



The Alabama Baptist

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June 13, 2019

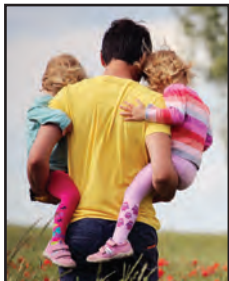
Vol. 184, No. 24
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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



Nehemiah Teams founder Jess Jennings leads prayer during the opening worship service of this year's orientation for students participating in Nehemiah Teams and P52 this summer.

Photo by Wendy Jennings

Nehemiah Teams and P52 hold first training at new facility

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Down a dusty dirt road atop Lookout Mountain, 180 students from 25 different states recently gathered to prepare for a summer of missions as part of Nehemiah Teams and Project 52 (P52).

The week of early summer orientation was not new. Nehemiah Teams have been training in North Alabama since 2010. What was new

was the location. For the first time training was held at the organization's facility in Mentone instead of a local church.

Work not finished

There's still work to be done but Nehemiah Teams founder Jess Jennings is excited students actively obeying the Great Commission now have a permanent home base in Alabama from which to prepare.

"We realize the task of obeying the Great Commission is not finished," Jennings said. "Whether students stay in the United States or go abroad they have a part to play and one of our goals is to help them view life missionally."

The students who attended

training this year represent 65 colleges and universities and five high schools, Jennings said. The students will work alongside representatives from the International Mission Board (IMB) internationally through Nehemiah Teams and alongside representatives of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) through P52. Representatives of those organizations make their specific requests known throughout the year and students join teams to fill those needs.

Nehemiah Teams training is the first step. Orientation week includes worship, Bible study, evangelism training, team-building and preparation (See 'Evangelism,' page 8)

Crossover rallies kick off evangelism effort

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Johnny Hunt got saved he was a high school dropout living in the projects and managing a pool room. Not too long after a church invited him to come share his story. Hunt said he didn't have fancy words or any idea what he was doing, but he shared the gospel — and people responded.

Power of the gospel

The gospel message has power no matter the messenger but it has to be shared in order to change lives, said Hunt, senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at the North American Mission Board.

"That's the only hope tomorrow, Saturday or anytime — that the gospel comes," he told the crowd listening at the Crossover kickoff rally June 5. "God's word faithfully proclaimed is the most powerful force in the world. God takes it and uses it to change lives."

Several hundred people gathered for the event held live at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and via simulcast at four satellite locations around the metro area — First Baptist Church, Mount Olive; Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham; The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; and (See 'Work,' page 11)

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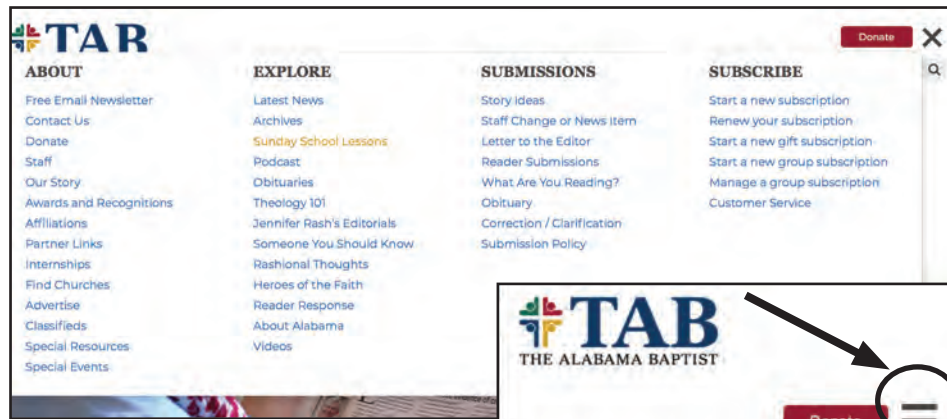
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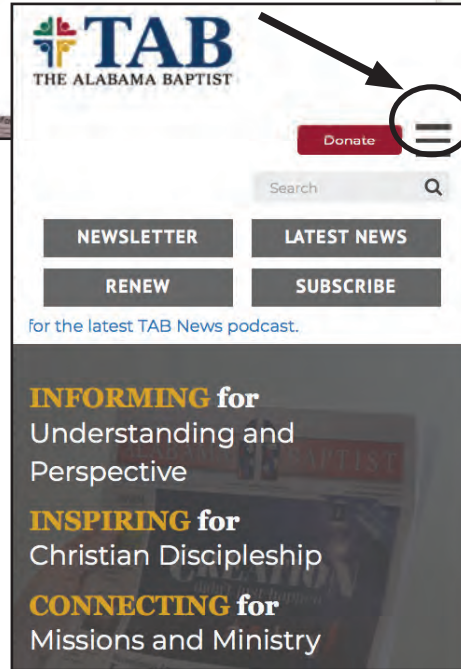
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"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

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"MY SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER JUST TEXTED TO SAY HE'S PRAYING FOR US AND THIS NEXT GUY IS A SUCKER FOR A HIGH INSIDE FAST BALL."

MY RASHIONALE

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

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



Proper maintenance allows us to shine brighter

If you want a house that stays clean and orderly at all times then invite people over a lot — that’s the advice a friend said her mom taught her.

We tend to step up in our ability to clean, pick up and straighten up when guests are on the way.

And we are more relaxed in letting a few things go when we aren’t expecting anyone to visit.

Preparing for guests is on my mind because we recently intensified our cleaning efforts at *The Alabama Baptist* building as we anticipated many friends coming to Birmingham for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

We put careful thought into exactly what needed to be done to make the office sparkle and then worked toward that goal.

While a few things on the list had to wait because of timing, we did take care of several items that needed to be done. Our team did a fantastic job assessing all aspects of the building inside and out and worked hard to put everything possible in order.

The “getting ready for guests” exercise also helped us dream a little about future projects that would enhance the spaces in which a good number of us spend many hours a day.

It’s always fun for me to see the transformation of a room, house or office after some serious decluttering and cleaning. And I love how it seems so much easier to keep a room clean for the first few days after a major scrubbing.

But the minute we choose to wait on the dishes or laundry, leave the bed unmade or pile random items on the kitchen counter it is hard not to automatically move into messy mode. It doesn’t seem to bother us as much to let the mess grow once one exists.

The same is true with repairs. We will put up with broken or missing parts when it’s only ourselves who are impacted but we will make the effort on the repairs when guests will be using whatever it is that is broken.

So it does seem that making sure we are constantly entertain-

ing guests would ensure a more orderly and pristine home or office as my friend’s mom says.

We could apply the same line of thinking to our cars and other physical spaces. But what about our spiritual lives? Would the same concept work there?

I’m thinking God as the primary and constant guest.

When we are thinking about God, talking to God and inviting Him into our life moments, then our minds will naturally be more orderly and less cluttered. We will desire for all parts of our lives to be clean and pol-

ished. We will work to repair the broken parts and stay attuned to what is needed to keep each part working correctly.

If we are functioning properly and maintaining a more pristine inner temple then we are able to shine brighter for the Lord and be more effective as we share Him with others.

We are able to observe those around us more clearly because the clutter in our own lives has been cleared.

We also develop personally because more time with God leads to growing in Him.✝

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

To the fathers out there — sometimes it’s the little things, the routine moments that make the biggest difference

Sometimes things don’t work out like you planned. You can pitch a fit, get angry and pout about it — or you can adapt.

That’s a lesson my daddy has modeled for me my entire life.

It might mean an obstacle like a flat tire causes you to miss an important appointment.

Or maybe a team member fails to carry his or her weight and you have to pick up the slack.

It could be any number of unexpected events that disrupts your day. The best way forward is to assess the situation in front of you, adjust to take care of it and work to get back on track as best you can.

It also may mean changing your plans entirely if the derailment is severe enough — but if that’s what you need to do, then that’s

exactly what you do, says my dad.

Living on a farm in rural Alabama offers a special opportunity to be surrounded by the beauty of God’s world, experience a calmer existence and participate more fully in the daily moments of family.

But farming and working acres and acres of land also brings with it consistent problems — equipment breaks down, tools wear out, the weather doesn’t cooperate, people get sick, the community experiences a tragedy, etc.

I can remember many times when I would be so frustrated because something didn’t work out right and dad would be frustrated too, but he didn’t waste time being upset like I did. He would calmly and quietly figure out what all needed to be done and do it without any drama.

Sometimes it meant dealing with

a serious issue in the chicken house in the middle of the night; sometimes it was taking a break from the plowing he had planned for that day to rescue me from a broken-down car.

There’s always a way

Whatever it was then and whatever it might be today, I am better because my dad chose — and continues to choose — not to let the disruptions of life defeat him. I sense that same calmness in myself even in my weakest moments when I want to cry, scream or pull the covers over my head.

Thank you, daddy, for teaching me there’s always a way through the problems in front of us, disruptions are temporary and a calm spirit steadies the environment for everyone involved.✝

Your Voice



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

Consider the minister in wedding budget

By **Barbara Eubanks**
www.barbaraebanks.com

June is upon us and wedding bells will be ringing for many. For the special day hundreds, maybe even thousands, will be spent on just the right dress for the bride. The family will pay for beautiful flower arrangements. The attendants will be decked out in the finest array. Caterers will set elaborate tables, heavy-laden with tall cakes and other delights.

These things are visible and draw complimentary comments from attendees. All contribute to a memorable event.

But just how much is the minister's time worth? Often there are hours of premarital counseling and an evening rehearsal though he already knows his part and what to do. The actual day of the wedding is filled with pictures, ceremony and such. After the ceremony his robe or tux must go to the cleaners. Believe it or not they charge him.

The many awed and impressed guests never see what is in the envelope slipped to the minister by the groom (and yes that is the groom's responsibility). The amount in it probably doesn't even

equal the price of the bride's shoes and certainly isn't equivalent to the tip for the servers at the restaurant where the after-rehearsal dinner is held.

This is a situation the minister could never address except to his family or to another minister friend.

But now I can speak up for those ministers who have had to smile and bite their tongues. I never could have nor would have when my preacher husband was living but I can say those things now.

My husband was one of the most generous people I've ever known and never really expected more than he received. He usually would give the meager \$50 or so (rarely \$100-\$200) back to the groom and tell him to buy his bride a nice dinner. Other times he would hand the honorarium to me and say, "Buy you a new dress with this."

I haven't vented on this matter out of need. God has blessed us liberally. I call it to the attention of those planning weddings and to give the general public an idea of what is left undone when it isn't in the public's eye.

A person's true character is often revealed in what he does that is not seen.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Barbara Eubanks is an author and Christian humorist from Boaz. She was married to her husband, Steve, a minister, for 56 years before his death in 2014.

College students are one of the most strategic groups to reach in the world. ... We just have to be willing to do the hard work to reach them.

Kyle Bryant
College pastor
Alberta Baptist Church
Tuscaloosa

VBS allows children and volunteers to hear the gospel more in one week than they might hear in six months.

Julie Donovan
Children's minister
North Shelby Baptist Church

Paul was not one to procrastinate. Neither should we delay what we can accomplish today.

Charlie Howell
Executive director
of missions
Madison Baptist Association

Prayer knows no political affiliation.

Kevin Blackwell
Director of the Ministry
Training Institute
Samford University
drkevinblackwell.com

Letters to the editor

Regarding the letter from John Giles published in the May 23, 2019, issue of *TAB*:

I understand that Mr. Giles has concerns about prison reform; however, his conclusions do not match my reading of current conditions.

Alabama prisons are not summer camps. Anyone who has studied conditions in our prisons knows that they are dangerously overcrowded, woefully understaffed, with disturbing violence and suicides.

The overcrowding is due in part to our overemphasis on "getting tough on crime" and locking people up. Long sentences for nonviolent crimes

have not been a deterrent but have provided prisoners with a school for crime.

Joyce Greathouse
Birmingham, Ala.

The lottery bill died by a handful of votes. Let's hope it stays that way. Alabama needs its leaders to focus their time on attainable solutions for problems that aren't going away, and on opportunities that might if we refuse to focus.

It's about time they quit day-dreaming about hitting the lottery.

J. Pepper Bryars
Senior fellow
Alabama Policy Institute

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Sexual assault of males ‘a result of manipulation, threats’

EDITOR’S NOTE — The Alabama Baptist is allowing anonymity for the source of this first-person article in keeping with common journalistic practices of not publicizing victims of sexual assault. TAB leadership knows the source and his family, has confidence in his interpretation of the situation and would like for his story to be added to the current conversation on sexual assault taking place in Southern Baptist life. If you are struggling with a similar issue or would like to talk with the source please email news@thealabama-baptist.org with your request and we will pass it along.

It has been a year ago now that news of my termination from a Southern Baptist institution was made public. Jennifer Davis Rash of *The Alabama Baptist* was the only journalist who contacted me for a statement following the initial release of the information. Instead of rushing to press, as many other publications did, she declined to run a story with only partial information.

In my opinion she acted in the spirit of Proverbs 18:17: “The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and ex-

amines him.” For that act of Christ-like kindness and journalistic integrity I am so very grateful.

There are many reasons for victims of sexual assault to stay silent: shame, confusion, intimidation, fear of retaliation or a desire to protect people and institutions — just to name a few. But there is also “a time to speak” (Eccles. 3:7).

My hope is God will use my broken experiences to comfort someone who, possibly even at this very moment, is enduring a situation similar to my own.

My story of sexual assault

In 2017, while traveling for a conference with ministerial colleagues, a female contact arranged for me to meet with members of her organization. However, when I arrived the woman was alone.

I know the “Billy Graham Rule” and have always been careful never to meet alone with a woman. But because it was broad daylight and in a public place I felt safe.

At the end of our professional meeting, however, she made a startling comment out of the blue. She held up her phone, showed me a picture of my boss and then remarked she could call him right then and claim I had raped her. It would be my word against hers, she said.

I panicked. Having seen first-

hand how even false allegations have destroyed entire ministries I felt utterly vulnerable. How could I prove something that *didn’t* happen? As I tried to figure out how to handle this situation I made efforts to appease her, hoping there was some other explanation for her threat. But this only made the situation worse.

In the weeks that followed my trip the threats escalated. Eventually I became compliant to her demands and threats. My lack of courage, utter hopelessness, fear of losing my family and fear of jeopardizing the Church’s reputation resulted in a completely nonconsensual, unwanted sexual assault that has left me traumatized to this day.

During that season one of my colleagues made a thoughtless comment: “I’d rather hear that a Christian leader has died than fallen.” In my broken mind that comment took root, and in the darkest moment of my life I bought a rope and decided to go ahead and just be with Jesus.

God spared my life that night and

gave me strength to tell my wife what had been happening. Emboldened by her understanding and support I found the courage to cease all contact with the assailant, regardless of the consequences.

The next day the threats became directed toward my boss and he was sent evidence of what appeared to be an affair.

Within hours, and under the threat of a public scandal, my boss brought me into his office, told me my service with the institution was over and handed me a pre-written letter of resignation. I refused to sign it and explained I had been sexually assaulted and threatened.

“What in the world does that mean?” he asked. I explained again I had been sexually assaulted and did not have an affair. He told me to stop lying and that truth and repentance were the only two words that mattered. Determined to bring me to a point of repentance he began listing the names of all the people and Christian ministries I had disappointed with my “adultery.”

Both requests to draft my own letter of resignation — one that
(See ‘My sin,’ page 6)

“God spared my life that night and gave me strength to tell my wife what had been happening.”

'My sin was fear'



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'Our power to shame survivors' positions Church to inflict 'greater' damage

(continued from page 5)
would detail the circumstances of sexual abuse — were refused. Anything I said was seen only as evidence of unrepentance so I finally gave up.

Under more duress than I have ever felt in my life I explained a final time I had been assaulted and then signed the prepared statement of resignation, admitting to a “moral delinquency” that disqualified me from ministry. At the end of our brief meeting my boss told me to exit the building through the back door so his secretary wouldn’t have to look at me.

The days that followed were a blur. Escorted by security I cleaned out my office. My wife and I sold our house, packed whatever belongings could fit inside our car, said goodbye to a few friends and drove away in search of a new life wherever God would lead us.

Everything was gone. My speaking invitations were canceled. My articles and chapters were pulled from various publications. I was stripped of publishing contracts for nearly a dozen books and, now unemployed, had to repay thousands of dollars in book advances.

As word of my resignation quickly spread, my wife and I received hundreds of emails, text

messages and phone calls. One of the first messages expressed hope that I would “feel refreshed in repentance,” that I would “come to know restoration and love in [my] relationship to [my wife] that will be nothing short of miraculous,” and that I wouldn’t “lose sight of a grace greater than even the worst of sins.” With every buzz of the phone came a fresh layer of trauma. With every new article published about me online I felt the assault happening over and over again.

It would have been far easier to admit to having had an affair, be restored and eventually return to ministry. There’s a place in the church for repentant sinners.

But if I told the truth I risked being seen as an unrepentant adulterer and there’s no place for that in Christian leadership.

My sin, however, was not lust or adultery. My sin was fear (2 Tim. 1:7). In hindsight I know I should have immediately informed my wife and employer of the situation. But the fear of not being understood

kept me quiet. I wrongly thought that I could handle it alone.

Throughout the last year my wife and I saw a very different side of the Church we love and have served for so many years — it was a Church that not only shoots her wounded, but often does the wounding as well.

It has taken me a long time to forgive my assailant and even longer to forgive my boss. I can’t blame him for his actions because I also have succumbed to the power of threat. If I had been in his shoes I might have done the same thing.

Women seem to be more familiar than men with the realities of sexual assault. Many men, including myself for many years, grow up with the belief that because we are typically physically stronger than women we are not vulnerable in these ways.

But male sexual assault often has nothing to do with physical strength and everything to do with power, control, leverage, manipulation and threats. When you have something

to lose — a marriage, a family, a ministry, a reputation, a livelihood — it’s much easier than you think to give into small demands first, and then larger ones, in order to save and protect those you love.

I wonder how many men are going through something similar today. As men we feel extremely embarrassed to talk about this issue. If, somehow, we do manage to admit to being sexually assaulted we are often not believed and shamed, even by our closest friends and family.

Encouragement to male victims of sexual assault

Let me offer a few words to men who are experiencing, to whatever degree, the trauma of being sexually abused. I desperately wish someone had shared these words with me.

► **If you are suicidal**, please stop reading right now and call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

► **You are not alone.** Recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that “over one year, men and women were equally likely to experience nonconsensual sex, and most male victims reported female perpetrators.” If you apply these statistics to

“Male sexual assault often has nothing to do with physical strength and everything to do with power, control, leverage, manipulation and threats.”

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of POWER and LOVE and SELF-CONTROL.”

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) numbers more than 100,000 adult men affiliated with the SBC have potentially been sexually assaulted.

▶ You might feel trapped and that there's no way out, but **you do have options**. If you need someone to talk to — someone who will believe you and support you — call the confidential National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-4673.

▶ **Sexual assault is not an affair**. It is not a moral failing. Threat removes any possibility of consent.

▶ Run as fast as possible to a **licensed professional counselor who is a Christian and who has clinical training in trauma recovery for male victims of sexual assault**. My own hesitancy to do this resulted in substance abuse, added trauma and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

▶ **If you choose to share your story**, you have the freedom to do so whenever you want, to whom-ever you want and in whatever way you want. No victim of sexual assault should ever be forced to share the intimate and painful details of his trauma unless he chooses to.

A challenge to SBC leaders

The temptation to mishandle allegations of sexual assault and distance ourselves from victims is real, especially when the fear of negative public image triumphs over the desire to protect the individual.

As Southern Baptists listen to survivors and create policies to protect these men, women and children there are some nonnegotiable principles to follow. The list below is far from exhaustive, but it's a place to start. Any one of these would have made a tremendous difference in my termination meeting.

▶ **Every allegation of sexual assault must be taken seriously**, no matter the plausibility of the allegation, the age or gender of the victim or his or her position within the church, ministry or institution.

▶ **Follow your policies and procedures ruthlessly**. It's not enough to merely *have* good policies for handling allegations of sexual misconduct if you do not *follow* them.

▶ **Don't allow your previous experience with handling cases of adultery to cloud your ability to recognize sexual assault**. Offer to call law enforcement and defer to experts who can conduct independent investigations.

▶ When it comes to handling personnel matters, **maintain the**

highest standards of policy and principle by resisting the temptation to pick up the phone and control the narrative.

▶ **Offer pastoral care**. Pray with and for the victim. Refuse to utter words of disbelief, shame, judgment or intimidation.

▶ If you have not been formally trained to counsel victims of trauma and sexual abuse **do not attempt to counsel them**. You will likely retraumatize the victims. Keep a list of trained professionals who can help victims of sexual assault.

▶ **Ensure that your theology allows for a correct and biblical understanding of men and women**.

Women can be assailants. Men can be assaulted.

A challenge to the Church

The Church is uniquely positioned to inflict *greater* damage on victims of sexual assault than even the secular world because of our power to shame survivors spiritually. Our churches must become sanctuaries — safe havens — for those who have been traumatized.

▶ **Confirm allegations of sexual**

misconduct before reaching out with messages of dismay or calls for repentance. Getting this wrong causes unimaginable harm to victims of sexual assault. Real lives are at stake.

▶ **Equip yourself to understand**

male sexual assault. This issue is far more common and complicated than we realize, and there are a growing number of educational resources online.

▶ **Choose your leader wisely**. If you have concerns about a person's godliness, maturity, conversational priorities or character, be absolutely certain that God is calling you to that place

before aligning yourself with — and submitting yourself to — that leader's ministry.

▶ **Resist the temptation to gossip**, whether publicly or privately. "Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly," says the Lord, "I will destroy" (Ps. 101:5). Gossip, as Paul listed it in Romans 1:29, is just as much a sin as sexual immorality and nothing has the power to rot a Christian's fruit of the Spirit like social media.

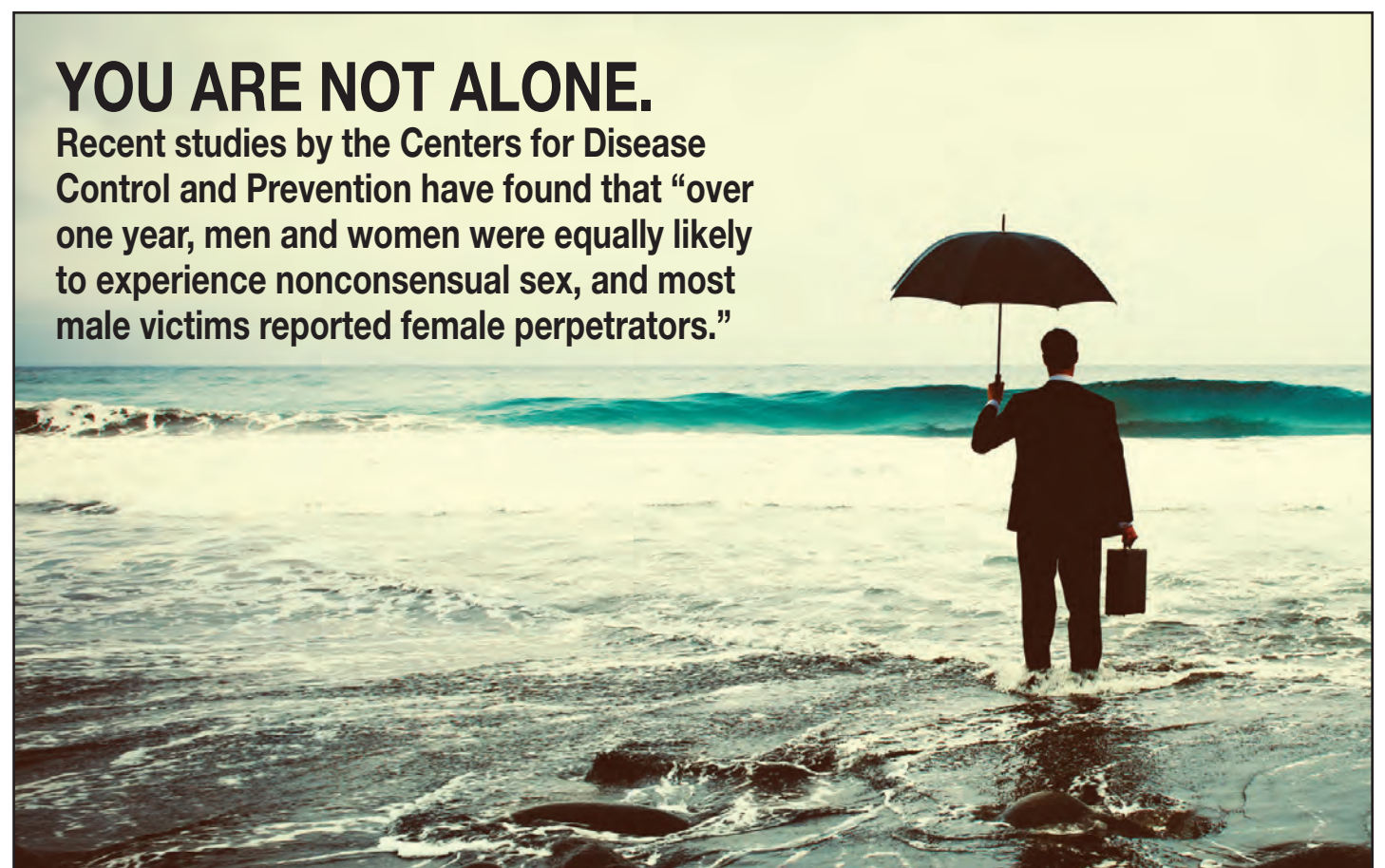
"Our denomination has come to a crossroads, but we do not stand here alone. At the center stands a cross and a Christ who knows exactly what it's like as a man to be assaulted."

A denomination at a crossroads

Born and bred into the Southern Baptist denomination I have spent my entire vocational ministry preaching from her pulpits, teaching in her classrooms and writing for her publishers. Jesus loves His Church, including His Southern Baptist bride, and so do I. God has guided us through dark times — through controversy, scandal and necessary theological corrections — and I believe He will guide us still, so long as we continue aligning ourselves with the truths of Scripture.

Our denomination has come to a crossroads but we do not stand here alone. At the center stands a cross and a Christ who knows exactly what it's like as a man to be assaulted. As part of the humiliation of Roman crucifixion Jesus was stripped of His clothes, blindfolded, slapped in the face, spat upon and hung up, naked and exposed, for all the world to see. Jesus' closest friends and disciples, the leaders of His Church, abandoned Him to protect their own lives and reputations.

Male sexual assault is a difficult conversation but it's one we need to have. If our denomination continues to mishandle allegations of abuse, especially now that we're aware of these issues, then the words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34), cannot be said of us. 🇺🇸



YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
Recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that "over one year, men and women were equally likely to experience nonconsensual sex, and most male victims reported female perpetrators."

Evangelism training equips students for gospel work

(continued from page 1)
for safe travel. Kassie, whose team will serve in Southeast Asia, said the security training was an eye-opening experience. Her teammate Sondra said learning about cultural dos and don'ts in the country where she will serve was interesting and helpful.

Another team member, Kaley, said worship and Bible study had been her favorite parts of training.

"We are growing in our relationship to God, knowing the primary goal is the gospel," she said. "Our team leaders are making sure we're firmly grounded before we go into these spiritually dark places."

Students are now in the field, and over the course of approximately 52 days (based on Nehemiah's 52-day project to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem), students will assist with short-term projects among refugees, immigrants and unreached peoples.

Jennings and his wife, Wendy, long-term cross-cultural workers with the IMB in Southeast Asia, have brought students alongside them for years. They believe students can help open doors among the unreached. Nehemiah Teams are a starting point to help students see their lives through a missional lens.

"Each of us has a missions calling or a missions obligation," Jennings said. "We want students to under-

stand the Great Commission is for each of us. We encourage each of them to seek the Lord for the sake of the nations."

And he wants Alabama Baptists to see how Nehemiah Teams can help mobilize students in their churches for Great Commission work.

"We want churches to know we can partner with them," Jennings said.

"Most of our students come through Baptist Campus

Ministries, but we would love to make direct connections with local churches and Baptist associations."

Encourage students to go

One way churches and associations can do that is to encourage students to fill requests for teams. Churches or associations who have existing partnerships with Baptist representatives in the field and are preparing to send students to serve can utilize Nehemiah Teams training for their groups too, Jennings said.

"We want to lead students from 25 states well," Jennings said. "But we also want Alabama Baptists and Alabama Baptist students to know they don't have to go far to get trained and go serve."

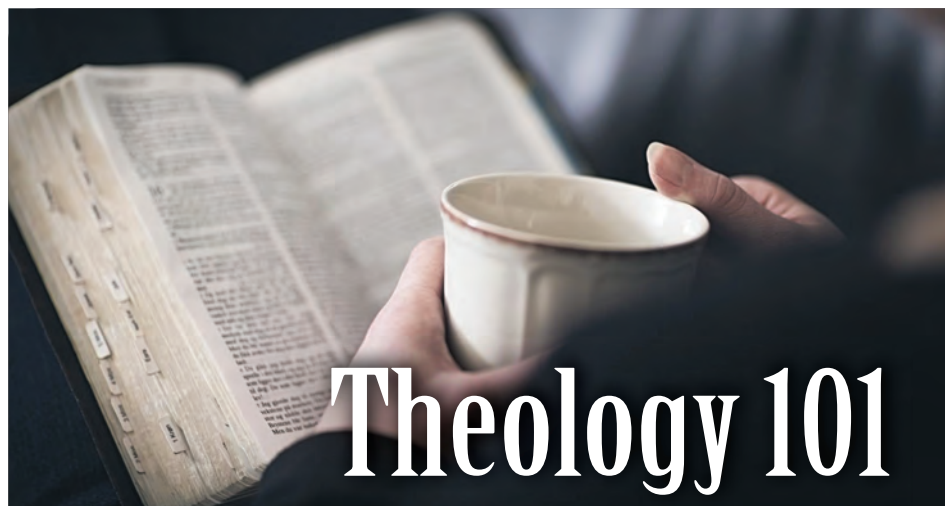
EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names have been changed for security reasons. ✚

For more information on Nehemiah Teams and P52 visit nehemiahteam.com and goproject52.com.



Photo by Luigi Almine

During P52 and Nehemiah Teams training, students hold Bible study in outdoor classrooms. The facilities are simple and sparse, which helps prepare students for whatever conditions they may encounter in the field.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Fatherhood of God

Implications for Prayer

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

Jesus made the vital connection between prayer and the Fatherhood of God in the model prayer He gave His first followers. When they requested He teach them to pray His response was, "When you pray say: Our Father in heaven" (Luke 11:1-2). Addressing God as "our Father" has a double connotation.

First it connotes a special familial relationship with God in which He is Father and we are children. In this relationship we are privileged to think of God as jointly the Father of Jesus and of us. Jesus' use of "our" conveys the sense of God being our Father and His Father.

Prayer is thus connected with our kinship with Christ in which He teaches us to think of God as His Father in the ultimate or eternal sense as well as our Father in a derived or redemptive sense.

Thus the pattern of the Lord's Prayer emphasizes a spiritual kinship with God through Christ in which the Father of our Lord also is our Father who is in heaven.

Spiritual kinship

The other implication of thinking of God as "our Father" is that of our spiritual kinship with every other believer regardless of location, time, language, ethnicity, geography, gender and such. We are together in the same family and share the same privilege of access to the same Father through the same practice of prayer.

Jesus was noted for the intimacy He shared with the Father often

referring to Him in the familiar family language of "Abba." As often explained this term is roughly equivalent to the familiar family name "Daddy." Through Christ we have access to God in terms of a warm, intimate and familiar relationship while remembering God is all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present.

Worshipful awe

At its best our praying holds in mind both God's otherness and His gracious nearness to us as His family.

Worshipful awe and respect join in close fellowship and access when we engage in prayer to the One who is both our Father and the awesome God of eternity.

A kind of sidebar to God's fatherhood is that as our perfect Heavenly Father He knows what we need before we ask just as Jesus reminded the disciples before giving them the Model Prayer: "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8).

A further implication of praying to our all-knowing and loving Heavenly Father is that we can confidently pray like Jesus did when He asked, "Not My will but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). ✚

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.



**Father's Day is
Sunday, June 16.**

Lessons from our FATHERS

Fathers, father figures given important responsibilities in Christian households

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Since 1924 the third Sunday in June has been designated as Father's Day. President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the purpose of the day is "to establish more intimate relations between fathers and their children and to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations."

What are those obligations? The Bible offers guidance.

1. Love your family (1 John 3:23).

Joanne Sloan, co-founder of the Southern Christian Writers Conference and contributor to *The Alabama Baptist*, said her father, a World War II veteran, was always affectionate toward their family. She has many memories of her father telling her and her siblings he loved them. A small picture of her father kissing her mother reminds her even today of her father's love, as does a special memory.

"One day during a trip my sister, brother and I were in the backseat

of the car. Daddy turned around and said, 'I love you kids so much. You will never know how much.' He then turned to Mother beside him and said, 'And I love your mother.'"

A father's love is a great gift, Sloane said.

2. Create a peaceful home (2 Tim. 1:7).

Rhonda Reeves Galyean, former preschool editor for Woman's Missionary Union, said her dad's positive attitude made a big impression on her.

"Dad believed negative thoughts and attitudes weren't biblical and

reminded me often that a positive attitude brings honor and glory to God," Galyean said. "He taught me God's presence would always be with me [and that] God does not give you a spirit of fear and timidity, but 'of power and of love and a sound mind.' He loved and lived that Scripture!"

3. Show love through discipline (Prov. 3:11-12).

Children who have not been

Ask God to bless fathers and father figures as they teach lessons about life and living to children in their care.



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taught responsibility can't be expected to make mature decisions. A time will come when someone will provide discipline — perhaps in the courts of law or other agencies. Because fathers love they discipline. Discipline should come in talking through the problem and listening with the heart as well as the head.

4. Set an example for your children (Prov. 20:7).

It was no secret. Everyone in the small town knew Dan's father had drug problems.

"When he tells me I should not experiment with drugs his words carry little meaning. After all he's been arrested several times and I've seen him buying drugs on the street," Dan said.

'Like my father'

In contrast Sidney's father is known in the community for attending Sidney's school activities, for being generous with benevolence organizations and for his involvement in church missions

projects. "I want to be like my father when I have a family," Sidney said.

5. Teach truthfulness and honesty (Prov. 23:15).

Anna, age 10, found a woman's purse lying on the street near her home. Opening it, she discovered four \$20 bills.

'My parents taught me'

"For a moment I thought about keeping the money and never saying anything," Anna said. "But I realized that wasn't being honest. My parents taught me to tell the truth."

Fortunately the purse was returned to its rightful owner thanks to identification found inside.

"Being able to return [the purse] gave me a wonderful feeling," Anna said.

Being the father God intended requires time, patience and wisdom. This Father's Day ask God to bless fathers and father figures as they teach lessons about life and living to children in their care.✠



Unsplash.com

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

LifeWay director of generosity and digital giving Todd McMichen speaks to Alabama Baptist leaders at his 'Growing a Powerful Generosity System' seminar.

Impact of giving



Photo by Michael J. Brooks

LifeWay generosity director McMichen teaches transformational giving seminar

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Charitable giving shouldn't be a "transaction" but a "transformation."

That's the message LifeWay director of generosity and digital giving Todd McMichen brought Alabama Baptist leaders in "Growing a Powerful Generosity System," a seminar he taught in Huntsville on May 15 and Birmingham on May 16.

"New giving and habitual giving is a great way to measure our success," McMichen said. "Giving regularly and generously is the number one indicator of how engaged our members are in reading the Bible, attending, serving and living out the vision of the church."

The good news is giving in the U.S. in the last four years is at an all-time high, McMichen said.

"Americans gave \$410

billion to charity in 2017," he said. "Seventy percent of giving is done by individuals, 16% by foundations and 9% through bequests. And 31% of the charitable gifts go to churches. This means houses of worship not religious organizations."

But McMichen said there was also less hopeful news for churches.

Modern generation

"The average percentage of income given to churches has remained around 2% for the last 40 years," he said.

McMichen listed several guidelines, or "catalysts," which encourage the modern generation to give.

"They want organizations to have a trustworthy track record," he said. "They need to know the group can be trusted with their money. And they want leaders of the group to 'buy in' to the mission and give themselves."

Millennials also desire excellence.

"Churches need to do everything with excellence not extravagance," he said. "We need to mow the grass, plant flowers, stripe the parking lot, paint the building and, most of all, worship well."

Communicating a clear vision of the impact giving makes in the church and broader community is another significant principle.

"Too often we assume church members know how their money is spent," he said. "But many only see the 'budget needed' and the 'budget received' in our worship bulletins.

Tell the story better

"We need to tell our story better from the pulpit and on our webpages. We need to explain how lives are being changed inside our walls, in our communities and in our world," McMichen said.

Churches should make the mechanics of giving simpler too, McMichen advised.

"When I was young, our church sent me 52 envelopes every year and I'd use them," he said. "Today fewer do. I think the offertory time in our worship services is honorable, but we must be strategic and offer alternatives. And we should explain these options clearly."

McMichen said "stewardship" is a biblical principle and a word often spoken in our churches, but it doesn't communicate as well to a new generation.

"What we talk about is generosity," he said. "We serve a generous God and we're to be like Him. A generous life is the best way to live. People who are gen-

erous are ... warm-spirited and committed. We have to teach this to a new generation."

Be patient

He encouraged church leaders to be patient with church members as they grow in generosity.

"If a person is wrestling with their decision to be baptized we don't turn them away," he said. "We work with them and love them until they commit to Christ publicly. We do the same thing in giving. We want to move beginning givers and occasional givers to be generous givers."

For more information on LifeWay's digital giving platform go to lifeway.com/generosity.



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Work of the Holy Spirit

Hunt challenges Southern Baptists to share gospel message confidently

(continued from page 1)
First Baptist Church, Trussville.

During the rally Hunt shared a message to encourage volunteers for the Crossover outreach event, held annually in that year's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting host city.

In Birmingham teams of college and seminary students spent the week of June 3–7 prayer walking, serving in local churches' Vacation Bible Schools and making door-to-door evangelistic visits. On Saturday, June 8 volunteers from across the state and SBC gathered at eight

hub churches to break into teams and share the gospel in the surrounding neighborhoods.

After Hunt spoke Bill Fay, author of "Share Jesus Without Fear," spoke to volunteers about simple ways to talk to people about their spiritual condition.

Fay said practicing basic gospel conversations helps those doing outreach "find a great, great,

brand new freedom that absolutely, unconditionally you cannot fail."

In carrying out door-to-door evangelism Fay recommends approaching homes and putting residents at ease by merely collecting

"It's not our job to convince anybody of anything — that's the work of the Holy Spirit of God."

**Johnny Hunt
senior vice president of evangelism and leadership
NAMB**



Johnny Hunt, senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at the North American Mission Board, encourages listeners at the June 5 Crossover kick-off rally to share the gospel confidently knowing the Holy Spirit empowers the message.

Photo by Tracy Riggs

prayer requests. That separates outreach volunteers from salespeople and others who might unexpectedly ring a home's doorbell. Then if the person at the home is open to it volunteers can pray with him or her right there.

"Here's why this is different and powerful. ... When you, who are connected through the power of the Holy Spirit open your mouth and pray, we see people cry, break down, weep, get stunned because they're not used to hearing someone talk to God," Fay said.

From there he suggests asking questions to promote conversations about Jesus and a person's spiritual condition, such as, "By the way, do you have any spiritual beliefs?" and "What is your understanding of who Jesus is?"

Follow-up questions like, "Do you think there is a heaven or hell?" and "By the way, if you believed something that was not true, would you want to know it?" help believers engage

more deeply with nonbelievers, Fay said.

Obedience to ask the questions and share truth when people are receptive is all God asks His people to do, Fay said.

'All about God'

"It's all about God. No one comes to Christ unless the Father does it," he said. "You can't blow this but you sure can be part of it."

Hunt also said the gospel "spoken in human weakness is being confirmed in divine power."

"It's not our job to convince anybody of anything — that's the work of the Holy Spirit of God," he said. "We ought to have confidence in the message."

As part of the Crossover kick-off event each site began the night with its own worship music. Wes Hampton of the Gaither Vocal Band led worship at The Church at Brook Hills and local choirs and worship teams led at the satellite locations. The rally ended with a corporate call to the altar to pray for Crossover.✝



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Participants at the host site of the Crossover kick-off rally — The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham — practice asking each other questions to start spiritual conversations.

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3 stories you should know



Morning Star News photo

Police have banned evangelistic events in a town in western Uganda following open-air preaching in which many Muslims put their faith in Christ, sources said. Churches in Bwera held a joint evangelistic event amid the large Muslim population in Bwera beginning May 20. The success of the event led not only to the ban but to church leaders receiving death threats. 'Tomorrow we are coming to kill all of you during the open air crusade,' read one text message. (MS)

Platt comments on prayer for President Trump

On June 2, President Donald Trump made a surprise visit to McLean Bible Church, the DC-area megachurch where David Platt serves as teaching pastor. Platt, former head of the International Mission Board, prayed for the president from the stage.

Platt said in a letter to his congregation he did not learn of the president's visit until minutes before the two took the stage together.

"Sometimes ... we're faced with a decision in a moment when we don't have the liberty of deliberation so we do our best to glorify God," he explained.

Platt said his "aim was in no way to endorse the president, his policies or his party but to obey God's command to pray for our president and other leaders" as mentioned in the Bible. (TAB)

Last Missouri Planned Parenthood to stay open

On May 31 a Missouri judge ordered the state's last remaining abortion center can continue operating just hours before the Planned Parenthood facility's license was set to expire.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services had not renewed Planned Parenthood's license due to concerns about failed abortions, compromised patient safety and legal violations at the facility.

Planned Parenthood sued the state in late May to keep the abortion center open.

St. Louis Circuit Judge Michael Stelzer's ruling stopped Missouri from becoming the first state in the country with no abortion provider. The number of abortions performed in the state has gone down every year for the past decade. (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Former Alabama Baptist pastor Jimmy L. Maddox dies at 75



Former Alabama Baptist pastor Jimmy L. Maddox died May 20. He was 75.

At the time of his passing Maddox lived in Dothan where he had moved with his family during his teen years. After high school he began working in the family business, then for Georgia Highway Express. He later attended Baptist Bible Institute (now The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville) and began three decades of pastoral ministry — 1976 to 2006.

During those years Maddox served as pastor of eight churches including Union Hill Baptist, Cottonwood and Pleasant Hill Baptist, Gordon.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Becky; daughters, Tina and Nikki; sons, Todd and Scott; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)



MADDOX

Evangelical financial watchdog faces scrutiny over backing of megachurch



About five years ago the Village Church of Barrington, a congregation northwest of Chicago with a \$1.8 million annual budget and average weekly attendance of 600, decided to become accredited with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

ECFA — founded in 1979 to promote financial integrity in Christian ministries and avert heightened government regulation in the wake of televangelist scandals — claims nearly 2,400 members.

"We thought it would give donors confidence to know that we were doing things by the book," said David Jones, the Village Church's pastor.

But now — amid scrutiny over ECFA's years-long failure to identify financial misdeeds at Harvest Bible Chapel, a Chicago-area megachurch that fired its founder and senior pastor, James MacDonald, earlier this year — the Village Church said it is rethinking its relationship with the Christian watchdog group.

In December, ECFA issued a statement saying

that Harvest was in compliance with its rules. Not long afterward church officials admitted misleading ECFA.

In April, ECFA terminated Harvest Bible Chapel's membership, pointing to "significant violations" of several of its financial standards.

The group had suspended the megachurch the previous month after church leaders admitted "a lack of financial control and oversight" under MacDonald. In March, ECFA said "new information" led the watchdog group to investigate whether the church had violated ECFA's financial standards.

Dan Busby, ECFA's president since 2009, referred Religion News Service's request for an interview to a public relations firm.

Karen Dye with Guardian PR + Events said Harvest Bible Chapel is "conducting an external review by a forensic accountant."

"Out of respect for that process and until that report is public, ECFA will not be participating



NEWS

News near you

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church, Birmingham**, will host Vacation Bible School on June 24–27 from 9 a.m. to noon. This year’s theme is “ROAR! Life is wild. God is good.” A cook-out will be held June 27 at 6 p.m. To register visit www.fbcirmingham.org/vbs. Jim Cooley is pastor.

BUTLER ASSOCIATION

► **Spring Creek Baptist Church, Honorville**, celebrated Senior Adult Day on May 5. The church honored its 16 senior adults ranging in age from 85 to 97 years old. The church also hosted a birthday party and lunch. Birthday tables were decorated for each month of the year and family members were invited to attend. The 16 honorees were Eloise Kuczarski, Willie Claude Foster, Magdalene Grant, Orren Foster McGough, Jane Pritchett Demerse, Edna Carlee Reeves, T.J. Fountain, Stringer Pritchett, Bruce Raymond Perdue, Betty Foster, W.T. Reeves, Hubert Ray Foster, Marvin



BETTY & WILLIE FOSTER

Hartley, Carolyn Bowden, Daisy Reynolds Bell and Betty Heartsill Yawn.

The children of the church presented each woman with a corsage and each man with a boutonniere and all received an oversized personalized birthday card. A display was set up for each honoree with pictures and memorabilia depicting his or her spiritual gifts and service to the church, community and country. All of



ELOISE KUCZARSKI

the men honored served in a branch of the military.

Kuczarski was the oldest female honoree and Willie Foster, a lifetime member, was the oldest male honoree. Pritchett had the most family members attending the celebration — more than 25.

Jamie Baldwin, state missionary with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, was the guest speaker for the day. He shared examples of senior men and women from the Bible who God used for His plan and purpose, encouraging all to continue serving no matter their age.

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host Camp CLBC for preschool through sixth grade June 27 from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. A family meal will be held at 5:30 p.m. The program following the meal will feature illusionist Bryan Drake. Activities will include Bible study, music and hands-on activities. For more

information call 334-347-6082. To register visit www.CLBCOnthe.net. Danny Wiggins is pastor.

DALE ASSOCIATION

► **David Grier** is the new pastor of **Post Oak Baptist Church, Ozark**. His first Sunday will be June 16. He previously served as a pastor in Florida. He holds a degree from The Baptist College of Florida. He also teaches Advanced Placement English at Carroll High School in Ozark. He and his wife, Daphne, have two children.



GRIER

MADISON ASSOCIATION

► **Hillwood Baptist Church, Huntsville**, will host a concert featuring gospel artist Ivan Parker on June 21 at 7 p.m. For more information call 256-883-1950. For tickets call 256-883-0485. Charles Freeman is pastor.

MUSCLE SHOALS ASSOCIATION

► **Old Town Creek Baptist Church, Moulton**, will host Vacation Bible School on June 23–27 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Brandon Kerby is pastor.



WILKS

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **Jared Wilks** is the new student pastor at **North Valley Baptist Church, Odenville**. He is currently studying at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. 🇺🇸

— NEWSBRIEFS —

in any interviews,” Dye said in an email. She declined, too, to make Busby available to answer more general questions about ECFA’s history and purpose. (RNS)

Wycliffe to begin 10 Bible translation projects in persecuted nations



Wycliffe Associates, an international organization involving people in the advancement of Bible translation, is ready to begin Scripture translation for 10 languages in an undisclosed nation where the government fiercely opposes Christianity and evangelism is illegal.

There are 150 language groups in the country and Christians from 10 language groups there want to begin translations using a Wycliffe Associates strategy called Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation (MAST).

“Many Christians in this part of the world had resigned themselves to never seeing a Bible in their own ... language,” said Bruce Smith, President and CEO of Wycliffe Associates. “But then they heard about the MAST strategy.”

MAST is a collaborative translation method

that Wycliffe Associates teaches to mother-tongue translators in a workshop setting.

In the nation where Wycliffe Associates hopes to launch at least 10 new MAST workshops, the government tracks every move of people believed to be Christians.

“There are thousands of secret house churches in this country,” said Smith, “and we have reports of more and more

people coming to Christ. Yet millions of the people attending these churches don’t have a Bible in their own heart language.” (Wycliffe Associates)

Maine bill banning ‘conversion therapy’ for minors signed into law



Maine Gov. Janet Mills signed a bill into law May 29 that reportedly prohibits so-called “conversion therapy” for minors struggling with unwanted



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same-sex attraction. Maine joins 16 other states and the District of Columbia in banning the therapy.

The law defines conversion therapy as “any practice or treatment that seeks or purports to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity,” but it says the definition does not include “any practice or treatment that provides acceptance, support and understanding to an individual.”

The law does not specify who may determine what constitutes “acceptance, support and understanding.” The law specifically mentions “marriage and family therapists” and “pastoral counselors” on the list of licensed professionals who cannot provide such therapy to anyone under the age of 18.

“This bill would equate sound biblical counseling with torture and abuse under the name of conversion therapy,” the Christian Civic League of Maine said on its website.

Although the bill does not explicitly equate conversion therapy with child abuse, it places it in the same section as abuse as grounds for revoking a professional counselor’s license if they are found participating in it. (BP)



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Alabamians among spring seminary graduates

Alabama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and divinity schools in spring 2019.

The Alabama Baptist was provided the following list of graduates by the schools.

► Beeson Divinity School:

Doctor of Ministry — Charles Webster, Pelham

Master of Divinity — DeVonta Anderson, Florence; Armstead Herndon, Bessemer; Byron Jackson, Oxford; Callie McManus, Smith's Station; Raphael Pierce, Birmingham; Corey Powell, Gardendale

Master of Arts in Theological Studies — Lauren Gatch, Birmingham; Rebecca Graber, Lillian; Caroline Summers, Pelham; Browning Thornton, Mountain Brook

► Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Doctor of Philosophy — Kenneth W. Lovett, Auburn; Alan J. Pihringer, Harvest; Tyler M. Smith, Anderson

Doctor of Ministry — Josh Sammons, Alexander City

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Justin Thomas Abercrombie, Louisville

Master of Divinity — Taylor Gurley, Talladega; Daniel Murphy, Daphne; Grant Powell Norris, Frisco City; Jonathan Adam Tait, Mobile

Master of Arts in Worship Leadership — Jason Christo-

pher Crowe Sr., Huntsville
Master of Arts in Christian Education — Jessica Mayfield, Odenville

Master of Arts in Leadership — Marc Wilson Hall, Tuscaloosa

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling — John C. Benefield II, Gadsden

► Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Doctor of Ministry — Jeffrey Adam Gardner, Decatur; Jonathan Cory Horton, Selma

Master of Divinity in Advanced Biblical Studies — Samuel James Ammons, Troy

Master of Divinity in Christian Ministry — Robert Doughton Lyerly III, Birmingham

Master of Divinity in Preaching and Pastoral Ministry — Jon David Pearson, Montgomery

Master of Theology — Thomas Wesley Remkus, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies — Jacqueline Blair Feller, Birmingham

► New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:

Doctor of Ministry — Joshua King Posey, Pleasant Grove; Marvin Otto Robinson, Citronelle; Joshua Guy Wilson, Tuscaloosa

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Daniel Spurgeon Tankersley, Dothan

Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and

Supervision — Lauren Melissa Carlisle, Birmingham
Master of Divinity — Owen Scott Rumble, Trussville

Master of Divinity, Christian Education Specialization — Alana Knight Robbinette, Montgomery

Master of Divinity, Expository Preaching Specialization — Michael James Licina Jr., Deatsville

Master of Arts in Christian Apologetics — Edward Benjamin Vines, Hueytown

Master of Arts Pastoral Ministry — Nicholas Lee Stockdale, Reeltown

Master of Arts (Apologetics) — Roland Anthony Kidd Jr., Daphne

Graduate Certificate in Women's Ministry — Nancy Elizabeth Dickson, Sylacauga

► Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Master of Divinity — Jared Helms, Clanton

Master of Arts in Islamic Studies — Casey Johnson Aikens, Tuscaloosa

► Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:

Doctor of Counseling — Sean Paul Burson, Pike Road

Master of Divinity — George Joseph Lanier, Eclectic; Jacob A. Overstreet, Semmes

► Gateway Seminary:

Master of Missiology — Sarah Katherine Johnson, Huntsville. (TAB)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Cave Spring Baptist Church, Priceville, Alabama, seeks full-time pastor with minimum five years experience. Only a God-called, energetic minister who cares for multi-generations, ready to reap the harvest; a person whose professional and personal life align with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 need apply. Deadline: June 30. Email: info@thebsbc.com for more information.

PASTOR

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

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER

Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster, seeking part-time music minister. Sunday and Wednesday worship and occasional special events, such as VBS. Duties: planning and directing congregational and choral music, ensembles and assisting with youth ministry. Must be committed to biblical truth and demonstrate good people skills and organizational ability. See siluriabaptist.com for job description and contact form.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Small church in western Jefferson County, Sylvan Springs, Alabama, looking for bivocational, part-time minister of music for three blended services per week. Send resumes to: First Baptist Sylvan Springs, 5692 Birmingham Road, Sylvan Springs, AL 35118, ATTN: Search Committee.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

First Baptist Church, Guntersville, is currently seeking a director of children's ministry. Please submit resume to Amy Fondren at afondren@gvillefbc.org. Director of Children's Ministry Search Committee.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS/SINGLES

Covenant Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee, a conservative Southern Baptist church with a traditional worship style, seeks a full-time minister of students, singles and their families. Applicants must send a cover letter and resume to: youthsearch@mybcc.org or to: Covenant Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027.

YOUTH MINISTER

Cottage Hill Baptist Church (Bessemer Association) is seeking candidates to restart the youth ministry. Please email resumes to:

lorettamconnell@gmail.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

PIANIST

New Georgia Baptist Church is seeking a pianist for Sunday morning worship. Paid position. Contact: jdmoman@charter.net.

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Someone You

Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett

Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Tony and Ann Bartlett

More than 20 years ago Tony and Ann Bartlett taught their first Sunday School class, which was a large group of first graders. As the children moved to the next grade level so did the Bartletts. The couple continued to move up with the class until the students were in sixth grade. Along the way the Bartletts developed a close bond with the students and have maintained contact with the individuals, who are adults now. The Bartletts are still teaching Sunday School, currently working with third, fourth and fifth graders. Ann, 75, is a retired IT specialist; Tony, 67, is a foreman/contractor assistant.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION: Bible study teachers for third through fifth grades

CHURCH NAME: Moffett Road Baptist Church, Mobile, in Mobile Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6)

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts:

Bartletts: We teach God's word to children. We work with Amy Flowers, director of the children's department and teacher for first and second grades, and with our secretary Sheila Gully. As we continue to teach, we find that all children are special and a gift from God.

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

Tony: My fifth-grade Sunday School teacher was the most influential person in my faith life. He had a positive effect on my life.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

Ann: God has been teaching



ANN AND TONY BARTLETT

me to be more humble and to be focused on Him and not me.

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

Ann: I would tell my younger self, "Trust God and live by faith."

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

Bartletts: Some of our special traditions are each Christmas our church displays poinsettias around the sanctuary and each Easter they display Easter lilies. The displays are beautiful. 🌸

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.

Persecuted church

Armed gunmen kidnap 19 Christians, kill one in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Suspected Fulani herdsmen stormed a church choir practice and kidnapped 17 Christians in north-central Nigeria on May 19, the same night gunmen killed a Christian and kidnapped two others at a Baptist church, sources said.

Each attack took place in Kaduna State where assaults on Christians have recently ramped up.

In Dankande village the gunmen attacked Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) after midnight as a combined choir made up of members of two churches was rehearsing.

"As we were in the church Fulani herdsmen numbering over 20 just surrounded the church and started shooting," a local source said.

Nathaniel Waziri, chairman, of the ECWA Zaria District Church Council, confirmed May 23 the gunmen kidnapped local pastor Zakariya Ido, his daughter and 15 other church members, including the son of the pastor of an Assemblies of God church.

Christians make up 51.3% of Nigeria's population, while Muslims living primarily in the north and middle belt account for 45%.

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

In related news

► When police took Gornath Chalanseth from his home in eastern India early on the morning of Dec. 13, 2008, he assumed they only wanted to question him over minor political activity in his capacity as a member of the local village council.

Ten years, five months and six

days after he was taken into custody Chalanseth walked out of prison May 21, again released on bail. He had been released on bail twice before but had been taken back to prison shortly after. This time, however, because the Supreme Court issued the release on bail he does not have to return unless the high court itself so orders.

Chalanseth said he is happy to be released but he also is concerned about the six others who remain in jail while claiming innocence. There

is hope his release could set a precedent for the others.

► Village leaders in eastern India prohibited five Christian families from working on their farms or walking on the main road before district authorities revoked the order in May, sources said.

Leaders of Bannhardi village, in Jharkhand state's Latehar District, told the five families in April to either

convert back to their ancestral Sarna religion or face punishment. When the Christians refused to renounce their faith the village issued a decree April 10 instructing their farmland be confiscated and prohibiting them from interacting with anyone, fetching water and buying or selling, they said.

After District Collector Rajiv Kumar intervened and annulled the order May 13 the villagers agreed to let the Christians receive government rations and water, but they said they will continue to refuse to associate with all who have converted to Christianity.

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



Morning Star News photo
Gornath Chalanseth speaks with a journalist following his May 2019 release from prison.



ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

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Stronger Together

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.

JUNE

- 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
- 15-19 **Missions Adventure Camp for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 16 **Church Financial Issues**, Tennessee River Baptist Association Office, Scottsboro, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 18 **Church Financial Issues**, Northport BC, Northport, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 18 **Child Protection Workshop**, First Baptist Church, Trussville, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 19-20 **SPEAK, Eastmont, Montgomery**, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 22-26 **Missions Adventure Camp for Boys & Teen Boys**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 23 **Church Financial Issues**, Calhoun Baptist Association Office, Anniston, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 25 **Church Financial Issues**, Mobile Baptist Association Office, Mobile, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 26-27 **Equip...for Missions, for Ministry, for Life**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Pat Ingram, ext. 292
- 26-27 **Missions Adventure Camp for Lad & Dad**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223

AUGUST

- 1-3 **Alabama Church Planting Basics**, Glynwood, Prattville, Lamar Duke, ext. 332
- 2-3 **The Summit: For Church Leaders**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Jamie Baldwin, ext. 240
- 2-3 **English as a Second Language Workshop**, Prattville FBC, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311
- 4 **Social Issues Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 4-8 **Collegiate Week**, Falls Creek, Oklahoma, Mike Nuss, ext. 276
- 6 **Church Financial Issues**, Dale Baptist Association Office, Ozark, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 8 **Church Financial Issues**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 12 **Biblical Church Revitalization**, Lindsay Lane, Athens, Daniel Wilson, ext. 343

Legislative recap: Human trafficking bills pass on final day

Two bills aimed at combatting human trafficking and another to legalize daily fantasy sports were among those passed in the final days of the Alabama Legislature's 2019 regular session which ended May 31.

The Legislature unanimously passed two bipartisan human trafficking bills, House Bill (HB) 261 and HB 262. Rep. Merika Coleman (D-Birmingham) and Rep. Terri Collins (R-Decatur) co-sponsored the legislation.

Trucker training

HB 261 requires all new commercial driver licensees to undergo industry-specific human trafficking training. Truckers Against Trafficking, a national organization that trains truckers on identifying human trafficking victims in their daily work life, will work with junior colleges and trade schools to facilitate the training.

HB 262 clarifies existing law to prohibit publishing photos of those charged with the act of prostitution, while allowing for photos of those charged with soliciting or procuring prostitution to be published. The bill's goal is to protect potential victims of human trafficking from public identification while deterring

those arrested for paying for sex.

Two human trafficking resolutions also were passed in the 2019 session. House Joint Resolution (HJR) 145 encourages Alabama law enforcement officials to ensure every officer in the state is trained regarding human trafficking and HJR 244 creates the Alabama Healthcare Human Trafficking Training Program Commission, which is tasked with developing a training module for all health care-related employees to readily identify and provide trauma-centered care for human trafficking victims.

"With the human trafficking bills and resolutions passing through the Legislature ... Alabama is sending a very loud and powerful message to traffickers that we are extremely serious about stopping these horrible crimes," said Pat McCay, chair of the Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force. "A big thank you to everyone who called and emailed their legislators to make this a reality."

Earlier in the session the Legislature passed the Alabama Human Life Protection Act which makes performing an abortion in Alabama

a felony. Gov. Kay Ivey signed the bill May 15 but noted the law is "unenforceable."

Supporters hope Alabama's bill and others like it will force the U.S. Supreme Court to revisit and perhaps even overturn Roe v. Wade, the decision that legalized abortion in the U.S.

The Legislature also passed HB 361, which legalizes online daily fantasy sports (DFS) in Alabama. Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), who opposed the bill, argued daily fantasy sports websites like FanDuel and DraftKings, which allow participants to place bets in online sports-related contests and win money

based on individual and team performance in real-life games, constitute gambling.

Supporters argue online daily fantasy sports are games of skill not chance and therefore a constitutional amendment was not required to allow them to operate in the state.

A proposal to establish a state-sponsored lottery in Alabama also failed to pass. The bill passed in the Senate but failed to pass a procedural vote in the House effectively

killing the bill for the session.

However, Joe Godfrey, ALCAP executive director, said he suspects the lottery bill is not dead.

"We anticipate the lottery may come up again as a suggested source of revenue to fund prison reform," he said.

An increase in funding for prisons was included in next year's budget and some legislators have said they expect Ivey to call a special session on prisons later this year.

Two local gambling bills calling for constitutional amendments to legalize the operation of electronic gambling devices (slot machines) in Macon and Greene counties failed to pass.

Marriage licenses

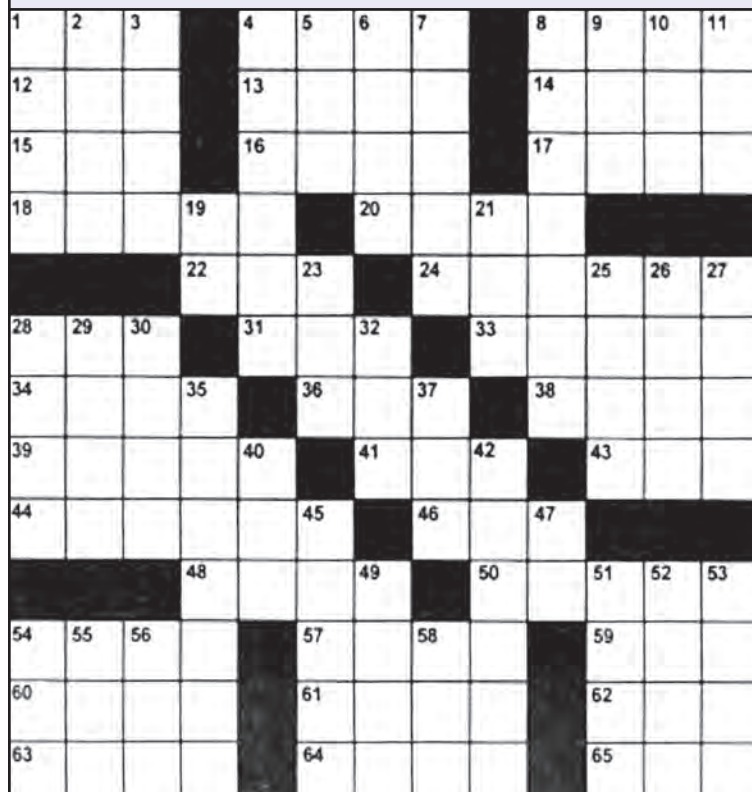
Legislators also passed a bill to eliminate marriage licenses in Alabama. Officials in several counties stopped issuing marriage licenses following the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing gay "marriage" in 2015. Under the new requirements couples will file an affidavit with the county probate judge, who will record the marriage. The bill also eliminates the requirement of a ceremony to "solemnize the marriage." (Carrie Brown McWhorter)

For more information on any of these bills go to www.tabonline.org/bills.

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

Christian Crossword

By Mary Ann Freeman Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Touched the ____ (Matt. 9:20)
- I know in ____ (1 Cor. 13:12)
- Sendeth ____ on the just. (Matt. 5:45)
- The serpent beguiled ____ (2 Cor. 11:3)
- ____ despised his birthright. (Gen. 25:34)
- Woe to them that are at ____ in Zion. (Amos 6:1)
- ____ as a sheep to the slaughter. (Acts 8:32)
- I will give you ____ (Matt. 11:28)
- As the Lord ____ (Josh. 11:9)
- I ____ toward the mark. (Phil. 3:14)
- Now abideth faith, ____ and charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)
- Your life is ____ with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3)
- This is the ____ of John. (John 1:19)
- They called for Jesus' death.
- All things ____ possible. (Mark 9:23)
- Where Joshua and all Israel stoned Achan. (Josh. 7:24-25)
- A tenth of an ephah. (Ex. 16:36)
- Verily I say unto ____.
- Say ye unto your brethren ____ (Hos. 2:1)
- Moses' brother. (Ex. 4:14)
- National Security Council. (abbr.)
- Labor Day month. (abbr.)
- How Samuel's sons were

- influenced. (1 Sam. 8:3)
- ____ hath not seen. (1 Cor. 2:9)
- Ahab served ____ a little. (2 Kings 10:18)
- If thy ____ eye offend thee. (Matt. 5:29)
- Run with patience the ____ (Heb. 12:1)
- I am the true ____ (John 15:1)
- Japanese drama.
- The 12th month. (Esther 3:7)
- Seared with a hot ____ (1 Tim. 4:2)
- Solomon's navy brought him this animal. (1 Kings 10:22)
- The son of ____ (Mark 6:3)
- ____ any of you. (1 Cor. 6:1)
- Were there not ____ cleansed? (Luke 17:17)

Down

- ____ thou mine unbelief. (Mark 9:24)
- Sing of the mercies of the Lord for ____ (Ps. 89:1)
- Darius' nationality. (Dan. 11:1)
- Cyrus king of ____ (2 Chron. 36:23)
- Indicates an enzyme.
- Be not ____ with thy mouth. (Eccles. 5:2)
- Private instructor.
- Isaac's wife. (Rom. 9:10)
- Auto club.
- Independent School District. (abbr.)
- Indicates maiden name.
- Be quiet.
- Green vegetable.
- O ye ____ bones. (Ezek. 37:4)
- Electrical units.
- Bear witness also at ____ (Acts 23:11)
- To shed drops.
- Ruth left this country. (Ruth 1:22)
- One of the sons of Eliphaz. (Gen. 36:11)
- One of the sons of Zophah. (1 Chron. 7:36)
- Long time.
- Thought it not ____ to be equal with God. (Phil. 2:6)
- Them which despitefully ____ you. (Matt. 5:44)
- National Education Association. (abbr.)
- They found a man of ____ (Matt. 27:32)
- Jesse's youngest son. (1 Sam. 17:14)
- East Indies. (abbr.)
- Italian money.
- Which strain at a ____ (Matt. 23:24)
- The ____ of glory. (Col. 1:27)
- ____ that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor. 13:10)
- Abraham went and took the ____ (Gen. 22:13)
- American Dental Association. (abbr.)
- Automobile.
- Neither cold ____ hot. (Rev. 3:16)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 16

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



SETTING THE EXAMPLE 1 Timothy 3:1–13

Everything rises or falls with leadership. If there's no leadership on the field there will not be any points on the scoreboard. So it is with the church. One of the greatest crises in the church today is the vacuum of godly, male leadership in the church. Godly pastors and godly deacons are important.

A Pastor's Heart (1)

A man who will succeed as an overseer, elder or pastor (these terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament) must be called by God into the work.

God's call on a man's life will create within him a desire to serve in this office. A man may meet the character requirements and be able to teach the Word, but if he lacks a pastor's heart he will not succeed in God's eyes.

A Pastor's Character (2–7)

Character leads to trust. Trust leads to leadership. The overarching character qualification is the overseer "must be above reproach." While enemies may bring accusations against the overseer, these charges are proven to be empty whenever fair methods of investigation are applied.

The overseer must be a "one-woman man." He is to be a man of unquestioned morality, one who is entirely true and faithful to his wife. His marriage relationship should serve as an example of faithfulness to his wife. He is to maintain sexual purity in his conduct as well as in his thought life.

The overseer must demonstrate Spirit-empowered self-mastery. He is to be "self-controlled." He thinks clearly. His pleasures are not primarily of the senses but those of the soul. He is to be "sensible" in that he is well-disciplined and knows how to order his priorities correctly. He is to be "respectable." He must have an orderly life. Ministry is no place for a man in a continual confusion of unaccomplished

plans and disorganized activities.

The overseer must minister well. He must be "hospitable," a lover of strangers. In other words the overseer is generous in meeting the needs of people he does not know.

He must also be "able to teach." Every overseer must possess this spiritual gift. He is to be skillful in teaching the word of God to the people of God. He may be gifted to teach one-on-one, in a small group or from the pulpit. The overseer must work hard to know the Word and to communicate it with passion. Effective teaching is woven into the moral character of the teacher. What a man is cannot be divorced from what he says.

The overseer must also be above reproach in that he not be an "excessive drinker," a "bully," "quarrelsome" or "greedy." Rather he is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, gentle, gracious and selfless. "He must manage his own household competently and have his children under control with dignity." If the overseer cannot manage his own family well, how can he be expected to manage God's family?

The overseer should not be a "new convert." He needs to be a man who has matured spiritually and is continuing to grow as a follower of Christ. He also must have a "good reputation" among people outside of the church.

A Deacon's Character (8–13)

Having covered the qualifications of the servant leaders, the overseers, Paul turns his attention to the leading servants, the deacons.

The qualifications for serving as a deacon are like the qualifications for serving as an overseer with one notable difference. The overseer must be able to teach the word of God. God-called deacons are to meet needs of the people according to the Word, support the ministry of the Word and unify the body around the Word.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University

HANNAH: FAITH THAT PRAYS 1 Samuel 1:1–2, 9–11, 17–18, 26–28; 2:1–3

In Hannah we find a woman who shows what it looks like to trust God even when those around us don't understand what we are going through.

Bring your needs to God. (1:1–2, 9–11)

In Hannah's world few things were more humiliating for a woman than being unable to provide a husband with children (especially a male heir) and it was always thought to reflect a problem with the woman herself. Hannah's inability to bear children was probably what led Elkanah to take on a second wife.

The men in Hannah's life meant well but were insensitive to her humiliation and pain. Her husband couldn't understand her chronic grief and thought his love for her should have made childlessness a nonissue (1 Sam. 1:8). Later, the priestly figure Eli interpreted manifestations of her crushing grief as drunkenness (1 Sam. 1:13–14).

There is no indication Hannah let her pain lead her to act out against others. Rather she took her anguish to God in prayer and appealed to Him in the form of a vow to dedicate her child completely to the Lord if He would put an end to her humiliation by granting her the son she so desired.

Trust God to answer. (1:17–18, 26–28)

When Eli misinterpreted her silent prayer (praying silently was an unusual thing in ancient Israel) and wrongfully insulted her, Hannah politely but firmly stood up for herself and explained that rather than dealing with an unusually immoral woman, he was dealing with an unusually distraught and spiritually passionate worshipper.

Eli may never have noticed Hannah or engaged her in conversation were it not for his misunderstanding of what she was doing.

Providentially what began as an

insulting misinterpretation on his part resulted in his authoritative endorsement of her prayer and newfound confidence in her heart (vv. 17–18).

In teaching on this passage we need to be careful not to suggest it contains a promise from God that all infertile couples who pray and trust like Hannah will have their prayers answered in a similar manner. The experience of most infertile couples (including those who pray as passionately as Hannah) has not been the same as Hannah's.

In Hannah's case the response to her prayer would end up dealing not only with her personal humiliation but also with the humiliation Israel was going through due to a lack of dynamic leadership. Samuel's birth brought not only Hannah, but all of Israel, out of an anguished period.

Like Hannah we must pray with confidence that God hears us and He will accomplish His purposes through our prayers and our lives as we submit ourselves to Him.

Thank God for His answer. (2:1–3)

Hannah's prayer has echoed through the prayers of saints ever since her days. Others have found in her words a model for their own prayers of thanksgiving for being brought from a place of humiliation to a place of honor (compare Luke 1:46–55). Hannah recognized in her own experience God honors those who humble themselves before Him and humbles those whose arrogance puffs them up.

Sometimes this only happens when we see God face-to-face, but other times we see this reflected in powerful answers to our prayers.

Our prayers should be informed by the understanding of God's priorities and agenda reflected in Hannah's prayer of praise. Like hers, our hearts should be quick to recognize signs God has acted to answer our prayers and fulfill His purposes through them.✠

TOP 8

best-selling Christian books

FICTION

1. **The Road Home**
By Beverly Lewis (Bethany)
2. **The Masterpiece**
By Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
3. **The Kremlin Conspiracy**
By Joel C. Rosenberg (Tyndale)
4. **A Promise of Hope**
By Amy Clipston (Zondervan)
5. **The Shack — Paperback**
By William Paul Young (Windblown)
6. **An Amish Miracle**
By Beth Wiseman (Zondervan)
7. **The Book of Mysteries**
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
8. **An Amish Spring**
By Amy Clipston (Zondervan)

Source: Christian Book Expo at press time



Media reviews

It Had to be God! Volumes 1 and 2

Jack R. Smith. Cathedral City, CA: AquaZebra Book Publishing, 2017. 306 pp. (Paperback).

I often groan when I see yet another memoir — just being honest here — because they are often not that interesting and frequently not well written or well edited. Not all of them are like that, but too many are. When I got a two-volume set from Jack Smith I was not excited.

Surprise! “It Had to be God!” is a well written (and well edited), entertaining set of books that chronicles a 60-year ministry. As you may have guessed the author points upward to explain things that have happened in his life and ministry, humbly refusing to accept credit for his success in the ministry. Instead Smith ends most of his delightful anecdotes with the proclamation “It had to be God!” and you know he means it. In the preface he declares, “After reading this book, if you are impressed with me instead of God, I have failed to communicate my heart’s intention.”

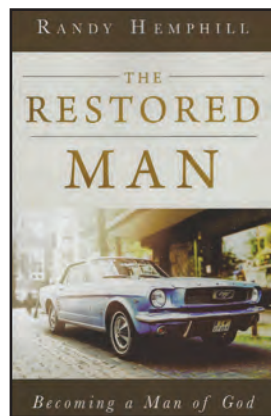


The Restored Man: Becoming a Man of God

Randy Hemphill. Birmingham, AL: Iron Stream Books, 2019. 151 pp. (Paperback).

I know I’m not a man but I had to read the book to review it. Don’t worry guys — Randy Hemphill doesn’t give away any deep, dark secrets men conceal from women. This was definitely a book for men though and a good one. Maybe a great one.

The author weaves a story of a grandfather and his grandson restoring an old car into the narrative, drawing parallels with the restoration of men as he addresses what he sees as three major imbalances in books and resources available to men: Behavior over heart, points over process and spiritual over emotional. Hemphill writes that his book is not just another checklist of behaviors men need to work on but a quest for the heart of men: “God does not want to fix you but to father you. Behavior matters but only as it flows from a restored heart.”



He had my attention — and this was just the preface! The book, or process, unfolds with frequent invitations into self-reflection interspersed with biblical stories and challenging commentary. At the end are appendices written to guide men in setting up and maintaining a Restored Man Group.

Hemphill lives in Birmingham with his family where he serves as executive director of LIFE Ministries.

Out of This World

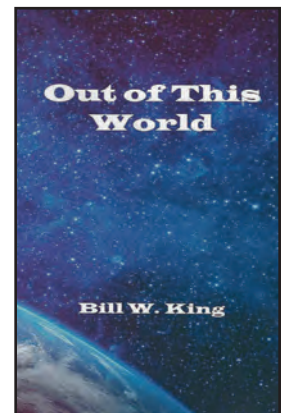
Bill W. King. Opelika, AL: Billy Bob Bo Publishing, 2017, 295 pp. (Paperback).

A young man with a well-deserved reputation for fast cars, drinking and general misbehavior is responsible for his girlfriend’s death. Realizing what he has done the young man repents, turns his life around and later feels called to preach. But it would be a long time before he would preach his first sermon.

This is Bill King’s second novel, a serious departure from his earlier book which featured the humor of his alter ego, Billy Bob Bohannon. For someone who dresses funny and acts even funnier King’s novels are a surprise. The story is riveting, the plotting masterful (there was more than one facepalm moment in reading this one because I didn’t see a plot twist coming!) and the writing and editing are well done.

The gospel story is deftly woven throughout the book providing basic theological concepts and the path to salvation for nonbelievers who might be reading it.

Besides writing books and making appearances as Billy Bob, King is a syndicated columnist and has served as associational mission strategist for the Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association since 2007.



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Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for The Alabama Baptist. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.



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‘Perfect timing’

Kerri Johnson leads Graffiti 2 Works to make eternal impact in NYC’s Bronx

By **Trennis Henderson**
WMU National Correspondent

For Carmen Rodriguez, Diega Cordova, Emily Medina and Johanna Chavez serving as WorldCrafts artisans with Graffiti 2 Works in New York City’s South Bronx has made a lasting impact in their lives.

Both the WorldCrafts fair trade

How to pray:

▶ Pray the Graffiti 2 Works ministry will bless everyone involved from those creating the goods to those who buy them.

▶ Pray the Johnsons will continue to shine God’s light in New York City’s South Bronx area. (TAB)

micro-enterprise and the Adult Learning Center, affiliated with the Christian Women’s Job Corps (CWJC) program of National Woman’s Missionary Union, are coordinated by Kerri Johnson, the founding director of Graffiti 2 Works.

As the only certified CWJC site in both the city and state of New York, Graffiti 2 Works’ efforts include literacy, English as a second language, high school equivalency training and more. The ministry is part of Graffiti 2 Community Ministries which has had a presence in the Bronx since 2005.

Johnson and her husband, Josh — originally from Princeton, Virginia — were leading missions trips for college students to serve at Graffiti 2 at the same time God was dealing with them about their personal call to missions.

“Praying this all through we fell in love with the South Bronx. We



Photos by Pam Henderson/WMU

The close-knit WorldCrafts artisan group at Graffiti 2 Works in the South Bronx includes Diega Cordova (front) and (standing, from left) Carmen Rodriguez, Graffiti 2 Works Director Kerri Johnson, Emily Medina and Johanna Chavez.

fell in love with the people here and the ministry here and the staff here,” Johnson said.

‘God sent’

She initially launched the WorldCrafts effort with very limited sewing skills and experience. As she was evaluating how the program needed to be revamped, she struck up a conversation at a neighborhood farmers market with Cordova, the mother of a student in Graffiti 2’s after school program who was a seamstress.

“Right from the start I knew God had sent me Diega. ... It was just God’s perfect timing.”

Cordova, a native of Honduras, had been living in the United States for almost 30 years. As Kerri shared her vision for a WorldCrafts artisan group Cordova quickly agreed to join the effort.

Noting that she began sewing at age 16, Cordova was able to step in, streamline the sewing process and train new artisans. Teaching her new co-workers how to sew aprons, bags, purses, lanyards and other products to market and sell through WorldCrafts, Cordova said, “I was very happy that they came and we joined to work together. It’s a wonderful program not only for us, but for the community.”



Diega Cordova (foreground) and Johanna Chavez work together as WorldCrafts artisans through Graffiti 2 Works. ‘It’s a wonderful program not only for us but for the community,’ Diega said.