



The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

October 10, 2019

Vol. 184, No. 40
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



**Faith & Family —
Parents: Research,
monitor what
child is watching**

◆ Page 8



**Theology 101 — A
Prayerful Life**

◆ Page 9



**Atmore's Canoe BC
planted Pensacola's
Olive Baptist Church
125 years ago**

◆ Page 10



Photo courtesy of BMBA

Chris Crain (center), executive director of missions for Birmingham Metro Baptist Association (BMBA), leads a pastors roundtable discussion. BMBA is one of 75 Baptist associations across the state.

Common mission

Associations meant to offer connection point for churches

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Pop quiz — what's the name of your local Baptist association? What's the name of your associational missions director? What does your association do?

If you don't know the answers JoBeth Gamble is one of many who would tell you that you should. Gamble — a member of a tiny-but-thriving mountain church in Stevenson called Helton Memorial Chapel Missionary Baptist Church — knows her association's missions director because she

sometimes calls him “preacher.”

Her church has been without a pastor for five years and Dwight Everett, director of missions for Tennessee River Baptist Association, fills the pulpit often.

He also rounded up help from other churches in their local association to help replace the church's floors after flooding caused them to rot.

And that kind of service is just the tip of the iceberg.

Kristy Kennedy, an associate in the office of associational missions and church planting for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said associ-

ations — a network of churches bound together by geography and a common mission — can accomplish a lot when it comes

to missions and the spread of the gospel.

“Since associations focus on our ‘Jerusalem,’ or local community, they are vital to meeting community needs,” she said.

With that in mind Oct.

20–26 — the Week of Prayer for Associational Missions — is a perfect time to get to know your local association or get engaged even more than you already are. Consider these ways suggested by associational leaders to help you get (See ‘Associations,’ page 6)



**Oct. 20–26
is the Week of
Prayer for Baptist
Associations.**

Block party trailer a hit in SE Ala. Assoc.

By Lanell Downs Smith
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Delivered just a few months ago Southeast Alabama Baptist Association's (SABA) new block party trailer is already helping local churches connect with their community, providing churches with more opportunities for missions and ministry.

The trailer supplies a resource that enables churches to be “better together,” said Judy Gay, SABA church relations coordinator.

“It's an example of how our resources can be used collectively to provide something like this and how this one vehicle can be used in all parts of our association, by rural churches and city churches, by small churches and larger churches.”

The trailer, stocked with a popcorn machine, snow cone maker, refrigerator, generator and carnival style games, is equipped with a fold-out stage that can be used for gospel presentations. Churches provide their own supplies and food and can “check out” the trailer for use at their community events.

Wired Ministries in Dothan was among the first to utilize the trailer at their Wired Week event June 21–26 during which volunteers distributed snow cones while building relationships with homeless people in Dothan; (See ‘A Godsend,’ page 6)

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

First-person: Impressions at the border

Half fact-finding endeavor, half whirlwind missions trip, our visit to the U.S.-Mexico border emphasized for me the essential nature of Bible teachings about service, faith and gratitude.

I saw volunteers, missionaries, ministers and their families living daily in observance of Matthew 25:35-40: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Then the righteous will answer him saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick

or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me.’”

Serving others

I saw how these servants, despite constant struggles to find the money, manpower and time to operate these missions, didn’t hesitate to give up their own resources — even a pastor’s own home — to make sure strangers from other lands and cultures were properly fed, prayed over and cared for.

And I witnessed these cared-for strangers — men, women, children and infants — show gratitude for such care.

It didn’t seem to matter that these refugees were stalled — with little

more than the clothes in their small suitcases and backpacks — in a country they only meant to pass through on the way to the United States. They seemed unfazed that they awaited an uncertain fate in U.S. immigration court over the next weeks, months or even years as they sought asylum from the dangerous conditions in their home countries.

They smiled when talking about having plenty of food, not having to sleep out in the open and receiving encouragement and prayers from the people of faith who serve them. Regardless of their imperiled circumstances they were grateful.

Everywhere I looked — at both the servants and the served — I saw gratitude.

It is a lesson I pray that I will never forget. (Martha Simmons)

I have been on numerous missions trips in the past 10 years. Even though this was an awareness trip we still had to have the mindset of a missions trip. Typically on a missions trip we minister to people in their country who would like to get out of their current situation. This trip, however, was different. We met people who left their countries in search of freedom and a better life. The families and individuals we encountered were in transition, hoping to get through the difficult process of obtaining access to cross the border into the U.S. Many had walked hundreds of miles to begin the process.

Living in tents

As they wait for months for an appointment they live in tents under a shelter still exposed to the outside elements. A family of four made their home in a small tent. As I looked in the tents I noticed the small number of items they possessed. These families did not have much but what they did have they took great care of. Their belongings were very neat and organized. They made their belongings fit well in the small space by folding each item and stacking everything neatly around the inside walls of the tent.

The children did not have many toys. I noticed one little boy bouncing an imaginary ball around the tents. These are the simple things we do not think about.

One glaring thing I noticed — the

parents love their children and want the best for them. So this is what they do to gain a better life.

I witnessed a mother smile at her little girl as they lined up for the breakfast provided by a local church. She kissed her on the head and wrapped her arms around her as they stood in line. No words, just love and comfort for her child as a new day started.

It was very encouraging to watch how the U.S.-based missionary is partnering with the Tijuana-based

missionary. So much has been done to help so many. It was interesting to hear from the pastors and how they are forming churches in the area. It was also encouraging to note so many things the pastors are doing with very few resources.

More aware

This was not the awareness trip I was expecting. However, I am more aware of how so many are being the hands and feet to share the love of Christ. (Susan Stevens)

With thanks and appreciation ...



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Special thanks to Amelia Pearson (right) and Lawrence Phipps (left) for serving on the board of directors for *The Alabama Baptist*. Following eight years of service they will rotate off in October. Pearson also served two years as chairperson of the board and Phipps served two years as secretary. They are pictured above with 2017-2019 board chairman Arthur Williams.



(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.
is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.
Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org
Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Includes print, digital and full web access

Group Rate per issue — \$16.25
(Need at least five in your group to qualify)
Individual — \$24.95 per year with 3-year plan

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cynthia Watts <i>Executive Assistant</i>	Janet Erwin <i>Executive Editor</i>
Debbie Campbell <i>Director of Communications</i>	Carrie B. McWhorter <i>Content Editor</i>
Bill Gilmore <i>Director of Sales</i>	Lauren C. Grim <i>Creative Services</i>
Melanie McKinney <i>Advertising Manager</i>	Jessica Ingram <i>Production Manager</i>
Pam Holt <i>Sales Representative</i>	Grace Thornton <i>Special Assignments Editor</i>
Susan Stevens <i>Sales Representative</i>	Hannah Muñoz <i>Digital Editor</i>
Linda Harrison <i>Financial Administrator</i>	James Hammack <i>Digital Services Manager</i>
Deb Lowery <i>Financial Assistant</i>	Haley Piersol <i>Digital Services Associate</i>
Annette Brown <i>Guest Services</i>	Sarah Gill <i>Customer Relations</i>
Richard Maddox <i>Computer Services</i>	Amy Hacker <i>Customer Relations</i>

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Subscription Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

MY RASHIONALE

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

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



Is it really about a need to be right or merely to be understood?

So what is it about needing to be right? That it is our way or the highway?

I remember phases and seasons where my attempt to explain my reasoning or be understood came across as needing to be right. Granted I have had (and do have) moments where my stubbornness wins — and I'm determined to be right.

But for the most part I actually only want to be understood. I am wrong a lot but sometimes it takes me talking things out, processing with others and thinking around the full picture before I can see clearly.

It can be extremely frustrating when the other person won't allow my opinion to matter and have value.

Sadly I know I've done the same thing to others when the discussion seems to be going in circles or I'm in a hurry and become impatient.

One thing I'm learning is to postpone complex conversations until I can truly focus on the other person and give him or her the appropriate time and attention needed.

At the same time I'm working to avoid surprising others with intense discussions.

If I get worked up about something and spontaneously call the person involved or walk into his or her office and immediately start sharing what is on my heart and mind then I'm setting myself up.

What if the other person is under extreme pressure to complete a deadline or just received

difficult news or maybe is exhausted from any number of circumstances?

The other person's ability to truly listen and calmly discuss the situation may be debilitated in that moment and the result is likely not a positive one.

So saving these types of discussions until both parties can focus helps achieve the goal of being heard and understood.

A second thing I'm learning is to take a breath and let the other person fully explain what he or she is attempting to share before I jump in and share my opinion.

It's also important to truly listen and understand, not just humor and endure. Ask questions and clarify. Take the time to grasp what is being said.

Who knows, you might discover something you didn't know. You might even realize the situation is not as clear cut as you thought.

And the other person might change his or her mind about the issue after a thorough discussion.

If I can pull away from needing to make sure my thoughts on the situation are heard over

everyone else's in the room and the others know they will have a chance to share, then emotions typically calm down and a genuine respect and trust surfaces.

Working to understand the other person's reasoning doesn't mean we are agreeing with it, but it does demonstrate we value the other person and want to learn everything we can about a situation before finalizing our take on the matter.

It shows we are committed to truly understanding the full issue and not merely determined to be right whether we have all the facts or not. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

Up for bringing back original concept of 'social' media? It's about sharing life with others through online tools not inciting hate, anger

Remember the ice bucket challenge of 2014 or the Tebowing challenge of 2011?

How about the supposed original social media challenge back in 2010 — the planking challenge?

It's always fun to either participate in the silly challenges and tag someone else to do the same or watch from afar as others attempt whatever action becomes that season's internet sensation.

We might even think of something fun for *TAB* readers to do soon but in the meantime I would like to propose a more subtle and serious challenge for social media users.

Challenge: Only use social media for socializing and uplifting purposes for the rest of 2019 (and actually from here on out).



123rf.com

For instance, share the unique and crazy things that happen to you on any given day as well as those special trips and experiences.

Share about your new job or recently earned degree or maybe your engagement announcement. And then of course there are wedding photos, new baby pics, that super

cute new puppy and special family reunions.

The list of real life moments could go on and on especially if you share prayer requests and areas where you are struggling.

Do use caution about how much personal information you post online and remember that what you post can be seen by more people than you may realize unless you are sending a private message.

The tone and style in which you post also indicates a lot about your heart, so my challenge is to only use social media for sharing real life with each other and to make others smile when you can — not to debate various issues which should be discussed more calmly in person.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



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

Make time to love neighbors, disciple others

By Daniel Gillenwater

Pastor, The Church at Eastern Oaks
Moderator, Montgomery Baptist Association

Are we making the best use of our time? This is a question we would do well to ask of ourselves, our families and our churches. Technology continues to bring about new time-saving devices yet we continue to overburden our schedules.

Being busy is not the same as making the best use of our time. If we are not careful we fall into the trap of living under the tyranny of the urgent. We allow work deadlines, sporting events and various other activities to compete for our

limited amount of time. But what is most urgent is not always what is most important. Many of us in the church today would greatly benefit from reevaluating our schedules and time commitments.

If we were to do this what criteria would we use in our reevaluation? I would recommend this: Let us evaluate everything we do in relation to the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:35–40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20).

Are we loving God? Are we loving our neighbor? Are we making disciples? Everything else can wait.

In my family life, work life and

church life, am I loving God? Am I loving my neighbor? Am I making disciples?

Join me this week in taking a prayerful look at our schedules.

Am I spending time every day in God's word and prayer? Am I actively involved in a community of believers where I can love and be loved? Am I keeping my eyes open for opportunities to make disciples?

Fair warning: Some things may have to be eliminated from our schedule to make room for more important things so that we "make the best use of the time, because the days are evil."

I wanted to express my appreciation for the new look of *The Alabama Baptist*.

I'm 91, so I've been in the Baptist church here at Jackson's Gap since 1949 and most of these years have received your paper through Jackson's Gap Baptist Church.

My first look is the front page then I turn to the puzzle to complete it. I like the Sunday School lesson comments and try to read all of the news the same day. The new format with larger print is helpful.

Coleen L. Davis
Jackson's Gap, Ala.

Letters to the Editor

Illegal is not a race. It's a legal term for a status of someone breaking American law. It is an American border security crisis. No sane country would give illegals citizenship.

I am a retired R.N. who cared for the sick and elderly of two counties in Alabama for several years. They needed help then and I'm sure they need help now.

We should not be housing, clothing, feeding or giving money to illegals and immigrants who disobey our laws and depend on our government for income and housing.

Only USA citizens should receive our government benefits,

vote in USA elections and be counted in the USA census.

We don't have any responsibility to protect a foreign citizen. They don't have First Amendment rights. They have no rights under American constitutional law. Americans have rights and it's our job to protect Americans.

Remember the 9/11 attacks? They said they would destroy us from within and it is happening.

I agree we should help people in need but we need to make sure our own country is taken care of first before other countries.

When I read about people and churches giving so much to immigrants it concerns me.

We have so many veterans, elderly, children, disabled United States citizens and homeless that aren't being taken care of who are not breaking laws.

It is our responsibility to take care of our own family and country before taking care of other countries.

Before we ask what is fair to illegals and immigrants living in our country, we need first ask what is fair to American families, students, taxpayers and America's job seekers.

It's about putting Americans first.

Judy Sears
Woodland, Ala.

The month of October is set aside as Pastor Appreciation Month. This is a great time to let your pastor know how much you do love him and his family. We hope you will get creative and think of ways to show your appreciation this year and not just in October but all through the year.

Kenneth Baggett
DOM, Salem-Troy
Baptist Association

A life will manifest the wisdom one possesses before a word is ever spoken or ever written.

D. Jay Powell
Author, "Be Inspired:
101 Thoughts for Every
Christian Writer"

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“I hope I had some influence with people.
I hope they enjoyed my playing.”

JOE ALLEN TURNER, 88

Recently retired organist at FBC Wetumpka who played for 63 years

The church needs to be aware that we are members of one another. We may be a nose, we may be a toe.

But we are members of one another and when one member is hurting all of us should be hurting. That should motivate us to be actively involved in doing things that no one but a church can do. There are a lot of social organizations that can do things, but the church is unique as the body of Christ to do what no one else can.

Morris Murray
Minister and counselor

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 that we would like. Through the Sabbath we ask God to do what we could never do without Him.

Professor Jeffery M. Leonard
Samford University

My favorite story from years of reading *TAB* is the one about the lighthouse lady. She loved lighthouses and one issue of *TAB* had a lighthouse on the cover. She reported feeling particularly despondent at that moment and picked up the paper to read it. That one issue made a forever difference in her life (all God-ordained, of course). I love being part of a ministry that is so impactful to the lives of its readers.

Linda Harrison
TAB financial administrator

In a Word-centered faith, the ability to read well is central. As a “People of the Book,” Christians have a particular calling to preserve and promote the gift of deep reading from physical Bibles. Pastors can model, lead and teach the way.

Karen Swallow Prior
Author and professor

The best evidence of God’s power is your obedience. The beauty is not in signs and wonders but in the conviction that came upon you to act like Christ and operate in a supernatural strength to live accordingly. If you ... are serving the Lord unashamedly with confidence and a sound spirit, stop stressing.

Dinuki Suraweera
Relevantmagazine.com



Photo by TBFA

Barry Bledsoe is president of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama.

Global impact of legacy gift

In Central Asia, God is leading local Christians and refugees to open a wellness center to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of abused women. The center will be located in an area where life is hard and the infant mortality rate is almost four times that of the United States.

How are God-sized dreams like The Wellness Center possible? Because of intentional steps made through The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA) by generous believers like Miss Stella White.

White was a schoolteacher who lived simply, maintaining a modest home and lifestyle throughout her life.

By crafting a Legacy Plan through TBFA she chose to create perhaps her most significant Christian legacy — at her death a trust to benefit her church and ministries she supported during her lifetime.

Through her plan White was able to make the fulfillment of the Great Commission a core part of her legacy.

Legacy planning is for everyone, whether you have a lot or a little.

Let the example of Stella White inspire you to intentionally plan today so lives can continue to be transformed around the world even after you leave this earth.

—Barry Bledsoe

From the *Twitterverse*

@GaryFenton07

Excelling at work is an offering to God for what he has done not a down payment on what you want him to do next.

@Slsellers7170

When you’re in the middle of a storm do not surrender to the storm but trust in the Lord who can give you peace in the middle of the storm.

@ERLC

The Church should be multigenerational: Young listening to old, old listening to young, all followers of Christ working out their salvation in fear and trembling. @dandarling

@bellevuepastor

“Nothing becomes a priority until we become intentional. We must be intentional about evangelism —

verbally sharing the gospel of Jesus with lost people.” Excellent word from Allen Taylor this morning at “Who’s Your One” rally at Christ Place Church, Flowery Branch, Georgia.

@MarcHodges3

If you have not started reading the word of God daily, today’s a great day to start.

@matheaglass

Have we boiled down the gospel to gain merely earthly treasures and in doing so have we lost all that is truly ours in Christ Jesus? #amthinking #amwriting

@micahfries

I fear that the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control) are

not commonly held values for many Christians today. We like them in theory, we just don’t think they’re practical.

@DailyKeller

We see the Bible as a book of answers to our questions but if we let the text speak we find that we are not even asking the right questions.

@TrevinWax

The idea that we have unlimited freedom or the right to all the happiness we can imagine is simply unworkable. Reality doesn’t bow to our imagination.

@SEBTS

“Hypocrisy is wanting to be seen by others. Christianity is doing things in the secret places [of our hearts and lives] because God sees.” @jjoshsmith #SEchapel

Southeast Alabama Baptist Association volunteers prepare sack lunches for fair workers at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan in 2018.



Photo courtesy of Southeast Alabama Baptist Association

A 'Godsend'

Various ministry efforts of Southeast Alabama churches supported by local association

(continued from page 1)
residents of Marianna, Florida, recovering from Hurricane Michael; and participants at a Kids Club water day in Enterprise.

'Connecting point'

"[The trailer] gave us an immediate connecting point," said Wired community ministry director Morgan Blankenship. "Who doesn't love a snow cone on a hot summer day? We emphasize relationship building on our evangelism teams and this allowed us to easily begin that conversation with people."

Blankenship reported seven salvations during Wired Week and said the trailer enhanced their ability to minister to the community and helped teach teams of youth how to effectively share the gospel.

Matt Vickers, minister of youth and children for Pathway Baptist Church, Dothan, said their commu-

nity back-to-school bash in August was a resounding success thanks to the block party trailer. The predominantly senior adult congregation has been working to build up its ministries to children and students so they used the trailer to connect with more than 60 children and their families at the event.

"We were able to engage family members," Vickers said. "Our people were talking to moms and dads while their children played. Our senior adults were just loving on these kids and their families."

The trailer was a "Godsend" that represented the willingness of the association to be a neighbor to partici-

pating churches, Vickers said.

This year the association will mobilize the trailer to serve meals to workers at the National Peanut Festival in Dothan on Nov. 1–10, said John Thomas, SABA associational missions director.

SABA sets up on the midway to serve meals on Thursday before the fair opens. Volunteers assemble sack lunches to dispense and this year lunches will be distributed from the block party trailer.

Jeff Ross, pastor at Heritage Baptist Church, Dothan, has led the fair ministry for more than six years, coordinating the effort to provide clothing, blankets and meals to fair workers,

many of whom struggle financially and have specific needs that come with life on the road, Ross said. The association provides workers with toiletry bags and "welcome to Dothan" cards created by children's groups from the local churches. A baby changing and feeding station is available each night of the fair and volunteers use the opportunity to engage moms in gospel conversations.

SABA churches partner with Campers on Mission to host a worship service the first Sunday morning of the fair and each year between five and 10 decisions for Christ are made, Ross said.

Love of Christ

"It's been a great way for us to be able to show the love of Christ and it has afforded us opportunities to witness," said Ross. "The people know we are there and when they come year after year they look for us." 🌈



Photo courtesy of Southeast Alabama Baptist Association

SABA volunteers prepare snow cones during Wired Week.

Associations meet community needs, offer global opportunities

(continued from page 1)
involved during the week of prayer and beyond to support your local association:

1. Engage with your association in missions.

This can mean local, North American or international missions efforts.

Tom Stacey, director of missions for Selma and Cahaba Baptist associations, said he's seen a lot of relationships built and lives changed through various partnerships and projects.

"It's a wonderful opportu-

nity to get involved in ministry and relationship to other people in your local area who go on those trips," he said.

2. Connect with your association on social media.

Wendell Ray, elevating mission strategist for Escambia Baptist Association, said one of the best ways to know what's going on in his association is to connect on Facebook.

For example on the association's Facebook page "we have a post every Tuesday called Teacher Tuesday," he

said. "We ask people to pray for schoolteachers on that day."

It's a good entry point for people to get to know more about the way the association is engaging the community.

3. Invite your associational leader to speak at your church.

If you're ready to deep dive into what your association has to offer consider inviting your local associational leader to speak in your church.

Rick Ellison, director of missions for Baldwin Baptist

Association, said this is a great way to find out about local ministries.

"We can come together and do missions — more than we would be able to do by ourselves," he said. "The association is also a great resource and helpful problem solver for churches."

4. Encourage your association's pastors.

Most associations include a number of bivocational pastors. Chris Crain, executive director of missions for Birmingham Metro Baptist

Association, said one great way to strengthen your association is to help them honor and encourage those pastors.

"Many of these church leaders are overworked and undercompensated," he said. "Churches and church members have blessed me with gift cards, new books, access to vacation properties and other resources. These gestures go a long way to encourage stressed-out ministers and to strengthen the bond they have with the local association." 🌈

‘Many Campuses ... One Church’

Walker Association 5-year plan shows power of associational cooperation

By Lanell Downs Smith
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Walker Baptist Association (WBA) began a new chapter in their story on April 16, 2016, as they embarked on a five-year plan to reach their county for Christ.

The network of northwest Alabama churches adopted the motto “Many Campuses ... One Church” as part of a long-range plan designed to help churches become more than just a part of the same association, said David Miller, WBA director of missions.

The plan launched with a one-year prayer commitment, joining churches to worship together, visit each other and enjoy fellowship.

Game changer

In the second year the association’s seven districts began to pray for the churches within their district. And in the third year WBA took 164 participants to Black Mountain, North Carolina, where they helped revitalize a local church, visiting more than 600 homes in four nights in door-to-door evangelism.

For many volunteers, the trip was a game changer.

On that trip Zak McCullar of First Baptist Church, Carbon Hill, was inspired to propose adding a Children’s Ministry Day to the Southern Baptist Convention calendar, a motion approved and implemented in 2019.

Burden for the lost

Pastors participating in that trip felt a burden for the lost in their community, Miller said, and asked one another, “Why can’t we do this at home?” A bivocational pastors’ group was formed and pastors joined forces to develop a monthly visitation program.

Each month volunteers gather at one church, going out in the name of that church to share the gospel and invite neighbors to attend worship. Each visitation effort can reach 200 homes in one day and to date WBA volunteers have visited more than 3,300 homes, Miller said.

“God has done something in every church where we have gone visiting,” said Dave Sexton, pastor of Lupton First Baptist Church in Nauvoo. “One church has doubled in



Photo courtesy of David Miller

A group of Walker Baptist Association volunteers perform construction repairs on a Florida house damaged during Hurricane Michael. Walker Association has a five-year plan to help churches cooperate to expand their reach for Christ.

size. We’ve seen people saved in the streets.”

The fourth year of the plan has seen the start of district revival services. Sammy Gilbreath, evangelism strategist for North Alabama for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), delivered a unified message of reaching the lost at each district meeting. More than 1,500 people attended and heard that message, Miller said.

“More important than the number of people who attended, I watched the Lord break the hearts of our folks over lost people,” Miller said. “Every night the altars were full of people praying for lost people by name.”

Miller noted that planning and teamwork were crucial for the plan’s success.

“It cannot be done by one person. It has to be done by an association. It would be impossible without the help of our pastors,” he said.

Leading strategically and working with others toward revitalization within the association are the major responsibilities of the associational missions director, said Rick Barn-

hart, director of SBOM’s office of associational missions and church planting.

The association, he said, “is designed to meet the churches’ needs” and Barnhart said his office offers resources to help in that mission.

Areawide crusade

As WBA anticipates the fifth year of the strategic plan the association is working on an areawide crusade scheduled for April 25–26 at Jasper High School. Evangelist Ted Traylor from Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, will lead the crusade. Volunteers will work in teams to pray, visit, counsel, usher and provide parking and medical assistance.

District prayer meetings will culminate in a countywide prayer meeting and blitz. Miller said churches are praying for their neighbors who need Christ.

“We are expecting the Lord to do mighty things through the crusade,” Miller said. “We are expecting hundreds to come to faith. At revival our people wept over lost people. It’s going to be an exciting time to see what the Lord does.”



Photo courtesy of David Miller

Walker Baptist Association disaster relief volunteers respond to needs in Marianna, Florida, following Hurricane Michael. Walker DOM David Miller (left) plans with volunteers Lamar Nelson (center) and Bill Ellis.

'Be careful little eyes'

Parents, caregivers: research, monitor, discuss what your child is watching

By Kristin Lowrey, MSW, LICSW, PIP, Registered Play Therapist
Special to The Alabama Baptist

O be careful little eyes what you see." The words of this childhood Bible song are so simple but ring so true.

We live in a world where we are bombarded with images constantly.

As a parent I find myself working harder to shield my children from many of the images that are all around: the billboards we drive by, bumper stickers on cars, advertisements that pop up on the computer and commercials that

play on television. I also find myself having more frequent disagreements with my children about the appropriateness of movies.

As we approach Halloween more advertisements for horror movies are airing on TV and online. For many people and families scary movies are a normal part of the Halloween season. However, exposure to this scary and often gruesome content can have a negative impact on our children.

Children's brains are still develop-

ing and are unable to make sense of this kind of information. They may even struggle with differentiating between fact or fiction.

Some studies have found the younger a child is when exposed to violent and scary content, the longer lasting the negative impact can be. Children may develop anxiety and/or specific phobias related to the exposure. They may also experience sleep problems including nightmares. Studies have found that adults who were exposed to scary content as children may still experience residual anxiety into adulthood. You may know someone who is scared of swimming in the ocean

due to the movie "Jaws" or someone who dislikes or is scared of clowns because of Stephen King's "It."

Children aren't ready

As adults we often know what we can handle, particularly related to the type of content we watch. We then make choices to ensure the content of what we watch is ok for us. Children don't yet know what they can handle and often don't have a say in what the family is watching. They



123rf.com

rely on adults and parents to choose content that is appropriate for them.

Here are some ways I would encourage parents to help safeguard the eyes and minds of children:

▶ **Do your research before allowing children to view movies.** Ask other trusted parents their opinions on movies, check out previews to movies and/or read online reviews to help determine the appropriateness of the content for your children. *The Alabama Baptist* regularly covers family-friendly entertainment choices. Another good resource is www.pluggedin.com.

▶ **Monitor what your children are watching.** Without appropriate supervision or parental controls on electronic devices children can view — even accidentally — many videos with questionable content. Filters can be set up on your devices to help in this area. YouTube, the leading website for video clips, and Netflix, the streaming service with the most subscribers, both have parental control settings. Go to tabonline.org/

parental-controls for information on how to set those up.

▶ **Find time to talk to your children.** Ask about the shows they watch when they're with friends. Have conversations with them about what you feel is appropriate versus inappropriate television or video content for them.

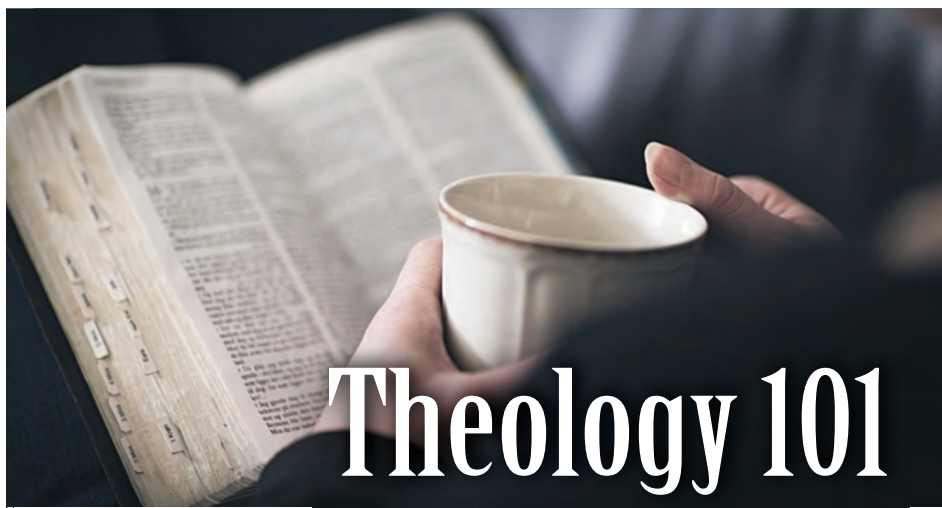
Never be afraid of setting limits for your children. If we aren't careful the wrong exposure now can create a problem later on.

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

Kristin Lowrey is a licensed social worker and registered play therapist supervisor and is clinical director of children and adolescents for Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

"Children don't yet know what they can handle and often don't have a say in what the family is watching. They rely on adults and parents to choose content that is appropriate for them."

Kristin Lowrey
Registered play therapist



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Aspects of an Abundant Life

A Prayerful Life

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

The very idea of believers experiencing an abundant life while ignoring or being erratic in their prayer life is an idea that is dead in the water. Prayerlessness is a major enemy of an abundant Christian life. God alone can supply the lasting abundance we need and are capable of possessing.

A prayer-filled life is already on the road that leads to spiritual abundance since God's abundance often lies on the receiving end of prayer.

The observation of the psalmist is still valid: "In Your presence is fullness of joy" (Ps. 16:11). Prayer is the appointed way into God's presence. In a similar way we read of the longstanding principle that roots from centuries before Christ in the promise given in Isaiah 56:7: "I will ... make them joyful in My house of prayer."

Unhurried meditation

The highest inspiration for prayer is God's word fueling our unhurried meditation on His truth which in turn leads us into prayer. Often the best subjects for prayer arise not out of our needs but out of His word. The sequence of God's word, our meditation and resultant prayer can be our best path into an abundant life since it allows God to suggest our prayer topics.

While our needs are legitimate subjects for prayer God's concerns may well be the more important items on our prayer lists.

We might go on to add that

prayer is the way God has provided His children to receive what He already desires to supply us each day. The Bible minces no words in declaring, "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2). Prayer is, of course, the appointed means of asking.

God's abundance

This same passage goes on to allow that failure in prayer can occur when we ask amiss in order to spend God's supply on our own pleasures (James 4:3).

While these warnings are not to be dismissed, Jesus put the matter of God's abundance being received through prayer in positive terms by declaring, "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matt. 7:7).

In short the potential for experiencing God's abundance is closely tied to the regular discipline of prayer engaged in for the right reasons.

His abundance is not only for our good but also and most pre-eminently for His glory.

Given the individuality of each of our lives and our own distinctive circumstances what would our prayer-filled life look like? If not already the case begin filling life with regular prayer and watch for ensuing spiritual abundance. 🌿

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.



Canines for Christ reveals God's joy, unconditional love

Leonard says his dog Molly understands the need for comfort.

"She was left out in 18-degree weather and left to die with her mama," he said.

But someone got them to a shelter and that's where Leonard met her, adopted her and gave her the opportunity to start comforting others.

Molly now serves as a therapy dog through Canines for Christ.

"She's made more than 4,000 visits," said Leonard, who serves as a chaplain and vice president of operations for Canines for Christ. "She's trained to work with our law enforcement first responders and 911 dispatchers when an officer goes down in the line of duty."

What Molly offers is a "ministry of presence," he said. "We just let the dog be the dog. The vest says it all. It's good for her to just be there and love on people."

Canines for Christ is often called in to respond after natural disasters, school shootings and other tragedies. They're also able to go into nursing homes and other places where people might need extra love.

And during each visit Leonard, a member of Victory Baptist Church, Mount Juliet, Tennessee, is able to share how God came down and rescued us just like Leonard rescued Molly.

"When a person gets involved as a Canines for Christ volunteer, we just encourage them to get involved with

what God is already doing, where He is already at work," he said.

Started in 2007, Canines for Christ now has more than 1,000 therapy dogs and 900 volunteers in 35 states and four foreign countries. Some of those live in Alabama, including Patty Johnston.

"I had been given a little Cavalier King Charles spaniel that was blind in one eye," said Johnston, who lives in Saraland. "Through that dog God birthed in me the idea to do pet therapy. With him having a disability I knew he could minister to others."

That spark ignited a passion and Johnston got three golden retrievers she trained to be therapy dogs.

'Go where God opens doors'

"We just go where God opens the doors," she said. "It brings people such joy. There's just something about a dog's love that can be an example of God's unconditional love to people."

To become a Canines for Christ volunteer visit the organization's website and check out the step-by-step instructions. Dogs must be good with people, especially children, and not have ever bitten anyone, Leonard said. During the application process your dog will need a veterinarian's clearance, will get American Kennel Club certification and will be insured with liability insurance through the ministry.

For more information, visit k9forchrist.org. (Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Shiloh Baptist Church

Canines for Christ, an international dog therapy ministry, visits Shiloh Baptist Church, Saraland, in Mobile Baptist Association. Canines for Christ uses the unconditional love of dogs to demonstrate the unconditional love of God.

'Gospel battleship'

Ted Traylor (left), an Alabama native who has served as pastor of Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida, for the past 29 years, greets people at the church's 125th anniversary celebration.



Photo by Curtis Powell Photography

Church plant just across state line flourishes following vision of Canoe Baptist Church

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

A little more than 125 years ago 12 people from Canoe Baptist Church, Atmore, went with their church's blessing across the Alabama state line and planted a church in rural Florida. According to them it was just a small seed they put in the ground and watered.

Small seed

But what happened as a result is that God "took a canoe and turned it into a gospel battleship," according to Brian Nall, associational mission strategist for Pensacola Bay Baptist Association.

The church they planted about 50 miles away from

their doors — Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida — is now a regional church averaging 3,500 on Sunday mornings with active local and international ministries.

"Olive really took off under Dr. Jerry Passmore in the 70s," said Ted Traylor, an Alabama native who has served as the church's pastor for the past 29 years.

"That turned into a regional situation with a lot of ministry to the homeless and others in our community when a hurricane hit about 15 years ago."

The church is also actively involved in missions in Romania, Central Asia and several other countries.

"The seed of that small rural church has really grown," he said, noting the members

of Canoe Baptist were "visionaries."

"They couldn't see it all then but my goodness how the Lord has honored that courage," Traylor said.

Enjoying the blessings

One of those "visionaries" was A.M. Lowery Jr., who went with the little missionary team to serve as Olive Baptist's first pastor. Through the years, as the church plant grew its mother church — only a decade older — stayed faithful in ministry too, according to Kevin McKinley, a member of Canoe Baptist.

"It's a vibrant church," he said, noting that over the years Canoe Baptist built three sanctuaries. "It's got a pretty good membership

now. On Sundays the pews are often packed."

They're enjoying the blessings of what those first church members started 125 or more years ago at Canoe Baptist — and so are the people of Olive Baptist.

Traylor said that small missionary team who moved to Pensacola never got to sit

in the shade of the tree they planted but because of them now others enjoy that blessing. That's a driving thought Olive Baptist members want to keep as they grow in the generations to come.

"That's what we want to do," he said. "We want to continue to plant trees others can sit under one day."✠

SAVE THE DATE

Hallelujah for the Cross

**2019 ALABAMA BAPTIST
PASTORS CONFERENCE**

Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne
November 11, 2019

<http://albaptistpc.com>

IN LIFE THERE
ARE NO SHORTCUTS.
BUT THERE ARE
GUIDEPOSTS.
AND GUIDES.

At Thrivent, we help Christians be wise with money. No matter what your financial situation looks like, we're here to guide you, so you can live a more content, confident and generous life.

THRIVENT[®]
Be Wise With Money™

ADVICE | INSURANCE | INVESTMENTS
BANKING | GENEROSITY

Thrivent.com

To learn more, contact
jason.tucker@thrivent.com

29847 R8-19

'Caring for Him'

Local college students launch ministry to Birmingham's homeless population

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Three 19-year-olds who met at Thompson High School in Alabaster found their hearts touched by the plight of Birmingham's homeless population and have joined forces to help.

"I moved to the UAB (University of Alabama at Birmingham) campus last year," said Kayla Haller. "I guess I'd never seen or even thought about homeless people until I met a man who had nothing. I gave him the 70 cents I had in hand. He was so grateful. You'd have thought I gave him \$70. He said, 'God bless you,' and he meant every word of it."

Haller, a member of Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster, and a psychology and criminal justice major, volunteered to help a church that operates a soup kitchen and learned more about the plight of the homeless.

"A man ate with us and then he asked if he could take a few packs of crackers with him," she said. "He told us he had a jar of peanut butter and could use the crackers to make another meal. That's all he had."

'Great ministry'

Haller's friend, Graisi Smith, an early education major at UAB, said she met the homeless through her church, Hunter Street Baptist, when they sponsored trips to Jimmie Hale Mission and Jesse's Place. Additionally an employee at the bank where her dad works in downtown Birmingham sponsors a lunch on Fridays in Lynn Park.

"I've worked with her and this too has been a great ministry," she said. "Often other people offer to help and some vending companies have donated the older products they replace in their machines. I felt drawn

to this kind of ministry and Kayla and I began to plan what we could do."

The third friend, Tyger Quarles, a student at Vanderbilt University, was able to secure the help of his church, the Christian Life Church on Valleydale Road, for storage and the "packing party" was held there this summer.

"We purchased drawstring back packs and filled them with hygiene items, non-perishable snacks, reusable water bottles, Bibles and personal notes," Haller said.

"[Alabama's] homeless are located primarily in Mobile, Montgomery and Birmingham, and some believe as many as 4,000 are [living] in Birmingham," she said.

"You might not see them on the busiest of streets since they seek out areas without much traffic. They seek shelter under overpasses and bridges and use trees

to dry their clothes after it rains."

Haller said winter is especially hard for the homeless.

The BJCC in downtown Birmingham offers winter shelter at night when temperatures drop to a certain level, but the shelter is only for the night.

"Other than this they fend for themselves in the weather," she said.

Haller said she and her friends have learned more about the cycle of homelessness.

'Sincere gratitude'

"Some homeless have mental issues of course. Some are veterans who need medication and they don't have it," Haller said. "Many wish to work but they don't have resumés or clothes or contact addresses so this process is stymied. What we dream about is a

job center where we offer resumé-building assistance, provide contact addresses and telephone numbers and

perhaps include shower rooms for hygiene."

Haller said the trio has never felt threatened in their interactions with the homeless only appreciation from those they are helping.

"All I've seen is sincere gratitude that somebody cared about them," she said. "And

Jesus told us that caring for people in need is like caring for Him."

The trio formed the "Hope To Homeless" ministry, or "H2H," and are happy to talk with local churches about their vision and the need for additional ministry.

H2H has a Facebook page and an Instagram account (hopetohomelessbham). The ministry can be contacted by email at hopetohomelessoutreach@gmail.com.✝



Photo courtesy of Kayla Haller
Kayla Haller (pictured) and two of her friends launched Hope to Homeless, or H2H, ministry in Birmingham.

SHE ONCE BUILT A FORT SO LARGE, THAT IT UTILIZED EVERY BLANKET, TOWEL, AND CHAIR IN THE WHOLE HOUSE.



CHILDREN
AMAZE US EVERY DAY

and at Children's of Alabama, we want to see every child grow up and live to their fullest potential. That's why we recruit, train and retain the most inquiring minds, the most skilled hands and the most compassionate hearts in pediatric medicine.

1600 7TH AVENUE SOUTH BIRMINGHAM, AL 35233 (205) 638-9100 ChildrensAL.org

Healthcare as amazing as their potential

WE UNDERSTAND YOUR MISSION
BECAUSE WE SHARE
YOUR MISSION

Property and casualty coverage for your church from a provider you can trust.


GuideStone®

To get a quote, call:
(214) 720-2868

3 stories

you should know



Photo by Baptist Global Relief

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief leaders (pictured above, praying with local residents) have been working to finalize partnerships with Baptist churches on Grand Bahama island to help them rebuild after Hurricane Dorian. Mark Wakefield, disaster relief and chaplaincy ministries strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, plans to visit the island soon to counsel local pastors and help train them in trauma counseling so they can help their congregations. (BP)

Christian aid workers executed in Nigeria

Islamic extremist group Boko Haram reportedly released a video Sept. 22 showing the execution of two Christian aid workers in Nigeria, both members of the country's predominantly Christian Mwalghavul ethnic group.

The two young men, both members of the Church of Christ in Nations, were on a mission to help build shelters for people displaced by Islamic extremist violence. The video posted on Boko Haram's Amaq news site shows the men being shot by masked, armed men. Nigerian human rights watchers said the killings were Boko Haram's first execution on the basis of "ethnic cleansing."

Nigeria ranked 12th on Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution. (MS)

Young Life rejected by Duke student gov't

The Duke University Student Government Senate refused Sept. 11 to recognize Young Life as an official campus group, the independent student paper *The Chronicle* reported.

Young Life, which describes itself as a ministry working to introduce adolescents to Jesus Christ and help them grow in faith, is bound by the group's national sexual misconduct policy, a student told *The Chronicle*.

The policy states that "persons who engage in sexual misconduct or who practice a homosexual lifestyle" are "not to serve as staff or volunteers in the mission and work of Young Life."

Young Life has chapters in middle schools, high schools and colleges in all 50 states and more than 90 countries, according to *younglife.org*. (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor and missionary, Shelby Smith, dies at 92



Shelby Andrew Smith Sr., a longtime Alabama Baptist pastor and missionary, died Sept. 25. He was 92.

A native of Jemison, Smith earned his bachelor's degree at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and master of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Samford later awarded him with an honorary doctor of divinity.

Smith's pastoral ministry began with his ordination at Concord Baptist Church and spanned more than 71 years, including Dixons Mills Baptist; Sunny South Baptist, Dixons Mills; and Billingsley Baptist churches.

In 1958 he and his wife, Betty, moved to Ecuador and served on the missions field there with their five young children until Betty's death in 1964. In 1968 he married Frances Ann Higdon and the family moved to serve in the Caribbean.



SMITH

He is survived by his wife, Frances; sons, Shelby Jr., Sherwin and Shean; daughters, Sheryl and Sherlie; 17 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren. (Grace Thornton)

IMB trustees appoint 24 missionaries, welcome new board members



International Mission Board (IMB) trustees appointed 24 new missionaries, welcomed 23 new trustees and approved the 2019–2020 budget during the organization's Sept. 25–26 board meeting in Richmond. Two Alabamians, James "Jim" Cooley and Charlotte Madison, were among the new trustees.

Cooley is pastor of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, and has been in pastoral leadership for the past 31 years. He holds a master of divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and a doctor of ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



COOLEY

Madison is a retired high school Spanish teacher and the wife of Ron Madison, who retired as pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, in 2016. Madison holds a master of religious education from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and has served as a trustee with Alabama Woman's Missionary Union.

IMB trustees also adopted a balanced budget projected at \$267.4 million and noted that fewer churches have been contributing to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in recent years.

"Should that trend continue over the next decade our future as a sending organization is bleak," IMB President Paul Chitwood said. He added that IMB must prioritize mobilizing Southern Baptists to pray, give, go and send to the nations.

IMB officials noted the new budget allows for funding up to 50 more Journeymen to be sent above the normal class of approximately 100. (TAB)



MADISON

News near you

BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will host a homecoming celebration Oct. 20 at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served following the service and singing will start again at 1:30 p.m. The Fishermen will bring the music. For more information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Weogufka Second Baptist Church** will celebrate 100 years with a homecoming service Oct. 13 at 10 a.m. The Darnell Family will be the musical guests. Lunch will follow the service. Brandon Baird is pastor of the church.

CLARKE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Randy Johnson** is new interim pastor of **Grove Hill Baptist Church**. He has served Alabama Baptist churches for more than 30 years. He and his wife, Janie, have four children, nine grandchildren and are expecting another grandchild in January.



JOHNSON

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Mount Olive Baptist Church, Elba**, will host a homecoming Oct. 13 at 10:30 a.m. No Sunday School will be held. Pastor Olan Strickland will preach. A covered dish lunch will follow the service. ▶ **Whitewater Baptist Church, Elba**, will host a homecoming service Oct. 13 at 10:30 a.m. Pastor Tommy Green will speak. A covered dish lunch will follow. ▶ **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host the fifth annual Community Country Fest on Oct. 19 from 4 to 6 p.m. Ten Mile Branch will provide bluegrass music and activities will include hay rides, carriage rides and a petting zoo. For more information call 334-347-6082. Danny Wiggins is pastor. ▶ **Eanon Baptist Church, New Brockton**, will host a homecoming service Oct. 20 at 10:30 a.m. John Granger, director of missions of Coffee Baptist Association, will be the guest speaker. Special music will be provided by Derek Snellgrove and Chosen. A covered dish lunch will follow the service. For more information call 334-565-3523. Mark Ward is pastor.

CONECUH ASSOCIATION

▶ **Brooklyn Baptist Church** will hold a homecoming celebration Oct. 13 at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. Jack Williamson is pastor.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Fairmount Baptist Church, Red Level**, will celebrate 198 years with a homecoming service Oct. 13. Sunday School will begin at 10 a.m. and the service will be held at 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow the service. John Bell is pastor.

MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Snowdoun Baptist Church, Montgomery**, will host a homecoming service Oct. 13 at 11 a.m. Pastor Steve Campbell will preach and a covered dish lunch will follow the service. Snowdoun Baptist also will host a revival Oct. 13–16 at 6:30 p.m. with special Montgomery-area guest speakers and music for each service. Nursery care also will be provided. For more information call 334-207-5258.

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Christopher Campbell** is the new pastor of **Southside Baptist Church, Decatur**. He previously served at Immanuel Baptist Church, El Dorado, Arkansas. He holds degrees from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham and Mississippi State University in Starkville. He and his wife, Marianne, have two children.



CAMPBELL

RANDOLPH ASSOCIATION

▶ **Herren's Grove Baptist Church, Woodland**, will host Friends and Family Day on Oct. 13 featuring singer Kevin Moore. The service will begin at 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. David Taft is pastor.

OTHER

▶ **Mount Moriah Fellowship Baptist Church, Monterey**, will host its once-a-year homecoming service Oct. 13 at 11 a.m. Daryl Cleworth will be the guest speaker. 🌈

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Pastor of West Mobile Baptist retires, begins ministry at Christian retreat



Charles Gibbs said retiring from active pastoral ministry wasn't on his radar just yet.

"We had no idea God was about to move us," he said.

But after 24 years as pastor of West Mobile Baptist Church, Gibbs and his wife, Vanita, have answered the call to become operational directors of Abbie Lane Christian Retreat Center in Coushatta, Louisiana. The retreat center, which has three cabins and 12 prayer gardens, is for ministers and spouses of all Christian denominations to come for up to three months.



GIBBS

"Our part of the ministry is 'table talk' ministry," Gibbs said. They will prepare two meals a day for guests and allow them space to talk if that's what they want or they can simply rest."

Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for Mobile Baptist Association, said the Gibbsses

were actively involved in associational and state missions and will be missed by many across the association.

"Pastor Charles demonstrated the results of a faithful ministry that clearly preached biblical truth and trained disciples that grew the church into one of the leading congregations in the association," Wright said.

Before coming to Mobile, Gibbs also served as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Dequincy, Louisiana, and Fernwood Baptist Church, Gulfport, Mississippi.

For more information about the retreat center visit abbielane.org. (Grace Thornton)

Amy Whitfield named SBC EC's associate communications VP



Amy Whitfield has been named associate vice president for convention communications of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC). She will begin Oct. 16.

Whitfield has served as director of marketing and communications at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North

Carolina, since 2014. She also is the co-host of the "SBC This Week" podcast, which she and Jonathan Howe, now the EC's vice president for communications, began in 2015.

Whitfield is the coauthor of the 2018 book "SBC FAQs: A Ready Reference" with Keith Harper, senior professor of Baptist studies at Southeastern Seminary, and has been an assistant parliamentarian at the SBC's annual meetings since 2016.

In her new EC role Whitfield will be editor of *SBC Life* (www.sbcclife.net), the journal of the Southern Baptist Convention; lead in utilizing media technologies to advance the messaging, mission, vision and ministries of the SBC and the EC; and promote participation in the SBC annual meeting and other events.

As the EC's women's liaison Whitfield will have a lead role in developing strategies for recruiting, utilizing and developing women at multiple levels of Southern Baptist life and advising the EC leadership on issues related to the encouragement and involvement of women in the SBC. (BP)



WHITFIELD

Coffee County pastor launches AED ministry

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Minutes matter. They've mattered for the whole 25 years Will Jordan has been a paramedic. They matter if you're in a rural church with the nearest ambulance 15 minutes away and they matter if you're at a First Baptist Church and are right next door to a station that provides emergency medical care.

That's why Jordan — who also serves as pastor of Newbia Baptist Church, Elba — said he wants to see every church in his association, Alabama and beyond

have an AED device ready and available in their building.

"We have so many older folks and even younger folks with known heart conditions, let alone the ones who have heart conditions and don't know about it," he said. "But there's been such success with resuscitation. If there's a chance to save them we want to be equipped. God is the one who's going to save them but He can use us as tools. As Christians we need to be ready."

Restore rhythm

An AED, or automated external defibrillator, uses electric shock to restore a heart's rhythm. It's used when people have sudden cardiac arrest and if it's available within the first minute the survival rate is

vastly improved, Jordan said.

"Many of our churches are located in rural areas with extended time for EMS response," he said, noting that even if the church is close to a station it would be difficult to get an emergency responder there in under a minute.

'Chain of survival'

He said the "chain of survival" starts with bystanders recognizing the problem early and starting CPR and defibrillation right away.

John Granger, director of missions for Coffee Baptist Association, said he believes with more AEDs

available and more people trained in how to use them lives will be saved.

"You never know when a heart attack will take place and if you have someone trained and right there

then the likelihood of them getting beyond it is much greater," he said.

AEDs are like a life jacket on a boat, he said — you don't need it until a crisis, but "when you need it you need it."

"For a fairly small price you might be able to save someone's life," he said.

For any churches interested, regardless of denomination, Jordan is offering free AED and CPR training and certification as well as help in securing AED devices at a reasonable cost.

To contact Jordan, email pastorwilljordan@gmail.com.



Pixabay.com

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Grove Hill Baptist Church, Grove Hill, AL 36451, is prayerfully seeking God's lead for a full-time pastor. All applicants should have previous experience and have a seminary degree, master's preferred. Resumes with photo may be mailed to: Grove Hill Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 849, Grove Hill, AL 36451, or emailed to: ghbc@grovehillbaptist.org, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee.

BIVOCATIONAL/PART-TIME PASTOR

Fairview Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational or part-time pastor. To apply submit cover letter and resume to: Fairview Baptist Church, 600 River Rd., Valley, AL 36854, or email to: fairviewbaptistch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Pate's Chapel Baptist Church is searching for a bivocational worship leader. Please mail resume 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 resumes to: nbccbaptist@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

We are accepting resumes for a bivocational youth minister. Interested candidates please submit your resume 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 six through 12 on Wednesday nights and Sundays.

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 resume 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 resumes 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. Resumes should be sent to: Chilton Baptist Association, ATTN: DOM Search Committee, P.O. Box 1260, Clanton, AL 35046 or email to: cbasecretary@bellsouth.net.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Dekalb Baptist Association is now receiving resumes for the position of director of missions (associational missionary). Prospective candidates must have previous pastoral experience and have a college degree from an accredited university. Preference will be given to candidates with a master's degree and accredited seminary training. Resumes may be mailed to: Dekalb Baptist Association, ATTN: DOM Search Committee, 218 Parker Avenue SE, Rainsville, AL 35986. Resumes may also be emailed to: david@rainsvillefirst.com. Deadline to receive resumes is Nov. 4.

OFFICE/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Chilton Baptist Association is accepting resumes 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 resumes to: Tony Christensen, 102 Cedarbrook Dr., Clanton, AL 35045 or email to: tonychris777@att.net.

BUSINESS

FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-

in-tubs. We service Alabama 1-800-682-0658.

SIGNS

NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Signs Services, a full-service sign company located in Alabama for 25 years, is ready to help you grow your church sign ministry. From digital message signs to traditional signs. Reliable Signs handles the design, fabrication and installation statewide. www.reliablesigns.com. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

GULF SHORES CONDO

1-, 2-, 3-bedroom luxury beachfront condos and four-bedroom beach resort house! Booking with the owner directly saves you \$\$\$. Call Chris at 800-713-6435 or email: cashley945@earthlink.net.

FOR SALE

CHURCH BUS

2008 MCI J4500 54-passenger kneeling bus with Detroit series engine with B500 Allison transmission. Six flip down TV monitor screens and restroom. This extra low mileage bus (359,000) is in very good condition and has been serviced regularly. Only 40,000 miles put on by the church since purchased in October 2015. For pricing and more information call Rev. Brent Shaw at First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, at 251-928-8685 or email him at bshaw@firstfairhope.org.

MINISTRIES

VISUALLY IMPAIRED READERS

Know someone who's visually impaired and finds it difficult to read? *The Alabama Baptist* is now offering a way through the National Library Service and Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped for that person to listen to stories and news in a format that comes in the mail for free. For more information contact 205-870-4720, ext. 101 or email jerwin@thealabamabaptist.org.



Follow us on Twitter
[@AlabamaBaptist](https://twitter.com/AlabamaBaptist)

'Everything changed'

MercyMe guitarist tells of band's humble beginnings, surprise of 'I Can Only Imagine' success

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

MercyMe, whose hit song "I Can Only Imagine" was the focus of a 2018 feature film of the same name, will be in concert Oct. 17 at the BJCC's Legacy Arena. It is one of the stops on their "Imagine Nation" tour with Crowder and Micah Tyler.

MercyMe guitarist Mike Scheuchzer said the song the band is perhaps best known for was not one they recog-

nized immediately as a hit. In fact Scheuchzer said in an interview with *The Alabama Baptist*, the song "I Can Only Imagine" was included on MercyMe's album "The Worship Project" primarily as "therapy" for lead singer Bart Millard.

'Changed our lives'

"We were working on an independent record of ours," Scheuchzer said. "We had nine songs that we felt were ready to go but we felt that it was ripping people off to

sell an album for \$10 and only have nine songs on it."

The band was preparing to load up to go to a show when keyboardist Jim Bryson sat down at the piano and started "goofing off," as Scheuchzer put it.

"He played the now-famous opening lick and Bart was like, 'Wait. What was that?'" Scheuchzer said.

Millard started singing the song he had been living with for years, his song about his dad's death. The band followed along and added music. "I Can Only Imagine" became the 10th song on the album and then was practically forgotten, according to Scheuchzer.

"We never played it for probably eight months after that," he said.

Everything changed at a youth camp where the song was requested.

"We were like, 'Yeah, uh, give us a minute,'" Scheuchzer said. "We had to try to remember what key it was in and how to play it. We

played it that night and we've played it every night since. We thought we had a pulse on what people wanted from us and we had no clue. We went eight months without playing that song. All of a sudden we were playing it and it changed our lives."

The Birmingham-based filmmaking team of Andrew and Jon Erwin brought the song's story to the big screen. The film is one of the top grossing Christian films of all time and won "Inspirational Film of the Year" at the 2018 Dove Awards. It is also the fourth top-grossing music biopic,



Photo courtesy of The Media Collective

MercyMe

according to *The Wrap*. The song "I Can Only Imagine" has topped both Christian and mainstream charts.

The success of the song and the film has given MercyMe a platform to share the message that "God is real. Jesus is real. He loves you even though you're messed up. And we know because

"God is real. Jesus is real. He loves you even though you're messed up."

Mike Scheuchzer
guitarist, MercyMe

we are messed up," Scheuchzer said.

"The Bible is really clear that getting it right is not what saves us. If it was then Jesus wouldn't have had to die on a cross. That's

really hard to reconcile because we want to fix things. We are just constantly reminding people that they are loved just the way they are."

It's a lesson the band members learned as they grew from humble beginnings, Scheuchzer said.

"We were kids. We didn't know any better. We were just [playing music] because it was fun. We were willing to not make any money just to get to play music and chase a dream," he said.

The first two years MercyMe members supplemented their income with odd jobs. Scheuchzer worked at Blockbuster Video. Millard

had income from his dad's pension and concentrated on bookings and promotion.

"We played anywhere that would have us. It was a joke based in truth that we would play for Taco Bell and directions home. We were saying yes to every opportunity that we were given, no matter how small or weird."

With the attitude of "treat this show as if it was the most important show we've ever played," MercyMe even played for a homeschool graduation with only one graduate. Scheuchzer said the family paid them but "[it] wasn't a lot. We got casseroles and graduation cake. It was one of the best gigs we did that year."

'Weird and awesome'

Early on the band didn't know how to deal with conflict and could be "jerks to one another," Scheuchzer said. They would fight it out verbally, hug and then go back to being best friends.

Through the years the band members have learned to give each other space and Scheuchzer said he's very fortunate to be doing what he loves with people he loves.

"It's not just like a 25-year job," he said. "It's 25 years of living together. It's a weird and awesome thing we have." 🌈

Internationally known, award-winning artist

MICHAEL ENGLISH

in concert



NOVEMBER 4 AT 7 PM

Bethlehem Baptist Church

416 Bethlehem Road, Midland City, AL 36350

NOVEMBER 5 AT 7 PM

Eastmont Baptist Church

4505 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36109

NOVEMBER 7 AT 7 PM

First Baptist Church

Fairhope, AL 36532

TICKETS

\$10 per ticket • \$8 each for a block of 10 or more

Join us for a night of music and worship!

For tickets or details,
call *The Alabama Baptist* at 1-800-803-5201, Ext. 100.

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



As I serve Alabama Baptists in the area of collegiate student mobilization, I am privileged to work with students across the state as they discern God's call of obedience on their lives. These students take steps of faith to participate in missions endeavors across the globe.



State Missionary
Chris Mills
cmills@alsbom.org

Each year hundreds of students involved in Baptist Campus Ministries serve during the Christmas holidays, spring break and throughout summer. I love hearing their reports when they return. I also love getting to see how God uses that missions experience to shape the next steps of their journey.

Recently I was able to witness that in an extraordinary way while serving with a team of students in New York City. We partnered with Jackson Heights Community Church for their Back to School Bash. This was a time to bless the South Asian community of Jackson Heights through games, backpack distribution and fun.

At one point during a break in the game we were hosting, I looked around to see numerous college students who I knew were connected to Alabama Baptist churches and five former student missionaries from Alabama that have now planted their lives in New York City. Some of those students served in NYC as student missionaries. Some served in South Asian contexts abroad or on their campus. I began to reflect on the fact that their missions experience as a college student had radically transformed their lives.

CareerPlant is an emphasis focused on challenging students to see the opportunities that exist to plant their career in a city or area of need. It's designed to challenge students to see that God has given them a skillset and passion that He wants to use – and the opportunities for use are endless!

For returning student missionaries, CareerPlant is a challenge to let a missions experience change them. Perhaps God is calling them to plant a church or be a businessperson on mission. Whatever the call is, obedience is the answer – just like with these five



Career missionaries and short-term volunteers from Alabama serve in New York City.

in New York City. Obedience is their calling. They are seeking to remain faithful to it. And that was both an encouragement and a challenge to me.

The 2020 summer missions application season is here. Would you pray for students as they consider summer missions service? Would you pray for those considering CareerPlant or other opportunities? To learn more about student missions opportunities or CareerPlant, visit onemissionstudents.org and click on the Go tab.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Event and location is followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call

1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613-2 + the extension, or visit alsbom.org.

OCTOBER

**Cooperative Program Month
Minister Appreciation Month**

- 11-12 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 18-19 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 22 **Fall Missions Festival for Adults**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 25-26 **Church Security Training**, Northbrook Baptist Church, Cullman, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267

NOVEMBER

- 2 **North Alabama Church Library Conference**, Central, Decatur, Eva Nell Hunter, (256) 353-5912
- 3 **Daylight Saving Time Ends**
- 4 **Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 10 **ALCAP Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 10 **Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner**, 3 Circle Church, Fairhope, Lamar Duke, ext. 332
- 11 **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders**, University of South Alabama BCM, Mike Nuss, ext. 276



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 12-13, 2019
EASTERN SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH • 6847 PARK DR. • DAPHNE

- 12-13 **Alabama Baptist State Convention**, Eastern Shore, Daphne
- 28 **Thanksgiving Day**

DECEMBER

- 1-8 **Week of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering**, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 12 **Early Bird Tax Conference**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 25 **Christmas Day**

Samford University introduces the new **Biblical Studies Major**



Samford University
Howard College of Arts and Sciences

samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/biblical-and-religious-studies

Samford University is an Equal Opportunity Educational Institution/Employer.

Hobby Lobby founder says prayer essential for success

A foundation of prayer is the key element in running a successful business, Hobby Lobby CEO David Green told those gathered in Mobile on Oct. 1 for the 14th annual University of Mobile (UM) scholarship banquet.

“On my worst days prayer was the answer,” Green said.

UM alumna Chelsey Sayasane, co-host of Studio10 at WALA FOX10, interviewed Green throughout the evening and shared her personal story of how UM prepared her to integrate her faith into her professional calling.

Lonnie Burnett, UM interim president, said Green lives out the kind of servant leadership UM instills into its students.

“If we can teach our students servant leadership we have put in a good day’s work,” Burnett said.

The university’s Voices of Mobile ensemble performed several songs.

Hobby Lobby opened its first store in 1972 and now



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile

Hobby Lobby founder and CEO David Green (right) answers questions from UM alumna and TV host Chelsey Sayasane during the university's annual scholarship banquet Oct. 1.

operates some 850 stores in 46 states with more than 37,000 employees.

Anointed for ministry

Green said he always felt his calling was in retail and shared how God is anointing him to do ministry through Hobby Lobby.

“Whatever God gives you to do, do your very best,” said Green as he encouraged students to not wait until they land the perfect job to start doing well but instead


to do their best at whatever they are doing at the moment.

Green was accompanied by his wife Barbara and expressed how they both believe in spending time in prayer and following the word of God.



The Greens have been married 58 years and are actively involved in their church as well as many national and international Christian ministries and charities. (UM)

WXJC RADIO FM 101.1 AM 850
BIRMINGHAM
WXJCRADIO.COM

THE MOST POWERFUL BIBLE TEACHING SIMULCAST IN AMERICA

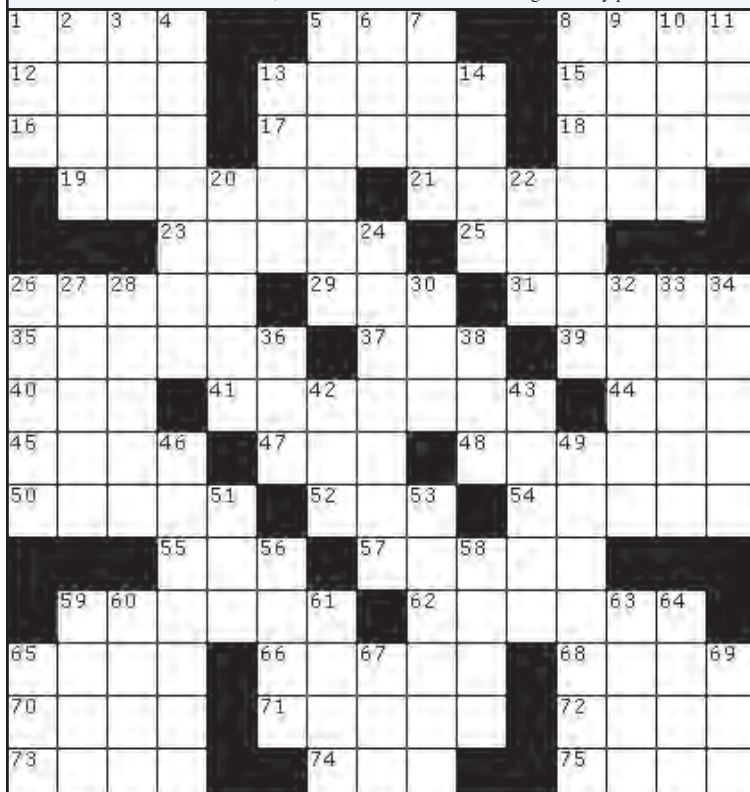


InTouch Ministries
IN TOUCH WITH
DR. CHARLES STANLEY
WEEKDAYS AT 8:30 AM

Christian Crossword

Copyright © by Cliff Leitch
The Christian Bible Reference Site, www.ChristianBibleReference.org. Used by permission.



Across

1. Smack
5. Hertz
8. Baby’s “ball”
12. Rice wine
13. Raccoon-like animal
15. Jewish calendar month
16. Wicked
17. Brother of Moses
18. Jerk
19. Heavenly beings
21. Book near Proverbs
23. Small flat boats
25. Men’s neckwear
26. Step
29. Transgression
31. Jewish teacher
35. Spice
37. Womens’ ___
39. Bolted
40. Annex
41. Samson’s evil wife

44. Past
45. Twin brother of Jacob
47. Computer type
48. Wife of Jacob
50. Grating
52. Pan’s partner
54. Ship’s sail holders
55. Insult
57. Whining voice type
59. Nephilim
62. Tent fabric
65. Baptismal ___
66. A witch lived here
68. Brews
70. Front
71. Florida City
72. Rolled chocolate candy brand
73. Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (abbr.)
74. School group

75. Shriek

Down

1. South southeast
2. Magma
3. Related
4. Early American
5. Moves effortlessly
6. Average work performance
7. Quit moving
8. Type of seasoning (2 wds.)
9. Father of Cain
10. Prohibits
11. Noah’s boat
13. Golden ___ (Israelite idol)
14. Institution (abbr.)
20. Has ears
22. Atmosphere
24. PC valley
26. Smile scornfully
27. City
28. Book of facts
30. Zero
32. Boredom
33. Father
34. Graven images
36. Precious stone
38. Obstruct
42. Drink
43. Villain in book of Esther
46. Made current
49. Hill where Jesus was crucified
51. Yang’s partner
53. Washington city
56. Prow
58. Frock
59. Instrument to guide oxen
60. 1/12 of a foot
61. Nip off
63. Healing plant
64. Hawk
65. Farming club (abbr.)
67. Digital audio tape
69. Sun’s names

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 13

Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



WALKING TOGETHER Ephesians 4:1–10

Walking Worthy (1–3)

Having established valuable Christian doctrine in the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul now turns to the practical applications that necessarily follow. The “therefore” in the text indicates what Paul is about to say builds on the previous material.

It is often said today, “We just need to love people; we need to show them the love of Christ. Theology isn’t important.” However, the practice of loving others devoid of a doctrinal underpinning is hollow and will not last. If Christians only try to be kind to other people how is this any different than the Peace Corps? Don’t they do the same thing? This is not just hypothetical.

Christian missions suffered at the beginning of the 20th century because so many Christian denominations believed the gospel was about helping people get out of poverty. It is not difficult to see the implications of this.

If the gospel is reduced to helping other people with their economic problems then there is no real drive to take the message of redemption to the farthest reaches of the world. Instead one travels abroad to help people physically. Biblically all this does is allow people to face eternal separation from God — only well fed and with finances.

Conversely focusing on doctrine and not living it out is equally defective. Sometimes Christians focus on having the right doctrine but they don’t practice the implications of such doctrines. Historically this often leads to legalism, where Christianity focuses more on believing the right thing rather than living it out.

Both of these approaches — love with no truth and truth with no love — carry negative consequences. This is why Paul connects the two. The word “therefore” puts the two sides together: doctrine and practice.

Furthermore Paul mentions

Christians have received their calling and they must live worthy of it. This is important to note. The fruit of being a Christian follows the actual becoming a Christian. Many think they have to get their lives right in order to follow Christ.

However, it is not possible to get your life right apart from God. This means that first one believes in Christ and repents and then he or she changes and begin to produce the fruit of the Spirit and good works. Many religions teach that people have to strive to get their lives right so God will accept us. Christianity teaches the opposite. We believe and then Christ makes us acceptable to God.

Living Unified (4–6)

Christians are to be characterized by unity based upon the fact that there is one Lord and one Church made up of all believers in Christ. While many denominations exist, as long as they base their salvation upon Christ we can consider them brothers and sisters in Christ, making us part of the same body.

Enjoying Victory (7–10)

Paul turns from unity in the body of Christ to the individuality of the members within the Church. He references Psalm 68 for support, a psalm pertaining to David’s triumph in battle. Just as a king returning from battle would provide gifts to his people the same applies to Christ our heavenly King.

God gives each believer at least one spiritual gift for the purpose of edifying the Church. Each gift is to be used to support the body of Christ.

Therefore while the Church is unified it is comprised of individual Christians each caring for one another and utilizing their gifts to help one another and to bring praise to God.

We need to take stock of how God has gifted us so we can be used by the church to edify and encourage other believers and glorify God. By doing so we can create unity and be effective witnesses for Christ. 🌈

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



GOD’S WILL AND MY WILL Ephesians 1:4–6; Romans 11:33–12:2

As time sifts through our memories leaving us with a handful of moments from the past there are some memories we treasure and some we would rather forget. Like many other people many of my most treasured memories are those related to my children.

One that I hold onto particularly tightly was a time when my older son, still just 5 or 6 years old, tugged at my sleeve to ask me a particularly challenging theological question.

I did the best I could in answering the question but I had clearly not resolved the issue for him entirely. He mused, “Hmm. That’s really difficult. I guess when I get to heaven, I’ll just have to ask God about it.”

Agreeing that the issue was really difficult, I replied, “Well, you know, I am a lot older than you so I’ll probably make it to heaven before you. And when I do I think I’ll have to ask God the same question.”

In a priceless moment Samuel replied, “Well when I get there and see you two talking I’ll just come over and listen in.”

Though he had no way of knowing so at the time, my son’s response to this tough theological issue — his willingness to wait until that day when he would finally get to ask God directly — is one that is thoroughly biblical.

The authors of Scripture regularly admit there are issues that are just too difficult for us to understand on this side of the veil. Though our hearts might wish to know all the mysteries of life for now there are difficult ideas we just cannot fully comprehend.

We are chosen by God’s will. (Eph. 1:4–6)

One of the most difficult of these mysterious issues is understanding the will of God. Almost all Christians would acknowledge, as well they should, that God is sovereign over the affairs of His creation and over the hearts of His creatures.

A passage like Ephesians 1 certainly affirms this understanding.

The language in this passage is

that of God’s choosing believers before the foundation of the world, of His

predestining us for adoption, of the purposes of His will and so forth.

There is little doubt the God described in this passage is one who sovereignly ordains the affairs of the world and its people.

A full understanding of God’s sovereign will is a mystery to us. (Rom. 11:33–36)

Scripture is also clear that things happen in the world which are not what God truly desires and God’s creatures make meaningful choices. How can we adjudicate between these seemingly contradictory notions? One option — an option followed by various large and influential denominations — is to resolve the contradiction by simply giving preference to one side (sovereignty) or the other (free will) and forcing every Scripture passage to fall in line with that preference.

The Bible appears to point us in a different direction, however. This passage, for example, emphasizes the mysterious aspect of the divine will. Here Paul insists that none of us has truly plumbed the depths of God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge.

At least in the here and now God’s ways remain inscrutable to us. In other words, as the Apostle Paul famously tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:12: “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.”

God reveals what we need to know as we surrender to Him. (Rom. 12:1–2)

Understanding God’s will in part does not mean we fail to understand it altogether. God reveals to us what we need to know as we surrender our lives and our wills to Him. Under normal circumstances we want to know what we are getting into before we make a commitment.

Counterintuitively God asks us to surrender to Him first and let understanding follow. As Paul says, we are to be transformed first; only then can we understand the will of God that is working in us. 🌈



Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

Vudu's new filtered movie service gives families options

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

What if you could turn a PG-13 movie into a family-friendly film that even a 7-year-old child could watch?

Thanks to a new venture between Vudu, Walmart and Clearplay you can.

In September the Walmart-owned Vudu launched a new section on its platform called “Family Play,” allowing families to filter out rough language, sexuality and violence in more than 600 streaming movies, including action films like “Avengers: Endgame” and “Spider-Man: Far From Home,” as well as more family-centric flicks like “Incredibles 2.”

The result: family movie night without uncomfortable moments — and without the need to dive for the remote.

The service currently is available on computer

browsers, iOS and Android devices and certain smart TVs, but Vudu says the list is growing.

I tested the new service by watching “Superman Returns” with my young children — I connected my laptop to my TV with an HDMI cord — and it worked flawlessly.

More options

Most movies on Vudu can be rented or purchased although some are available free but with ads.

It's the most exciting development for family enter-

tainment since the launch of VidAngel, which has a similar service but lost a court case, limiting what can be streamed legally. (VidAngel is still in business and remains the better option if you're wanting to filter mature content from Netflix or Amazon Prime.)

Tim Winter, president of the Parents Television Council, said Walmart took a “bold stance” in launching the service.

Helping parents

“They're saying, ‘We know that parents want this. And we're going to try to find a way to make it happen.’ I'm absolutely thrilled,” Winter said. “We hope other streaming platforms beyond just Vudu will seek to adopt something like [the filtering options].”

The new service also incorporates information from Common Sense Media, the popular website with parental reviews.

Learn more at Vudu.com/familyfeatures.

Also worth watching this month:

▶ **“When Hope Calls”** — If you're a fan of Hallmark's series

“When Calls The Heart” — or just Hallmark movies in general — then you'll love “When Hope Calls.” Set in 1916 it tells the story of sisters Lillian and Grace who open an orphanage in the Canadian town of Brookfield. The series has the same feel and look of “When Calls The Heart” but with an entirely differ-



Photo courtesy of Hallmark

‘When Hope Calls’

ent plot. It's streaming now on Hallmark Movies Now, Hallmark's on-demand streaming service.

▶ **“Toy Story 4” and “The Lion King”** — These Disney films are two of the most family-friendly movies of 2019. In “Toy Story 4,” Sheriff Woody has a new owner and a new hilarious friend: Forky. “The Lion King,” of course, is a live-action remake of the animated classic. (Parents may want to be prepared to discuss the film's “circle of life” worldview.) Both films earn high marks for family entertainment. The Disney/Pixar film “Toy Story 4” is on digital platforms and on DVD/Blu-ray. “The Lion King” debuts on digital platforms Oct. 11, followed by DVD/Blu-ray on Oct. 22.

▶ **“One on One with Kirk Cameron”** — The

well-known Christian actor interviews celebrities such as Phil Robertson and ends each show with a game or stunt with his guest. It's enlightening and entertaining. The series airs Thursday nights on TBN which has undergone a transformation and now features a prime-time lineup with the goal of reaching a new generation. The Thursday night lineup also includes “Drive Thru History” and “Jesus the Game Changer.”

New series

▶ **“Carol's Second Act”** — This one comes with a caveat but first the plot: A middle-aged woman, Carol Kenney (Patricia Heaton), pursues her dream of becoming a doctor at age 50. This means of course that she will be training alongside young adults half her

age. I only screened the first episode, which included one or two minor coarse words and an implication that one character is a lesbian. So why is it on the list? Here's why: It's funny, it contained no sexual humor (a rarity) and because Heaton is a favorite among many Christians. Watch with caution. It airs Thursday nights on CBS.✝

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.



‘Planting gospel seeds’

Colorado church provides meals, hot showers for whitewater rafting guides

The red raft bobs up and down then picks up speed down the rushing river in the Rocky Mountains. Everyone onboard readies for the first rapid as the guide gives last-minute instructions.

The raft suddenly dips, drops and then twists getting everyone onboard excited except Tommy, the

laid-back guide sitting at the back. The more whitewater they encounter the bigger Tommy’s smile.

By the end of the trip Tommy has everyone on the raft laughing. The trio, Tami Elsey, Barry Sutherland and Katie Dillon, invite the guide to join them for dinner at Mountain Heights Baptist Church, Buena Vista. Others from their missions team from Kansas invite their guides as well.

The guides smile in acknowledgment. They know Mountain Heights Baptist well — every Monday is “church meal” night when the small congregation opens its doors to the river guides to get a homemade meal and a hot shower. Mountain Heights has been reaching out to the river guides for 25 years.

“This is a big whitewater rafting industry area,” Dan Ehlers explains. He and his wife Nancy have been involved with the ministry for 20



Photo courtesy of Blue Valley Baptist Church

Whitewater rafting guides settle in for a weekly home-cooked meal at Mountain Heights Baptist Church, Buena Vista, Colorado, aided by a week of outreach each summer by volunteers from Blue Valley Baptist Church, Overland Park, Kansas.

How to pray:

▶ Pray whitewater guides will come to know Christ through the ministry of Mountain Heights Baptist Church.

▶ Pray Mountain Heights Baptist Church’s ministry will continue to thrive and have an abundance of resources and volunteers. (TAB)

years. “Back when we first started this rafting companies didn’t take good care of their guides — there was no place to shower, guides got paid by tips, no fresh water.”

‘Showing Jesus’ love’

“Mountain View opened the church and prepared a once-a-week hot meal. We took a big water tank out to their campgrounds. We eventually built showers on the church grounds,” Ehler says. “This was our way of showing Jesus’ love. We simply met a need.”

Pastor Joe Chambers, an avid outdoorsman himself, explains rafters have their own way of living and doing things. It’s a way of life that

can often ostracize them from the surrounding community of retirees, professionals and tourists. Many pitch a tent or live in their cars. Their goal is to spend as much time on the Arkansas River as possible. Hygiene is not always a top priority.

The guides are not people who normally attend church. With a chuckle Chambers adds, “There’s something about an 85-year-old grandmother serving you a meal and then sitting down to talk that helps these 20-somethings feel comfortable, open up and just talk.”

The church’s key goal, the pastor says, is to plant gospel seeds and to show the unconditional love and kindness of Christ. (BP)



In the Rocky Mountains whitewater rafting guide Tommy navigates Baptist volunteers down the Arkansas River.

BP submitted photo

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.



WEEKDAY MORNINGS ON WXJC

ADRIAN ROGERS JIM DALY DAVID JEREMIAH
ROBERT JEFFRESS CHARLES STANLEY MICHAEL YOUSSEF
TONY EVANS JAMES DOBSON CHARLES MORRIS
JOHN MACARTHUR ALISTAIR BEGG J VERNON MCGEE

AND AFTERNOONS LIVE



THE JOE LOCKETT SHOW
WEEKDAYS 3-5P

FM 101.1 & AM 850



THE MARK WHITE SHOW
WEEKDAYS 5-6P

WXJCRADIO.COM