	\$2,709.00	\$2,537.00	Crossroads		\$0.00	\$0.00	Coosa Valley	0	\$4,153.00	\$1,000.00				
Friendship	0	\$883.78	\$828.68	CrossWay		\$3,990.16	\$0.00	Corinth	0	\$669.50	\$1,262.58	<b>Tallapoosa</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Happy Home	8	\$3,000.00	\$1,368.40	Dogwood	3	\$37,864.77	\$33,810.26	Cropwell	26	\$67,111.26	\$42,081.08	Alexander City First	6	\$67,458.37	\$81,299.45
Henagar	11	\$25,061.54	\$37,333.54	Double Oak Comm.		\$0.00	\$5,000.00	CrossPoint	41	\$17,416.63	\$282,038.12	Bay Pine	10	\$1,721.51	\$1,300.76
Hodge	1	\$6,709.83	\$6,525.00	Dunnavant Faith		\$0.00	\$0.00	Eden Westside	50	\$17,050.00	\$5,094.35	Bethany		\$0.00	\$0.00
Ider	3	\$24,971.50	\$12,385.00	Enon	3	\$9,970.38	\$7,214.72	Evening Star	4	\$0.00	\$3,500.00	Bethel	0	\$1,538.95	\$96.87
Mt Zion	3	\$5,889.80	\$4,892.00	Fourmile		\$21,025.20	\$6,320.00	Fairview #1	1	\$0.00	\$1,311.67	Beulah	0	\$5,698.59	\$2,671.50
New Bethel	1	\$1,324.92	\$137.00	Grace Montevallo	0	\$345.00	\$566.00	Friendship	2	\$16,760.81	\$6,826.00	Calvary	1	\$900.00	\$0.00
New Home	15	\$13,533.32	\$9,748.93	Harpersville First		\$8,383.56	\$6,266.63	Greensport	2	\$7,055.30	\$4,931.00	Calvary Heights	2	\$2,468.34	\$2,294.65
New Sardis	0	\$900.00	\$1,611.00	Helena First		\$6,333.00	\$12,793.89	Gum Springs	0	\$0.00	\$300.00	Camp Hill	8	\$4,221.55	\$4,572.08
Pisgah	5	\$5,915.42	\$4,146.31	Iglesia Bautista		\$4,772.00	\$1,719.18	Happy Home	22	\$4,899.03	\$2,149.80	Comer Memorial	0	\$4,378.48	\$2,652.67
Pleasant Hill	6	\$8,828.51	\$12,517.57	Indian Springs First	4	\$13,455.94	\$4,064.00	Lister Memorial		\$0.00	\$900.00	Dadeville First	4	\$55,477.26	\$27,042.53
Pleasant View	1	\$500.00	\$1,551.43	Klein	1	\$1,335.84	\$50.00	Macedonia #1	3	\$3,526.82	\$3,295.59	Daviston		\$0.00	\$0.00
Poplar Springs	0	\$528.00	\$3,229.80	Liberty	36	\$242,415.07	\$65,694.94	Macedonia #2		\$0.00	\$1,165.00	Eagle Creek	0	\$10,145.24	\$2,640.00
Rosalie	4	\$2,041.48	\$4,711.73	Lighthouse Community	0	\$1,120.00	\$0.00	Markeeta		\$0.00	\$0.00	Fellowship	5	\$0.00	\$0.00
Section	0	\$3,600.00	\$3,510.00	Macedonia North		\$11,465.25	\$3,970.00	McEntyre	0	\$2,596.72	\$1,628.36	Good News	8	\$2,847.00	\$2,400.00
Spring Hill	1	\$808.00	\$500.00	Macedonia South	1	\$1,042.47	\$1,000.00	Mineral Springs		\$0.00	\$0.00	Hackneyville	4	\$1,195.00	\$0.00
Stamp	2	\$4,956.00	\$6,127.00	Mayberry		\$828.53	\$0.00	Moody First	14	\$45,316.35	\$38,360.92	Hillabee	4	\$26,619.37	\$9,204.10
Sylvania	6	\$3,600.00	\$9,307.00	Meadow Brook	11	\$101,118.90	\$57,057.39	Mt Moriah	2	\$4,226.30	\$4,001.78	Horseshoe Bend	1	\$2,750.00	\$2,801.00
Union Grove	5	\$2,125.04	\$450.00	Montevallo First	14	\$28,546.78	\$4,861.00	Mt Olive #1	0	\$200.00	\$600.00	Jacksons Gap	31	\$15,536.00	\$17,268.58
Unity	5	\$225.00	\$1,336.00	Mt Signal		\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Pisgah	4	\$11,670.93	\$7,817.98	Lake Martin	10	\$28,767.00	\$13,675.80
<b>Sand Mountain Totals</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>\$157,239.71</b>	<b>\$159,595.82</b>	Mt Zion	0	\$0.00	\$314.87	Mt Pleasant	0	\$1,871.69	\$0.00	Lake Pointe	6	\$19,100.87	\$9,970.62
				North Shelby	13	\$181,260.58	\$134,972.34	New Beginnings	0	\$2,870.00	\$0.00	Lebanon	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Sardis</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	North Shelby Viet.		\$221.62	\$0.00	New Hope	13	\$41,705.15	\$1,778.00	Mountain Springs	1	\$8,016.05	\$6,751.40
Alberton New Life		\$600.00	\$1,850.00	Northside	2	\$3,948.48	\$1,655.68	New Hope, Argo		\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Carmel	5	\$3,730.21	\$1,697.00
Bethel	2	\$4,274.31	\$1,745.00	Oak Grove		\$0.00	\$0.00	New Lebanon	4	\$8,475.47	\$4,611.61	Mt Zion	6	\$7,518.22	\$5,728.32
Chapel Hill		\$4,469.11	\$219.30	Oak Mountain	1	\$7,467.00	\$8,967.00	New Prospect	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	New Beginning	2	\$1,081.04	\$62.15
Friendship	0	\$820.00	\$3,695.00	Pelham First	55	\$287,790.81	\$88,513.75	North Valley	24	\$8,100.00	\$8,682.23	New Concord	0	\$6,589.00	\$815.00
Mt Carmel		\$5,704.55	\$5,087.64	Pleasant Grove		\$0.00	\$0.00	Northside Fellowship	0	\$7,510.12	\$24,580.52	New Elkahatchee	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
New Chapel		\$1,040.00	\$1,832.71	Pleasant Site	0	\$5,040.27	\$5,300.00	Oak Grove #1		\$0.00	\$0.00	New Hope	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pilgrim's Rest	1	\$2,312.88	\$4,451.82	Prospect	0	\$2,457.00	\$1,700.00	Oak Grove #2	4						

# CHURCH REPORT FOR 2018

Old Providence	0	\$2,200.00	\$4,617.23	New Life	5	\$9,294.96	\$3,640.00	Manchester		\$0.00	\$300.00	New Freedom	1	\$849.72	\$2,232.98
Old Union	0	\$1,183.00	\$224.00	North River	6	\$0.00	\$13,750.00	Maranatha		\$50.00	\$25.00	New Mt Zion	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Orr Street	0	\$12,347.58	\$4,877.87	Northport	26	\$29,488.15	\$148,835.20	Mt Carmel		\$7,202.00	\$1,278.00	New Prospect	0	\$300.00	\$0.00
Perryville	7	\$2,564.42	\$3,560.46	Northridge		\$3,121.72	\$4,079.73	Mt Joy	1	\$2,689.67	\$5,299.00	New Union	1	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Pleasant Ridge	2	\$600.00	\$1,900.00	Northside	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Philadelphia	0	\$8,708.48	\$9,694.05	Northside	3	\$5,011.50	\$6,810.12
River Road	2	\$815.95	\$1,950.95	Northwood Hills	3	\$14,264.46	\$1,804.05	Mt Pisgah	2	\$0.00	\$1,247.00	Panama	0	\$1,391.68	\$1,469.26
Rock Springs	3	\$615.00	\$1,605.00	Oak Grove	0	\$900.00	\$0.00	Mt Vernon	4	\$82,389.83	\$31,206.55	Ryans Creek	6	\$16,799.13	\$27,628.01
Rocky Creek	10	\$0.00	\$0.00	*Oregonia		\$0.00	\$0.00	Mt Zion		\$0.00	\$540.00	Salem	0	\$3,220.00	\$6,582.00
Russell Farm	1	\$450.00	\$1,120.50	*Philippine Globe		\$0.00	\$0.00	New Bethel #1		\$0.00	\$413.00	Sardis	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sandy Creek	0	\$702.73	\$760.00	Pilgrim Rest	0	\$1,300.00	\$1,050.00	New Canaan	3	\$8,914.86	\$2,017.53	Seventh Street	1	\$9,159.39	\$14,009.60
Sixth Street	4	\$29,921.47	\$22,393.84	Piney Grove	3	\$2,839.62	\$1,527.23	New Life		\$0.00	\$0.00	Shelton Grove	6	\$2,577.00	\$2,389.00
Town Creek		\$0.00	\$173.00	Praise		\$1,419.48	\$0.00	New Prospect	4	\$15,340.00	\$4,403.00	Smith Lake	11	\$5,970.00	\$1,445.80
Vertical Point		\$6,006.69	\$1,501.68	Ridgecrest	1	\$31,189.49	\$11,314.80	New Vision		\$0.00	\$0.00	Southside	0	\$5,600.00	\$5,652.00
Wayside	0	\$9,801.34	\$9,520.00	Rose Boulevard	0	\$1,200.00	\$330.00	New Zion	11	\$4,317.63	\$10,250.63	Spring Hill	7	\$8,116.00	\$7,435.64
Zion Hill	1	\$505.88	\$1,140.67	Rosedale	2	\$10,030.86	\$5,003.00	Northside	8	\$65,813.91	\$44,420.29	St. John	0	\$800.00	\$0.00
<b>Talapoosa Totals</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>\$363,183.47</b>	<b>\$258,960.88</b>	Ruhama		\$0.00	\$0.00	Oakman Central		\$0.00	\$0.00	Stouts Mountain	3	\$0.00	\$0.00
				Shiloh	2	\$18,026.83	\$6,502.45	Oakman First		\$0.00	\$360.00	Sulphur Springs	2	\$2,271.46	\$2,787.53
<b>Tennessee River</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Skyland Blvd.	10	\$71,505.89	\$24,142.75	Odom Memorial		\$3,486.50	\$12,563.00	Valley Springs	3	\$0.00	\$2,900.00
Agape	7	\$15,583.37	\$31,035.00	Taylorville	7	\$43,717.94	\$20,436.00	Parrish First	3	\$35,165.00	\$4,831.00	West Point	3	\$16,730.61	\$4,300.00
Bethany	0	\$866.10	\$100.00	*Temple		\$0.00	\$0.00	Philadelphia	1	\$8,347.64	\$3,690.83	West Side	8	\$2,818.00	\$1,625.15
Bethel	2	\$100.00	\$1,448.50	City of Refuge		\$0.00	\$0.00	Pleasantfield		\$0.00	\$0.00	White Oak	0	\$1,317.66	\$3,074.54
Bridgeport First	8	\$16,771.88	\$9,343.04	Korean Church		\$0.00	\$0.00	Providence	10	\$1,879.39	\$2,943.00	<b>West Cullman Totals</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>\$350,750.21</b>	<b>\$344,705.56</b>
Calvary	5	\$58,958.56	\$4,522.75	*The Lighthouse		\$150.00	\$110.00	Pumpkin Center	2	\$1,493.45	\$3,250.00				
Calvary Stevenson	7	\$1,236.96	\$1,236.95	Tuscaloosa First	35	\$304,009.40	\$113,246.50	Samaria	1	\$0.00	\$2,061.00	<b>Winston</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Center Point	16	\$42,223.29	\$48,583.27	Union Grove		\$0.00	\$0.00	Saragossa	1	\$8,259.33	\$2,347.00	Addison First	2	\$18,124.30	\$5,705.18
Central	0	\$3,156.74	\$1,422.00	Unity	1	\$2,569.67	\$1,894.46	Shady Grove		\$0.00	\$0.00	Antioch	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,700.00
Edgefield	3	\$4,040.00	\$2,000.00	Valley	8	\$2,557.00	\$212.00	Starview		\$0.00	\$20.00	Arley First	44	\$38,879.45	\$34,320.35
Emmanuel	0	\$191.60	\$0.00	Valley View	45	\$52,500.00	\$9,185.00	Sumiton		\$960.00	\$6,516.00	Beech Grove	0	\$2,000.00	\$1,486.44
Essential Fort Payne	0	\$376.39	\$0.00	Vance	0	\$1,234.96	\$720.49	Sunlight	0	\$0.00	\$353.88	Bethel #1	7	\$3,243.00	\$1,711.21
Fairfield	1	\$1,746.85	\$800.00	Wildwood	7	\$0.00	\$0.00	Townley First	6	\$3,568.73	\$3,021.00	Bethel #2	2	\$1,324.00	\$4,727.00
Freedom	0	\$200.00	\$200.00	Yellow Creek	1	\$3,365.91	\$937.01	Union Chapel		\$0.00	\$500.00	Church of The Forest		\$0.00	\$0.00
Friendship	0	\$330.00	\$100.00	<b>Tuscaloosa Totals</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>\$1,298,910.70</b>	<b>\$687,459.22</b>	Union Grove		\$1,658.76	\$225.00	Concord	0	\$9,195.64	\$1,500.00
Halls Chapel	0	\$947.00	\$4,688.00	<b>Tuskegee Lee</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Westside	2	\$11,156.87	\$21,036.00	Corinth Heights	2	\$3,000.00	\$5,855.00
Harmony	2	\$1,566.36	\$2,622.26	Airview	10	\$2,814.00	\$809.50	<b>Walker Totals</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>\$610,308.93</b>	<b>\$309,158.10</b>	Delmar	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Helton Memorial	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	*Auburn First		\$0.00	\$0.00					Double Springs First	9	\$34,497.74	\$18,627.40
Hollywood	3	\$2,247.00	\$680.00	Carrville	6	\$25,264.02	\$7,874.02	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Ephesus		\$0.00	\$0.00
Hopewell	0	\$5,945.85	\$1,172.00	Central	3	\$2,419.88	\$6,537.21	Antioch	0	\$482.00	\$1,456.00	Fairview #1		\$0.00	\$250.00
Larkinsville	21	\$0.00	\$0.00	Chewacla	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Chapel Hill	1	\$11,319.75	\$25,580.97	Fairview #2		\$0.00	\$0.00
Maranatha Hollywood		\$368.19	\$0.00	Concord	0	\$700.00	\$1,415.00	Chatom Baptist	6	\$73,718.25	\$21,500.50	Friendship	0	\$12,937.27	\$14,155.46
Matthew's Memorial	0	\$922.67	\$2,000.00	Cowboy Lee County		\$3,119.00	\$0.00	Escatawpa		\$0.00	\$0.00	Grace	3	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mt Ararat	0	\$100.00	\$559.17	Cubahatchie		\$1,200.00	\$1,690.00	Fairhope	5	\$6,736.15	\$319.00	Haleyville First	11	\$61,765.57	\$27,226.00
Mt Carmel	6	\$1,094.37	\$7,719.09	Elam	1	\$10,972.00	\$3,264.17	Four Points		\$530.21	\$425.00	Houston	2	\$2,439.09	\$2,306.67
Mt Nebo	1	\$600.00	\$1,000.00	Farmville	1	\$10,808.59	\$7,198.00	Frankville	0	\$5,566.00	\$5,138.00	Kemp	0	\$0.00	\$1,355.00
Mt Pleasant	0	\$0.00	\$450.00	Grace Heritage		\$600.00	\$0.00	Friendship		\$200.00	\$1,000.00	Liberty Grove	2	\$0.00	\$1,635.00
New Covenant	2	\$600.00	\$0.00	High Hope		\$0.00	\$0.00	Howardtown	3	\$4,706.00	\$0.00	Lynn		\$0.00	\$0.00
New Home	0	\$245.00	\$280.00	Journey Church Valley	3	\$100.00	\$3,674.78	Laton Hill	0	\$2,004.00	\$2,710.00	Meek	9	\$7,817.06	\$9,118.06
New Hope	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lakeview	48	\$0.00	\$328,848.09	Leroy First	10	\$63,165.00	\$11,457.54	Mt Carmel		\$0.00	\$0.00
New Life	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Liberty		\$1,650.38	\$2,934.14	Liberty		\$6,617.00	\$2,600.00	Mt Zion	0	\$1,517.00	\$1,127.00
Oak Grove	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Loachapoka	0	\$1,973.87	\$286.00	Malcolm	0	\$3,923.00	\$2,247.00	New Home	4	\$0.00	\$445.00
Paint Rock	0	\$10,470.61	\$4,947.30	New Life Auburn Korean		\$1,500.00	\$1,200.00	McIntosh	0	\$5,302.88	\$2,176.00	New Hope #2	10	\$4,459.00	\$770.00
Providence	0	\$2,455.50	\$2,700.00	Newsong		\$0.00	\$0.00	Millry	2	\$36,564.00	\$5,885.00	New Prospect	9	\$13,428.09	\$15,881.00
Roaches Cove	6	\$2,400.00	\$2,536.00	Northside	0	\$3,272.36	\$3,113.00	Mt Moriah		\$0.00	\$0.00	Northside At Addison		\$600.00	\$501.55
Rudders Chapel	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Notasulga First	7	\$11,042.32	\$5,241.70	North Oak Grove	0	\$2,128.00	\$106.00	Old Union	6	\$5,158.68	\$4,397.34
Scottsboro First	3	\$77,296.56	\$49,188.17	Opelika First	61	\$614,929.80	\$316,598.02	Pine Level	0	\$1,359.93	\$2,816.61	Pinetucky	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Shiloh	2	\$5,915.00	\$3,947.00	Parkway	19	\$105,345.00	\$45,669.31	Pleasant Hill	1	\$1,101.00	\$320.00	Pleasant Hill #2	4	\$3,886.00	\$8,749.96
Stevenson First	6	\$11,612.00	\$4,227.00	Pepperell	1	\$11,729.46	\$5,547.73	Reeds Chapel		\$11,392.22	\$4,827.11	Primera Iglesia	22	\$240.00	\$0.00
Swearingin	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pleasant Grove	1	\$8,145.96	\$9,324.78	Rivers		\$0.00	\$0.00	Rock Creek	0	\$747.00	\$4,743.00
Trinity	2	\$21,042.78	\$17,690.00	Pleasant Springs	0	\$2,663.00	\$355.00	Shady Grove	0	\$0.00	\$100.00	Sardis #2	0	\$4,479.00	\$1,000.00
Victory	3	\$0.00	\$600.00	Providence	14	\$76,302.58	\$25,314.03	Shiloh	5	\$3,740.93	\$1,918.00	South Haleyville	0	\$699.20	\$245.00
Willow Street	0	\$7,781.38	\$1,260.40	Purpose	11	\$4,008.00	\$0.00	South Oak Grove	0	\$3,582.00	\$5,170.00	Sunny Home	2	\$5,431.50	\$1,516.00
Woodville	2	\$0.00	\$1,400.00	Reeltown First	8	\$9,110.05	\$940.00	Spring Bank	3	\$5,269.73	\$6,517.73	Trinity		\$0.00	\$100.00
<b>Tennessee River Totals</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>\$299,392.01</b>	<b>\$210,457.90</b>	Ridge Road		\$2,000.50	\$2,000.50	Spring Hill	8	\$9,134.00	\$7,736.00	<b>Winston Totals</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>\$236,868.59</b>	<b>\$171,154.62</b>
				River Road	8	\$605.00	\$1,361.00	St. Stephens First		\$5,194.52	\$2,117.00				
<b>Tuscaloosa</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Rock of Ages	6	\$0.00	\$0.00	Three Forks	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Trust Accounts</b>		<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
A New Beginning		\$0.00	\$0.00	Rocky Mount		\$0.00	\$0.00	Tibbie	3	\$7,679.98	\$8,966.81	Betty Mae Pearson Trust		\$9,631.03	\$0.00
Alberta	15	\$91,518.35	\$25,027.58	Salem First	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Wagarville	0	\$0.00	\$191.21	Foundation Trust		\$193,701.52	\$96,893.53
Bethany	0	\$9,487.46	\$10,684.72	Salem Macon	0	\$4,119.29	\$3,146.00	Washington	0	\$2,154.20	\$2,554.20	<b>Trust Accounts Totals</b>		<b>\$203,332.55</b>	<b>\$96,893.53</b>
Bethel	2	\$1,200.00	\$3,400.00	Society Hill	9	\$420.00	\$701.00	Yellow Pine	0	\$2,100.00	\$2,100.00				
Beulah	0	\$1,600.00	\$1,950.00	Union Grove	4	\$5,733.00	\$2,356.00	<b>Washington Totals</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>\$275,670.75</b>	<b>\$127,935.68</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>		<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Big Sandy	1	\$16,564.00	\$16,539.00	Wallace Chapel		\$0.00	\$300.00	<b>West Cullman</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Associational Office		\$17,451.12	\$77,402.24
Buhl	3	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00	West Auburn		\$753.43	\$0.00	Arkadelphia	0	\$301.50	\$301.50	Jesus First Ministries, Inc.		\$0.00	\$0.00
Calvary	17	\$83,337.14	\$3,639.67	Word of Life		\$2,873.31	\$718.31	Baldwin Heights	0	\$6,014.20	\$4,590.75	Non Association		\$0.00	\$88,526.51
Carrolls Creek	6	\$59,553.88	\$18,687.97	<b>Tuskegee Lee Totals</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>\$926,174.80</b>	<b>\$788,417.29</b>	Beech Grove	0	\$100.00	\$600.00	Personal		\$2,280.00	\$443,185.30
Chapel Hill	17	\$85,604.37	\$8,027.72	<b>Walker</b>	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>Designated</b>	Belview Heights	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Miscellaneous Totals</b>		<b>\$19,731.12</b>	<b>\$609,114.05</b>
Circlewood	12	\$109,582.08	\$39,801.27	Aldridge Community		\$0.00	\$0.00	Bethany	4	\$23,217.75	\$12,376.37				
Coaling	16	\$10,833.26	\$16,953.40	Antioch		\$4,956.26	\$3,791.09	Bethel	0	\$800.00	\$1,600.00				
Corinth	0	\$1,200.00	\$2,392.00	Argo	7	\$7,321.09	\$0.00	Bethlehem West	5	\$14,383.50	\$34,184.00				
Cornelius Chapel		\$0.00	\$0.00	Barton Chapel	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	Bethsadia	0	\$5,389.00	\$5,611.00				
Cottondale		\$0.00	\$0.00	Blooming Grove	11	\$1,944.00	\$720.00	Bremen	1	\$0.00	\$300.00				
Covenant Chapel		\$0.00	\$0.00	Boldo First	4	\$1,994.37	\$1,200.00	Brickyard							

# 'Gift from God'

## More than 650 babies given life, family through embryo adoption

(continued from page 1)

an embryo adoption agency is “the most life-affirming” of the options.

Kimberly Tyson of Snowflakes Embryo Adoption says when she fields those calls from potential placing parents they have usually been thinking about their embryos for quite some time, knowing they need to do something with them. They do not plan to give birth to them, but they want them to have the opportunity for life.

“Allowing their children to be born into another family is a big hurdle,” Tyson said. “We try to help them process the emotions attached to that.”

Embryo adoption is like traditional adoption in that placing families can choose potential adoptive families by reading their stories and looking through photo books of their lives.

But in other ways it's a completely different process, Tyson said. “The exciting difference is that you give birth to your adopted child.”

Snowflakes also encourages the two matched families to communicate with each other and develop a relationship — a process that takes time, but can be so rewarding, she said.

“There will be full genetic siblings in each family,” she said. “We want them to have some level of communication with each other.”

Because in the U.S. embryos are considered property by law, when an embryo adoption happens Snowflakes uses property contract law to transfer the embryos legally from one family to another — not adoption law. Through the Snowflakes program placing parents will gift all of their remaining embryos to the adopting family, giving them an opportunity to undergo multiple implantations and potentially even genetic siblings, Tyson said.

When a baby is born from those embryos the woman who gave birth to that baby is the one who is listed as the legal parent on the birth cer-



Photo courtesy of Birt family

Phoebe Birt, born a year ago to Nate and Julie Birt through embryo adoption, holds a copy of her dad's book, 'Frozen But Not Forgotten.'

tificate, along with her husband.

“The placing family's mother is not going to see your baby and take [him or her] back,” Tyson said. “By law that baby is your baby.”

The relationships between adoptive and biological families look different, but many of them have developed close bonds.

“They're just lovely, lovely families with great relationships,” Tyson said.

That's what Birt is seeing happen in his family's life since the birth of their daughter, Phoebe, now 1, whom they adopted as an embryo.

After going through a home study just as a family would for a traditional adoption the Birts were matched with a placing family. They read the placing family's medical history and the narrative story and corresponded by email. Phoebe had been frozen for about 10 years before she was born.

### 'Mothers are heroes'

“We talked to our placing mom and she said, ‘Every time I picked up the phone to call the adoption agency I would just start crying.’ There's so much emotion about putting your babies up for adoption,”

Birt said. “But these mothers are heroes — they're giving their children a chance at life.”

Birt's family, who lives in Missouri, kept in touch with Phoebe's placing family through the process, sending them notes of encouragement along the way. Then after Phoebe was born her biological family, who lives just a couple of hours from the Birts, invited them over for a barbecue.

“Phoebe will always know her history and where she came from. We are her mom and dad and that will never change, but she will always have access to her biological parents and siblings,” he said.

It's been an interesting and unexpected journey, but Birt said his family is so glad they took the first

step. To help others consider if embryo adoption might be a good fit for them he chronicled his family's story in his new book, “Frozen But Not Forgotten:

An Adoptive Dad's Step-By-Step Guide to Embryo Adoption.”

As Birt's family was considering embryo adoption he said he often heard the question, “Why would you adopt an embryo when there are children already born who need homes?”

He says from his perspective both kinds of adoptive parents are needed.

“These are children with souls just like any other form of adoption,” he said. “If you believe God has a plan for each and every person it really reframes the urgency of adoption. These frozen embryos have every potential to become future church leaders, doctors [or] political leaders.”

Tyson said the people who call inquiring about adopting embryos are usually people who are struggling with infertility themselves and have tried IVF with their own eggs and sperm unsuccessfully.

“We want these families to know there is another solution,” Tyson said. “You don't have to create more embryos with the potential of having even more end up in frozen storage.”

An egg isn't waiting to be born, but an embryo is — it is a human life, she said. “We really want our Christian community to know there are more than a million frozen embryos in storage in the United States and more are created and placed in storage every year. We want to help as many of these babies to be born as possible.”

### 'Frozen and unique'

Snowflakes is the oldest embryo adoption agency in the world, and Phoebe Birt was their 575th baby born.

“We call them ‘snowflakes babies’ because they're frozen and unique and a gift from God,” Tyson said.

Since the program began in 1997 almost 650 babies have been born to adopting families through Snowflakes. They've had more than 1,500 placing families in their program — more than 6,500 embryos in total.

In 2017 a healthy baby boy was born who had been frozen for 21 years. Another family is in the process of performing an embryo transfer with embryos frozen in 1989.

To read more about the Birt family's personal embryo adoption journey and Nate Birt's book visit [frozenbutnotforgotten.com](http://frozenbutnotforgotten.com).

**“But these mothers are heroes — they're giving their children a chance at life.”**

**Nate Birt**

**For more information about Snowflakes Embryo Adoption visit [nightlight.org](http://nightlight.org).**

## Using Scripture to teach children the value of life

By Denise George  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In a culture where life is often devalued and disrespected, churches and parents can affirm life by teaching our children the value of life through the lens of Scripture.

How do we teach these truths?

Through God's word preached powerfully from the pulpit, taught in Bible study classes and read and studied regularly with parents and grandparents during family devotional times.

Here are some Scripture suggestions for teaching children how God values life:

► God creates human life and loves His children even as they develop and grow within their mother's womb: "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb ..." (Ps. 139:13-16).

► God knows each person and has a perfect plan for each life even before a child is born: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; and before you were born I consecrated you ..." (Jer. 1:5).

► God gives children as gifts to be valued and loved: "Behold children are a heritage from the Lord; the fruit of the womb a reward ..." (Ps. 127:3-4).

God's word also expresses actions and attitudes adults should have toward children.

The verses below re-

mind adults, whether parents, grandparents or ministry leaders, how to respond and relate to young people.

► Jesus called the children to Him even when others dismissed them: "Let the little children come to Me, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these ..." (Luke 18:16).

► Jesus expects adults to respect children: "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me but

Him who sent Me" (Mark 9:37).

► Jesus expects adults to love children: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually

see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

► Jesus expects adults to teach, nurture and keep children safe physically and spiritually: "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish" (Matt. 18:14).

### Affirming life

We can confidently affirm God-given life through God's word, teaching our children essential lessons about the value and preciousness of life even as they live within a society that continues to devalue and cheapen life.



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# 'Directly to the heart'

## Pro-life bills advancing in Alabama, across the U.S.

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Pro-life advocates are advancing legislation in several states, including Alabama, hoping to force the Supreme Court to revisit the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that made abortion legal in the U.S.

In a 74 to 3 vote on April 30, the Alabama House of Representatives approved House Bill (HB) 314 — the Alabama Human Life Protection Act — which would make performing an abortion a Class A felony punishable by 10 years to life in prison. Attempting an abortion would become a Class C felony, punishable by one to 10 years in prison.

The bill essentially bans abortion in Alabama except in cases of serious health risks to the mother or lethal fetal anomaly. The bill was awaiting consideration by the Alabama Senate at press time. If passed the bill would become one of the most — if not the most — restrictive abortion bans in the country.

### Challenging action

The wording of Alabama's bill and others like it protects the sanctity of human life at its earliest stages, supporters say. However, the intent of current pro-life legislative efforts in Alabama and other states focuses on a larger goal — challenging legal abortion at the national level.

"We decided it was time to address the actual issue, which was 'do we want to allow abortion in our country' and maybe ask the Supreme Court to revisit their decision," said Rep. Terri Collins (R-Dist. 8), the bill's sponsor. "This bill is designed to ask the courts to revisit what I think was a bad decision."



U.S. SUPREME COURT

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During contentious House floor debate, Collins said the bill is focused on the personhood of the baby in the womb. "That baby, I believe, would choose life," she said.

Critics of HB 314 have noted the bill's intentional lack of exceptions for abortion in the case of rape or incest. Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), said omitting such exceptions is important.

"When we add exceptions we start to question the personhood of the baby," Godfrey said. "We want to remain consistent that this is a baby no matter the origin."

Godfrey said he expects Alabama's bill to be challenged if it becomes law and welcomes that action.

"We hope it will make its way to the Supreme Court — this bill or another," he said.

Alabama is not the only state currently grappling with abortion legislation.

► Mississippi, Georgia and Ohio have passed bills prohibiting abortions after the fetal heartbeat is detected. Governors in Mississippi and Ohio have signed those states' bills into law; Georgia's governor is expected to do the same.

► Oklahoma's governor approved a bill April 25

requiring doctors who prescribe abortion-inducing medications to inform patients that a medically induced abortion may be reversible.

► The Florida House passed a bill April 17 requiring minors to obtain parental consent for an abortion. A similar bill is making its way through the state's Senate.

► Church leaders and Republicans in Massachusetts are opposing a bill allowing abortions after 24 weeks in some cases and removing other abortion restrictions.

► The Texas House of Representatives recently approved the Born Alive Act, imposing fines and/or imprisonment on physicians who fail to care for infants who survive an abortion.

The courts also have been involved. Kansas' Supreme Court ruled April 26 that the state's constitution protects the right to an abortion. Under the ruling abortion would remain legal Kansas' constitution even if *Roe v. Wade* were reversed.

And in February the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked a Louisiana abortion law from going into effect in a 5-4 vote, upholding a lower court's decision to block the law.

### Going for the win

Supporters on both sides of the abortion issue are counting on one or more of the state bills making its way to the Supreme Court where a decision could settle the issue for generations.

"Our intention is to go directly to the heart of *Roe v. Wade*," said Rep. Christina Hagan (R-Ohio), "to challenge the question of when a life begins." ✠

# Venezuelan Baptists ask for prayer after uprising

The Venezuelan National Baptist Convention has called upon fellow believers around the world to pray for Venezuela following an April 30 military uprising in the capital city of Caracas against embattled President Nicolás Maduro's government.

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó reportedly took to the streets with heavily armed soldiers and opposition activist Leopoldo López, whom the military freed from house arrest. In a three-minute video posted on Twitter, Guaidó called on Venezuelans to back the uprising.

"The moment is now," he said at the La Carlota air base in Caracas.

Southern Baptists working alongside national believers in Venezuela released a statement calling for prayer saying, "This is a crucial day for a divided nation." They reported Tuesday afternoon the "situation continues undefined, moving rather slowly."

Earlier in the day Southern Baptist workers reported that "gunfire is being exchanged in a major Caracas zone where civilians are caught in the middle."

Other parts of the city, they said, reported gunfire in their neighborhoods, while others have been placed under house arrest by the secret police.

Venezuelan Information Minister Jorge Rodríguez tweeted the government will quash the attempted coup

by military "traitors." Troops loyal to Maduro reportedly fired tear gas as López spoke at a highway overpass near the air base.

In January 2019, Guaidó declared himself the acting president of Venezuela, insisting that Maduro's 2018 reelection was illegitimate. The growing military backing could open the door to deposing Maduro.

"The armed forces have taken the right decision," Guaidó said. "With the support of the Venezuelan people and the backing of our constitution, they are on the right side of history."

The U.S. and several other nations have recognized Guaidó and urged Maduro to step down.

## 'Ongoing collapse'

Hundreds of protesters have been arrested and reports say at least 57 have been killed since then. During the May 1–2 uprising at least four people were killed and more than 200 wounded, according to human rights group Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict.

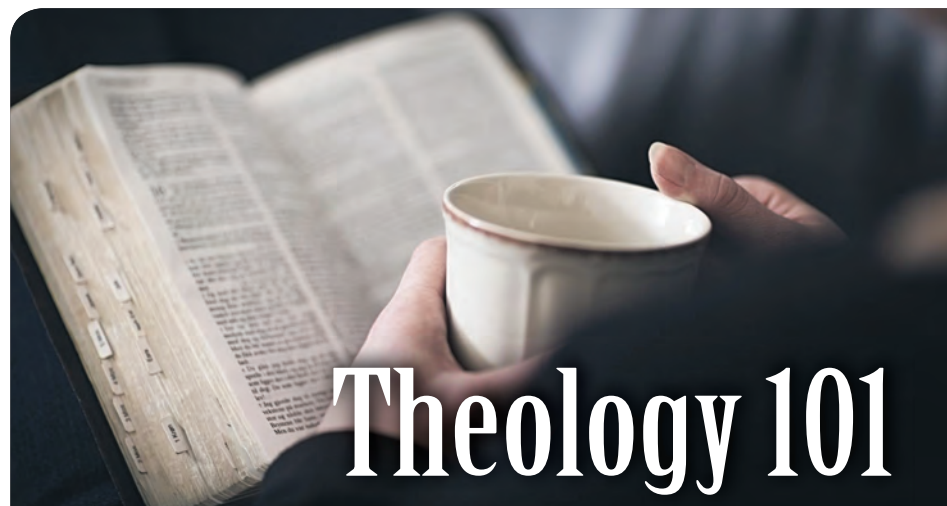
Refugees fleeing Venezuela's ongoing economic collapse are crossing the country's borders to Colombia and Brazil, adding a new front in Latin America's already critical migration situation with thousands facing dangerous journeys to escape famine, poverty and political chaos.

Faith groups including Baptists have stepped up their relief programs across Latin America. (BP, TAB)



Screen capture from CNN (BP)

The Venezuelan National Baptist Convention has called upon fellow believers around the world to pray for Venezuela following an April 30 military uprising in the capital city of Caracas against embattled President Nicolás Maduro's government.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Eternal security

# Divine Seal, Divine Guard

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

Our theme continues to be that of the eternal security of believers in Christ. The approach continues to be that of allowing some common human analogies to undergird the theological conviction that persons who are once saved are always saved.

Previously such common ideas as birth, gift and grip have served to illuminate this biblical teaching. This week two additional ideas illuminate further the theme of eternal security, namely divine seal and divine guard.

These two items surface in connection with the burial of Jesus following His death. Matthew 27:62–66 tells how the religious leaders were troubled following the death and burial of Jesus.

## 'I will rise'

They went so far as to approach the Roman Procurator Pilate with their troubling thought. Having remembered Jesus was known to have promised, "After three days I will rise" (v. 63), they feared friends of Jesus might steal His body from the tomb and then put out the rumor, "He has risen from the dead" (v. 64).

In response to their request to secure the tomb two actions were allowed: "They went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard" (v. 66). We borrow these two actions as ways of thinking further about a believer's security in Christ.

First is the divine seal. The agent of the divine sealing is the

Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 sets forth the admonition, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Using the same idea of a seal 2 Timothy 2:19 says, "The solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: the Lord knows those who are His."

## Firm foundation

Believers are secure in understanding that our all-knowing and all-powerful God knows who genuinely belong to Him, and this truth provides a firm foundation upon which we may stand assured that God will preserve and protect those who belong to Him. Of the Holy Spirit the Baptist Faith and Message statement says, "He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption" (Article II.C).

Second is the divine guard. In the case of Jesus' burial a posted guard kept watch over His sealed tomb. In the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy believers can say with confidence, "I know the One in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to Him" (2 Tim. 1:12).

This week as believers we can confidently confess we are divinely sealed and eternally guarded.✠

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.



# ‘Never stopped singing’

## American Idol’s Burroughs got his passion for performance from his grandparents

By Susan Withrow Murphy  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**W**alker Burroughs’ seemingly effortless performances on season 17 of ABC’s American Idol made fans even of the Idol judges, and even though his run on the show ended April 28, the 20-year-old is carving out his own unique musical career path thanks in part to the influence of his grandparents.

Growing up outside Birmingham in Vestavia Hills, where the family’s home church is Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, Burroughs now lives in Nashville. He is majoring in music education at Belmont University with aspirations of becoming a band or choral director.

Those who watched Burroughs climb the ranks through American Idol’s pressure-packed performances understand why the judges not only praised his talent as a performer but also seem to genuinely like him as a person.

Where did Burroughs get his mojo? His grandparents — Gogo, Baba, Bop and Nana — may have set the stage.

Burroughs is named after his grandparents Charlotte and Jimmy Walker. To him they are Gogo and Baba, “Grandmamma” and “Grandfather” in Chichewa, a dialect spoken in Malawi. During the early 1960s, a time when racial strife was bubbling high in the Deep South, the Walkers, from Tuscaloosa, boarded the Queen Mary and sailed overseas to share their lives with the people of Eastern and Southern Africa during what would be a 21-year-long career with the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board).

The couple returned to the United States for a few years when Jimmy



Photos courtesy of Burroughs family

Walker Burroughs (left) says his grandparents have been an important influence on him. Pictured with Burroughs and his twin sister, Milligan, are grandparents Bob and Esther Burroughs (center) and Charlotte Walker (right).

contracted melanoma. Charlotte wondered what to do with a degree in home economics while Jimmy was undergoing treatment. She landed on nursing school. Nearing age 40 she received her degree, was certified as a registered nurse and as soon as Jimmy got the all clear, they returned to the missions field where they built a medical clinic. Charlotte ran the operation as head nurse.

Later Jimmy pastored churches in west Alabama and was associate director of missions for Tuscaloosa Baptist Association before his death in 2005.

The couple’s four daughters, Burroughs’ mom being the youngest, often sang as a warm-up quartet to their preacher father. Charlotte’s mother had been a classically trained pianist and today Charlotte has two grand pianos stationed together in her Tuscaloosa home where the family gathers to play music and sing.



BURROUGHS

“Among many other things, Gogo and Baba taught me what it looks like to love people from all over the world,” said Burroughs.

Bob and Esther Burroughs, known as Bop and Nana, may get credit for gifting Burroughs the DNA of music and leadership.

Bob encouraged Burroughs sitting side by side with him at the piano, helping him work through difficult spots and offering advice in singing. “Walker is growing strong in confidence and character,” he said.

### ‘Molds it to his own’

“Someone said of Walker, ‘He doesn’t just sing a song — he caresses and molds it to his own style.’ And that’s so true.”

A star in his own right Bob Burroughs has been a prolific composer and arranger of church music for more than a half-century. He served as minister of music in Southern

Baptist churches in Oklahoma, Texas and Georgia while writing and arranging music for vocal and handbell choirs. He was composer-in-residence and taught music theory at several colleges, including Samford University in Birmingham, and retired from the Florida Baptist Convention, where he served as state music director.

Bob has more than 2,000 published musical works on his extensive resumé, including “Jesus, My Lord My God My All,” “Beholding All Your Glory,” and “Lord Make Our Homes,” one of a handful of songs that he and Esther have collaborated on over the course of their 60-year marriage.

Esther, a gifted speaker, author and founder of Esther Burroughs Ministries: Treasures of the Heart, spent nearly two decades as associate director of church growth and associational evangelism with the North American Mission Board. Esther was also the first female campus minister at Samford University and has been called “the Beth Moore of her generation.”

“We’re so proud of Walker and all our grandchildren,” Esther said. “His parents invested their lives in him and other young people through Passport, a summer camp ministry they began in 1993. Walker performed publicly for the first time at Passport. He came into the world singing and he’s never stopped.”

“My grandparents’ lives have had such an impact on me,” said Burroughs. “They taught me very practically about loving others and worshipping as a family — all the times we spent singing together and celebrating together are etched in my heart. I’m richer for all they poured into my life.”

*“All the times we spent singing together and celebrating together [as a family] are etched in my heart.”*

Walker Burroughs



# Tell THE Story

## My Experience at Pursue

**More** than 400 high school seniors and college students from across Alabama gathered at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, for the annual Pursue conference.



church based in California. Benner and Powell spoke about the importance of everyday evangelism and finding ways to share the Gospel.

All students at the conference also learned HANDgelism, a mnemonic device Powell created to help believers remember the steps in sharing their faith.

As someone who spent most of my life in church and knows Christians are called to share the Gospel, Pursue was both encouraging and convicting.

I enjoyed meeting other college students dedicated to their faith, but I also got a much-needed reminder that I need to make evangelism more of a priority in my life.

In talking with friends after Pursue, I realized the conference taught us an important link that is often forgotten in evangelism.

We know we should share the Gospel.

And we, as Christians, know the Gospel. But it's the bridge between knowing and going that often gets left out.

I've found that the strategies of sharing our faith are often the missing puzzle pieces.

Just a few things that often get left out:

- how to be in constant prayer for our lost friends.
- how to lead a conversation

in a spiritual direction.

- how to share with people of different faiths (or no faith).
- how to be bold in sharing as an introvert.

We especially connected with what Tom Richter, pastor at Cullman First Baptist Church, said when he spoke at Pursue Friday night – that we should tell our story and THE story regardless of our past, the cost and what anyone might do or say.



He reminded us that the Gospel is the most important story we will ever tell and

that we should make it the number one priority in our lives.

My friends and I, as well as college students from across Alabama, prayed that the Lord would have us do just that on our campuses. We prayed that we would share our testimonies and the Gospel boldly and without any hesitation.

All in all, Pursue 2019 was a life-changing experience for me and many others. I cannot wait to see how the Lord uses what we learned to make THE story known on campuses throughout Alabama.



By Sydney Basden  
SBOM Intern

*Sydney Basden, a UA student double-majoring in news media and political science, just completed a semester as an intern in the Office of Communications & Technology Services. She is scheduled to graduate in May and will return for work on a master's degree in the fall.*

This year's conference, which took place Feb. 22-23, 2019, focused on telling THE story – the Gospel.

With a strong emphasis on evangelism, the two-day event allowed students from campus ministries and church college ministries to better equip themselves to share their faith

and love for Christ with those on their campuses.

As a State Board of Missions intern and a college student involved in the University of Alabama's Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM), I was excited to attend Pursue and hear more about how to share my faith.

Armed with a State Board camera and my Bible, I wandered around the conference snapping pictures and learning how to be a better witness for Christ in my daily life.

Main stage and breakout sessions were led by evangelical leaders from across the state and the country.

Two of the speakers were Putti Benner, associate director at the University of Texas Arlington's Baptist Student Ministry, and Jason Powell, associate pastor at Harvest Christian Fellowship, a multi-site

Members of my BCM at UA returned to campus **recommitted to sharing** our faith and reaching those on campus who have never heard the Gospel.



## ABDR teams, Alabama WMU volunteers to coordinate preschool ministry at SBC

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Becky Luther is no stranger to serving the littlest attendees of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting. She's done it for the past seven years as the convention has met in other cities.

But this year she'll be heading up those efforts as the SBC comes to Birmingham. It's all part of her work as the coordinator of the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) temporary child care ministry. In partnership with the North American Mission Board, Luther has organized 120 volunteers from eight states to help take care of attendees' preschoolers (infants through age 4). About a third of that workforce is from Alabama.

"It's a big operation," said Luther, a member of East Gadsden Baptist Church, where she serves as preschool director.

### Self-contained

Not only is it big — it's mostly self-contained. Not all of those volunteers will be directly providing child care; some will be keeping the ministry going in other ways. ABDR feeding teams will provide breakfast and dinner for volunteers at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, which will house the whole

preschool ministry workforce.

ABDR teams will also run a shower and laundry unit for volunteers' personal use and to keep children's craft smocks clean. Trained chaplains will be on hand and two nurses will provide a first aid station. The whole preschool area will have strict security to ensure children's safety, Luther said, noting that their teams are accustomed to providing that kind of ministry at a high level.




Photo courtesy of GBCVB  
The Birmingham Zoo and the McWane Science Center are a few activities perfect for children.

"It came up about 10 years ago that disaster relief was equipped to handle this ministry at the SBC — we had all the equipment and our volunteers were trained and background checked,"

she said. "It made sense for us to do it and we've had an agreement with the Executive Committee ever since."

And it's a blessing to be able to care for SBC messengers' children, she said. Volunteers get to play games, do crafts and sing songs with them and see the "little lights" come on in their eyes.

Planning on bringing your preschooler to the SBC annual meeting? Register for child care at [sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth](http://sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc19/childrenyouth). There's also a day camp for older children and missions opportunities for youth available at the same link. 

## Cookies, boat races among 131 missions activities offered at national WMU in June

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

When missions heroine Lottie Moon was serving in China, she often baked cookies for the children in her village. Her little tea cakes won them over — and earned her an invitation to go and meet their mothers so she could share Jesus with them.

It's a time-honored tradition — missions and hospitality. It's still going on today and you're invited to keep it going.

And yes, cookies are involved.

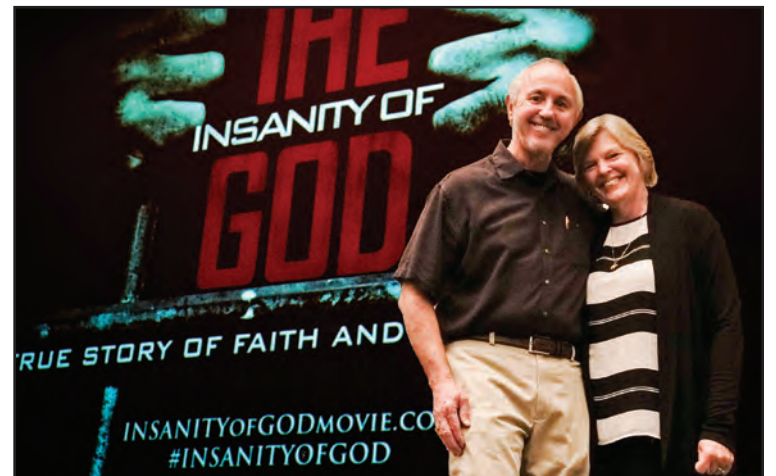
This June national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) would like for you to join them in Birmingham for their annual missions celebration, held June 9 at the Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and June 10 at the national WMU office just down the street.

The Sunday gathering, which starts at 3 p.m., will feature missionary speakers such as Nik Ripken, who has written extensively on the persecuted church around the world. The Monday gathering, which starts at 9 a.m., will include 131 missions-related activities in honor of WMU's 131st anniversary.

One of those events will be baking Lottie Moon's cookies. Others will include:

- ▶ Activities to introduce you to different countries and cultures, like an opportunity to learn the traditional African game mancala and eat Greek food. You can also interact with disaster relief units, women's ministries and refugee outreach.

- ▶ Games and talks to help you learn more about missions history and offer you



BP photo

Nik Ripken (pictured above with his wife, Ruth) has written extensively on the persecuted church. Ripken will speak June 9 at national WMU's annual missions celebration.

creative ideas for missions education in the future.

- ▶ A refugee simulation which will provide a personal glimpse into what it's like to leave everything you know behind.



- ▶ A Narnia-like experience for children where they can crawl

through a wardrobe into a reading nook, where volunteers will be posted all day to read books to them. Adults can also discover more about the book publishing process from Iron Stream Media, WMU's publishing partner.

- ▶ The Rain Gutter Regatta, where you can race your vessel in the sailboat equivalent of the pinewood derby.

- ▶ Art and craft experiences like crafting t-shirt jump ropes and signing a tile in a mosaic of the world.

- ▶ The opportunity to prepare etchings of bricks on the newly laid Walk of Faith

## Acteens to celebrate 50 years

Once an Acteen, always an Acteen — that's what WMU believes anyway.

So they're inviting Acteens past and present to gather for a dinner June 7 to celebrate 50 years of the missions edu-


and pray over the legacy of WMU's missions heroes past and present.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, national WMU executive director, said this is just the beginning — there's so much to dive into and she would love for everyone to take part.

"Join the celebration as you learn how God is moving and working in remarkable ways around the globe," she said. "Since your story intersects with God's story this is your story too. Immerse yourself in this missions experience as you pursue God on a deeper level."

### 30-day devotional

The celebration will also include the release of the new 30-day devotional "On the Journey" written by Wisdom-Martin and Linda Cooper, national WMU president.

To register for sessions and lunch, visit [wmu.com](http://wmu.com) and click on the "register today" banner. 

cation group for teen girls.

The event, called Acteens for Life, will occur at national WMU headquarters in Birmingham at 6 p.m.

Visit [wmu.com/acteensforlife](http://wmu.com/acteensforlife) for more information or to register. (TAB)

# 'Unlikely friendship'

## Telemarketing call leads to missions partnership

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

It was the kind of call most people answer then hang up immediately.

But for some reason Eddie Vines just couldn't.

"The man on the phone was such a good telemarketer when my wife answered the phone she tried to politely brush him off, but she couldn't seem to get rid of him," Vines said. "So I took the phone from her and he wouldn't let me get off either."

Turns out the young man, who goes by Achui, was one of the Naga people, a group in Northeast India. They were headhunters until Baptists took the gospel there more than a century ago, along with literacy and education.

And as Vines, a member of Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, sat on his porch swing that day, Achui told him the story of his people and how they went from living in darkness to following Christ. It softened Vines' heart.

### 'Goal and desire'

And something else happened too — they forged a friendship.

In the 13 years since that initial call Vines and Achui have logged hours on the phone. They've done their best to support and encourage each other, and they've developed a father-and-son-type relationship, or a Paul-and-Timothy one, Vines said.

And not too long ago Vines told Achui he felt like it was high time they meet in person.

"It was always a goal and a desire for the two of us to meet in person, but the timing and finances never



Photo courtesy of Eddie Vines

Achui and his family are a part of the Naga people, a group in Northeast India. He serves as a deacon at his local Baptist church.

seemed to line up," Vines said. "Finally this past fall I felt the Lord leading me to travel to India."

Achui was delighted, Vines said. Not only that — the young man had an idea.

"At the time he was organizing a conference for graduate students, and he said it would probably encourage more people to come if there was an American on the panel," Vines said. "He asked if I would like to come and speak on Christian leadership."

That was right up Vines' alley. He'd been a judge in Bessemer for years and along the way studied at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and started Faith Fortress Ministries, a ministry that's a marriage of missions and apologetics.

So they crafted a plan, and soon after, that face-to-face meeting finally happened.

As the two men visited and drove the seven hours to the conference they talked about the world, Christianity, education — and the state of the Naga people.

Since the trip Vines is working to find ways for Faith Fortress to partner with Naga believers and bolster them to train leaders, strengthen

churches and reach the people groups around them.

And all of that started with a telemarketing call.

"I truly thank God for bringing Achui and myself together in this very unlikely friendship," Vines said.

"And I pray that He will do a mighty work in India through Faith Fortress as we develop an ongoing relationship with the Nagas."

For more information about Faith Fortress Ministries visit [faithfortress.org](http://faithfortress.org).

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

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

#### PART-TIME INTERIM WORSHIP LEADER

University Baptist Huntsville, Alabama, seeking part-time music worship leader. This is a paid position. Send resumes to: Elaine Grimes, [bandegrimes@bellsouth.net](mailto:bandegrimes@bellsouth.net).

#### 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](mailto:roland@mspeanut.com) for additional information.

#### STUDENT MINISTER

Fayette First Baptist Church in Fayette, Alabama, is looking for a full-time student minister. Please contact Scott at [scottdavis@fayettefbc.org](mailto:scottdavis@fayettefbc.org) for more information.

#### STUDENT MINISTER

FBC McCalla is seeking a part-time student minister. The church is located in the western part of Jefferson County, close to McAdory High School. Send resume to: P.O. Box 268, McCalla, AL 35111 or email it to: [tdjproductions1@gmail.com](mailto:tdjproductions1@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Alabama, is seeking candidates to lead our youth ministry. Please submit resumes to: [office@fbcwoodstock.org](mailto:office@fbcwoodstock.org).

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### MINISTRIES

#### TAB PODCAST

The TAB News podcast provides content from *The Alabama Baptist* each week in a radio-show-style format for listeners to download and listen to at their convenience. A host will guide the show, along with several readers and guests who will be invited in to talk about some of the story topics in depth. Listen to the TAB News podcast anywhere you get your podcasts such as iTunes, Stitcher, etc., or visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org/explore/podcasts](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org/explore/podcasts). New episodes are released weekly.

#### TAB DIGITAL

In addition to the print edition *The Alabama Baptist* also releases a weekly digital edition of the newspaper to every subscribers' email. The digital edition now comes complimentary with all subscriptions to TAB. The digital edition has the same content as the print edition — just in full color — and it can be accessed anytime and anywhere there is internet access. For information on the TAB digital edition, or to update your email address on file email [subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org).

# Someone You Should Know

**Rick Ellison**

By Leigh Pritchett  
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Rick Ellison, 67, of Silverhill served in the U.S. Army for a stint and later was a state missionary with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He currently serves on the board of directors for The Alabama Baptist. He is an alumnus of Southwest Texas State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and wife Teresa have three children.

**MINISTRY DESCRIPTION:** Associational mission strategist for Baldwin Baptist Association

**CHURCH NAME:** First Baptist Church, Silverhill, in Baldwin Baptist Association

**LIFE VERSE:** "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. 40:31)



ELLISON

**Q:** Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.

A: Strengthening and promoting fellowship among leaders and 65 church campuses in Baldwin Baptist Association; being a resource and friend to pastors, staff, associational ministry leaders and others; working with leaders and others to pray and discover the most strategic ways to start new church work.

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

A: The greatest spiritual influence in my life was my dad, Dr. Billy Ellison. He served as a pastor in Tennessee and as an associational missionary/director of missions in Alabama until his death.

**Q:** What has God been teaching you lately?

A: God is good and is teaching me to spend more time with

Him, walking closely with Him daily.

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

A: Of course the Bible is important in my life, being in Scripture each day. Billy Graham has been an influence. I love to read about him. I love all Billy Graham represents, his integrity and the way God used him in crusades and other ways. Billy Graham is a hero, that's for sure. In my personal life "Just as I Am" by Billy Graham has had the most influence. Reading his autobiography and how God has used him. I came from a generation that Billy Graham really impacted.✝

DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS  
**Someone You Should Know?**

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o *The Alabama Baptist*, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

# 'Kingdom journey'

## Bridgewater Community Church dissolves; gives assets to FBC Loxley

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Bridgewater Community Church, a church plant in Spanish Fort, has dissolved after five years of ministry, transferring its assets back to First Baptist Church, Loxley, its founding church.

### 'Bless that church'

Representatives from the two Baldwin Baptist Association churches signed dissolution papers on April 23, completing the transfer of \$11,000 in assets from Bridgewater to First, Loxley.

Bridgewater's leadership felt the time had come to dissolve the ministry after necessary location changes led to dwindling membership. With 10 to 15 regular members, providing leadership and ministry to the community had become increasingly difficult.

"It was so small we couldn't really continue," said Ralph Rimmer, Bridgewater's pastor. "Closing this chapter we were able to bless that church."

Rimmer was serving as student pastor of First, Loxley, when he and his wife, Beth, sensed the call to plant a church. The church supported him in that endeavor.

"I think their ultimate problem was location," said Louis Johnson, pastor of First, Loxley. "It was difficult to get to if you didn't know where it was and for some older members it was just too far after the move. Ralph and his team did a great job. They would get up early and put out posters with arrows to the church." Despite their efforts numbers

declined. As Bridgewater leaders prayed for guidance they asked God to reveal His will for the future of the church and God opened the door for Rimmer to resume student ministry as interim student pastor of First Baptist Church, Tillman's Corner. The congregation supported Rimmer in the decision.

First, Loxley, stood alongside the Bridgewater congregation throughout the dissolution process, inviting Bridgewater members to join with them and assisting those who decided to seek a new church.

The Bridgewater funds will be used to complete renovations on an unfinished second floor at First, Loxley, for use as a children's wing and youth ministry area.

"We stepped out in faith to support that ministry and even as it dissolved we did not view that as a failure because they reached countless lives in their five years of existence," Johnson said. "We will never know the eternal impact that Bridgewater Community Church had in the

kingdom of God. It's not a failure. It's the next step in a Kingdom journey."

### 'Certainty of calling'

Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said it is "heartbreaking" to see a church close, but notes the majority of church plants are thriving.

Southern Baptists can support young churches through prayer and encouragement, Duke said.

"Pray for them to have clarity, vision and certainty of calling," Duke said. "Pray for them to have the encouragement they need. Find ways to encourage them."✝



Debbie Gressett

Ralph Rimmer (left), pastor of Bridgewater Community Church, and Larry Lutz (center), Bridgewater administrative director, gift the assets of Bridgewater to Louis Johnson, pastor of FBC Loxley.

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# China's oppression of religion focus of USCIRF 2019 report

With its particular focus on China's oppression of religious and human rights, an independent watchdog group has decried the state of religious freedom across the globe in its annual report.

## 'Manifold suffering'

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a bipartisan organization created 20 years ago, concluded in its April 29 report that "innumerable believers and nonbelievers across the globe continued in 2018 to experience manifold suffering due to their beliefs."

The commission cites dozens of countries in its 234-page report, but espe-

cially notes China's repression of a range of religious beliefs — including Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, Uighur Muslims and human rights defenders.

While the State Department's annual international religious freedom report covers every nation in the world other than the U.S., USCIRF annually documents fewer than 30 countries that have the most significant religious freedom violations.

USCIRF recommends the State Department redesignate the following 10 countries as "countries of particular concern" (CPCs): Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan,

Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The State Department designated these countries as CPCs in November.

USCIRF thinks six additional countries should be cited as CPCs: Central African Republic, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The commission adds it has given 12 other nations its Tier 2 designation for the next most serious level of religious freedom violations: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia and Turkey.

## Most egregious

In addition, the commission is calling on the State Department to list five nonstate actors, or organizations outside a government's control, as "entities of particular concern": the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabab in Somalia, Houthis

in Yemen; and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Syria.

China, along with Russia and Sudan, has been a focus of the watchdog group since 1999 as it prepared its first annual report.

Two decades later it notes that Uighur Muslims, in particular, remain severely

repressed by Chinese officials.

At a Capitol Hill news conference announcing the report USCIRF

Commissioner Gary Bauer said China has been listed by the commission as one of the most egregious "Tier 1" countries for religious freedom in each of its 20 reports.

"If we were to rate the Tier 1 countries China would be in a category all by itself," said Bauer, president of American Values, a public policy think tank. "The level of persecution — they are an equal opportunity persecutor. They go after anybody, any sect that might compete with the commu-

nist, atheistic government of China."

Other countries beyond China are also highlighted, including Vietnam, Sudan and Tajikistan, which the report says are suppressing religious freedom and permitting persecution.

## 'Growing trend'

The commission cites Eritrea and Russia along with China as examples of countries that brand religious minorities as "extremists."

The report, issued after recent attacks on mosques in New Zealand and churches in Sri Lanka, also calls for the administration to set aside money for the department of State and Defense "to train and equip local officials and communities to protect places of worship and other holy sites, especially in countries where such sites face a high risk of attack."

"That recommendation pre-existed these most recent attacks," said USCIRF Commissioner Tony Perkins, "because we see this as a growing trend." (RNS)

**See the full 2019 report at [www.tabonline.org/USCIRF](http://www.tabonline.org/USCIRF).**

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# 3 stories you should know



RNS photo by Adelle M. Banks

Among the guests at a White House ceremony marking the National Day of Prayer on May 2 was Yisroel Goldstein, leader of the Chabad of Poway synagogue in San Diego recently attacked by a gunman. Goldstein, standing with his hands in bandages after a finger was blown off in the attack, tried to pivot beyond the tragedy — which killed one and wounded several others. ‘If something good can come out of this ... horrific event, let us bring back a moment of silence to our public school system,’ he said. (RNS)

## UMC upholds marriage stance, split possible

A ruling by the United Methodist Church’s (UMC) highest court has upheld the denomination’s support of traditional marriage and its opposition to LGBT ordination. The ruling, some evangelical commentators say, could portend a split in the UMC.

In an April 26 ruling the UMC’s Judicial Council upheld 10 of 17 petitions in the Traditional Plan narrowly adopted by delegates to the UMC General Conference in February. The Traditional Plan affirmed the UMC’s longstanding declarations that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” and “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” cannot be ordained to the ministry or married in the UMC.

The Traditional Plan is scheduled to take effect in January 2020. (BP)

## Study: Suicides spiked after ‘13 Reasons Why’

An analysis of suicide data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows a significant jump in youth suicides following the release of the Netflix original show “13 Reasons Why” which depicted a teen girl killing herself.

The series debuted in March 2017 and during April 2017 alone 190 U.S. tweens and teens took their own lives.

The April 2017 suicide rate among kids aged 10 to 17 was .57 per 100,000 people, nearly 30% higher than the preceding five years included in the study and a 19-year high in suicides, researchers found.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for U.S. teens, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. (TAB)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### Neil Carter to retire after 31 years in ministry at Pleasant Grove Baptist



After a nearly 31-year-long “amazing and wonderful journey,” Neil Carter is set to retire from his role as associate pastor for Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Moulton.

His last day as part of the church staff will be May 31.

In his years at the church Carter said he and his wife, Debbie, have seen God do incredible things. He got to be a part of the church’s vibrant van ministry, international missions trips and a youth ministry that saw several young people commit to the ministry. He also worked alongside four pastors who served Pleasant Grove Baptist over the years.



CARTER

“We have experienced some great times of revival,” Carter said. “We have watched as God has shown Himself mighty through literally hundreds of people coming to know the Lord.”

And they experienced family “to the fullest extent,” he said. They walked alongside families as they celebrated births or faced sickness and death, and they watched as children in the church grew up and got married — including their own.

It’s a big change to retire from the church they’ve called home, but Carter and his wife feel like God is moving them on to the next season of ministry.

“Believing that the call to ministry is a life-long call we will continue to serve the Lord wherever He wants, and He is already giving us glimpses of that,” he said. (Grace Thornton)

### Second cyclone hits devastated area of southeastern Africa



Less than two months after Cyclone Idai devastated parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi and left more than 400 people dead a second cyclone has impacted the same region. Cyclone Kenneth made landfall in Mozambique on April 25 impacting a district of 114,000 people in the southeastern Africa country. Heavy rains and

high winds destroyed homes, fields and businesses.

The death toll has risen to 38, but the total number remains uncertain as the storm has severely damaged infrastructure and cut off transportation and communication.

With rain still in the forecast flooding is a major concern, along with water-borne diseases like cholera and the long-term loss of crops and food supplies.

Baptist Global Response (BGR) responders already providing aid following Cyclone Idai are now assessing the long-term response to Cyclone Kenneth, but prayer is needed.

BGR officials urge believers around the world to pray for the people in areas completely cut off, with no access to food and shelter and who cannot communicate with those outside. To give to the BGR Disaster Response fund go to [www.gobgr.org](http://www.gobgr.org). (BGR)



Screen capture from WKBN

# News near you

## EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

▶ On April 14, **First Baptist Church, Fairview**, celebrated its **bicentennial anniversary**. Pastor David Chambers spoke during the special service. Current church members shared their favorite memories of the church.

The church's music director, Todd Holcomb, led the congregation in singing hymns, the choir sang a special song and DeeDee Carden, April

Pearson and Drew Pearson performed as a trio.

Johnie Sentell, representing the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Randy Makemson, director of missions for East Cullman Baptist Association, presented plaques to the church. Randall Shedd, from the Alabama House of Representatives presented a resolution from the State House and Senate.

A history of the church was published and available for purchase.

"It was impressive to see everyone work together to make the celebration successful," said church member Bill Cobb.

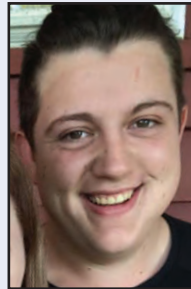


Photo by Johnie Sentell

Skits featuring highlights from church history were performed on Sundays leading up to the anniversary. The church held special services each month in 2019, and the church plans to continue the celebration through the rest of the year.

## FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Kyler Childers** is the new interim student pastor at **First Baptist Church, Russellville**. He began April 24. He is married to Cheyenne.



CHILDERS

## GENEVA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Maple Avenue Baptist Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on May 14 at 11 a.m. Ryan Gant, Michael Herrera, Suzanne Mixon and others will perform a musical program. For reservations call 334-684-9617. Teddy Ward is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Capitol Heights Baptist Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate its 85th anniversary May 19 at 10:30 a.m. Calvin Kelly will be the guest preacher. Lunch will follow the service. Dale Huff is interim pastor.

## SAND MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

▶ **New Home Baptist Church, Pisgah**, will host the 2019 spring camp meeting of the New Home Baptist Bible Camp May 13–16 at 6:30 p.m. Joe Arthur will speak Monday and Tuesday, and C.T. Townsend will speak Wednesday and Thursday. David Smith is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

▶ **Cool Springs Baptist Church, Ashville**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary May 26. An old-fashioned hymn singing will begin at 10 a.m., and the celebration program and activities will begin at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow at noon. The church also will host an Old-Fashioned Day on May 19. Curry Harris is pastor.

## TALLAPOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Lake Martin Baptist Church, Dadeville**, will host fishing and hunting professional Hank Parker on May 11 from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Parker will share his life story and tips for time spent outdoors. A barbecue lunch will be provided. All proceeds go to local missions and disaster relief. Call 256-825-7434 for more information or for tickets. Roger Kendrick is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Piney Grove Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host a homecoming celebration May 19 at 10:30 a.m. The Kingsmen Quartet will sing. A love offering will be taken, and nursery will be provided. For more information call 205-799-2065. Danny Wayne Davis Jr. is pastor.

## OTHER

▶ **Mount Vernon Theatre** in Tallassee will host Southern Gospel's Alabama Homecoming on May 11 at 7 p.m. The concert will feature Mark Lanier, Holy Destiny, Wilburn & Wilburn and Bob Sellers. For more information or to purchase tickets go to [www.tabonline.org/homecoming](http://www.tabonline.org/homecoming).

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### *Professors in Washington must make accommodations for religious traditions*



A new Washington state law makes it easier for college students to take time off for religious holidays. Gov. Jay Inslee signed Senate Bill 5166 into law April 29, making Washington the first state requiring institutions of higher education "reasonably accommodate" students who need time for religious observances. Accommodations include rescheduling exams and permitting absences, as long as the student notifies the professor of the needed accommodation within the first two weeks of class.

Supporters said the bill will allow students of faith to honor their faith traditions while upholding their academic responsibilities. (RNS)

### *Retired Alabama Baptist pastor, state missionary, Lyon, dies at 83*



Henry L. Lyon III, a retired Alabama Baptist pastor and state missionary, died April 30. He was 83.

After growing up in Birmingham and later Montgomery, Lyon was ordained to the

ministry in 1952 and became pastor of Snowdown Baptist Church, Montgomery. He later served as pastor of other Baptist churches, including Pike Road; Eastern Valley, Bessemer; First, Anniston; and First, Selma.

In 1986, after 21 years at First, Selma, he joined the staff of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He served there until he retired from his role as director of the office of discipleship/family ministries in 2001.



LYON

Lyon earned a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham, and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Troy University also presented him with a doctor of humanities, and Judson College in Marion presented him with a doctor of divinity degree.

Through the years he served in various roles in state Baptist life, including chairman of the executive board of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. He also served on the board of trustees for Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, where he surrendered to the ministry at a Royal Amba-

sadors camp at age 14. At the time of his death Lyon was a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, where he taught the Poundstone Sunday School Class.

Lyon is survived by his wife of 59 years, Sara Jane; daughter, Jane Louise; son, David Louis; and three grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

### *Many Christians still pay church tax in countries across Europe*



In several Western European countries a majority of adults not only agree to pay a church tax imposed on all baptized Christians but also have no intention of opting out of it even though they can, according to a new survey by the Pew Research Center published April 30.

Western Europe is often seen as a highly secularized region where established religion is dying out. Church taxes are blamed for part of that erosion because the only way to avoid the tax where it is mandatory is to officially leave the church in which one was baptized.

The Pew report found far more people still finance their church than attend it. (RNS)



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

# CROSSOVER BIRMINGHAM

# 2019



Wednesday, June 5



6:30 pm - Kickoff Rally  
and Training with

**JOHNNY HUNT**

at The Church at Brook Hills,  
Birmingham

(Visit [CrossoverBHM.org](http://CrossoverBHM.org) for simulcast locations)

Saturday, June 8

8:30 am - Training

10 am

Evangelistic Visitation  
Across 7 Associations



BESSEMER - BIRMINGHAM  
MUD CREEK  
NORTH JEFFERSON  
SHELBY - ST. CLAIR  
SULPHUR SPRINGS

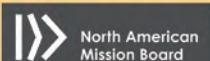


For information about  
specific locations and to  
register, visit [CrossoverBHM.org](http://CrossoverBHM.org)



Alabama Baptist  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

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



## 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](http://alsbom.org).

### MAY

- 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
- 9-10 **WMU, SBC Celebration/Annual Meeting**, Birmingham,  
Candace McIntosh, ext. 222
- 10-14 **Missions Adventure Camps 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 Camps 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 Camps 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

### JULY

- 1-3 **Mini Missions Adventure Camp for Girls, Boys & Leaders**,  
WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 1-3 **Mini Missions Adventure Camp for Teen Girls**, WorldSong,  
Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 4 **Independence Day**
- 4-6 **Family Missions Adventure Camp (Two Nights)**, WorldSong, Cook  
Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 5-6 **Family Missions Adventure Camp (One Night)**, WorldSong, Cook  
Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8-12 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong,  
Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8-12 **Northwest Alabama Baptist Lad (1st-3rd Grade) & Dad Camp**,  
Earle Trent Assembly Baptist Camp, Florence,  
Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 8-12 **Super Summer Alabama**, Samford University, Birmingham,  
Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 11 **Acts 1:8 Connections Celebration**, Lakeview, Birmingham,  
Scotty Goldman, ext. 387, or Barbara Owen, ext. 334
- 11 **Church Financial Issues**, Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals,  
Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 12-13 **Children's Choir Summit**, Shocco Springs, Talladega,  
Karen Gosselin, ext. 318
- 15-19 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong,  
Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 15-19 **Mix MusiCamp@Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Talladega,  
Keith Hibbs, ext. 217



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— **Michael Wallace**  
Student Pastor, North Highlands Baptist Church

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## Prayer vigil for Nicaragua to be held in Alexandria

A prayer vigil for Nicaragua organized by Crosspoint International Ministries will be held May 17 at 6:30 p.m. at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Alexandria, in Calhoun Baptist Association.

Omar Alvarado, director of Central American Missions for Crosspoint International Ministries, said the service will be a time of prayer for peace and justice, for the local churches and pastors, for those who have lost loved ones, for those in exile and for the government to be moved to mercy.

and Central America. That work has been disrupted by the ongoing political turmoil in Nicaragua that began April 19, 2018, when unrest and violence broke out against President Daniel Ortega.

One year later life continues to be difficult for Nicaraguans. According to the Nicaraguan Pro Human Rights Association, the number of deaths stands at more than 560.

“We will continue to minister in Nicaragua, also helping create awareness of what continues to happen in the country and expand ministry into Honduras as Nicaragua is still not safe for missions teams from the United States to come and serve,” Alvarado said.

Hear background about the situation in Nicaragua on TAB News’ Sept. 6 podcast featuring Alvarado and Felix Ruiz, president of the Nicaraguan Baptist Convention, or read more about the situation at [tabonline.org/Nicaragua](http://tabonline.org/Nicaragua). (TAB)

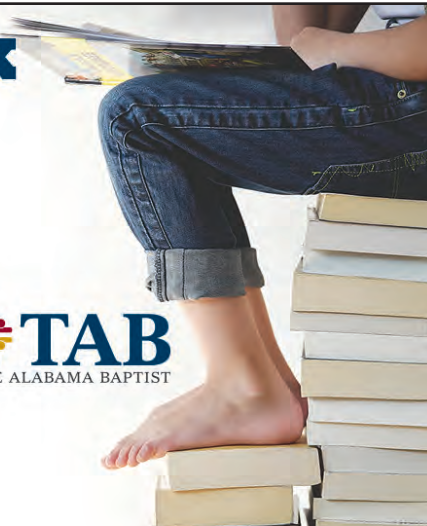
### ‘Continue to minister’

“We have lost all civil rights and the true nature of the current government is quite evident now. We are living under a dictatorship,” Alvarado said of his home country.

Calhoun Baptist Association is one of several associations and churches in Alabama who partner with Crosspoint in missions and ministry work in Nicaragua

## Want your book considered for a review?

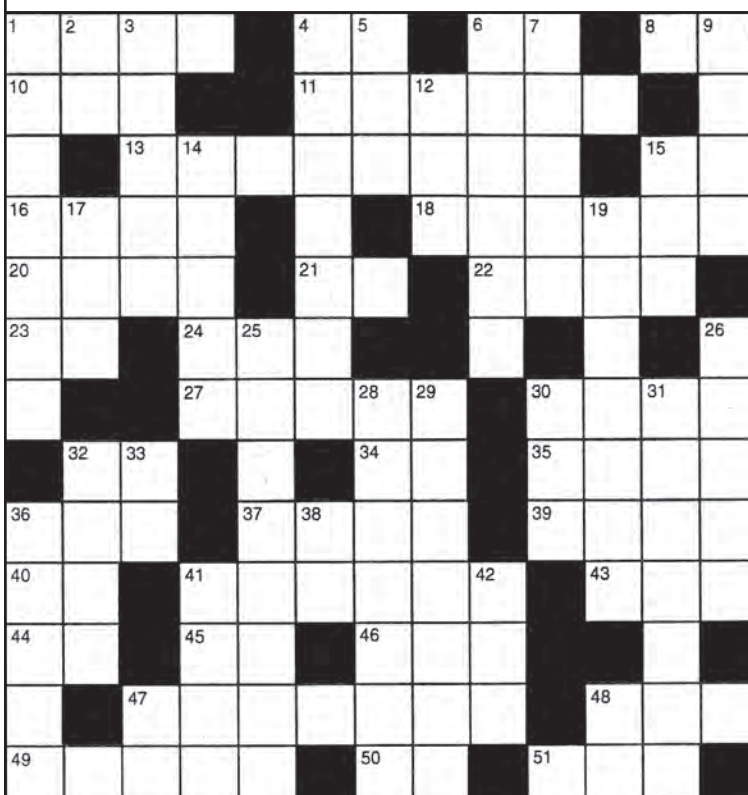
Mail a copy to:  
P.O. Box 1504,  
Hartselle, AL 35640



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

## Christian Crossword

By Udena McKee Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

1. To crush.
4. The Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ truth. (1 John 5:6)
6. What all homes in the South have.
8. Wind direction
10. \_\_\_\_\_ did that which was right. (1 Kings 15:11)
11. If I be \_\_\_\_\_, then my strength will go. (Judg. 16:17)
13. A Protestant denomination.
15. Land from which the Lord brought Abram. (Gen. 15:7)
16. Verse or rhyme.
18. A mental disorder.
20. Behold the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (John 1:29)
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Moses lifted up the serpent. (John 3:14)
22. The days that Adam lived were \_\_\_\_\_ hundred and thirty years. (Gen. 5:5)
23. \_\_\_\_\_ else!
24. The mother of all living. (Gen. 3:20)
27. Fragrant shrub.
30. Location.
32. Seaman apprentice. (abbr.)
34. Thou shalt make \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with them. (Ex. 23:32)
35. When the Lord smelled the

- pleasing \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 8:21)
36. Male cat.
37. Judah is a \_\_\_\_\_’s whelp. (Gen. 49:9)
39. Curve.
40. And when he had spit \_\_\_\_\_ his eyes. (Mark 8:23)
41. He \_\_\_\_\_ meet them. (2 Sam. 10:5)
43. A particular thing. (legal term)
44. King of Bashan. (Num. 21:33)
45. Seth lived \_\_\_\_\_ hundred and five years. (Gen. 5:6)
46. Drone.
47. Thou shalt have good \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 1:8)
48. Consumed.
49. So Absalom \_\_\_\_\_ the hearts of the men of Israel. (2 Sam. 15:6)
50. With regard to.
51. Golf peg.

### Down

1. One who endangers success by meddling.
2. Ye shall be \_\_\_\_\_ gods. (Gen. 3:5)
3. Melchizedek, king of \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 14:18)
4. Abraham’s son. (Gen. 16:11)
5. But Sarai was barren; \_\_\_\_\_ had no child. (Gen. 11:30)
6. Away, hence. (archaic)
7. A hundred. (comb. form)
9. How much less man, that is a \_\_\_\_\_? (Job 25:6)
14. Flower cluster.
15. Even those who by reason of \_\_\_\_\_ have their senses exercised. (Heb. 5:14)
17. Paddle for canoe.
19. Person who has access to confidential information.
25. But \_\_\_\_\_ covereth the mount of the wicked. (Prov. 10:6)
26. Groups of animals.
28. Have ye \_\_\_\_\_ brother. (Gen. 43:7)
29. Bruise.
30. To weep with convulsive heaving.
31. An elementary child’s flute.
32. This \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord. (Ex. 15:1)
33. Morning time.
36. Handyman’s necessity.
38. And \_\_\_\_\_ the vine were three branches. (Gen. 40:10)
41. First king of Israelite nation. (1 Sam. 9:17)
42. Mantras.
47. \_\_\_\_\_ Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old. (Gen. 50:26)
48. One. (Scottish)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 12

## Explore the Bible

By Robert E. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### PROMISES Mark 13:24–37

#### Seen! (24–27)

Since childhood the Second Coming of Christ has fascinated me. I still remember our youth group at First Baptist Church, Monroeville, studying “The Late Great Planet Earth,” a book published in 1970 that compared end-time prophecies in the Bible with current events of the time. I devoured this little book, devoting a lot of my thoughts and energy in an attempt to figure out the mysteries of the end times.

The early disciples also were curious about the signs of the close of the age. Jesus purposefully leaves ambiguity in His teachings so we will not be able to nail down a specific chronology of last days events.

In other words God doesn’t desire Christians to spend all our time and efforts deciphering international events and natural disasters. Instead He wants His children to be ready for His return.

When that time arrives the cosmic tumult will alert Christians the hour is at hand. All creation will be shaken and in awe as the Lord comes in glory! His Second Coming is not in humility as a baby but with all power as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will not come in secret; instead He will be publicly seen by all people. The world will tremble and mourn at the One they scorned while believers rejoice as Jesus gathers all His children.

#### Be Assured! (28–31)

Remember Mark’s use of intercalation is helpful in interpreting this section. Verses 24–27 and 32–37 teach on the Second Coming of Christ, while verses 28–31 discuss the destruction of Jerusalem.

It makes sense when Jesus states this generation will not pass away because the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in A.D. 70 and that “generation” was still alive.

Jesus reminds His disciples they

can be assured of the fall of Jerusalem by examining the fig tree.

Throughout the years humans have observed that once a fig tree sprouts summer is around the corner. Similarly when they witness the abomination of desolation (I believe this desolation involves Rome surrounding Jerusalem), they will know destruction of the temple is upon them (Mark 13:14–16). The suffering involved in the conquest of Jerusalem was great.

Be assured, just as Jesus kept His word concerning the destruction of the temple so will He keep His word that He is coming again.

#### Stay Ready! (32–37)

We don’t know the day or hour of His return. While we don’t ignore the signs of the times, charts and graphs attempting to pinpoint His return are limited at best. Increasing troubles in our world should serve as a reminder that each day we are closer to His parousia (Second Coming).

We must stay ready as we watch, work and wait for Jesus to appear in the clouds. Watching involves observing the times but not obsessing over them. To view every world event as a fulfillment of prophecy can lead to an unbalanced focus on the eschaton, or end of the world, therefore causing us to neglect other aspects of the full counsel of God.

Time is short. The hour is late. We must be found working when He returns, making disciples as we await Jesus’ coming. Knowing Jesus will return soon we must stay ready.

My youthful fascination with the end times was not inherently wrong. However, ultimately Christ desires me to live each day for His glory as I watch, wait and work for His return. Again, stay ready. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, our Savior will come again. May He not find us sleeping! 🙏

## Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of New Testament, Samford University



### LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD Luke 9:57–62

Read Luke 9:1–56 for context. Today’s collection of difficult teachings comes at an important moment in Luke’s Gospel. In verse 51, Jesus turns toward Jerusalem but He does not arrive there until chapter 19. As a result much of Luke is devoted to this trip, and we read the teachings and miracles that happen on the way in the shadow of the cross and in the light of the empty tomb.

In Luke 9:1–6 and 10:4, Jesus sends out disciples with instructions “to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” while living like homeless people. They had already “left everything” to follow Jesus (see Luke 5:11, 28) and now they must give up their staffs, bags, food, money and clothing.

The implication is they should rely on God for their basic needs; the further implication is whoever welcomes them acts on God’s behalf.

The cost of discipleship is dear. Jesus makes that point again in Luke 9:23–27. In verses 46–48 He says that the disciples who are most like children (having no resources and possessing low rank and little power) will be the greatest.

#### Following Jesus includes no guarantee of comfort or safety. (57–58)

Jesus and His disciples are “going along the road” to Jerusalem. Hence this person’s declaration to follow “wherever you go” is an unwitting commitment to join Jesus on the cross. Jesus, however, only mentions His own homelessness. To follow Jesus during His ministry is to know neither where one will lodge nor what one will eat.

At the time Luke was writing to Theophilus (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1), many others (including Paul, Barnabas, Silas, John Mark, Timothy, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquilla) had taken up the same practice. Some

wealthy disciples supported the missionaries, yet they too left their homes (see Luke 8:1–3).

#### Delayed obedience is disobedience. (59–60)

The person who wishes to bury his father contrasts with the fishermen and Levi, who left everything to follow Jesus without delay. Yet burial of one’s dead relatives was an important obligation in ancient Judaism. It is clear that following Jesus to proclaim the kingdom of God supersedes familial duties, but what is the force of “Let the dead bury their own dead”?

Some have said Jesus uses hyperbole to drive home His point (see Matt. 5:29–30; Matt. 18:8–9; Luke 18:25). Others have speculated verse 60 implies the father is not yet dead so the requested delay is indefinite. Alan Culpepper suggests these “dead” are “spiritually dead”; hence Jesus is telling the man to choose (eternal) life by following Him.

#### We can’t move forward in Christ if we’re looking back. (61–62)

Surely we understand this person’s desire to say goodbye to the family he will leave behind. Jesus’ agricultural metaphor anticipates His instructions to ask God to send laborers for the harvest in Luke 10:2. These eschatological images convey urgency (see Luke 3:17). Because we do not know when the Son of Man will return and judgment will happen we must proclaim the arrival of God’s kingdom without delay and it must be our highest priority.

However one reads Jesus’ responses to these would-be disciples, His words are difficult to hear and a challenge to understand. Living them out will require our own conversation with Jesus: “Lord, I know You call me to follow You immediately and despite what it may cost me. Teach me what that means in my life and in the present situation.” Following Jesus requires prayer. May we never cease doing so. 🙏



# Media reviews

**MOVIES/TV**

## Netflix's 'You vs. Wild' tops this month's family-friendly options

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

When “Man vs. Wild” first aired on the Discovery Channel in 2006, I was hooked. It seemed there was little that survival expert Bear Grylls couldn’t do — from finding water in a dry desert to building a fire in the pouring rain.

And even when it was disclosed that Grylls sometimes receives help off-camera I remained a fan.

“Man vs. Wild” went off the air in 2011, but a new series by Grylls — Netflix’s “You vs. Wild” — may be even better. Like “Man. vs. Wild,” this newest show spotlights Grylls as he battles nature and the elements and fights for survival. But unlike that earlier show, “You vs. Wild” puts the viewer in control.

“You’re in charge here,” Grylls says in one episode. “You’re on this journey with me. You decide.”

It’s a cross between a video game and a survival

show. It’s the next best thing to Grylls phoning you and asking, “What do you think I should do next?”

Here’s how it works: Every few minutes Grylls faces a decision. (Such as: crossing a ravine via a log or a swinging vine.) You then make a choice with your remote control and Grylls follows your command. (Don’t worry: He doesn’t die.)

Season 1 includes eight episodes. The scenarios are apparently staged, but that doesn’t detract from the thrill of the show.

It’s ultra-entertaining and educational as we learn about survival in a unique interactive format. In other words we learn how to live off the land God gave us.

The series also is family-friendly, unless you’re troubled by video of someone eating bugs, that is.

### No faith elements

The show contains no faith elements that I’ve seen although Grylls himself is a Christian. YouTube includes a handful of videos of him



‘You vs. Wild’

Netflix

speaking on his testimony.

Also worth watching this month:

► **“Run the Race”** — This faith-based sports-themed movie follows the story of two brothers who see football as the ticket out of their small town — until tragedy strikes. Tim and Robby Tebow were executive producers of this inspiring PG-rated film which begins streaming on digital platforms May 21. It releases on DVD and Blu-ray June 18.

► **“Apollo 11”** — If you weren’t alive when man first landed on the moon, or you simply want to relive the moment all over again, then this documentary is a must-watch. “Apollo 11”

takes advantage of never-before-broadcast footage and couples it with newscaster audio from 1969 to give you a unique, trip-back-in-time experience. It releases on DVD and Blu-ray May 14.

It’s rated G but includes two mild coarse words.

► **“The Carol Burnett Show”** — Remember when broadcast television was funny, family-friendly and clean? Here’s proof. Amazon Prime recently added more than a dozen episodes of

“The Carol Burnett Show,” which began airing in 1967 and featured Burnett and an all-star cast performing skits so funny even they couldn’t keep a straight face. The cast included Vicki Lawrence, Harvey Korman and Tim Conway.

“The Carol Burnett Show,” which began airing in 1967 and featured Burnett and an all-star cast performing skits so funny even they couldn’t keep a straight face. The cast included Vicki Lawrence, Harvey Korman and Tim Conway.



‘The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part’

Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers

### 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.

► **“The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part”** — Full disclosure: I’m not a big fan of “The Lego Movie” series, even though my children are. The movies are just too busy and frantic. But I must admit: “The Lego Movie 2” (PG) is family-friendly. There’s no foul language. There’s no sexuality. The violence is minimal. It even includes a few positive messages — if you’re patient. It released on DVD and Blu-ray on May 7.

# ‘I belong in it’

## Vacation Bible School leads young girl to Christ, is now her ministry calling

**A**shley Virto was a teenager 10 years ago who knew about Jesus Christ but didn’t know Jesus Christ.

Thanks to a bus ministry and a Vacation Bible School (VBS), Virto, now 24, is a Christian serving Jesus Christ in her church in Ten-

nessee and is now helping to train Spanish-language VBS leaders.

Her passion for VBS is fueled by the love and care she received during VBS a decade ago at The Way, The Truth and The Life Baptist Church, a Hispanic congregation in Ripley, Mississippi.

Virto said she probably never would have attended VBS had it not been for the church’s bus ministry.

Her mother allowed her to go, “so I just went,” she said. “It looked like a lot of fun.” Not only was it fun, it proved to be life-changing.

Following a Bible story Virto gave her life to Christ and prayed to receive Him in her heart.

“I didn’t know what I was doing at the time, but I did it,” she said. “I told Him in my prayer, ‘I don’t know who You are, but I want You to show me who You are.’”

One day her mother saw Virto



BP photos

When Ashley Virto was 14 she got on a church bus and ventured to Vacation Bible School. ‘It looked like a lot of fun,’ Virto, now 24, said.

### How to pray:

► Pray for Ashley Virto as she pursues her calling in children’s ministry.

► Pray for the churches preparing to offer VBS this summer, and pray children across the country will come to know Christ. (TAB)

reading her Bible and asked where she had gotten it. Virto said the church had given it to her and to her surprise her mother asked if she could go with her the next Sunday.

### Making an impact

Her mother felt welcomed by the church and before long Virto’s family began attending as well. All have since accepted Christ as their Savior.

Recalling the impact one VBS had on not only her but her entire family, Virto said, “You don’t know the impact that you are making when you talk to children about Jesus.

“When you teach them music,

when you show them a piece of artwork that reminds them of who He is or read a Scripture verse from the Bible — you don’t realize what that’s doing to you until you are older or when you start to build your relationship with God,” she said.

Three years ago she was introduced to the VBS training sessions and has been involved ever since.

Voicing her passion for children, Virto said, “I feel that I have been called to be in children’s ministry. I still don’t know what aspect, but I know that I belong in it.”

And it all began at a VBS in rural Mississippi. (BP)



Ashley Virto (back row, far right) was among VBS leaders across Tennessee who attended a national training session in January at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.