



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."



WMU photo by Pam Henderson
GAs listen attentively as Alabama's Rosalie Hunt shares about global missions. Rosalie and her husband, Bob, served as Southern Baptist international missionaries for 30 years.

'Pass it on'

FBC Guntersville missions leaders seek to nurture 'world hearts' in GAs, RAs

By **Trennis Henderson**
WMU National Correspondent

For Girls in Action (GAs) at First Baptist Church, Guntersville, learning about global missions from GA leader Rosalie Hunt is a definite perk. In fact

Rosalie literally wrote the book on the history of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

Hunt and her husband, Bob, are retired Southern Baptist missionaries who served 30 years in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, South Asia, Australia and the Philippines. She is the author of WMU's 125th anniversary history, "We've a Story to Tell: 125 Years of WMU," as well as historical narratives about such legendary missions leaders as Fannie E.S. Heck, Ann Has-

seltine Judson and Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend.

Hunt brings that same missions passion and commitment to her grade school GAs who gather each Wednesday evening for missions education and activities at First, Guntersville.

'God's plan'

"I so much want these girls to have a world heart, a world view and know that America is not the center of the universe and that they can be part of God's plan," she said. "You

don't have to be 29 years old. You can be part of God's plan when you're 9 years old and He can speak to you then and keep speaking to you."

The Royal Ambassadors (RAs) at First, Guntersville, are in good hands too. Jackie Hester, an assistant principal at Central School in Madison County, is a former Alabama Acteens Panelist. Her love of missions was nurtured during her years as a GA and Acteen and she wanted to pass along
(See 'RAs,' page 14)

TAB to begin offering special format materials for visually impaired readers

Do you know someone who's visually impaired and finds it difficult to read? Now there's a way for that person to listen to stories and news from *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) as well as a variety of other books and information in a format that comes to him or her in the mail for free.

The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) partners with the National Library Service (NLS) to offer special format materials and specialized playback equipment free of charge to those qualifying for their services.

According to the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS), the first step is to determine if the person qualifies for services.

Anyone is eligible for these services if he or she meets at least one of these conditions:

- ▶ Is legally blind
- ▶ Cannot read standard print with corrected vision
- ▶ Physically cannot hold a book or turn its pages
- ▶ Has been diagnosed by a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy with a reading disability as a result of an organic dysfunction
- ▶ Is deaf-blind.

Anyone with at least one of the visual impairments listed can apply for services by following these three steps outlined by the APLS:

1. Download and complete the



Photo by Debbie Campbell

TAB's editor-in-chief Jennifer Davis Rash (right) interviews reader Jack Kinley about the benefits and functionality of the playback materials for the visually impaired. Rash and director of communications Debbie Campbell recently delivered Kinley the first cartridge containing TAB News and *The Alabama Baptist* audio digest. Kinley is holding the playback equipment.



TAB photo

Each cartridge will be loaded with episodes of TAB News that can be listened to using the equipment provided by the National Library Service.

application form found at www.tabonline.org/application.

2. Have a doctor, ophthalmologist, optometrist, nurse, therapist or a professional staff member of a hospital, institution or welfare agency certify the qualifying visual impairment.

3. Mail the application to the closest cooperating library. The libraries providing the service are listed at www.loc.gov/nls/find.html. You may also call 888-657-7323 for an address.

Once your friend or family member receives the playback equipment, sign up to receive the weekly TAB News audio digest by calling 205-870-4720, ext. 118, or email tabnews@thealabamabaptist.org. We will send the latest issues of TAB News on individual cartridges in special mailers.

As soon as the first issue has been completed it can be returned sim-

ply by putting the cartridge back in the special mailer, flipping the address card over and dropping the package back in the mail. No need to worry with postage or filling out anything. It is all covered.

Listen to TAB News

When we receive the audio cartridge back we'll load it up with more stories and news and send it back so the cycle never ends. This same routine also works with audio resources available from the library.

The reason we send two cartridges of TAB News on the first installment is so there's always one to listen to while one is cycling through the return, reload and resend process.

We are so excited to help your friend or family member with this opportunity. Let us know if we can help answer any questions.

For more information contact Janet Erwin at 205-870-4720, ext. 101, or email jerwin@thealabamabaptist.org. (TAB)

I appreciate reading the sports articles in TAB. It is always an encouragement to see how young men and women are using sports as a platform to share their faith. TAB provides a great way to share with our sons how to live out their faith on the field.

Susan Stevens
Advertising contractor, TAB



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

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

MY RASHIONALE

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

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



Achieving success sometimes requires adjusting the plan

I can't remember how often I've said the same thing through the years but one of my mentors finally called me on it.

As I walked him through the scenario that day, I ended with a sigh and something to the effect of "I just want them to do it right. That's all I'm asking."

But what does "right" mean? His question made me think: My definition of right might be different than the other person's definition of right. In fact, it obviously was in this case.

Finding a solution often means starting back at the beginning to make sure each person understands exactly what is being asked of him or her and holds a clear grasp of the expectations.

It means using the tried and true step of sharing with the other person in a style he or she understands not the way we prefer or even best understand ourselves.

Some people are visual learners, some audible and some learn best by doing (kinesthetic learning).

I always think of the example of two people from different countries who don't speak each other's language.

As one is trying to speak to the other he restates what he is trying to say over and over, getting slower and louder with each reiteration.

Obviously if the language itself is the barrier then stating the same words slower or louder will not cause the other person to suddenly understand.

It falls in line with the saying: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results."

A friend experienced something similar recently with a daunting assignment.

She was asked to achieve a certain goal but not given any type of step-by-step instructions nor provided the assistance she needed to truly understand what was expected of her.

In the end everyone on the team was frustrated and the project turned out to be much more difficult than it had to be — all because the leader did not make sure the team member understood what she needed to understand and the team member

didn't ask the right questions to make sure she understood.

Neither realized in the beginning that clarity was missing. In fact both parties actually thought they had communicated and were working under the same assumptions — until several missed deadlines later.

When the team leader realized what had happened she halted the project, found a better way to explain the goal and brought in the proper resources.

And what had been an assignment doomed to failure found its way to completion and success within a few days.

A set of team leaders here at TAB recently mapped out a plan to adapt one of our processes

that hasn't been running quite as smoothly as we want.

I found myself caught in the loop of restating what needed to take place, emphasizing the importance and finding ways to implement accountability.

Everyone on the team wants to properly participate but several members truly are struggling to develop the habits needed to make the process successful.

So we could either force the process to work as it was initially designed or pull back, find the steps tripping people up and make the necessary adjustments.

The bonus for us is that the tweaks will actually make the process better than we originally imagined it could be.✝

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

The tentacles of childhood cancer run deep and wide for each family in the midst of the fight — look for ways to help this month

September became National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in 2013 but childhood cancer became a reality for my family a decade ago — in the month of September.

The malignant tumor was removed from the head of our youngest niece Belle in September 2009. Her cancer had metastasized by the time it was discovered but her mom and dad didn't let that stop them from fighting and giving Belle the best chance possible.

Many of you walked with our



family through those nearly five and a half years before we said goodbye to her in January 2015.

And many of you know the depth of the pain personally, some from

years ago and others right now at this moment.

Consider sharing your story with us.

Along with being a salve for your own spirit, telling your story opens up an opportunity to encourage others on their journey.

And if you would like to know more about Belle and our family's journey, read posts from her mom at www.caringbridge.org/visit/bellemitchell.

Previous Rashional Thoughts during that time also can be found at www.rashionalthoughts.com.✝

Your Voice



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

Hearing their stories an important first step

By **Frankie Melton**

Pastor of Heath Springs (S.C.) Baptist Church

I was standing on the sidewalk in front of our church one afternoon when a gentleman walked by I didn't know.

I approached him and introduced myself as the pastor of the local Baptist church. His face immediately communicated an openness and warmth.

As soon as he spoke I realized that Hugh McSweeney was not local. He had a British accent, which in a small South Carolina town is nothing less than exotic. My curiosity was immediately piqued.

As I continued to probe I learned he was from the Central American country of Belize. He had been living in our town for two years but somehow our paths had never crossed.

I invited him to church and he

came the next Sunday. After some months, Hugh expressed a desire to become a member of the church.

I met with him over a series of weeks to discuss the gospel, church membership and baptism. Hugh affirmed that Christ was his Savior but because he had grown up in an Anglican church he had not been baptized by immersion.

He readily agreed to be baptized. Up to that point no person of color had ever been baptized at Heath Springs Baptist Church, much less an immigrant. The church rejoiced to receive Hugh into our membership and he was baptized during a Sunday morning worship service. He sings in the choir every Sunday and is one of the most faithful members of the church. He is also a dear friend.

Over the years as I have continued to get to know Hugh McSweeney, I

have been reminded that everyone has a story. Every immigrant has a story and as followers of Christ we should have an intense desire to know their story.

Sometimes you may have a celebrity living in your midst and not know it. Hugh McSweeney was not just another Belizean immigrant who moved to South Carolina. In Belize he had served as the government's finance secretary.

When I see Hugh on Sunday mornings, I am reminded of the amazing relationship and story of his life I almost missed. Scripture is clear that Jesus was attracted to people with all types of backgrounds. He spent time conversing and eating with tax collectors and sinners as well as religious leaders and Roman soldiers. James, in his New Testament epistle, reminds us that God is no respecter of persons.

In the same way, let us be eager to hear the stories of people who don't look or sound like us. The book of Revelation reminds us that around the throne there will be people from every nation, tribe, people and language singing praises to our God. In preparation for that eternal celebration, may the church on earth reflect the reality of heaven.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Frankie Melton is senior pastor of Heath Springs (S.C.) Baptist Church and assistant professor of Christian studies at North Greenville University in Tigerville, S.C. (BP)

Alabama is considered to be the heart of the Bible Belt yet over half of our residents do not attend church. We have to do something about it.

Lamar Duke
Lead church planting strategist, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM)

When the opportunity came to go to Alaska, in my spirit and in my heart, it was very clear that it was the step God wanted me to take.

Jae McKee
Director of Church Planting and Missions for the Alaska Baptist Convention Acts 1:8 Connections missions partner, SBOM

If someone comes to Christ through disaster relief work it is because of everybody from the admin to the local associational coordinators to the people who keep equipment up and running.

Cookie Baker
Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief chaplain, Etowah Baptist Association

Jesus was such a master at leadership strength that He could deliver it with compassion or confrontation.

George Yates
Church health strategist SBOM

Letters to the Editor

Your front-page article about Bible-reading habits in the Aug. 1, 2019, issue of *The Alabama Baptist* was very good.

I enjoy learning God's word. I'm 86 years old and I can quote more than 40 verses or passages of God's word. I do this each morning and then have my daily prayer time.

God didn't say for us to read His word through every year. He

said to study it (2 Tim. 2:15).

I study a person's life like Job, Abraham, Joseph, etc. I also read just a verse sometimes and run all the references on that word I can find.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper. Jesus is coming back and I'm ready.

Mrs. Edward Varner
Deatsville, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“One person coming to Christ is better than 10 Academy Awards.”

STEPHEN KENDRICK

Film writer and producer

Doors may serve a number of different purposes. Most of them open up and allow us to go through to reach some other place; however some may lead us nowhere or to the wrong destination. Jesus said, “I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9a). His door has a cross ... a real cross ... His cross. His door opens up into everlasting life. His door is the only door that can take us there.

Bill King
Associational missions director
Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association

I find that in general, foster and adoptive families need these four primary pillars of support: tangible, educational, relational and spiritual. This list is not exhaustive but is

merely representative of the types of things church leaders can be thinking through as they work to wrap around and support families in their communities.

Jason Johnson
Author
“Everyone Can Do Something: A Field Guide for Strategically Rallying Your Church Around the Orphaned and Vulnerable”

One day we were walking downtown and we asked some girls, “Would you like to be our friends this summer?” We were so excited when they said yes. So we also said yes — to going to the mall and to the cafes with them downtown. Finally one day through just sharing our lives with them, sharing our

stories, we were able to share the gospel with them. We were able to walk them through why we were created in the first place. Then one of them asked, “What do I do to be saved?” We said we have an answer for you. What I learned this summer is not to give up and just to go and keep going and keep giving people the chance to glorify God.

Grace Mitchell
Nehemiah Teams member

I am glad [for] everything that happened to me because had it not, I probably would have made another \$50 million playing baseball but I would have never met Jesus.

Darryl Strawberry
Former baseball player and Strawberry Ministries leader



Photo by Alabama WMU
 Candace McIntosh is executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union.

Missional life begins here

The twinkle in Ella Kate's eyes says it all. She's got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in her heart!

The joy she experiences during Missions Adventure Camp (MAC) at WorldSong is contagious. She loves being with friends and learning about Jesus. But those aren't the only highlights Ella Kate and her friends experience.

One of the things that makes WorldSong different is each camp's unwavering focus on missions. Campers spend up-close and personal time with real-life missionaries. They hear about God's heart for others in a place and environment where they both respond to God in salvation and in forming commitments to live on mission for their whole lives.

God not only speaks to the campers but to the staff as well. Anna Beth St. Pierre credits her time as a cabin leader at WorldSong as a time that “forever changed my life” because it's where she surrendered to the call of missions.

Because of the gifts you give through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, girls and boys personally experience missions through MAC at WorldSong. Thank you! To God alone be all glory!

—Candace McIntosh

From the *Twitterverse*

@myarnell

Father, just as you are the source of all blessing, let me be the source of blessing to others today. Jesus, as you are the place in which all blessing resides, make my life a place for blessing. Holy Spirit, as you are divine blessing itself, move out through me. (Eph. 1:3)

@scottdawson

I cannot determine what happens to me, but I do choose what happens inside of me. Situations will either make me choose to be better or bitter. I choose to trust that “He who began a good work will be faithful to complete [it].”

@speak4theunborn

May we proclaim God's praises as we walk into a new week, thanking Him that we are His people and

have received mercy! Let us share this hope with those who have not yet received such great grace. The gospel is our only hope for lives to be truly changed and saved.

#ProLife

@BCHawk83

Don't take for granted the missions partnerships your church builds overseas; it could be an answer to prayer for Christians across the globe.

@jdgrear

“If we make disciples on campus today, we'll have disciples in places of influence tomorrow.” — Josh Miller

@Stu_Davidson

Humility is an important factor for the follower of Christ. Humil-

ity is something God gives; it is not something that we automatically possess. Humility bestows the blessing of wisdom in weary circumstances.

@SharayahColter

Jesus, the only perfect person in all history, had enemies — enemies that hated Him so much they lied about Him, conspired against Him and killed Him. He told followers not to be surprised when enemies opposed them as well and to pray for, bless and love them. Jesus, what a Savior!

@IMB_SBC

“When I joined the Story One Church [for deaf believers in Thailand], it was the first time that I felt like I was equal in God's eyes to a hearing person.” — Alisara, deaf believer in Thailand

'Resolutely rethink RETIREMENT'

Retirement no time for spiritual dormancy, faith leaders urge

By Martha Simmons
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For many of those still chained to their desks and living for the weekend retirement can appear a well-deserved reward at the finish line — a time to relax, pull out the golf clubs or putter in the garden, sort of a permanent vacation.

Not so fast, some faith leaders say. You're just getting started.

Former Baptist minister John Piper, founder of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, urges believers to "resolutely rethink retirement."

In his book, "Rethinking

Retirement — Finishing Life for the Glory of Christ," Piper writes, "There are different ways of dying. And there are different ways of living just before we die. But for the Christian both of them — the final living and the dying — are supposed to make God look glorious. All of them are supposed to show that Christ — not this world — is our supreme treasure. So finishing life to the glory of Christ means using whatever strength and eyesight and hearing and mobility and resources we have left to treasure Christ and in that joy to serve people — that is to seek to bring them with us into the everlasting enjoyment of Christ."

Prime example

Piper points to Ralph Winter, the founder of the U.S. Center for World Missions as a prime example. Until his death at age 84,

Winter continued to travel, speak and write for the cause of Christ in world missions.

When Winter was in his 60s, an age when most Americans are thinking about retirement, he wrote,

"Most men don't die of old age, they die of retirement. I read somewhere that half the men retiring in the state of New York die within two years. Save your life and you'll lose it.

Just like other drugs,

other psychological addictions, retirement is a virulent disease not a blessing. ... Where in the Bible do they see [retirement]? Did Moses retire? Did Paul retire? Peter? John? Do military officers retire in the middle of a war?"

More recently a group of Christian leaders led by Bruce Bruinisma, a 77-year-old entrepreneur and financial planner, asked fellow believers to sign a 10-point document, "The Retirement Reformation Manifesto." The group is mounting an effort to turn the traditional view of retirement on its head in the hopes of convincing retirees that leaving one's daily job is no time to enter a phase of "spiritual dormancy" and self-indulgence.

Christians, they remind us, are called to bear fruit in all seasons.

"Retirement is simply a stepping stone to future purpose and ministry," says Bru-

RETIREMENT
101
First in
a series





123rf.com

insma, founder and CEO of Envoy Financial, a retirement provider that serves those in ministry, and founder of the Live with Meaning Foundation.

Retirement in the Bible

The Institute for Faith, Work & Economics notes that the only biblical reference to something like retirement is when God tells Moses the Levites were to retire at age 50. But that only meant ceasing hard labor. The elder priests were to continue mentoring, advising and counseling the younger ones. Conversely the Institute points out,

the Bible is filled with examples of men who worked throughout their lives including:

Coming in TAB

Careful planning can provide the financial means to support missions and ministry work following retirement from a secular profession. In the next installment of Retirement 101, TAB will explore contemporary wisdom on saving for retirement.

▶ The Apostle John, who served and wrote into his 90s

▶ Moses, who was 80 when he went to Pharaoh and asked for the freedom of the Israelite slaves and worked until his death at age 120

▶ Daniel, who was thought to be in his 80s when he was thrown into the lion's den.

It's not difficult to find many more examples of biblical exhortations to stay missions-oriented throughout one's later years.

“The Bible is not silent about this because it is not silent about life,” says Piper. “And the period between 65 and 85 is called life. It is not something else. In fact it is a crucial part of life because it is the last period of preparation before we stand before the Lord face to face and give an account for every idle word and moment, according to Matthew 12:36.”

About a fourth (18 million) of the 74 million Baby Boomers are Christian, Piper estimates, and millions of them are financially stable, making them “really rich” by global standards. “What a force for good they can be in the world,” Piper writes, adding, “God has not given us 70-somethings a lifetime of experience with God and with the world to be shelved while we putz around endlessly with our hobbies and games and leisures.”✚

“God has not given us 70-somethings a lifetime of experience with God and with the world to be shelved while we putz around endlessly with our hobbies and games and leisures.”

John Piper
founder of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary

BIBLE VERSES

about serving

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather serve one another humbly in love.”

— Galatians 5:13

“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.”

— Hebrews 6:10

“But be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you.”

— 1 Samuel 12:24

“But be very careful to keep the commandments and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

— Joshua 22:5

“Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

— Romans 12:11

“But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.”

— 2 Chronicles 15:7

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.”

— 1 Peter 4:10

“Whatever you do work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

— Colossians 3:23–24

Dealing with a bully

How to help your child navigate, handle bullying

Bullying can cause great psychological impact. Kids who are bullied tend to have lower self-esteem and are more likely to struggle with depression.

How do you know if your child is being bullied? Some of the warning signs include:

- ▶ Comes home with torn, damaged or missing pieces of clothing, books or other belongings or “loses” things without being able to give a proper explanation of what has happened
- ▶ Displays unexplained cuts, bruises and scratches
- ▶ Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus or taking part in organized activities with peers (such as clubs)
- ▶ Has lost interest in schoolwork or suddenly begins to do poorly in school

- ▶ Appears sad, moody (mood swings with sudden outbursts of irritation or anger), teary or depressed when he or she comes home
- ▶ Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches or other physical ailments
- ▶ Experiences a loss of appetite
- ▶ Seems anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem

▶ Steals or asks for extra money from members of the family (to soften up the bullies).

If you notice any of these signs in your child, it’s time to have a conversation. Ask direct questions such as:

- ▶ “Are there any kids at school who are picking on you or bullying you?”
- ▶ “Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?”
- ▶ “Are there any kids at school who you don’t like? Why not?”

ample, avoid areas of the school where there are not many students or teachers around. Make sure you aren’t alone in the bathroom or locker room. Sit near the front of the bus. Don’t bring expensive things or a lot of money to school. Sit with a group of friends at lunch. Take a different route through the hallways or walk with friends or a teacher to your classes.

Source: Pathways Professional Counseling



123rf.com

- ▶ “Do they leave you out of things?”

Let them know they can tell you or any trusted adult whenever they are being bullied. Reassure your child you are there to talk about what’s happening.

Remember bullying is difficult for kids to navigate and know how to handle. They often feel they should handle it on their own and don’t want to “tattle” on the kids in their school. Remind them telling is not tattling and help them with strategies for dealing with a bully (see sidebar).

Consider talking with the staff at your child’s school too. First meet with your child’s teacher. He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers at school.

Share your concerns and ask about how your child relates to other classmates. Allow the school to set up an appointment with the par-

ents of the bully to curtail the bullying if needed. If you see or suspect your child is being bullied, take the issue seriously. Talk to your kids and be aware of the warning signs.

Online bullying

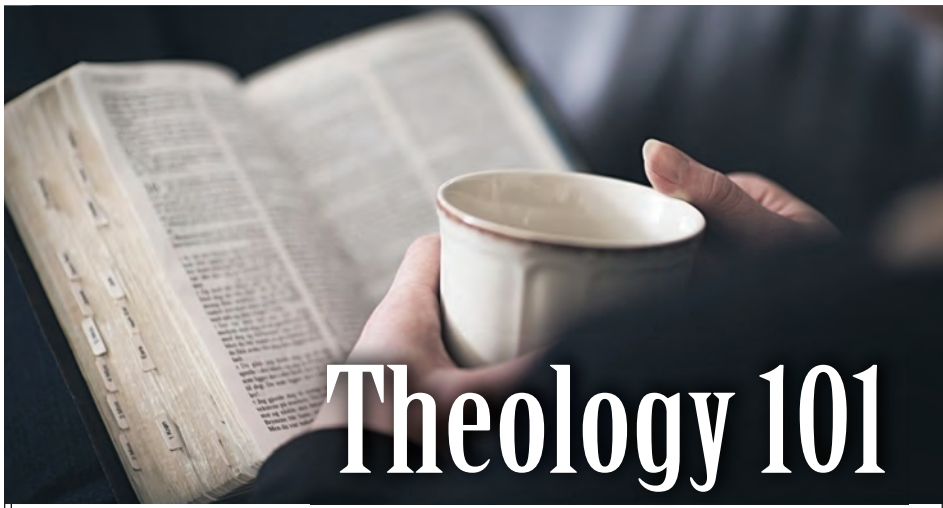
Also be aware bullying can take place in a school, church or neighborhood setting and also online. Many bullies and online predators are using the anonymity of the internet to attack their victims.

For more information on identifying and stopping bullying visit www.stopbullying.gov or contact Pathways Professional Counseling to set up an appointment with a licensed professional counselor to talk about strategies to stop the bullying.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Faith & Family is a monthly look at important spiritual, cultural and relational issues facing today’s families. For more articles on contemporary topics like these go to PathwaysProfessional.org/blog.

Helpful tips for children when dealing with a bully

- ▶ Do not fight back.
- ▶ Don’t try to bully those who bully you.
- ▶ Try not to show anger or fear. Students who bully like to see they can upset you. Calmly tell the student to stop or say nothing and then walk away. Use humor if that comes easily for you to do.
- ▶ Try to avoid situations where bullying might happen. For ex-



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Aspects of an Abundant Life

Theme Introduction

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

Previously consideration has been given to images of Christians as children in God's family, soldiers in God's army, athletes in God's arena, farmers in God's field and pilgrims on God's journey.

Given some biblical truths suggested by these images, what kind of lives should these kinds of people be experiencing or at least aspiring to?

Under the general theme of an abundant life Theology 101 will consider various biblical descriptors of Christian living at its best. This was best described by Christ when He explained His mission in John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly."

Alive and practical

Theology that moves beyond the theoretical or academic to make a difference in our lives is theology that is alive and practical. Giving thought to an abundant Christian life is as practical an exercise as we can engage in provided we seek to move beyond intellectual understanding to the doing of the truth. After all the Bible admonishes us to "be doers of the Word and not hearers only" (James 1:22). With such a goal in mind Theology 101 for several weeks will seek to explore some aspects of an abundant life.

We might borrow Jesus' words from Luke 6:38 to think of an abundant life as one that is meaningful, full and overflowing. In that passage He spoke in terms

of "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over." That could be a good description of Christian living at its fullest and best.

God specializes in causing abundance. In a meaningful doxology Ephesians 3:20 says God is able to do what we "ask." Even more He is able to do what we "think" or ask. On top of that the verse tells us that God can do "all" that we ask or think. As if that is not encouraging enough the passage reminds us that He can do "above" all we ask or think. He can even do "abundantly" above all we ask or think. And if that were not enough the verse declares God can do "exceedingly" abundantly above all that we ask or think.

So as not to leave us wondering how God can do this the promise ends with the explanation that this is "according to the power that works in us."

Using various Bible passages in coming weeks we will consider some key descriptors of this kind of life. As contradictory as it sounds at first next week we will be directed by God's word to think of an abundant life as a crucified life. ✚

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.



'The valley of testing'

Brunson urges Christians to be prepared for coming persecution, stand up for truth

Andrew Brunson said he gave up many times while he was imprisoned in Turkey.

"I was broken," he told listeners at the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference in Birmingham on June 10. "But I would work my way back into the battle."

But on one particular day he said he was called suddenly into court and accused of trying to overthrow the Turkish government. The prosecutor was calling for three life sentences and solitary confinement.

"I had been climbing out of brokenness but this really knocked me down hard," Brunson said.

In that place of brokenness he finally cried out that Jesus was worthy of all of his suffering.

"I began to fight every day," said Brunson, who served as a church planter and pastor in Turkey for 23 years. He was released in October 2018 after two years in prison.

'Adjusting perspective'

Persecution isn't something to be romanticized, he said. Before he was put in prison he held an idealistic view of suffering.

"I had to adjust my perspective," Brunson said. "I tried to bring my expectations and my mindset into the line of what Jesus wanted."

He had a choice — to cling to Christ as His anchor or live in constant fear of the future.

'Increasingly difficult'

"Prison tested my love for God," he said. "Many people are tested and don't make it out. The valley of testing is full of dry bones, people who have failed their test. I began to pray, 'I don't want to fail in the valley of testing. If You never release me from prison I'll still follow You.'"

Churches need to teach that persecution is coming and how to stand when it

does come, he said, noting how Jesus talked about the dangers of not being ready. While most Christians in the West have never encountered

persecution, Brunson said he thinks it is going to become "increasingly difficult" to stand for Jesus and truth in the United States — especially for the next generation.

"I fear many of us are complacent and unaware and I think that means many of us are going to be blindsided about what comes," he said.

Nothing is more important than "to be faithful in my generation, to love Him, to stand without apology before my King," Brunson said. "Someday you will also stand before King Jesus. May you do so without cause for regret." (Grace Thornton)



BRUNSON

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A Word from Our State Leaders



Rick Lance

State Missionary and Executive Director
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

“The Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering is truly having an impact on our state. I have seen firsthand how the generous gifts from Alabama Baptist churches are bearing lasting fruit at home and abroad. For example, when the tornadoes hit last March, the *Yellow Shirt Army* swooped in and got to work immediately, just hours after the storms. They had already been trained and were ready to go. Or last summer, when our partners at Alabama WMU welcomed girls *and* boys to Missions Adventure Camp. Your gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering are helping to make these and so many other Great Commission Ministries possible. Thank you for all you do to help get the word out in your church and association. I am thankful for your partnership.”



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Candace McIntosh

Executive Director
Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union

“I want to thank you, our leaders around the state, for all you do to support the Week of Prayer for State Missions and the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. In four short years, this offering has become a vital part of the fruitful work of Alabama Baptists in our home state, nation and even around the world. Your effort to help share the information about the offering is so essential to the overall impact we are able to have. Please know you are appreciated and so important!”



3 stories you should know



LifeWay photo by Aaron Earls

Ben Mandrell was installed as the 10th president of LifeWay Christian Resources at a celebration held Aug. 26 at the organization's Nashville headquarters in conjunction with LifeWay's August trustee meeting. In his remarks to trustees Mandrell described the current season as 'a new day' for both himself and the 128-year-old organization and emphasized the need for resources to help churches and families worldwide grow in their faith in Christ. (BP)

Somali mother's Bible provokes rejection

A 32-year-old mother in Somalia was forced to leave her home after her husband discovered her Bible in an unlocked drawer.

The woman, who secretly converted to Christianity in 2016, received a Somali-language Bible during a trip to Kenya to seek medical care for her father.

Upon returning to her home the woman forgot to lock the drawer where the Bible was hidden. Her husband found the Bible. He then divorced her and threatened her with stoning if she came near her daughters, ages 4 and 7, again.

Somalia's constitution establishes Islam as the state religion, according to the U.S. State Department. The nation ranks No. 3 on Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

Dorian spares Puerto Rico, US relief ready

Puerto Rico escaped a direct hit from Hurricane Dorian as the storm moved through the Caribbean, to the relief of those on the island still recovering from the devastating toll of Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Dorian's impact in the U.S. and British Virgin Islands was more severe but not catastrophic.

Florida Baptist Disaster Relief moved to Level 2 response Aug. 29 ahead of the storm's anticipated landfall in the state on Labor Day.

The North American Mission Board's Send Relief agency has prepared for the Atlantic hurricane season by staging supplies in various locations in Puerto Rico, including 150,000 meals and emergency packs with chainsaws, propane powered cook stoves and generators. (NAMB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

St. Clair church child-care worker arrested on child abuse charges

An Odenville man who worked at a church child-care center has been arrested on child sexual abuse charges.

Austin Greenway, 19, of Odenville, was arrested Aug. 20 on charges of sexual abuse of a child less than 12 and a school employee engaging in a sex act with a student under the age of 19, according to a statement from the St. Clair County Sheriff Billy Murray.

Greenway was an employee of the North Valley Early Learning Center and after school program, a ministry of North Valley Church, Odenville, for two years.

In June investigators with the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office were contacted by Margaret police department officials to look into allegations of sexual abuse of a 9-year-old child.

An "extensive investigation" followed, Murray said, resulting in an indictment of Greenway.



GREENWAY

Greenway turned himself in to authorities and was booked on the charges. He was released on a \$50,000 bond. His next court date is Oct. 2, Murray said. (TAB)

Crossbridge Community's Harris Cook celebrates golden milestone

Harris Cook says that 50 years ago he was afraid to get up in front of a class and present a report. He would've never guessed God would save him and call him to be a pastor and even a missionary to Venezuela.

"God has taken me places and allowed me to meet people — it's been more than I could've dreamed," he said. "I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Cook, pastor of Crossbridge Community Church, Helena, recently celebrated a half century of ministry since he met the Lord, surrendered to his calling and transferred to Samford University in Birmingham to start his ministerial training.

Over the years, he served several churches in Alabama — Garywood Baptist, Hueytown; West End Baptist, Birmingham; First Baptist Church,

Alexander City; and Northside Baptist, Jasper.



COOK

Later he and his wife, Jenny, served with the International Mission Board in Venezuela for six years. They returned to the United States to serve Crossbridge Community, where they've been for the past 13 years.

"When I think about my life as a Christian I don't see anything I've given up — I only see what I've gained," Cook said. "When you walk with the Lord and see His hand at work, He'll take you places you never dreamed." (Grace Thornton)

IMB decides to go in different direction with VP of marketing, communication

On Aug. 12 the International Mission Board (IMB) named Mark MacDonald as the new vice president of marketing and communication.

On Aug. 26 the IMB announced MacDonald was not a good fit for the role and the organization would be going in a different direction with

News near you

BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will celebrate its 90th anniversary Sept. 15 at 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow the service and a short program will follow the meal. The church will also host its regular third Sunday singing that night at 6 featuring The Kellys. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CLEBURNE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Larry Wayne Vinson** is the new associational missions director for **Cleburne Baptist Association**. Vinson, a native of Oxford, was pastor of Victory Baptist Church, Lanett, from 2001 until his retirement in 2016. He was pastor of Avalon Woods Baptist Church, Seale, from 1993 to 1999 and of Colomokee Baptist Church, Blakely, Georgia, from 1983 to 1993. Vinson served a variety of leadership roles in East Liberty Baptist Association, including Sunday School director, Vacation Bible School director and disaster relief chaplain. Vinson is a graduate of Florida



VINSON

Baptist College and Troy University, where he earned a master of counseling and psychology. While serving bivocationally he worked in mental health at West Central Georgia Regional Hospital and later as day treatment director of New Horizons Behavioral Health, both in Columbus, Georgia. He and his wife, Susan, have three children and two grandchildren.

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

▶ **East Gadsden Baptist Church** will host Family Life Sunday on Sept. 15 at 10:30 a.m. John Dickinson is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Vinemont Baptist Church** celebrated its centennial anniversary Aug. 18. Pastor Joey Smithson preached. The history of the church was presented by Jane Teeter, whose parents were charter members.

Congregational singing was led by director of music Melba Wiegard.

Certificates were presented by Joel Teal, on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and East Cullman director of missions Randy Makemson.

Quilts and photos were displayed. The quilts were used in the past to raise money as people would pay to have their name put on a quilt.

“The day was very good,” said Smithson. “It was great seeing the people celebrate.”

Baptism was part of the celebration. Lunch and a time of fellowship followed the service.



Photo by Joe Teal

GENEVA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Maple Avenue Baptist Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on Sept. 10 at 11 a.m. The Watsons will present a program of bluegrass music. For reservations call 334-684-9617. Teddy Ward is pastor.

MOBILE ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Irvington**, will host revival services Sept. 15–18 featuring guest evangelist Phil Glisson. Ron Griffin is pastor.

SULPHUR SPRINGS ASSOCIATION

▶ **Temple Hill Baptist Church, Empire**, will host a homecoming service Sept. 8 at 10 a.m. Special guest singers will be Steel City Quartet. Tim Blackmon will be the guest speaker. A potluck lunch will follow the service and there will be no afternoon singing. Joey Holloway is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Forrest Jones** is the new minister of children and families at **First Baptist Church, Dadeville**. He holds a bachelor’s degree in education from Auburn University and is currently pursuing a master of divinity at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to being called into ministry Jones served as a police detective and training instructor. He and his wife, Caren, have eight children. 🇺🇸



JONES

— NEWSBRIEFS —

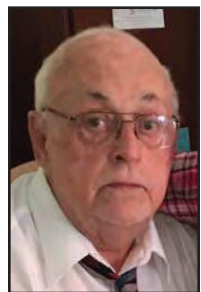
the vice president position. “God is good but this is difficult,” MacDonald said. (BP)

Johnny Reese Huey, longtime pastor in Walker Association, dies at 79



Johnny Reese Huey, interim pastor of Barton Chapel Baptist Church, Cordova, died Aug. 11 following heart surgery. He was 79.

In his later years of ministry Huey served several Walker Baptist Association churches as pastor or interim pastor, including Providence Baptist, Oakman; Liberty Grove Baptist, Nauvoo; Coal City Baptist, Jasper; and New Vision Baptist, Jasper.



HUEY

David Miller, director of missions for Walker Association, said Huey’s “passion for the gospel was incredible.”

“The last thing he said to me as they were wheeling him out for surgery was, ‘I’m going to be alright either way — either way I win,’” Miller said.

Earlier in his life Huey studied at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and served as pastor of two Baptist churches in Mississippi. After that he moved to Alabama and served as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Forestdale.

He is survived by his wife, Linda; daughter, Tanya; son, William; and two grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

Montgomery Assoc.’s Lisa Rose marks 35 years in missions, ministry



When Lisa Rose looks back over her 35 years of missions work, it’s easy to pinpoint where her journey began — Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) at the University of Montevallo.

“My campus minister and other folks really poured into my life and gave me the opportunity to do missions in college,” she said. “It made a huge impact.”

They got her involved in local ministries and during her years in college she spent four summers doing BCM summer missions in other places too.

“That really set the tone and that’s where my

call to missions happened,” Rose said.

From there she served as a North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionary in New York City. Then in 2006 she joined the staff of Montgomery Baptist Association (MBA), where she served as compassion ministries director until transitioning into the role of director of church mobilization at the beginning of August.

In that role she will still be involved in compassion ministries but she will also recruit volunteer missionaries from local churches to serve across Central Alabama’s River Region and internationally.

Neal Hughes, who leads Montgomery Association, called Rose a “gifted missionary practitioner.”

“She loves Jesus and people with all of her being,” he said. “The MBA is fortunate to have such a multitalented missionary on our staff.”

“I lie in bed at night thinking of all the possibilities,” Rose said. “I love missions, I’ve loved this journey, and I can’t wait to see where it goes from here.” (Grace Thornton)



ROSE

RAs, GAs instills 'love of missions' in children

(continued from page 1) that missions legacy to her son and other boys.

"What we like to do is to make sure the boys understand what it is to be the hands and feet of Jesus," she explained. "We want to incorporate the values and the virtues of the RAs and make sure they understand what it is to be a missionary themselves."

Hunt and Hester work closely with a team of other GA and RA leaders in the church to help their students both learn about and get personally involved in missions.

Among the hands-on projects the GAs have gotten involved in is connecting with girls their own age at Light of Hope Learning Center in Bangladesh.

The center is a day shelter providing impoverished girls education, life skills, health care and moral training. The girls at Light of Hope also create products marketed through National WMU's WorldCrafts fair-trade ministry.

After studying about the girls in Bangladesh the GAs in Guntersville wanted to find practical ways to help them. They decided to organize a bake sale to raise money for a sewing machine for the center.

"By the time we finished we ended up with \$4,700 so we got a bunch of sewing machines for them," Hunt said.

On the RA front Hester and other leaders seek to encourage a similar level of missions awareness and involvement. Their RA

chapter has taken the lead in organizing an annual chili cookoff to raise funds for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and has added a soup cookoff to benefit the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

They also have collected shoes for children in need, served alongside the ushers as church greeters and shadowed several of the church's ministers and leaders.

"Part of being an RA is learning how to be a leader and follow that leadership role and that's what we promote for our boys," Hester explained. She said the RA leaders strive to help the boys "feel a purpose and be connected to our church. We want them to be leaders."

Equipping the next generation of missions leaders also is a top priority for Hunt. Noting that she would love for some of her GA girls to eventually answer God's call to career missions, she recounted her own commitment to a life of missions service more than seven decades ago.

Next generation

"I felt God's call to missions when I was 9 years old — perfect GA age," she said. "So I wanted that for the children in this church. ... That's when the Lord speaks to children, when they're young, when their hearts are tender."

Affirming her personal motivation for nurturing a love of missions in her young GAs, Hunt added, "I really hope to instill a vision in another generation so they will pass it on." ✝



WMU photo by Pam Henderson
Jackie Hester leads RAs at FBC Guntersville in a missions lesson.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information on placing a classified ad call 205-870-4720, ext. 102 or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Linden Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. We are a conservative Southern Baptist church located in Marengo County, Alabama, with blended style of traditional and contemporary worship. If interested in this position, send resumés to: Linden Baptist Church, P.O. Box 480776, Linden, AL 36748-0776, ATN: Pastor Search Committee or email to: jarnett@bellsouth.net. The deadline for sending resumés is Sept. 30.

PASTOR

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

PASTOR

Stapleton Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Seminary degree required along with pastoring experience. To be considered for this position please submit a resumé and cover letter to: sb.search.team@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Immanuel Baptist Church is accepting resumés for pastor. We are a conservative, traditional-worship-style congregation. We are seeking a pastor with excellent preaching and church building skills, able to lead in reaching younger families and individuals while maintaining senior member relationships. Excellent facilities. Previous senior pastor experience and seminary education preferred. Please include web links to sermons or current DVDs. Email resumés to: ibc.pastorsearch@myimmanuel.net.

FULL-TIME MUSIC & WORSHIP PASTOR

Piedmont First Baptist Church, Piedmont, Alabama, is seeking an individual with experience to provide a full-time leadership in developing a quality Christian music ministry of various music styles that glorifies God. Must have a bachelor's degree in choral or instrumental music, and the ability to play piano/keyboard and experience in utilizing and/or coordinating audio, video and lighting. Please send resumé to: info@piedmontfbc.org. Full job description on request.

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.

MISSIONS, MEN'S & EVANGELISM PASTOR

First Baptist Church in Athens, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking resumés for a new and exciting position on our staff. This candidate will lead our efforts in missions: Lead, challenge and recruit for involvement in missions. Men's: Lead men to live out a godly purpose in family and community. Evangelism: Assist lead pastor and staff in oversight of all evangelistic ministries of the church. We seek a gifted communicator of the gospel and seven to 10 years of related ministry experience. A master's degree is required. Email resumés to: MMEPPastorSearch@fbcathens.org.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF STUDENTS

First Baptist Church in Athens, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking resumés for associate pastor of students. This candidate will lead our efforts to reach and disciple middle school through college students as well as providing pastoral care and ministry to parents and families of students. Engaging parent/guardian involvement is primary. We seek a gifted communicator of the gospel and five to seven years of student ministry experience. A bachelor's degree is required in a related field. Email resumés to: StudentPastorSearch@fbcathens.org.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Grace Point Baptist Church, Somerville, Alabama (Morgan County), is seeking candidates for a part-time youth minister. If interested and you feel you have the calling, please email resumés to: perrysmith@centurytel.net.

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: fbc206@aol.com or mailed to: FBC Search Committee, P.O. Box 428, Slocomb, AL 36375. Responsibilities include leading our students from grades sixth through 12th and our young adults in college and career. Resumés must be received by Sept. 6.

TWO PART-TIME POSITIONS

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, is seeking a part-time church secretary and youth minister. For more information, contact Pastor Steve

Potts, 205-798-3341, email: stevepotts@westwoodbc.net.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

New Beginnings Baptist, Graysville, Alabama, is searching for a bivocational youth pastor. Please send resumés to: 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. Send resumés to: Lakewood Baptist Church, 4011 Lakewood Drive, Phenix City, AL 36867.

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FOR SALE

CEMETERY LOTS

Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama, has 3 adjoining cemetery lots for sale at Jefferson Memorial Cemetery in Trussville. Sold individually or together at great price. For information, call 205-798-3341 or email: stevepotts@westwoodbc.net.

Marion Matters

Judson volunteers partner with Perry County community for annual service initiative

Mark Tew has only been the president of Judson College in Marion since the spring, but that didn't stop him from diving headfirst into the work of Judson's "Marion Matters."

Alongside approximately 136 Judson volunteers, including students, faculty and staff members, and a team from *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) newspaper, Tew and his wife, Ann, served — and sweated — during the Perry County-wide community service initiative Aug. 23, coordinated by Judson's office of faith-based service and learning.

This year marked Judson College's 15th annual Marion Matters.

Marion Matters volunteers worked outdoor cleanup, partnered with local schools, visited nursing homes and homebound Marion community members and more.

"I loved participating in Marion Matters," said TAB digital services associate Haley Piersol, who assisted with clothes sorting at Sowing Seeds of Hope's job training center. "It was great to see the young ladies of Judson interact

and help their community. The world is always a better place when people reach out to help those around them."



Photo by Jessica Ingram
TAB digital services associate Haley Piersol sorts clothing at Sowing Seeds of Hope's job training center.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash
Judson president Mark Tew and Jim O'Neal, superintendent of facilities and security at Judson, help their group install a fence and clean, move and set up playground equipment at Marion Academy.

Amy Butler, director of faith-based service and learning at Judson and coordinator of Marion Matters, said that in addition to the meaningful service projects,

Marion Matters is often freshman students' first introduction to the community where they will spend the next three or four years. "Through their participation in Marion Matters," Butler said, "new students not only learn about service opportunities that exist in Perry County but they also learn about their own gifts and talents that they can use to serve people wherever God calls them."

Motivation

Tew quoted Mark 10:45 at the debriefing session Friday afternoon reminding students that in the same way Jesus "came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many," the motivation for service "isn't just the act of service; it is how service is combined in our total giving of ourselves," he said.

And Marion Matters was the perfect opportunity for



Photo by Debbie Campbell
A group of Judson students and faculty decorate bulletin boards for students and teachers at Perry County's Francis Marion School.

the TAB team to kick off its new ministry service effort for staff members, said TAB editor-in-chief Jennifer Davis Rash. "We plan to participate in ministry service projects several times a year so coming alongside Judson in the annual effort in Perry County was a natural partnership." (Judson, TAB)



Photo by Mary Amelia Taylor

A team of TAB staff members — (clockwise from top, left) Jennifer Davis Rash, Cynthia Watts, Bill Gilmore, Debbie Campbell, Jessica Ingram, Haley Piersol and Janet Erwin — worked alongside Judson College volunteers during the 15th annual Marion Matters service initiative.

Resources available to prevent abuse, care for survivors

At the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in June hundreds of churches committed to the “Caring Well Challenge,” an effort to equip churches to prevent abuse and to provide better care for survivors of abuse within their congregations.

Utmost importance

The arrest of a man accused of abusing a child while employed as a child-care worker at an Alabama Baptist church (see ‘St. Clair,’ page 12) highlights just how important the Caring Well Challenge is, according to Dan Darling, vice president for communications for the SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

“Parents are asking one important question when they come into our churches: Is it safe to put my kids

in this program? They increasingly want to know if churches are proactive on this issue,” Darling said.

Churches and individuals who commit to the Caring Well Challenge will be better equipped in two important ways, he said.

“The goal is to prevent abuse from happening as best we can but also to create within the church a refuge for those who are survivors — those who are looking for a place where they can feel love and welcomed,” Darling said.

One of the key components of the challenge is “Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused,” a curriculum available at churchcares.com.

The curriculum includes a downloadable handbook and videos from top experts

featuring various abuse scenarios in ministry, at church or at school to help leaders understand and implement best practices for prevention and protection, Darling said.

“We wanted to create resources that are easy for churches to implement,” he said. “We didn’t want to

put a burden on small and medium-sized churches.

That’s why one of the first steps is to

build a church safety team and empower them to look at current practices, which is something even a small church can easily do.”

In addition churches are encouraged to send pastors and ministry leaders to the 2019 ERLC National Conference on Oct. 3–5 in Dallas.

This year’s conference will be entirely focused on the topic of equipping churches

to confront the abuse crisis.

The lineup of conference speakers includes sexual abuse survivors Rachael Denhollander, Susan Cadone, Megan Lively, Trillia Newbell and Mary Demuth; SBC leaders J.D. Greear, Ronnie Floyd and Russell Moore; Gary Haugen, who helps fight human trafficking through his organization International Justice Mission; and many others.

Several panel discussions are scheduled, including “God Made All of Me: What Your Student Ministry, Children’s Ministry and Parents Can Do to Protect Kids” and “Facts vs. Myths: Understanding Who Child Sexual Abusers Actually Are.”

Some of the conference speakers and sessions will be live-streamed, Darling said. Details about the live stream will be available the week of the event on the ERLC website.

“One of the most serious things churches can do is make sure the church is a safe environment for children. But victims also want to know they will be seen and heard and to know they are welcome in the family of God,” Darling said.

Church as a refuge

“The Caring Well Challenge will give a sense of comfort and peace in the church not just on the prevention side, but also by providing the language and coaching on how to talk to survivors ... and how to really create in our churches a kind of refuge.”

For more information on the Caring Well Challenge including links to resources, visit www.caringwell.com. To register for the 2019 ERLC Caring Well Conference go to www.erlc.com/upcoming-events/2019-erlc-national-conference. (TAB)

For more information visit www.caringwell.com.



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because we are COMMITTED to a CURE.



Children's
of Alabama



Alabama Center
for Childhood Cancer
and Blood Disorders

UAB MEDICINE



Don Donald's sons, Brooks (center) and Donny (right), wait on the Apollo 11 lift off on a beach near Cape Canaveral, Florida.

'Blessed one'

Former NASA engineer, Alabama Baptist remembers Apollo 11 liftoff 50 years later

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

By today's standards it's not a very good picture. "I was using an old Kodak and I didn't have a zoom," Don Donald said.

But the photo still captures the scene he sees crystal clear in his mind, the spot where he stood 50 years ago and watched American astronauts make history. As his 3-year-old son, Brooks, scratched in the sand on a beach near Cape Canaveral, Florida, he and his wife, Mary Charles, and 5-year-old son, Donny, watched the Apollo 11 mission lift off toward the moon.

'Golden age'

"On the way back to Huntsville we stopped at my parent's home in Pine Apple, Alabama, and watched the moon landing on a black and white television on July 20," Don-

ald said. "This was the golden age of space exploration and I was very fortunate and proud to be a part of it."

The beach wasn't his only part in it — that was merely the icing on the cake. Donald worked as a propulsion engineer for NASA for 31 years from 1962 until he retired in 1992. Most of that time was spent in the test laboratory at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville.

"We were involved in the early development of the Saturn V Apollo propulsion system, from building them to testing them," he said.

In 1967, after a tragic fire killed the three astronauts of Apollo 1, the first crewed mission of the U.S. Apollo program, Donald and his colleagues were tasked with testing the insulation flammability of the Apollo space capsule.

"That fire resulted because of a 100% pressurized oxygen atmo-



Photo courtesy of Don Donald

sphere so we simulated various mixes, like regular air, which is mostly oxygen, nitrogen and helium," he said. "We did that and as a result of that program I was selected to be a launch honoree for Apollo 11."

'Great career'

That's how he and his family ended up on the beach in Florida that day.

In the days and years that followed he experienced a "great career" with NASA, working on the space shuttle and acting as lead test conductor on all the dynamic tests that were completed in Huntsville. Later he was one of the test directors and lead engineer on an exter-

nal tank test, and he also worked on a space telescope in Sunnyvale, California.

Then in 1992 a few dozen early retirements were up for grabs and he took one.

"I moved back home to Pine Apple and we went into the real estate and appraisal business which has been very good to us," Donald said. "I've been fortunate to be able to come home and get really involved in church."

Today he serves as the lead deacon at Bethsaida Baptist Church, Pine Apple, in Pine Barren Baptist Association.

"My walk has been a blessed one," he said.✚

Christian Crossword

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Across

- Fish
- Mother
- Type of missile
- Dregs
- Perfect
- Halo
- Domain
- Respond
- As previously cited
- Blindly optimistic person
- Book by Homer
- Computer type
- Battle of nations
- Scriptural your
- Frozen water
- Small ground plot
- Pouch
- Asks repeatedly for payment
- Event when Jesus was crucified
- Double-reed instrument

- River (Spanish)
- Transgressions
- Jesus' last meal
- Type of plane
- Biddy
- Swiss-like cheese
- Pigpen
- Liabile
- Constrictor snake
- A name of God
- ___ goes before destruction
- Clover
- Feel sorry for
- Talked
- Popular stadium
- Pine
- Charlemagne's father
- Royalty
- Look
- Concerning
- Skewer

Down

- Applaud

- Air (prefix)
- Spool
- Hymn of praise
- Supernatural event
- City in Yemen
- Denote
- Parrot
- Alternative (abbr.)
- Boat's wind catcher
- Length of forearm
- First husband of Bathsheba
- Father
- Talk
- Asian country
- Fire remains
- Object of false worship
- Island nation
- Son of Seth
- Retired persons association (abbr.)

- Trash
- Point
- Adam's son
- Has toed
- Ventilates
- Tie
- Catch sight of (KJV)
- Southeast by east
- Card game
- Clothing (KJV)
- Deface
- Shock
- Cost
- A tenth part
- Quaking tree
- Leader of Exodus
- Colorer
- Faith, ___ and charity
- Related
- Fellow
- Lotion brand
- You are the ___ of the earth
- Resort hotel

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 8

Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



REMEMBERED Ephesians 1:15–23

Knowledge of God (15–17)

In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us how to pray in the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is not the only example of prayer in the Bible for us to emulate when we talk to God, however.

In today's passage in Ephesians Paul gives us an example as he prays for the saints in the city of Ephesus. We can use this prayer to help guide us as we pray for other believers in our communities and around the world.

To begin Paul expresses thankfulness for these saints, which shows an attitude of gratitude, something all believers should have. Second he prays for the Ephesians to possess a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the Lord God.

Christians will never be perfect until glorification so there is always room to grow in wisdom. Even the most mature Christian still has a lot to learn. The more we walk with Christ the more we realize we are far from perfect.

Instead of this being a curse it is a blessing because it draws us closer to God. In fact the more we realize our imperfections the greater God becomes to us. As we realize we cannot become more like Christ on our own we become dependent on God.

As we pray this prayer for ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ it will unite our local church bodies and make us a more effective witness for the good news of the gospel of Christ.

Hope of God (18–19)

In modern American culture many people focus on their identity — who they are and their desire to be known and legitimized. This becomes evident as we observe people demanding others accept them for who they see themselves to be. It is a rampant issue in our culture today but it is not new. For centuries people have struggled with identity issues but as Christians we have hope. We have eternal assurance of who we are.

The Christian does not have this need to focus and obsess over identity because our identity is found in Christ, and we are who He says we are. It is a great comfort knowing it is our Creator — the God of the universe — who gives us value and not the society around us. Trying to live up to society's standards is just a recipe for anxiety, depression and insecurity as we can never live a perfect life.

Therefore it is important for us as Christians to take stock of who we are in Christ Jesus and what benefits come with this calling. Paul emphasizes that our calling as Christians brings us great hope because knowing what God has done for us means our focus is solely on God and not our earthly circumstances.

Power of God (20–23)

Without a doubt the most important aspect of Christianity is the resurrection of Christ. Not only does it show the power of God in defeating death but it proves that the God who is able to conquer the grave and raise His Son from the dead can surely fulfill all of the other promises He made to His people.

This should be great encouragement to the believer because in every trial we face we know God is greater. This does not mean we will overcome each and every trial here on earth, but we can live with hope and confidence knowing who's in control. And when death comes we can trust that the God who raised Christ from the dead also will raise us from the dead.

The resurrection is so important that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 if the resurrection is not true, then Christians are to be pitied above everyone else because we worship a dead Savior who can do nothing to help us.

We, however, should live in the knowledge and confidence of the glory of the resurrection in such a way that others are drawn to our lives and as a result drawn toward Christ. 🌟

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



A DAILY PURSUIT Philippians 4:4–9

One generation often passes on life lessons to the next through the use of proverbs. These are snippets of the distilled wisdom of countless ancestors who managed to make their way through life before we stepped onto the stage.

Tucked away in the corners of our mind are innumerable examples of this sort of wisdom, a point illustrated by the fact that we can complete lines like these almost without thinking: "The early bird ...," "Two wrongs ...," "A bird in the hand ...," etc.

Because proverbs represent the collective wisdom of the community they tend not only to be memorable but also to be inarguably true. This is certainly the case with one famous proverb — "The grass is always greener on the other side."

It is a curious aspect of the human condition that the degree of our satisfaction with life is largely comparative.

One second our mouths salivate over the entrée a server sets in front of us, the next our shoulders slump in disappointment as we notice that someone else's meal looks even better than ours. Nothing takes the shine off a new car so much as spotting another car that is even nicer.

We always seem to want what others possess. We are rarely content with what we have.

In the last chapter of his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul offers an extended discussion of the issue of contentment.

Apparently having heard of some of the discord that marked the church at Philippi, Paul urged the believers there to cease their competition and strife and to live lives marked by contentment.

Begin your day with praise. (4–5)

In verse 4, Paul charges his readers, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice."

Coming from another person this might sound like a bland spiritual platitude. Coming from Paul, however, this was a command to be

taken seriously. After all Paul had himself already experienced suffering and prison for the cause of Christ.

This was a person who had been through difficult circumstances and had earned the right to be taken seriously when he urged rejoicing even in trying times.

Paul's charge to the Philippians was that they find contentment in the person of Jesus regardless of their circumstances and that they rejoice in the blessings God had given them rather than fret over blessings they had not yet received.

Pray and leave your concerns in the hands of God. (6–7)

Paul's emphasis on contentment continues. He urges the Philippians not to be anxious about anything but rather to practice the art of turning over their concerns to God in prayer.

The apostle never denies his readers have genuine concerns worthy of consideration.

What he does instead is encourage the Philippians to give those concerns to God, to thank God for His goodness, to entrust Him with their needs and then to hold on in faith until God acts out His own good pleasure.

Fill your mind with the things of God. (8–9)

Paul has in mind also a pattern of life for the moments that separate our requests to God and God's response to us.

He urges the believers at Philippi to train their minds to focus on what is good and honorable, pure and lovely, commendable and excellent.

Paul seems to recognize that in difficult times our minds and our hearts can be drawn away to dark places. Perhaps out of doubt, perhaps out of anger, we can let ourselves drift over into attitudes and actions that pretend as if God is not really there at all.

Paul urges his readers then and now to hold onto what is good while we wait for God to do what is best. 🌟



Media reviews

MUSIC

E58 Worship

Make Way
LVIII Music

It's the debut album from Expression 58 Worship, which was formed out of Expression 58 Church in Los Angeles and features Matt Sallee, a member of the seven-member worship group and the newest member of the a cappella group Pentatonix. It's an impressive freshman album



with powerful Hillsong-like songs such as "Freedom" (co-

written by Sallee) and "Love Goes On" joining slower-tempo memorable tunes like "Filled With Heaven." It was recorded before an audience.

Jordan Feliz

Future
Centricity

Feliz burst onto the scene in 2015 with his song "The River" and "Future" is his best album yet. For lovers of Christian folk/rock/pop with thoughtful, gospel-centric lyrics, it's hard to pick a favorite. Perhaps it's "Witness" or "Changed" — both of which

have received extensive radio play. Or maybe it's "Count That



High" or "Faith" — two songs that deserve more radio airtime. Or maybe it's "That's the Life," in which Feliz's vocals are on display.✝

'Value truth over feeling'

Skillet rocker wants to 'reach as many people for Christ as I can'

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Skillet frontman John Cooper acknowledges his band's music is difficult to define. Christian rock? Sort of. Mainstream rock? Kind of. Hard rock? Yes. Popular? Most definitely.

The band has sold more than 12 million albums worldwide and has seen their music streamed hundreds of millions of times. They play at mainstream rock concerts throughout the world and at Christian festivals too. They just released their 10th studio album, "Victorious."

Cooper and his bandmates — wife Corey Cooper, Jen Ledger and Seth Morrison — might be the most successful crossover rock band ever. And they haven't abandoned their faith — in fact it's just the opposite.

Viral Facebook post

Cooper received widespread attention this summer when he penned a viral Facebook post urging Christians to stop relying on worship leaders and "influencers" for truth and instead to "rediscover the pre-eminence of the Word" of God. The church, he said, must "value truth over feeling." He posted it after author and former pastor Joshua Harris announced that he had left Christianity and after a singer for Hillsong said he was "losing" his faith.

The post's popularity was ironic considering Skillet's music isn't explicitly Christian although it does contain biblical themes. And the band's fans run the gamut — atheists, agnostics and yes, Christians.

"I believe music speaks to people. And I want to use my platform to reach as many people for Christ as I can," Cooper said. "I've had people



John Cooper

Photo courtesy of John Cooper

say, 'I've been a Skillet fan over 10 years and I had no idea that you are a Christian band. ... Our lyrics are not overt. What I think is most Christian about Skillet is not actually the lyrics ... [It's] the things we talk about in interviews, the things I say on stage and the lives that we live. I always talk about Christ at the shows — how Jesus has changed my life."

Skillet's new song "Legendary" from the "Victorious" album urges the listener to live a life that matters. It contains the lyric: "While I'm alive, I'll push through the pain, I'll run for the prize."

It's not a Christian song in the traditional sense, but it's easy to see the scriptural reference in it.

"We only have a short life to live," Cooper said, explaining the meaning, "so let's run for the prize which is Christ. Christ is the prize.

Let's finish the race strong."

"Victorious" isn't the only new project by Skillet. Cooper also has a new graphic novel — a comic book — that features him and his bandmates as the protagonists. It's called Eden.

"It's an exciting science fiction book without the cursing and without the mature stuff that everybody can enjoy," he said. "A family can read it."✝

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.

Stepping toward refugees

Door 'wide open' for gospel ministry amid crisis in Sudan, to refugees at home

Despite continuing protests and violence in the nation of Sudan, Abraham Deng sees God opening a door for the church to bear fruit particularly among Muslims.

Deng, who came to America as a refugee from what is now South Sudan, frequently visits both his home-

town area in South Sudan as well as the nation of Sudan where his wife and three children await approval to move to the United States.

Deng recounted that three women came to the local church during his visit to Sudan this spring saying they needed to follow "the son of Mary" after seeing Him in a dream.

"I had heard accounts of people saying, 'I saw Jesus in a dream' or 'I heard it in movies,' but I never talked to someone face-to-face telling me they have seen Jesus in a dream and 'He asked me to follow Him and directed me to come to the church.'"

This is not a unique occurrence as the events happening in Sudan have "opened the door wide open" to sharing the gospel with Muslims.

"We prayed with them and they accepted Christ and many others have given their lives to Christ during this crisis," Deng said.

In addition to sharing the gospel



Submitted photo

Abraham Deng leads worship for the Sudanese congregation meeting at Clarkston International Bible Church northeast of Atlanta.

in Sudan, Deng is one of the founders and current worship leaders of a congregation of Sudanese refugees meeting at Clarkston International Bible Church (CIBC) in Georgia.

Host to the world

Lead pastor Trent DeLoach said CIBC has been hosting a number of different ethnic congregations for years with the Sudanese meeting the longest at more than 10 years.

The opportunity to work with different ethnicities has helped DeLoach realize the importance of praying for foreign-born brothers and sisters when crises arise worldwide.

"I believe the most fruitful and

beneficial cross-cultural ministry is born out of prayer," DeLoach said. "I guarantee you every city in our great country has some element of foreign-born people that live there and we want all of our Southern Baptist family to step toward refugees and internationals with the love and compassion of Christ."

Deng used a metaphor of God shaking up a tree to describe the crisis in Sudan — a difficult and painful experience that ultimately will produce great fruit both in Sudan and in America.

"God has shaken up the country, and the Muslims now are falling as fruit and the church has to go and pick up that fruit." (BP)

How to pray:

▶ Pray for civilians in Sudan to be given government control so the country can move toward guaranteeing religious freedom for Christians.

▶ Pray for Christians in Sudan to step out in faith and boldness to do what God has for them. (TAB)



NAMB photo

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WEEKDAY MORNINGS ON WXJC

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AND AFTERNOONS LIVE



THE JOE LOCKETT SHOW
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THE MARK WHITE SHOW
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