



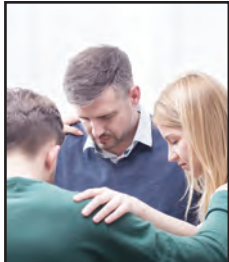
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INSIDE



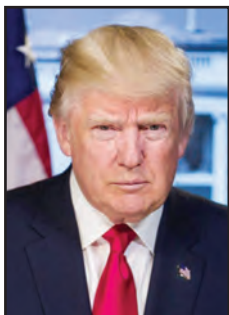
10 ways to show your pastors and church staff you support, care about them

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Fellowship of Christian Athletes continues 65-year tradition

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President Trump seeks to protect religious freedom around the world

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Migrant MINISTRIES

Tijuana Baptist churches, San Diego Association partner to assist, reach families

Immigration news reports in the United States frequently focus on the processing and detention centers while also attempting to explain the existing policies and positions of politicians, federal judges and advocates lining up on both sides of the issue.

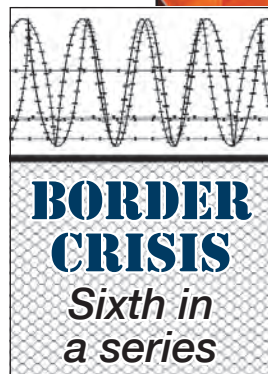
Lost in the coverage, however, is what happens to the tens of thousands of people who find themselves back across the border in Tijuana, Mexico, after unsuccessfully crossing into what

for them is their longed-for promised land.



Photo by Julie Choe

Honduran immigrant Belkis Yanely Bucto Buezo holds her 2-year-old daughter, Andry Suleyka, in front of their pup tent home at Movimiento Juventud 2000 in Tijuana.



Since the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) — informally called “Remain in Mexico” — began in January migrants crossing the southern U.S. border and

seeking asylum have been deported to Mexico to wait for their immigration hearings. Many of them — men, women, children and infants — are

from countries other than Mexico and wind up living on the streets because they have no resources on which to live.

While this also is true in other Mexican border towns Tijuana is particularly hard hit because it is the site of the busiest land border crossing in the Western Hemisphere.

Tijuana now faces a humanitarian crisis as some 40,000 people find themselves stranded there, according to the San Diego Southern Baptist Association (SDSBA). SDSBA supports a number of migrant ministries across the border.

Across the street from “The Jesus Tree” — a large, white-barked tree emblazoned with the blue-painted name of Jesus — is the Movimiento Juventud 2000 (Youth Movement 2000), a mission serving (See ‘Opportunity,’ page 6)

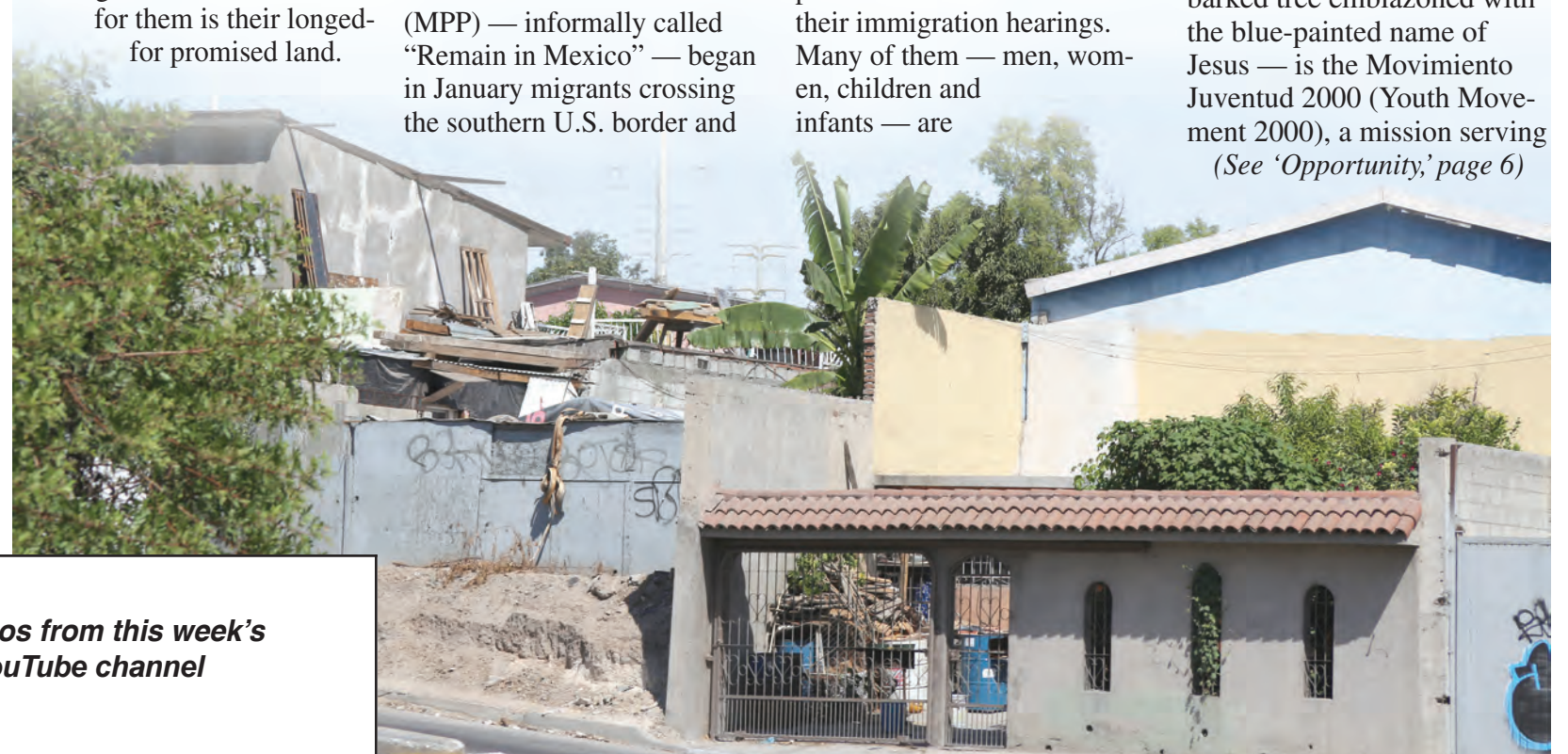


Photo by Amy Hacker

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

TAB Team's Migrant Ministry Coverage in Tijuana

Below: TAB executive assistant Cynthia Watts works on a puzzle with some of the children staying at one of the migrant shelters in Tijuana

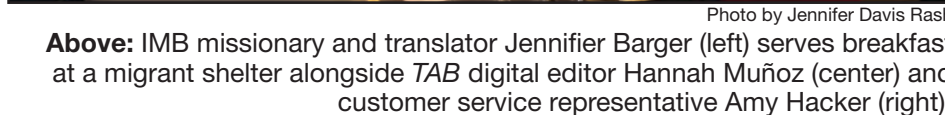


Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash



Right: Sara Gonzalez (left) translates for TAB writer Martha Simmons as she talks to a migrant at a shelter.

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash



Above: IMB missionary and translator Jennifer Barger (left) serves breakfast at a migrant shelter alongside TAB digital editor Hannah Muñoz (center) and customer service representative Amy Hacker (right).

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Right: DOM Mike Carlisle (far left) and the staff of the San Diego Southern Baptist Association host the TAB team Sept. 18–20. The team spent 24 hours in Tijuana learning about various ministries taking place.



Photo by Jim Shankula



Above: TAB editor-in-chief Jennifer Davis Rash (left) interviews Juvenal Gonzalez for TAB News. Listen to the podcast at tabonline.org/podcasts.

Photo by Susan Stevens



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

Special thanks to Scotty Goldman, director of the office of global missions at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, for his guidance as we planned our trip.

Special thanks also to Doug Wilson with Counter Threat Group for providing security training for the team.

Additional migrant ministries supported by Southern Baptists from other parts of California as well as from Arizona, New Mexico and Texas are taking place in various parts of Mexico. TAB plans to follow up with those ministries in future issues.



"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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An unexpected migrant crisis shifts ministry focus in Tijuana

I love watching people who enjoy connecting a need with a resource — and even more I want to learn from them.

A recent visit to southern California and the northwest corner of Mexico exposed us to an association team with more than a decade of experience finding resources for a specific need that could have easily fallen through the cracks. You'll read about some of their work on page 1.

Mike Carlisle, director of missions for San Diego Southern Baptist Association (SDSBA), along with his wife and ministry support specialist Judy; church planting catalyst missionary Juvenal Gonzalez and his wife Maria; administrative assistants Darcie Hatch and Sarai Gonzalez; preschool ministries director Julie Choe; and communication specialist Julie McFadzean work long hours assisting member churches in various ministry efforts. Their job descriptions read much like what we find in Alabama and other states.

Hatch's husband Walt and the Gonzalez's children also find themselves actively involved in associational ministry efforts on any given day — again similar to what many families in ministry experience.

But the SDSBA team found itself in a unique position in 2006 — not only geographically but also with a ministry opportunity.

California is one of four states sitting on the southern border of the United States, which stretches roughly 1,500 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The three other bordering states are Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.



The northernmost part of Mexico bumps up against these states so the associations and state conventions are leading the missions and ministry efforts at and around the border.

The North American Mission Board's work stops at the U.S. border and the International Mission Board work in that area of the world is focused on southern Mexico and into Central and South America.

When Carlisle recognized the unmet needs less than 25 miles from his focus area he recruited Gonzalez to plant churches and mentor pastors in Tijuana.

Again the original ministry efforts were pretty routine for what we know as Southern Baptists, but everything changed in early October 2016 when a caravan of several hundred Haitians captured the world's attention by congregating in Tijuana in an attempt to enter the U.S.

Gonzalez noticed they were sleeping in the streets, hungry, dirty and in dangerous situations. Most only spoke Creole and French, the rare few spoke Spanish and none of them spoke English so the language barrier made it all worse.

"The situation was a difficult one but it certainly wasn't the U.S. government's responsibility," Gonzalez said. "Even so we (the Church) still couldn't let them suffer."

Gonzalez saw a need and determined the Baptist churches in Tijuana could make a difference with the help of the SDSBA.

So together they developed their own disaster relief-type response to the crisis that walked up unexpectedly.

And what started out as a temporary assistance effort for one group quickly turned into an official ministry to all migrants arriving from other countries.

In the past three years five Baptist churches have repurposed their ministry focus to intentionally reach the undocumented strangers in their midst.

Several churches now provide sleeping quarters for migrants. Some have showers and restrooms and others have developed feeding programs.

In fact a large chunk of the 345,000 miles on Gonzalez's 2003 charcoal gray Dodge Ram pickup truck has been made

with his daily trips across the border to pick up rice and beans for the meals.

He wants to be a good steward so he makes one or two trips a day to pick up food and other supplies because the prices are better in the U.S., he said.

We were with Gonzalez less than 48 hours but in that time we saw his deep compassion and the constant assessing of needs and how to meet them.

His legacy of service will be obvious in the stories from the pastors he is mentoring, and a glimpse of his heart can be heard on this week's TAB News podcast feature (www.tabonline.org/podcasts).

And our time with Gonzalez helped us realize there are church leaders and faith families across the border in Tijuana working tirelessly to help the unending stream of people from other countries showing up in Mexico with nothing and ending up with nowhere to go.

We were encouraged to see how much work is already underway not only to help care for the people's physical needs but also to share Christ with them.

The church leaders aren't spending their energy lobbying for the migrants to be allowed into the U.S. nor are they shoosing them out of town. They are simply providing shelter, food and showers — and preaching Jesus — until the migrants move on to the next place or decide to settle in Mexico.

The Baptists serving in Mexico don't need us to organize the work but they could use help with finances and volunteers. 🙏

Your Voice



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

Unintended consequences: AL's new marriage law

By **Allan McConnell**
Special to The Alabama Baptist

On Aug. 29 marriage law in Alabama changed drastically. No longer is a couple seeking to be legally married in the state of Alabama required to visit any of the county probate offices to get a wedding license. All they need is a notary to witness each of them signing a form. They don't even have to be present together to sign the form.

More importantly no longer is the couple required to have some form of ceremony or solemnization to seal the marriage. Even if they do have a ceremony no longer is the one who performs it required to attest to the marriage at all.

Both individuals sign the form in front of a notary and then submit the form in person or by mail. A ceremony is optional; only the notarized form is required.

I own a small business that provides Christian wedding officiating and see my job as more about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ than about making money. This new law had an immediate negative impact on my business. But the fact that my business will suffer financially is a side issue for me.

In a Christ-centered wedding ceremony I get the opportunity to share the gospel with a captive audience. God has given me a platform with wedding ceremonies to speak about Jesus and it has borne much fruit over the years.

I'm concerned the new law will

remove many of those opportunities.

Why did the Alabama Legislature pass this unneeded and inappropriate law? The answer is same-sex "marriage." When the U.S. Supreme Court made same-sex "marriage" legal in all 50 states there were many state and local judges throughout the nation who reacted by denying wedding licenses and certificates to same-sex couples.

In Alabama there were eight county probate judges who refused to perform any wedding ceremonies or issue marriage licenses. That stance worked without denying the right to be married as ordered by the Supreme Court since a license could be purchased in any of the remaining Alabama counties with the state accepting and recording their marriage certificate.

There is no question Alabama's new law was written and passed to counter same-sex "marriage." As a conservative Southern Baptist, I cannot personally agree with the Supreme Court or any jurisdiction saying that same-sex "marriage" is equal to the union of one man and one woman. However, as a citizen I do recognize that same-sex couples have been given the right to be married in the eyes of the government.

Some in Montgomery, including Christian leaders, argue the new law is "just the state getting out of the wedding business" and "Christian girls are still going to want a wedding ceremony." Unfortunately neither one of those positions is correct.

The county probate offices still require a fee be paid for recording a marriage certificate and a portion of that fee is sent to the state. So the state is still in the wedding business.

As for Christians continuing to want a traditional wedding ceremony performed by a pastor or Christian minister, I'm not so sure.

I do think "churched" couples will continue to desire traditional weddings for quite some time but unfortunately many Christians are no longer "churched" in the sense that I am using here.

For most people if something is legal it is looked at as being right and proper. Therefore this new law has great potential to damage the proper moral view for traditional marriage by removing the requirement of a ceremony.

The worst part of all of this is that a change in the law was unnecessary. Shame on us as Christian citizens for either not knowing or simply trusting that our interests are being supported or upheld in the halls of power in Montgomery.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Allan McConnell is the owner of Another Happy Couple Wedding Services, which provides officiants for Christian wedding ceremonies. He lives in McCalla. If you are a pastor, recently married couple or prospective bride or groom, TAB would like to hear how the new marriage law is affecting you. Please contact us at news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Your church address is by God's design. It is His intent that you minister to it. If a church turns its back on its community, then I believe we are going to answer for that.

Daniel Edmonds
Alabama Baptist State
Board of Missions

God has used backpacks, movie nights, crawfish boils and backyard VBS to help us connect with the 86% Anglo-Catholic community. We just did what the culture is doing and they responded.

Bo Smith
Pastor and church planter
Lakeshore Church
New Orleans

Your faith is great if it's placed in the One who promises to deliver you safely home — no matter your failings or feelings.

Pastor Eugene Carver
Hillview Baptist Church
Birmingham

The qualities of the first church stood out where they had care, concern, compassion, love, generosity, etc., for each other.

Pastor Jeff Kendrick
Mt. Philadelphia Baptist
Church, Cordova

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“Prayer does change things when our perspective becomes God’s perspective.”

LYLE DEASE

Associational missions director, Pickens Baptist Association

Language learning is essential for the effectiveness of most cross-cultural mission efforts. So are things like a place to live, a means of transportation, a ministry budget and immunizations — all provided by the generosity of Southern Baptists who give their tithes and offerings to the Lord in a local church that is committed to cooperative missions.

President Paul Chitwood
International Mission Board

There will be times in our journey through life when we need a refuge from our enemies, a shelter from our storms or a sanctuary from our problems. Our desire to get away is more of a temporary reprieve than a permanent detachment. We need to

renew our strength and restore our hope. David teaches us that in troubling times, there are no GPS coordinates for the haven we so desperately crave. God is our hiding place. Let us run to Him for protection.

Pastor Rick Patrick
FBC Sylacauga

Sometimes the word volunteer has the wrong connotation. I volunteer at the Red Cross or at the PTA. I serve in my church. Any discussion of overseeing lay people in the church starts by recognizing that distinction.

Sue Mallory
ChristianityToday.com

While Western aid organizations play an important role in providing

emergency health, water and sanitation services to conflict-torn regions, these are short-term solutions to long-term problems. ... The best use of resources is to effectively train and engage local churches to act. ... Local churches by their nature tend to be involved for the long term. ... When we empower the local church, we can break the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty that endangers the lives of millions of people.

Scott Arbeiter and Tim Breene
World Relief

Watch your thinking, for in the battle between the imagination and the will, the imagination usually wins.

Billy Graham



Judson College photo

Mark Tew is president of Judson College in Marion.

Picking up the towel

In the 15 years since its inception the voluntary service-learning project at Judson has grown from a handful of students who trimmed hedges and installed a bathroom floor into Marion Matters, a program that annually involves more than 100 new Judson students, returning student leaders and employees reaching out to our community.

This year teams decorated graves, read to shut-ins, prepared bulletin boards and organized textbooks at the public high school, organized the Lincoln Normal School Museum, moved playground equipment and built a playground fence.

In our post-event debriefing each student paused to answer questions designed to connect the service activity with the student’s Christian worldview. I reminded the group that the reason Jesus washed the disciple’s feet was because of the dissension that arose over James and John wanting prominence over the other disciples.

Jesus said if you want to lead you must be willing to serve. And yet, despite Jesus’ words, no one picked up the towel and washed his brother’s dirty feet.

In a world so filled with the need for Christ, we must take the role of slave and pick up the towel.

—Mark Tew

From the *Twitterverse*

@Blackwell_Kevin

My recommendation to ministry students this week: Develop a deep reservoir of faith because the people you serve will constantly draw from it. I have learned through experience!

@SWBTS

The highlight of Global Missions Week will always be hearing our @IMB_SBC missionaries sharing how God is at work around the world. @SWBTSwmc

@NOBTS

“Sometimes in life, God leads you through the wilderness because he sees things you don’t.”
— Jim Henry #NOBTSchapel

@NationalWMU

“I finally understood what it meant that people around the world

worship the same God and one God hears every voice.” — Ashley Fan, 2019 National Acteens Panelist, as she reflects on her summer missions trip with Project Esperanza [in the Dominican Republic]

@shadesmtn

Every sin — all of it — has the potential to grow and demand more of our time, focus and energy, and displace our love and commitment to God.

@DrJohnCross

“If you’re filled with the Spirit, you’ll be wearing out the soles of your feet not the seat of your pants.” @OSHawkins @SWBTS

@codyhale

Youth pastor: Do you want to see God call out pastors from your ministry? Make it clear how much

you love your work and how wonderful it is to walk with God.

@museumofBible

Johannes Kepler believed the study of science was “a sacred discourse” that demonstrated the wonder of creation and the Creator. ... Kepler, it’s been said, would break out in song upon making a new scientific discovery. A quote from Kepler in his later days reflects his life credo and Psalm 19: “Now I see how God is, by my endeavors, also glorified in astronomy, for ‘the heavens declare the glory of God.’”

@SEBTS

“If we meet ‘Christians’ who are unloving, we have to consider if they’re really Christians. ... A lack of sincere love calls lots of other things into question as well.”
— @MarkDever

Mexican pastor, family 'SAW THE NEED'

Opportunity to preach Jesus, share His love abounds at U.S.-Mexico border

(continued from page 1)
men, women and children in need of shelter and food.

When a delegation from *The Alabama Baptist (TAB)* visited there recently families were living in about 40 colorful pup tents taking up every available square inch of concrete floor space in an open-air metal warehouse in Tijuana's Zona Norte just yards from the U.S. border.

Telling a story

The tents are the homes of migrants fleeing Guatemala, Ecuador, Nicaragua and El Salvador as they wait for their appointments at the U.S. Immigration Office where they could apply for visas or asylum.

And while the reasons behind why these particular families traveled to the border are varied a peek into each tent told similar stories.

It told the story of families traveling as many as 2,000 miles with as many possessions as they could carry.

It told the story of parents doing their best to provide a good life for their children.

It told the story of children smiling and laughing as they played with siblings and new friends.

Many of the immigrant refugees were Haitian a few years ago, the mission's organizers said. These days they are mostly from Mexico, Central America and South America.

"This used to be a parking lot," said mission coordinator Yesenia Ardor, gesturing to the pup tent area. "Everything was out in the open."

Donated labor and materials built the metal shelter, she said. A new washer and dryer serve as a major advance in caring for the refugees living in the cramped quarters.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday breakfast at the shelter is provided by SDSBA church planter Juvenal Gonzalez and Gamaliel Lopez, pastor of Iglesia Bautista el Calvario (Calvary Baptist Church), and his wife Mayra.

"We saw the need of the people," said Mayra. "It's not easy for them to be here. If there's no one to feed them, we must."

And this feeding ministry all started with the Lopezes' children.

"My children wanted to start serv-



Photo by Amy Hacker

Marina Andrea Vargas watches over her 6-month-old daughter Angela Sophia while her husband works a job in the city. The Vargases are living at Salvation Way while waiting for their U.S. immigration court date.

ing others so we started handing out sandwiches at bus stations and on the streets," Gamaliel said.

Eventually they couldn't make enough sandwiches. As a family they made a decision: "We need to start doing more."

So Lopez contacted Gonzalez and together they started serving breakfast at the shelter.

Lopez prepares breakfast each morning in his church's kitchen and carries the food across the city to the shelter.

The TAB team helped Lopez serve breakfast for the migrants staying at the shelter.

"It was a humbling experience as we walked past the 40 small camping tents set up on the cold concrete floor to the kitchen to serve breakfast," said TAB director of communications Debbie Campbell. "Seeing the spark of hope in the eyes of many of the migrant families brought tears to my eyes. Many smiled at us when they came through the serving line so grateful for breakfast and a simple smile. It seems like such a small ministry but

you can tell it makes a huge impact."

Like other faith-based missions Movimiento Juventud 2000 does not accept money from the Mexican government.

And while it does receive donations of material goods such as food and clothing and a few dollars from those who can contribute while staying there, Ardor says it's a stretch to pay for the monthly utility bill, which often runs more than \$1,000 per month in U.S. dollars.

Several churches also are doing everything they can to help the hurting while sharing Jesus.

Salvation Way

In a small courtyard festooned with laundry flapping on criss-crossed clotheslines 22-year-old Marina Andrea Vargas watches over 6-month-old Angela Sophia and 5-year-old Jaqueline Naome while her husband works a day job in the city. At night the family of four sleeps on a mattress on the floor in a small, windowless room at the En Camino de Salvación (Salvation Way) mission.



Photo by Susan Stevens

Pastor Gamaliel Lopez and his wife Mayra spearhead the migrant feeding ministry at Movimiento Juventud 2000 where they provide breakfast three days a week.

For the Vargas family the quarters there are pure luxury.

About three months ago the family had spent 15 days hitchhiking from Guatemala in an effort to cross the U.S. border and apply for asylum.

“My husband was in a very bad situation in Guatemala,” Vargas said through an interpreter. “I didn’t want my children to have to live in that situation.”

The trip through Mexico was dangerous, she said. “This trip has marked my daughter for life. She fears the Mexican police will send her back home.”

‘Grateful for the mission’

The Vargas family crossed into the United States illegally on a raft that floated across the Rio Grande into Texas. When they were deported from San Diego into Tijuana they slept out in the open for a time. The family eventually found its way to the mission and will stay there while waiting for their U.S. immigration court date.

Vargas is hopeful her family will be allowed in the U.S. so they can go to live in Miami, where a friend is willing to sponsor them.

“It’s hard to be here,” she said. “I don’t know many people. But my main goal is to have a better future for my daughters.”

Meanwhile the wait is not wasted by the people of faith who work to share Jesus with and take care of the migrants.

“I am very grateful for the mission here,” Vargas said. “I have security. We never go hungry. I am encouraged by the church people and grateful for their prayers.” (TAB staff team coverage)

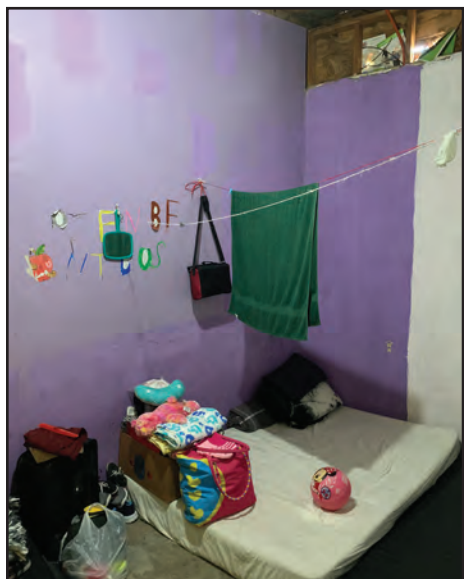


Photo by Debbie Campbell

Migrant families passing through Mexico are grateful for secure places to sleep such as this space at Salvation Way.

‘Power of ONE’

Church planter launches wave of migrant ministries in Tijuana

By Jessica Ingram
The Alabama Baptist

Fourteen years ago Juvenal Gonzalez, his wife Maria and their children were living comfortably in North Carolina where Gonzalez served as pastor of Iglesia Bautista Betel (Bethel Baptist Church), Lumberton.

But after attending a Woman’s Missionary Union MissionsFest in Tijuana in 2005 they felt God calling them back there.

“I did not want to come to Tijuana,” Gonzalez said. “I said, ‘No and no and no.’ But when the Lord wants to tell you something He can tell you just like it is. One pastor said to me, ‘If you’re comfortable where you are it’s because you aren’t doing anything.’ And that was me. Living in my comfort zone.”

‘Looking in the mirror’

But this wasn’t Gonzalez’s first, second or even third time in Tijuana. He was an immigrant. He crossed the U.S. border so many times the border patrol officers would tell him, “See you next time.”

“It was like looking myself in the mirror and seeing 30 years back,” he said. “I was there. I needed a glass of water, I needed shelter. If I’m able to help just one person, maybe another Juvenal comes along and for me it finally just clicked in my mind.”

Since the Gonzalezes arrival in Tijuana their family has grown — they now have five children: Sarai, Ismael, Said, Neftali and Jared — and more than 45 churches have been planted in various neighborhoods of the city through Gonzalez’s partnership with the San Diego Southern Baptist Association (SDSBA) and other Baptist churches both in the U.S. and Mexico.

“This is the power of one passionate leader to build relationships and change communities,” said Mike Carlisle, director of missions for SDSBA. “This is



Photo by Cynthia Watts

Juvenal Gonzalez speaks with the TAB team about Salvation Way and the ministries provided by the church.

what the Church is supposed to look like. We can’t think that people don’t deserve it for whatever reasons. We don’t deserve grace but God gave it to us. We must give the grace we are given.”

For the past three years the Gonzalezes have been working with Baptist churches in Tijuana to shelter migrants coming to the border.

“When you read the Bible you cannot help but think about it,” Gonzalez said.

Before Jesus feeds the 5,000, His disciples tell Him they don’t have enough food to feed the growing crowd. But Jesus tells them to “go and see” what they have (Mark 6:38). And out of what they have — five loaves and two fish — Jesus feeds multitudes. That was all the encouragement Gonzalez needed.

“When we started we thought, ‘Well we can give them shelter but in the morning let’s not just send them straight to the border. We know where the people go and stand in lines to wait for their numbers. Let’s not just send them, let’s give them coffee and sweet bread,’” he said. “It’s just like Jesus said: ‘What do you have?’”

And all he had was Folgers and sweet bread.

“But soon it was like God was pouring it Himself and I got so encouraged because one church called

and then another church called and before we knew it we started serving breakfast, lunch and dinner for the migrants.”

Living and serving at the busiest land border crossing in the Western Hemisphere provides a unique advantage for gospel work, Gonzalez said.

“I didn’t have to go to Haiti or Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala or Cuba. All these Spanish-speaking people came to our border,” he said. “And I told other pastors here, ‘This is our chance. Not for the Americans but for the Mexicans to preach the gospel because we don’t need a translator. We can say straightforward: ‘Jesus te ama’ (Jesus loves you).”

And thus began the network of churches and ministries Gonzalez coordinates to serve migrants.

“The investment we make in people is powerful. I didn’t know someone was making an investment in me 30 years ago when they preached Jesus to me. Who would’ve thought, ‘We’re helping Juvenal now because he’s going to lead church plants and ministries in Tijuana’? Nobody except God.”

Along with providing shelter and food to the migrant caravan, Gonzalez has been involved in several other ministries, including linking Pastor Gamaliel Lopez and Iglesia Bautista el Calvario (Calvary Baptist Church) to a shelter where they can serve breakfast; supporting Primera Iglesia Bautista de Tijuana (First Baptist Church, Tijuana) and its Haitian congregation; and housing volunteers and missions teams in rooms at his home.

‘It’s our moment’

For Gonzalez it’s not about padding his church plant and ministry numbers. It about supporting those serving within the community.

“We want to help the church so the church can help the community,” he said. “Now it’s our moment. We know if the Lord is in it it’s going to multiply.” ✝

Appreciate your PASTOR

10 ways to show your pastors and church staff you care about, support them

During the month of October many churches recognize Pastor Appreciation Month, also known as Clergy Appreciation Month, as an intentional time to honor their pastors and church staff.

The history of appreciating those ordained by God goes back to Bible times. The Apostle Paul writes that “the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). In 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, Paul suggests those whom God has chosen to work among believers should be held in the highest regard in love for their work.

“Recognizing your pastor and his family is a gift of love,” said Barrett Long, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tusculum. “This should be above and beyond what a church is already doing for their leader. Observing Pastor Appreciation Month is a way to say, ‘Our church loves and appreciates you.’”

Churches choose many ways to honor their pastor and church staff or celebrate their work in the church and community. It’s really a family appreciation, Long said.

“However a church chooses to honor their minister(s) it should bring joy and encouragement to his family,” he said. “As a pastor is on-call throughout the day and often into the night there are times when the family has to change their plans.”

Danny Rasberry, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist, Stanton, agreed.



Pray for your pastor and church staff. Honor God by honoring His servants.

“It’s important for the pastor’s wife to be recognized also,” Rasberry said. “She may be left out when only the pastor receives this acknowledgment.”

Rasberry says a pastor may go through a “dry spell” and it’s good to “tell as well as show” appreciation.

“Ebenezer Baptist adds this event to the calendar each year. At this time the church honors us with a lunch and a love offering,” he said. “This

is just one way we know the congregation loves us.”

If your church is wondering how to observe Pastor Appreciation Day or Clergy Appreciation Month perhaps these suggestions will help.

Most important: do something. Involve as many people as possible. Don’t neglect to say “thank-you” to the pastor and church staff who are always there for your congregation.

1. Circle of prayer. Ask the pas-

tor, pastoral staff members and their families to come to the front of the auditorium. Invite members to surround them and pray for them.

2. Write letters. During October distribute stamped envelopes addressed to the pastor and church staff. Ask members to write a short letter to each expressing their appreciation of staff leadership. Thank them for ministering to you in both good and not-so-good times.

3. Plan a churchwide meal.

What are your staff members’ favorite dishes? Plan a luncheon or dinner honoring them with food and fellowship. Ask several members to share a time when a staff member was there for them or their family in a time of need.

4. Purchase Christian books by favorite authors, Bible commentaries or other study aids appropriate to the individual’s role and interests.

5. Gift-a-day. Ask Sunday School classes or other church organizations to work together on an appreciation calendar. Each day in October, the pastor and/or staff members will receive one small item or gift, such as a gift card for coffee at a local coffee shop, a homemade cake, a car wash or theater tickets.

6. Decorate office doors of the staff. Ask children to draw “happy” pictures or use balloons to decorate.

7. Give ministers a plaque stenciled with a Bible verse (Num. 6:24–26 for example) as a prayer for God’s blessings.

8. Share with the media. Let others in your community know you appreciate your pastor and staff.

9. Remodel the church office. How long has it been since the church office was updated? When visitors stop by what is their first impression? Work with the pastor to determine the best way to do this and be willing to help raise the funds.

10. Random acts of kindness. Think of ways to show kindness to your pastor, church staff and their families. If they have young children can you offer transportation when they are occupied with church duties? If a staff member’s family has a pet can you provide a safe home for the dog or cat if they’re on vacation?

Most important: Pray for your pastor and church staff. Support them by your attendance and commitment. Tell others about the

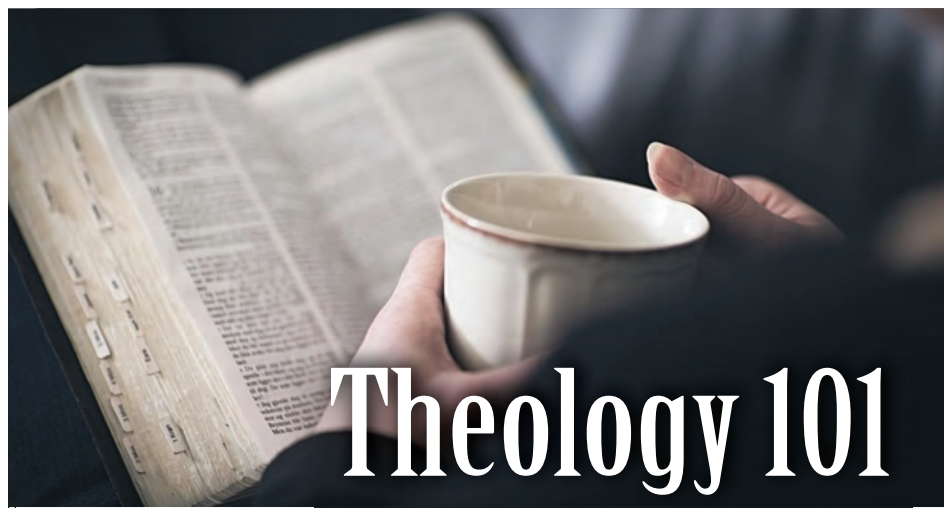
pastor and church staff God has chosen to lead your church. Be cooperative and loving toward others. Honor God by honoring His servants. (Carolyn Tomlin)

“Hold them (pastors) in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”

1 Thess. 5:13

Pastor Appreciation Day is Oct. 13.

Clergy Appreciation Month is October.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Aspects of an Abundant Life

A Joyful Life

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

Our language contains a number of compound adjectives that end with a syllable of fullness or abundance. One such word is joyful.

Life at its abundant best is a joy-filled life. Most of us have multiple reasons for joy in spite of life's negatives, disappointments, pains and lack. Even so our joy cannot be full apart from Christ who said to His followers, "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

To this same end of fullness of joy Jesus is on record as having prayed for His followers saying, "I have come to You and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Christ's prayerful desire is to fill us to the full with His joy.

Earthly happiness

Often our earthly synonym for joy is happiness. However, as the word happiness itself intimates happiness is somewhat external in that it depends on what is happening to us or around us.

Joy on the other hand speaks of something that is not necessarily dependent on happenings. The source of real joy is not earthly events but is found in our heavenly Lord.

God's people have been known to be joyful in the most adverse circumstances. A classic example was Paul and Silas during their imprisonment in Philippi (Acts

16:25). Their plight in a first-century prison was far from hospitable.

Their joy was not found in their circumstances or surroundings.

Heaven's joy

The joy that manifested itself in praise was internal and had its source from heaven. By no means have those two Christ-followers been the only ones to experience joy while suffering.

A number of Bible verses point us heavenward for the source of real abiding joy. For example we might try these verses on for size amid our own situations and make them part of our meditation. Psalm 16:11 confesses before the Lord, "In Your presence is fullness of joy." Isaiah 12:3 promises, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." Galatians 5:22 reminds us, "The fruit of the Spirit is ... joy." Psalm 30:5 yields the promise, "Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning."

A full and abundant life is difficult if not impossible to imagine without the joy of the Lord filling our hearts. Why not give daily thought throughout this week to Proverbs 17:22: "A joyful heart is good medicine." ✠

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.



Samford seminar addresses sexual brokenness in world

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Missions in the midst of a global pornography epidemic was the topic of a Global Voices seminar held recently at Beeson Divinity School's Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham. David Parks, director of the Global Center, and Traylor Lovvorn, executive director of Undone Redone, a sexual addiction recovery ministry, spoke at the seminar.

Parks, who served with the International Mission Board (IMB) in Southeast Asia, said missionaries worldwide face the impact of the global pornography epidemic but have few resources to help those who struggle with pornography addiction. However, truths about guilt, shame, repentance and grace applied in recovery ministries in the U.S. may be helpful to missionaries serving abroad.

Lovvorn, a former church planter who secretly struggled with pornography and sexual addiction for 11 years before his addictions were exposed, shared his personal experience with addiction. He also explained his own recovery as examined through the lens of three dominant ways cultures around the world tend to interpret events in their lives: honor-shame, innocence-guilt or power-fear.

Looking through the lens of the honor-shame model Lovvorn said he felt he didn't measure up. Since he was fundamentally flawed he hid. He couldn't let others know who he really was.

"The opportunity I've seen with my own struggle and even the gift of addiction is that it's given me a new lens with which to understand the gospel in a fresh new way," Lovvorn said. "I spent years impressing with a pristine mask and really trying to convince God and everyone

else what a small sinner I was."

Through the innocence-guilt model Lovvorn said he knew he was justified by faith but his practical theology was that he was sanctified by sweat and effort.

"Ultimately I saw God as very, very angry and very, very disappointed, even disgusted with me that I couldn't get my act together," Lovvorn said.

The radical nature of the gospel says we have the Father's smile because of the finished work of Christ not because of what we can or cannot do, he said.

Using the power-fear model Lovvorn said a lot of his struggle had to do with his identity as a man since pornography tends to eliminate the fear of

rejection many men face.

Safe place for healing

The church can provide a safe place for healing because it is a place to share what we can't overcome on our own, Lovvorn said.

"When willpower is not fixing a problem we have the opportunity to see our need for a Savior," he said.

Asked what churches should do about pornography Lovvorn said pornography is not the main issue. Teaching healthy sexuality can help, as can counseling to help individuals get to the root causes of their sin. But mostly, he said, we need to provide safe spaces of community where people can take

off their masks and be authentic.

"In a lot of our churches the recovery groups are in the basement," he said, referencing Richard Rohr's book about addiction recovery "Breathing Under Water."

"People in the basement are longing for the day they'll be back on the main level with the normal folk," he said. "The normal folk are thanking God they are not like those folks in the basement. However, true spirituality happens in the basement." ✠



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Visit www.UndoneRedone.com to learn about inviting Undone Redone to your church. If you or someone you love is dealing with sexual brokenness, go to www.Route1520.com.

FRUITFUL

JOHN 15:5

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NOVEMBER 12~13, 2019

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TUESDAY MORNING**

TIM COX

PASTOR, LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH, CHELSEA

MESSAGE, TUESDAY EVENING

JASON ALLEN

PRESIDENT, MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, KANSAS CITY, MO.

SPECIAL MUSIC BY VOICES OF MOBILE

CONVENTION SERMON,

WEDNESDAY MORNING

RICK MARSHALL

RETIRED PASTOR, EASTERN HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTGOMERY

"FRUITFUL" THEME INTERPRETATIONS

ANNEL ROBAYNA

STATE MISSIONARY, HISPANIC MINISTRY

TUESDAY MORNING

JARMAN LEATHERWOOD

PASTOR, HOUSE OF HOPE AND RESTORATION, HUNTSVILLE

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

BEN STUBBLEFIELD

PASTOR, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON

WEDNESDAY MORNING



TIM COX



JASON ALLEN



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ANNEL ROBAYNO



JARMAN LEATHERWOOD



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HOTEL GUIDE The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and is not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate at any of these hotels, please contact Amy Nelson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or (334) 613-2231, anelson@alsbom.org.



CONVENTION HOTEL

Hilton Garden Inn Mobile East Bay/Daphne
29546 North Main Street, Daphne
(251) 625-0020
King or 2 Queens: \$94 + tax
Breakfast buffet included
Reserve by October 11

Hampton Inn Daphne
Mobile East Bay/Daphne
29451 US Hwy 98, Daphne
(251) 626-2220
Standard: \$99 + tax
Breakfast included
Reserve by October 11

Homewood Suites Mobile East Bay/Daphne
29474 North Main Street, Daphne
(251) 621-0100
Studio King Suite or 1 Bedroom King Suite:
\$109 + tax
Breakfast & evening reception included (M-Th)
Full kitchen
Reserve by October 11

Courtyard by Marriott
1300 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort
(251) 370-1160
King or 2 Queen: \$105 + tax
Suite: \$129 + tax
Bistro serving breakfast/dinner
Starbucks
Reserve by October 25

Best Western Plus Daphne Inn & Suites
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(251) 625-6260
King: \$89 + tax
2 Queen: \$94 + tax
Breakfast included

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott

12000 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort
(251) 370-1160
King or Double: \$99 + tax
King Suite: \$119 + tax
Breakfast included
Reserve by October 25

Holiday Inn Express Fairhope
19751 South Greeno Road, Fairhope
(251) 928-9191
Single or Double: \$89 + tax
Group Code: CBA or Alabama Baptist Convention
Reserve by October 27

Holiday Inn Express Daphne
29726 Woodrow Lane, Daphne
(251) 621-1223
King or 2 Queen: \$99 + tax
King Suite or 2 Queen Suite: \$109 + tax
Breakfast included
Reserve by October 28

Comfort Suites

29450 North Main Street, Daphne
(251) 626-1113
King: \$70 + tax
2 Queen: \$80 + tax
Breakfast included
Group Code: Alabama Baptist Convention
Reserve by October 27



For complete information about the convention, including an interactive hotel guide, please visit alsbom.org/convention.

Alabama Baptist congregations are asked to watch for information from the State Board of Missions regarding registration of messengers to this year's State Convention meeting. Information was sent by U.S. mail on September 30 to each local church with instructions on how to pre-register messengers through an online process.





Photos courtesy of FBC Tallassee

Tallassee student ministry 'speaks life' into community

Your past doesn't define you! Jesus is better! God is in control!

If you're driving around Tallassee you might see some of these signs put there to speak words of life to you and anyone who sees them.

It all started one day in September when Brandon Fomby, student pastor at First Baptist Church, Tallassee, in Elmore Baptist Association, was reading Proverbs and felt God lay a burden on his heart.

"In Proverbs 18:21 it says the tongue has the power to give life or death," Fomby said. "I just started thinking

about ways we could speak life to the people around us." So he got together with his student ministry team and pitched the idea of "Sign the City" — putting words of life on signs all over town.

They loved the idea and the students did too.

Since the signs have been up Fomby said he's gotten messages from adults in town saying things like "I saw a sign today and it said exactly what I needed to hear."

"It's just a simple idea," Fomby said. "We're just going to see where it leads." (Grace Thornton)

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Prayerfully seeking a Southern Baptist pastor who preaches the uncompromised Word of God. If led by the Spirit to respond send resumé to: River Road Baptist Church, 3352 Warrior River Road, Hueytown, AL 35023 or notiHim@bellsouth.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Faith Baptist Church in suburban Mobile, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor with at least six years' experience. SBC seminary preferred. We are a growing, predominately African-American congregation of 60 people. Visit www.faithbaptistchurch2801.org for additional information. Please send resumé with a link to sermons to: groce1lant@comcast.net or mail to the following address: Tom Groce, Pulpit Committee, 251-209-9285, Faith Baptist Church, 2801 Knollwood Dr., Mobile, AL 36693. Opens: Sept. 15; closes: Nov. 30.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Pate's Chapel Baptist Church is searching for a bivocational worship leader. Please mail resumé to: PCBC, ATTN: Music

Search Committee, 190 CR 295, Jemison, AL 35085, or email: pcbcmusicsearch@gmail.com.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

We are accepting resumés for a bivocational youth minister. Interested candidates please submit your resumé to: Lakeview Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 190, Lake View, AL 35111 on or before Oct. 30. Responsibilities include leading students grades 6-12 on Wednesday nights and Sundays.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Dawes has a part-time opening for a youth pastor. Contact Harold Rester at 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@mexiabaptistchurch.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Chilton Baptist Association is currently accepting resumés for the position of director of missions. This person should have demonstrated a commitment to associational and state missions by their giving through the Cooperative Program and participation in association, state and national ministries. Resumés should be sent to: Chilton Baptist Association, ATTN: DOM Search Committee, P.O. Box 1260, Clanton, AL 35046 or email to: cbasecretary@bellsouth.net.

OFFICE/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Chilton Baptist Association

is accepting resumés for a full-time office/financial secretary. The applicant must be a committed Christian and active church member. The position requires experience as well as excellent communication and computer skills. Mail resumés to: Tony Christensen, 102 Cedarbrook Dr., Clanton, AL 35045 or email to: tonychris777@att.net.

BUSINESS

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TRAVEL/VACATION


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'Every coach, every athlete'

Fellowship of Christian Athletes continues 65-year tradition of sports, discipleship

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) founder and basketball coach Don McClanen wondered why professional athletes endorsed products like cigarettes but not a Christian lifestyle so in 1954 McClanen founded FCA with the idea that sports could be used to share Jesus.

Since then sports have become even more popular in every culture and FCA, serving both coaches and athletes from youth to pro-

fessional, keeps growing too. More than 14,000 FCA chapters, called huddles, are active in 85 countries. More than 88,000 attended FCA camps this year. The organization's vision is to reach "every coach, every athlete, every team and every community in every country" by using the strategy "Pray, Give and Go."

Unengaged youth

Erick Armster, or "Brother E" as the local football players call him, is urban ministry director of

Alabama FCA and works in Montgomery area schools. Armster said teens in this demographic often are not involved in church youth groups.

"Through FCA, I get an opportunity to get in front of kids that would probably never hear the gospel broken down in a way that they can grasp it," Armster said.

Building relationships that otherwise wouldn't have been possible is an important part of what FCA does best, said Jami Sikes, women's ministry director of Alabama FCA. Sikes was a coach, a teacher, and an athlete and has seen FCA from each perspective.

"We can meet [the athletes] where they are," Sikes said, noting the girls she disciples can be authentic because they know someone is "pouring into" them.

Last summer Sikes led a citywide girls' Bible study in Montgomery focused

on social media. Sikes said social media fosters a spirit of comparison and puts a great deal of pressure on students so she taught the girls the difference between "who I think I am and who God thinks I am."

College outreach

In addition to high school students Alabama FCA

works with college-aged athletes. College athletes in particular can feel lost and alone, as many are transplants from other states. Steven Clark, former Auburn football player and current leadership coordinator of Alabama FCA, said FCA provides community and fellowship for both athletes and non-athletes at the college level.

Clark was greatly influenced by FCA. He was an All-American both in

academics and athletics. He transferred that performance emphasis to his faith and never "took the time to know the One who gave [him] life."

An FCA college retreat helped him recognize who Christ is and how to know Him. This led to getting plugged into the campus FCA, whose emphasis on

For information about starting an FCA Huddle in Alabama, visit www.alabamafca.org.

growing leaders helped him to "realize that we have little eyes looking up all the time."

Another major focus

of FCA is to reach coaches who will impact the next generation of athletes, Sikes said. Coaches often receive little encouragement and FCA fills that gap by mentoring, discipling and providing resources.


Armster shared the story of one Alabama coach who was changed by FCA's ministry by going to a coach's family camp last summer.

Towards the end of camp this coach accepted Christ. Armster was then able to disciple him during the next school year.

'Coaching God's way'

Armster said the coach told him, "I want to do coaching God's way. I want to do my family God's way. I want to raise my kids God's way."

FCA offers free online resources for youth groups regardless of FCA affiliation, including devotionals, Bible studies, skits and more. Resources are accessible at www.fcaresources.com.

Churches also are needed to partner with local FCA groups through prayer, volunteering and financial support, Armster said. Church support helps FCA provide staff to grow the ministry. 

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Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne
November 11, 2019

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3 stories you should know



Photo by Tommy Shaw

Students gather early at schools across Alabama and the world Sept. 25 to join together for See You at the Pole 2019. Alabama schools where the morning prayer event was held include Eufaula High School, Hewitt-Trussville High School, Berry Middle School (pictured above), Muscle Shoals High School, Highland Home School, Coosa Valley Elementary, Cullman Middle School and many others. This year marks the 29th anniversary of See You at the Pole.

SBC's Greear leads US House in prayer

On Sept. 25, Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear opened the afternoon legislative session of the House of Representatives with prayer.

"May You grant that this body rule in a way that directs the men, women and children of the country toward Your goodness and enables them in thankfulness to You," he prayed. "May we perceive the love that You have for us and may that translate into love for one another, especially the most vulnerable."

Greear's trip to the U.S. Capitol also included meetings with multiple congressional leaders, including Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.), Rep. David Price (D-N.C.), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and others.

Watch Greear's full prayer at <https://tabonline.org/Greear>. (BP)

Mattel launches line of gender-fluid dolls

Mattel released its Createable World line of dolls Sept. 25 describing the six dolls in the series as gender-neutral and coupled with short and long wigs and male, female and gender-neutral attire. This new line will likely flop on the market, Christian experts said.

Bob Stith, a Southern Baptist gender issues expert and founder of Family and Gender Issues Ministries in Southlake, Texas, said the dolls are irresponsible.

God's creation of two sexes is undeniable, Stith said, and is confirmed in both the Old and New Testaments.

"Certainly in a fallen world those lines can get blurred," said Stith.

"But the compassionate response is not to promote the blurring of the lines but to lovingly help our fallen culture to move back towards God's creative intent." (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Carner, longtime Alabama Baptist music minister, dies at 88



John William "Bill" Carner, a longtime music minister at churches in Alabama and other states, died Sept. 11. He was 88.

Carner served as music minister of Central Baptist Church, Decatur; Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery; and Ruhama Baptist Church, Birmingham; as well as churches in Oklahoma, Texas and Kentucky.

A native of Mississippi, he served in the U.S. Navy before earning a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma Baptist University and a master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

After retirement Carner was an active member of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, and later First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Carner is preceded in death by his wife of 53 years, Shirly Leslie. He is sur-



CARNER

vived by two daughters, Sheryl and Shan; four grandchildren; and one great-grandson. (Grace Thornton)

No global right to abortion, President Trump tells United Nations



President Trump decried efforts within the United Nations (U.N.) to establish a global right to abortion in a speech Sept. 24 to the U.N. General Assembly.

In his address Trump broke new ground for a sitting U.S. president by speaking about abortion to the U.N. General Assembly, according to the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).

Americans will "never tire of defending innocent life," Trump said. "We are aware that many United Nations projects have attempted to assert a global right to taxpayer-funded abortion on demand — right up until the moment of delivery. Global bureaucrats have absolutely no business attacking the sovereignty of nations that wish to protect innocent life.

"Like many nations here today we in America believe that every child, born and unborn, is a sacred gift from God," he said.

Trump's U.N. speech was the latest in a series of global, pro-life initiatives by his administration since he took office in January 2017, including:

► Reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico



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City Policy which bans federal funds for organizations that perform or promote abortions overseas.

► Cancellation of money for the U.N. Population

Fund because of its partnership with a Chinese population-control program that includes forced abortions and sterilizations. (BP)

Alabama's Roger Willmore celebrates 50 years in 'unbelievable' ministry



Roger Willmore took his grandmother's hands to pray for her, just like he'd always done before when he'd visited her, and she started to weep.

"I asked her why she was crying and she said she had always prayed for me that I would

News near you

DEKALB ASSOCIATION

▶ **Jed Richey** (third from left) is the new pastor of **Bethel Baptist Church, Geraldine**.

At his ordination service were his wife, Katie (fourth from right); former pastor Terry Sisco (third from right); interim DeKalb director



Photo courtesy of Chris Murdock

of missions Chris Murdock (left) and several church deacons. Jed and Katie have two children.

EAST LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

▶ **LaFayette Heights Baptist Church** will host the 11th annual Chambers County Outdoor and Wild Game Expo on Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The expo will be held at the Chambers County Agricultural Arena. David Ellis will be the guest speaker and live music will be provided by The Ryan John Band. Free food and door prizes will be available plus more than 40 local vendors and exhibitors available to browse. Paul Howard is pastor.

FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Chase Dowdy** is the new pastor of **First Baptist Church, Russellville**. He previously served as pastor of Stowers Hill Baptist Church, Attalla. He also served as youth pastor at First Baptist Church, Guntersville, and Cherry Street Baptist Church, Attalla. He holds degrees from University of Alabama at Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kelly, have two children.



DOWDY

GENEVA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Maple Avenue Baptist Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on Oct. 8 at 11 a.m. Henry County sheriff Will Maddox will be the guest speaker. For reservations call 334-684-9617. Teddy Ward is pastor.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Marshall Baptist Association** will host Impacting Lives for Christ 2019 on Oct. 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Marshall Baptist Retreat Center. The Deaf-focused fellowship event will include a potluck dinner. To register and sign up to bring a side dish, dessert or drink visit www.albcedeaf.org. Randall Stoner is associational missions director.

MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Prattville**, will host the Abundant Living event Oct. 8 with humorist and author Debbie Childers. Doors will open at 9 a.m. and the meeting will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a break for lunch from

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information visit www.alsbom.org/event/abundant-living-2019. Peyton Hill is pastor.

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Falkville**, will host Ivan Parker in concert Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken during the concert. Stephen Cannon is pastor.

RUSSELL ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Hurtsboro**, will celebrate its 148th anniversary with a homecoming service Oct. 6 at 10:30 a.m. Mark Brantley will preach. Living Water will bring special music. Chris Webb is pastor.

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

▶ **Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Cropwell**, will host a special service featuring Paul's Journey on Oct. 6 at 10:30 a.m. For more information call 205-525-5273. Chris Beck is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Mount Olive Baptist Church, Coker**, will host GODstock 2019 on Oct. 5 at 5 p.m. Food will be provided. Bring a chair for the praise and worship concert on the grounds. Canned good donations will be accepted. Tim Tindle is pastor.

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, McIntosh**, will celebrate its 66th homecoming Oct. 6. Music will begin at 10 a.m. and the service will begin at 11 a.m. Earnest Tucker will be the guest speaker. A fellowship meal will follow the service. John Stone is pastor. 🇺🇸

— NEWSBRIEFS —

become a Christian at a young age," he said. "And she said that she'd always prayed that God would call me to preach."

Fifty years later Willmore, who says he never imagined he would be able to speak in front of people, is looking back over the answer to his grandmother's prayers — a rich half century of ministry.

"There's only one word for what God has done — unbelievable," he said. "I'm proof that whatever God calls you to do He gives you what you need to do it."

Willmore, now associational missions director for Calhoun Baptist Association, has served 42 years as pastor of several Alabama Baptist churches. Through the years he's served in various roles in Alabama Baptist and Southern Baptist life, including president of the state convention from 2006 to 2008 and as a trustee for the University of Mobile, Judson College in Marion and LifeWay Christian Resources.

He says a highlight of his ministry has been



WILLMORE

the mentorship of expository preacher Stephen Olford and getting to participate in Keswick conventions over the years. He's preached in 15 countries, including Japan. Baptists there recently presented him with a certificate honoring him for 50 years in the ministry.

Willmore said he's grateful for God's blessings and for the support of his wife, Sandra, who has been there every step of the way.

"It's a privilege to have been a pastor," he said. "I hold that position in high esteem." (Grace Thornton)

MacLaren, former CP/stewardship director for SBOM, dies at 79

John MacLaren, longtime pastor and former director of the office of Cooperative Program/stewardship development for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), died Sept. 19. He was 79.

MacLaren served the SBOM from May 1, 1995, to Jan. 31, 2007. He also served as director of missions for Elmore Baptist Association and pastor and interim pastor of several church-

es, including North Brewton Baptist Church; New Hope Baptist Church (now Orrville Baptist Church), Orrville; and other churches in Florida, Georgia and Mississippi. He was a member of Millbrook Baptist Church.

"As a state missionary for 12 years John cared deeply about the Great Commission, encouraging Alabama Baptists to be faithful in stewardship and support for missions through the Co-



MACLAREN

operative Program," said Rick Lance, SBOM executive director. "He also served well in ministry posts before and after his ministry with SBOM.

"John will be missed but his legacy will live on through the many lives that he influenced in serving the Lord," Lance said.

MacLaren was a graduate of Norman College in Georgia, Samford University in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is survived by his wife, Judy Moseley MacLaren; son, Michael Moseley; daughter, Monica King; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. (TAB)



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Memorials are listed below (the name of the deceased is bolded).

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Brazil, Mabel, Bessemer: Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
Duncan, Opal, Gadsden: Zoe Benefield & Angela Sims
Ford, Taylor, Jr. (Buddy), Linden: Providence BC of Gallion
Foxhall, Frances, Linden: Providence BC of Gallion
Godwin, Jean, Evergreen: Eureka BC of Franklin
Granto, Oliver, Locust Fork: Fred & Patricia Hollis

Hawk, Mona, Marianna, FL: Eureka BC of Franklin
Johnson, Milton, Locust Fork: Patricia & Fred Hollis
Littleton, Curtis, Salem: Evelyn Gullatte, Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Northcutt, Mildred, Columbus, GA: Evelyn Gullatte, Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Nutt, Deborah, Pensacola, FL: Eureka BC of Franklin
Ozment, Edward "Gump", Sumterville: Tony & Joyce Chambless
Phillips, Ricky, Hixson, TN: Mrs. Jean Reynolds
Phillips, Steve, Salem: Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Ray, Brenda, Gallion: Providence BC of Gallion
Rigsby, Irene, Opelika: Ben & Barbara Blasingame
Roberts, Charles, Pine Hill: Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Melton
Smith, Douglas, Selma: Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Melton

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who made a Grace Gift to Alabama Baptist Children's Homes. To learn more about Grace Gifts or how to make one, visit alabamachild.org/give or call **205.982.1112**.

President seeks to protect religious freedom

President Donald Trump pledged \$25 million in U.S. funding to protect religious sites and relics and announced a coalition of U.S. businesses to protect religious freedom in the

workplace during the Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom, a meeting held Sept. 23 at the United Nations (U.N.) headquarters in New York. Trump became the first

U.S. president to convene a meeting at the U.N. focusing on religious freedom.

“This initiative will encourage the private sector to protect people of all faiths in the workplace,” Trump said. “Too often people in positions of power preach diversity while silencing, shunning or censoring the faithful. True tolerance

means respecting the right of all people to express their deeply held religious beliefs,” Trump said, citing statistics that 83% of the world’s population lives in countries with religious persecution.

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, applauded the event attended by more than 100 governmental leaders and members of persecuted faith communities globally, including Christians, Jewish leaders and Muslims.

Trump proclaimed religious liberty one of his highest priorities as president.

“Today with one clear voice the United States of America calls upon the nations of the world to end religious persecution,” Trump said. “To stop the crimes against people of faith, release prisoners of conscience, repeal laws restricting freedom of religion and belief, protect the vulnerable, the defenseless, and the oppressed, America stands with believers in every country who ask only for the freedom to live according to the faith that is within their own hearts.”

The new business group for workplace religious freedom would be the first of its kind, Trump said.

He didn’t name members of the group but said it would include some of the “most successful men and women on earth” whom he described as “great business leaders, great people of strength.” (BP)



TRUMP

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- Across**
- African nation
 - King when Jesus was born
 - Right angle to a ships length
 - Degrade
 - OT book of history
 - Samson’s evil wife
 - Greek goddess of youth
 - American Football Conference (abbr.)
 - Give up
 - Foot wear
 - Lend
 - Spoken
 - Samuel’s mentor
 - Unconscious states
 - Put out
 - The ___ is my shepherd
 - Financial obligation
 - Suggest
 - Pacific, for example
 - Records
 - Three
 - Critical
 - Wind
 - Cafes
 - Sugar-free brand
 - Plant louse
 - Happening
 - Winnie the ___
 - Goof
 - Am I my brother’s ___?
 31. Fear
 33. A Roman emperor
 34. Snare
 35. Flat bread
 36. Canoe propellers
 37. Can be left out
 39. ___ and the door shall be opened
 41. Abhors
 42. Pride
 45. Wager
 47. Contains Book of Psalms
 50. Beer container
 52. First son of Cain
 53. Filthy ___
 55. Light cake
 56. Unclean animals
 57. Lip
 58. Heavy metal
 60. Touch
 61. Vanish
 63. Steep
 65. X
 67. Not (prefix)
- Down**
- Hew
 40. A name of God
 41. Nozzle (2 wds.)
 43. Epoch
 44. Clannish
 46. Past
 47. Support
 48. Property
 49. Ports
 51. Strong metal
 54. Poet
 57. Samuel’s mentor
 59. Put out
 62. Radiates
 64. Financial obligation
 66. Pacific, for example
 68. Three
 69. Wind
 70. Creed
 71. Bunsen burner
 72. Paradise
 73. Ms. Keller
 74. Stink
 2. King when Jesus was born
 3. Degrade
 4. Samson’s evil wife
 5. American Football Conference (abbr.)
 6. Foot wear
 7. Writer Bombeck
 8. Biblical Greek word for love
 9. Leader of Exodus
 10. Annex
 11. Animal caretaker
 12. Uncommon
 13. Comedian Griffith
 21. Gratuity mark
 23. Trusty horse
 26. OT abode of the dead
 28. First woman
 30. Tax agency

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 6

Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



RESIDENCE Ephesians 3:14–21

Petitioned (14–15)

Once again Paul is an example for us today, showing the importance of praying for others. Often believers struggle with prayer: Since God knows all things why should we pray?

However, the Bible is filled with prayers and while we believe God already knows the future, He chooses to work through us and our prayers to accomplish His purposes.

Looking at the following verses gives us an idea of how Paul prays and sets a model for us as well.

Indwelt (16–19)

At this stage of Paul's life he was a prisoner. He could have chosen to pray to be released from his chains. He could have prayed for total freedom to travel wherever he pleased for the sake of the gospel. He could have even prayed for financial gain so he could use it to facilitate his travels and spread the gospel. But he did not. Paul prayed for the believers.

Many false teachers today tell their listeners we should pray for what we want regardless of the reason and God will give it to us.

I have heard of a man who was told by his pastor if a person prayed for something 2,000 times God would grant the request so he began praying for a Cadillac, which he never received. This position is unbiblical.

God hears our prayers and we are told to pray but God never promises to give us what we want. He does promise to give us what is best. Often this is difficult for the believer to understand. I have prayed for people to be healed from their illnesses but healing did not come. Did God hear my prayer? Yes. Did He answer according to my will? No, but He answered according to His will.

We have to remember several things here — God loves us and in all things, the good and the bad, God works for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28).

So how does Paul pray? Paul

prays believers would be strengthened by the Spirit and that Christ may dwell in our hearts. But wait — does this mean Christ does not dwell in the hearts of Christians?

Being a Christian means that Christ dwells in our hearts does it not? Yes this is true but just because one believes in Christ does not mean that person is always following the promptings of the Holy Spirit and actively living out his or her Christian faith. It is important to live out our Christian faith on a daily basis.

This involves a total commitment to follow Christ regardless of the situation. If we remember God's love for us this is an easy thing to do.

For God to love us so much that even though we were still sinners He sent Christ to die for us in order to reconcile us to God is a wonderful expression of love that should motivate us to live our lives for Christ.

Every aspect of our lives should be captive to Christ. This will never be achieved perfectly in this life, but we strive to continue to grow in Christ daily — this is sanctification.

Honored (20–21)

Paul finishes this section with a spontaneous expression of praise to God which is the proper outpouring of joy to God. Because of what God has done for us in Christ, Paul is able to be joyful even though he is in chains for the gospel.

This is a model for us to follow. We aren't all in prison but we live in hectic times with stresses due to family, work, finances, health, marriage, etc. Yet despite these trials we face we possess an everlasting joy because of our relationship to God the Father in Christ and that is an encouraging thought.

Remembering our joy allows us to face each day with the knowledge that God loves and cares for us and our lives contain purpose and meaning.✝

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



UNCOMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS 1 Thessalonians 4:3–12

Few stories in the Bible are as riveting as the account of David's rise to the throne. His is the quintessential "rags to riches" story. When the prophet Samuel comes to call on David's father Jesse and asks to see his sons, David is the one Jesse doesn't bother to fetch from the fields. When mighty Goliath mocks Israel's armies and Israel's God, David is the one derided for thinking he could take on the Philistine champion. When King Saul worries he might lose his throne David is the one Saul's armies hound into the wilderness. And yet despite all of these adversities David's star rises relentlessly. Samuel anoints him as the future king. Goliath finds him much more than a worthy adversary. Saul steadily wanes in popularity as David receives the nation's praise. From the humblest beginnings David rises through the ranks to become Israel's most beloved king.

But just at the moment David's trajectory had reached its zenith, disaster would strike. One son would rape his half-sister and be killed by her brother. That vengeful brother would launch a civil war against his father and force David to flee Jerusalem in shame. One son would die just days after he was born. After having gained such heights David's family and nearly his entire kingdom came crashing down all around him.

What could possibly have led to this terrible fall from grace? Put simply it was the moment he lingered on the balcony looking at Bathsheba rather than turning away to mind his own business. When David summoned Bathsheba to his palace and then chose to cover up the consequences of his actions through deception and finally murder, he unleashed a whirlwind of destruction in his own family. Having seen the failings of their father David's sons were quick to follow suit. The result was a torrent of chaos and bloodshed that David and his family barely survived.

What was true in the life of David is equally true today. Few aspects

of life hold the potential for such joy and such chaos as do personal relationships. They can be the life preservers that hold us up in the most difficult of times or the anchors that drag us downward threatening to drown us altogether.

Approach every relationship with absolute purity. (3–5)

The Apostle Paul recognized the importance of relationships in his first letter to the Thessalonians. In the fourth chapter of his epistle he urged the believers at Thessalonica to abstain from sexual immorality. He implored them to control their bodies "in holiness and honor" not set them loose "in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God." Ultimately a life of sexual immorality is one that digs traps we are sure to fall into in the future.

Don't take advantage of other people. (6–8)

The traps we set with our bodies do not affect only ourselves, however. Paul describes sexual immorality as something that wrongs and transgresses against other people. The apostle would not subscribe to the notion that our sexual transgressions are victimless crimes. On the contrary he regards the conduct of our bodies as something that can harm and victimize others even when the other person is a willing participant.

Focus on your own actions. (9–12)

Ultimately Paul calls the Thessalonians to a radically different lifestyle than one focused on self. He urges brotherly love, commending his readers for the love they have already shown to believers in the area. Along with this exhortation to brotherly love Paul adds advice that fosters simplicity in any situation: live quietly, mind your own affairs, work with your hands, walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. Paul's instruction contains a recognition that living as a believer among unbelievers will not always be easy. When trials come a simple life will best serve to give joy even in the midst of trouble.✝



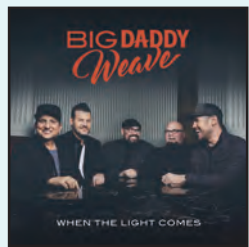
Media reviews

MUSIC

Big Daddy Weave

When the Light Comes
Word

It's the ninth studio album from Big Daddy Weave. The band stands out for its infusion of Scripture into contemporary Christian music and the result



is toe-tapping tunes that wake your soul. "Alive" borrows themes

from Ephesians 2 (and might be my favorite tune of 2019). Other good ones are "Turn On the Light" (which deserves radio airplay), "Fly" (which looks forward to meeting Jesus) and "Pursuit" (which has an 80s synthesizer feel to it). If slower beats are your thing try "I Know," which spotlights God's goodness.

Planetshakers

Rain
Venture3 Media

If Hillsong isn't contemporary enough for you Planetshakers may be your thing. It's upbeat

worship music with lots (and lots) of keyboard and percussion (and a

little techno). And it's marvelous. (At least, my 7-year-old son and I think so.) This Christian worship band is based out of Planetshakers Church in Melbourne, Australia, and has released more than 30 LPs and EPs. For upbeat tunes try "Only Way" and "My Reason." Yes there are a few slow-tempo songs too. It was recorded live.✝



'None of it is possible without God'

Hip-hop artist Aaron Cole: My blessings are 'not by chance'

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Asking Christian artist Aaron Cole why he raps is like asking a fish why it swims.

It's what he's always done.

Cole began rapping at age 3 thanks to a father who owned a music studio and an uncle who was a Christian rapper. Soon — before he even was in school — he was performing at shows.

At the age of 15 he was discovered by well-known musician TobyMac.

Now at age 20 and after a string of independent projects Cole is releasing his debut Gotee Records album, "Not By Chance," and he's ready to take his music to another level.

The album is a mixture of pop, hip-hop and soul, fused with stories of his life and how Christ has helped him overcome trials. TobyMac co-founded Gotee and is the CEO.

Cole joked that his previous projects — written when he was in his teens — were "kids' stuff."

"When I go through trials that's when I make my best music," Cole said. "I feel like in every song [on "Not By Chance"] I talked about something that mattered. I just feel like this was me reaching that whole other level."

It was produced by former Capital Kings member Cole Walowac, who also produced seven songs on NF's album "The Search" that reached No. 1 on the Billboard chart for albums in the U.S.

Cole already is receiving national recognition and was nominated for



Aaron Cole

Photo courtesy of Gotee Records

GMA Dove Award New Artist of the Year. The winner will be announced Oct. 15.

The album's title — Not By Chance — has special meaning to Cole.

'It's by His grace'

"Even with all that work and sacrificing none of it is possible without God. It's not by chance," he said. "It's by His grace."

The songs cover a range of topics, from family problems (he raps about his parents' splitting up on "Love Don't Cost a Thing") to sports (he mentions the Houston Rockets' James Harden in "Fasho").

"I'm a big fan of sports," he said.

Cole's unique style of hip-hop — it's free of coarse language, after all — sets him apart from well-known mainstream hip-hop artists. But he doesn't view himself as a "clean

rapper." To him he's simply writing songs about his life and faith.

"Because of what I believe inside, it bleeds out into my music," he said. "People who do music — whatever they believe, it comes out."

Still Cole acknowledges some people won't like his music simply because he does discuss faith.

"The gospel," he said, "is offensive sometimes."✝

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.

‘Living testimony’

Miami Dolphins receiver Horn looks for the positives on the field and in life

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Pieces to Reece Horn’s professional football puzzle continue to fall into place. After setting records while playing at NCAA Division II University of Indianapolis where he was an American Football Coaches Association All-American, Horn

went undrafted in the 2016 NFL draft.

Efforts to make the roster of an NFL team were unsuccessful so he spent two years playing in Europe and then for the Memphis Express in the inaugural Alliance of American Football (AAF). The league folded in April 2019, two months after it started and before many scheduled games were completed.

A wide receiver, Horn is now where he originally wanted to be — in the NFL — and playing this season for the Miami Dolphins, who signed him after his performance in the AAF.

“My football path has been out of the ordinary. Going from the NFL to overseas is a huge gap, but at the end of the day you just have to persevere. It doesn’t matter where you come from as long as you put in the work and make plays and put up some good numbers. Anybody can



Photo courtesy of Miami Dolphins

After going undrafted in the 2016 NFL draft Reece Horn played football in Europe and with the Alliance of American Football before landing with the Miami Dolphins.

see that and they’ll find you if you are good enough,” said Horn.

Faith helps him keep a positive outlook, he said. Daily he thanks God for allowing him to wake up and see another day and play football.

‘More than we think’

“I could never give too much praise to God for allowing me to be where I am. The Lord does a lot more than we think or give Him credit for,” Horn said.

Former teammate Dontez Byrd called Horn a “true competitor, all the time hustling, first one on the field, last one off the field. [He] gives it all he’s got.”

Byrd also noticed Horn’s life.

“He is a real living testimony. He is very humble — a trustworthy teammate,” Byrd said.

The experience of visiting St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House while he was in Memphis gave him a glimpse into a day in the life of a child with cancer and helps him be grateful even in disappointing times.

“It’s never easy in that respect,” Horn said.

But an attitude of “being thankful for what you have, waking up and being healthy, knowing that someone is having it worse than you are” helps Horn stay focused and to persevere through “any situation.”

How to pray:

► Pray Reece Horn will continue to share his testimony and be a gospel witness to his teammates, coaches and fans.

► Pray Christian athletes in all sports will stand up and boldly proclaim their faith, sharing the love of Christ with all people. (TAB)



Photo courtesy of Miami Dolphins

Reece Horn at Miami Dolphins training facility

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



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WEEKDAYS 3-5P

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