



# The Alabama Baptist

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August 15, 2019

Vol. 184, No. 32  
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



Trustworthy news, stories with heart essential elements of TAB's mission

◆ Pages 6–7



Immigration crisis not new in country viewed as haven for persecuted

◆ Page 9



Beauregard benefit offers healing, donations to community

◆ Page 15

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

Cole Burton looks at his sister, Libba, after opening his eyes for the first time following an accident that left him in a coma.



Photos courtesy of Tina Burton

After being hit by a car in rural Calhoun County in May 2018 and a long road of recovery, Cole Burton will return to college at Auburn University in the fall of 2019.

# 'God WINKS'

## Series of miracles takes Auburn student from coma back to college

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**C**ole Burton says he missed the moments the miracles started happening. He doesn't remember the panic that happened around him in rural Calhoun County after a driver lost control and plowed into him

and a classmate while they were studying rock formations on the side of the road.

He wasn't conscious when an ambulance pulled up just seconds after someone called 911 — it was passing by on its way from dropping someone off nearby.

He wasn't aware the helicopter that picked him up and took him to UAB Hospital just happened to be in the area because a rainstorm had prevented it from returning to Sylacauga.

And he was still in a coma the day his then pastor, Rob

Jackson, and the Burton family gathered around him to pray for the biggest miracle of all.

### 'Pretty bleak'

"It looked pretty bleak," said Jackson, who had served as the Burtons' pastor at Central Baptist Church, Decatur. "He had massive head trauma and other major injuries."

The other young man who had been airlifted from the accident died from his injuries. The Burtons had been asked to consider taking their son off life support, but they felt they shouldn't, said Charlie Burton, Cole's dad.

"God impressed upon us that if He didn't take him at the site of the accident God would make that decision and we didn't have to," he said.

They put their son on a feeding tube. He continued to worsen.

"We gathered around him there that night and as we prayed, you could feel the power of God," Jackson said.

As they prayed Cole started "storming" — which can be a sign of the brain starting to wake up and control normal body functions.

(See 'Burtons,' page 11)

# 10-year-old Zak McCullar organizes inaugural Children's Ministry Day at FBC Carbon Hill

Within minutes of the first-ever Children's Ministry Day emphasis being announced as officially on the denominational calendar, ministry leaders wanted to know what First Baptist Church, Carbon Hill, had planned.

The northwest Alabama church would undoubtedly set the standard for the special focus every third Sunday in July through 2023 since the idea originated from the pastor's 10-year-old son, Zak McCullar.

Zak's dad (and pastor) Scott McCullar said, "I decided to let Zak lead the way for our faith family ... and am thankful he allowed me to have a part in the special day."

Zak made the original motion for Children's Ministry Day to be added to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) calendar at the June 2018 annual meeting in Dallas. He then addressed the SBC Executive Committee in February 2019 prior to their vote approving it.

Zak was recognized on stage in June 2019 during the SBC annual meeting in Birmingham, and the special emphasis at First, Carbon Hill, took place July 28.

Zak, his sister Mackenzie and their friend Addie Mae Crumbley helped lead the service.

"Children's ministry workers



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Zak McCullar shares some of the story behind Children's Ministry Day on July 28 at FBC Carbon Hill where his father, Scott, is pastor. Zak organized the special emphasis Sunday and led the congregation in a call to worship by singing 'The Lion and the Lamb.'

spend time, money and effort," Zak said. "Sometimes it is a thankless job but they still do it. They are very important to me." (Jennifer Rash)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

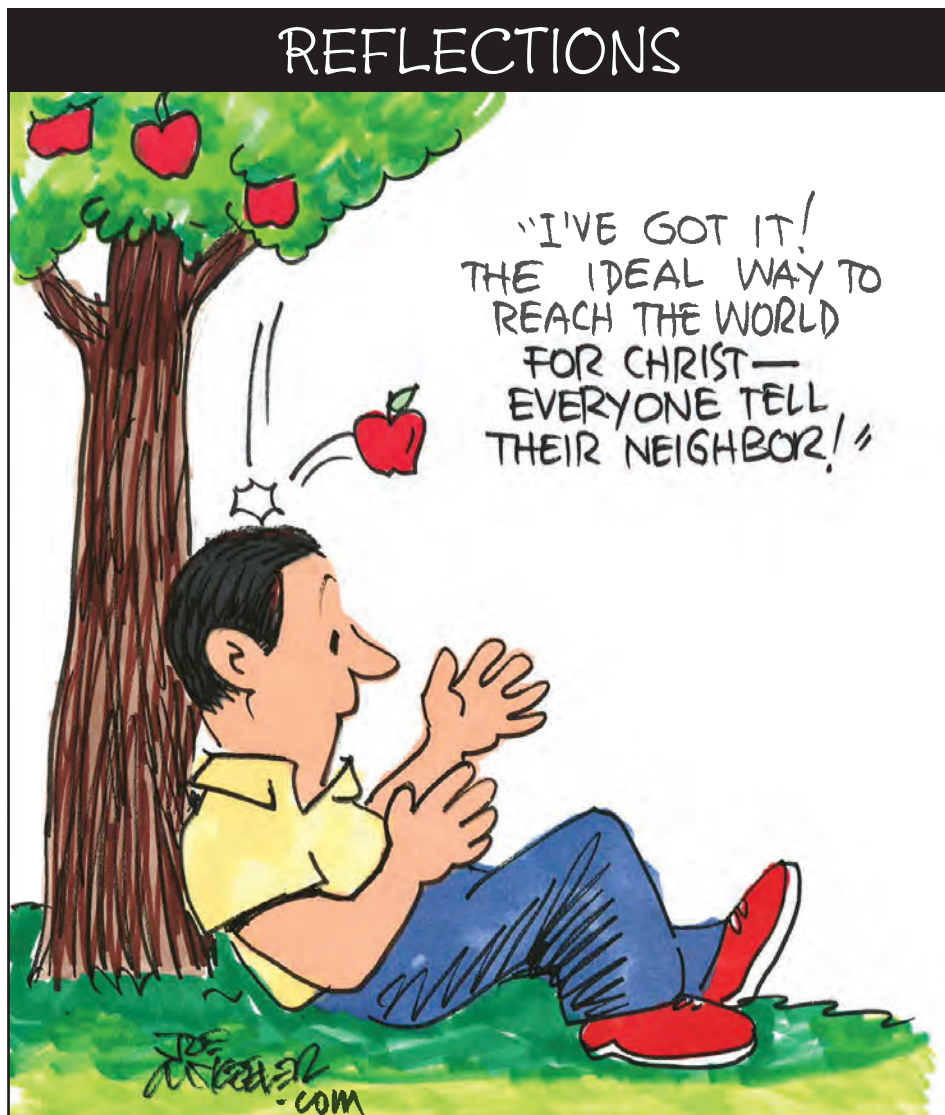
The kids of FBC Carbon Hill gave out 13 gift bags with special treats and a note to the children's workers in the church.

**Clarification**

To donate to the RaVenz Project in Venezuela as detailed in the July 25, 2019, issue, visit [www.imb.org/give/project/venezuela-crisis-response](http://www.imb.org/give/project/venezuela-crisis-response).

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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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as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council

# MY RASHIONALE

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
President and Editor-in-Chief

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@RashionalThts



## Thank you for doing life with us — we love sharing your stories

A famous quote by Ronald Reagan says, “We can’t help everyone but everyone can help someone.”

I’m not sure when I first heard this quote but I remind myself of it often as the despair and brokenness around all of us becomes more and more overwhelming.

So many odds seem stacked against an endless number of friends, family and acquaintances as well as that constant stream of faces popping up in media reports sharing the latest horrific action or depressing situation.

We are bombarded with upsetting news reports on every news channel, in every newspaper and on all forms of digital news platforms.

We can’t escape the negativity, ugliness and unthinkable actions happening so routinely now that we aren’t really surprised — which makes it even more sad, knowing we have come to expect the worst of each other.

One by one, more and more of the human race is losing hope, embracing fear and deciding not to try any more. Evil and deep-seated anger are turning some to destructive retaliation.

And who needs enemies on foreign soil plotting against us when we are doing a spectacular job of imploding by ourselves?

As all of the despair swirls around us, how easy is it for believers in and followers of Jesus Christ to pull into themselves determining that “there’s no hope,” “it’s too far gone” or “it’s just too overwhelming”?

Some days really are exhausting (almost too hard to bear) and most definitely overwhelming but with Christ we are able.

We know this and for many of us we’ve truly experienced it, but we also fight a constant battle of amnesia when it comes to God’s promises, God’s word and many of the basic truths.

You might have a favorite Scripture or a certain song that motivates and recenters you.

Sometimes a spiritual mentor or Bible study teacher reminds us that we can overcome — even when life doesn’t work out

like we thought or the journey looks drastically different than we ever imagined.

We also hope that engaging with *The Alabama Baptist* and TAB Media offers a glimpse of hope and reminders of how much good really is happening amid the chaos.

Our goal is to offer accurate and fair reporting of news and information, helpful resources for surviving life’s difficult circumstances and hope-filled encouragement and inspiration along the journey.

We love sharing the stories of

God’s people doing God’s work in Alabama, across the nation and around the world.

We pray your time spent with *TAB* is calming, peaceful and fulfilling — and that it prompts you to shine for Jesus, share His love and demonstrate the amazing grace He modeled for us.

Walking this path with you is one of our greatest honors. Thank you for trusting us and committing time to spend with us. Thank you for joining the conversation and helping us all learn together. Thank you for doing life with us. 🌈

## RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

### What would the world be like if adults could have and share even half the joy the children in our lives bring us?

Church hopping isn’t the typical routine for those of us at *The Alabama Baptist* but Sunday, July 28, provided a fun opportunity to participate, at least to some level, in three different church services.

All were different styles and sizes but each were filled with love, joy, smiles, a buzz of excitement and a warm welcome for all who showed up.

It really does make a difference to sense you are noticed and sincerely appreciated.

I spent most of my time that day at First Baptist Church, Carbon Hill, for their special Children’s Ministry Day (see story, page 2) — and the kids didn’t hesitate to swallow me up with lots of love.



experiences into the word of God ... but children are bold and full of faith. They have joy and take each day as it comes,” he said.

“Children serve the Lord with everything they have and often times we adults hold back a little bit. We should come to the Lord like little children — joyful, faithful and bold.”

McCullar’s words reminded me of the importance of investing in the lives of the children around us.

They need us to believe in them, remind them of their value and teach them how to navigate life.

They need us to model for them how to express love and joy for our Savior in adulthood.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

If only all of us could be that bold to show the grace and love of Jesus.

Pastor Scott McCullar said it best during his sermon: “Children have a great value in the kingdom of God. We can learn lessons from them. They hold nothing back.”

“We adults try to squeeze our

# Your Voice



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

## Serving the Lord in and out of the spotlight

By Julie Donavan  
Children's minister, North Shelby Baptist Church

I am sure we can all look back and think of our first day of school experiences.

I was always excited to see the friends I missed over the summer. We would talk during PE or at lunch about our vacations and outings we might have taken.

A new school year meant new challenges and fun memories with new and old friends.

One teacher sticks out in my mind more than anyone else — Ms. Braswell. She was my fourth grade teacher and she was kind, caring and fun.

You could tell that she truly loved

her students and she wanted us to succeed. It helped that she let us chew gum and take our shoes off during class even though we weren't supposed to.

The reason Ms. Braswell stands out above the rest is because you could see her heart in every lesson she prepared. She was intentional with her students.

Teachers work so hard to make sure their students get the education they need to thrive. Teachers do not only work in front of the classroom but at home as well. Teachers prepare lessons at home and they aren't getting paid for that time.

This reminds me of the over-achieving work of the prophet Eli-

jah. Although Elijah wasn't perfect, he would go above and beyond to serve the Lord. Elijah served the Lord behind the scenes when he was obedient to the Lord at the river (1 Kings 17:2–16). Elijah knew he was alone but he obeyed God and the Lord blessed him by sending food through ravens.

There were many times when Elijah was not behind the scenes. Instead he was on center stage proclaiming God's name (1 Kings 18:21).

Elijah will always be known as one of the greatest prophets in the Bible. He is known because of his obedience to the Lord, no matter the circumstance. Like I said, Elijah wasn't perfect and that is why we can relate to him so well.

Let's take a note from teachers and from the prophet Elijah. We should serve the Lord behind the scenes and on the stage.

Sometimes when we serve behind the scenes we feel as if our work is not worthy because people don't see it, but God sees our work and He is pleased.

God is the only one who matters when we are serving Him and not the people around us: "So then, my dear friends, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless (1 Cor. 15:58)."

I hope you remember this verse as you serve the Lord whether it be behind the scenes or on the stage.

It is very important that we all work together for the glory of God, that we continually pray for each other and that we work together for the furtherance of the gospel.

**Scott Stokes**  
Associational mission strategist  
Lamar Baptist Association

We can and will still enjoy the wonder and excitement of the Lord's presence when we gather for worship.

**Pastor Gary Fisher**  
South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham

Even if they've strayed far from church in college and adulthood, dechurched millennials have at least some pieces of growing up with God tucked away in their minds and hearts.

**Grace Thornton**  
www.WMU.com

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. Biblical hope is a certainty.

**Jay Robertson**  
Assistant professor of Christian studies  
University of Mobile

## How's your heart?

What condition is your heart? Your heart will beat about 500 million times over a lifespan of seven decades.

However, things can go wrong, from birth defects to the breakdown of the cardiovascular system.

One can learn how to take care of his or her heart, find complications before they get worse and even prevent potential diseases.

But one major heart problem no medical doctor can repair is spiritual. The best recipe for a healthy heart is found in Philip- pians 2:5: "Let this mind be in

you which was also in Christ Jesus."

How can we help anyone else with a healthy heart unless we are on the right diet?

We only have one heart and one opportunity to have a healthy heart.

Be diligent about how your heart is treated. Out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

**EDITOR'S NOTE — This devotional is adapted from "Be Inspired: 101 Thoughts for Every Christian Writer" by D. Jay Powell.**

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“One’s walk with God should include dependence on God and mutual dependence among believers.”

SCOTT MCCONNELL

Executive director, LifeWay Research

Thankful for *The Alabama Baptist* paper sharing a list of vetted points of contact to aid in supporting ministry and humanitarian relief at the border. So thankful. We should all respond with compassion to the migrant crowds, harassed and helpless.

**Alan Cross**  
Author and pastor

Membership in a local church means joining your imperfect self to many other imperfect selves to form an imperfect community that, through Jesus, embarks on a journey toward a better future ... together.

**Scott Sauls**  
Author and pastor

Life goal: to speak, write, sing, laugh, weep, work and play in such

a way that someone, at some point, will find it easier to believe in Jesus.

**Ray Ortlund**  
Renewal Ministries

Though we can say we love others through our actions, if we fail to verbalize the gospel, which can save their souls from hell, have we really loved them? Let us go forth and do good deeds, but let us also be intentional about turning those good deeds into gospel deeds.

**Terry Dorsett**  
Executive director, Baptist Convention of New England

I felt a renewed hope spark in my heart. Not necessarily hope for the closed door to be opened again, but hope for a day when I would fully

trust in the beauty and wholeness of God’s plan.

**Maggie Walsh**  
The Rope blog

Jesus said, “I will come again.” This is a wonderful promise for the Christian: the coming of the Lord Jesus to gather His people unto Himself! I do not know when Christ will return but I do know He will return for His people. The Bible says, “Watch, because you do not know the day on which your Lord will come.” We are to be alert and looking for His return. We are encouraged to be waiting and looking for the coming of our Christ.

**Pastor Eugene Carver**  
Hillview Baptist Church  
Birmingham

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @ScottyWardSmith

Today I want to listen 10 times better than offering suggestions; remember that not all my opinions need to be shared; be more intrigued with people than irritated; assume if I knew more, I’d be more compassionate and slower to criticize anyone. I need the Gospel today.

### @TrevinWax

We need more than accountability for the struggle of the present moment; we need a glorious vision of the future selves we are becoming.

### @krazy4ujc

Our culture has accepted two huge lies. 1. If you disagree with someone’s lifestyle, you must fear or hate them. 2. To love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are non-

sense. You don’t have to compromise convictions to be compassionate.

### @alsbom

The Week of Prayer for State Missions is Sept. 8–15. Southern Baptist churches all over the state are praying together for a powerful movement of God through various Great Commission Ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and Alabama WMU.

### @craiggroeschel

We can’t let compliments go to our heads or criticism stick in our hearts.

### @SusanCodone

Part of worship is sharing our story. I’m grateful God shapes me to use my gifts. What story can you tweet today as worship? “And we

know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” Rom. 8:28.

### @Rgallaty

“... True prayer is measured by weight, not by length. A single groan before God may have more fullness of prayer in it than a fine oration of great length.” — C.H. Spurgeon

### @VOM\_USA

SYRIA: Pray that God will open the eyes of extremists in Syria to see the truth of Jesus Christ.

### @DannyAkin

“The motto of every missionary, whether preacher, printer or schoolmaster, ought to be ‘Devoted for life.’” — Adoniram Judson



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs  
Russell Klinner is executive director of Shocco Springs Conference Center.

## Brake check at Shocco

My family loves the experience of a theme park, especially roller coasters. The excitement builds from the time they see the rides. They build a mental storyboard, complete with the sights, sounds and imagery of everything from the thrill of the first drop to the brake check at the end of the ride.

As I was talking with my kids about a recent trip to Six Flags, I realized how similar the cycle of Shocco is to a theme park experience. We imagine what it will be like, we live it out and then we do it over again.

We spent much of last year preparing for and building our dream for summer 2019. Thanks to the prayers, support of countless people and God’s hand, 2019 has lived up to the story we built in our minds.

We hosted 30,000 guests, served over 200,000 plates of food and had roughly 600 registered decisions for Christ. Countless lives have been eternally changed by God.

Season after season since 1948, God has been faithful. Although we’re in summer 2019 “brake check,” we are already planning for fall and looking ahead to summer 2020. Get ready and partner with us as we get ready to do it again. It will be unforgettable!

—Russell Klinner

# Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

**Trustworthy news, stories with heart remain essential elements of *TAB*'s mission**

**W**hat makes a story one you'd want to read?

The day Jennifer Davis Rash, editor of *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*), asked that question on the *TAB* News podcast, she went on to tell the story of Dewayne Rembert, a young man who grew up stealing from houses and selling drugs — until Jesus got hold of his heart and changed everything.

Now Rembert is planting a church in an urban area of Alabama filled with young men facing similar struggles as he did.

That's the kind of story Rash says *TAB* wants to tell. It's the kind that fills the pages of *TAB*'s weekly print edition, the text of its digital format and the minutes of its weekly podcast.

And the heart behind it — a heart to encourage and inform people

and help them walk a little closer to Jesus — is the same heart that's been there since *TAB* was founded 176 years ago.

## Great stories

From the minute Baptists first arrived in Alabama they started changing their towns, their state and their world. And they still do today. They pray, they give and they invest in their churches. They raise up missionaries, build houses, feed the hungry and take the hope of Christ to the ends of the earth. And all of those things make great stories, stories that others need to hear.

**The Alabama Baptist has won more than 250 awards for its content in less than 25 years.**

In the past 23 years *TAB* has won more than 250 awards for its content — graphic design, editorials, stories about Alabama's difference-makers and investigative articles. One series in particular helped rally voters to put a halt to an almost assured statewide lottery in 1999.



Photo by Maggie Walsh

Judson College's George Washburn (behind piano), director of library resources, and Leah Washburn (playing piano), enrollment coordinator for distance learning, lead a special rendition of 'Happy Birthday' during the 175th birthday party for *The Alabama Baptist* on Feb. 6, 2018, on Judson's campus in Marion.

It showed "what can happen when Christians work together," wrote Bob Terry, *TAB*'s editor emeritus who retired in 2018 after 23 years at *TAB* and 50 years total in Southern Baptist newspaper life.

Across its history *TAB* has been led by a number of editors, but only four in the century after it was made a convention entity — L.L. Gwaltney, Leon Macon, Hudson Baggett and Terry. Rash, Terry's successor, has been at *TAB* since Jan. 1, 1996, and at the helm since Jan. 1, 2019.

"At *TAB* we want to help believers grow in their faith and stay focused on our main priority — to love the Lord with all our heart,

mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves," Rash said. "We want to provide encouragement to survive the difficult days and resources to help with a variety of life issues. We also desire to give inspiration to share the gospel as the Lord leads and let His light shine through us in every moment of our day-to-day lives."



Photo by Caroline Summers

Bob Terry (pictured above with his wife Pat) retired Dec. 31, 2018, after 23 years as *TAB* editor.

*TAB* also strives for excellence and to provide trustworthy news reporting, she said.

A few quick facts you need to know:

► The print edition reaches nearly 55,000 households every week. It offers heartwarming feature stories, resources for Christian



Photo by Sondra Washington

Kendrick Washington, aka The Real Apok, (second from right) and his daughter, Adaia, discuss esports and ministry with then *TAB* editor-elect Jennifer Davis Rash (second from left) and Debbie Campbell for a 2018 *TAB* News radio show.



TAB photo

The offices of *The Alabama Baptist* moved around the state for decades before finding a permanent home in Birmingham's Homewood neighborhood in 1975. Recent changes in the building include the creation of a community space downstairs.

living, Baptist news, articles on the persecuted church globally and other important information from Alabama and around the world.

▶ The digital edition is delivered each week to every subscriber's inbox and includes the full content of the paper in full-color.

▶ The *TAB* website, [thealabama-baptist.org](http://thealabama-baptist.org), offers an archive of the newspaper's articles from 2000 to the present with full access available to *TAB* subscribers.

▶ The *TAB* News podcast — co-hosted by Rash and Debbie Campbell, *TAB*'s director of communications — presents an inspirational interview or two each week, along with an audio digest of a few selected stories from that week's issue. You can access it on the *TAB* website or your favorite podcast app, like Apple Podcasts or Stitcher. (And you can find Rembert's story on the March 26 podcast.)

### Radio show

▶ *TAB* also has a radio show that airs in north and central Alabama each Saturday at 2 p.m. on Birmingham's WXJC 101.1 FM and 850 AM or at <http://player.listen-live.co/42691>.

▶ You can find *TAB* on social media — follow @AlabamaBaptist on Twitter and Instagram and like

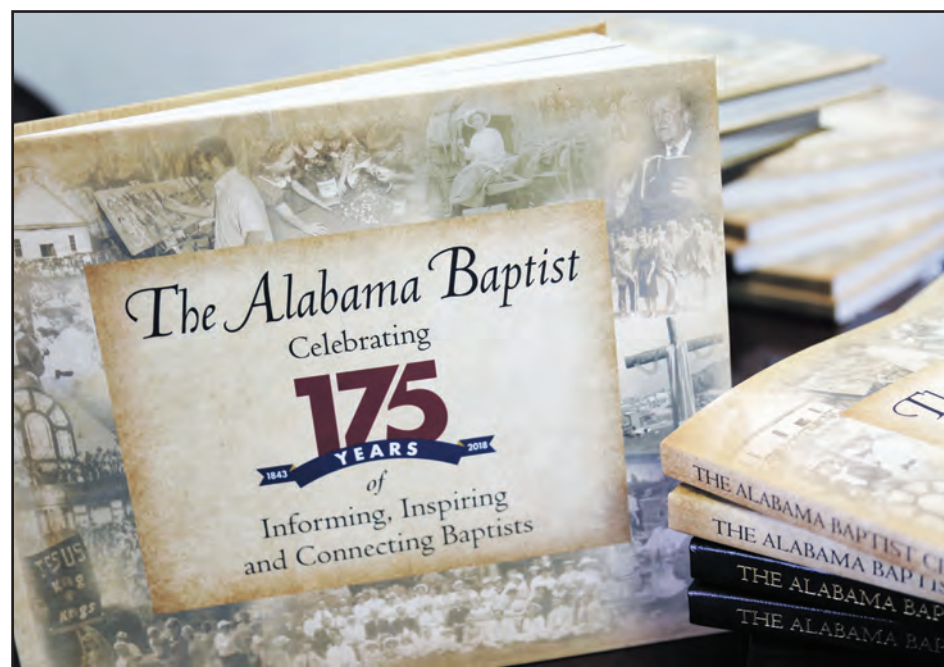
*The Alabama Baptist* newspaper on Facebook.

### Home office

▶ The offices of *TAB* moved around the state for decades before finding a permanent home in Birmingham's Homewood neighborhood in 1975. Recent changes in the building include the creation of a community space downstairs complete with tea and coffee that

can be used for meetings, Bible study or simply a resting spot.

▶ The inspirational story of *TAB*'s gritty journey to survive wars, fires, tough financial times and other obstacles is told in a book released in 2018 for the newspaper's 175th anniversary — “The Alabama Baptist: Celebrating 175 Years of Informing, Inspiring and Connecting Baptists.” (*TAB*)



TAB photo

*The Alabama Baptist* released a book in 2018 for the newspaper's 175th anniversary. It shares the inspirational story of *TAB*'s gritty journey to survive wars, fires, tough financial times and other obstacles.

## Read The Alabama Baptist Day is Sunday, Aug. 18.

*“I just wanted to tell you how timely I found the My Rationale editorial on service in the July 18 issue of TAB. I also appreciated the Rastional Thoughts in that same issue which dealt with the fact that everyone we meet is facing a struggle. If we could only approach everyone with that in mind. Keep up the good work. I am challenged by your articles.”*

**Janice Pitchford**  
Author, speaker,  
member of FBC Abbeville

*“I’m a reader and my husband is a movie watcher. It’s fun and informative to read the media reviews to discover vetted books and movies for us. TAB is a source we trust and rely on.”*

**Janet Erwin**  
Executive editor, *TAB*

*“I really appreciate that I have the ability to keep up with what is going on through TAB. Keep up the good work.”*

**Pastor George Washburn**  
Marion, Ala.

*“TAB has a strong desire to honestly report news that is relevant to Alabama Baptists. In addition to that TAB connects people in useful ways through opinion articles, quotes from local sources and needs as advertised by churches.”*

**James Hammack**  
Digital services manager,  
*TAB*

# New resource center opens for Winston Assoc. churches

Anticipating all that God is going to do through the new ministry resource center for Winston Baptist Association churches — that’s what Director of Missions Don Smith has been up to lately. That and putting the finishing touches on the new multimedia center with specialized training rooms and space for special events.

Smith gathered with staff members and lay leaders of churches from Winston Association for a night of dedication and celebration Aug. 4 at First Baptist Church, Double Springs.

Tours of the new ministry resource center took place during the afternoon and included a spread of treats provided by area church volunteers.

Smith and his ministry assistant Sandy Tingle have been officiating out of First, Double Springs, during the construction phase so Smith thanked pastor Phillip Twilley with a special plaque during the service.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), preached the evening sermon from Acts 1:4–11

and outlined the goal for Christians until Christ returns:

- ▶ Wait for His promise.
- ▶ Witness with His power.
- ▶ Work His plan.
- ▶ Worship His presence.

“We are finishing the work of Jesus because we have the Holy Spirit in us,” Lance said. “We are waiting with a sense of hopeful anticipation with the promise

God has given us in Jesus.

“The Spirit is not limited. The Spirit will fulfill you and do ministry through

you,” he said. “We are involved in reaching the world for Jesus Christ no matter how old we are or how long we’ve been a Christian.”

Also participating in the celebration service were James Nelson, worship leader of First, Double Springs; Adam Rogers, worship pastor for First Baptist Church, Arley; a combined choir from Winston Association churches; and Roger White, pastor of First, Arley. (Jennifer Davis Rash)



Winston Association Director of Missions Don Smith (left) thanks FBC Double Springs Pastor Phillip Twilley for the church’s help while the new facility (top) was being built.

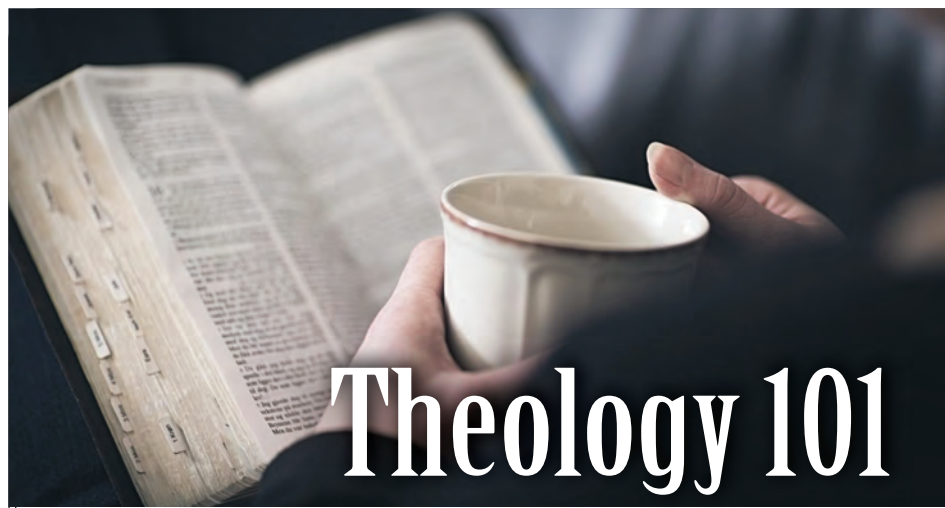


Photos by Jennifer Davis Rash



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, preaches from Acts 1:4–11 during the Winston Association ministry resource center dedication and celebration service Aug. 4 at FBC Double Springs.



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Images of a Christian

## Christians as Athletes

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

We have previously considered the images of children and soldiers as ways of understanding some distinctions and obligations of being Christians. This week our attention turns to the image of athletes as another window through which to view the Christian life.

In biblical times common athletic events included wrestling, boxing and running. These images are similar in that they suggest individual performance as opposed to team performance. This serves to put us personally under the spotlight of Scripture so we ponder our individual service.

Reference was made last week to 2 Timothy 2:3–4 and its use of the imagery of a soldier. The continuation of this passage introduces the additional image of an athlete, saying, “And also if anyone competes in athletics he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules” (v. 5).

### Source of truth

We hold in mind that the Bible employs athletic images as ways to suggest and communicate truth, not as being the source of truth. The Bible is the source of truth; the images are but helpful vehicles that illustrate and communicate it.

The declaration in 2 Timothy 2:5 underscores the necessity for awareness of and obedience to the rules of a sport. As Christians our rulebook is the Bible, regularly read, rightly understood and rigidly obeyed.

Discipline or self-control is essential to a godly life just as it is to a winning athlete. As the apostle Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 9:25–27: “Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control.” God expects disciplined obedience to His commands.

### Consistent obedience

Just as winning athletes adhere to a strict diet and regular exercise, so must victorious Christians regularly ingest the word of God as 1 Timothy 4:7 admonishes: “Train yourself for godliness.” Strict training is the hallmark of winners. Consistent obedience is one indication of genuine faith, even as it also brings us assurance of our salvation. An obedient life is essential for growth in likeness to Christ and in service to Him.

As winning runners do so must we do in developing and maintaining our focus, both on personal disciplines and the ultimate goals. Runners who take the prize neither look to the side nor focus on what’s behind. They keep a clear-eyed focus on the finish line. 🏃

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.



# History of American IMMIGRATION

## Immigration crisis nothing new in country viewed as haven for persecuted

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

**F**or a country that often prides itself on being a nation of immigrants, the United States (U.S.) hasn't always welcomed the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Since its infancy as a country founded largely by foreign-born people fleeing religious persecution, America has pretty much moved from one immigration crisis to another. Here's a look at how immigration — both legal and illegal — has shaped American history.

### 1700s

▶ French-speaking Roman Catholic Acadians exiled from what is now Canada relocate to Virginia but are met with anti-Catholic sentiment and are eventually deported to English prisons where many die.

▶ German immigrants are initially welcomed but then criticized in U.S. newspapers and marginalized for their efforts to emancipate slaves.

▶ Irish refugees fleeing starvation are allowed in but are ridiculed and denied employment because of their Catholic religion.

▶ Congress passes laws allowing white and free immigrants to become naturalized citizens.

### 1800s

▶ Immigration slows during the Civil War.

▶ Nativist political parties strengthen and anti-immigration laws are enacted.

▶ In the late 1800s, Congress actively encourages immigration from European countries while suspending immigration from China.

▶ A wave of immigration during the Industrial Era is met with a rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment.

### 1900s

▶ The Immigration Act of 1917 bars immigrants from many countries suffering from vari-



The Statue of Liberty, given to the United States by France in 1886, serves as a symbol of welcome to immigrants arriving to the country from abroad.

ous issues including people with mental and physical handicaps, labeling them as "undesirables."

▶ The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 caps immigration to 3% of immigrants from the same home country, except for professionals or Latin Americans.

▶ Pre-World War II America shuts the door on almost all countries except England and other close allies; refugees were particularly hard-hit by the measure.

▶ The refusal of Jewish immigrants — both before and after World War II — along with massive numbers of people worldwide displaced by war and shifting national boundaries, eventually sparks new and largely pro-immigrant laws and policies, including the Truman Directive (1945), Displaced Persons Act of 1948, U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Refugee Relief Act of 1953.

▶ The U.S. begins accepting immigrants from communist countries

in 1953 especially welcoming well-educated people; Cubans fleeing Fidel Castro's regime dominate U.S. immigration in the 1960s and 1970s.

▶ The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 abolishes the earlier quota system and focuses on reuniting immigrant families and attracting skilled laborers.

▶ Southeast Asian refugees begin arriving in 1975, their numbers eclipsing those of earlier Cuban immigrants.

▶ In 1980 a crisis ensues when some 125,000 Cubans and 25,000 Haitians arrive in a six-month period forcing the U.S. government to establish tent cities and other refugee camps and emergency processing centers; anti-immigrant sentiments are on display as the Ku Klux Klan holds a rally and cross-burning near the refugee tent city set up at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

▶ Illegal immigration sharply increases from destabilized countries in Central and South America in the 1980s and 1990s.

▶ The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 establishes amnesty programs for most illegal immigrants who entered the U.S. before 1982, but criminalizes the hiring of illegal aliens as workers and institutes the I-9 form for all employees.

▶ New legal permanent residents increase from 595,014 in 1981 to more than 1.8 million in 1991.

▶ The Immigration Act of 1990 expands deportation laws, increases border protections and caps immigration to 675,000 people per year; nevertheless legal immigration continues to rise well above the cap.

### 2000s

▶ Immigrant numbers drop significantly after 9/11.

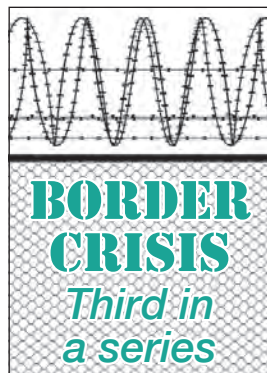
▶ Patriot Act of 2001 and the Homeland Security Act of 2002 clamp down on immigrants and increase security measures, but legal immigration resumes its generally upward trend a couple of years later, frequently topping 1 million new legal immigrants annually.

▶ Total estimated unauthorized immigrant populations rise from 8.6 million in 2000 to a high of 12 million in 2008 but decline somewhat in ensuing years.

▶ During his 2016 campaign Donald Trump promises to eliminate immigration from Muslim countries and build a wall along the 1,954-mile border between Mexico and the U.S.

▶ An estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants currently live in the U.S.; about 63,000 of whom live in Alabama, with 63% from Mexico, 11% from Guatemala and 11% from Asia.

▶ In 2019 headlines are dominated by family separation policies, crowded and unsanitary conditions in overwhelmed immigrant detention facilities, detainee deaths and illnesses, inadequately funded and staffed border patrol facilities; politically charged debates between the president and Congress about immigration continue. 🇺🇸



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*Healthcare as amazing as their potential*

# Burtons 'had to lean completely on ... faith'

*(continued from page 1)*

Jackson said he didn't want to give the family false hope because he knew that though God was surely capable of a miracle not every story ends with one. But in this case he felt God was healing — and He was.

It wasn't long before the young man began improving slowly but surely. They moved from UAB's intensive care unit to the ICU at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta.

Cole Burton regained consciousness, then began the long journey of learning to eat, talk and walk again. In July 2018 he watched the Peachtree 10k race from a wheelchair as the runners passed by the Shepherd Center. Then this year he ran in it. And this fall he's returning to school at Auburn University.

"We are the recipients of a miracle," Charlie Burton said.

His wife, Tina, agreed. "God has shown His face," she said. "We call them little 'God winks' that started the day of Cole's accident. We want people to hear our story and see what God can do."

## Trusting God

Cole Burton said walking through this has taught him to trust God in ways he never could've imagined.

"People who have a lot of schooling in this kind of injury predicted I would not be at this point right now," he said. "We had to lean completely on our faith. We could've told you these things beforehand — that God would get us through — but we hadn't experienced them before now."



## Check out our podcast — TAB News.

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# 3 stories you should know



RNS photo by Manman Dejeto

Following the killing of a United Church of Christ pastor on the island of Mindanao on Aug. 2, church leaders in the Philippines are urging Christians to speak and stand together in upholding the sanctity of human life and human rights. The Ecumenical Bishops Forum alleges attacks on Christian human rights defenders have increased since 2016 when President Rodrigo Duterte (above) took office because of Duterte's 'avowed contempt for human rights.' (MS)

## *SD public schools will display national motto*

Public school students in South Dakota will be greeted by the national motto, "In God We Trust," when classes resume this fall.

A new state law took effect in July that requires the motto to be displayed in a "prominent location" where students are "most likely" to see it. Lawmakers who proposed the law believe the quote will inspire patriotism, according to The Associated Press.

Six states — Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida and Arizona — have approved similar legislation in recent years.

According to the Treasury Department, "In God We Trust" first appeared on U.S. coins largely because of increased religious interest during the Civil War. It was declared the official U.S. motto in 1956. (TAB)

## *Christians in India arrested at wedding*

Five men, five women and a 3-year-old girl were jailed following a raid at a Christian wedding in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan state, India.

A mob of 250 men armed with rods and wooden sticks arrived at the wedding and began cursing the guests and telling them to leave, sources said. Mob leaders accused the Christians of offering money to fraudulently convert poor people.

The Christians were charged with disturbing the peace. However, outcry from organizations and individuals made aware of the arrests resulted in the dropping of all charges against those arrested.

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

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### *Mobile pastor Mack Morris to retire after more than 50 years in ministry*



In 2018, Mack Morris, pastor of Woodridge Baptist Church, Mobile, celebrated 50 years in ministry. During that time he served

as pastor of seven churches, on the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and its executive committee, as moderator of Mobile Baptist Association, as the first president of the board of regents at University of Mobile (UM) and as a trustee at UM for 11 years.

On Aug. 25, after serving at Woodridge Baptist for 19 years, Morris will retire from the full-time pastorate but not from ministry. He will continue serving churches to help with building programs and as a transitional pastor. He and his wife, Kathy, also plan to travel and spend time together and with their three children and two grandchildren.

Morris has been a leader among Southern



MORRIS

Baptists in growing churches, reaching people for Christ, missions giving and building church facilities, according to Cindy Smith, pastor's secretary at Woodridge Baptist. He has led church building conferences across the southeast and has led churches where he served to complete 18 building programs. In his spare time he also is an author, poet and history buff.

Woodridge will host a retirement reception in honor of Morris on Aug. 25 from 2 to 4 p.m. (TAB)

### *NAE's 'Bless Your Pastor' resource kit helps churches show appreciation*



The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has launched a national campaign to help congregations "show and share God's love" for their pastors in creative and practical ways.

The Bless Your Pastor campaign is part of a larger initiative to address financial challenges faced by pastors and is funded by a \$1 million, three-year grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Half of American pastors make less than \$50,000 per year while serving 50+ hours per

week. Nearly 60% of pastors do not receive retirement or health care benefits from their churches, and 3 out of 10 pastors have student loan debt averaging \$36,000, according to NAE.

"Bless Your Pastor is about people in the church sharing their time, talents and treasures to creatively bless their pastors and church staff members," said Brian Kluth, national director of NAE Financial Health and spokesperson for Bless Your Pastor. "Some examples can be babysitting, doing car repairs, offering low or no cost medical and dental care, sharing a vacation home and providing gift cards to the pastor and family."

Church staff members or lay leaders can sign up for the campaign at [www.BlessYourPastor.org](http://www.BlessYourPastor.org) to receive a toolkit of resources including a list of "50 Creative Ways to Show God's Love to Your Pastor." (NAE)

### *FBC Oakman pastor Bill Phillips to retire after 33 years in ministry*



Bill Phillips said as he looks back over his years in full-time ministry it's been "great and wonderful."

# News near you

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church, Pinson**, will host Deer Hunter's Day on Aug. 25 from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hank Parker will be the keynote speaker. Alabama conservation office Kerry Bradford and Purina wildlife consultant Rhonda Johnson also will speak. Tickets are limited and include the seminars, a meal and a chance to win door prizes. For more information or to purchase tickets visit [www.fbcpinson.org](http://www.fbcpinson.org) or call 205-681-9611. David Awtrey is pastor.

► Twenty-five years ago the congregations of 85th Street Baptist Church and Mount Olive Baptist Church joined together to form **Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville**. The church celebrated that anniversary July 28.

Pastor Glenn Sandifer preached during the special service and minister of music Ricky Buckner led worship. Wayne Scott, the church's first pastor, shared memories on how the church began.

Gerald Glenn presented a certificate from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and



Photo by John Garrett

Butch Henderson presented a certificate from Birmingham Metro Baptist Association.

"Everybody really enjoyed it," anniversary committee chair Carol Massey said.

Lunch followed the service and a group picture was taken by John Garrett.

## BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

► **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will host its third Sunday night singing Aug. 18 at 6 p.m. featuring Bloodline. For more information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

## COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Blue Eye Baptist Church, Lincoln**, will celebrate its 100th homecoming with an all-day singing featuring Uplifted on Aug. 18 at 11 a.m. A covered dish meal will be held at noon and singing will resume at 1 p.m. Jacky Morgan is pastor.

## COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Hopewell Baptist Church, Andalusia**, will host revival services Aug. 25–28. Billy Graham, pastor of evangelism and prayer at Redemption Church, Saraland, will be the guest speaker and Jeremy Hawsey will lead worship. Sunday services will be held at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday services will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 334-222-2757. Barry Wilkinson is pastor.

## MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Pine Grove No. 2 Baptist Church (The Grove), Albertville**, celebrated its 100th anniversary July 13.

Former pastors Dustin Taylor, Jim Kilpatrick,

Welton Brooks and Johnny Taylor shared memories. Special music was brought by The Lacy Family.

Gerald Glenn presented the church with a certificate from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Photos and the altar bench saved from the fire that destroyed the church in 1972 were on display.

The article "The Beginning of Pine Grove Church" by Maude Beam also was available.

Dustin Taylor, the church's longest serving pastor, was presented with a special podium.

"The day was a huge success. There was a big crowd," church member James Dobbins said. A reception followed the service. Matt Stover is pastor.



Photo by James Dobbins

## MUD CREEK ASSOCIATION

► **Johns Baptist Church, Adger**, will host a homecoming celebration Aug. 25 at 11 a.m. Lunch and singing featuring The Mission-Heirs will follow. David Lawrence is pastor.

## SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Grace Baptist Church, Montevallo**, will celebrate its 26th homecoming Aug. 18 at 10:30 a.m. Heavens Strings will bring special music. Bob Stricklin will be the guest speaker. A covered dish meal will follow the service. Tim Driskell is pastor. ✝

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

A big portion of that time was spent at First Baptist Church, Oakman, where he recently retired from the pastorate after 33 years.

"I have such a loving wife — she's been a mainstay in my ministry," Phillips said. "It has been great to see what God has done."

Before serving at First, Oakman, Phillips earned bachelor's degrees from Howard College (now Samford University) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He served in Kentucky for a while before coming back to Alabama and serving as pastor of Belcher Memorial Baptist and Wyatt Baptist, both in Birmingham, and Cedar Hill Baptist and Aiken Grove Baptist, both in Jasper.



PHILLIPS

During his long tenure at First, Oakman, he also began a street preaching ministry that he said gives him an opportunity to reach people who might not otherwise be reached.

Phillips is available for supply preaching or as an interim pastor. Contact him at 205-522-9970. (Grace Thornton)

## Southern Baptists respond following mass shootings in Texas and Ohio

Following two mass shootings Aug. 3–4 that took the lives of 31 people, Southern Baptists prayed, met needs and called for an urgent look at how white supremacy can "fuel" violence.

In El Paso, Texas, on Aug. 3, a 21-year-old man linked to online writing that supports white nationalist and racist views killed 22 and injured 26 others at a Walmart. Volunteers with Texas Baptist Men set up at a local shopping center to serve first responders and families affected. Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) Disaster Relief sent chaplains to El Paso, and Baptist churches from around the area gathered Aug. 4 at First Baptist Church, El Paso, for a prayer service that drew more than 400 people.

In Dayton, Ohio — where a 24-year-old gunman opened fire in a nightlife district and killed nine people, including his sister — Steve Stiglich, associational missionary for the Greater Dayton Association of Baptists, said he offered the city's mayor support in any way officials might need it.

Jim Richards, executive director of the SBTC,

expressed grief over the killings and a "pervasive evil" motivating such crimes.

"Racism, however it is expressed, is a blasphemy against the one true God whose image all women and men bear," Richards said. "The idea that one race is inherently superior to another, whether it is called white supremacy or some other label, is unbiblical." (BP)

## FBC Piedmont senior adult director Rhonda Ledbetter dies at 61

Rhonda Ledbetter, director of senior adults at First Baptist Church, Piedmont, died July 31 at the age of 61.

A retired educator, Ledbetter held degrees in music, drama and music education from Jacksonville State University. A vocalist, voice teacher and actor, she appeared in several Christian movies, including "Woodlawn," "Mom's Night Out" and "Let There Be Light."

She was preceded in death by her husband, Jerry. (TAB)



LEDBETTER

# Anonymous donor gives large gift toward Valleydale's debt

When Pastor Mac Brunson said hello to Valleydale Church, Birmingham, a year ago, there was something he wanted to help them say goodbye to fast — the \$6.2 million they were still carrying in debt.

A year later they've paid off nearly half of that debt, thanks to several factors — one of which was a \$1.5 million gift from an anonymous donor announced on Brunson's one-year anniversary July 21.

## 'A great day'

"It was a great day," Brunson said. "We had 16 people join the church that day. The Lord is really pouring His blessing out on Valleydale."

The focused paydown of the debt started several years ago, before Brunson's arrival. The church restructured the more-than-10-year-old debt when it was having trouble making the massive

payments and that bought them some breathing room, Brunson said.

They also had started a One Fund campaign, something executive pastor Jeff McGukin said has really made a difference. In a traditional capital campaign church members are asked to give over and above their regular tithes and budget giving to pay down the loan. In Valleydale's One Fund setup all the church's money goes into one pot and then is divided into four areas — ministries, missions, capital improvement and debt retirement.

"It was a major shift for us," McGukin said.

When Brunson arrived he continued the push to attack the debt and asked the church to focus on getting it paid off.

"I think over the next three years we'll be able to pay it off. I'm hoping we can pay it off sooner than that," he said. "Getting it paid down

has been a big encouragement to the church staff and to the church as well."

Large debt can really weigh a church down, Brunson said.

## 'God's moving'

"Long-term, deep debt, it can be a killer for churches," he said. "The people get discouraged with it and the pastor and the staff bear the weight of it and they get discouraged with it as well."

That's why he said he would encourage any church with debt to focus on paying it off as quickly as possible.

"We want to free ourselves up to have funds to spend on things God might lead our church to do," Brunson said.

McGukin said he can feel the excitement building in the church.

"We just feel God's moving this church in the right direction so we're pretty excited about the future," he said. (Grace Thornton)

## Samford panel discusses global trends in Christianity



Photo by Hannah Muñoz

David Parks (right), director of the Global Center at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, and J.D. Payne, associate professor for the School of the Arts and pastor of church multiplication at The Church of Brook Hills, Birmingham, held a panel discussion during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June. The panel, titled 'Global Trends in Christian Missions,' focused on the widespread use of pornography worldwide, international students, refugees and immigration. 'You don't have to have one particular political view about immigration to care about the issue and to see people as human beings and to see Jesus wants us to reach people and help people, not just in America but globally,' said Parks. Watch the full videos of this and other interviews at [www.tabonline.org/Samford](http://www.tabonline.org/Samford).

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information on placing a classified ad call 205-870-4720, ext. 102.

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### PASTOR

Big Hurricane Baptist Church, located in Brookwood, Alabama, has been a beacon in the community for nearly 200 years. The church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational/part-time pastor with a Christ-like spirit to lead and teach a small but loving and faithful congregation. If interested please contact Larry Holway at 205-799-2438.

#### FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP LEADER

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is seeking an individual with experience to provide full-time leadership in developing a comprehensive music ministry that will lead our congregation into authentic worship. This individual needs to be experienced in leading contemporary worship, a worship choir, praise band and in developing the music ministry with multiple teams of all age levels. Experience in utilizing the areas of sound and video technology within the sanctuary and through various types of social media is desirable. For more information visit [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net) and go to job openings. Send resumés to: ATTN: Southside Baptist Church Search Committee, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, or [southside@sbcandalusia.com](mailto:southside@sbcandalusia.com).

#### WORSHIP PASTOR

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Alexandria, Alabama, is seeking a full-time worship pastor, ministry style is contemporary blend. Send resumés to: [mtzion@cableone.net](mailto:mtzion@cableone.net).

#### BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

New Hope Baptist Church in Romulus, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational minister of music for two (morning and evening) blended Sunday services. If interested send resumés to: Lillian Roberts at [lily.l.roberts@gmail.com](mailto:lily.l.roberts@gmail.com), or directly to the church at 16598 Romulus Road, Buhl, AL 35446, ATTN: Minister of Music Search Committee.

#### PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Concord Highland Baptist Church (Bessemer Association) is looking for candidates to restart our youth ministry. Please mail resumés to: Youth Search Committee, Concord Highland Baptist Church, 105 Concord Highland Dr., Bessemer, AL 35023.

#### MINISTER OF YOUTH, COLLEGE & CAREER

First Baptist Church Slocomb, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a full-time minister of youth, college and career. Interested

candidates should submit resumés to: [fbcs206@aol.com](mailto:fbcs206@aol.com) or mailed to: FBC Search Committee, P.O. Box 428, Slocomb, AL 36375. Responsibilities include leading our students from grades 6th through 12th and our young adults in college and career. Resumés must be received by Sept. 6.

#### BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

New Beginnings Baptist, Graysville, Alabama, is searching for a bivocational youth pastor. Please send resumés to: [nbccbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:nbccbaptist@gmail.com).

#### CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Lakewood Baptist Church of Phenix City, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a full-time children's minister. Childhood development/seminary education is desirable. Full information including job description is available on our website: [lbpc.org](http://lbpc.org). Send resumés to: Lakewood Baptist Church, 4011 Lakewood Drive, Phenix City, AL 36867.

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# Medicine for the soul

## Beauregard benefit night offers healing moments, donations to help community

**D**octors may not prescribe music and laughter but both are good medicine, and folks got a big dose of each Aug. 2 at the Beauregard Strong benefit night hosted by Providence Baptist Church, Opelika.

"If you missed Beauregard Strong ... well, you just should have been here. It was simply the best," said Providence's pastor Rusty Sowell.

The goal of the night was to encourage community members still recovering following the March 3, 2019, tornadoes that struck the east Alabama communities of Beauregard and Smiths Station, both in Lee County, killing 23 people and leaving hundreds homeless.

Volunteers staged out of Providence Baptist to provide aid and support in the days that followed.

"It was a great night and so good to see everyone enjoying themselves through smiles, laughter and praise," said TAB director of communications Debbie Campbell. "We had prayed for God to use this event to help heal and renew people through a night of Christian entertainment."

### 'Looks like Jesus'

The benefit featured several performers familiar to Alabama Baptist audiences. Pianist Frank Jones opened the evening with classic



**NEW GROUND**



**MICKEY BELL**



Photos by Ken Miller  
Rusty Sowell, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, welcomes guests to Beauregard Strong, an event to help those affected by the March 3, 2019, tornadoes in Lee County.

favorites and a pre-show singalong. Illusionist David Garrard brought his blend of tricks and humor to the stage, followed by come-

dian Mickey Bell. New Ground, a gospel trio based in Scottsboro, sang and singer/songwriter Aaron Wilburn finished out the evening with a selection of his humorous songs.

In one of the evening's most serious moments Wilburn sang a newly written, yet-to-be-released song, "That Looks Like Jesus to Me." The lyrics describe scenes of people ministering and the refrain, "that looks like Jesus to me."

Wilburn added a special final verse for the evening which noted the ministry done in the Beauregard community and specifically out of Providence Baptist Church. As tears flowed among those in the audience Wilburn pointed to the crowd and sang, "You look a lot like Jesus to me."

An estimated 300 people attended

the event and more than \$9,000 was donated to relief efforts.

"The overwhelming response shows how much people care for one another in this community," she said.

Bill King, associational missions director for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association, expressed his gratitude.

"Thank you, *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper and sponsors, for providing us with a wonderful evening of fun and worship while at the same time raising a significant

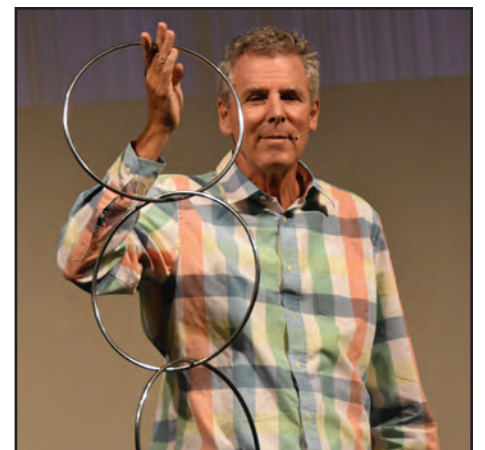
amount of gifts to help those residents in Beauregard who are still rebuilding their homes and lives," he said.

The Baptist Foundation of Alabama was presenting sponsor for the evening, joined by sponsors Auburn Bank, BBVA Compass Bank, La-Mar Financial Services/Raymond James and Lee County Association of Realtors.

The churches of Elmore Baptist Association sent a donation of \$3,400, and Wal-Mart gave \$1,000 which was used to purchase gift cards for families who will receive



**FRANK JONES**



**DAVID GARRARD**

new homes later this year through the 2019 Millard Fuller Legacy Build, an initiative of The Fuller Center for Housing, a faith-driven nonprofit organization that builds and rehabilitates homes for people in need.

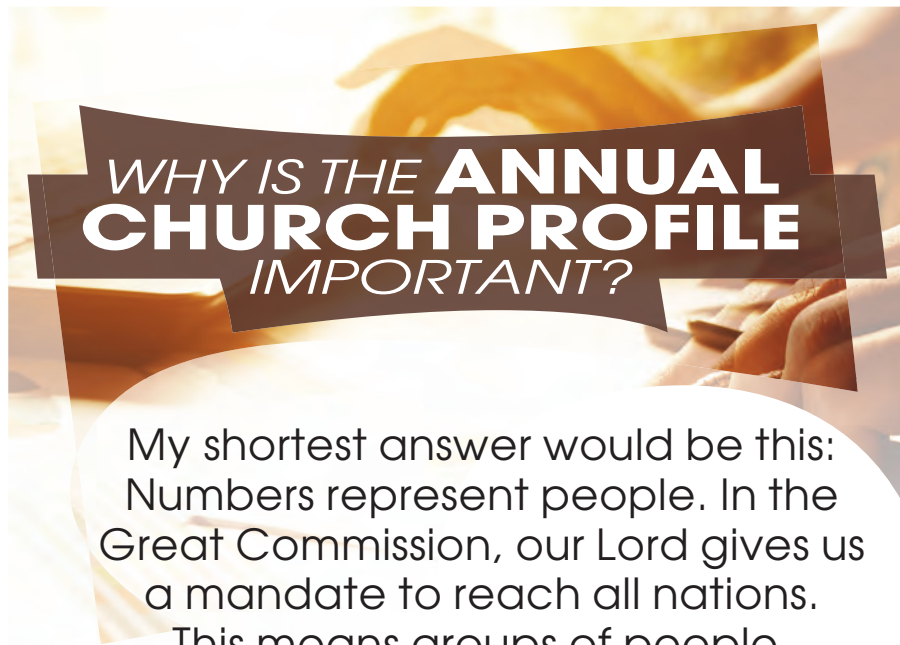
### Millard Fuller Legacy Build

The goal of the project scheduled for Sept. 29–Oct. 4 is to build 11 houses, and volunteers of all experience levels are needed.

Providence Baptist Church will once again be a major part of the effort, hosting a kickoff dinner Sept. 29 and feeding and housing volunteers throughout the build. For more information on the 2019 Millard Fuller Legacy Build or to register as a volunteer, go to [www.fullercenter.org](http://www.fullercenter.org). (Carrie Brown McWhorter)



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



Furthermore, the Bible makes extensive use of numbers, such as:

- promising that "where two or three are gathered" in Christ's name, He is in the midst of them (*Matt. 18*).
- that three disciples went with Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration (*Mark 9*).
- that eight were saved on Noah's Ark from the Flood (*1 Peter 3*).
- that 12 apostles were called by Jesus (*Matt. 10*).
- that more than 500 witnesses saw the resurrected Christ (*1 Cor. 15*).
- that about 3,000 souls were saved on the Day of Pentecost (*Acts 2*).
- that multitudes of 5,000 (*Matt. 14*) and 4,000 (*Matt. 15*) were miraculously fed by Jesus.
- that there is one God (*Deut. 6*) and that He is three in one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*John 1, Matthew 28*).

intercession for our fellow Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists:

- (1) We rejoice in prayer for those places and ministry categories in which God is giving an increase (*1 Cor. 1*).
- (2) We should intercede in prayer for places where more God-sent laborers are needed to work in His harvest (*Matt. 9*).

Let me say a word of appreciation to each church clerk, associational clerk and others who provide a detailed and often tedious labor of love through faithful and accurate reporting through the Annual Church Profile.



By Rick Lance  
State Missionary

Your labor, like any work for the Lord, is not in vain (*1 Cor. 15*) and is much appreciated by your state missionaries, associational missionaries and numerous Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists.

John 15:5

These are only a few crucial examples of numbers included in Scripture.

Reporting numbers on the Annual Church Profile allows us to know more about how to pray through rejoicing and

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Event and location is followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613-2 + the extension, or visit [alsbom.org](http://alsbom.org).

**AUGUST**

- 17 **Called Conference**, Glynwood, Prattville, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 18 **Read The Alabama Baptist Sunday**
- 18-25 **Royal Ambassador Week**, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 20 **Church Financial Issues**, Northbrook, Cullman, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 22 **Church Financial Issues**, Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association Office, Opelika, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 22 **Uplink on the Road**, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 29 **OneDay for Worship Leaders**, Hunter Street, Hoover, April Brewer, ext. 279

**SEPTEMBER**

- 2 **Labor Day**
- 3 **The Heart of Leadership: Becoming a Leader People Want to Follow**, SBOM Facility, Prattville, Debbie Dickey, ext. 218
- 5 **Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Rita Goldman, ext. 249
- 8 **Single Adult Sunday**, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 8-15 **Week of Prayer for State Missions and Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering**, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 12 **Bold Moves**, First Baptist Church, Pell City, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 285
- 12 **Personnel Management**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 241, or Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 12-13 **Alabama Singing Men Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Keith Hibbs, ext. 217
- 12-13 **Alabama Singing Women Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Cindy Parrish, ext. 230
- 15 **Anti-Gambling Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 16 **Preparing for Retirement**, Mobile Baptist Association Office, Mobile, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 17 **2019 Singin'**, University BC, Huntsville, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 17 **Preparing for Retirement**, Canaan, Bessemer, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 18 **Preparing for Retirement**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 19 **Preparing for Retirement**, Decatur First, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 26 **Personnel Management**, Birmingham First, Lee Wright, ext. 241, or Linda Hicks, ext. 263

**OCTOBER**

**Cooperative Program Month  
Minister Appreciation Month**

- 4-5 **International Friends Retreat**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Debbie Adams, ext. 275, or Chris Mills, ext. 379
- 8 **Abundant Living for Adults 55+**, Prattville First, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 10-12 **Interlink Marriage Retreat**, Camp Baldwin, Elberta, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 11-12 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 18-19 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 22 **Fall Missions Festival for Adults**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 25-26 **Church Security Training**, Northbrook Baptist Church, Cullman, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267

**NOVEMBER**

- 2 **North Alabama Church Library Conference**, Central, Decatur, Eva Nell Hunter, (256) 353-5912
- 3 **Daylight Saving Time Ends**
- 4 **Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 10 **ALCAP Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 10 **Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner**, 3 Circle Church, Fairhope, Lamar Duke, ext. 332
- 12-13 **Alabama Baptist State Convention**, Eastern Shore, Daphne
- 28 **Thanksgiving Day**

# Beatitudes help Christians become countercultural

Robert Smith says the women in his family taught him you never buy children's clothes in the size they're currently wearing — if you do they'll grow out of them almost immediately.

“But if you buy an oversized outfit, the child will grow up into the clothes,” he said.

That's what the Beatitudes represent — an oversized piece of clothing Christians are growing into,

said Smith, the Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

## ‘Growing into them’

Smith opened the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference in Birmingham on June 9 with an overview of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1–12). Over the rest of the conference — which had the theme Kingdom Character — other speakers focused on individual Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes “don't

fit us now, but the Spirit is growing us so we begin to fit them,” he said.

“One of these days when we stand before Him and have been glorified and perfected we will fit them. We are becoming who we already are.”

Smith said the nine Beatitudes “interpenetrate” the nine fruits of the Spirit — they are directly related to each other. The attitudes of the Beatitudes are implanted to produce

the fruit of the Spirit, he said. “It's being before doing ... ‘who I am’ before the imperative ‘what I do.’”

Good works do not produce salvation — salvation produces good works, Smith said. But they go hand in hand.

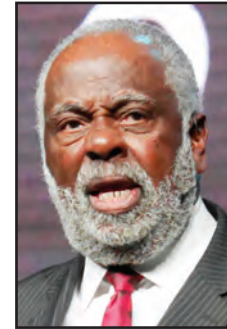
“God is working to develop from the inside what

He's already put in you,” he said. “God is developing and growing in you the attitudes and the fruit.”

The Holy Spirit is vital in this process, Smith said — He's “not a luxury but a necessity.”

## Facing the world

What Christians are becoming is countercultural — the Beatitudes “fly in the face of the world,” he said. “God has called us to be countercultural, peculiar, unique, different, so we stand out and face the world with a gospel that is not adulterated or mixed.” (Grace Thornton)



SMITH

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# Christian Crossword

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							59					

## Across

- Like a flying \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 4:7)
- Boards of fir trees of \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 27:5)
- Treatise have I made, \_\_\_\_\_, all that Jesus began. (Acts 1:1)
- Ye shall be witnesses unto \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 1:8)
- Descended to the stone of \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 18:17)
- Peter and John about to \_\_\_\_\_ into the temple. (Acts 3:3)
- Took a wife \_\_\_\_\_ whose \_\_\_\_\_ was Tamar. (Gen. 38:6)
- California. (abbr.)
- I will punish \_\_\_\_\_ in Babylon. (Jer. 51:44)
- Animal that sounds like new.
- Earth shall \_\_\_\_\_ to and fro. (Isa. 24:20)
- Close relative to reindeer.
- Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)
- Why look ye \_\_\_\_\_ earnestly on us? (Acts 3:12)
- To \_\_\_\_\_ away disciples. (Acts 20:30)
- It \_\_\_\_\_ not for you to know. (Acts 1:7)
- The son of Jair slew \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 20:5)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Judah's firstborn ... and the Lord slew \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 38:7)
- Shilshah, and Ithran and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 7:37)
- Ye \_\_\_\_\_ of Galilee. (Acts 1:11)
- Adam was first formed, then \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Tim. 2:13)
- \_\_\_\_\_ it, rase it. (Ps. 137:7)

- The troops of \_\_\_\_\_ looked. (Job 6:19)
- \_\_\_\_\_ boweth down, Nebo stoopeth. (Isa. 46:1)
- An odour of a sweet \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil. 4:18)
- And in the \_\_\_\_\_ sea. (Acts 7:36)
- Until \_\_\_\_\_ offering should be offered. (Acts 21:26)
- \_\_\_\_\_, the son of Azariah. (Ezra 7:3)
- North American. (abbr.)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ said unto me ... I have given \_\_\_\_\_ unto the children of Lot. (Deut. 2:9)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Ramah, and Hazor. (Josh. 19:36)
- Could ye not watch with \_\_\_\_\_ hour? (Matt. 26:40)
- People of an ancient Asian country.

## Down

- As many as were ordained to \_\_\_\_\_ life believed. (Acts 13:48)
- Saying, \_\_\_\_\_ thou that destroyest the temple. (Mark 15:29)
- From \_\_\_\_\_ to Rimmon. (Zech. 14:10)
- Machine for weaving.
- The sons of Midian; Ephah, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 25:4)
- Desire the \_\_\_\_\_ milk of the word. (1 Pet. 2:2)
- Erected an altar, and called it \_\_\_\_\_-elohe-Israel. (Gen. 33:20)
- Name unknown. (abbr.)
- This \_\_\_\_\_ that which was spoken. (Acts 2:16)
- Barzillai the Gileadite of \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Sam. 17:27)
- I am Alpha and \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 1:8)

- \_\_\_\_\_, ha. (Job 39:25)
- Bringing sick \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 5:16)
- Name unknown. (abbr.)
- Sound an \_\_\_\_\_. (Joel 2:1)
- Why should it \_\_\_\_\_ thought a thing incredible? (Acts 26:8)
- Called the altar \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 22:34)
- And \_\_\_\_\_ opened her eyes. (Acts 9:40)
- Two \_\_\_\_\_ for one \_\_\_\_\_. (Ex. 16:22)
- I \_\_\_\_\_ my glittering sword. (Deut. 32:41)
- \_\_\_\_\_ offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice. (Heb. 11:4)
- Duke \_\_\_\_\_. These \_\_\_\_\_ the dukes of Edom. (1 Chron. 1:54)
- Went \_\_\_\_\_ unto her ... called his name \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 38:2, 3)
- Of the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 7:6)
- An altar ... in mount \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 8:30)
- The cruel \_\_\_\_\_ of asps. (Deut. 32:33)
- Bath-sheba, the daughter of \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Sam. 11:3)
- Parted them to all \_\_\_\_\_, every man had need. (Acts 2:45)
- \_\_\_\_\_ bare to Esau Eliphaz. (Gen. 36:4)
- Ye \_\_\_\_\_ men with burdens. (Luke 11:46)
- Why make ye this \_\_\_\_\_? (Mark 5:39)
- When the angels \_\_\_\_\_ left them ... (Luke 2:15)
- Do \_\_\_\_\_ mi
- Take it from \_\_\_\_\_.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 18

## Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### LIVING WITH INTEGRITY Titus 2:1-15

#### Spoken (1)

Paul urged Titus to complete the organization of the churches on the island of Crete in order that by the work of consecrated elders the voice of people teaching false doctrine might be silenced. That was the substance of chapter one.

In chapter 2, Paul focused on individual and family life. “But you” in verse 1 was emphatic denoting the sharp contrast between the false teachers and Titus. Paul commanded Titus to preach things consistent with sound doctrine. We must be true to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the word of God both in belief and behavior.

#### Acted (2-10)

The gospel makes a difference. Indeed the gospel requires a difference in how we think and live. The gospel calls people within the church to pursue godliness, whether old or young, male or female, slave or free.

Paul instructed Titus to teach older men to be “self-controlled.” They need to be wise in decision-making and careful when making judgments. They should be level-headed. The older men should be “worthy of respect” and “sensible,” exercising mature judgment and proper restraint. Older men need to be sound in the faith, loving and patient, not losing heart and throwing in the towel.

Paul instructed Titus to teach older women to be “reverent in behavior,” their lives marked by holiness. They are not to be “slanderers” who make false and unfounded accusations. The word for “slanderer” is diabolos, which is used 34 times in the New Testament to refer to the devil.

A godly woman will not be devilish in her speech. Older women need to be levelheaded not “slaves to excessive drinking.” They should teach the younger women in their homes and in the church. This teaching was to be one-on-one or small group instruction as the older women taught the younger women the basics of life in Christ and

about marriage, family and child-rearing. This biblical pattern of older women mentoring the younger women has too often been neglected in our churches today.

Paul instructed Titus to tell the older women to teach the younger women and encourage them “to love their husbands and to love their children.” This is the only instance in the Scriptures where a woman is encouraged to love her husband.

Paul was concerned that a woman’s first commitment under the lordship of Christ was to her husband and her family. The younger women were to be taught to be “self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind and in submission to their husbands.” They were to exercise balance and wisdom in their lives, and they were to have a moral life above reproach.

The younger women were to be taught to make their home their primary responsibility. They were to be gentle and considerate and yield to the leadership of their husband. They were to live their lives so God’s word would be honored.

Paul instructed Titus to teach the slaves to be obedient to Christ by obeying their masters in all things. The gospel contains implications for every person and every area of life.

#### Empowered (11-14)

In these verses Paul explained the power of the gospel to change lives. No one ever meets Jesus and stays the same. God’s grace teaches us how we should live. No matter what our position in life might be the grace of God is continually shaping us more and more into the image of Christ. We are to be encouraged to live godly lives as we anticipate the return of Jesus.

#### Authority (15)

Paul wrote to encourage Titus to step up and lead with authority. He was to continue teaching sound doctrine and rebuking the false teachers in order that these churches become gospel outposts in enemy territory.✠

## Bible Studies for Life

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



### REMEMBER GOD’S FAITHFULNESS 2 Chronicles 16:1-13

It is always good to have friends and alliances you can rely on. But our decisions can reveal whether or not we are trusting ultimately and supremely in the Lord or instead in our earthly friends and alliances. King Asa had learned from his father to trust solely in the Lord in even the most challenging of circumstances but then something changed.

#### Don’t depend on others for what you should be depending on God. (1-6)

The move by Baasha, king of Israel, to keep people from leaving or entering the territory of Judah (where Asa was king) reflected an escalation in ongoing conflict between Israel and Judah and presumably a first step toward invading Judah.

Previously Asa had faced seemingly insurmountable forces by trusting in the Lord. But now he trusts in his own political skills and in the king of Aram instead of the Lord. With the future of the Jerusalem temple in the balance Asa did not turn first to the Lord who made His presence known there but rather to the pagan king of Aram instead.

Asa also took treasures that represented offerings made to God as acts of worship, removed them from the temple and sent them to Ben-Hadad, tangibly demonstrating he trusted in him rather than in the Lord.

Asa won a temporary victory at the cost of his relationship with the Lord God, the only One who could provide real and everlasting security.

#### Don’t forget what God has done and can do. (7-9)

Hanani, the seer, pointed out the change in Asa’s behavior which reflected the change in his loyalties. Asa could have had victory over the king of Israel and over the king of Aram if he had remained loyal to the Lord. But he made a “foolish” decision that would result in

constant war (v. 9). Although the passage treats Asa as a negative example, verse 9

emphasizes the positive point that provides hope to us today even as it did to ancient Israelites and Jews: “the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” God is always ready to strengthen and renew those who fully trust in Him.

#### Don’t let pride or self-centeredness dictate your behavior. (10-13)

That Asa’s heart had turned away from the Lord was made even clearer by his response to the prophet. When someone points out our sins and failures we need to find the humility and courage to face the truth and turn to the Lord in His mercy.

But Asa’s hardened heart manifested itself again in his brutal oppression of some of his people (v. 10) and later in life when he refused to turn to the Lord for help.

Part of the point of verse 12 is that Asa always could have sought help from the Lord. It is not that the Lord was unwilling to respond to Asa’s cries for help but that Asa was unwilling to turn to the Lord. Asa’s story is an unnecessarily tragic story of someone unwilling to recognize his need to turn back to the Lord.

What is it about our decisions and behavior that reveal our ultimate trust and loyalty is found in the Lord rather than in family, friends, alliances or earthly resources?

When someone lovingly points out a change in our behavior that seems to reflect a change in our relationship with the Lord, do we seriously consider this potentially crucial information or do we become defensive and dismiss it too quickly? Do we listen to the concerns and warnings of friends and family or do we continue living the same way?

Our pride should never keep us from going back and returning to the grace of our faithful Lord.✠



# Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

## Kendrick Brothers' 'Overcomer' leads August family-friendly spotlight

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

**I** admit it. I cried during the first Kendrick Brothers movie I watched: the marriage-themed “Fireproof” (2008). I did the same during “Courageous” (2011), which spotlighted fatherhood, and “War Room” (2015), which focused on prayer.

And yes I cried again while watching a screener of their latest film, “Overcomer,” which opens in theaters Aug. 23.

Alex and Stephen Kendrick — the filmmaking duo behind these popular faith-based films — are skilled at weaving an emotion-laden story with biblical truth.

Sure they want to entertain you, but they're more concerned with your heart. They want to convict you with the gospel. They want you to walk away from the movie with a desire to become more like Christ.

“Overcomer” (PG) follows the story of John Harrison (Alex Kendrick), a coach whose team is expected to

contend for the state title. But when a local company closes — forcing families to move elsewhere looking for work — he loses his best players and his identity as a successful basketball coach. John is then forced to coach the cross-country team, which consists of one girl named Hannah (Aryn Wright-Thompson) who is searching for her identity and purpose too.

“Overcomer” also stars Priscilla Shirer (“War Room”) as the principal and Shari Rigby as John's wife, Amy. “Overcomer” asks the question: What do you allow to define you?

A Christian's identity, according to the Kendricks, must not

be found in work, hobbies or family but in Christ.

“Even though we call ourselves Christians we still tend to put our primary identity in our job,” Alex Kendrick said.

“If we don't know who we are in Christ we will be devastated rather than just disappointed” when trials come, said Stephen Kendrick.



Photo courtesy of Sony

### 'Overcomer'

It is the Kendricks' sixth film and their first since “War Room,” which climbed to No. 1 nationwide in its second weekend.

A No. 1 showing at the box office may be a tall task for “Overcomer” because of the competition. The R-rated “Angel Has Fallen,” which opens the same weekend as “Overcomer,” is predicted by Box Office Pro to make around \$17 million its first weekend. (“War Room” was No. 1 with \$9.5 million.)

But Kendrick films always seem to surprise us.

“Overcomer” is rated PG for some thematic elements.

### Worth watching

Also worth watching this month:

► **“Unplanned”** — It's the film about Abby Johnson, the former Planned Parenthood clinic director who became pro-life after assisting with an abortion. “Unplanned” released on DVD

and Blu-ray Aug. 13. It was rated R but should have been PG-13. Yes, the film shows an abortion on an ultrasound, but that's the only scene in the film involving an actual abortion. The rest of the film follows Johnson's story. Still this film isn't for children. It's disturbing and includes minor language.

► **“Tolkien”** — It's the biopic about J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of “The Lord of the Rings.” “Tolkien” is a fascinating peek into the life of the famous author, although it doesn't touch on his faith. It's rated PG-13 for some sequences of war violence and is probably best for tweens and up. “Tolkien” released on DVD and Blu-ray Aug. 6. It debuted on digital platforms in July.

► **“Secret Life of Pets 2”** — Don't believe the critics. This animated film was better than its predecessor and it includes a great pro-family message about children. It

released on digital platforms Aug. 13 and is out on DVD and Blu-ray Aug. 27. Rated PG for some action and rude humor. (It also includes one unnecessary instance of “pssed.”)

► **“Buddy Davis Amazing Adventures”** — It's an adventurous nature-centric children's program with a biblical worldview. Buddy Davis goes on a dinosaur dig, visits the everglades, goes caving and explores Alaska and glaciers in this Answers in Genesis series. It's now on Pureflix.com.✠



'Secret Life of Pets 2'

Photo courtesy of Illumination

## 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.

# ‘Toward the Savior’

## Mormon pageant in Utah draws 400 witnesses for Christ to share gospel

**F**our hundred evangelical witnesses, including Southern Baptists, encouraged one another as they sought to share the gospel with Mormons who attended the “Mormon Miracle” pageant in Manti, Utah.

The Mormon Miracle, with a cast of 900, was held the last two weekends in June drawing more

than 100,000 Mormons to the rural mountain town and its majestic Gothic/French Revival temple, located two hours southeast of Salt Lake City.

The 90-minute pageant depicts historical “moments” in Mormon history such as the persecution they faced on their trek west in the 1800s.

Part of the difficulty in witnessing to Mormons stems from the fact they use the same words as evangelical Christians but attach different meanings to them, said James Walker, president of Watchman Fellowship and a member of Fielder Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Arlington, Texas. He was onsite June 16–23 with a 21-person missions team that spent the early part of the week in training.

The budding apologists, who came to Manti from several states to share their faith, heard from Sandra Tanner, a longtime Christian



Photo by Bryan Hartline

Watchman Fellowship team members talk with a Mormon young man (in dress shirt and tie) in Manti, Utah, while others listen in on the conversation.

analyst of Latter Day Saints beliefs.

“Mormon leaders have made the tragic mistake of pointing their people toward a church instead of toward the Savior,” Tanner told the Watchman team at Utah Lighthouse Ministry, a Salt Lake City research center that compares Mormon and Christian doctrines.

### Relationship with Christ

“They claim theirs is the only true church and that all others are false and have no authority. This tends to make the people more concerned about the organization than about their relationship with Christ.”

Chris Eller, associate executive director of the Baptist Convention

of Iowa, described the pageant as “a great opportunity for whole families to share the gospel with a group of people who badly need the gospel right here in our own country.”

Several other evangelistic groups had their own attention-drawing items for interacting with Mormons. Still others just chatted with people until they found receptivity. By the end of the six days — two weekends of three days each — almost two dozen professions of faith had been reported and countless seeds were sown.

“We’re here to share God’s unconditional love,” Walker said, “with those who so desperately need to hear it.” (BP)

## How to pray:

▶ Pray Mormons across the country will continue to be exposed to the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

▶ Pray churches will continue to send out missionaries to witness among Mormons and other unbelievers in our country and around the world. (TAB)

Photo by Terri Johnson



Downhill from the Mormon Temple in Manti, Utah, Eric Johnson (front, center) of Mormonism Research Ministries engages in a conversation with a couple who agree to read the New Testament book of Romans to see what God says about forgiveness.