



# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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



IMB president Paul Chitwood (center) introduces newly commissioned missionaries at a Sending Celebration held June 11 at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Birmingham.

Photo by Tracy Riggs

## 'Proclaim the gospel'

### IMB commissions 26 missionaries to go 'among the nations'

Everyone clapped, many stood and some even cried as 26 missionaries were commissioned for gospel ministry June 11 at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Birmingham.

Led by International Mission Board (IMB) president Paul Chitwood, the Sending Celebration included each commissioned missionary speaking briefly about where he or she was going and why

each felt called to missions. Some faces were left in the dark, their names and identities concealed due to the dangers of carrying the gospel to many places around the world.

#### Listen and pray

"As they speak I want you to do three things," Chitwood told the crowd.

"Listen to how God is moving. Pray fervently for them and the people they will live

among. Consider what God might be telling you to do."

Believers of all ages, couples and singles, were sent out to Asia, Spain, Madagascar, Argentina, the Middle East and to the ends of the earth. One young man was sent out to proclaim the gospel among the Deaf peoples.

"What an incredible privilege we have to send missionaries," Chitwood said.

"I say 'we' because you play a part in sending them.

Together we as Southern Baptists have been sending missionaries for 174 years."

Chitwood asked all former IMB journeymen, IMB missionaries and pastors to stand.

"All of you have been a part of making disciples. I want you to know that not only are we thankful but we also recognize that you are the IMB's greatest mobilizers for missions," he said.

The celebration also included (See 'God,' page 15)



# Samford hosts preaching discussion

The question “What is preaching?” was the subject of a popular panel at Samford University’s booth in the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting exhibit hall. The panel featured Beeson Divinity School professors Robert Smith Jr. and Mike Pasquarello and was moderated by Grant Taylor, associate dean for academic affairs at Beeson.

Referencing Paul’s charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 to “preach the word,” Taylor opened up the discussion to answer the fundamental question.

“Preaching is a great, great task and an honor for preachers to participate in it,” said Pasquarello, Methodist Chair of Divinity and director of the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute at Beeson. “It announces, it proclaims, it declares to the world who God is and what God has done in Jesus Christ.”

“There is a mysterious element when it comes to preaching,” added Smith, who holds the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Beeson where he teaches Christian preaching. “God takes our alphabet based upon His word and turns the Word into life and transformation.”

“What we’re trying to do at Beeson is to raise up living witnesses to the Word, lovers of the Word and those who speak the Word with conviction,” said Pasquarello.

Smith and Pasquarello compared Beeson’s emphasis on the Word



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

Beeson Divinity School professors Mike Pasquarello (center) and Robert Smith Jr. (right) respond to the question ‘What is preaching?’ during a panel discussion at the Samford University SBC exhibit hall booth. Grant Taylor (left), Beeson associate dean for academic affairs, moderated the session.

and preaching to different foods.

“I love spaghetti and meatballs” but especially the meatballs, Smith said. “Beeson is intentional about serving meatballs, the text. Non-negotiable. ... I hope Beeson will always be known for its insistence on the text being central. Let the methods, let the models, let those things be optional. But not the text.”

### ‘It’s nourishing’

“It’s meat and potatoes,” Pasquarello said. “It’s nourishing and people who are starving need it.”

The goal of Beeson’s Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute, the professors said, is to teach preaching and to teach pastors, strengthening the pastor as a whole person.

“I want to equip my people, who I preach to, to be able to define what preaching is, to be able to do it in their own language and in their own style,” Smith said.

The full video of this and other Samford panels is available online at [www.samford.edu/news/2019/Samford-at-the-2019-SBC-Convention](http://www.samford.edu/news/2019/Samford-at-the-2019-SBC-Convention). (Hannah Muñoz)

## The Alabama Baptist

will not publish a July 4 issue. The next issue will be July 11.

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.



“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 RASHIONALE

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

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@RashionalThts



## Ministry of presence, sensitivity to Holy Spirit's direction powerful

**F**ather's Day this year turned out to be a difficult day for a friend of mine — he faced it for the first time without his son.

Another friend wondered whether to mention it or leave her concern unsaid.

My suggestion was to say something, to acknowledge his son's passing and recognize the difficulty of that day — and any day really.

After all he hasn't forgotten his son nor what happened so our bringing it up wouldn't cause extra hurt or grief.

However, acknowledging his son and his pain could be therapeutic for him, maybe even comforting.

The same is true for all of our grieving friends.

Even if tears appear or the grieving person chooses not to say much, try to allow him or her to embrace the tenderness of the moment without feeling rushed to respond.

Hearing his or her loved one's name and knowing someone else remembers draws a variety of emotions to the surface.

Let your friend work through those emotions and avoid the temptation to talk too much or say something to hurry up the tears.

We all want to make it better, to take away the pain, but sometimes it isn't possible — at least in human terms.

And saying too much can sometimes be overwhelming for

the person or put him or her on the spot to have to respond.

The ministry of presence makes the difference.

We rarely need to say much, if anything.

Being present, giving our friend permission to grieve and intentionally finding simple ways to help along the journey can decrease the intense loneliness.

Walking through grief is hard enough but adding a layer of consistent loneliness pushes it up to the edge of unbearable.

And one thing I've learned is that many people who are beaten down with the heartache of grief and loneliness in their lives don't have the strength to even reach out, to let you know how they are struggling.

They put on the mask and push through the moment or the day while people buzz all around them never noticing the pain in their eyes.

Many times the grieving say all the right things to keep the rest of us from worrying.

It makes me sad to think about how many times I've missed an

opportunity to be a listening ear or an encouraging friend.

Keeping our attention on those around us rather than ourselves is a good first step in noticing what others might need.

Another step is to intentionally look for opportunities to make a difference.

And then there's the listening to God part.

Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and doing something when He brings specific people to mind will change you in a powerful way. 🙏

## ONE YEAR ON THE AIR

### TAB News celebrates first anniversary of Saturday radio show on WXJC 101.1 FM/850 AM, 10 months as podcast

**I**n June 2018 our radio producer at WXJC assured us interviewing and sharing on the radio would become natural.

Debbie Campbell and I were venturing into new territory as co-hosts for TAB News, a weekly 30-minute radio show highlighting a current topic, inspiring ministry or interesting person.

We scripted every word of that first show — and you could tell. Our style relaxed a little for the second show and even more for the third show.

By the end of June we were rolling and now a year later we can walk into the studio with only a few notes.

We are having a great time sharing our recorded conversations with all of you.

The radio show is merged with



Photo by Bill Gilmore

an audio digest of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper each week and is available at iTunes, Stitcher,

iHeartRadio or [tabonline.org/](http://tabonline.org/) podcasts. Check us out.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

# Your Voice



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

## 10 things your pastor's wife wants you to know

By Shari Thomas  
Co-founder, Parakaleo.us

Many women married to a pastor enjoy a wonderful, caring church community and most enjoy working with their husbands to see God's kingdom expand in their city. But here are some things many pastors' wives have in common.

10. She is her own person — not an appendage of the pastor.

9. She possesses a calling whether inside or outside the church.

8. She may struggle financially.

7. She shares her husband with the whole church.

6. She is harmed by gossip.

5. She lives with unrealistic ex-

pectations from others but most often from herself.

4. She probably finds friendships in the church tricky to navigate. Rich friendships can be had but they require maturity and an understanding that some topics are off limits.

3. She's harmed by criticism of her husband. Pastors have been told they don't work hard enough, don't disciple enough, don't preach well enough, don't visit congregants enough. And unlike spouses in many other professions these are the same people with whom she worships and fellowships.

2. She lives with stress and ambiguity. For the pastoral family — pastor, spouse and children — the

expectations are not usually clear which causes high levels of stress. Consider showing her the same compassion you would extend to someone who has recently received hard news. Why? Because this has most likely been her experience on any given day. Hearing that a trusted staff member plans on resigning, a key church leader is having an affair, the church cannot pay its bills or her husband's job is in jeopardy are the types of revelations women in ministry face on a regular basis.

Regardless of the differences the item every pastor's wife has in common is No. 1.

1. She, like you and me, doesn't get her righteousness from measuring up to the standards of others, from her church attendance, from knowing Scripture or from how much money she spends on her wardrobe.

In God's courtroom the verdict has been given. Her flaws, mistakes, shame and sin as well as all her goodness was placed on Jesus Christ. He took on Himself what she deserved. And what's more? God gave her Christ's righteousness. She has been given the verdict of righteous, beloved daughter.

*EDITOR'S NOTE— Adapted from a blog post by Shari Thomas, co-founder of Parakaleo, a nonprofit serving women in church planting. The original post can be found at [sharithomas.org/who-is-the-woman-married-to-your-pastor/](http://sharithomas.org/who-is-the-woman-married-to-your-pastor/).*

It's one thing to listen but it's another to learn and then you lead people. When we started loving each other, things started to change in our community.

**Pastor Buddy Gray**  
Hunter Street Baptist Church, Birmingham

We want our fellow Southern Baptists to know that we are here if they have a Jewish neighbor that they need to minister to. We want to be able to help them.

**Ric Worshill**  
Executive director  
Southern Baptist  
Messianic Fellowship

No other American family of churches is invested in theological education the way Southern Baptists are invested.

**Chuck Kelley**  
Retiring president  
New Orleans Baptist  
Theological Seminary

It doesn't matter what you do; if you do it better then other people will be blessed because you did.

**Richard Blackaby**  
Author, Bible teacher  
and leadership coach

## Letter to the Editor

On June 6, President Donald Trump stood on the wind-swept beaches of Normandy, France, amidst other world leaders and a handful of surviving World War II D-Day veterans and delivered the most stirring, inspirational and poignant speech I have witnessed.

The president highlighted the invasion which resulted in thousands of American casualties. He focused on the ordinary boys from the farms of middle America and the streets of small-town USA that answered the call — all 16.1 million.

This story has special meaning for me personally. My Uncle Fred drove a landing craft ferrying troops from ships onto the beach at Normandy on D-Day.

He was shot through the knee, evacuated to a field hospital, recovered and was back in combat within two months. He was already back on the combat line when my grandparents received notice of his wounds.

God Bless America — especially the living and dead of Normandy.

**James W. Anderson**  
Talladega, Ala.

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# “ Sharing Jesus is truly the way to put the gospel above all. ”

TIMOTHY COCKES

*Graduate student at Liberty University and Crossover Birmingham participant*

There's going to be times that there's smooth sailing waters and your anchor is Jesus and things are going good in your ministry, in your home. There's going to be times that it's troubled, rough waters and you're barely holding your head up.

**Kim Hamm**

**President**

**SBC Ministers' Wives Luncheon**

No one, whether acting as a private citizen or business owner, should be forced to violate his or her conscience, even for issues that our culture demands tolerance with no dissent.

**Russell Moore**

**President**

**Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission**

True diversity is embracing different cultures and incorporating their perspectives in daily operations. ... Southern Baptists, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by becoming a pluralistic denomination which embraces different cultural expressions in creating our denominational tapestry.

**Jeff Iorg**

**President**

**Gateway Seminary**

One of the ways God will accomplish a great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages ... will be through those who go on to share what they have heard from us. ... In an unprecedented season of the globalization of missions, those who

Southern Baptists have reached are now taking the gospel to the nations themselves.

**Paul Chitwood**

**President**

**International Mission Board**

While each [Native American] tribe is unique, with its own history, culture and current situation, there are commonalities that bind Native people together and we're working to find and develop resource tools to bridge the barriers that have hindered the gospel message.

**Gary Hawkins**

**Executive director, Fellowship of Native American Christians (FoNAC) and pastor of Native Stone Baptist Mission**

**Tulsa, Okla.**



Photo by SBOM

Ray Burdeshaw is acting executive director of the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers.

## Fulfilling life's purpose

The mission of Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC) is to provide affordable housing to lower income seniors in order that they might retain their dignity, independence and a sense of belonging, as well as their best possible health as they experience fulfillment in their life's purpose under God.

We fulfill our Great Commission ministry in part through the monthly Cooperative Program allocation we receive. We are most grateful for these gifts as they afford us the opportunity to share Christ's love with our residents through various activities throughout the year or by providing for immediate needs.

It has been our privilege to introduce those who have toured the new State Board of Missions facility in Prattville to the ministry of ABRC.

We look forward to seeing how God will work through ABRC at "such a time as this" as we continue to invest in the lives and needs of baby boomers as they transition into retirement.

We invite you to visit our website at [www.albrc.org](http://www.albrc.org) to learn more about our ministry.

Even better bring your senior adults to visit one of our locations.

—Ray Burdeshaw

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @ArtRainer

Southern Baptists — After having coffee with friends at a Birmingham cafe, the server refused to let us pay. Her reason? SBCer's generosity to her during the convention. Well done, Southern Baptists. #SBC19 #GiveGenerously

### @bcmLink

Pray for students to grow in their faith this summer! Regardless of what their summer looks like, we pray that they are learning more about the Lord and growing deeper in their faith. #ReachEveryStudent

### @alan\_floyd

"A child is going to have a hard time finding a Father in God if they can't find much of God in their father." Leave a Legacy of Blessing. See Prov. 20:7

### @EdLitton

For all who think we have nothing from which to repent or lament for in our times, read Nehemiah chapter one. Nehemiah confesses the condition of Jerusalem and he owns the sins that caused it and kept it in rubble.

### @macbrunson

Passion, a compelling emotional feeling, is no replacement for poor theology. I don't care how deeply you feel, The Word has the final say.

### @ChandlerDonegan

What if we as Christians glorified God and made much of the gospel in our tweets in such a way that it actually drove others away from social media, to the Word of God, and into community within the local church?

### @alsbom

Pray for your pastor's family to seek God in their lives and to not let past church hurts isolate them. #PrayingAlabama

### @MBChurchAL

Do you ever feel like you're stuck in life and don't know how your needs will be met? In life's deserts, we quickly forget that God will give us exactly what we need for today. Trust him to provide your "daily bread" and walk with him as he leads you to green pastures.

### @jaredcwilson

If your kids aren't being disciplined by you and your church, they're being disciplined by the world. It's one or the other. Nobody grows up un-disciplined.

# REFRESH

## conference

### Covington Baptist Association hosts special retreat for ministers' wives

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**T**he health of the local church directly connects to the well-being of pastors and their families. So as part of a ministry strategy to encourage and equip ministers and churches, Covington Baptist Association offers a retreat to support ministers' wives.

The second Refresh Conference for ministers' wives was conducted this spring at Blue Lake Methodist Camp. The retreat offered a variety of activities designed to pamper and encourage the women who serve their churches as they minister alongside their husbands. The wives of ministers in all facets

of service in Covington and surrounding associations were invited to attend.

Having served as a minister's wife for more than 40 years, conference organizer Shirley Flowers of Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, appreciates the challenges these women face.

#### Hurts and experiences

"I've seen the hurts and experienced some myself in ministry," Flowers said.

Most of the retreat leaders are also ministers' wives selected because they have faced the same struggles as those attending.

"It's ministers' wives serving ministers' wives because they need a safe place to be themselves," Flowers said.

Plans for the conference began almost three years ago when Flowers' husband Mike became pastor of Southside. Flowers approached Otis Corbitt, director of missions for Covington Baptist Association, with the idea to provide a retreat where ministers' wives could be refreshed. Corbitt fully supported the idea.

"I know how important pastors are to churches," Corbitt said. "We want to encourage and enrich them. If their wives are encouraged, they will also be encouraged."

The association helped fund the conference and Corbitt enlisted the help of Shirley Smith, Covington Association Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) director.

"We invite and encourage WMU



Photo courtesy of Shirley Flowers

Jennifer Mills (left) enjoys a pedicure at the Refresh Conference hosted by Covington Baptist Association as a way to encourage and support ministers' wives. Manicures and pedicures were provided by area cosmetology students.



Photo courtesy of Shirley Flowers

Belinda Adams (left) and Rebecca Ray take advantage of a hair shape-up during Covington Baptist Association's second Refresh Conference for ministers' wives conducted this spring at Blue Lake Methodist Camp. Haircuts and facials were provided by cosmetology students from Lurleen B. Wallace Community College.

ladies to get involved by helping with door prizes and welcome bags," Smith said. "We want to let [the wives] know we love them and appreciate what they do every day."

This year's conference kicked off on March 8 with dinner and fellowship. After dinner Flowers' chapel message about Hagar exhorted participants to consider how God

worked in the life of the Old Testament woman.

#### Studying God's Word

"We give them complete freedom to do what they want," Flowers said, noting they could play games, enjoy snacks and conversation or simply relax.

"The only thing I ask is that they

*"We want to let [the wives] know we love them and appreciate what they do every day."*

Shirley Smith  
Covington Association Woman's Missionary Union director



Photo courtesy of Shirley Flowers

Refresh Conference is organized annually by (left to right) Shirley Flowers, Kaci Perry and Shirley Smith. The conference includes Bible study, one-on-one meetings with professional counselors and special treats.

*“Some ministers’ wives go through a whole lot. They sometimes feel very alone or they’re just really struggling.”*

**Rebecca Ray**

wife of Pastor Keith Ray, Harmony Baptist Church, Andalusia

be there for chapel. We have a lot of fun but we also delve into the word of God.”

On Saturday cosmetology students from Lurleen B. Wallace Community College pampered attendees. Some enjoyed a haircut or facial while others relaxed with a manicure and pedicure.

Alisha Lewis, licensed professional counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, was on hand to offer information on Pathways’ services and to visit one-on-one with participants.

Each of the 17 women in attendance received a copy of the book “So You’re the Pastor’s Wife” by Ruth Senter and gift bags.

Mary Beth Culbreth, whose husband Dennis serves as director

of missions for Hamilton County Baptist Association in Chattanooga, Tennessee, directed Saturday’s chapel services. Heather Messick

of Redemption Church, Mobile, led worship.

“It was a wonderful time of refreshment,” said Rebecca Ray, who serves alongside her husband Keith at Harmony Baptist Church, Andalusia. “Some ministers’ wives go through a whole lot. They sometimes feel very alone or they’re just really struggling. To have someone who can relate to being at that place in life, to pray

for you and encourage you and laugh with you, it’s a special gift.”

The next conference is scheduled for March 6–7, 2020, and will feature Diane Nix, director and founder of Contagious Joy ministry.✝



Photo courtesy of Shirley Flowers

Participant Geri Corbitt spends time in Scripture during her quiet time at the Refresh Conference.

# Ways to ENCOURAGE your minister’s wife

▶ Respect her husband’s time off. It may be the only time of the week she or her children have seen him.

▶ Include her in your activities. Some ministers’ families live far away and holidays can be a lonely time. However, understand when they can’t accept your invitation.

▶ Offer sincere encouraging words.

▶ Remember her birthday with small gestures like cards, texts or phone calls.

▶ Understand when she makes a verbal slip. None of us are perfect.

▶ Be kind to her family. No one agrees 100% of the time and children don’t always behave.

▶ Accept her. She may not be like your former minister’s wife. Allow the Father to lead her in the areas of her ministry.

▶ Protect her privacy. Everyone has weak moments. If she shares a heartache/burden with you don’t

share it with others without her permission.

▶ Be a thumbs-up prayer warrior. The thumb is the closest appendage on your hand to your heart. Use it to remind you to pray for her and her family. Tell her when you give her a thumbs-up you have prayed for her that week. Make sure she knows what a thumbs-up means. Pray for her, her husband and family and for the work they do in the local church.

▶ Serve alongside her and her husband. Offer to call or visit church prospects or ailing/absent congregants.

▶ Show appreciation. Gift cards, handmade treasures, personal video messages and mini-vacations go a long way to show your love for them. Encourage children and youth groups to show their love for her and for her family too. (Compiled by Lanell Downs Smith)



Unsplash.com

Show appreciation to your minister’s wife with thank you cards, handmade treasures, birthday treats or personal video messages. Encourage children and youth groups to show their love for her and her family too.

# Ministry teams approach may help engagement

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

A recurring theme at this year's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Birmingham was that of working together for unity in the gospel.

At the local church level working together might mean thinking about how your church gets along and how it runs its committees or teams.

Nationwide an estimated 65 million "dones" exist — Christians who have quit church due to infighting, politics and committee structures, according to a January article by Baptist News Global.

According to minister and author Patrick Vaughn, many of these people went to church looking for community and found judgment or felt they were asked to give their time and talent to maintaining the institution rather than reaching out.

He said this should be a "wake up call" to the church to think about what church really means.

For some that means a change from their traditional committee structure to a ministry team approach, he said.

Mike Jackson, director of the office of LeaderCare and church health for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said for him, the important thing about both committees and ministry teams is the heart behind them.

## 'Not a matter of semantics'

"We have to be careful that it's not a matter of semantics — 'Let's just call them ministry teams' (but there's no difference)," he said.

The temptation with traditional committee structures is to fill a vacancy with a warm body, Jackson said. "But sometimes in putting committees together there's a lot of thoughtful prayer and consideration of the individuals — their shape, their spiritual gifts, their heart and their aptitude."

That's the idea that makes ministry teams work too, he said — find-

ing someone who has a passion and letting that individual serve accordingly.

"I think what ministry teams want to try to do is find people who are passionate about something and put them in that area of responsibility and then don't necessarily change them after two or three years," Jackson said, noting committees traditionally have a rotating structure.

## Working together is key

Don Hatcher, associational missions director for Barbour Baptist Association, said he doesn't know of any churches in his association that have embraced the ministry

team designation, but he's begun to use it informally among his pastors and churches.

"I started using the team concept long before I retired from pastoral ministry," Hatcher said.

"I faced no push back from my church. My approach was to

explain that the designation 'team' was an accurate description of a group of people who work together to achieve a goal whereas a committee was usually a group of people who meet, decide what needs to be done and then expect someone else to get it done."

Jackson said whether a church chooses committees or teams often depends on its personality.

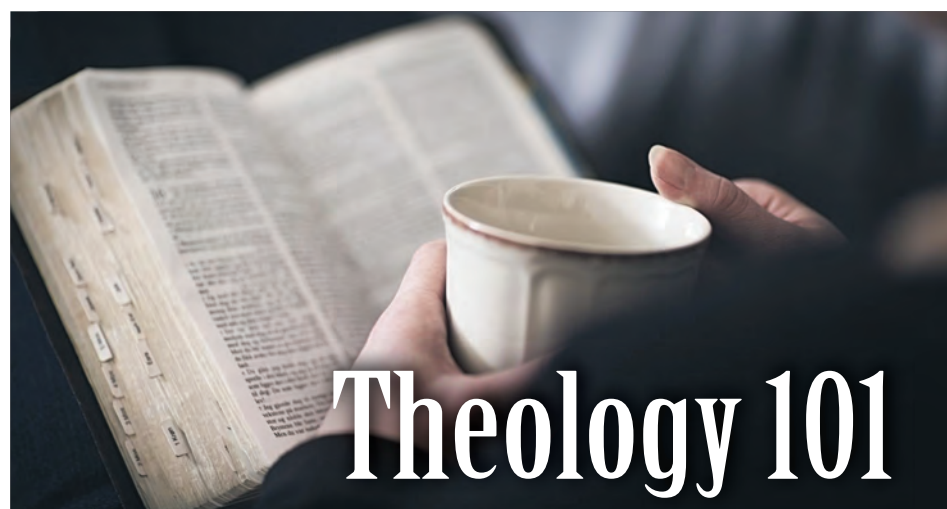
"In some churches deacon bodies may find it easier to do things through structure," Jackson said. "I would say to those deacons, find out where these guys are passionate and plug them in there. If you've got a guy with a heart for evangelism, put him on the outreach team."

On ministry teams membership is more fluid — people can come and go and stay longer if they feel led.

"That would probably be the big difference I see — trying to pair people with passions and gifts in a place where they can effectively minister," Jackson said. "In our putting together ministry teams we've got to be very cognizant of that person and their gifts." 🌿

*The important thing is the heart behind the system.*

**Mike Jackson**  
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Thinking About Independence

# Independence: Vice or Virtue?

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

We are only one week away from Independence Day, the federal holiday in the United States commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress. In this setting and with its historical significance the descriptive term independence has cherished and valued force.

However, not all expressions of independence, especially on the personal level, are positive. The focus of Theology 101 this week is not on national independence but individual independence and independence not in a political sense but a spiritual one.

The closing two lines from William Ernest Henley's famous poem "Invictus" are often quoted. After making reference to what he termed his "unconquerable soul" and his "unbowed" head the poet ended with the declaration, "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."

## Independence at its worst

Such words could refer to a life without God which would be personal independence at its worst.

The idea of life independent of God is but a mirage anyway. The water we drink, the air we breathe and the food we eat come to us from God who causes it to rain on the just and unjust alike.

It is possible for one to live in conscious independence from God. However, in the end every-

one gives account to God.

For a confessing Christian there is a sense in which independence can be a vice of the worst sort such as attempting to live independently of God's will, of His word, of prayer, of loving service to others, of Christ's commands and of the Holy Spirit's guidance and power.

## Independence at its best

Independence in the Christian life can be positive. Being set free from the ceremonial laws and ordinances of the Old Testament is a blessing Christ brought to God's people.

The Bible urges Christians to stand fast in "the liberty by which Christ has made us free" and not become entangled with "a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). Such liberty is a virtue indeed.

Independence from external rituals is only part of its virtue. Of great virtue is finding liberty from the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life as well as from the onslaughts of the world and the devil.

Of Himself, Christ promised, "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Freedom in Christ is personal independence at its best. 🌿

*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.*



## WFCW reaches, empowers women in Wiregrass region

A little over a year and a half ago Kaye Chancey started a group to help pull Christian women in the Wiregrass area together and empower them to reach others.

The group — Wiregrass Fellowship of Christian Women (WFCW) — is about women helping women and encouraging them to know the Word and find their worth in God, said Chancey, the group's director. It's a cross-denominational group welcoming women of all ages and places in life.

### 'Place of refuge'

"We want to be a place of refuge," Chancey said.

WFCW met for a while in churches but now meets monthly at an area restaurant in an effort to get out and engage the community. Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Kinston, in Sardis Baptist Association, is one church that has hosted the group in the past.

"It's been a great way to help women with specific needs," said Amy Bess, a member of Pilgrim Rest Baptist, noting they had helped the group host gatherings for widows and single moms. "We just focus on what God lays on our heart."

Hearing others' testimonies allows women to know they're not alone and helps them feel like they can open up and feel safe sharing their struggles, Bess said. That gives them the opportunity to love and encourage each other.

### 'We are all called'

"God can bring you out of any situation and we are all called to spread the gospel," she said.

For more information about WFCW visit its page on Facebook. The group took a break for the summer but will start meeting again in the fall. (Grace Thornton)

# Humbly following Christ

## FBC Atmore sees beginning of change in revitalization journey

Bobby Davis said he and others at First Baptist Church, Atmore, don't think they're a dying church — they just need to be injected with a little new fire.

When Davis first joined the church in 1957 after his stint in the service, they were running 500–600 in worship.

"I have to take into consideration that was seven years after the start of the Korean War and we were also still in the post-World War II era," said Davis, 85, the church's deacon chairman and a member of the vision team.

Attending church was popular back then, he said — but times are different. A year ago they had about 100 at Sunday worship.

"We're fighting an increasingly secular culture, and it bothers me because all this is happening on my watch," Davis said.

### A start

But on his watch they're also beginning their revitalization journey. The Escambia Baptist Association church has called a new pastor — Kevin Garrett — who is working on his doctor of ministry in church health and next generation ministries through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. They've also engaged Auxano, a church consulting firm, after a donor within the church gave generously to the pastor's discretionary fund.

## Demaris Baptist continues tradition of Decoration Day

Shirley Ingram said she made a promise to keep flowers on her family graves and she "will honor that promise as long as I can get down there."

For her that means traveling to Demaris Baptist Church, Cedar Bluff, in Lookout Mountain Baptist Association, for Decoration Day, held this year on the first weekend of June.

The tradition was always to clean and decorate the graves at Lawrence Cemetery on Saturday and



fbcatmore.org

Garrett and Davis agree there is not a success story yet — it's just a start. They simply feel they are humbly following Christ into what's next. But in the first quarter of this year the church was up nearly 23% in worship attendance, 9% in Sunday School attendance and nearly 24% in undesignated giving.

"I'm thrilled with where we're headed," Garrett said. "We're just here trying to see how we can best reach our community."

"Progress is good. And Bobby Davis — along with the previous pastor — has led the church well into this season. So many people his age are sitting by and complaining about what had changed. He's

selling effective change to reach others," Garrett said.

Davis said the church's hope in calling Garrett was to get "someone who could invest [his] life in us and love us and bring us back to the right condition."

### A desire to serve

And he said maybe that's happening already. Some younger people are starting to attend and they're working to get involved in more community activities.

"We just want to love the people around us," Davis said. "The gospel hasn't changed. We want to show that Jesus makes a difference and get them to want to join us." (Grace Thornton)

hold the homecoming and dinner on the grounds at the adjoining Demaris Baptist, Ingram said.

### Changing times

"Thirty years or so ago a large crowd would be in the cemetery on Saturdays but the times have changed and people and traditions have changed with them," she wrote on Facebook.

But she still goes each year as do people all over North Alabama. It's a tradition that's been going for

more than 150 years and is about remembering those who have died.

Bob Terry, editor emeritus of *The Alabama Baptist*, wrote in an editorial in 2006 that Decoration Day is a holiday associated with hard work and celebration.

"It is a time of fond remembrance and a time of affirming faith in life beyond the grave," he wrote. It often corresponds with a homecoming and, of course, casseroles. And for many like Ingram, it's a yearly commitment. (Grace Thornton)



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Warren Haynes (right) of Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, participates in a panel discussion with Mark Gainey (center) of Fultondale FBC and Andy Frazier of Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton.

# ‘As we go’

## Disciple making not about what Christians do but ‘who they are’

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Warren Haynes said disciple making isn't what Christians do — it's who they are. “Whether we have one conversation or multiple conversations with someone, we ought to use it in a way that moves them a little closer to Jesus,” he said.

Haynes — national director of contextualized leadership development for Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, and author of “Discipleship Uncomplicated” — was the guest speaker at a Disciple Making Ministries dinner held June 11 at Fultondale First Baptist Church. The event was

hosted by Disciple Making Ministries, a pastor network co-sponsored by Daniel Edmonds and Larry Hyché at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

“The idea of the network is to facilitate pastors walking together so they have someone to call on for encouragement in making disciples personally and leading their churches by their lives,” Edmonds said, noting that the network includes around 150 pastors meeting in pastor huddles in Alabama and beyond.

The June 11 event was a way for pastors to get together, hang out and hear from

someone seen as an expert in the field.

Haynes offered some practical ways to build relationships for the purpose of sharing the gospel, including:

▶ **Remember people by name.**

Haynes said that's the first thing you can do to change your foundational relationship with another person.

When he meets people at stores, businesses or anywhere, he puts each name and

a note about where he met the person in his iPhone's Reminders app. Then he hits the info button and tells it to remind him about that person when he arrives at that location.

This helps him remember to pray and to look for another opportunity to interact with them by name, he said.

“It's really important to remember people's names,” Haynes said. “When someone forgets our name we kind of feel like they forgot us.”

The simple act of remembering could lead to a changed life, he said.

▶ **Pray for God to protect people.**

Sometimes breakthroughs happen when you pray for people's protection or provision. For example someone may recount a story of how he or she narrowly missed being in an accident and you can share with that person how you've been praying specifically for his or her safety.

“Sometimes prayer is the only thing that's going to make a difference,” Haynes said. “I pray God will protect people, that God will provide for them and that they will come to know Jesus.”

▶ **Share your stories.**

Ask questions of other people, listen to their stories and then share yours when asked, Haynes said. You can tell stories about how God has done things in your life and in the context of your story “you can plant truth in people's lives and they can't get mad at you,” he said.

Ken Allen, associational



Photo by Phil Brown

missions director for DeKalb Baptist Association, said Haynes' encouraged him.

“We in the church have a tendency to make disciple making too complicated,” he said. “Dr. Haynes made disciple making look simple — know someone's name, make a list of people you are most likely to influence and pray for them.”

Gathering together with other pastors from around the state was encouraging too, Allen said.

### ‘Grassroots level’

“You cannot help but be excited about church leaders meeting to discuss making disciples,” he said. “I love how this movement is at the grassroots level. Pastors all over the state are seeing afresh the biblical mandate to make disciples.”

Marty Holley, associational missions director for Russell Baptist Association, said he attended the event because God is renewing his passion for disciple making.

Haynes “helped me more clearly see disciple making occurs ‘as we go,’” Holley said. “At times that will be brief encounters but will also be longer ongoing mutual spiritual investments with specific individuals.”

After the talk Haynes took part in a panel discussion with Andy Frazier, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton, and Mark Gainey, pastor of Fultondale First, moderated by Robert Mullins, pastor of Crossroads Community Church, Elmore. The men talked about what disciple making looks like for them personally. ☞

For more information about Disciple Making Ministries, email [dedmonds@alsbom.org](mailto:dedmonds@alsbom.org).

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## you should know



Photo courtesy of Larry Dover

Volunteers from Franklin Baptist Association help construct a 3,000-square-foot multipurpose building at Leesville Korean Baptist Church, in Louisiana, a congregation that began more than 40 years ago. Franklin Association's construction team has traveled once a year for more than three decades to help churches with facility needs. 'It's an inspirational experience and it's always a blessing,' said Patsy Bobo, a member of Cherry Hill Baptist Church, Russellville. (TAB)

### *Housing allowance safe for ministers to claim*

The minister's housing allowance is safe following a decision by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) not to appeal a Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a statement FFRF officials said they felt a Supreme Court decision in their favor was unlikely and "concluded that any decision from the current court would put the kibosh on challenging the housing allowance for several generations."

In 2017, FFRF won a district court ruling that declared the minister's housing allowance unconstitutional. That decision was stayed, pending the resolution of all appeals. It was overturned early in March 2019. The minister's housing allowance was codified in federal tax law in 1954. (TAB)

### *High court upholds cross on public land*

A 40-foot cross on public land completed in 1925 to memorialize 49 World War I soldiers from Prince George's County, Maryland, does not violate the First Amendment's prohibition against government establishment of religion, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 20.

The American Humanist Association had challenged the constitutionality of the cross.

Writing for the 7-2 majority Associate Justice Samuel Alito said the age of the memorial and various meanings attached to it by the community provide evidence for its constitutionality. Alito added, "A government that roams the land, tearing down monuments with religious symbolism and scrubbing away any reference to the divine will strike many as aggressively hostile to religion." (BP)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### *Carey Association continues tradition of Sunday worship at Cheaha Park*



It began in 1980 with one visit to the park director's house, and nearly 40 years later it's still going strong.

From April to October each year — with the exception of race weekends at Talladega Superspeedway — Carey Baptist Association churches partner with a ministry at Cheaha State Park in Delta to conduct a nondenominational service on Sundays at 9 a.m.

Pastors in the association rotate preaching there, some of them moving their Sunday services to the Al Alexander Activities Building, a chapel named after the man who got it all started in 1980. Donna Frames, a member of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Delta, has served as the ministry's pianist and soloist for three decades.

"We're persistently there presenting the gos-



Photo by ADCNR

pel," said Bruce Willis, director of missions for Carey Association. (Grace Thornton)

### *FBC Union Springs' music minister Heitman announces retirement*



John Heitman used to fill in as a music director for churches when they needed it, and one Sunday in 1997 he was sent to First Baptist Church, Union Springs.

They asked him to stay and be the interim. Then they said, "Why don't you just stay and do this all the time?"

"It's really been a lot of fun," Heitman said of his 22-year run as the church's minister of music. Heitman is retiring at the end of August so he and his wife, Carolyn, can move closer to their children and grandchildren in the Carolinas.

"It's been very rewarding," he said. "One thing I've really enjoyed seeing is the transition of the church. We had a lot of older people and now it's a lot of young married people with kids."



HEITMAN

Bill Cannon, pastor of First, Union Springs, said it has been a joy to serve alongside Heitman.

"John is faithful to the Lord, always focused on glorifying the Lord, and dependable," Cannon said. "He will be missed by me and the church. He is one of the best there is as a husband, father, servant and friend." (Grace Thornton)

### *Cleo Prestridge, wife of Cleburne County pastor, dies at age 75*



Cleo Prestridge, wife of Pastor Doug Prestridge of Harmony Grove Baptist Church, Fruithurst, died June 8. She was 75.

Prestridge was a lifelong resident of Cleburne County. She was married to Doug for 58 years and they served 43 years in ministry together at Harmony Grove Baptist.

She taught special-needs children for 23 years and also served as a volunteer hospital and prison chaplain.

She is survived by her husband; daughters, Shelia, Tracey and Gail; son, David; 10 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

NEWS

# News near you

## BIBB ASSOCIATION

▶ **Schultz Creek Baptist Church, West Blocton**, will host a singing featuring Spoken For on June 29 at 6 p.m. Ben Corley is pastor.

## CHILTON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Ebenezer Baptist Church, Stanton**, will celebrate its bicentennial anniversary throughout July. Sunday School will begin at 9:45 a.m. and the worship service will begin at 10:45 a.m. each week. Each Sunday will feature a special event or speaker including Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions on July 21. For more information call 334-366-2535 or email ebc1819@gmail.com. Danny Rasberry is pastor.



LANCE

## COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host Camp CLBC on July 11 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The theme will be "Healthy Habits" and will include Bible study, music and activities. The camp program will feature archery with Wiregrass

Outdoors. A family meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. For more information call 334-347-6082. To register visit [www.CLBCOnthe.net](http://www.CLBCOnthe.net). Danny Wiggins is pastor. ▶ **Newbia Baptist Church, Elba**, will host Vacation Bible School on June 28-30. Friday's activities will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Saturday's activities will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the program will conclude Sunday at 11 a.m. The theme is "In the Wild." Will Jordan is pastor.



BAILEY

## CLEBURNE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Morgan Bailey**, second vice president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, is the new pastor of **Macedonia Baptist Church, Ranburne**. His first Sunday was June 23. He comes to Macedonia from Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer, where he served as pastor for 13 years. Bailey and his wife, Ritta, have two adult children.

## COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Hepzibah Baptist Church, Talladega**, will host a southern gospel concert featuring The Wood Brothers on June 30 at 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. A finger food fellowship will follow the concert, and participants should bring their favorite dish. Justin Milliken is pastor.

## DALE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Holmes Baptist Church, Ariton**, will present a fifth Sunday singing and fellowship June 30 at 5:30 p.m. featuring local church talent and others from the surrounding communities.

Refreshments will follow the singing. Wayne Williams is pastor.

## ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Atmore**, will hold a fifth Sunday singing June 30 at 11 a.m. with music by Hillspring Drive. Larry Beauchamp is interim pastor.

## ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

▶ Three Gadsden churches, **Central Avenue Baptist, Damascus Baptist and Edgewood Baptist**, are joining together for a community-wide Vacation Bible School on July 14-18. Ray Wain, Eddie Stevenson and Bart Watts, respectively, are the pastors of the three churches.

## PLEASANT GROVE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Vance**, will conduct Vacation Bible School for ages 3 through 12th grade July 14-19 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The theme will be "In the Wild." Jonathan Blackstock is pastor.

## SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Mount Enon Baptist Church, Dothan**, will celebrate its 131st anniversary with a homecoming service July 14 at 10 a.m. Bob Pittenger will be the guest speaker. Starla Watford will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow the service. Don Tew is pastor.✝



Photo by Mount Enon

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### *New Prospect's Vickers stresses need for strong families, missions mindset*

Noel Vickers said his 40-plus years in ministry, including the past five years as pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church, Ashland, in Clay Baptist Association, have been spent trying to encourage people of all ages to be strong Christians in a rapidly changing world.

"It's definitely changed since I was a young minister," said Vickers. "There are a lot of moral issues that just weren't issues back then. As pastors we've got to try to prepare people for a world that's gone mad."

He encourages parents to instill a love for Christ and the church and young girls and boys to be strong in the faith.

"I think we're living in the greatest time in history as far as our opportunity for outreach goes," he said. "We've got access to people in our country and other countries like never before, and we need to share with them." (Grace Thornton)



VICKERS

### *Allen Joyner marks 15 years at Sweet Home Baptist in Conecuh Association*

This year marks 15 years that Allen Joyner has served as pastor of Sweet Home Baptist Church, McKenzie, in Conecuh Baptist Association.

Brent Horton, the church's deacon chairman, said the church is grateful for his steady presence.

"Pastor Allen is very dedicated," Horton said. "He's dedicated to working in the community and like most pastors he's on call 24/7."

Joyner is very dependable and always there for his church, visiting people at home, in the hospital and in the nursing home, Horton said.

"He's just a very humble, dedicated pastor. He always makes himself available." (Grace Thornton)

### *Retired pastor, associational director Paul Kendrick dies at age 87*

Paul D. Kendrick, retired Alabama Baptist pastor and director of missions (DOM), died June 15. He was 87.

A native of the Zion Chapel commu-

nity near Elba in Coffee County, Kendrick considered Zion Chapel Baptist his home church. He held an undergraduate degree from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and a master's degree in education from Troy State University (now Troy University). He went on to earn a master of divinity and doctorate of ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Kendrick served for 39 years as a bivocational pastor to churches in Clarke, Coffee, Geneva and Walker counties while teaching English and French at the high school level. He also taught night classes in English and speech at the Alabama Southern Community College campus in Thomasville.

He retired in 2007 after 18 years as DOM of Washington Baptist Association. The association's caring center was named the Paul and Mavis Kendrick Caring Heart Center in honor of him and his wife, Mavis, who died in 2007.

Kendrick is also preceded in death by a son, Ronald, and daughter, Candance. He is survived by his daughter, Lisa; sons, Russell and Milton; 13 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren. (TAB)

# Shades Mountain's Forehand honored for 40 years in ministry

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Susan Forehand says she thinks her whole story has just been this — try to do the next right thing.

For years she's asked God what the next thing was He wanted her to do. And for the past four decades, that "next right thing" was to stay at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham. On June 2 the church honored her for 40 years of service — first in recreation ministry, then in women's ministry. Shades Mountain Baptist pastor Danny Wood said Forehand's legacy is loving people and being there for them in good times and in bad.

"I have been fortunate to be here for 25 of her 40 years of ministry and have had the privilege to watch Susan minister to people both within her job description and beyond," he said. "She consistently listens, loves, counsels, encourages, motivates and, yes, even cries with people. Sometimes the situation calls for upfront leadership and other times sitting in the background but her presence — which is the most important — is always there."

Forehand knows the value of presence personally. When she and her sister were young, her mother died of cancer. The women of First Baptist Church, Alexander City, where her father was pastor, helped raise the girls.

"God always brought women into my life to mentor me or speak into my life or tell me I could do something before I thought I could," Forehand said.

One of those things was to attend Samford University in Birmingham and major in something virtually unheard of at that time — church recreation. It was very new and it was "really so much more" than just having a gym where kids could play, she said.

It was a ministry that was growing at Shades Mountain when Forehand graduated from Samford — the church was in the process of building its community life center.

That building has been "a handle for people to build relationships," she said. "People would come for recreational programs and events and find out that big church on the

hill wasn't so bad and maybe they would come back."

For more than a decade Forehand went deep in that ministry, reaching out to children and families and sharing the gospel through it. Then when Wood became pastor he sat down with staff members individually and asked if they thought they were in the role they should be.

And as they talked Forehand realized the "next right thing" might be a move into women's ministry.

"It was a great time — a crossroads for me," she said. Getting women of all ages and stages in life together to swap stories was thrilling to Forehand.

"When our younger women get a really deep heart conversation with a wiser godly woman it is just gold to them," she said. "When everybody takes off [her] makeup it's just a bunch of girls talking. We want to be loved, feel secure, know our lives can make a difference."

Forehand has observed a lot happen over the years. She faced a cancer battle of her own several years back but she can tell multiple stories of how God walked her through it. She treasures the relationships she's built along the way, and

she's grateful for the constant support of her husband, David, and their daughter, Blythe. She remembers when the church first installed computers and when the idea of carrying a phone around seemed far-fetched. Now she's finding ways to use technology to mentor other women.

## 'Just be faithful'

"I think that's part of my role now, and I love doing that for younger women," she said. "I would say to women — it's OK and perfectly normal — if you feel like you don't know it all or just can't do it all. Just be faithful in doing what you do know how to do and where God has you and let the Lord take care of the rest."

And Forehand said she never stops being surprised how God uses broken vessels.

"I don't know how or why He's let me be a part of all this," she said. "I just know He's good and He's been faithful and given me what I needed." ✝



Photo courtesy of Shades Mountain Baptist Church  
Pastor Danny Wood (right) applauds Susan Forehand, who was recognized June 2 for 40 years of ministry.

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information on placing a classified ad call 205-870-4720, ext. 102 or email [ads@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org).

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### 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. Resumés with photo may be mailed: ATTN: Pastor/Search. [www.cbcprattville.org](http://www.cbcprattville.org).

#### 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@gmail.com](mailto:ebcashfordal@gmail.com).

#### 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.

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Mauldin First Baptist Church, Mauldin, South Carolina, is seeking to hire a full-time student pastor. Primary duties include overseeing the ministries of students and their families from sixth grade through college. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree, and three years of experience is preferred. Please submit resumés and/or questions to: [wleonard@fbcmauldin.org](mailto:wleonard@fbcmauldin.org).

#### YOUTH MINISTER

Cottage Hill Baptist Church (Bessemer Association) is seeking candidates to restart the youth ministry. Please email resumés to: [lorettamconnell@gmail.com](mailto:lorettamconnell@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](http://piedmontfbc.org). Job description available upon request.

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### PIANIST

New Georgia Baptist Church is seeking a pianist for Sunday morning worship. Paid posi-

tion. Contact: [jdmoman@charter.net](mailto:jdmoman@charter.net).

#### HOUSEPARENT

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### MINISTRIES

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# 'God has provided'

## 'Sweet fellowship' holding out hope for a pastor

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Sometimes if a train comes through town at just the right time, the service might start at 11:15 instead of 11. Or they might start a little late if it takes a minute to get all the children to sit down.

But no matter what Helton Memorial Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Stevenson, opens its doors every Sunday morning and gets started eventually.

### Filling the pulpit

In recent years they've "only missed two services and that's because of flooding in the area," said church member JoBeth Gamble.

That in and of itself is an

amazing sign of God's provision, she said. Mid-July will mark five years that the little church has been without a pastor but every week they've had someone in the pulpit.

"It's in a very, very remote setting but they've never missed church because they didn't have somebody to preach," said Dwight Everett, director of missions for Tennessee River Baptist Association.

The church, which backs up to a mountain, was built in 1900 after local doctor Pleasant H. Helton passed away and his wife donated the property to build a

church. The building has the original bell, and up until a couple of years ago its water source was a gravity-fed spring off the mountain.

The church is on the North Alabama Hallelujah Trail, a list of 32 churches that are at least a century old, still stand on their

original sites, are accessible to the public and still hold services. Round Mountain Baptist Church, Cedar Bluff, in Cherokee Bap-

tist Association is also on the trail, as is Church of the Forest, Houston, in Winston Baptist Association.

Helton Memorial "is a sweet, sweet fellowship," Everett said. "They've said

For more information about the North Alabama Hallelujah Trail, visit [northalabama.org/trails/hallelujah](http://northalabama.org/trails/hallelujah).



Facebook photo

Helton Memorial Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

they have always known they were a starter church for young preachers but young preachers just don't come this way anymore."

### 'There for a reason'

Their last pastor stayed as long as he could, preaching from a stool behind the pulpit until his health wouldn't allow him to anymore. Now others, including Everett, fill in each week.

Gamble said she feels like God is still blessing the church.

"We're there for a reason," she said. "We have high hopes God is going to send us another pastor."

It's a small congregation but they have some young families and last year with the help of other churches in the association they conducted Vacation Bible School.

The association also jumped in to help rebuild some of their classroom floors after flooding caused them to rot.

"It's totally amazing the way God has provided — I just have to sing His praises," Gamble said. "We can still pay the bills and there are still people coming. I love that place and I know it's where I'm supposed to be." ✝

## Sipsey Assoc. church builds CLC



Photo courtesy of Brad Hartsfield

During the recent homecoming celebration at New Hope Baptist Church, Berry, the congregation gathers in its unfinished Christian Life Center to pray. 'This is something that the church has had a vision to do for more than 15 years and now it is happening,' said Pastor Brad Hartsfield, adding that God is blessing the church with an active children's program and outreach ministry. (TAB)

## Community Life food bank helps families fill in the grocery gap

In Randolph County approximately 40% of residents are either under 18 or over 65 and 24% live below the poverty level.

That's why Frances Davis said the food bank ministry at Community Life Church, Roanoke, in Randolph Baptist Association, is dear to her heart.

"We have children in schools that go home hungry because the only meal they get is from the school. We have the elderly going without food to buy medicines," she said.

Every third Saturday of the month the people of Randolph County can visit the food bank and receive 22 pounds of food to help

them "get over the hump" at the end of the month, said Davis, who runs the ministry.

Volunteers from the church operate the food bank, which serves anywhere from 120 to 160 fam-

ilies per month. The ministry purchases food from Food Bank of East Alabama for about 18 cents a pound and receives donated goods from Walmart and Kroger.

"It is a true blessing," Davis said. (Grace Thornton)

## 'God deserves the praises'

(continued from page 1)  
a time of worship and an opportunity for those present to lay hands on and pray for the missionaries.

"May they proclaim the name of Jesus. May they boldly preach the gospel. May they glorify Christ in all that they do. Not to us but to Your name be the glory," the crowd prayed aloud.

"As we've been singing praise to God tonight we know that God deserves the praises of all the people of the earth," Chitwood said.

"Isn't it inspiring to be a part of what God is doing among the nations? Join us in the mobilized effort for the sake of the mission. Every church. Every nation." (Jessica Ingram)

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

# CHILD PROTECTION WORKSHOP

JOIN US ON JULY 18, 2019, IN TRUSSVILLE, ALABAMA.

GuideStone® knows that protecting children, youth and other vulnerable populations from the devastating consequences of sexual abuse is of the utmost importance to your ministry. **Which is why we are working with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, First Baptist Church Trussville and MinistrySafe to present the upcoming Child Protection Workshop.**

This one-day event will properly equip your ministry team with the tools and resources they need to help prevent acts of abuse.

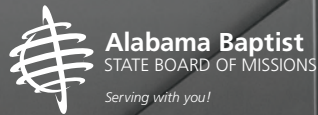
Will you join us for this important opportunity to learn how to keep your ministry aware and children safe?

WHEN: Thursday, July 18, 2019

WHERE: First Baptist Church Trussville (128 N. Chalkville Road, Trussville, AL 35173)

COST: \$20/person (includes lunch)

REGISTER: [guidestone.org/childprotectionworkshop](http://guidestone.org/childprotectionworkshop)



## SPEAKERS

Tom Richter



D.A. Horton



Billy Young



## WORSHIP LEADERS

More Than This



# JULY 19-20, 2019

EASTMONT BAPTIST CHURCH  
Register at [speak.ymlink.org](http://speak.ymlink.org)

## McCalla's Hepzibah Baptist enjoying new digital newsletter

It's a work in progress but Terry Lolley says he likes the way Flowpaper has worked for his church's digital magazine so far.

"We've only done two of them using Flowpaper, but the feedback has been really positive," said Lolley, executive pastor of Hepzibah Baptist Church, McCalla, in Pleasant Grove Baptist Association. "Everyone's enjoyed the look."

### Simple tool

Flowpaper is a digital tool that allows churches to make their magazine or newsletter available online without requiring a special app for it. It takes PDF files, compiles them into a flipbook format and enhances them with links to websites or videos.

Lolley said Flowpaper's simplicity and features were appealing to him as he tried out several different publishing tools.

"For instance, in one of our issues we were able to embed a funny Father's Day video for them to watch," he said.

Flowpaper's ability to work across platforms was a big selling point for him too.

"There are a lot of issues with just using email — some people don't check their email often, and there can be problems with spam filters. And not everybody has Facebook," he said. "This way they can access it right on the screen through whatever medium they are already using — email, Facebook or through our website. And they can get to it from their phone, tablet or computer."

To take a look at Hepzibah's newsletter visit [hbmccalla.com/](http://hbmccalla.com/) announcements. For more information about Flowpaper visit [flowpaper.com](http://flowpaper.com). (Grace Thornton)

# Transforming others

## Preacher's child, addict speaks to students on addiction

Matt Kelley has been sober now for more than 20 years, but before that, he was in "a bad place" for 14 years.

"I'm a preacher's kid, and I knew what I should've been doing," Kelley said. "But I made some bad decisions."

Kelley's work these days is in substance abuse prevention through his organization, Equip Ministries. He works hand in hand with churches like Moundville Baptist Church in Hale Baptist Association to share the gospel with the hurting.

"As a former addict Matt has a tremendous testimony of God's grace," said Jason Duckett, pastor of Moundville Baptist. "Now God is using his story to transform others. He has partnered with our church for community outreach events."

Kelley has "unique methods" of sharing the gospel



[equipministries.org](http://equipministries.org)

and has developed a curriculum designed to help the local church minister to addicts who have come through his ministry, Duckett said.

### Every teenager

Because Kelley himself was a preacher's kid who fell into addiction one of the mottos of Livingston-based Equip Ministries is that every teenager is at risk, Kelley said. He travels around the Southeast speaking to thousands of middle school and

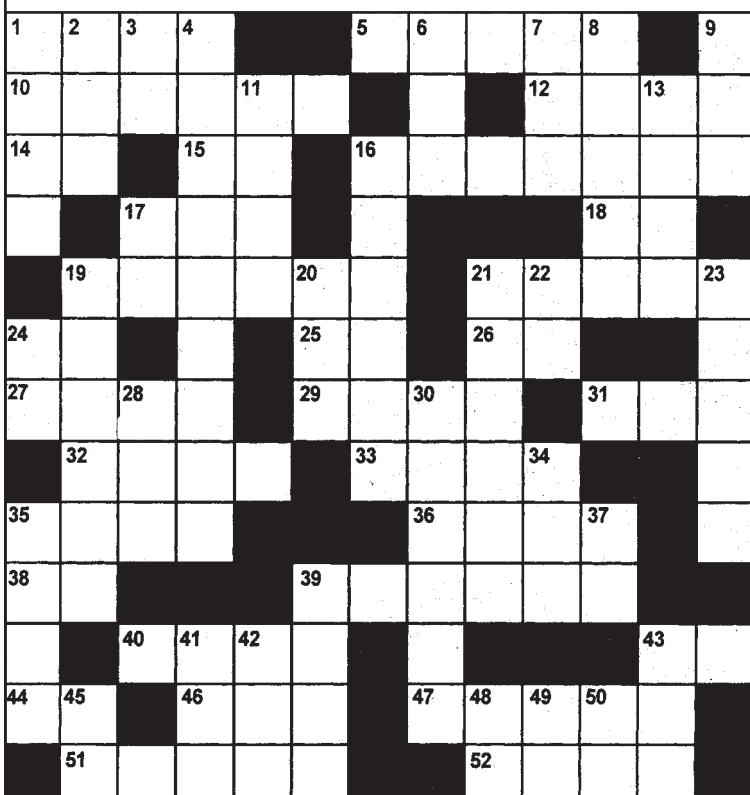
high school students, teaching them to recognize the temptations of substance use.

"We also speak in churches ... to awaken the congregants on the ever progressive advancements of teen addiction, depression and suicides, then to inspire them to maturity and willingness to [push] back against these temptations," Kelley writes on his website.

For more information visit [equipministries.org](http://equipministries.org). (Grace Thornton)

# Christian Crossword

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### Across

1. Hid from \_\_\_ and from generations. (Col. 1:26)
5. \_\_\_ is your reward in heaven. (Matt. 5:12)
10. The \_\_\_ shall come and take our place. (John 11:48)
12. I will not \_\_\_ to speak of anything. (Rom. 15:18)
14. For example.
15. Missouri.
16. \_\_\_ thy son, he shall build my house. (1 Chron. 28:6)
17. David ... feigned himself \_\_\_. (1 Sam. 21:12,13)
18. \_\_\_ I my brother's keeper? (Gen. 4:9)
19. The power of \_\_\_. (Esther 1:3)
21. As \_\_\_ obeyed Abraham. (1 Pet. 3:6; alt. spelling)
24. How can these things \_\_\_? (John 3:9)
25. Truth \_\_\_ Consequences.
26. Ambush between Beth-el and \_\_\_. (Josh. 8:12)
27. All sailors can tie a \_\_\_.
29. An authoritative standard.
31. Into captivity unto \_\_\_. (Amos 1:5)
32. Where are the gods of ... Hena and \_\_\_? (2 Kings 18:34)
33. Amos, the son of \_\_\_. (Luke 3:25)

### Down

35. A middle point between extremes.
36. A unit of dry measure.
38. Above-ground subway.
39. \_\_\_ and Bartholomew. (Matt. 10:3)
40. \_\_\_, Tekel, Upharsin. (Dan. 5:25)
43. Let us \_\_\_ over unto the other side. (Luke 8:22)
44. These \_\_\_ght Milcah did bear to Nahor. (Gen. 22:23)
46. Prefix having to do with the earth.
47. I write not these things to \_\_\_ you. (1 Cor. 4:14)
51. Simeon that was called \_\_\_. (Acts 13:1)
52. In the top of the rock \_\_\_. (Judg. 15:8)
13. Rome. (Italian)
16. The excellency of Carmel and \_\_\_. (Isa. 35:2)
17. Pray ye to the Lord for \_\_\_. (Acts 8:24)
19. Jacob called the name of the place \_\_\_. (Gen. 32:30)
20. A free election.
21. Hannah ... bare a son called ... \_\_\_. (1 Sam. 1:20)
22. They fled before the men of \_\_\_. (Josh. 7:4)
23. Speed it up!
24. Book. (abbr.)
28. Eggs.
30. Whitewater.
34. 1,101 in Roman numerals.
35. What the hand wrote on the wall. (Dan. 5:25)
37. Kitchen Police. (abbr.)
39. Balak brought Balaam unto the top of \_\_\_. (Num. 23:28)
41. In the white of an \_\_\_. (Job 6:6)
42. Formerly.
43. Jewel.
45. I am glorified \_\_\_ them. (John 17:10)
48. Cursed is \_\_\_ that curseth thee. (Num. 24:9)
49. But also to die \_\_\_ Jerusalem. (Acts 21:13)
50. Mom.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 30

## Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### BEING RESPONSIBLE 1 Timothy 5:1–8, 17–21

God does not save people so they can be “Lone Ranger” Christians. Not only does a person need a relationship with Jesus, he or she also needs a relationship with his or her brothers and sisters in Christ. We are a faith family. But because we are sinners saved by grace times of disagreement and conflict will occur.

Ephesus was no different. Faint-hearted, mild-mannered Timothy did not like conflict. The elders looked down on the young lightweight. Some of the elders had denied the faith and shipwrecked the faith of others. False teachers were present. Women wanted to be in charge as elders. The church was unhealthy due to theological and relational confusion. How can our churches be healthy? How are we to get along with one another? What responsibilities come with being a member of a faith family?

#### Respect All (1–2)

When Timothy talked to older men and women in the church he was to talk to them with the respect they were due — even with the affection he would have for his own parents. And he was to treat younger men like brothers. Younger women in the church were to be honored and their purity was to be protected just as a brother would for his own sister. Churches are faith families and members should relate to one another accordingly.

#### Care for Widows (3–8)

The church is to honor genuine widows through support. These widows had no other family members to care for them. If a widow had physical family members who could care for her the family members should practice godliness and meet her needs. This act of godliness pleases God, demonstrates their faith and frees the church to help widows without family support.

If a family will not care for the needs of their own family, especially widows in their family, they have

denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. This unloving act is sinful negligence. Lack of positive action, the sin of omission, contradicts one’s profession of faith. Your life is the best illustration of what you actually believe. Though one professes to be a Christian, he lacks the most precious of all the fruits that grow on the tree of the Christian life and conduct — love. Where this good fruit is absent there cannot be a good tree. If a professing Christian does not perform his religious duty with respect to those whom God has placed within the sphere of his special responsibility he is worse than an unbeliever.

Our goal as the church is to create a counterculture, a whole new society that demonstrates God is good, we are family and we love one another. We are to be a faith family who takes care of one another.

#### Care for Pastors (17–21)

The church is to honor faithful elders (pastors) with twofold honor. Double honor involves respect and includes pay. Pastors are to be expected to be good leaders in the church. They also must labor diligently in the study and proclamation of the word of God. A good pastor works hard to fulfill God’s calling on his life.

The church is to protect pastors from unfounded accusations. The elders are to be safeguarded against having to answer a charge unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. Lacking such support the accusation must not even be entertained. The reputation of the elder must not be unnecessarily damaged and his work must not suffer unnecessary interruption.

When an accusation against an elder has sufficient support and is sustained by the facts the sinning elder must be publicly rebuked. Elders who live with unrepentant sin must not be spared. In fact they must be punished more severely than others.✠

## Bible Studies for Life

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

### THE POOR WIDOW: FAITH THAT GIVES Luke 12:13–21; 21:1–4

This week we learn from a poor widow that our attitudes toward money reflect our attitudes toward God and those in need.

#### Having an abundance of things does not equate to having an abundant life. (12:13–15)

Someone who feels he deserves a greater share of an inheritance hopes to co-opt Jesus’ authority to help himself in his conflict with his brother. Jesus indicates He hasn’t been appointed to resolve this particular issue and suggests the fact that the man’s first instinct was to use Jesus’ authority to his personal advantage in a financial dispute may be a sign that his priorities were confused.

In what might have been his one opportunity to benefit from Jesus’ presence he couldn’t think of any greater thing he could gain from Christ than a financial advantage.

He sought a greater abundance of things in life rather than seeking the abundant life only Christ can offer. Jesus’ warning about the temptation of greed could potentially apply to both of the men involved in this dispute.

#### Evaluate your life’s pursuits and priorities from an eternal perspective. (12:16–21)

Our Lord tells a parable about a man who thinks the sole purpose of life is to gain financial security and then to be free to enjoy the wealth he has gained. It never occurs to the man that rather than simply storing his wealth and using it to enjoy a life of leisure he could be using it for the benefit of others.

He is focused on his own self-interest in a way that, ironically, is to the extreme detriment of his own self-interest.

The blessings we receive are given to us by God to be shared with others in need and not to be

hoarded for our own use.

Jim Elliot, the missionary martyr, wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” The man in Jesus’ parable was unwilling to give what he could not keep and no strategy is more foolish than that. Rather one should be “rich toward God” which includes being rich in generosity toward those in need.

As Proverbs 19:17 says, “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and He will reward them for what they have done.” The good things God gives us should be used to advance His kingdom purposes.

#### Sacrifice is a demonstration of one’s willingness to trust God’s provisions. (21:1–4)

The faith of the poor widow described in this passage is even more remarkable when we remember in the verse just before this passage Jesus says the teachers of the law “devour widows’ houses” (Luke 20:47).

The fact religious leaders had been exploiting people like her did not deter her from giving all she had to the temple they controlled. Her giving was a reflection of her love for God and her faith in Him, not a reflection of her faith in them.

The religious leaders should have been ashamed of themselves for exploiting such a woman rather than helping keep her from becoming destitute. Those who were making a show of their generous giving to the temple but whose generosity did not extend to this woman should also have been ashamed.

Unlike them she will be remembered as one who trusted God not only with her last penny but down to her last breath. She had less money and better reasons not to give than any of us but provided us with a Christ-like example of entrusting oneself completely to God and of showing part of what it means to be “rich toward God.”✠



MUSIC/MOVIE

# Media reviews

## Newsboys

United  
Fair Trade

Bringing former Newsboys vocalist Peter Furler and guitarist Phil Joel together with



current band members including singer Michael Tait, 10-track "United"

is one of the best-ever Newsboys albums. If you want a rock-style worship song, try "Greatness of Our God." For a song with Furler and Tait harmonizing, listen to "Symphony." To hear the Newsboys and former DC Talk member Kevin Max, listen to "Love One Another." Another good one is "Never Setting Sun."

## Hillsong Young & Free

III  
Hillsong

It's the third album but the first studio release from Hillsong Church's contemporary worship group, which unlike Hillsong United makes worship music geared solely toward a younger audience. The album includes 17 tracks,

with everything from pop ("How Deep is the Love") to electronic dance music ("Love Won't Let Me Down") to acoustic guitar ("Jesus Loves Me"). I liked it. But if you don't like any of those, then listen to "Selah I." It includes a clip from a Billy Graham sermon. ✝



# 'It's about what God has done'

## Camp talks about first wife's death in new album, movie

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For Christian singer Jeremy Camp, the next year won't be like any other 12-month stretch during his long career.

It began in June with the making of "I Still Believe" — a faith-based romantic film about the relationship with his first wife — and will continue this fall with the release of his yet-to-be-titled next album. Then in March 2020 "I Still Believe" will hit theaters giving Camp a larger platform than he's ever had by putting his story in front of millions of moviegoers.

Alabama's Jon and Andrew Erwin are directing it.

"I feel like the last few years have been a big heart preparation for me for this very moment," Camp told *The Alabama Baptist*.

"I Still Believe" will tell the true story of Jeremy and Melissa falling in love, marrying and then

returning from their honeymoon only to discover cancer had spread throughout her body. She died a few months later. He then wrote the song "I Still Believe."

K.J. Apa ("Riverdale") will play Jeremy while Britt Robertson ("A Dog's Purpose") will play Melissa.

Camp wrote about Melissa's testimony in his 2011 book, "I Still Believe." Still,

he said, having it retold on the big screen caused him to pause briefly and ask: Do I want to put my wife and family through that again? In 2003 he married Adrienne Liesching,

the lead singer of the Christian band The Benjamin Gate.

He and Adrienne believed the hope-filled story of Melissa needed to be told on screen. Melissa had stayed strong in her faith while facing death and Camp too held to his faith after her passing.

"It's not about me, it's about what God has done," Camp said. "And God's opening

a door to share the hope that He's given me."

Camp said he sensed God telling him, "I want to use this to minister to more people than you've ever ministered to before."

### 'Dead Man Walking'

Camp released a single, "Dead Man Walking," from the album in May. It is based on Colossians 2:13. That song and his

upcoming album have a similar theme, he said: Remember what God has done.

"You were once a dead man walking," he said. "You may be going through struggles and hardships. Yet look what God has

done. He's been

faithful." ✝

*"It's not about me it's about what God has done. And God's opening a door to share the hope that He's given me."*

Jeremy Camp  
singer/songwriter

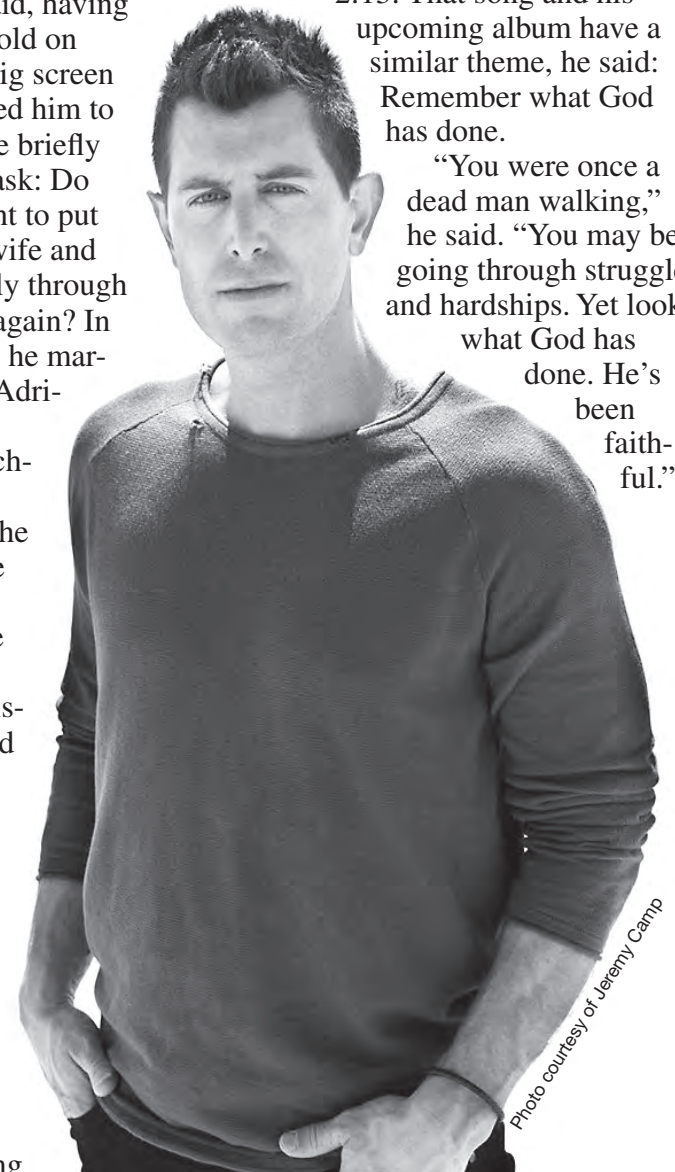


Photo courtesy of Jeremy Camp

## Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

# Example of what their lives could be

## Baptist Global Response training center changes woman's life, family situation

**P**urnima and her husband recently celebrated one year of marriage and they're even thinking about having children. But their love story is an unlikely one that began because of a job training center supported by Baptist Global Response (BGR).

In Purnima's South Asian home most women are born into poverty

### How to pray:

▶ Pray for women in South Asia and around the world to find hope and a future through Christian job training ministries.

▶ Pray for Purnima and others who minister to women in poverty through vocational training. (TAB)

and destined to stay there. A woman is expected to marry early, bear children and obey her husband. Because most marriages are arranged marrying for love is rare. This is what Purnima had grown up knowing.

Due to her father's frequent absences from the family and her mother's health problems, Purnima and her younger sister supported the family for years, paying the rent and putting food on the table.

But Purnima had an ally many girls don't — a local handicrafts training center.

She and about 30 other girls have spent years coming to the center, learning skills like embroidery and sewing. They earn a respectable wage for their work so they're able to provide for their families. The beautiful bags, jewelry and accessories they create are shipped around the world. But it was only a matter of time before Purnima's father ar-



BGR photo

Purnima helps support her family through sewing and embroidery work.

ranged her marriage. Depending on who he chose she could be condemned to poverty forever.

### An unexpected turn

That is ... until the program leaders paid for Purnima and other girls to attend a Christian camp.

While they were there, a Christian man noticed Purnima. He came home and told his parents to stop looking for his wife — he had found her. He sent word to the center that he wanted to marry Purnima.

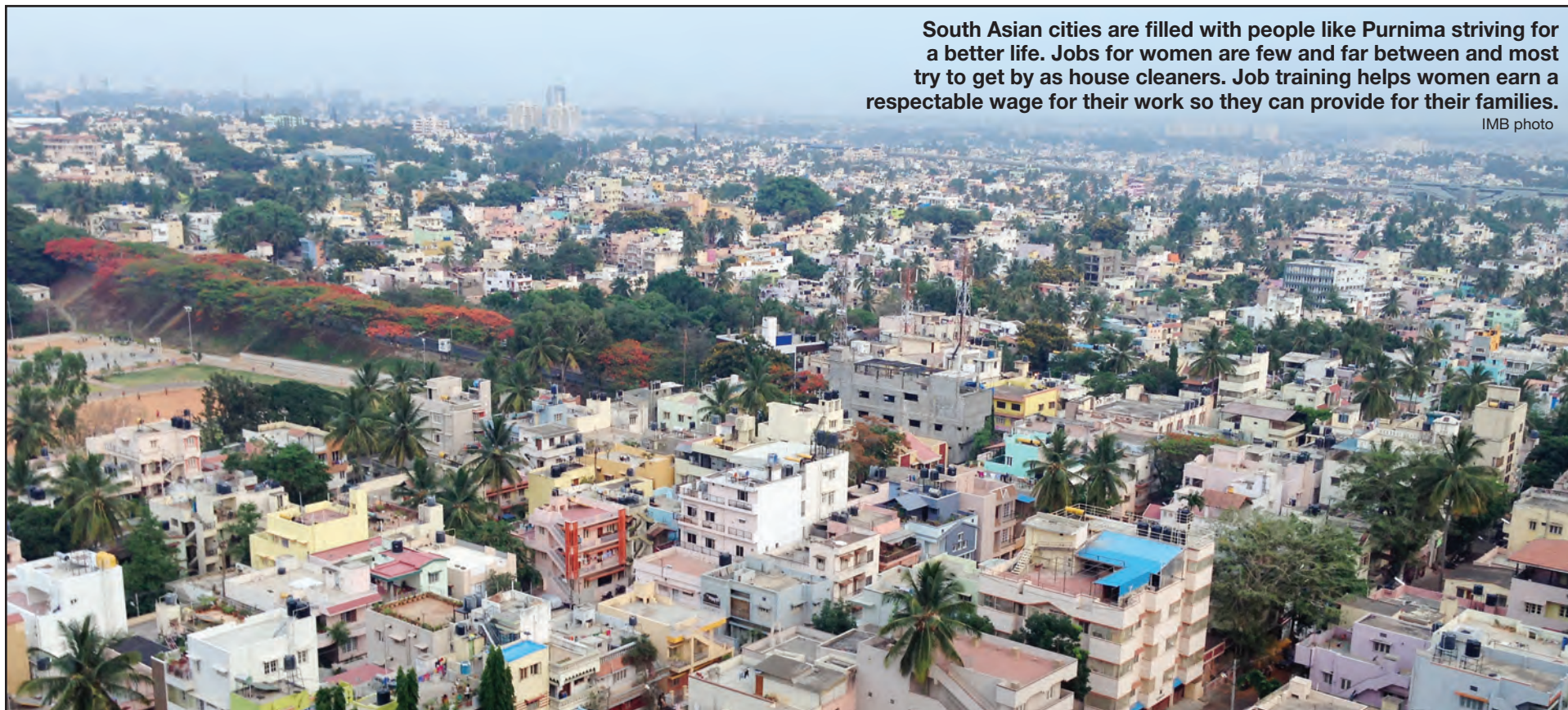
At first Purnima's father disapproved. But in time he changed his mind and Purnima said yes. The training center arranged all the wedding plans between the two families.

They paid for all of Purnima's share of the wedding expenses since the family had such little money.

On the day of the wedding two of the center leaders escorted Purnima into the ceremony.

Purnima finally has love and security in her life. The center has hired her as a full-time staff member teaching younger girls embroidery and older girls more complex sewing techniques. It wasn't long ago that she was one of them, another girl just trying to make ends meet.

Now she's an example of what their lives could be, thanks to gifts to BGR. To read more stories of lives changed or to give go to [www.gobgr.org](http://www.gobgr.org). (BGR)



South Asian cities are filled with people like Purnima striving for a better life. Jobs for women are few and far between and most try to get by as house cleaners. Job training helps women earn a respectable wage for their work so they can provide for their families.

IMB photo