



The Alabama Baptist

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Alabama's Kathy Litton first female elected SBC registration secretary

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Alabama GAs, RAs take the stage at SBC annual meeting

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Southern Baptist Convention messengers spend time in lament and prayer June 12 during closing session of annual meeting.



Photo by Phil Brown

Sexual abuse in the SBC

Southern Baptists recognize past failures, put plans in place for prevention, accountability and care

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

On the issue of sexual abuse Southern Baptists must ensure accountability for perpetrators and consolation for victims. That was the message echoed over and over from the stage, in panel discussions and in the hallways as the denomination gathered in Birmingham for the 2019 Southern Baptist

Convention (SBC) annual meeting.

“We have to take a stand for those who have become victims. We have to hold those accountable who have hurt them. We have to get this right for our churches to be a safe place for the lost,” said child sexual abuse survivor Stephanie Davis, whose story of abuse by her childhood music minister was shared in a video during the convention’s closing session June 12.

When Davis told someone what was happening to her, “God’s people failed” in two significant ways, she said.

The music minister left the church to go to semi-

nary and continued moving from church to church until as recently as last year. And no one ever talked to Davis about her trauma.

‘Give us the courage’

“Their silence screamed that I had caused everything that had happened to me,” she said.

Such stories highlight “sins of omission and commission,” said SBC President J.D. Greear, and Southern Baptists must take a different path forward.

“Give us the courage to make the changes that genuine repentance requires,”

(See ‘Time,’ page 6)

New process for disfellowship of SBC churches

As part of the effort to address churches that fail to respond well to sexual abuse allegations in their congregations, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting approved an amendment to the SBC’s bylaws to repurpose the Credentials Committee.

Standing committee

Going forward the Credentials Committee will be a nine-member standing committee consisting of the SBC’s registration secretary, Executive Committee (EC) chair, and, for three-year terms, three members nominated by the EC and four members nominated by the Committee on Nominations for approval by messengers to serve staggered terms at the committee’s outset.

The committee will be charged with determining whether churches are in friendly cooperation with the SBC according to their approach to concerns about sexual abuse, racism or homosexuality.

The issue of homosexuality was addressed in 1993.

Sexual abuse and racism are addressed in two amendments to the SBC constitution proposed June 11. They would expand the definition of cooperating churches to specify sexual abuse and (See ‘Credentials,’ page 7)

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

Alabama Baptists well represented at SBC annual meeting in Birmingham



STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Photo by Doug Rogers



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Photo by Doug Rogers



SHOCCO SPRINGS BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER

Photo by Doug Rogers



ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Photo by Doug Rogers

When the two exhibit halls at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Birmingham opened up on June 10, people from across the country flooded in.

Alabama Baptists were well represented on the exhibit floor by people and booths including exhibits for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center and Samford University. (TAB)



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

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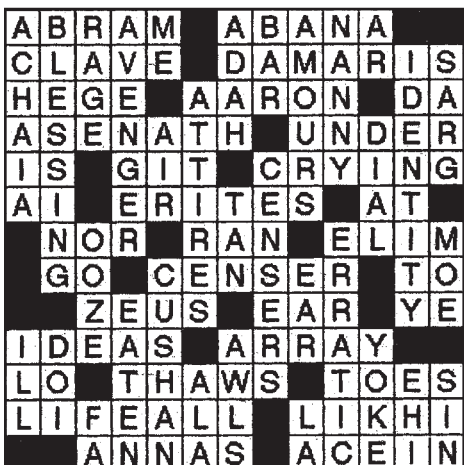


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WANT TO SEE MORE PHOTOS?

To view more photos from the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, visit www.tabonline.org/SBC19.



Samford University and Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries held panel discussions and interviews at their booths in the exhibit hall during the Pastors Conference and Southern Baptist Convention. Coverage of those meetings will come in the following weeks.

MY RASHIONALE

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

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



SBC 2019 second largest Birmingham-area convention ever

So many angles, so many topics — we could have easily produced a 32-page issue with coverage from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting like we did for the exclusive publication available at the meeting.

However, we decided to touch on the main highlights in this issue, which by the way went to press less than 48 hours after the final gavel, and then share expanded coverage on select topics in the coming weeks.

If you are interested in a topic coming out of the meeting that isn't covered be sure to let us know.

One interesting tidbit during the June 11–12 meeting in Birmingham is that one-third of SBC entities had new presidents who delivered their first reports to messengers in those roles.

The new leaders are Ronnie Floyd, Executive Committee; Paul Chitwood, International Mission Board; Adam Greenway, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Jamie Dew, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Those pointing out the new leaders forgot to mention the freshmen class of state Baptist editors covering the annual meeting. I'm sure our names were on the list and time ran short (ha) or it could have been that we don't deliver reports (most likely the reason).

While the three of us new to the editor's chair have covered SBC annual meetings for years, it was fun to experience it for the first time in our new roles — Scott Barkley, Georgia's *Christian Index*; Seth Brown, North Carolina's *Biblical Recorder*; and yours truly.

Managing the overall coverage can be a bit overwhelming because of all the moving parts.

Along with the two-day business meeting, more than 125 related activities are taking place around the city.

And of course there are hundreds of friends we must catch up with in the exhibit hall.

I'm sure you wouldn't guess I love that part — building relationships, networking and enjoying time to chat and fill up on lots of hugs.

But our job is to listen to all the reports, attempt to understand what is being said and look for what is not being said.

From there we work to condense the content into accurate and clear summaries that are manageable to consume.

The sheer amount of information tossed out during the annual meeting sessions plus all the surrounding meetings and activities can easily overload the mind. It takes a team of writers, photographers and editors to work through it all.

I'm grateful for our *TAB* team as well as our colleagues in the press room who assist in pulling all of the information together. We love the opportunity to serve you in this way and work hard to keep you appropriately and consistently informed.

Our *TAB* team also appreciated the opportunity to join the overall Alabama Baptist team that assisted in bringing #sbc19

to the state, the first time it has been here since 1941.

Roughly 1,365 of the nearly 8,200 registered messengers in attendance were from Alabama. Reports also indicated nearly 2,000 guests and more than 1,800 exhibitors registered for the event, bringing the total attendance close to 12,000.

That means the 2019 SBC annual meeting was the second largest convention of any kind in Birmingham's history.

Stay tuned for reflections coming out of this year's annual meeting including the move toward open dialogue on issues we are facing and an expanded role for women in SBC life.✝

NEW SBC OFFICERS

Congratulations to Alabama Baptist Kathy Litton being elected SBC registration secretary — the first female in the role



Newly elected SBC officers are (left to right): John Yeats, executive director of Missouri Baptist Convention, recording secretary; Marshal Ausberry, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, Fairfax Station, Virginia, first vice president; J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, president for a second one-year term; Alabama Baptist Kathy Litton, director of planter spouse development for the North American Mission Board, registration secretary; and Noe Garcia, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, second vice president.

BP photo

Your Voice



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

SBC's one ambition must be to seek and save lost

By **J.D. Greear**

President, Southern Baptist Convention

The Christian life is like a well — you don't get the best water from the well by widening the circumference of the well but by going deeper into it. Churches that grow wide without growing deep are not really as wide as they think.

Heaven counts converts not disciples. Matured disciples multiply. Growing deep with God leads to evangelistic width every single time since going deep with Jesus means becoming a disciple-maker.

The best riches of the Christian life come not by expanding your knowledge but by going deeper in the gospel.

In Romans 1, Paul refers to the gospel as the very power of God (Rom. 1:16). He doesn't say the gospel connects us to God's power but the gospel is itself God's power.

Romans, a letter Paul wrote to Christians, is divided into two sections. The first 11 chapters are the Apostle Paul's exploration of the depths of gospel doctrine; the second section is his application for practical living.

He joins these two sections with a single word: therefore.

"Therefore ... in light of all you've learned about the mercies of God, I beseech you to offer your body as a living sacrifice. By renewing your mind in the mercies of God you'll be transformed into the kind of person who obeys God from the heart" (Rom. 12:1-2).



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The gospel loomed so large for Paul it was all he talked about. This is what it means for the gospel to be above all. It's of first importance. It's the only thing we should be known for — when people think about and talk about us, they should think and talk about the gospel.

Politics are important but not as important as the gospel and people's souls. Our traditions and preferences are important but not as important as reaching the next generation. Our institutions are important but the mission is above all. The gospel is more important than any programs, preferences, political leaning or competing priority.

It's not that we shouldn't discuss these things and how we arrive at our conclusions, just that where

Scripture does not draw a direct line between a biblical conviction and a political conclusion neither should we. We have a gospel too great and a mission too urgent to let anything secondary stand in our way.

If we amen or applaud that then we have to review our sermons, our Facebook posts and our Twitter feeds and ask: Am I allowing issues of secondary importance to hinder me from talking about issues of first importance?

Jesus' life was driven by one ambition — to seek and save the lost. So must ours be.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Adapted from J.D. Greear's presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention on June 11, 2019.

Sixty-three percent of our new churches planted in the last year were planted by people of color. #SBC19
Pastor Dean Inserra
City Church
Tallahassee, Fla.

I am a survivor of sexual abuse in the SBC and on that lived experience I call all Southern Baptists to take action for the church. Today, #SBC19, vote accordingly. To all believers, watch and pray. #alofus

Susan Codone
SBC panelist

Still chewing on this word from @plattdavid this morning: "Meekness endures challenges in this world with confident hope in the world to come." #SBC19

Trevin Wax
Director of Bibles & reference, LifeWay

God is able to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Dominique DuPar
National Acteens panelist
La Puente, California

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“May this world know the SBC stands against all forms of sexual abuse.”

RONNIE FLOYD

President, SBC Executive Committee

In our own context and community, no matter our age, situation or culture, we are to be relentless in our pursuit of Christ.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin
Executive director
National WMU

3 things for #SBC19 ...

1. We can disagree and still be unified.
2. We can disagree and still be gracious.
3. We can disagree and still be hopeful.

Pastor Ronnie Parrott
Christ Community Church
Huntersville, N.C.

Great start to SBC! Because of generous donors in our convention,

President J.D. Greear presented a check for \$250,000 to Mayor Randall Woodfin to support Birmingham City School teachers. We love Birmingham! I am honored to serve here among great Southern Baptists.

Chris Crain
Executive director
Birmingham Metro
Baptist Association

The headquarters of the SBC is not Nashville, Richmond or Atlanta. The HQ of the SBC is the 45k plus local churches. Our heroes are pastors. Professors are needed and presidents of entities essential but the office of pastor is the highest call in the land. #SBC #SBCPC19

Malachi O'Brien
Former VP of SBC

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal ... but sometimes on earth, there is pain that is lifelong. We need to be okay with the tension that everything is not healed or restored on earth ... but God is absolutely present and at work.

Katherine Wolf
SBC Pastors Conference

Once again I'm encouraged by how many younger faces are attending the SBC annual meeting. They are excited about the trajectory towards international missions, Send City church planting and tangible expressions of love through Send Relief. The future is looking great!

Pastor Clay Smith
FBC Matthews
Charlotte, N.C.



SBOM photo

Thankful spirit

Thank you, Alabama Baptists, for your ministry of hospitality in welcoming our fellow Southern Baptists to my hometown of Birmingham during the SBC annual meeting.

Thanks especially to those who participated in Crossover Birmingham, whether sharing Christ and ministering in neighborhoods or praying that the effort would result in souls being saved — and they were.

This SBC meeting was highly consequential.

For those who came to know Christ as Savior and Lord, the impact will be forever, through the gift of eternal life.

Many decisions also were made that are typical of each year's gathering but are nonetheless crucial matters.

Messengers accepted carefully crafted recommendations that will endure well into the future, encouraging Southern Baptists to become more effective ministers to the hurting, making our churches safer places and ensuring that all feel welcome at any congregation in the SBC family.

I am most thankful to God who has put us into right relationship with Himself through Jesus Christ and into a familial relationship with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

As always: Thank you for supporting the Cooperative Program, which makes possible missions and ministries as we serve Him together.

— Rick Lance

From the *Twitterverse*

@Wade_Burleson

Two instantly observable differences in this SBC Pastor's Conference. First, the professionalism of the worship teams, original videos, and speakers is next level superb. Second, I've never seen such free expressions of worship among Southern Baptists. #Beautiful #SBCPC19 #SBC19

@ashlynportero

There is no stronger example of female leadership than a sexual abuse survivor proclaiming Christ's victory over evil and calling the Church to action. Thank you @R_Denhollander, @BethMooreLPM, @SusanCodone. #SBC19 @ERLC

@ricky_stark

"You may say, 'Pastor, I'm not a racist!' But are you indifferent? The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference." —@EdLitton #SBC19 #SBCPC19

@haines_matt

At #SBCPC19 @plattdavid is faithfully modeling the very beatitude he is expositing and delivering a prophetic message that our convention needs to hear — calmly and joyfully trust in our Judge.

@davemiller7

I have been attending SBC Conventions and Pastors Conferences since 1979 ... yeah that one. @EdLitton preached a sermon that stands among the best. Bold. Prophetic. Biblical. Direct. #SBCPC19

@alldredgejess

Speaking of multi-generational this year there are three generations of my family present representing three churches at this year's #SBC19

@SBCthisWeek

A SBC that doesn't have a place for @BethMooreLPM, doesn't have

a place for a lot of people. To suggest that the problem we have is that women are speaking too much is crazy to me. — @drmoore #SBC19

@PaulMCooper

"You can't have justice without reconciliation. Justice without reconciliation is what the Bible calls hell." — @dhati #SBCPC19

@DrRobertSmithJr

"The Beatitudes are oversized clothing. We don't fit them yet. We are growing up into them ... one day in glory we will fit in them and they will fit us." @DrRobertSmithJr #SBCPC19

@BriantheLion

It's pretty unanimous that @jdgrear is killing it right now, right? Attacking that SBC idol of politics. We cannot allow politics to take a higher precedent than the gospel. #sbc19

Caring Well report, resolutions address church sexual abuse

A report from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Sexual Abuse Advisory Group calls sexual abuse in the SBC “an epidemic powered by a culture of our making” and one that will take “years of purposeful work” to fight.

The advisory group, commissioned by SBC President J.D. Greear following his election in 2018, was tasked with considering how Southern Baptists at every level can respond swiftly

and compassionately to incidences of abuse and foster safe environments within churches and institutions.

The resulting 52-page report, “Caring Well,” provides research into the prevalence of abuse, its effects on survivors and research-based ways to respond when abuse occurs.

The report also includes the stories of survivors of abuse in SBC churches and ways churches can protect the vulnerable in their congregations.

Other actions

Other actions related to church sexual abuse that took place at the 2019 SBC annual meeting in Birmingham include:

► Adopting a proposed SBC constitutional amendment to expand the definition of a cooperat-

ing church regarding sexual abuse. As an amendment requires adoption at two consecutive conventions, the amendment will be presented again at the 2020 annual meeting.

► Repurposing the SBC Credentials Committee (see story, page 1) to field claims against churches in regard to sexual abuse, discrimination based on ethnicity and matters such as homosexuality that would

call their “friendly cooperation” into question. A constitutional amend-

ment on ethnicity will be presented for its second vote in 2020.

► Adopting Resolution No. 2: On the Evil of Sexual Abuse, which calls for condemnation of the sin of sexual abuse, reporting to civil authorities when abuse happens and decisive action “to intervene on behalf of the abused” and “to exercise appropriate church discipline upon abusers.”

► Adopting Resolution No. 3: On Local Church Autonomy and Accountability, which affirms local church autonomy while also “repudiat(ing) any who seek to use the cherished doctrine of local church autonomy as a means of hiding the sins of ministers and others in the church who abuse, sexually or otherwise, ‘the little ones’ of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (TAB)

The full ‘Caring Well’ report of the Sexual Abuse Advisory Group is available at www.caringwell.com/report.

For the Caring Well challenge, visit www.caringwell.com.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Messengers pray for sexual abuse survivors and past failures to protect the vulnerable during a time of lament and repentance in the June 12 afternoon session of the SBC annual meeting.

Time to take action

Abuse prevention, care for victims is gospel issue

(continued from page 1)

Greear prayed during a time of lament at the beginning of the closing session. “Forgive us of our negligence, our fear, greed, pride, selfishness — any motive that has caused us to be complacent not compassionate ... [to] so many in our communities who have experienced abuse.”

Addressing more than 8,000 messengers to the SBC, Greear said “the failures of the way of man brought us to the place we are as a denomination on this issue of abuse” and only a movement of God can change the trajectory.

“It’s not just policy. It’s not just statements and changes. It’s the spirit of God working in us,” Greear said.

SBC churches have failed in a number of ways, he



Photo by Tracy Riggs

‘Forgive us of ... any motive that has caused us to be complacent not compassionate,’ prays SBC President J.D. Greear.

added, including failing to train leaders at the congregational and associational level, failing to care for survivors and failing to report abuse to civil authorities.

“SBC polity has never

precluded accountability,” he said. “Some actions are not only immoral they are illegal. Someone who has abused another should never be in [a position] where they could do that again and if they are truly repentant they will understand that.”

Urgent matter

In both his presidential address to the convention June 11 and in the report to the convention on next steps, Greear addressed complaints that the issue of sexual abuse is a distraction. Prevention of abuse and care for the abused is a gospel issue, he emphasized.

“Why would the lost trust us with the message of salvation if they cannot trust us with the safety of the vulnerable? ... Didn’t Jesus leave the 99 to go after the

“ It’s not just policy. It’s not just statements and changes. It’s the spirit of God working in us. ”

J. D. GREAR
Southern Baptist Convention president

one? Even one victim is one too many.”

Greear outlined eight “action steps” the SBC needs to take beginning with the “right heart” and including training, resources and ministry screening processes.

New assignment

Another step is the “right governing documents,” he said. Governing documents will be one of the assignments for the newly created standing Credentials Committee (see story, page 1).

Greear also introduced the Caring Well challenge, an educational resource to help churches increase awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and improve care practices for victims and survivors.

Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said SBC entities, seminaries and churches have committed to the Caring Well challenge, which was intro-

duced at the SBC meeting.

Messengers were provided free materials to get started and Moore said more than 100 churches signed up June 12.

There’s no excuse for a church of any size not to participate, Greear said.

“You don’t have room not to include this in your calendar. The impact of this moment on our gospel witness is too critical for you

to minimize, to postpone or to ignore this,” he said.

Greear said the Sexual Abuse Advisory Group

remains committed to providing SBC churches with resources to walk through the process of education.

‘Shape our future’

“We cannot change our past but we can shape our future,” Greear said. “Jesus said if you love me feed my sheep. This is the moment for us to love our Savior and serve His children.” ✝

For more information on SBC news related to church sexual abuse, visit tabonline.org/church-sexual-abuse.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

‘The SBC has reached its age of accountability,’ Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore said in his entity report to the SBC. ‘The vital question before us is what will we do next?’

Credentials Committee now charged with handling concerns

(continued from page 1) racism as grounds for declaring a church as “not in friendly cooperation” if adopted by messengers to the 2020 SBC in Orlando.

The committee will be tasked with reviewing information when an issue arises during the SBC annual meeting regarding whether a church is in cooperation with the convention.

Procedures

The Credentials Committee shall either (a) consider the question and, when prepared, make a recommendation to the EC or (b) submit a rec-

ommendation to the convention at the earliest opportunity, which will be immediately considered. One representative of the church and one representative of the Credentials Committee shall be permitted to speak to the question, subject to the normal rules of debate.

If an issue with a church arises between annual meetings the committee will review the information and submit a report to the EC when a church is deemed not in cooperation. The EC, at its next meeting, shall consider the report to make a determination. The decision can be appealed to the

convention at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting, when the matter will be considered as part of miscellaneous business on the first day.

Disfellowshipped churches who wish to be reconsidered for reinstatement of fellowship would do so through the Credentials Committee.

A Registration Committee, appointed by the SBC president, will take the lead in registering messengers to the SBC annual meeting, a role previously handled by the Credentials Committee. (BP, TAB)



Photo by Phil Brown

Trillia Newbell, abuse survivor, author and Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission director of community outreach, prays Southern Baptists will boldly ‘speak the truth in love’ on the issue of abuse.

Terry Long (center), associational missions director for Choctaw Baptist Association and South Alabama strategist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, prays over a couple with his team during Crossover Birmingham on June 8.

‘Unbelievable, enthusiastic, passionate’



Photo by Phil Brown

Jesus proclaimed across Birmingham area by Baptists during Crossover visitation

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Terry Long says it was two flat tires that led to one big miracle June 8 during Crossover Birmingham.

Long, who serves as associational missions director for Choctaw Baptist Association, and Roy and Becky Adkins, members of First Baptist Church, Oak Grove, in Adger, had just knocked on their second door and gotten no answer when they noticed a car on the shoulder of the road at the end of the driveway.

Bob and his wife, Jean, both in their mid 70s, were just finishing up changing two tires on their daughter’s car. As the team began to talk with them both were ready to receive Christ and they prayed together.

“It’s no accident that you were here,” Long told them and asked them what they thought about what

had just happened in their lives.

Bob exclaimed, “I think I’m going to heaven now.”

Long told him he could know for sure he was. His wife, Jean, said she was sure she was too.

‘God appointment’

“It was a real God appointment,” said Long, who also serves as South Alabama strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). “We had such a sweet conversation with them.”

His team had four of those conversations that day.

Across the city teams saw similar stories happen as they participated in door-to-door visits as part of Crossover, an outreach event held annually in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting host city. Volunteers gathered from across the state and nation to be involved, some who couldn’t stay for

the SBC meeting but wanted to be a part of reaching Birmingham with the gospel.

Rodney Parker, minister to students at The Baptist Church at McAdory, said it was “great to see youth involved in sharing the gospel with others” during Crossover.

Scouter Kellum, who serves in student ministry with the SBOM and at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, agreed. One of his students, Joseph Higbee, had asked to participate in Crossover for his 14th birthday so June 8 his whole family drove up for the day.

“His heart is just on fire for the Lord,” Kellum said, noting since Higbee gave his life to Christ last summer, he has spent hours reading the Bible, organized his school’s See You at the Pole and a Bible study group and is constantly looking for other ways to share his faith.

“It’s been amazing to watch,” Kellum said.

During the North American Mission Board (NAMB) report to the Southern Baptist Convention on June 11, Johnny Hunt, NAMB’s senior vice president of evangelism and leadership, said volunteers knocked on more than 10,409 doors.

The gospel was shared 1,817 times during Crossover, resulting in a reported 364 salvations, he noted.

‘Rejoice and celebrate’

Teams fanned out in neighborhoods around eight Birmingham-area hub churches — First, Oak Grove; First Baptist Church, Mount Olive; The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham; First Baptist Church, Pelham; First Baptist Church, Moody; and First Baptist Church, Trussville.

“All day long Crossover was an unbelievable, enthusiastic, passionate event,” said Sammy Gilbreath, SBOM director of evangelism.

“Thunderstorms didn’t hurt the effort. There were contacts made, Bibles left, people who accepted Christ and we’re celebrating every single one.”

David Hobson, associational mission strategist for Mud Creek Baptist Association, believes Crossover will be part of a time of “spiritual transformation” for the association.


“We rejoice and celebrate the decisions made during this event and look forward to seeing even more disciples made as a result because even just one decision and changed life has made the entire time of preparation and execution worth it,” Hobson said. 



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Crossover includes medical/dental clinic

Sixth Avenue Baptist, Birmingham, served as the host site for a free medical and dental clinic for the community.

“We maxed out the dental and medical clinics,” said Sammy Gilbreath, SBOM director of evangelism, noting the site was supposed to close at 4 p.m. but dentists worked into the evening with people already registered.

People met Jesus at the clinic too — one while sitting in the dental chair, led to faith by the dentist. (TAB)

Kingdom Character

Pastors Conference focuses on Beatitudes, renewed commitment for living out the gospel

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Danny Wood knew from the beginning he wanted the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference (PC) in Birmingham to tell a story — a story of what it looks like for pastors and other Christians to lean into who the word of God says they should be.

So over the many months leading up to the June 9–10 conference, that’s what Wood, PC president and pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, put together with the help of the Shades Mountain staff — messages, music, videos, stories and even a book about living out the Kingdom character found in the Beatitudes.

“My hope is that it would give us a renewed commitment to living out the gospel, that we would be committed to seeing our lives transformed with the character of Christ,” Wood said in the days leading up to the conference. “We are seeing Satan getting more and more active — his desire is to see pastors fail. We need to finish strong and cross the finish line, and to do that we’ve got to maintain Kingdom character so we can live out the gospel and reach this world for Christ.”

Now that the conference is over, he said he prays the several thousand people who attended walked away transformed.

“The speakers to me could not have done a better job; they were so on point,” Wood said, noting that he invited speakers who “couldn’t just preach about it but were living out the Beatitudes.”

Hearing from Alabamians

Gripping stories and messages from two Alabama Baptist preachers and a couple with Alabama roots opened the conference June 9.

“God has called us to be counter-cultural, peculiar, unique, different,



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The choir from Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, was joined by members of Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Sunday night to lead worship at the Pastors Conference. Members of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham, sang with the Shades Mountain Baptist choir Monday night.

so we stand out and face the world with a gospel that is not adulterated or mixed,” said Robert Smith Jr., the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Samford University’s Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, who opened with an overview of the Beatitudes.

Over the rest of the conference other speakers focused on individual Beatitudes.

Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church, Mobile, closed the first night with Matthew 5:4, “Blessed are those who mourn,” sharing the story of losing his wife, Tammy, in a

tragic car accident.

In between the two preachers, Jay and Katherine Wolf — founder of Hope Heals and son and daughter-in-law of Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery — shared the story of the massive brain stem stroke that left Katherine disabled at 26 years old.

“Not many of you have had a brain stem stroke, but I guarantee you’ve had hard stuff in your story,” said Katherine, who along with Jay

spoke on “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3).

Jay Wolf said the poverty of spirit believers have comes from giving what they have away.

‘You’ve been given hope’

“We get to go back to these places of our wounding and not only find healing for ourselves but other people too,” he said. “You’ve been given hope not so that you can be hopeful ... but so you can give it away.”

The next morning, David Platt, pastor of the Washington, D.C.-area McLean Bible Church and former pastor of The Church at Brook

Hills, Birmingham, talked about meekness — something he said he had learned a lot about in the week leading up to the conference. On June 2 at his church, he had stepped off stage after the Lord’s Supper and been told President Donald Trump was stopping by and wanted the church to pray with Him.

“As a result of that prayer and that letter (of explanation) on Sunday night I would find myself at the center of a social media firestorm,” he said. “Why do I share this? I am guessing I’m not the only pastor in this room who is coming into the conference after a hard week.”

He then encouraged pastors and Christians to both act and react in meekness, calmly and joyfully trusting God, and he prayed for pastors who were walking through tough days in their life and ministry.

Over the rest of the conference six other speakers continued the theme Kingdom Character through the Beatitudes. The event also included two roundtable discussions, one on racial reconciliation and one on persecution.

Coverage of individual speakers’ messages will be published in upcoming issues of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Wood said he was “thrilled” about how the conference went.

“The Lord was lifted up, and hopefully people were challenged and encouraged,” he said. 🙏

To watch the full sermons, visit sbpc.net.



DANNY WOOD



Volunteers from Shades Mountain Baptist Church, where SBC Pastors Conference president Danny Wood is pastor, serve during the conference by handing out programs and answering questions.

Instagram photo from Shades Mountain Baptist Church

‘Actively, relentlessly pursue Him’

WMU hosts international missions experience for annual meeting, 131-year celebration

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Sweet home, Alabama, where the skies are so blue. Sweet home, Alabama, Lord, I’m coming home pursuing you.”

With a bit of creativity National Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) president Linda Cooper introduced the theme “Pursue” as she welcomed more than 1,000 participants to WMU’s 2019 Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting on June 9 at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham.

“While we are together I pray you will experience a time of renewal and encour-

agement ... reuniting with your WMU family members,” Cooper said. “God is doing amazing things throughout the world and you are a big part of it.”

The meeting sessions included music, creative dance, missions challenges, personal testimonies and times of prayer.

Ruth Ripken, who along with her husband, Nik, spent 35 years serving in countries where persecution of Christians was common, led the WMU tradition of praying for missionaries on their birthdays.

Nik Ripken, author of two books on the global persecuted church and founder



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The Native Praise Choir sings in Native American languages during the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting held at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, on June 9.

of Nik Ripken Ministries, closed the meeting with a challenge to the Church.

“Where the Church exists,

He expects and commands us to pursue others for Him just as He has pursued us.

“Everywhere we see thou-

sands of young men and women giving their lives in wars around the world are places where the Church has failed to take the gospel for 2,000 years,” Ripken said.

Matthew 28 tells us to go, he said, but fear is Satan’s No. 1 tool.

“In the midst of fear we can choose to trust and we can choose obedience to our Savior,” he said.

Those attending the WMU meeting also heard from two couples serving on the field.

Philip and Jummai Nache, North American Mission Board church planters in Minneapolis, shared about their ministry. They serve in an area where hundreds of

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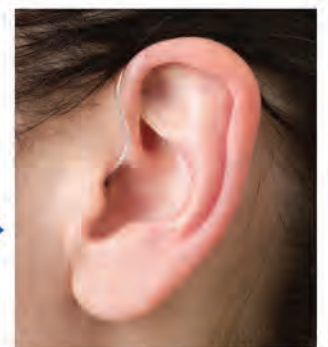
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Africans come each year for education and work opportunities.

Philip, a third generation Christian in his home country of Nigeria, came to the U.S. for seminary but God had other plans. Now the Naches help prepare believers to return to their home countries to start churches and share the gospel, Philip Nache said.

‘Boldly proclaim’

Hun and Eunjoo Sol, International Mission Board representatives in East Asia since 2012 whose work includes training for seminary students and outreach to college students, asked the group for prayer.

“Without your prayer and support we can’t do anything,” Hun Sol said. “Keep praying for us to share the gospel and make disciples and make small groups and church planters and build new leadership in local churches.”

Eunjoo Sol added, “Pray for us to open the door of

evangelism ... to boldly proclaim the gospel.”

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of National WMU, encouraged believers to live “on call as Christians each and every day.”

“If you want to pursue God pray for His power. If you want to pursue God live for His purposes. May we pray for His power. May we live for His purpose. May it be so,” she said.

National Acteens panelists and WMU president emeriti also took the stage to share their testimonies, echoing Wisdom-Martin’s call to daily be on mission.

Grace Cain, national Acteens panelist from Pineville, Louisiana, said in the midst of the many deci-

sions she has to make as a high school student she has learned to test her choices against what the Bible says.

“Does it allow me to be holy? Does it allow me to share the gospel? As I am on

this quest for answers I am able to get closer to God’s wisdom and peace ... chasing after a deeper knowledge of God so I can live a life that pleases Him,” Cain said.

Acteens panelist Ashley Fan of Blacksburg, Virginia, said she was the first in her family born in the U.S.

One of the first people to show kindness to her family when they arrived in this country was a Christian and as a result her family has become believers.

“God really does pursue us individually,” Fan said.



Photo by Tracy Riggs
Kaipookalani ‘Titah’ Castill (back) teaches the hula at the WMU building during the 131-year celebration June 10.

Also during the meeting David George, president of the WMU Foundation, presented the Dellanna West O’Brien Award for Women’s Leadership Development to Ruby Fulbright, retired executive director of North Carolina WMU.

In the only business conducted during the meeting Cooper, who has served as WMU president since 2015, was re-elected president and Shirley McDonald was elected recording secretary.

During Cooper’s presidential address she reminded participants of what she called “the common denominator” in Scripture.

Missions activities

“God wants us to actively, relentlessly pursue Him as He does us. We cannot expect others to see Christ in us if we are not actively following, always pursuing Him,” Cooper said. “Our missionaries and many of you are doing just that — passing it on to others as you pursue Him.”

On June 10 WMU celebrated 131 years of missions with 131 missions activities throughout the day conducted at their headquarters in Birmingham.

Activities appealed to all ages and to all the senses. Participants could prepare a cup of tea and hear about early missions educator Polly Webb. Royal Ambassador (RA) leaders shared about RAs while teaching attendees how to make grilled banana boats. Another treat was using Lottie Moon’s cookie recipe, which was one of the ways she reached out to families in Chinese communities.

Dramatic presentations throughout the day provided insight into figures from WMU history.

The Native Praise Choir sang during lunch. The group has 59 members representing 18 Native American tribes. They formed in 1999 and present songs in languages of the Five Tribes of Oklahoma. 🇺🇸

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3 stories you should know



Photo by Marc Ira Hooks

Ten-year-old Zak McCullar from First Baptist Church, Carbon Hill, has become popular among Baptists after his appearance at Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meetings two years in a row. During the June 2019 meeting in Birmingham, Executive Committee President Ronnie Floyd invited Zak to join him on the stage prior to messengers voting to add a Children's Ministry Day to the SBC calendar the third Sunday in July through 2023. 'Zak, think about it ... it was your heart and your vision that did that,' Floyd said, referring to Zak's 2018 introduction of the motion to create the day.

SBC messengers adopt \$196.5 million budget

During the Executive Committee (EC) report messengers approved a 2019–2020 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget of \$196,500,000 and a 2019–2020 EC and SBC Operating Budget of \$7,700,000.

Messengers also approved appointing an ad hoc committee to develop and provide more comprehensive trustee training and adding language to the organization manual that states:

"Entity administrators should reinforce with their trustees the principle that entity trustees are to represent the interests of the entire convention as well as those of the entity."

Resolutions in appreciation of Chuck Kelley and Thom Rainer also were adopted and presented during the EC report. (TAB)

LifeWay Stores can't pay for themselves

LifeWay Christian Resources' Lacting CEO Brad Waggoner shared with messengers the organization's financial realities and difficult decision to close the LifeWay Christian Stores retail chain.

"At the close of 2018, LifeWay Stores had more than \$19 million in losses for the year," Waggoner reported, noting the trend started downward in 2014.

"Over the past five years the total retail losses we've covered from revenue-generating ministry channels reached nearly \$50 million."

The prediction was for nearly \$60 million in losses by 2021 and that led to what Waggoner called one of the most difficult decisions in LifeWay's 128-year history.

Trying to cover the losses became "unreasonable, irresponsible and unsustainable," Waggoner said. (TAB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

IMB report offers encouraging statistics on international missions



Every church, no matter its size, has a role to play in sending the gospel to the nations.

That was the message International Mission Board (IMB) President Paul Chitwood shared with messengers in his IMB report June 11 during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Birmingham.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

"We have 174 years working together to get the gospel to the nations," he said. "We are working so that people from around the world will be joining us at the throne."

Chitwood gave examples of ways IMB missionaries and ministries — supported by Southern Baptists — are impacting the world.

► IMB's Bible translation project for southeast Asia is halfway to being fully funded.

► Missionaries in Europe have seen the most fruitful three years in the last three decades.

► Because of the devastating cyclones that have hit unreached people groups missionaries who were once shut out of certain countries have been allowed in to help with relief work.

► In South Asia a church was burned to the ground by a woman against Christianity. Soon after the woman asked for prayer because someone in her family was diagnosed with cancer. God healed the family member and she became a believer, even donating land to build a new church building.

"Southern Baptists alone can't lead everyone to Christ," Chitwood said. "The only way God will accomplish a great multitude from every nation standing before His throne is if people go ahead sharing what they have heard from us." (Jessica Ingram)

Alabamians elected to serve on Southern Baptist Convention boards, committees



On June 11, at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Birmingham, seven Alabamians were elected to serve on SBC boards and committees including the SBC Executive Com-

mittee, GuideStone Financial Resources, International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Gateway Seminary.

The nominees — selected by the 2019 SBC Committee on Nominations — were announced in mid-April.

Alabamians elected to serve are:

► **Executive Committee** — Paul S. Hicks, pastor of Good Shepherd Community Church, Hayden, nominated for a second term

► **GuideStone Financial Resources** — J. Rodney Bledsoe, member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, and chief development officer at The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, term expiring in 2023

► **International Mission Board** — James H. (Jim) Cooley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Birmingham; and Charlotte B. Madison, member of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, terms expiring in 2023

► **North American Mission Board** — Erin S. Bounds, member of North Valley Baptist Church, Odenville, nominated for a second term

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary** — Harry Edward (Ed) Litton Jr., pastor of

18 of 23 motions referred

Three motions proposed by Alabama Baptists; five motions ruled out of order

► **Referred to all SBC entities:**
Requesting each entity report on their efforts to address abuse.

► **Executive Committee:**

- Consider modernizing the nomination process and technology for the SBC's boards and committees.
- Comprehensive report be given at the 2020 annual meeting on the progress of 12 recommendations adopted by the SBC in 2011 for expanding ethnic participation.
- Amend the SBC's business and financial plan to strengthen the fiscal accountability of the entities.
- Update Baptist Faith & Message (BF&M) 2000 to include a 19th statement: "God will restore National Israel like Romans 11 says and bring about a reunion with her neighbors in the Middle East."
- Allow senior pastors to vote for SBC officers electronically.
- Amend BF&M 2000 Article 6 to state, "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office and function of the pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."



Photo by Matt Miller/BP

A motion by Morgan Bush of Morningside Baptist Church, Huntsville, was ruled out of order because it was in the nature of a resolution. His motion requested churches consider the impact of pornography and take 'vigorous action to meet and defeat the effect of pornography.'

- Create an official statement regarding the social gospel.
- A day of special emphasis and prayer for the persecuted church.
- George Liele Evangelism, Church Planting, and Missions Day.
- Help churches with funding for the investigation of sexual abuse.

- **Committee on Order of Business:**
 - Honor BF&M 2000, conservative resurgence, its leaders at 2020 SBC.
- **ERLC:**
 - A motion by David Haynes of First Baptist Church, Center Point, requesting the study of birth control's effect on a conceived child.

- Provide trauma counseling for survivors of abuse.
- Equip churches to minister to groups promoting sexual immorality of various types and prepare for "attacks on the pulpit."

► **NAMB:**

- A motion by David Hobson of Mud Creek Association to fund second staff member for bivocational and/or small churches.

► **LifeWay:**

- Include a gospel presentation in each children's student guide.

► **Southwestern Seminary:**

- Lawful recovery of school property that may have been removed from president's home.

► **Ruled out of order:**

- Full text of IMB's May 29, 2019, Sexual Abuse Examination.
- Recording secretary to be non-voting member of SBC EC.
- ERLC to study how to promote abolition of human abortion.
- Council of Seminary Presidents make the most recent BF&M the only doctrinal statement faculty is required to sign. (TAB, BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Redemption Church, Saraland, term expiring in 2022

► **Gateway Seminary** — Daniel Atkins, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, term expiring in 2024. (TAB)

North American Mission Board report highlights 'Who's Your One?' initiative

If 10 percent of church attenders in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) decided to pray for and see one person come to Christ over the next year, Southern Baptists would record the highest number of baptisms in the history of the SBC.

Johnny Hunt shared that statistic during the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) presentation at the SBC's annual meeting to underscore the importance of the "Who's Your One?" evangelism initiative. Hunt serves as senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at NAMB.

Who's Your One headlined NAMB's time on stage June 11 during the annual meeting of the SBC in Birmingham. (BP)

Rummage delivers convention sermon, declares Calvary 'hill worth proclaiming'



Oklahoma pastor Stephen Rummage proclaimed the power and promises Christians have in Jesus Christ "because of the cross" in the convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 12.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Every person "is on one side of the cross or the other — the lost side or the saved side," Rummage emphasized.

"If you are on the lost side God loves you and wants to save you," said Rummage, pastor of Quail Springs Baptist Church, Oklahoma City. "If you are on the saved side God has given you a sacred trust and message to proclaim."

Underscoring the apostle Paul's teaching in Colossians 2, Rummage highlighted what God accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Rummage also emphasized standing for the matters of highest importance.

"For Jesus, Calvary was a hill worth dying on. For us, it is a hill worth living on. It is a hill worth proclaiming," he said. (BP)

News near you

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church, New Brockton**, will host a Family Fun Day on June 22 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in New Brockton Memorial Park. Nathan Sims is pastor. ► **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host the Bryan Drake Show on June 27 at 6:30 p.m. Danny Wiggins is pastor.

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Mount Signal Baptist Church, Chelsea**, will host a community revival service June 27 at 7 p.m. Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, will be the guest speaker. Leonard Irvin is pastor. ☠



Photo by Marc Ira Hooks

North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell (left), informs Mike Perrigin, a bivocational pastor at Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Gordo, and his wife, Kim, the June mortgage payment they made would be their last. The announcement that a donor had paid off their home was made at the June 10 NAMB Send Luncheon in Birmingham.

NAMB honors Alabama pastors during Send Luncheon

Alabama Baptists were among those highlighted as the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send Luncheon celebrated the complex and rewarding journey of life in ministry.

During the June 10 lunch in Birmingham, NAMB President Kevin Ezell introduced Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and Rusty Sowell, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, who responded to the March 3 tornado that took 23 lives. Sowell led his congrega-

tion to step up in ways that each volunteer was uniquely qualified to serve.

"It was a tremendous effort on everyone's part to get to the epicenter and come together to serve the families and churches," Sowell said.

"What a tremendous witness it was to see all the people from the faith community come together to provide relief."

Out of gratitude for Sowell's leadership Ezell gifted him and his wife with a scholarship to a Timothy+Barnabas retreat in Palm



Photo by Doug Rogers

Springs, California, and announced that private donors were donating \$20,000 toward the church's efforts to build a permanent memorial to those who died.

Ezell also introduced Mike Perrigin, bivocational pastor of Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Fayette. He and his wife, Kim, are parents to two special-needs children, and while that assignment is challenging the couple is quick to assert parenting their children is one of their greatest joys. After the couple shared their story Ezell told them

the June payment they made on their mortgage was their last payment, as generous donors had stepped up to pay off the remaining balance.

John Killian, associational missions director for Fayette Association, said, "Mike is a good man. They are a good family, a humble family."

"They've never been a celebrity at any point in their lives but today they were at the top, standing up there being honored by thousands." (BP, TAB)

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BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Enterprise Baptist Church, Ashford, Alabama, is accepting applications for a bivocational pastor. We are seeking a pastor with a strong passion and sincere calling to lead all ages in worship, disciple and mentor new Christians and advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. Email to: ebcashfordal.com.

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 resumés to: First Baptist Sylvan Springs, 5692 Birmingham Road, Sylvan Springs, AL 35118, ATTN: 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 resumé to: youthsearch@mycbbc.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 resumés to: lorettamcconnell@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

Piedmont First Baptist Church

is seeking a part-time children's director for birth through grade 5. Interested individuals may submit resumés to the church address: 105 North Main Street, Piedmont, AL 36272 or piedmontfbc.org. Job description available upon request.

OTHER POSITIONS

PIANIST

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

HOUSEPARENT

If you want to make a significant difference in the lives of at-risk youth, the Baldwin County Sheriff's Boys Ranch is seeking a mission-minded, married couple for a relief houseparent, live-in position. Benefits include housing, salary, insurance and paid vacation. Inquire at 251-989-6392. Apply to join our team at <https://boysandgirlsranched.org/employment.html>.

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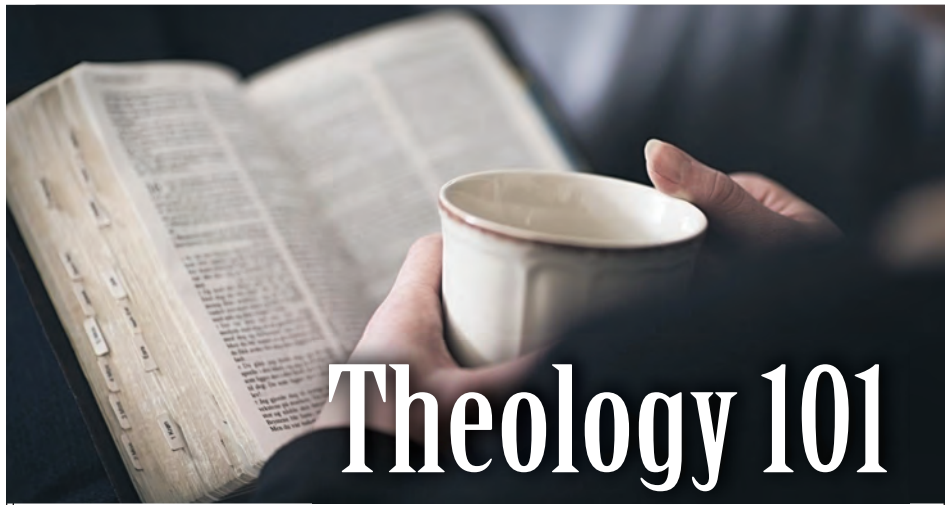
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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Fatherhood of God

Prototype for Human Fathers

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

The fact that Christ taught His followers to think of God as their Father in heaven became pervasive with early Christians. This is evident from the fact that within the first four verses of 16 of the New Testament epistles God is referred to as Father.

When Jesus asked Mary Magdalene to stop clinging to Him, He explained this request with the words, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father” (John 20:17). Part of the legacy Christ left to His followers — then and now — is the privilege of understanding God in the intimate term of Heavenly Father.

In Ephesians 3:14–15 we read of God the Father as the one of whom “the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.”

Family provider

In order to maintain the play on words found in the Greek text of these verses, many have suggested the sense could be rendered as “the Father from whom all fatherhood ... derives its name,” thus conveying the idea the very notion of fatherhood is to be derived from the Fatherhood of God.


Human fathers can learn from the Fatherhood of God that they should be providers for their families. Our Heavenly Father provides for us “everything necessary for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). In fact the Bible quite seriously maintains if an earthly father who professes to be a Christian does not provide for his

family “he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). The provisions earthly fathers can and should give their families go far beyond physical needs. For example, just as God provides wisdom and guidance for life so should human fathers guide their families by precept and example.

Fatherly qualities

In addition just as our Heavenly Father protects His spiritual family, He is a human father’s pattern for being the protector of his family. Earthly families not only need protection from physical dangers but even more so from spiritual dangers like exposure to bad examples, experimenting with occult practices or giving ear to false teaching.

In addition our Heavenly Father is the perfect prototype of such fatherly qualities as sacrificial love, unconditional acceptance, sternness mingled with gentleness, quickness to forgive, consistency in being available and approachable and willingness to discipline with wisdom and care.

A worthy Father’s Day commitment for human fathers is to become better imitators of God. 

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.



Careful discussion

Messengers take wording of resolutions seriously, adopt all 13 proposed to them

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers did not allow the late afternoon fatigue from a long day of meeting deter them. They wanted to discuss at least 10 of the 13 proposed resolutions and patiently waited their turns at a microphone.

In the end four proposed amendments failed while three passed but the passion for which everyone at the microphones shared was applauded by SBC President J.D. Greear.

The amendments that passed added a phrase or Scripture to what was already prepared. They did not change the nature of the resolution.

Resolutions Committee chairman Curtis Woods said the committee spent about 35 hours thinking about the dialogue and editing.

“Every resolution was prayed over as well as each person who submitted a resolution,” he said, noting 16 resolutions were submitted properly, 10 were declined and seven were generated by the committee.

“I firmly believe these resolutions will glorify the only true and living God,” he said. “We as a committee stand by these resolutions.”

Resolutions approved were:

▶ On abortion — the messengers applauded the recent enactment of state laws to restrict or prohibit abortion and called for the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse *Roe v. Wade*.

▶ On the “evil of sexual abuse” — which condemned and lamented all such abuse and called on churches and institutions to establish a safe culture for survivors and to guard against and confront abuse.

▶ On religious persecution — pray for the end of persecution in China and North Korea and urge religious freedom as a “top priority.”

▶ On critical race theory and intersectionality — affirmed the Bible as “the first, last and sufficient authority” regarding how the church tries to amend social evils and said critical race theory and intersectionality

should only be used in submission to Scripture.

The resolution describes critical race theory as a set of tools to explain how race functions in society and intersectionality as the study of how various characteristics overlap.

▶ On local church autonomy and accountability — reaffirmed the doctrine of autonomy under Christ’s lordship and rejected its use as a way to conceal sins of those in the church who are guilty of abuse.

▶ On sexuality and personal identity — which urged Christians who battle same-sex attraction “to forsake any self-conception or personal identity that is contrary to God’s good and holy purposes in creation and redemption” and commended the “faithful witness” of such disciples who walk in obedience to Jesus.

▶ On “mission advance” — in which messengers promised to oppose “a divisive spirit” and to develop a “cooperative culture.”

▶ On biblical justice — where messengers committed to respond to injustices by gospel proclamation, advocacy for oppressed people, acting with justice personally and demanding that “spheres of society” function righteously, truthfully and lovingly.

▶ On cultural awareness — which encouraged the convention’s seminaries, entities and churches to enable pastors to understand “how culture and contexts shape ministry methods and strategies.”

▶ On selective service — which advocated against drafting women to military service.

▶ On opposing human germline editing — which called on Congress and international policy makers to make it unworkable and illegal.

▶ On political engagement — urged a commitment to Christ over a political party.

▶ On appreciation to God and all who helped with this year’s meeting. (TAB, BP contributed)

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



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Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions



Alabama GAs, RAs take the stage at SBC annual meeting

When Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), addressed messengers during the June 11 afternoon session of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting she focused on discipleship.

"Our mandate is making disciples of Jesus who live on mission," she said. "This is what we do. And we do it three ways. We have missions discipleship for every age level, we develop leaders and we engage in compassion ministries."

Representing WMU's missions discipleship Royal Ambassadors (RAs) and Girls in Action (GAs) from Alabama's First Baptist Church, Alexander City, and First Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, performed "Start a Fire" by Unspoken.

"The children viewed it as an opportunity of a lifetime to be able to represent all RAs and GAs across the SBC," said Melinda Poole,



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Girls in Action and Royal Ambassadors from FBC Alexander City and FBC Jackson, Mississippi, perform for those gathered at the Southern Baptist Convention on June 11 in Birmingham.

WMU director for First, Alexander City. "What touched my heart was seeing people from other states come up to our children and talk to them and say 'I love your badges' and share with our children where they were from."

'Unique opportunity'

The leadership program highlighted during the report was Christian Women's

Leadership Center (CWLC). "Today's Christian women have a unique opportunity to lead our generation of women and our nation back to God," said Claudia Johnson, leadership consultant with CWLC.

The WMU compassion ministries represented during the report were Christian Women's Job Corps and WorldCrafts artisans. (TAB)

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Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Now the Lord said unto _____. (Gen. 12:1)
6. Are not ____ and Pharpar rivers of Damascus? (2 Kings 5:12)
11. Abraham ... ____ the wood. (Gen. 22:3)
12. Athenian woman who believed. (Acts 17:34)
15. In charge of King Ahasuerus' women. (Esther 2:3)
16. The Lord sent him to meet Moses in the wilderness. (Ex. 4:27)
17. Infant's first word for Daddy.
18. Joseph's wife. (Gen. 41:45)
20. The works that are done ____ the sun. (Eccles. 1:4)
22. I am, you are, he ____.
23. Dialect for get.
24. Eli heard the noise of the _____. (1 Sam. 4:14)
25. Joshua sent men from Jericho to _____. (Josh. 7:2)
26. Descendants of Eri. (Num. 26:16)
28. Sarah shall bear unto thee ____ this set time. (Gen. 17:21)
29. Not bow down thyself to them ____ serve them. (Ex. 20:5)
31. I ____ the marathon.
32. Place of 12 wells of water. (Ex. 15:27)
34. ____ ye therefore. (Matt. 28:19)
35. The sons of Aaron, took either

- of them his _____. (Lev. 10:1)
37. They went forth ____ go. (Gen. 12:5)
38. King of Greek gods.
40. Cut off his right _____. (Luke 22:50)
41. God said, ____ shall not eat of every tree. (Gen. 3:1)
42. Bright ____.
44. Strong people set in battle _____. (Joel 2:3)
46. And, ____, the angel of the Lord came. (Luke 2:9)
47. Melts.
49. Upon the great ____ of their right feet. (Lev. 8:24)
52. For it is the ____ of ____ flesh. (Lev. 17:14)
54. Ahian, and Schechem, and _____. (1 Chron. 7:19)
55. Led him away to ____ first. (John 18:13)
56. An ____ the hole.

Down

1. Gallio was the deputy of _____. (Acts 18:12)
2. Thou shalt be a _____. (Gen. 12:2)
3. Why do the heathen ____? (Ps. 2:1)
4. The Lord is the ____ of all such. (1 Thess. 4:6)
5. ____, myself and I.
6. And ____ bare Jabal. (Gen. 4:20)
7. Candy or ice cream ____.
8. Loves.

9. Mary Poppins was one.
10. Pass over through _____. (Deut. 2:18)
13. Joseph's brothers didn't know his ____.
14. "Hey, ____." Beetle Bailey's call.
16. Dresses. (verb)
19. The fowl of the _____. (Gen. 1:26)
21. The sun ____ of Ahaz. (Isa. 38:8)
24. And the ____ of pure gold. (1 Kings 7:50)
27. You get this at a beach.
30. Leak out slowly.
32. Flighty, capricious.
33. ____, Larry and Curly.
35. The tents of ____ in affliction. (Hab. 3:7)
36. Give ____ to his commandments. (Ex. 15:26)
39. Hast thou ____ of the tree? (Gen. 3:11)
42. So that it went ____ with Moses. (Ps. 106:32)
43. The noise of them that sing ____ hear. (Ex. 32:18)
44. Pointed tools for piercing holes.
45. Broken the bands of your _____. (Lev. 26:13)
48. Order ____ carte.
50. Benjamin's son.
51. Cleanseth us from all _____. (1 John 1:7)
53. Do, Re, Mi, ____.
54. Syllable to sing when you don't know the words.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 23

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



STAYING ON COURSE 1 Timothy 4:1–13

If we are to stay on course we cannot be deceived by false doctrine. We need the good, sound, healthy doctrine of Scripture. Southern Baptists, we must teach the truth of God's word and we must learn it, live it and love it.

Be Aware (1–5)

The Holy Spirit has warned us that false teachers will arise and seek to deceive God's people. We should not be surprised at the false teaching present in our world today. God has alerted us so we can be aware and be on the lookout for it. Just because someone opens a Bible and reads a verse does not mean he or she speaks for God. Satan and demons do that.

False teachers led by deceitful spirits declare they are truly spiritual. They have had dreams and visions. They possess unique spiritual insight. By constantly arguing with conscience, stifling its warnings and ignoring its siren, they at last have reached the point where conscience no longer bothers them.

False teachers in Ephesus were denying two great gifts from God: marriage and food. The Bible is clear that God created both marriage and food for His glory and our good. In Genesis, God created human beings as male and female. God created Adam first and said it's not good for the man to be alone. God's answer was a woman — not a hobby, a golden retriever or a fishing pole. It is glorifying to God for men to walk with Jesus, find a job, get married and have children. Blessed is the man whose minivan is too small.

The false teachers taught people to abstain from certain foods in order to become more holy. The Bible teaches everything is good if we use it as it was created and intended to be used. The word of God enables believers to have a proper understanding of food and by prayer we acknowledge food as a good gift from God.

Be Disciplined (6–10)

False teaching leads to corrupt living. The remedy for false teaching is faithful, accurate biblical teaching that flows from a consecrated teacher. Paul exhorted Timothy to be a good or excellent servant of Christ Jesus. He was not to get caught up in pointless silly myths but rather to train himself for godliness. This important word occurs 15 times in the New Testament, 13 times in the pastoral epistles and 9 times in 1 Timothy. Godliness is to be "God besotted" or God-centered — to have a right attitude and response to God.

No effective spiritual ministry exists apart from personal godliness since ministry is the overflow of a godly life. Therefore just as a young person in the gymnasium exerts himself or herself to the utmost so too must the believer, by God's grace and power, spare no effort to reach the goal of godliness. Put away the things that hinder you from pursuing personal godliness.

Be an Example (11–13)

In spite of opposition from the false teachers in Ephesus, Paul commanded Timothy to teach in accordance with the word of God and not back down or compromise for anyone or anything. It would not be easy but it was essential for the spiritual health of the Ephesian believers.

Timothy must set the example for believers in his speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.

English Puritan church leader Richard Baxter said, "It is a palpable error of some ministers ... who study hard to preach exactly yet study little or not at all to live exactly."

Built on the foundation of his godly character Timothy was to read and proclaim the truth of God's word. Without the centrality of the word of God and its exposition no biblical worship occurs. 🌿

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong

Professor of Religion, Samford University



ABIGAIL: INTERVENING FAITH 1 Samuel 25:2–3, 14–17, 23–28, 32–35

In Abigail we find a woman who shows us how faith combined with godly character, wisdom and humility can empower a person to serve as an intermediary in a time of crisis.

Be a person others can trust when help is needed. (2–3, 14–17)

Nabal and Abigail were an odd couple. She was as bright and beautiful as he was mean and miserly. David and his men were on the run and somewhat dependent upon the goodwill of others. Being an extraordinarily wealthy man Nabal had huge flocks of sheep and goats and thus a major sheep-shearing operation that could be expected to turn a large profit. David's men had protected Nabal's flocks and shepherds in hope of being rewarded once Nabal recognized how valuable it had been for his profit margin.

Nabal didn't merely rebuff David's request for compensation but went further and sought to shame David publicly as a nobody or worse — just someone's worthless runaway servant. One of Nabal's servants decided that Abigail needed to be informed. Her character was as well-known as Nabal's but for the opposite reason. While it might be impossible to reason with Nabal, Abigail was known as an intelligent and reasonable person who could be counted on in a time of crisis.

Heads would roll (literally) if Abigail couldn't undo the damage caused by her foolish husband.

Humbly encourage others to do the right thing. (23–28)

Given Nabal's offense of treating David shamefully rather than with honor in a culture where the attribution of honor or shame was an extremely sensitive issue, Abigail's approach was to humble herself and make it absolutely clear she considered David to be a man of extreme honor (and a man whose honor had been egregiously attacked) and her

own husband to be the one who lacked honor and did not deserve to be treated as a man of honor.

Nabal and others might be forgiven and spared for the sake of his wise, gracious, godly, generous and humble wife.

Knowing David to be a man of God she invoked the Lord and His providence as a sign that God did not want David to shed blood. Their encounter was a divine appointment intended to keep David from acting on his planned revenge. It would be wrong for David to act on his murderous anger, and God would reward him if he were to show grace and mercy instead.

Keep a Christ-centered perspective in resolving conflict. (32–35)

Abigail's extraordinarily wise, godly and culturally sensitive response brought David back to his spiritual senses and deescalated the extremely dangerous situation.

David recognized Abigail's intervention was not merely a cleverly calculated attempt to spare her husband but an act of God Himself. God was at work though Abigail to keep David from acting on his sinful desire to murder a man and his servants out of a rage based on his public slight.

Abigail's approach to resolving this conflict anticipated Christ's own approach. Christ "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant" and "humbled himself" before God that we might be spared (Phil. 2:7–8). By going out to intervene Abigail put her life on the line in order to save the lives of numerous others, including that of her foolish husband.

It was her combination of approachability, wisdom, humility and spiritual discernment that made her the one person who, by the providence of God, could defuse such a dangerous situation. We need more Abigails in our world today. 🌿

‘Blessed are the meek’

Meekness means recognizing that ‘you are weak but God is not,’ Platt says

The week before David Platt flew into Birmingham for the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference was a “sanctifying” week,” he said.

On June 2 he had stepped off stage after the Lord’s Supper at his church and been told President Donald Trump was stopping by and wanted the church to pray with him.

A thousand thoughts entered Platt’s head of how he could respond, but “the one that rose to the top” was 1 Timothy 2:1–2 — Paul’s charge to pray for all who are in high positions.

“In that brief minute I prayed specifically for an opportunity to speak the gospel to him and faithfulness to pray the gospel over him,” said Platt, pastor of the Washington, D.C.-area McLean Bible Church and former pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham.

He spoke with the president backstage, then after Platt prayed for him on stage Trump left without making any comments. The moment was over but for Platt the conflict was just beginning.

‘Social media firestorm’

“As a result of that prayer and that letter (of explanation) on Sunday night I would find myself at the center of a social media firestorm,” he said. “Why do I share this? I am guessing I’m not the only pastor in this room who is coming into the conference after a hard week.

“For some it’s been a hard month or many months,” he said. “I’m guessing for some of you it’s been a hard year. I just want to encourage you ... with what God has been teaching me about this beatitude.”

For his message Platt was tasked with preaching from Matthew 5:5 — “blessed are the meek.” He offered three pictures of meekness:

1. Meekness calmly and joyfully trusts in the justice of God.

Reading from Psalm 37, Platt gave some Old Testament perspective on meekness. The psalmist was surrounded by turmoil and injustice but still he delighted in the Lord.

How? By fixing his eyes on the Judge, Platt said. “This is the kind of meekness that will not come if your eyes are fixed on the world.”

There’s clearly a lot to fret about in this psalm but the psalmist

calmly trusts God. Sometimes pastors have a lot to fret about too, Platt said — situations like a divided deacon board or leadership team, betrayal by someone they trusted, a barrage of trials, disgruntled church members, false accusations or a complex situation they can’t seem to fix.

“So what do we do when we face this? We feel so helpless,” Platt said.

Meekness means recognizing that “you are weak but God is not, and God is on your side,” he said. “This psalm reminds me that God is my judge. You are not my judge, no one on social media is my judge, the president of the United States is not my judge. Jesus is my judge and I am so glad He is. Aren’t you?”

2. Meekness humbly listens and selflessly lives for the good of others.

From there Platt moved on to the New Testament and read from James 1, which urges Christians to be “quick to hear” and to “receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls.”

It can be hard to know how to work that out in the face of conflict, he said. With his own church on

“If you don’t ever have conversations with Christians who have different views from you, meekness may mean expanding your listening to people who aren’t just like you.”

**Pastor David Platt
McLean Bible Church
Washington, D.C.**



Photo by Phil Brown

David Platt, pastor of the Washington, D.C.-area McLean Bible Church and former pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, speaks at the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference.

June 2 the question up for debate wasn’t whether or not to pray for the president — the question was whether or not to bring him on stage and do it publicly in front of a lot of cameras, Platt said.

‘Different convictions’

He said he knew some Christians would feel that showing honor to the nation’s elected leader by praying for him publicly would be good for the sake of the gospel.

He knew others would feel it would make a holy moment into a public spectacle that could be twisted and abused — something they felt would be bad for the gospel.

Both believed what they believed for the sake of the gospel, Platt said.

“It’s possible for followers of Jesus who love the Word to have different convictions here,” he said. “One says do, another don’t — for the advance of the gospel.”

In these cases Christians should be quick to listen, slow to tweet and slow to post, Platt said.

“I trust we realize we live in a culture that entices us every moment to speak our thoughts from

behind a screen and not look our brother or sister in the eye and listen to them,” he said. “If you don’t ever have conversations with Christians who have different views from you, meekness may mean expanding your listening to people who aren’t just like you.”

Meekness like this is other worldly, Platt said — it comes from above.

“I just wonder if we grew in this attribute how ... Christ might look to a watching world around us,” he said.

3. Meekness endures challenges in this world with confident hope in the world to come.

The last picture of meekness is one of a person who looks forward to heaven with a confidence, knowing that is where trial and turmoil in ministry will end, Platt said.

‘Our hope’

“This is the gospel and it is our hope — Jesus, our meek King, has humbly and selflessly given His life on the cross for our good,” he said. “The meek have hope that a day is coming when challenges will be no more.” (Grace Thornton)

To watch the full video of Platt’s talk, visit sbcpc.net/sermons.

Life at the SBC convention

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Below: Jay and Katherine Wolf — founders of Hope Heals — share the story of the massive brain stem stroke that left Katherine disabled at 26 years old.

Photo by Phil Brown



Below: Messengers join in a time of worship at the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference.

Photo by Tracy Riggs



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Left: Two messengers spend time in prayer together for the future of the Southern Baptist Convention and the continued spread of the gospel.

Left: Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, welcomes messengers to Birmingham and opens the annual meeting in prayer.



Photo by Phil Brown

Below: The SBC gifts a check for \$250,000 through NAMB's Send Relief to Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin to assist local teachers in buying school supplies.



Photo by Phil Brown

Right: A Cross-over Birmingham volunteer talks with two people about how she can pray for and serve them.

Photo by Tracy Riggs



Photo by Jessica Ingram



Above: The special Southern Baptist Convention issue of *The Alabama Baptist* was displayed throughout the convention center for messengers to pick up.

Photo by Phil Brown



Above: Congregational singing during the SBC is led by a worship team from The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, where SBC President J.D. Greear serves as pastor.

A special thank you to WXJC Radio, our partner in producing TAB News, which airs Saturdays at 2 p.m. TAB News is also the first part of the podcast released each Tuesday along with the audio digest of that week's issue.



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