



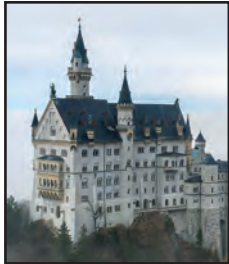
# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



Staying safe, making most of international travel

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Auburn's Chette Williams reminisces on 20 years in college athletics

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Chick-fil-A restaurant operator instills leadership concepts in young people he mentors

◆ Page 10

Blessings Christian Store in Prattville is one of several independent stores in Alabama that now offers LifeWay products to customers following the closure of LifeWay brick-and-mortar stores.

# ‘Eager to serve’

## LifeWay store closings open doors for independent projects

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Customers preferring a face-to-face shopping experience still have options following the closing of LifeWay Christian Resources brick-and-mortar stores earlier this year. Existing and newly opened independent Christian bookstores provide those options.

### Local buying

Matt Deavers, former associate at the LifeWay Christian Store in Montgomery and now church liaison at Blessings Christian Store in Prattville, said Vacation Bible School products, communion and record keeping supplies, engraved Bibles and Bible study materials were among the most popular items customers purchased directly

through the local LifeWay stores.

Many buyers preferred to view these materials in person, he said, asking questions and considering alternatives. As church liaison Deavers assists those who are ordering church supplies, helps church members choose personal resources and visits churches to ensure their needs are met.

The store offers a range of traditional products as well as customized printing services.

“Blessings and other independent stores are eager to serve their local churches and community in every way possible,” he said.

Jason Bachus, church planter and bivocational pastor of The Church of Pleasant Grove, Heflin, and former church connection specialist at the



Photo courtesy of Matt Deavers

LifeWay Christian Store in Oxford, opened Christian Book and Supply in Anniston



Photo by Crystal Bachus

A ‘burn bar’ at Christian Book and Supply in Anniston allows customers to make a customized music CD on demand.

with his business partner Daniel Moore in July. As a pastor Bachus desired to continue serving local churches. Smaller congregations and rural churches often favored personal service, he said, adding volunteer church workers often sought his advice on what products other churches were using and which materials would best suit their needs.

“You build these relation-

ships and I’ve served these people, helping them to do what God has called them to do,” he said.

Bachus’ new store offers all types of Christian books, church supplies and resources including engraved Bibles and accompaniment CDs. Bachus wants to continue serving local churches by helping them with the resources they need to reach people for Jesus.

### Face-to-face experience

“So that’s what I’m doing,” he said.

Independent Christian bookstores continue to offer the face-to-face experience, allowing customers to see and feel the products which is important, Deavers said.

(See ‘LifeWay,’ page 8)

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

# Equip ministry tips

## A Well-Balanced, Healthy Life – Charlotte Wyckoff

In the Christian's life a connection exists among the physical, the emotional and the spiritual. According to Charlotte Wyckoff of Alabama Baptist Nursing Fellowship, a well-balanced lifestyle is when all three aspects are in the right proportions in a believer's life.

"Sometimes we feel we are all out of balance," Wyckoff said. "If one aspect of our lives is out of proportion it can affect the others. Balance is about making the right choices and enjoying those choices."

The body's ability to function is known as the physical aspect of a

believer's being. Common stressors like obesity, inadequate or irregular rest, poor nutrition and insufficient physical activity can lead to poor health.

According to Wyckoff, Christians can take steps to improve their physical well-being.

Regular exercise and increased activity can promote weight loss and overall health. Portion control and healthy meal choices provide improved nutrition also helping to control body weight.

Proper rest and a regular sched-

ule combine to enhance the body's ability to function well and can be improved by eating foods high in melatonin such as fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle enables the believer to pursue spiritual and emotional health and helps the believer serve God with mind, body and spirit.

By making choices that promote physical health Christians can lay a foundation upon which to build their spiritual and emotional well-being. (Lanell Downs Smith)

**Maintaining a healthy lifestyle enables the believer to pursue spiritual and emotional health.**

*One of my favorite things about TAB is the monthly Faith & Family page. It always features topics that are practical and relatable. I know TAB is a source I can trust when we're talking about real life issues and situations. We were all placed here on this earth by God at this time to do life together and I think it's wonderful that TAB is here to help us.*

**Lauren C. Grim**  
TAB creative services manager

## REFLECTIONS

"LISTEN TO THIS, HONEY! AFTER FIRING THEIR THIRD PASTOR IN A ROW, SWAN LAKE CHURCH HAS SOLD ITS BUILDINGS, DONATED THE PROCEEDS TO MISSIONS, AND ENTERED A FEDERAL WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM!"



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.



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

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# MY RASHIONALE

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

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@RashionalThts



## God's plan is for work to bless us and bless others

**I**t's so hard to watch and not have answers for the exasperating situation. But even with everything stacked so solidly against my friend he has continued to push through each day hoping for a better tomorrow.

Any one of the layers through which he scrambles to tame would be suffocating, but the toll his life situation is taking on his work hurts him as much as any of the other struggles.

And it's true. His work ethic rivals most. He has always been someone you wanted on your team, someone you could depend on to get the job done.

Now to suddenly be undependable and waking up with new, "can't make this stuff up" drama every morning cuts him off at the knees. Not only does it wipe him out of any hope of mental astuteness on the job but his life has become a distraction for others on his team.

Maybe he's finally wearing down after all he's been carrying, but the new territory of a lack of focus at work and an inability to contribute at the high level of which he is accustomed has left him extremely discouraged.

Another friend finds himself in the exact opposite situation — life and work are both going really well and he loves what he gets to do every day.

However, he finds himself discouraged as well because he can't work fast enough or hard enough to catch up with the vision he has for the area in which he is called to serve.

So many ideas, so many

positive moves he could make if only he had more time, energy and finances to expand the staffing and resources needed to put the dreams into action.

Others are fighting their own battles of discouragement related to their work. Maybe aging means they aren't as quick or sharp as they once were. Maybe health issues mean they must give up the work they love so much. Maybe downsizing meant the role they thought would always be their's vanished years before they were ready.

We are built to work and contribute to society in whatever

ways we can. Defining what that looks like depends on each individual's situation, but not being able to do our part truly does cut away at us — even if we don't realize it in the moment.

How many times have you watched someone waste time or hide from responsibility when he or she could have truly made a difference in so many people's lives with just a little effort?

I struggle to understand the mindset behind anyone who spends excessive amounts of energy trying to get out of work rather than wanting to help — especially when so many people

would love to work so much more than they are able at the moment.

Just think if everyone gave his and her best each day then we could make such a difference in the world — and shine collectively for Christ like we've never seen before.

We also could easily reach out to those who are struggling around us because there would always be plenty of people to help share the load.

Check out Proverbs and Ephesians for more on what the Bible teaches about work ethic.✝

## RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

### TAB team in the air returning to Alabama at press time; report of migrant ministry opportunities coming soon

**I**t's been about 25 years since I first visited Tijuana, Mexico, (or TJ as the locals call it) and experienced driving across the U.S. southern border.

So when we decided to send a team from TAB to catch a glimpse of life at the border since the current humanitarian crisis began, I remembered how close San Diego was to TJ.

We first talked about crossing in Texas but after we learned about the ministry efforts led by the team at San Diego Southern Baptist Association we decided on that option — and it already felt slightly familiar.

While we did want to see with our own eyes what was happening at and around the border, we also had the bigger purpose of discovering and reporting on



Photos by Jennifer Davis Rash

opportunities for God's people to share His love and the hope that can only be found in Him.

And did we discover those — you'll read more in coming weeks.

We were not able to secure access to an immigration processing center nor a detention center but we

did get to sit down with an immigration official who works for the Mexican government to hear her story. We also walked along the wall in San Diego (pictured here) and walked and drove close to the wall while in TJ.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

# Your Voice



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

## 'Let us begin': Our Great Commission calling

By **Ronnie Floyd**

President and CEO, SBC Executive Committee

It was on January 20, 1961, that John Fitzgerald Kennedy delivered his inaugural address as the newly elected president of the United States. From the steps of the United States Capitol, President Kennedy delivered an epic address.

In the midst of appealing to the powers across the world for cooperation and peace, President Kennedy

said these words and I quote: "All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin."

Hear the appeal: *But let us begin.* I want to appeal to our generation of Baptists to do the same.

Let us begin. Let us begin to finish the task [of the Great Commission].

How do we quit until this task is finished? How do we rest until this task is finished and complete?

These words of Jesus Christ consume me: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus' call to us is personal. We cannot escape our responsibility. We cannot delegate this to another generation. Let us begin to finish the task.

Jesus' call to us is powerful. We cannot finish this task in our own power. We need power from on high, the power of the Holy Spirit God, to let us begin to finish the task.

Jesus' call to us is progressive. We must begin where we are in our own town, our own city, and not rest until this good news and this gospel of Jesus Christ is heard by every person across our own state, our own country and the nations of the world.

This reality is undeniable: people need Jesus and people need Jesus now.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This excerpt is adapted from Ronnie Floyd's address during his inauguration service held Sept. 16 at First Baptist Church, Nashville. Floyd is president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.*

Integrity is not perfection. It is consistency. A person of integrity is the same on the inside as on the outside; the same in the dark as in the light; the same when people are watching as when they are not. In a person of integrity words match actions.

**Bob Adams**  
Retired pastor

You cannot do everything coming into full-time ministry. You cannot be everywhere at all times. ... Share every chance you get and serve every chance you have but at the same time you can't be effective if you don't fill your own cup up.

**Randy Roberts**  
Basketball chaplain  
Auburn University

We cannot recover images of pastors and churches that are lost but we can preserve those images for the future.

**Lonette Berg**  
Executive director  
Alabama Baptist  
Historical Commission

Nothing comes to you that does not pass through God's fingers first.

**Tony Evans**  
Pastor and author

## Letters to the Editor

Grace Thornton's article on NASA propulsion engineer Don Donald was out of this world! What a great time to remember and celebrate our space heroes on the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11. God bless you, Mr. Donald, and thanks for all your hard work in service to America.

**Brad Renneke**  
Enterprise, Alabama

I was excited to see the article "'You be you' is overrated; 'You be Jesus' is what we need" by Jennifer Davis Rash in the Sept. 12, 2019, issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

I had just listened to a video a Christian friend had posted on social media and was very disappointed. The video was a very encouraging talk about coming out of tragedy and surviving, but there was no mention of the grace

of God or the mercy and forgiveness that is available because of the resurrection of Christ Jesus. Yes, there is beauty that comes from ashes but it isn't because of the tears of a Phoenix or from "believing in yourself."

Thank you Jennifer for reminding us that we don't need to be "us." We need to be JES-US!

The front page articles "Only God" and "God moves mountains and Hills" were very personal to me too. Latisa Sheehan was my best friend growing up in rural Clarke County and the Hills are going to minister beside a cousin of mine, Darryl Brunson, in Montana.

It is great to see stories of the miracles of God and the sharing of His love going strong today!

**Janie Lee Finley**  
Ministry Assistant/Next Gen  
FBC Silverhill

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

“When God calls us to serve Him, He also expects us to prepare to do our best.”

LARRY FELKINS  
*Director of Missions, Chilton Baptist Association*

It is not surprising when we see smaller churches doing fewer types of activities. Church activities require leaders and preparation. Small churches only have so many people to whom they can turn. Yet two-thirds of these churches choose to gather on Wednesday nights.

**Scott McConnell**  
 Executive director  
 LifeWay Research

Have you ever wondered why me? Why do I have this condition? Why does my brain work like this? There are millions of whys we can ask. There is no rhyme or reason as to why God heals some and not others that I have found in God's word. Don't lose hope ... because trust me there is a purpose in His

plan. It could be as simple as there is someone [who] needs to see how a person of faith handles the curve ball thrown their way.

**Trinity Cole Roggensack**  
**Phil Campbell, Ala.**

Leaders are lifelong learners.  
**Claudia Johnson**  
 Director  
 Christian Women's Leadership Center

One of the things that is difficult to understand for many Americans is that being a Christian in North Korea is not just following a different religion or even following Western teaching. The Kim regime is built on the idea that the Kims are divine beings. So being a Christian is treason.

The regime understands clearly that North Koreans hearing about salvation through Jesus Christ is a direct threat to their power.

**Todd Nettleton**  
 Voice of the Martyrs Radio

Believers are to serve others eagerly. Christians should work to assist everyone with each opportunity. We should also speak gently to others. We do not slander anyone, stirring up strife and trouble. We show humility. We should be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. We should consciously put others ahead of ourselves.

**Jay T. Robertson,**  
 Assistant Professor  
 of Christian Studies  
 University of Mobile



Photo by SBOM  
 Rick Lance is executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

## Support your association

Many local Baptist associations convene annual meetings in October for sharing times of inspiration, missions strategizing and praying that God will help us reach the world “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Across Alabama, associational missionaries lead and coordinate many efforts to help reach our world for Christ.

Certainly if Alabama was a foreign country Southern Baptists would be sending missionaries here. According to some estimates, more than 60% of the state's population does not attend church.

The spiritual needs are great and your state missionaries recognize that associational missionaries are vital partners in mobilizing God's people for Great Commission participation and obedience.

Please pray for your associational missionary and other leaders as they strive for Kingdom expansion and missional faithfulness.

If you can attend an annual associational meeting during October please do so and see firsthand what plans are underway for reaching your local Jerusalem and Judea.

A list of associations may be found online at: [www.alsbom.org/associations](http://www.alsbom.org/associations).

—Rick Lance

# From the *Twitterverse*

### @DailyKeller

Because in Jesus, God became human, He is not only the God on the other side of the chasm, He is the bridge over the gap.

### @m\_m\_riddell

“When the wind and waves are coming, You shelter me. Even though I'm in the storm, the storm is not in me.” — @theafters

### @LifeWay

“Freedom is not the absence of boundaries. Freedom is the ability to fulfill created intent. ... And you are most free when you fulfill God's created intent for your life.” —

@Ben\_Stuart\_

### @PastorLonO

“In the way of righteousness is

life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death” (Prov. 12:28). Choose the life He has for you!

### @\_AshleyBratcher

I would 100% rather sit with you for as long as it takes and listen to everything that you're going through than sit there for 15 minutes listening to your eulogy. Remember that. #mentalhealth #SuicideAwareness #NSPW @afspnational

### @SusanCodone

Childhood sexual abuse is probably the most effective weapon the enemy has for taking down a believer for life.

### @dpetty\_43

Burdens. Some of you will go to sleep tonight with a heavy burden. Just know this. No mistake or dark

moment in your life will ever change what Jesus did for you on the cross. And I hope you find peace and comfort in that.

### @SEBTS

“Your identity is not even found in the popularity that you can find in the evangelical subculture. Rather it's only in that you have been made the aroma of Christ for the world.” @philpnation #SEchapel

### @sendnetwork

There are few things as powerful as someone's testimony.

### @lensweet

“I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go. ... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Gen. 28:15). #promise #Godpromise

# International travel

## Heading CDC, State Department advisories necessary in post-9/11 world

By Doug Wilson  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**F**all is here and plans are underway for the typical activities that occur around the Christmas holidays and on into the upcoming spring and summer travel seasons. Many schools, churches and individuals will begin thinking ahead for international travel experiences at overseas study centers or for missions trips or leisure travel.

It is more important than ever for travelers to learn and understand the personal safety issues like crime and terrorism that exist in many parts of the world, especially in the popular tourist destinations of Europe, Asia, Mexico and Central and South America, and in less-traveled countries like India, various countries of the Middle East and those on the African continent. Regardless of the purpose of travel Americans need to become smarter about how they travel and learn how to avoid threats to personal safety. This requires equipping oneself with cultural knowledge, as well as awareness of health and security threats in our post-9/11 world.

The U.S. State Department has four travel advisory levels: Level 1 (blue) is the lowest (“exercise normal precautions”) and Level 4 (red) is the highest (“do not travel”). Travel advisories are posted at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

It is wise for those planning to travel internationally to regularly check the State Department travel advisory site and click the travel advisory tab for the latest updates. Conditions can change rapidly so check the website often prior to travel.

A few notes on some popular travel destinations:

### Mexico

Mexico is a very popular and affordable destination for college and



Neuschwanstein Castle, Schwangau, Germany

Unsplash.com

high school groups but widespread instability exists in the country due to crime and violence associated with drug and human trafficking.

Tourism generates almost \$20 billion per year in Mexico so the owners and operators of Mexican resorts take security seriously but violence has begun to spill over to some of the resort areas.

Leaving the resort areas, especially after dark, is never advisable under the current conditions in Mexico.

Drug and gang-related homicides continue to be a problem. In February 2018 a University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) anesthesiologist, Dr. William O’Byrne,

was assaulted and beaten in Puerto Vallarta and later died.

On March 8, 2018, the U.S. State Department closed the consular office at the popular tourist destination of Playa del Carmen due to a ferry explosion and an unidentified explosive device being found on another ferry near the port.

In the past several years incidents

of violence also have occurred near some popular resort spots including Cancun and Los Cabos along with incidents of tourists receiving tainted alcohol at some resorts.

Mexico is currently rated at advisory Level 2 (“exercise increased caution”). Some states within Mexico are rated as high as Level 4. Most resort areas fall in the Level 2 category.

### Europe

Europe, especially the United Kingdom (U.K.), France, Italy, Germany and Spain, remain under the threat of terrorism. Some European intelligence agencies rate the threat from likely to very likely. The U.S. State Department rates all of these countries at advisory Level 2.

In the past two years at least 75 people have been killed in terrorist attacks across Europe. ISIS members who previously fought in Syria and Iraq have returned to their countries, many in Europe, and are actively plotting future attacks and recruiting via social media.

Terrorists have been successful in several European cities with vehicular attacks against pedestrians in popular public venues.

However attackers are increasingly on foot, like the one who used a handgun and a knife to kill and in-

jure those visiting a famous Christmas market in France in December 2018.

### Africa

The continent of Africa is one of the popular travel destinations for missions trips. Depending on where in Africa you go the risk and threat can vary greatly.

It is advisable to enroll in the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for any travel to Africa (or anywhere for that matter). Travelers also should review the State Department travel website ahead of time for any recent travel advisories or warnings concerning Africa.

Along with threat awareness anyone traveling to Africa, the Middle East, South America or Asia should check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)) for necessary immunizations.

It can take weeks for your immunity to build up after a shot so do this well in advance of a missions trip or leisure travel. It is very important to know the mosquito-borne threat, especially for malaria. You can take prescriptions like Malarone to prevent malaria.

### Be smart

Whether your travels take you to Mexico, Europe or anywhere else in the world — including major tourist destinations within the United States — it is important to be smart and always maintain situational awareness. Following safety tips (see page 7) may help reduce your risk of becoming a victim of crime or being involved in a terrorist incident.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Doug Wilson wrote this article on behalf of Counter Threat Group, LLC. He has traveled internationally more than 40 times to 35 countries. Doug served 28 years in the military as an intelligence officer and currently works at Samford University in Birmingham where he is the assistant vice president of advancement. Doug can be reached at [dwilson@countertreatgrp.com](mailto:dwilson@countertreatgrp.com).*



Oaxaca, Mexico

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Do not pull out a map in public. Step into a store or restaurant to ask for help and get your bearings away from public sight.

# 5 important safety tips

## Planning, preparation, observation best defense in reducing risk while traveling

### 1. Be alert and vigilant to everything going on around you.

Adherence to this tip is the most important thing you can do while traveling internationally. Always remain alert to individuals who are exhibiting unusual behavior or look out of place. If you see this, report it. Too many terrorist incidents happen because someone who noticed something odd about someone or something did not report it.

Keep ample space between yourself and other people. Petty crime and pickpockets are common problems in many countries. Do not store valuables in exterior pockets. If you get lost avoid looking confused. Do not pull out a map in public but step into a store or restaurant to ask for help and get your bearings away from public sight.

Be aware of vehicular traffic and vehicle access to where you are walking. Situations where vehicles have been used by terrorists to run over innocent pedestrians are on the increase (Nice, Berlin, London, Stockholm, Barcelona and New York City). Many terrorist events

worldwide have been carried out with “everyday objects” like vehicles and knives.

### 2. Avoid popular social places such as restaurants, bars, shopping areas and entertainment areas during peak activity times.

The 2015 Paris mass-casualty terrorist attack that left 130 dead and hundreds injured occurred at popular nightspots on a Friday evening targeting diners and a packed auditorium at the Bataclan concert hall. Terrorists will always target peak traffic times to maximize damage so altering your plan to enjoy popular sites during the less crowded times of day or days of the week can significantly reduce your risk of becoming a statistic.

Also avoid mass transportation during peak times. The terrorists continue to target mass transportation — subways, trains and buses. Don't stay at Western brand hotels (like Hilton or Marriott) and instead seek out smaller, non-chain hotels or bed and breakfasts. If the terrorists choose to target a hotel chances are it will be the large chain hotels where Americans stay so try not to stay there.

### 3. Blend in with your environment.

Avoid wearing typical American apparel items like baseball caps, cowboy boots, sports jerseys and “I am an American” type of clothing. This tip is most important to prevent becoming a target for crime.

Pickpocketing and petty crime is prevalent in many European cities and Americans are heavily targeted. Thieves are very skilled at picking you out of a crowd. If you are an

American traveler, in the eyes of the pickpocket, you are wealthy.

Americans are identifiable because they are usually in groups, talking loudly, taking pictures, making eye contact, being animated and wearing conspicuous clothing. Large groups draw more attention than small groups.

The most obvious thing that is immediately noticeable is clothing and shoes. Americans are probably the only ones who wear white tennis shoes when traveling. This screams American. You don't see shorts or bright clothing in most countries.

Do a little research and get a feel for how people dress at different times of year in the countries you will be visiting. You can even buy some inexpensive clothing once you arrive overseas. Remember blending in reduces attention.

### 4. Protect your valuables.

Carry limited cash and one credit card. Write down your credit card number and the “if lost” phone number, in a jumbled format, on a piece of paper and store it away from your valuables so you can immediately call the card issuer if it is lost or stolen. Keep one copy of the number with you and leave one at home with someone. Notify your credit card company before you go and let them know the countries and time frames when you will be traveling. Also prepare a color copy of your passport and keep a copy in your luggage and one with someone back home.

Carry a “fake” wallet and keep a

small amount of money in that wallet. Your “real” wallet will have your cash and credit card preferably in a pouch around your neck or a hidden interior pocket. If you are forced to

hand over your valuables give them the “fake” wallet containing minimal cash and they will leave you alone. The rest of your money is safely hidden away.

Pouches you can wear around your neck and under your clothing are available and are large enough to hold your passport, cash and cards. This is the safest

place to keep your valuables. Never keep your valuables in a rear pants pocket or exterior backpack pocket.

### 5. Always have an exit plan.

Think ahead to an escape path or exit wherever you are, outside or indoors. Imagine the kinds of scenarios that could take place and consider what you would do if you found yourself in an unfortunate situation.

It's sad to have to think this way but it trains your mind to be prepared for unfortunate contingencies. A vehicle slammed into pedestrians on the Westminster Bridge in London. A bridge has no escape route. Re-think these kinds of experiences if the space is open to motor vehicles as well.

Planning and preparation is always your best defense in reducing risk and ensuring your travel safety. Avoiding risky situations through proper preparation can keep you from an act of crime or violence. Remember don't travel less — just travel smarter. (Doug Wilson)



Unsplash.com

Carry limited cash and one credit card.

## Helpful resources

► **Travel advisories:** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

► **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP):** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/step.html>

Compiled by Doug Wilson

# LifeWay working with independent bookstores to advance gospel

(continued from page 1)

“The value of being able to talk to someone who knows you and your community, who will listen and discuss your church needs with you, and work to help you find the best solutions is of immeasurable value,” Deavers said.

LifeWay spokesperson Carol Pipes said LifeWay remains committed to serving customers through a network of partners and on-line services.

The LifeWay Authorized Dealer program launched June 1 offering independent retailers the opportunity to stock LifeWay branded content including, for the first time, LifeWay imprint Bible studies. To date 277 stores have joined the program placing LifeWay products in 14 new states and 90 new markets.

## ‘Bright future’

Blessings Christian Store and Christian Book and Supply are among the authorized LifeWay dealers in Alabama.

The LifeWay church ordering system also allows churches to manage their curriculum and literature orders

and pastors and church staff can sign up for the same discount they received in the stores through LifeWay.com/churchstaffdiscount, Pipes said.

In addition LifeWay has increased its customer service center staff, added an enhanced live chat experience to help customers select resources and expanded access to its materials to include distribution through Amazon Marketplace and partnerships with retailers like Walmart, Mardel, Books-a-Million and Christianbook.com.

LifeWay has an “incredibly bright future,” said the organization’s new president and CEO Ben Mandrell, and will keep the mission and the message of the gospel the same while adjusting its approach.

“We want to celebrate the gospel of Jesus that has transformed our lives,” he said. “As long as we keep that the main thing and create resources where people in every part of the world can experience the life-changing power of the gospel, LifeWay will never be without work to do.”

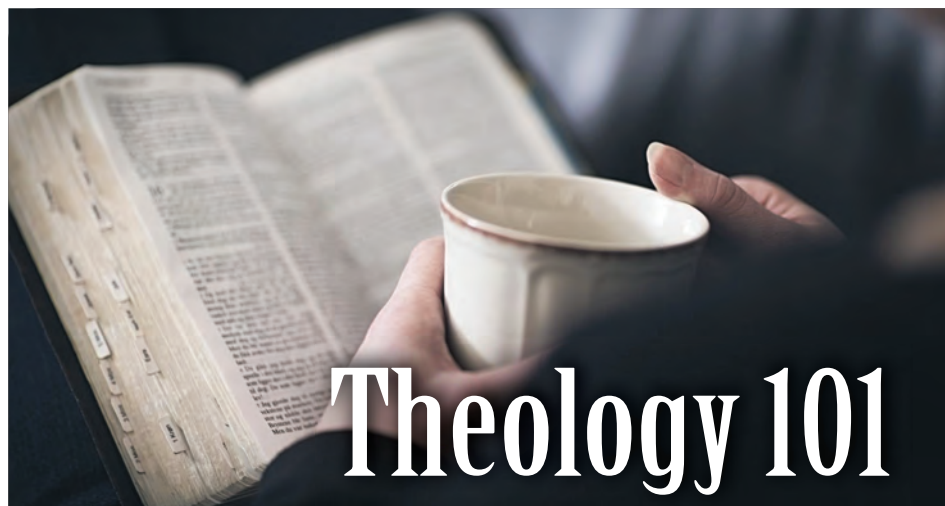
**“The value of being able to talk to someone who knows you and your community ... and will work to help you find the best solutions is of immeasurable value.”**

**Matt Deavers  
Church liaison  
Blessings Christian Store**



Photo by Crystal Bachus

Just like LifeWay stores or chain bookstores like Barnes & Noble and Books-a-Million, independent bookstores offer in-stock options ranging from Christian fiction, Christian living and theology books to Bibles and Bible studies.



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Aspects of an Abundant Life

## A Separated Life

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

Previously we have given thought to abundant Christian living in terms of living a crucified life and maintaining a grounded life. This week attention is drawn to how living a separated life can contribute to an abundant life. Immediately the admonition of 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 comes to mind: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” Its directive is followed by the imperative, “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.”

Abundant living cannot be sustained if we seek pleasure and fulfillment in wrong places, with wrong people, in wrong pursuits or with wrong priorities. In seeking to live a separated life we must be careful that our motivation is not to have others pat us on the back while we are communicating a “holier than thou” attitude.

### A godly influence

Living a separated life must be for right reasons. Among such reasons that are compatible with abundant Christian living is desiring to cast a godly influence in an ungodly world, as well as setting a positive example for others and keeping ourselves from being ruled by our own fleshly desires or having our lives shaped by the world’s mold.

We might say separated living has to do with the manner of our lives not with our life’s mission. Our mission is to be in the world but not of the world. Jesus ex-

pects us to be salt and light in our circles of influence. This happens only when we make our mission contact with the world without letting the world dictate the manner of our living.

### Call to repentance

We recall that Jesus’ opponents criticized Him for keeping company with people His opponents sought to avoid. Of course Jesus’ purpose was not to keep company with ungodly people in order to join them in their actions of wrongdoing or wrong thinking but to seek and to save them from the consequence of their manner of living. He put it like this, “Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick” (Matt. 9:12). He did not move among sinners because He was one of them but to show compassion and love toward them and to call them to repentance for the sake of His saving mission.

Part of abundant Christian living is the joy of seeing sinners come to the Savior as well as causing joy in heaven over each sinner who repents. In order to see this happen we must be among sinners as to our mission as witnesses but not as to the manner of our own behavior.

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.



Auburn University football chaplain Chette Williams (right) and basketball chaplain Randy Roberts sit down with Jennifer Davis Rash (left) and Debbie Campbell (taking photo) to discuss the role of university chaplains. Listen to the podcast at [www.tabonline.org/leading-athletes](http://www.tabonline.org/leading-athletes).

# Transforming lives



Photo by Debbie Campbell

## Auburn's Chette Williams reminisces on 20 years of investing in college athletes

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

When Chette Williams first thought about stepping into the role of football team chaplain at Auburn University it didn't exist as a full-time position. Up until then local pastors had served in that role as volunteers, but no one was there as a full-time spiritual director for the team.

But God had plans it seems. When Coach Tommy Tuberville came to Auburn in 1999 he sat down with Williams and together they drafted his job description. They decided to just take it one day at a time and watch how it developed.

And those days turned into months, months into years and years into two decades of leading athletes

at Auburn to know Jesus better. Williams is now the longest-standing chaplain at an NCAA Division I school and he's served as director of Auburn's Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) for just as long.

"It's been amazing," Williams said. "It's been 20 of the best years of my life. There have been challenges — whenever you're in ministry and trying to make a difference you're going to come under attacks, adversities and trials. But there have been a lot of blessings."

### Watch God work

One of those blessings has been the opportunity to disciple players, watch them grow in their faith and then watch how God works through them as they move on.

"After being here that long you get to see a guy come in, you disciple

him and lead him to the Lord and then years later you get to officiate his wedding or dedicate his children," Williams said.

A lot of those men are in full-time ministry. Some of them are chaplains at schools all across the nation — Miami, Western Kentucky, the Citadel and other places. Part of that has been because of a chaplain training program he started with Wes Yearly, a chaplain and FCA leader who came to Auburn from Ole Miss in 2005.

To watch men grow in their faith and ministry "has been absolutely amazing — one of the biggest joys for me," Williams said.

Nate Farrow, minister to singles 20s/30s at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, said Williams has made a tremendous impact on a lot of student athletes and served as both a father figure and spiritual father to many.

"I was grateful for the impact Chette had on my life as a young man at Auburn," said Farrow, an offensive guard for Auburn's football team from 2004 to 2007.

### 'Incredible help'

One memory that stands out for Farrow was during a season when he was experiencing a hard time navigating some life decisions.

"One of the things Chette taught me then was how to pray through Scripture," Farrow said. "We opened up to one of the Psalms and he walked me through verse by verse and prayed it with me. That has been such an incredible help in my life over the years both in my prayer life and relationship with Christ."

Williams said he loves those moments. He himself was changed by

a moment when someone sat down with him and helped guide his relationship with Christ.

"My faith journey started right here as a sophomore playing football at Auburn," he said.

### 'Victories and defeats'

That year Auburn Coach Pat Dye had kicked Williams off the team telling him that his attitude and other grievances had created a situation that just wasn't working out.

"That night I went to one of my teammates, Kyle Collins, who is still one of my best friends today," he said. "He sat down with me and I told him what had just happened."

Collins asked Williams if he was a Christian and Williams said yes — and started explaining all of the reasons he thought he was.

"He said, 'I didn't ask if you were religious, I asked if you had a relationship with Jesus,'" Williams said.

That night Williams hit his knees and after he and Jesus got on the same page he humbly went to see Coach Dye again.

"Coach Dye said, 'Let's just take it one day at a time,' and I was able to graduate," Williams said. "I love him — he's one of my dearest friends."

Taking it one day at a time has brought Williams a long way.

He chronicled that story in his first book, "Hard Fighting Soldier," and continued the story of what God is doing through Auburn players in his second book, "The Broken Road." Both are available on Amazon.

"I've enjoyed watching the players grow through victories and defeat," he said. "But seeing lives transformed — that's at the top of the list of things I've loved the most." ✠



Photo courtesy of Auburn University

Chette Williams (center), chaplain for the Auburn University football team, prays over the players at a home game in 2007. Williams has been with the team since 1999 making him the longest-standing chaplain at an NCAA Division I school.

Brent Fielder (left), operator of a Birmingham-area Chick-fil-A, meets with the top leaders in his restaurant. Fielder has spent years investing in young leaders in various ways so they can grow into their professional callings.

# Young leaders



Photo courtesy of Brent Fielder

## Chick-fil-A restaurant operator instills leadership concepts in young people he mentors

**B**rent Fielder says he feels like developing young leaders is his calling. It's a calling that's ranged all the way from training camp counselors to preparing chicken sandwiches.

"Before I owned a Chick-fil-A restaurant my job was running a program for college students," said Fielder, a member of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham.

In that role he recruited and equipped hundreds of college students a year to work as staffers at Chick-fil-A's WinShape Camps, a ministry created by the founder of Chick-fil-A, S. Truett Cathy.

"I really spent my time pouring into young leaders," he said. "Most people in the program weren't going to run camp for a living, but this was a way to grow them into their leadership acumen."

Fielder does the same thing now at the Chick-fil-A he operates in Birmingham — he trains his employees to be leaders wherever they might go.

### Time and energy

He puts his time and energy behind that in many aspects of his life serving on the board of overseers for Samford University and the board of advisors for Chick-fil-A's Impact 360 Institute which aims to equip the next generation of leaders through classroom and experiential learning.

He also serves on the board of directors for Vapor Ministries, a Sylacauga-based organization that

works to establish sustainable centers for alleviating poverty and multiplying disciples overseas.

"Vapor is doing the same thing (empowering young leaders) in a Third World environment," Fielder said. "There's a big need in these communities for leadership. The ministry tries to meet basic needs, but once you have things up and running you need local leaders to hand it over to."

### Leadership concepts

What are some concepts he tries to pass on to the young leaders in his life? He offered these six as a starting point.

**1. Be the leader you would want to follow.** "No one wants to follow a bad leader or to work for a bad boss," Fielder said. "Learn to be the leader you want to be led by."

**2. Replace yourself in**

**your role.** Fielder said he has yet to meet anyone who worked himself or herself out of a job and was no longer valuable to the organization.

"Always be teaching someone something," he said.

**3. You are responsible for your own development.**

"My job is to provide the tools and the resources for you to grow and develop," he said. "It is your job to own it, make it yours and grow."

**4. Work hard.** Fielder said nothing will replace hard, diligent work in your role.

"The Lord calls us to work as though you are working for the Lord and not for men," he said. "Why would you not make (your task) great through hard work and diligence?"

**5. Why not your best?** Truett Cathy often asked, "Why not your best ... why

not?" Fielder said that should be the question always lingering in the mind of every leader.

"You are building your own brand in everything that you do," he said. "Make it your best all of the time."

**6. Share what you are learning.** "As I pour into

you, pour into someone else," Fielder said. "Once you have anything — experience, knowledge and expertise included — you now have stewardship over those things. Part of being a good steward is being generous with it. Share the things that you learn with others." (Grace Thornton)

## SAVE THE DATE

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# Miracles are multiplying

## Montgomery partnership with local Mixtec believers opens doors for trip to unreached people

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Lisa Rose knew it was a divine appointment from the very beginning. She knew it from the first time she googled the Mixtec language 12 years ago and realized she had the most unengaged unreached people group in the Americas living right in her backyard.

But now the miracles are multiplying as she and others in Montgomery Baptist Association (MBA) are seeing the work among Mixtec people in Montgomery open doors to reach their relatives back in Mexico.

“It’s been amazing to see God work,” said Rose, director of church mobilization for MBA.

Through the past 12

years MBA churches have invested consistently in the Mixtec, with Rose discipling women and John Halbrooks serving as pastor of a small Mixtec church plant meeting at Highland Gardens Baptist Church.

“It’s been long and hard — we don’t have thousands coming every Sunday,” Rose said.

### ‘People of the clouds’

But they do have nine hard-fought for believers who have come to faith.

And in early 2018, MBA hosted a summit for people working to reach the Mixtec in other parts of the nation and in Mexico. Roughly 726,000 Mixtec — or “people of the clouds” — live high in Mexico’s mountains with another 100,000 or so

living in the U.S., mostly in California and New York.

At the summit Rose and Halbrooks talked with Thomas Thorpe, an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary, and learned he had been having trouble making connections with an unreached city of Mixtec people high in the mountains of Mexico. He had gone to visit twice but the second time he’d gone they wouldn’t let him in.

The Mixtec tend to be very suspicious of anyone who might threaten the “Mixtec way” of life, Rose said.

As she and Halbrooks talked with Thorpe they thought what if — just what if — the Mixtec believers in Montgomery could send word back to their relatives in Mexico that these people of God were friends not enemies.

It seemed like it could be the key.

And the Mixtec church in Montgomery was on board. They sent messages to their family in Mexico and in mid-August they sent Halbrooks, Rose and Sherry White, director of the Mixtec medical clinic in Montgomery, off with two suitcases full of gifts for their relatives.

“Our goal was to start relationships with some key families,” Halbrooks said.

When they arrived Thorpe drove them into the mountains of Mexico to visit one of those key families. When they arrived this time they were welcomed in — and invited to spend the night.

“They cooked us their best meals over an open fire and we shared pictures of their family back in Montgomery and talked and laughed,” Halbrooks said.

And the next morning the man of the house loaded them up in his truck and took them to go try to find the other families. That morning two families heard the gospel for the very first time and when the little team left the city Thorpe had a plan to come back with some tools and help the family they were staying with install the sink in the house they were building.

“We’re praying that when [Thorpe] goes back to visit, it will go very well and that

the family will wonder more and more why he loves them like he does,” Halbrooks said.

As the team drove away from the city Thorpe told them the families would immediately start talking about what it means to follow Christ.

“The dad was a very respected man in the community and they view following Jesus as turning their backs on the Mixtec way,” Halbrooks said. “If they make a decision it will be a family decision — and it will cost them greatly.

My prayer is that God would open that city and shatter the darkness with the light of the gospel.”

### God is working

Thorpe said he’s praying the same thing — and he can see that God is already doing amazing work through these connections.

“Montgomery Baptist Association has become a strategic partner for our work in Mexico because they, through their relationships with Mixtecs in Montgomery, have opened the door for our team into a community that had been previously closed to the gospel,” he said. “How exciting it will be for IMB work as more Southern Baptist churches in the United States engage migrant workers in their communities and connect with IMB personnel in their home countries.”

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Some names have been changed for security reasons.*



Photo courtesy of Montgomery Baptist Association


A team from Montgomery Association recently traveled into Mexico’s mountains to help an IMB missionary connect with an unreached people group there.




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# 3 stories you should know



Photo by Michael Eisenberg

A fire that destroyed a 5th century Holy Land church near the Sea of Galilee around 700 A.D. appears to have preserved the church's mosaic floor, which includes depictions of baskets, loaves and fish as well as inscriptions. Michael Eisenberg, head of the University of Haifa excavation team, said the mosaics provide insights into the local Christian community of the time. 'They recognized the places where the various miracles took place,' he said. (RNS)

## UM, NOBTS announce accelerated BA+M.Div

A new partnership between University of Mobile (UM) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) will allow students to earn bachelor of arts and master of divinity degrees in five years, two years faster than the normal track.

The Accelerated B.A.+M.Div. program will allow selected undergraduate courses taken at UM to apply toward the master's program at NOBTS. UM students also may qualify for advanced placement in biblical language courses.

In addition up to 29 hours of graduate-level courses taken in the University of Mobile School of Christian Studies master of arts program may transfer to any NOBTS master of divinity degree.

The program will start with the 2020 fall semester. (UM)

## Nepal pastor in hiding after video posted

A pastor in Nepal is in hiding after a video of his testimony was posted to YouTube.

The video was shot in March at the International Christian Media Workers Summit in Kathmandu. Pastor Sukdev Giri was one of the speakers. A Nepalese Christian woman living abroad posted the video to social media in August.

Giri, pastor of Trinity Fellowship Church in Chitwan District, said he has received death threats from Hindu extremists. His family and friends also are receiving threatening calls, he said.

A spokesperson for the legal advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom said Giri's case is "the first time a Christian [in Nepal] has been targeted for sharing [on social media] about his past religion and introduction into Christianity." (MS)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### Mount Hebron Baptist Church celebrates 200th anniversary

On Aug. 18, Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Leeds, celebrated its 200th anniversary.

Pastor Chris Haralson brought the morning message and former pastor James Blair shared memories.

Presentations were made by Jim Swedenburg, from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; Chris Crain, executive director of the Birmingham Metro Baptist Association; Lonette Berg, from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission; Dickie Drake, from the Alabama House of Representatives; and David Miller, mayor of Leeds.

Special music was brought by Debby Haralson. Burke Wren presented offertory music on the trumpet and Benjamin Harlan was the guest pianist.



Photo by Lonette Berg

A timeline, framed article on Hosea Holcombe — the church's first pastor — and plans for the next 12 months at the church were on display.

Three Sunday School rooms were organized as history rooms with photos, scrapbooks and church memorabilia.

"A Light Shines in the Valley," a history of Mount Hebron, was offered for sale and sold out that day.

Lunch followed the service and a sing-along followed lunch. Tours of the Hebron School building also were offered. The church started the school before the Civil War and the current building was built in 1915. It closed in 1942.

"The celebration went beyond our expectations," said Tommy Haralson. The church typically runs around 40 people, but more than 200 gathered for the celebration. (TAB)

### Ted Anderson, pastor of Dailey Street, celebrates 50 years in ministry

If there was one thing Ted Anderson didn't want to be it was a pastor.

"My dad was a pastor and I knew

from watching him that that life wasn't easy," he said. "I told God, 'I'll be glad to serve, but not that way.'"



ANDERSON

So he's more surprised than anyone that in August he celebrated 50 years of pastoral ministry.

"In 1969, I felt God calling me and I finally surrendered," Anderson said.

He had come to faith under his dad's preaching and his dad preached his ordination service too.

In the five decades that followed Anderson preached all over Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and Mississippi — "wherever God gave me an opportunity."

For the past two years he's been serving as pastor back at the church he attended as a little boy, the church where both his parents were saved — Dailey Street Baptist, Piedmont.

Wendell Dutton, associational missionary for Cherokee Baptist Association, spoke of his longevity in ministry and legacy in the area.

"He loves people, loves to preach and does a

# News near you

## BETHEL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Clay Davis** is the new transitional/interim pastor of **Sweet Water Baptist Church**. He has served at many Alabama Baptist churches including Lamison Baptist; Uniontown Baptist; Elam Baptist, Tallahatta Springs; and Rockville Baptist, Jackson. He holds degrees from Samford University in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sandra, have two children and grandchildren.



DAVIS

## ELMORE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Millbrook Baptist Church** will celebrate its 65th anniversary Oct. 6 at 10 a.m. No Sunday School will be held. The service will feature guest speakers, singers and fellowship. A BBQ lunch will follow the service. Visit [www.millbrookbaptist.com](http://www.millbrookbaptist.com) to register attendance and share any history, information or stories about Millbrook Baptist. For more information call 334-285-4731. Mike Ingram is pastor.

## MUSCLE SHOALS ASSOCIATION

▶ **Neil Carter** is the new associate pastor

at **Old Town Creek Baptist Church, Moulton**. He previously served as associate pastor at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Moulton. He holds degrees from the University of North Alabama in Florence and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children and two grandchildren.



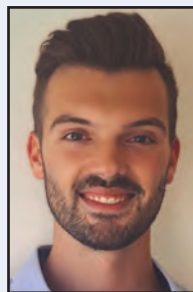
CARTER

## MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Trinity Memorial Baptist Church, Montgomery**, will host a homecoming celebration Sept. 30 at 11 a.m. Food and fellowship will follow the service. Trinity Memorial Baptist also will host a revival Oct. 1–3 at 6:30 p.m. Neal Hughes, associational mission strategist for Montgomery Baptist Association, will be the guest speaker. Stanley Holt is pastor.

## NORTH JEFFERSON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Jacob Holmes** is the new interim worship leader at **Beechwood Baptist Church, Mount Olive**. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is married to Anna Kate.



HOLMES

## RUSSELL ASSOCIATION

▶ **North Phenix Baptist Church** will host its 94th homecoming celebration Oct. 6 at 9 a.m. featuring The Seekers Quartet. Rendell Day, with the Oxford campus of

Alabama Children's Homes & Family Ministries, will be the guest speaker. Lunch will follow the service. Thomas Poole is pastor.

## SELMA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Shady Grove Baptist Church, Selma**, will host a revival Oct. 6–9. Don Stephens will be the guest evangelist and Jimmy Friday will bring special music. Terry Johnson is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Northport**, will celebrate its 75th anniversary Oct. 6. Services will be held at 9 and 10:30 a.m. with guest speaker Tim Patrick. Lunch will be served following the 10:30 a.m. service.

## OTHER

▶ **Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association** will host four pastor appreciation breakfasts in Alabama throughout October. The Oct. 8 breakfast will be held at The Club in Birmingham at 8:15 a.m. and will feature president and founder of Student Leadership University Jay Strack. The Oct. 15 breakfast will be held at the Marriott at the Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville at 7:45 a.m. and will feature Emir Caner, president of Truett McConnell University. The Oct. 22 breakfast will be held at the Marriott in Mobile at 7:45 a.m. and will feature Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans. The Oct. 29 breakfast will be held at the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens at 7:45 a.m. and will feature Michael Catt, pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Georgia. To register for one of the breakfasts visit [www.scottdawson.org/pastor-appreciation-breakfast](http://www.scottdawson.org/pastor-appreciation-breakfast). 🇺🇸

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

very good job serving his church," Dutton said. (Grace Thornton)

### **Ken Allen joins SBOM LeaderCare office as church health strategist**



Starting Sept. 16, Alabama Baptists had a new church health strategist — Ken Allen, a man with a "pastor's heart" and a "good rapport" with churches all over the state.

"Ken has been in a lot of different settings and coming out of the role of associational missionary he brings a wealth of experience that will be invaluable to us," said Mike Jackson, director of the office of LeaderCare and church health of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

Allen, who formerly served as associational mission strategist for DeKalb Baptist Association, will oversee the SBOM's work with church health and revitalization all over the state. He will also connect with bivo-



ALLEN

ational pastors and is trained to help churches resolve conflicts and seek peace.

"I want to let pastors know that I'm here. The office is here to help in any way that we can," Allen said. "My heart has been for years to really come alongside guys who are hurting, wondering what the next step is or have lost hope and need somebody to come alongside them, pray for them, support them, encourage them and get them back going again."

Before working in DeKalb Association, Allen served as pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, for 12 years, as well as at Concord Highland Baptist Church, Hueytown. He holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. (Grace Thornton)

### **Doug Wilson selected to lead UM's School of Christian Studies**



Doug Wilson is the new dean of the School of Christian Studies at University of Mobile (UM).

Wilson holds a bachelor of science in

church music from Toccoa Falls College and a master of divinity in pastoral ministry and a doctor of philosophy in Semitic literature, religions and culture, both from Mid-America Baptist



WILSON

Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tennessee.

He has extensive experience in music ministry, pastoral ministry, church planting and international service.

He also serves as director of the university's Global Engagement Office, focusing on international students and studies.

Wilson has numerous publications to his credit, including over 200 Bible study articles in *The Alabama Baptist*. He has served in church ministry for over 36 years.

"Preparing students for a life of service in the global marketplace is a stewardship that we take seriously," he said. "Partnering with academic disciplines across campus and institutions around the world affords us the opportunity to make a local and global impact for Christ and the gospel. I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve," Wilson said. (UM)

# East Texas church pays off \$4 million in medical debt

Hundreds of homes throughout East Texas got an unusual yellow envelope in their mailboxes thanks to one Southern Baptist church.

It wasn't a church invite or junk mail. Instead it could be worth tens of thousands of dollars for the recipients.

Facilitated by more than \$45,000 in generous gifts in August, Green Acres Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas, is working with a nonprofit toward paying off \$4 million in medical debt for their East Texas neighbors.

## 'Crippling problem'

David Dykes, the church's pastor, noted Tyler is the medical capital of East Texas with several large medical facilities. "Through my relationship with Mother Frances Hospital I know just that one hospital is carrying like \$157 million of unpaid bills," he said.

"It's a problem that's

crippling many families.

"The Bible says to 'bear one another's burdens and so we fulfill the law of Christ,'" he noted.

"The only law of Christ is to love God and love your neighbor. Because the need was so great we felt like this was the perfect thing for us to do."

Helping with medical bills is part of Green Acres' larger Kindness 25:40 initiative, based on Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you did for me."

As part of the initiative Green Acres challenged its members to participate in a variety of acts of kindness in the community.

To pay off the medical debt Green Acres contacted RIP Medical Debt, a national nonprofit that has helped organizations, like churches, abolish \$715 million of debt since its 2014 founding. (BP)

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### 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](mailto: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.cbcprattville.org](http://www.cbcprattville.org).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Unity Baptist Church, Trinity, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a bivocational pastor. Please email to: [ec6657@aol.com](mailto:ec6657@aol.com).

#### FULL-TIME MUSIC & WORSHIP PASTOR

Piedmont First Baptist Church, Piedmont, Alabama, is seeking an individual with experience to provide 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](mailto:info@piedmontfbc.org). Full job description available on request.

#### MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER

First Baptist Church of Hokes Bluff is currently looking for a person to lead our congregation in musical worship. They must have a strong relationship with Jesus and have a heart for helping others grow closer to Him through song. Contact the church office at 256-492-4679 or email your resumé to: [secretary@fbchb.org](mailto:secretary@fbchb.org).

#### 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).

#### MINISTER OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

FBC Huntsville, A Church in the Heart of the City ... is seeking a full-time minister of contemporary worship. For more information please visit [fbchsv.org/employment](http://fbchsv.org/employment). Resumés and examples of your worship leading may be sent to: [search@fbchsv.org](mailto:search@fbchsv.org).

#### BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

New Beginnings Baptist, Graysville, Alabama, is searching for a bivocational youth pastor. Youth sixth to 12th grade. Currently small group but many prospects for growth in area. Please send resumés to: [nbccbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:nbccbaptist@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Dawes has a part-time opening for a youth pastor. Contact Harold Rester at [haroldrester@att.net](mailto:haroldrester@att.net) or send resumé to: FBC of Dawes, 3941 Dawes Rd., Mobile, AL 36695.

#### ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN

Mexia Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of children and youth with experience (leadership preferred). The person selected for this position will lead children and youth ministry as well as assist with the total ministry of the church. Send resumé by Oct. 31 to: Mexia Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, P.O. Box 218, Mexia, AL 36458 or email: [office@mexia-baptistchurch.com](mailto:office@mexia-baptistchurch.com).

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#### TAB DIGITAL

In addition to the print edition *The Alabama Baptist* also releases a weekly digital edition of the newspaper to every subscribers' email. The digital edition now comes with all subscriptions. The digital edition has the same content as the print edition — including full color on all pages — and can be accessed anytime as long as you have internet. To update your email address contact [subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org).

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# Someone You

# Should Know

## Rob Jackson

By Leigh Pritchett  
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Dr. Rob Jackson, 57, Daphne, has an extensive and diverse resumé that includes being a pastor, pharmacist, adjunct professor, guest lecturer or presenter on at least three continents, writer, and evangelism associate with Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He also serves on the board of directors for The Alabama Baptist. He earned his pharmacy degree from Samford University in Birmingham and his master's degree and doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

**MINISTRY DESCRIPTION:** Special assistant to University of Mobile president for church relations and major gift officer in the office for advancement. He also serves as associate professor in Christian studies.

**CHURCH NAME:** Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, in Baldwin Baptist Association; currently interim pastor of Tillman's Corner First Baptist Church, Mobile, in Mobile Baptist Association

**LIFE VERSE:** "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Philippians 3:10-11)

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

A: Dad (along with Mom) was the most influential person in my life. Dad was a pastor and mentored me from childhood. Fond memories I have are of lying on my bed ... asking questions to Dad about the Bible, doctrine and so forth. Even as a child I was amazed by Dad's love for other people.

**Q: What has God been teaching you lately?**

A: Wow, He has been teaching me so much lately that I cannot include it all. Definitely He has emphasized over and over that

life is short and I must be busy for Him now for tomorrow may be too late.

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

A: If I could go back in time and speak to the young "Robbie Jackson" I would tell him to be disciplined for godliness. The Holy Spirit honors godly discipline and self-control. I would tell him to do everything for the glory of God. I know this attitude would have led to a greater testimony and witness when I was young. 🙏



JACKSON

DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS  
*Someone You Should Know?*

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o *The Alabama Baptist*, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org).

# God saves a small church, answers pastor's bold prayer

By Grace Thornton  
*The Alabama Baptist*

A few weeks ago Hopewell First Baptist Church, Bessemer, only had six members, and one couple was building a house in another city and moving soon.

"That would've only left four of us," Martha Daniel said.

And that just wouldn't do.

Daniel had been a member there since 1972. She and her husband had raised their two children there. It's a special place, she said.

But she knew it was time to do something before the church was forced to close.

So she called Barry Cospers, associational mission strategist for Bessemer Baptist Association, and asked if he could help them come up with a plan. He said yes.

"I asked her what her vision was and she said, 'I don't want to see the doors close,'" Cospers said.

He met with Hopewell members on a Sunday and they voted to let him guide the process of connecting them with another church.

## Bold prayer

"I got out to my car and asked my wife what she thought and she immediately said, 'Mickey Bell,'" he said.

Unbeknownst to the Cospers, just that week Bell — pastor of Grace Church, Bessemer — had prayed a bold prayer. He'd been looking for a new building for his church and coming up with nothing that worked financially.

"We had been running up against closed door after closed door. I had

gotten really discouraged," he said. "So I said, 'God, I'm going to ask for something boldly — I'm going to ask You to just give us the building.'"

## Emotional Sunday

And then he got the phone call from Cospers. And within days people from Grace Church met with people from Hopewell First and voted for them to deed the building to the fledgling congregation.

The church needed space for worship, for children's ministry and for their thriving food ministry, and Hopewell First had all that.

But it was a gift for Hopewell First too. On the first Sunday worshipping together Hopewell First's members were emotional to see more than 70 people filling their church building.

"They wanted to see cars in the parking lot. They wanted to see people in the seats," Bell said. "And God brought that all in one Sunday. We are grateful for the way they have become a part of us and for the way they were Kingdom minded in wanting the church to keep going. We are honored to partner with them."

Daniel said members of Hopewell First are "really excited" and looking forward to Oct. 1 when renovations will be complete and the new Grace Church will have a community grand opening.

"It's just kind of overwhelming," she said. "But it's great."

Cospers said he has "great joy" in his heart about the merger.

"I think it's going to be a tremendous fit and a lot of good things will come out of that." 🙏



Photo courtesy of Mickey Bell

The boards of Grace Church, Bessemer, and Hopewell FBC, Bessemer, stand behind Grace Church pastor Mickey Bell (center) as Hopewell FBC's deed is signed over to Grace Church before the first service with the united congregations.



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



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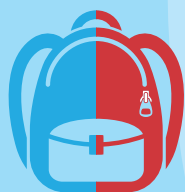
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# Sixteenth Street Baptist recalls bombing with messages of love

On Sunday, Sept. 15 — the 56th anniversary of the bombing that killed four young girls at the church — Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church unveiled refurbished spaces where visitors can watch videos about kindness, caring for all humans no matter their race and the civil rights history of the church and community.

“After you leave this place we don’t just want you to experience history,” Pastor Arthur Price Jr. said. “We call the four girls ‘angels of change’ and our hope is that people will leave inspired, become agents of change as a result of what happened here.”

## Church bells tolled

The church bells tolled at 10:22 a.m. — the moment on Sept. 15, 1963, that the dynamite went off, killing Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Morris, who is also known as Cynthia Wesley, as they were preparing

for the church’s Youth Day. A wreath laying ceremony also was held at the site of the bombing.

Eric S.C. Manning, pastor of Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina, served as the guest preacher during the 11 a.m. worship service.

“I think we have a symbiotic relationship considering the two churches experienced acts of violence within their place of worship,” Price said about Mother Emanuel, where nine worshippers were killed in 2015.

“This is a way that we can come together in solidarity and preach the message of Jesus Christ and how He teaches us to stand tall and

not to fear in the face of adversity.”

And on Sept. 5, Price welcomed to the church a government delegation from Wales, including its minister for education, Kirsty Williams.

Price said the visitors from Wales were heeding the message he hopes his church inspires. “That’s one of the things that the Welsh government did,” he said.

“They presented us with a plate with a black hand and a white hand extended to each other” addressing the fact that though people are different their value is the same, Price said. “We ought to be working together so that we make sure that what happened here 56 years ago never happens again.” (RNS)

**“Our hope is that people will leave inspired, become agents of change as a result of what happened here.”**

**Pastor Arthur Price Jr. Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham**



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## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Alack's partner
- Workers
- Possessive pronoun
- Cavity
- Eastern religion
- Unused
- Pace
- Communion table
- Stretch to make do
- South southeast
- Short NT book
- Coaxed
- Loathe
- One of Jesus' 12
- Split
- Last words of prayers
- Filthy \_\_\_
- Floating ice
- Tribe of Israel
- Above
- Sermon on the \_\_\_
- Heredity

### Down

- Lair
- House pets
- Rhymers
- Metric linear unit
- River of Mesopotamia
- Person released on parole
- Farm building
- Defense
- Asian bird
- Sports assn.
- Highs
- Admit
- Woolen
- That girl
- Protein part, with 'acid'
- World
- Hearing part
- Muggy
- Spur
- Book after Gospels
- Dregs

- Apex
- Eat
- Color
- Roof covering
- Picnic pest
- Food and drug administration (abbr.)
- Biblical unit of length
- Inanimate
- Word interpreted by Daniel
- A Scandanavian
- Californian desert
- Southwestern Indian
- Ship initials
- David's musical instrument
- Last word of a prayer
- Fresh
- Clothed
- Pear shaped stringed instrument

- Economics abbr.
- Treat badly
- Stag
- Negative (prefix)
- Loch \_\_\_ monster
- Speck of wood, etc. (KJV)
- Giant
- \_\_\_ girl
- Samson's evil wife
- Roman governor
- Pack
- Can metal
- Hesitation
- I am the \_\_\_ and the Omega
- Bleacher
- Governing group
- Short
- A Roman emperor
- Second letter
- Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (abbr.)
- Flightless bird
- Dickens' Tiny \_\_\_
- Tail movement

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 29

## Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### REVEALED Ephesians 3:1–13

#### The Mystery (1–6)

Paul begins this section by saying he is a prisoner on behalf of the Gentiles. Because of his ministry to the Gentiles the Jews opposed him and created problems for him all over the eastern portion of the Mediterranean (see Paul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts). This ultimately led to his arrest and eventual journey to Rome. It may seem strange for Paul to mention this at all but it is an important aspect of Paul's ministry.

The Gentiles may have wondered why Paul was in prison. After all if Paul was serving the one and only all-powerful God why would he end up in prison? Surely the God of the universe would have kept Paul free from harm. Many times Christians today feel the same way; "If we are doing God's work why do we get persecuted? Or why aren't we 'successful'?"

This is not how God judges success, however. Success for God means doing His will regardless of the outcome. Paul could boast about being in prison on behalf of the Gentiles because it meant God was still in control even though Paul was arrested.

This should provide encouragement for us today as we follow God's calling in our lives yet do not achieve success as the world understands the word. It should encourage us to press on knowing God is still in control even though our circumstances may seem less than desirable.

After his introduction Paul begins to write of the revealed "mystery" of Christ. When Paul speaks of "mystery" he does not mean some sort of strange unknown phenomenon. Instead he means something formerly unknown is now made clear. The mystery Paul refers to is the Gentiles and Jews are now part of a single body — the Church.

#### The Proclamation (7–9)

Because of Christ the Gentiles and Jews are now part of a single body. Christians are all of one race — Adam's race — and therefore

there is no room for segregation within the body of Christ.

This is why Christians should be at the forefront of movements to bring about racial and ethnic reconciliation as well as helping with refugees who need to experience the love of God through us.

#### The Purpose (10–13)

Paul finishes this section by admonishing the Gentiles not to be upset over his sufferings on their behalf. Through Paul's imprisonment Gentiles came to know about Christ and their reconciliation to God.

One significant application to this is the gospel is for all people. We know people are reconciled to God through Christ and we also know this message is for Jew and Gentile alike. We have a responsibility to share this news with all people groups across the world — from the easily accessible like the unbelievers at our jobs to the unreached people in the mountains of Asia.

Some people in churches today believe God will deal with each person according to what he or she knows. So someone raised in a Muslim family, for example, without ever hearing the gospel will be judged according to his or her own beliefs.

This is a form of inclusivism meaning salvation can come through means other than Christ alone. Scripture contradicts this belief (see Acts 4:12 and Rom. 1). Therefore it is all the more imperative for Christians to present the gospel to those around them and to support those who are presenting the gospel to other cultures.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28 compels us to support missions both near and abroad because the gospel is for all people and those who don't hear — and then consequently accept — the message are separated from God eternally. Love of neighbor should awaken us to do what we can to help support the work of gospel missions all over the globe.✠

## Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



### A SLOWER PACE Exodus 20:8–11; 31:12–17

In his book on the Sabbath the great scholar Abraham Joshua Heschel argued humanity lives simultaneously in two realms, a world of time and a world of space. Our exploits in the world of space — the physical world — are truly astonishing.

Our factories are filled with machines that precisely cut this, sort that, twist this, flip that and send a finished product out the door with blinding speed. Our medical researchers perfect on an almost daily basis new medicines, new devices and new techniques that keep us alive and keep us healthy far longer than we once imagined. We dig tunnels, build bridges, crisscross the globe in airplanes, bounce signals off satellites we put into space and so on and so on.

Our prowess in controlling the world of space only throws into sharp relief, however, our inability to control the world of time. Unlike the physical world we do not experience time as a fixed entity. One moment seems to last forever; another seems to pass in the blink of an eye. And despite our best efforts time marches past us endlessly, eating up our days until our time on earth is finally consumed altogether.

Heschel would say this aspect of time causes us to shrink away from the world of time to find refuge in the world of space. We try to accomplish in space — by making more money, buying a nicer car, building a bigger house — what we cannot accomplish in time.

The Bible stands steadfastly opposed to this bait and switch. It insists time be dealt with on its own terms and it gives us precisely the means for doing so: Sabbath.

#### A day of rest is a command. (20:8–11)

Some argue that observing the Sabbath is part of the law and thus, to their minds at least, no longer applicable to Christians. The law itself insists, however, the Sabbath is set on much more ancient foundations. When Sabbath observance is demanded in the Ten Command-

ments, for example, the text clarifies this is not a new ordinance but one grounded in creation itself.

When God Himself observed the Sabbath in the creation week He wove the dynamic of observing the Sabbath into the very fabric of the world He had fashioned.

#### A Sabbath rest is holy. (31:12–14)

Exodus 31 underscores the Bible's insistence the Sabbath is to be a holy day, a day set apart from the regular time of work and toil. The word "holy" is one that is often misunderstood in modern contexts. In the Bible it means simply "set apart." What made a place or a person or an object holy was the abiding presence of God.

In the tabernacle, for example, there was a place called the Holy of Holies. When God was present this room was so sacred a person entering it without permission would be struck down instantly. And yet when God's presence was removed to a different locale the priests could walk right in, dismantle the structure and carry it on to the next destination.

It was the presence of God that made it holy. The same can be said about the Sabbath day. When Scripture declares it to be holy it tells us God is available to us on the Sabbath in a way that transcends ordinary time.

#### A Sabbath rest reflects our relationship with God. (31:15–17)

At its heart Sabbath observance is an admission of our inability to conquer fully the world of space around us. Our lives are so busy and the roster of tasks demanding our attention is so lengthy that no human could ever really "do it all."

Sabbath is a means of surrendering to God and admitting we know this is the case.

In our own strength we will never be able to accomplish all we would like. Through the Sabbath we ask God to do what we could never do without Him.✠



# Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

## Faith-based crime series 'Vindication' now streaming on Amazon Prime

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The best new series on Amazon Prime Video is a crime drama full of brilliant sleuthing and police investigations.

But — surprise, surprise — not a curse word or mega-violent scene is in it.

The 10-episode series, called “Vindication,” premiered in August and tells the story of a detective named Gary Travis (Todd Terry) as he tries to solve crimes in a small Texas town.

But unlike other criminal shows, which focus on who committed the crime, “Vindication” gives us a unique spin by spotlighting characters who were wrongly accused — even though all the evidence is stacked against them.

There’s another surprise with this series: It’s

faith-based but not in the traditional sense. In “Vindication” faith plays a minor role in some episodes and a major role in others.

### Redemptive stories

It also differs from popular Christian entertainment in that it deals with adult themes (sexting for example) yet not in an explicit way. Most parents with teens

(and perhaps tweens) would consider the plots family-friendly. That’s because the stories are redemptive.

“Vindication” has familiar faces to Christian audiences: Emma Elle Roberts (“Unplanned”) plays the detective’s daughter. Masey McLain, who played the lead role in the faith-based movie “I’m Not Ashamed,” is featured in an episode too.

Terry, an actor who has been in such mainstream films as “Five Feet Apart,” is outstanding as the detective.

“Vindication” began



Photo courtesy of Amazon Prime



### 'Vindication'

streaming on the Prime Video platform in August.

Also streaming this month:

### Adults/teens

#### ▶ “Victoria,” Season 3 (Amazon Prime) —

It’s the story of Queen Victoria, who ascended to the throne at age 18 and reigned in Great Britain during the 1800s. In the newest season, which originally aired on PBS, she confronts challenges at home and abroad. Season 3 isn’t as family-friendly as the first two seasons so have the remote handy.

▶ “You’ve Got Mail” (Amazon Prime) — Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan star in this 1990s film about an email romance. No it’s not as family-friendly as a Hallmark movie but it’s not a trash-fest like other romantic comedies either. Adult

themes involve living together before marriage. Rated PG for some language. Available Sept. 30.

#### ▶ “Emma” (Hulu) —

A young woman named Emma Woodhouse (Gwyneth Paltrow) excels at playing matchmaker for others — but fails miserably at finding love for herself. It’s based on a Jane Austen novel and is largely family-friendly.

Rated PG for brief mild language.

### Children

▶ “Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore” (Netflix) — Dogs and cats team up to fight evil in this live-action film. It has slightly more potty humor and name-calling than I wanted but my children enjoyed it. This 2010 film is rated PG for action and humor. It entered the lineup in recent weeks.

▶ “AFV” (Hulu) — “America’s Funniest Home Videos,” which has been on a summer hiatus, returns to Hulu on Sept. 30 with new episodes in its 30th season. It’s a favorite in my home.

▶ “Open Season” films (Hulu) — These animated movies tell the story of a bear named Boog and all four of them enter the Hulu lineup: “Open Season” (2006), “Open Season 2” (2009), “Open Season 3” (2011) and “Open Season: Scared Silly” (2016). They include potty humor. (The first “Open Season” [2006] is also on Netflix.)

## 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.

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# ‘A plan and a purpose’

## Southern Baptist pastor in Texas takes pro-life battle to city government level

**S**outhern Baptist pastor Mark Dickson believes city governments should be utilized in a grassroots effort to fight abortion rights still protected federally. Which is why he persuaded the Waskom, Texas, city council in June to declare itself a sanctuary city for unborn children.

“For so long people have been

going to the state capital and nation’s capital and focusing the efforts there,” Dickson said. “The reality is that these are issues that affect our cities, our local communities and we’ve really all along needed to take things into our own hands.”

Dickson has gained media attention since his initiative began. Waskom adopted an ordinance outlawing abortion within the city of 2,200 people and declared abortion providers and funders to be “criminal organizations.”

The document expressly withholds enforcement “unless and until the Supreme Court overrules *Roe v. Wade* ... and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* ... and permits states and municipalities to once again enforce abortion prohibitions.”

Moore is not aware of an abortion provider ever offering its services within Waskom. The nearest



BP photo

Pro-life activists gather at prayer vigils outside Planned Parenthood clinics in 38 states following the release of the pro-life movie ‘Unplanned.’

### How to pray:

▶ Pray Christians across the nation will stand up for the unborn and for the lives and welfare of children in their communities.

▶ Pray more ministries will rise up to walk alongside and be gospel light to pregnant women considering abortion. (TAB)

abortion provider is Hope Medical Group for Women about 20 miles away in Shreveport, Louisiana. Texas has 23 abortion providers, according to abortion tracking sites.

“There’s lots of discussions happening and you’d better believe we’re going to go from city to city and we’re going to do everything we can to help other cities outlaw abortion in their city,” Dickson said.

### ‘True hope’

The Lilith Fund for Reproductive Equity, named in the ordinance as an abortion supporter, responded with two billboards that read “Abortion is Freedom,” displayed along Interstate 20 near Waskom.

Dickson’s congregation, about 45 miles west of Waskom, offers spiritual and practical encouragement to potential clients of Hope clinic. Housing, food, clothing, diapers, transportation and job placement assistance are among services offered, Dickson said.

“I offer true hope, because we all know at an abortion clinic, especially an abortion clinic named Hope Medical Group for Women, they don’t offer hope there,” he said.

“I tell them that abortion is not God’s will for their life, that God has a plan and purpose for them and their child, that they can be a great mother to that child. They’ve just got to trust in the Lord.” (BP)

After the Waskom, Texas, city council passed a pro-life ordinance outlawing abortion, abortion supporters countered with two billboards along Interstate 20 near the city.

Facebook photo

