



# The Alabama Baptist

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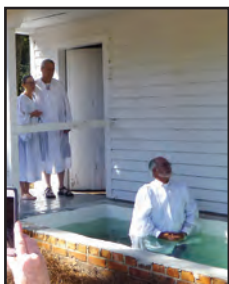
Vol. 184, No. 41  
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



San Diego, Tijuana different but dependent border cities

◆ Pages 6–7



Bethsaida Baptist Church reopens 19th century baptismal pool

◆ Page 9



Volunteers build 11 homes in 5 days for Beauregard tornado victims

◆ Page 11

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



ERLC photo  
The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's Travis Wussow (left), moderates 'Understanding the church's role in preventing abuse' featuring panelists (l to r) Samantha Kilpatrick, Carol Hogue, Kimberlee Norris and Palmer Williams at the Caring Well Conference held Oct. 3–5 near Dallas, Texas.

## 'Equip the church'

### SBC sexual abuse crisis: Caring Well Conference continues conversation

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
The Alabama Baptist

The church will never be "accidentally excellent" at protecting the vulnerable from abuse and caring for those who have been abused.

That was the message emphasized over and over at the Caring Well Conference, an event organized by the Ethics

& Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) held Oct. 3–5 near Dallas, Texas.

A capacity crowd of 1,650 pastors, ministry leaders, church volunteers, abuse survivors, counseling professionals and others concerned about protecting children and adults from abuse and its aftereffects attended. They heard survivors' gut-wrenching stories of abuse at the hands of those they trusted — pastors, church members, fellow seminarians, fathers — and the failure of those entrusted with leadership to take action to help them.

"We're not here to control

the message," ERLC executive vice president Phillip Bethancourt told attendees as the conference opened. "We're here to equip the church."

#### 'Gospel issue'

In keynote addresses, panel discussions and breakout sessions a variety of voices from inside the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as well as the convention's Sexual Abuse Advisory Group and many who work to help survivors set out to do just that.

"The church's response to sexual abuse is a gospel issue," ERLC president Russell Moore said. "Brothers and sisters

if you think that responding to church sexual abuse is a distraction from the mission of the church you do not understand the mission of the church.

"Jesus says, 'I love, I tend, I care for my flock,'" Moore said, pointing to John 10 and Jesus' description of Himself as the Good Shepherd. The Church must shepherd congregations, he said, doing everything possible to prevent abuse, training people to recognize abuse, ensuring reporting standards are practiced and caring for the survivors of trauma.

(See 'Abuse,' page 8)

# Mike Snow, Bethel Baptist Association work to engage community in mission

When Mike Snow opened up his early edition of the Oct. 10 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* he thought the TAB staff might be reading his mail.

“That’s exactly what we’ve been doing here — trying to help our people know what the association is and how it works,” said Snow, director of missions for Bethel Baptist Association.

The article on page 1, called “Common mission,” led with the questions, “What’s the name of your local Baptist association? What’s the name of your associational missions director? What does your association do?”

Snow says they’ve been focusing a lot of attention on getting the word out about those essentials lately.

Bethel Association — a network of 34 churches with an office in Linden — has been going strong for nearly 200 years. And since Snow started in his role with Bethel Association back

in January he’s been meeting with local church leaders to hear their hearts, share with them about the association and figure out ways they can partner together even better.

“We’re getting back to the basics of who we are and what we do,” Snow said.

## ‘Me and My Association’

This year he’s held two pastor roundtable discussions to hear what they need from their association and from Snow. He called those meetings “Me and My Association” so they would feel ownership of what’s going on in Bethel Association as a whole.

“We all have great things going on, we can just become stronger in our local places of service by joining together,” he said.

They’re basing their vision around the theme REAL — a Resource for the church, Education for ministry,

Achievement driven and Local missions first. One such local missions effort is Bethel Association’s partnership with Linden Baptist Church to operate a food ministry for the community. Together they’re able to secure funding and have enough space and manpower.

“Everything we’re doing, we’re trying to make that connection as an association,” he said.

He’s not the only one. Around the state dozens of associations are focusing on local cooperative missions this month with their own annual meetings and the observance of the Week of Prayer for Associational Missions set for Oct. 20–26.

It’s a perfect time to get to know your local association or get engaged even more than you already are. To learn more about associational missions or to find your own association visit [www.tabonline.org/](http://www.tabonline.org/) associations. (Grace Thornton)

# SBOM, TAB, ABHC increase protections

The leaders of *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) newspaper and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC) decided in early October to consider background checks on staff and board members (known as commissioners for the ABHC).

The TAB and ABHC boards both affirmed the decisions and the ABHC commissioners will vote on the exact plan in February.

The background checks will likely include running names by the national sex offender registry.

TAB will run checks on all new

staff and board members who are being considered after Jan. 1, 2020.

ABHC plans to check all existing staff and board members at one time if the plan is approved.

The groups’ leaders Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB, and Lonette Berg, ABHC, made the announcements to their boards following the lead of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

In August the SBOM trustees voted to authorize background checks and national sex offender registry checks on all current and future full- and part-time employees as well as all new trustees beginning in 2020.

“We want to make sure our State

Board is a safer place,” said SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance. “Everyone on our staff was vetted very well but in this climate we need to hit the reset button.”

SBOM associate executive director Bobby DuBois confirmed Oct. 10 that all employee background checks have been completed and all received clean reports. The three convention-elected officers also have requested those same checks be run on them, he added.

Other Alabama Baptist entities already have varying levels of checks in place based on their vulnerabilities and/or are considering updates to their policies. (TAB)



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

## Correction

In the Oct. 10, 2019, issue of *The Alabama Baptist* it was incorrectly stated that David Taft is the pastor of Herren’s Grove Baptist Church, Woodland. Chris Cook is now the pastor of Herren’s Grove Baptist.



Look for the new TAB Media graphic in the paper and visit [www.tabonline.org/youtube](http://www.tabonline.org/youtube) to watch the video that corresponds with the labeled articles.



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

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2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018  
as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist  
Communicators Association, Evangelical Press  
Association or Religion Communicators Council

# MY RASHIONALE

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

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@RashionalThts



## Thinking about the faith leaders, spiritual mentors in my life

I've been thinking about the spiritual leaders, mentors, pastors and other faith giants in my life lately. Maybe with October being Minister Appreciation Month they are coming to mind more than normal.

Along with growing up surrounded by dedicated parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, my brother and other family members in a nurturing faith environment, I have been blessed with so many amazing people of faith who chose to invest in me along the way.

Friends (especially my best friend, Vickie), teachers, community leaders and others in northwest Alabama helped me find my way in total surrender to Christ at 19.

Pastor Sammy Taylor of Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell, his wife Judy and countless others at Mountain View taught me, challenged me and helped me grow.

The faith community of Five Points Baptist Church, Northport — especially the Wallace family — invested in and cared for me during my college days at the University of Alabama (UA) in Tuscaloosa.

The Southern Baptist missionaries and Caribbean nationals who served the Caribbean Basin region took me in as their own during my two years on the missions field with the International Mission Board and Caribbean Christian Publications.

Every family — especially the Searcys — poured into me as did the leaders and members of Sheridan Hills Baptist Church, Hollywood, Florida, where I

served and worshipped during my time on the missions field.

When it was time to return home to Alabama it was another mentor in my life, Jim Oakley from UA, who connected me with Bob Terry of *The Alabama Baptist*. Dr. Terry quickly began investing in me and encouraged me in my journey as a faith-based journalist and editor.

Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, also became a mentor and encourager while I was a student at Beeson — and still is to this day. So many professors mentored me too.

The new dean at Beeson, Doug Sweeney, has become a fast friend and I look forward to learning from him as well.

Moving to Birmingham in 1996 meant finding a new church home and that too brought more opportunities to grow and learn.

I had the privilege of sitting under both Pastor Charles T. Carter and Pastor Danny Wood at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, for a while. And who knew at the time that being part of Shades during the leadership transition would turn out to be an experi-

ence I could pull from later in life? God did of course.

My pastor for the past 15 years has been Bill Wilks at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville. He and Rondie as well as associate pastor Stephen Hall, current staff, past staff, ministry assistants, lay leaders, Bible study teachers (especially Terry Newberry and Ray Walker) and the membership as a whole keep me grounded and love me unconditionally.

They have taught and are teaching me so much about faith and living life as a community of believers.✝

## WHAT'S NEW AT TAB?

### Check out the redesigned community space and meeting area for staff and ministry partners of TAB

We've worked hard the past 10 months on some physical updates to the Hudson Baggett Building in Homewood, home of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper and TAB Media.

Along with a newly designed community room for staff and guests to share a meal or have a cup of coffee, we've also added

a museum near the front door. It houses our historical pieces such as the actual desk used by Editor L.L. Gwaltney in the early 1900s.

TAB staff, board of directors and ministry partners also now gather for meetings in a reallocated space downstairs that previously housed the business office.

With a little rearranging we were

able to set up work spaces that allow our onsite staff to be in the same general area.

We also have several staff members who work offsite so our new multimedia set up by Audio Visual Excellence Inc. in Homewood provides a convenient and cost-effective way to conduct team meetings.✝



Community Room



Museum



Seminar Room

# Your Voice



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

## Carrying on the tradition of associational fellowships

By **Lanell Downs Smith**

Alabama-Crenshaw WMU Executive Director-in-training

Associational fellowships seem to be going out of style. In a world where individuals seek connection through social media, few find time to gather with other Christians outside of Sunday morning worship.

Some struggle to fit Wednesday night Bible study in between work, chores and social obligations. Others attend the occasional missions conference or retreat. But for most Baptists association meetings and events aren't even on the radar.

It hasn't always been this way. Back in the early 50s, when my parents were young, church events filled their entire social calendar. They and others like them in rural Crenshaw County churches never missed an association meeting.

They looked forward with great anticipation to spending time with good friends and learning of the associational missionary's journeys or hearing a stirring message.

In an area where few had a telephone and fewer had a television, association meetings provided a primary source of Christian fellowship.

The Alabama-Crenshaw Baptist Association still conducts quarterly meetings sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union. Members of all 27 churches in the association are invited for food, fellowship and a missions program.

While attendance has declined steadily through the generations, these meetings still attract on average 75 guests most of whom are WMU members and their families.

Planning teams strategize how to attract modern-day church members, employing methods like changing the meeting time and menu offerings

or engaging keynote speakers with a fresh and relevant message. We have added senior citizen rallies and Valentine's Day banquets.

Still most churchgoers fail to recognize what these meetings have to offer. We are too busy and disinterested. We fail to recognize the potential of these meetings.

As a church WMU director I began attending these meetings because I was expected to attend. As I continued going I thought of my parents and tradition. I share this precious legacy with them and others in our association.

The more I participate in planning associational events, the more I understand why my parents found them so important.

When we gather as Christians with our sister churches we experience the sweet fellowship Hebrews 10:25 warns us not to forsake. As we become acquainted with others who share the bond of Christianity we find encouragement for our daily walk. By visiting churches in our association we lift them up in the work they are doing for our Father.

We learn from each other and take home wisdom and ideas we can use in our own ministries.

Our modern lives are much different than those of the generations before us. One thing has not changed however — our need for community. Associational events nurture that spirit of community in a place where relationships can flourish in the love of our Savior.

Join me in praying for our Baptist associations and for the events they offer. And if you aren't attending your associational events, there's no better time to start.

## Letters to the Editor

I just read Allan McConnell's opinion column "Unintended consequences: Alabama's new marriage law" in the Oct. 3 issue of *TAB*. His article condemns valiant efforts to protect marriage in Alabama. While there is injustice "in the halls of power in Montgomery," it is not because of apathy, ignorance or lack of trust. Christians are suffering in the courts because they cannot serve sin in the same-sex "marriage" requirement.

**A. Eric Johnston**  
Birmingham, Ala.

In Allan McConnell's opinion column on Alabama's new marriage law the next to last

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

What got me thinking was the phrase "traditional marriage." All wedding ceremonies are steeped in tradition.

What the church needs to be concerned about is not the new law or the tradition but the covenant of marriage.

Unless the marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman sealed by God it's not a true marriage at all. It doesn't matter

much what, if any, tradition you follow. Those who want to have the tradition can still do so with or without the new law. Those who want to just live together can still do so with or without the law. And those who want a covenant marriage never needed a law one way or another.

The Church needs to be in the covenant business and not the tradition business. Jesus said that we are to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

Render to Caesar the weddings and unto God the marriage.

**Danny Cotton**  
Lincoln, Ala.

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“When the harvest comes, if we’re not ready, it’s going to be too late.”

CLAUDE KING

Co-author of “Experiencing God” and “The Mind of Christ”

Whatever you may be going through God can and will use it. Even in tough times financially, physically or spiritually, God can impart knowledge and wisdom that will make you better able to minister to others.

**Pastor Tony Barber**  
Church on the Bluff, Hoover

Somewhere in the magical life of a toddler, a child is able to walk only if they can hold on to someone. They are not leaning on their own strength for support. If they want to get where they are going, they must lean upon someone else. This need to lean often comes full circle in the later stages of life when we are forced to rely upon walkers, wheelchairs and canes.

Between these two stages, we often believe we are capable of handling things on our own. What a tragically dangerous thought. “I’ve got this” is as false a sentiment today as it was when Satan first uttered it falling from the sky. It is prideful, presumptuous and wrong. We reach our destination by replacing our self-sufficiency with God’s all-sufficiency as we lean upon His everlasting arms.

**Pastor Rick Patrick**  
FBC Sylacauga

News from Secretaries Pompeo and Ross [Oct. 8 announcing new U.S. restrictions placed on Chinese officials and organizations responsible for religious persecution] is welcome and sorely needed. ... The

persecuted people there do not bear the image of the Chinese Communist Party membership card, nor do they bear the image of a bar code for international commerce. They bear the image of a Creator above the reach of any state, no matter that it pretends to be a god.

**Russell Moore**  
President, ERLC

The Cooperative Program is consistent with the call God has placed on us to go and make disciples all over the world. The efficiency and ability to make an impact for the gospel through the Cooperative Program is far greater than what we can create on our own.

**Pastor Jeff Rasnick**  
FBC Shelbyville, Tenn.

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @ricklance

During this Minister Appreciation Month, I am praying for a deeper sense of gratitude for ministers and their families as they serve the Lord. Additionally, I thank God for our churches, where people worship the Lord, witness for Him and do His work in our world.

### @BillyGraham

“Man seeks to excuse himself from sin, but God seeks to convict him of it and to save him from it.”

### @DianeLangberg

We cannot foster true repentance in the lives of others unless it is a reality in our own. How can we expect to recognize superficial repentance or nurture true repentance if we have never bowed the knee and allowed God to do that work in our own hearts?

### @JennMGreenberg

God doesn’t redeem based on how popular, powerful, rich, or happy we are. God doesn’t love us because we are good. He loves us because He is good. How can shame hold sway over me when such honor is mine? Daughter of God. Heir of Heaven. Survivor of the Valley. Soli Deo Gloria.

### @deaninserra

The best way to raise kids who do not become cultural Christians is to be parents who are not cultural Christians. Be Christians by conviction not by culture.

### @ERLC

“Southern Baptists will not have a future if we do not confront our tendency to protect the system over survivors.” — @pbethancourt #CaringWell

### @MichaelCatt

Every #pastor needs a pastor. Someone he can call [and] trust. A person who will listen [and] pray as he shares his hurts [and] fears. Find your someone. I would not have survived in ministry [without] some of these kind of people in my life.

### @ThomRainer

Ministry does not happen on a set schedule.

### @sPeytonHill

Jonah loved the grace that the Lord poured out on him. Jonah hated the grace that the Lord poured out on Nineveh. We are in a dangerous place when we think we deserve grace but others deserve judgment. We have missed the essence of grace altogether.



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

## Continual improvement

Change is an inevitable part of our lives. From the time we are born we continually change physically, mentally and emotionally. From our salvation experience until our death we change spiritually. As Christians we recognize this as continual sanctification — daily becoming more and more like Christ is our goal.

The older I get the more I see that disciplines and trials are rooted deep in our sanctification. As we surface from each we have the opportunity to become more and more like the image of our Father that we so desire.

At Shocco Springs it’s time for growth of our physical campus. We are looking ahead to 2020 and finalizing plans for our new chapel. In August of 2020 we will begin construction. This is something we have long desired for you and our future guests.

As we prepare for this new project challenges and trials await. Although construction of a building is not the same as personal sanctification our goal is the same — endure and emerge as a reflection of what Christ wants us to be.

Questions? I know you have them. Join us at the Alabama Baptist State Convention in November and I’ll fill in the gaps.

—Russell Klinner

# At the EPICENTER

## San Diego, Tijuana different but dependent border cities with shared economies

**T**he adjoining cities of San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Baja California, are intricately connected by a shared geography and history as well as the bustling trade, traffic and kinfolk daily crossing the international border between the United States and Mexico.

Though geographically connected they are very different. A tour of the downtown areas of both cities provides sharp contrasts.

San Diego's downtown and waterfront communities are safe, walkable, well-manicured and adorned with five-star restaurants, attractions and expensive homes. Banners announce outdoor sporting events and concerts at the picturesque waterfront parks where people walk leashed dogs and pop into pet-friendly shops. A sense of history, calm and affluence exists in San Diego along with an appealing blend of the old and the new.

Tijuana on the other hand appears

to be in a perpetual state of construction. The city's downtown is a gritty mix of new hotel and shopping districts featuring American franchises, brightly painted one-story mom-and-pop shops, street taco vendors and steel-gated concrete homes abutting ramshackle shacks constructed of wood pallets and roofed with plastic sheeting.

No personal space can be found in this densely populated town where unleashed but well-fed neighborhood dogs wander the streets.

Despite their differences the cities depend on each other.

San Diego relies on green card-holding immigrants to provide workers for the thriving

businesses and industries in the glittering, upscale city of 3.5 million on California's coast.

Tijuana depends on the income its residents earn from U.S.-based jobs — salaries that far outstrip the earning power of employment in the hardscrabble city of 1.6 million.

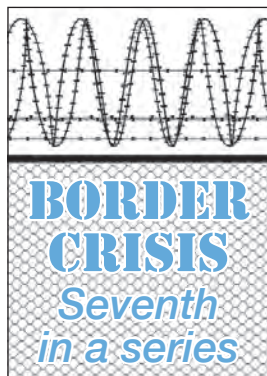


Photo by Jessica Ingram

Tijuana is a mix of newly constructed hotels and shopping districts featuring American franchises, brightly painted mom-and-pop shops and street vendors alongside steel-gated concrete homes and ramshackle wood houses.

Shared benefits accrue from the location of many U.S.-owned businesses in Mexico where labor is cheaper and regulations more relaxed. Certain lanes and passes allow for a relatively free exchange of authorized vehicles commuting between the cities.

With more than 50 million people crossing the border each year San Diego-Tijuana is one of the world's busiest land-border crossings and the fourth-largest binational metropolitan area in the world with a combined population of more than 5 million.

As such San Diego-Tijuana now sits at the epicenter of the current immigration debate.

According to a March report issued by the American Bar Association, "The immigration courts are facing an existential crisis. The current system is irredeemably dysfunctional and on the brink of collapse."

At the end of 2010 the backlog of federal immigration cases stood at nearly 262,000. By early 2017 that number had more than doubled. As

of the end of August the backlog stood at more than 1 million with more than 300,000 pending cases yet to be placed on the dockets.

### Trying to catch up

Understaffed courts are attempting to catch up in the midst of rapidly accelerating caseloads especially since the implementation of recent immigration policies.

The great majority of illegal immigrants in the U.S. actually entered the country legally, usually on an airplane, and simply overstayed their visas. Some 44% of those cases are closed when the immigrant fails to show up for his or her immigration court date.

Less numerous but garnering far more headlines are the migrants who cross the border illegally and request asylum. According to U.S. law, immigrants requesting asylum — whether crossing the border legally or illegally — must be heard in immigration court and convince a judge they have a credible fear of harm in their home country.

The San Diego immigration



Photo by Jessica Ingram

While in Tijuana the TAB team met with an immigration official working for the Mexican government (center) and heard about her experiences interacting with migrants.

court is overwhelmed, even more so since the “Remain in Mexico” program — formally known as the Migrant Protection Protocols, or MPP — was implemented at the beginning of 2019.

MPP requires all asylum-seekers who entered the United States via the California border to be deported back to Mexico until their next court date in San Diego.

### Limited resources

Such forces have combined to strain limited resources and create a “humanitarian crisis” across the border in Tijuana, according to the San Diego Southern Baptist Association, which estimates approximately 40,000 men, women and children are waiting there for their U.S. immigration court date.

In a recent interview with *The Alabama Baptist* an immigration official working for the Mexico government in the MPP program grew emotional when discussing the fate of the migrants she encounters daily.

“It is very difficult,” said the Mexican border agent, who asked that her name not be used. “I feel that their hearts are broken.”

Working exclusively with non-Mexican deportees who largely come from Central and South American countries, the agent and four others have seen some 17,600 individuals — or nearly 2,300 families — since the MPP program began.

Since MPP started in January this immigration agent’s job is to provide the adults with permits allowing them to work and live anywhere in Mexico up to 180 days while awaiting the immigration court date.

### A long wait

Although the agent we spoke with works with people who are supposed to be Spanish speaking, she often encounters indigenous people who speak only a Maya dialect making it difficult for them to find jobs.



Photo by Julie Cho

Friendship Park is located in Tijuana where the U.S.-Mexico border meets the Pacific Ocean. The Tijuana side features colorful sculptures, paintings and beaches where tourists and locals alike come to enjoy a nice day.

So far this year pending cases have been waiting in U.S. immigration courts an average of 696 days, according to a study by Syracuse University. Some immigrants go

home and return for the court date. But many have no safe place to return to, have spent all their resources just trying to get to the U.S. or have been swindled out of all their money by unscrupulous people promising to help them.

For those people, the agent said, “We try to find shelters that are already established. We connect them with medical

help if needed and pregnant women are prioritized.”

For such assistance this agent and many like her rely on the faith community, which provides food, shelter and a place to get clean as migrants wait the long months to plead their case for legal entry into the U.S. (Martha Simmons)



Photo by Debbie Campbell

The Mount Soledad cross stands high over San Diego and served as a location for prayer as the TAB trip began.

## First person: Impressions at the border

I am so grateful I was able to be a part of this missions project. Going into it I felt excitement and also knew that it would be a somber experience simply because of the nature of what was taking place in Mexico.

People’s lives are in limbo and I knew there was really nothing physically I could do to help them. I was encouraged though after meeting pastors and missionaries and hearing what they were doing to help the migrants.

My first-person experience painted a different picture than the stories I had seen on the news. While the news stories show poverty and helplessness, and it is true to a great extent, I am encouraged to see that Pastor Juvenal Gonzalez offers hope to these migrants, not just in the form of prayers but actually meeting their physical needs and bringing others in to do the same. Food, shelter and showing God’s love and forgiveness gives hope to these families that are seemingly without hope.

I wasn’t sure what to expect in the first shelter we visited, but when I went inside it seemed full of life and happiness.

Even though the people were living in tents and had one lone chair outside their space the children were laughing and people were smiling.

### Contagious passion

Each shelter was the same. The migrants seemed content and the children were happy. The passion of Pastor Juvenal is contagious. These people are his heart.

These bands of migrants surprised the United States but did not surprise God. He uses any means necessary to complete His purpose — that all will come to Him. The migrants are looking for a new home and many are finding a heavenly home in the process.

God’s people are rising up to meet these great needs and are themselves being blessed, reaching generations of people for God. (Amy Hacker)

# ‘Silence ... is deafening’

## Abuse must be reported; abusers must not be given opportunity to abuse again

(continued from page 1)

“Why? Because that’s what Jesus does,” Moore said.

Susan Cadone, abused as a teenager by the youth pastor and later the pastor of her church in Alabama, said believers who have experienced trauma are held back spiritually and “God is calling us to do this better.”

She challenged pastors to change the culture in their churches.

### Sermon topics

“I have yet to hear a sermon about sexual abuse or sexual violence,” she said. “The silence from the church is deafening.”

Boz Tchividjian, an attorney and former prosecutor who has focused on sexual misconduct and child abuse and founder of GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment), which helps churches investigate and respond to sexual abuse in their congregations, said individuals within the SBC family have sounded the alarm on church sexual abuse for years. However, he said, the issue came to the forefront only after two Texas newspapers published an investigative series on the crisis, including a database of some 380 perpetrators who committed crimes against 700 known victims.

“Imagine [if] the Southern Baptist Convention learned

that in the past 20 years over 700 babies had been murdered at Southern Baptist churches around the country,” he said. “Imagine [if] people had been telling leadership about this for years only to be ignored and sometimes vilified. ... What would happen?”

“I think that either the entire denomination would implode or at least its entire system would have to be dismantled — leadership, beliefs and polity.”

Too many survivors have lost the community of the church because they “simply stepped forward and exposed abuse,” Tchividjian said. “Parents have had churches turn their back on them simply because their child was abused inside the church. My hope is in the God who brings beauty out of all this mess.”

### ‘Call abuse what it is’

In his address on abuse and the future of the SBC, Bethancourt said the convention “won’t have a future unless we’re willing to call abuse what it is.”

“As pro-life advocates

[we reject] the refusal of people in our culture to not call abortion what it actually is,” Bethancourt said. “What we know is that when people use euphemisms to minimize the severity of what is happening it results in robbing the dignity of the unborn and failing to hold people accountable for their actions.”

We know wrong has been done when a counselor commits sexual abuse against a counselee or a coach abuses a student, he said. “When it’s

pastor to a member of the congregation it’s not just a moral failing — it is clergy abuse.”

SBC President J.D. Greear said one of the myths about clergy sex abuse is that the church is best equipped to handle allegations internally, which is often justified using 1 Corinthians 6, Greear said.

There is a difference between civil and criminal cases, however, and “Scripture recognizes that distinction,” he said, citing Romans 13.

And for those who would argue grace requires “giving the accused the benefit

of the doubt,” Greear asked, “What about benefit of the doubt for the one bringing the accusation? ... If one of my children were abused how would I want the situation to be handled?”

And even if an abuser repents, Greear said, the Christian understanding of grace never permits a sexual abuser a second chance to abuse others.

“Someone who has abused should never be in a position to abuse again and if they are truly repentant they will understand that,” he said.

Another alarm sounded at the Caring Well Conference is that criminal background checks are a first step but cannot replace careful background inquiries into prospective new church staff members or volunteers

Kimberlee Norris, an attorney and co-founder of MinistrySafe, an organization that advises churches and ministries in best practices to prevent sexual abuse, said only 10% of sexual abusers have interacted with the criminal justice system.

Chris Underwood, associate pastor for congregational care and missions at Highland Baptist Church, Florence, was challenged by that statistic, he said. Though his church performs background screenings for children’s workers he said he now realizes “that’s not enough.”

And in terms of handling a crisis, Underwood said, “we’ve already made the decision we’re not going to manage a crisis if something does happen at our church. We’re not going to be the investigators. We will report.”

### Long-term care

The biggest challenge Underwood said he took away from the conference concerns long-term care.

“What about the person, the woman or the child or the man who has endured the abuse who is maybe disillusioned with the church,” Underwood asked. “How do we provide care for them?”

Amy Whitfield, who started as associate vice president for convention communications of the SBC Executive Committee on Oct. 16, said caring well for survivors is a shared responsibility.

“One of the phrases you hear a lot in Southern Baptist circles is that we believe we can do more together than apart,” she said. “If we really believe that (then) it means doing things that are hard together as well.”



ERLC photo

Caring Well Conference participants publicly lament the abuse crisis in the SBC.

## Concern over reporting surfaces related to Lyell, Sils story

Concern surfaced during the Caring Well Conference (see story, page 1) over a March 8 Baptist Press article related to reporting “a morally inappropriate relationship” rather than calling it sexual abuse.

“In recent days, I’ve been made aware of the situation surrounding the article and the decisions made by Baptist Press at the time of publication,”

Jonathan Howe, the new vice president for communications of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, wrote in an Oct. 5 statement.

“I’m also aware that the story omitted all references to abuse and a lack of consent to sexual activity. ... This led to a general understanding that what happened between Dr. David Sils and Ms. Jennifer Lyell was a consensual

affair. As I understand it, that is not accurate.

“As the official news service for the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Press should be known for integrity, truth and accuracy. Ensuring that is my top priority.”

Lyell responded online Oct. 7 to the recent discussion about her situation at [lyellstatementonabuse.com](http://lyellstatementonabuse.com). (TAB)

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# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Aspects of an Abundant Life

### A Purposeful Life

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

An abundant Christian life is one that is full of joy and prayer as we have seen the past two weeks. A joyful and prayerful life is made even more abundant by having meaningful and exciting purposes for our days.

Since the 17th century many believers have answered the question about life's purposes in the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which answers the question about the chief purpose of man with the two-part answer, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

In its broadest expression a purposeful life is one set on glorifying God in every way in every day. The Bible instructs us, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). While we cannot make God any more glorious than He already is, we can by our manner of living and our life's priorities cause Him to be seen by others as the God of glory. Our words and our deeds are at their best when they enable others to see God's reflection through us.

An important aspect of glorifying God is to put His interests and purposes at the top of our list of reasons for living each day.


Jesus put seeking God's kingdom at the top of the list for life's purposes when He spoke about having the basic necessities of life such as food and

clothing, by admonishing, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). Might we not conclude that the starting point for experiencing an abundant life is asking God who "gives liberally and without reproach" (James 1:5) to do so in order that others might understand what a great and glorious God we serve?

#### Enjoy God forever

The second part of the traditional answer about the chief purpose of human life is that we enjoy God forever. We do well each day to ponder to what extent or if at all whether our chief delight is found in experiencing God's good pleasure.

Do we enjoy being a child of God? Is that enjoyment evident to onlookers? Is the future eternal enjoyment of God in His heaven spilling over into this present time of our earthly sojourn? If so then we will live a purposeful life that possesses a foretaste of the abundant life coming in our eternal future.

Desiring each day to live to the glory and enjoyment of God is a major part of the secret of an abundant life. 

*Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.*



## Bethsaida Baptist reopens 19th century baptismal pool

On Kent and Laura Tabor's first trip down to Alabama from Michigan they came for the hogs.

"It all started with a hunting trip," Laura Tabor said.

But it wasn't long before they were thinking about staying a little longer. They found a local realtor ready to show them a place to live — but even more he was ready to introduce them to a new way of life.

"Don's a very outgoing person," Kent Tabor said of Don Donald, a member of Bethsaida Baptist Church, Pine Apple. "He invited us to his church and we went there and everybody was outgoing and welcoming. It was the first time we had been to a church where when we left we were smiling because we had really enjoyed the church."

Laura Tabor said the whole community "just opened up their arms to us."

#### Monumental occurrence

And Sept. 22 the couple was baptized in Bethsaida Baptist's baptismal pool — a monumental occurrence in and of itself. The pool sits out back and Donald said to his knowledge the pool hadn't been used in at least 120 years.

"It was used for a few years as far as our minutes go somewhere around 1900," Donald said. "You had to fill it up with buckets of

water from a hand-drawn well so it was a pretty laborious process back then."

Somewhere along the way the church had started borrowing other churches' indoor baptismal pools for their services. The most recent baptisms before this one were held in Donald's swimming pool.

But as they talked to the Tabors they thought it might be time to revive the old baptismal pool. And with a water pump belonging to Bethsaida pastor Don Bell the whole process was a lot faster, Donald said.

"We cleaned it out, put a new top on it, relined it with a concrete finish and built new steps," he said.

And on the day of the baptism a "good crowd" showed up even though the temperature soared to nearly 100 degrees.

"It was quite an exciting service," he said. The Tabors' grandchildren came down for the event and sang "Amazing Grace" and everyone had dinner afterward at the Furman Civic Center, which doubles as the fellowship building for Bethsaida Baptist.

"We are blessed to have the Tabors as part of our church and Furman family," Donald said.

But the Tabors say the blessing is all theirs.

"We're glad we found it and they found us," Laura Tabor said. (Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Bethsaida Baptist Church

Don Bell (in pool), pastor of Bethsaida Baptist Church, Pine Apple, in Pine Barren Baptist Association, wraps up the baptism of Kent and Laura Tabor (standing, back) in the church's baptismal pool, which hadn't been used in at least 120 years.

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# Volunteers build 11 homes in 5 days for Beauregard tornado survivors

For the Beauregard community hit hard by tornadoes in early March getting back on its feet has been “a slow process,” said Bill King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association.

But the town’s recovery efforts got a big boost the first week in October as 1,200 volunteers from 29 states and four countries built 11 homes in five days.

“It was a good day,” King said about the home dedications Oct. 4. King and Rusty Sowell, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, dedicated the Robertson family’s new home, sponsored by Providence Baptist; Tuskegee Lee Association; Union Grove Baptist Church, Opelika; and two Methodist churches in the area.

The Robertsons were one of the families whose home



Photo courtesy of Bill King

Three area Baptists — (from left) Bill King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association; David Dismukes, a member of Providence Baptist Church, Opelika; and Rusty Sowell, pastor of Providence Baptist — lead the dedication service for the Robertson family’s new house Oct. 4.

was a total loss in the storms.

The building project was spearheaded by the Fuller Center for Housing. Each home’s materials — around \$50,000 in total — was sponsored by different churches and organizations. All of the labor was completed by volunteer teams.

Sowell said it was a “blessed moment” having the faith community partner together in this way.

“It’s a witness to what can be done when we all work together for a common good and a strong witness to what we can do in days ahead,” he said. (Grace Thornton)

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Photo courtesy of Shades Mountain Baptist Church

## Shades Mountain renovates for 'next generation'

Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, unveiled its nearly \$12 million facility remodel Sept. 29. The project began in February and set about repurposing the church's 30-year-old buildings to get more in line with the church's mission for the future.


"We entitled this initiative 'Next: The Time is now,'" Pastor Danny Wood said in a video on the church's website, noting a building 30 years old naturally had repairs and updates that needed to be made.

But as they considered

whether to make repairs or larger-scale renovations, they had "an opportunity to adjust the footprint within this facility that would put us in a better position to reach not just this generation but then also the next generation," Wood said.


As part of the building project, they increased the worship center's flexibility, restructured the facility for better traffic flow and created a larger lobby and more common areas.

To read more about the remodel visit [shades.org/about/next](http://shades.org/about/next). (TAB)



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## 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](mailto:ghbc@grovehillbaptist.org), ATTN: Pastor Search Committee.

### PASTOR

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

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:david@rainsvillefirst.com). Deadline to receive resumes is Nov. 4.

### STAFF ACCOUNTANT

Church seeks full-time staff accountant. Candidates must be knowledgeable and experienced in accounting software, possess excellent time management skills

and must have accounting/bookkeeping experience. A degree in accounting is preferred. Salary negotiable. Please send resume to: Accountant at P.O. Box 3391, Florence, AL 35630 or [jwj59277@gmail.com](mailto:jwj59277@gmail.com).

### 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](mailto:tonychris777@att.net).

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*Famous Christians from previous centuries*

# Heroes of the Faith

## 2019 marks 500th anniversary of birth of John Calvin successor

**T**heodore Beza (1519–1605), a French Reformed Protestant theologian, educator and author, played a major role in the Reformation.

A disciple of John Calvin, he succeeded Calvin as the leader of the Reformed group. This year is the 500th anniversary of his birth.

He was born on June 24, 1519, at Vezelay, in Burgundy, France, to Pierre de Beza and Marie Bourdelot.

His wealthy uncle took him to Paris for his education. When he was nine he was sent to Orleans to study under Greek scholar Melchior Wolmar. Beza went with him to Bouges, the focus of the French Reformation.

When Wolmar returned to Germany, Beza went to Orleans to study law. He received his license to practice in 1539 and spent two years in Paris as a lawyer. He also gained an important position in literary circles.

He became engaged in 1544 to Claudine Denoese, a young girl of poor means. He promised to marry her when his circumstances changed.

In 1548 when he published a collection of poetry, *Juvenilia*, he was considered one of the best writers of Latin poetry.

Soon after the publication of his

book he had a severe illness. He became aware of his spiritual needs and accepted salvation in Christ.

He and Claudine traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, and married.

They joined John Calvin who was involved in reforming Swiss political and educational institutions.

Beza served as professor of Greek at the Lausanne Academy in Switzerland from 1549 to 1558. He

served as pastor of the Geneva church from 1559 until his death.

He traveled throughout Europe as defender of the Protestant cause.



BEZA

**By Joanne Sloan**

*Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).*



In 1559 he and Calvin founded the Geneva Academy which promoted Calvinist doctrines.

When Calvin died in 1564, Beza became his successor.

One of Beza's enduring contributions was his voluminous writings, which influenced the development of Reformed theology.

Beza died Oct. 13, 1605.

Because of threats to steal his body he was not buried, like Calvin, in the general cemetery in Geneva, but instead in the monastery of St. Pierre.

In the 1960s, Geneva scholars began to carefully edit Beza's work, compiling at least 24 volumes. ✚

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*"...but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 (NIV)

# 3 stories you should know



NAMB photo

SBC Executive Committee President Ronnie Floyd reveals the third consecutive record-breaking Annie Armstrong Easter Offering total of \$62.2 million via a video call to the trustees of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) on Oct. 7. ‘This record-breaking offering ... demonstrates the passionate desire our churches have to reach each person for Jesus Christ in North America,’ Floyd said. NAMB President Kevin Ezell (standing) called the offering total ‘historic.’ (BP)

## InterVarsity group gains legal victory against University of Iowa

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA has gained a legal victory in its effort to remain an official student organization at the University of Iowa.

Federal Judge Stephanie Rose ruled Sept. 27 the university violated the evangelical campus ministry’s speech, association and free exercise of religion rights by barring InterVarsity for requiring its leaders to be Christians. InterVarsity’s membership is open to all who would like to participate but requires its leaders to agree to its statement of Christian faith.

The university derecognized 38 other student groups — including other Christian ministries, the Sikh Awareness Club, the Imam Mahdi Organization and the Latter-day Saint Student Association — at about the same time. (BP)

## Pro-lifers question why abortion industry opposes Louisiana law

Pro-life advocates are not fearful of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to consider the constitutionality of a Louisiana pro-life law, potentially setting up what abortion-rights supporters hope will be the reversal of a 2016 ruling on a similar case in Texas.

The high court announced Oct. 4 it would review a lower court opinion regarding a Louisiana requirement that an abortion doctor must have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said, “For a movement that purports to advocate for women’s health it is bizarre that the abortion industry opposes laws like this. What are they so afraid of? What’s wrong with the abortionist that he can’t get admitting privileges at a hospital?” (BP)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### Chilton Baptist Association’s Felkins to retire after 22 years as DOM



Larry Felkins says his 22 years as director of missions for Chilton Baptist Association have been really special.

“I feel like the Lord has allowed us to be a part of a lot of really good things,” said Felkins, who plans to retire Dec. 31.

That’s included missions, medical trips to Guatemala, partnerships with three church plants and an association of churches who are always ready to lead out in cooperating and serving, he said. “Because of God’s leadership and the generosity of our churches it’s been a really good ministry.”

Before coming to Chilton Association in 1997 he served as pastor of Maytown Baptist Church and Mount Zion Baptist Church, Jasper.

Through the years he also served in various state and Southern Baptist leadership capacities, including serving with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and as president of



FELKINS

the Alabama Director of Missions Fellowship.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, called Felkins a “dear friend and a valuable partner in ministry for decades.”

“In his role as an associational missionary Larry has exemplified excellence in leadership in a Christlike way,” Lance said. “Larry is a pastor’s pastor. He has been an encourager of pastors and other local church leaders as an associational missionary. I can say without hesitation that he has shared that ministry of encouragement with fellow associational missionaries and with state missionaries, including me.” (Grace Thornton)

### Baptist university’s new program to lower cost, build character



With the cost of higher education on the rise graduating debt-free has become increasingly difficult for many students.

But a new initiative announced by Williams Baptist University (WBU) in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, could provide students an affordable path to earning a degree while building character along the way.

At a press conference Sept. 16, WBU President

Stan Norman introduced “Williams Works,” a program with the goal of making “an academically excellent, Christ-centered university education affordable for all families with a real possibility of students graduating debt-free.”

“It is no secret that the cost of higher education has become daunting, a burdensome challenge for many students and their families,” Norman said. “This is manifested in debt that ... weighs heavily” upon graduates as they begin their careers.

Williams Works, which was approved by WBU’s board of trustees Sept. 13, will launch in the fall of 2020. The initial phase of the program will include 40 incoming freshmen who “are willing to work for their education,” Norman said. In exchange for working 16 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters at a job assigned by WBU the students in the program will be compensated in the form of the cost of their education at WBU including their tuition and fees. Students will also have the opportunity



Facebook photo

# News near you

## BALDWIN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Bayside Baptist Church, Lillian**, will host a homecoming celebration Oct. 20 at 10:30 a.m. Bill Jackson and Donnie Dickens will be the guest speakers. For more information call 251-256-0226. Tom Harris is pastor.

## BESSEMER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Seventh Street Baptist Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate its 97th homecoming Oct. 27 at 10:30 a.m. Bill Goodwin will be the guest speaker. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service. Former members and friends of Seventh Street Baptist are welcome.

## COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Newbia Baptist Church, Elba**, will host October-Fest on Oct. 26 from 2 to 6 p.m. The event will feature a guest appearance by Ranger Bob, a fish fry, games, candy and more. Will Jordan is pastor.

## EAST LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Sunset Heights Baptist Church, Lanett**, will host a homecoming service Oct. 20. A singing with Higher Hope will begin at 10 a.m. and preaching by Bill Clark will begin at 11:15 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. Everyone is invited.

## ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Atmore**, will host a fall revival Oct. 20–23. Sunday services will be held at 11 a.m. and 6:15 p.m., and Monday through Wednesday services will begin at 6:15 p.m. South African evangelist Cecil Peasley will be the guest speaker and Don Gober will bring special music. First, Atmore, will also hold the Samford University Ministry Training Institute course Introduction to the Old Testament beginning Oct. 28 at 6 p.m. For more information call 205-726-4055, email mti@samford.edu or visit First, Atmore's Facebook page. To register visit Samford.edu/go/mti. Kevin Lee Garrett is pastor.

## GENEVA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Slocomb**, will celebrate its 132nd anniversary Oct. 27. A praise service with The Thompson Family will begin at 10 a.m. then a service led by former pastor Gary Wiggins will follow. A fellowship meal will be held after the service. Tim Folds is pastor.

## MOBILE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Union Baptist Church, Grand Bay**, will host a homecoming celebration Oct. 20 at 10 a.m. Henry Creel, coordinator of faith-based services with Volunteers of America Southwest, will be the guest speaker. A special musical program also is planned. Food and fellowship will follow the service. David Walley is pastor. ▶ **Derek Allen** is the new pastor of **First Baptist Church, Tillman's Corner, in Mobile**. He previously served as church planter and pastor of Christ Centered Church, Miami, Florida. He also served at Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Warrior; Riverbend Baptist Church, Gadsden; Mount Carmel Baptist Church,

Gadsden; and with the Etowah Baptist Association. Allen holds degrees from Jacksonville State University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He also is currently pursuing a second doctorate from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. He and his wife, Lindsay, have four children.



ALLEN

## MUD CREEK ASSOCIATION

▶ On Sept. 1, **Dogwood Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Adger**, celebrated its centennial anniversary. Pastor Bob Fitzgerald preached and former pastors Jerry Batson and Darryl Cook shared memories.

Johnie Sentell presented a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and David Hobson, director of missions for Mud Creek Baptist Association, brought greetings.

Photos, church memorabilia, letters from former pastors and a painting of the early church building were on display.

"We enjoyed looking back at the past and looking forward to our future," said church member Melissa Davis.

## ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

▶ **Evening Star Baptist Church, Vincent**, will host a fall festival Oct. 26 from 2 to 5 p.m. It will feature games, prizes, pony rides, candy and much more. Shon Phillips is pastor. 🌈

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

to have their room and board expenses covered through working over the summer.

Williams Baptist University is affiliated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. (BP)

### **Bethel Baptist pastor retiring after 16 years at church, 43 years of ministry**

When Rick Cato looks back over his 43 years of ministry he only sees tremendous blessings.

"I've been truly blessed. All the places I've served were wonderful churches," he said. "And the opportunity to exercise my call has been a wonderful experience."

Cato — who most recently has served for more than 16 years as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove — plans to retire Oct. 27. He will continue teaching with Samford University's Ministry Training Institute, something he's done for the past 20 years, and will serve as a supply preacher.

Barry Cosper, associational mission strategist for Bessemer Baptist Association, called Cato "an exceptional leader and pastor who has been a special blessing" to the association.

"We will miss him ... but we praise God for his leadership through the years and into retirement," Cosper said.



CATO

Before coming to Bethel Baptist, Cato served as pastor of County Line Baptist Church, Cragford; Hughes Memorial Baptist Church, Pinson; First Baptist Church, Midfield; and Sycamore Baptist Church. He started out in ministry as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Warrior, and also served a church in North Carolina while he was earning his master's degree at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. (Grace Thornton)

### **Michigan adoption agency wins in court battle over religious beliefs**

Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies seeking to practice their religious beliefs gained an important victory Sept. 26 in Michigan.

Federal Judge Robert Jonker issued a prelimi-

nary injunction blocking Michigan from canceling the state-approved contract of St. Vincent Catholic Charities to provide foster care and adoption services. St. Vincent will be able to continue partnering with the state while the court case continues.

The Catholic agency has refused to certify and place children in the homes of same-sex couples as a result of its belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman. In his decision Jonker said the state's action "strongly suggests [Michigan's] real goal is not to promote non-discriminatory child placements but to stamp out St. Vincent's religious belief and replace it with the state's own."

Michigan has about 13,000 children in foster care. On average an estimated 442,000 children are in foster care in the United States on any given day, according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Nine states have enacted measures that protect the right of agencies to abide by their religious or moral convictions in adoption and foster care: Alabama, Kansas, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia. (BP, TAB)

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

# FRUITFUL

JOHN 15:5

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

**NOVEMBER 12~13, 2019**

EASTERN SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH • 6847 PARK DR. • DAPHNE

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**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,  
TUESDAY MORNING  
TIM COX**  
PASTOR, LIBERTY BAPTIST  
CHURCH, CHELSEA



TIM  
COX



JASON  
ALLEN

**MESSAGE, TUESDAY EVENING  
JASON ALLEN**

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, KANSAS CITY, MO.  
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RICK  
MARSHALL

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WEDNESDAY MORNING  
RICK MARSHALL**

RETIRED PASTOR, EASTERN HILLS BAPTIST  
CHURCH, MONTGOMERY



ANNEL  
ROBAYNO

## "FRUITFUL" THEME INTERPRETATIONS

**ANNEL ROBAYNA**

STATE MISSIONARY, HISPANIC MINISTRY  
TUESDAY MORNING



JARMAN  
LEATHERWOOD

**JARMAN LEATHERWOOD**

PASTOR, HOUSE OF HOPE AND  
RESTORATION, HUNTSVILLE  
TUESDAY AFTERNOON



BEN  
STUBBLEFIELD

**BEN STUBBLEFIELD**

PASTOR, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON  
WEDNESDAY MORNING



VOICES OF MOBILE

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONVENTION,  
PLEASE VISIT [ALSOM.ORG/CONVENTION](http://ALSOM.ORG/CONVENTION).

# CP giving exceeds projected budget for fifth straight year

In geese Jay Wolf sees an illustration of the Cooperative Program.

One goose “can fly 1,000 miles alone but in a flock that same energy expenditure will take a bird 1,700 miles,” said Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

“So if you have the sense of a goose be part of God’s team,” Wolf said of Southern Baptists’ Cooperative Program (CP).

“Being part of the larger Southern Baptist family is extremely important because Jesus called us to function as a synergistic team,” said Wolf, pointing out the CP — the way Southern Baptists work together in missions and ministry in state conventions and throughout North America and the world — provides the lift propelling the gospel to far corners of the globe, darkened concrete

tunnels of urban centers and vast rural landscapes.

Churches participating in the CP determine the amount or percentage of their undesignated offerings to be allocated for cooperative work outside their local reach. That amount is forwarded to the state or regional convention which determines by vote at its annual meeting the percentage to be sent to

Southern Baptists’ national and international causes.

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) allocates percentage amounts of what it receives to the International Mission Board (50.4%); North American Mission Board (22.79%); the six Southern Baptist seminaries (22.16%); Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (1.65%); and the SBC operating budget (2.99%). These percentages were approved by mes-

sengers to the SBC annual meeting in Birmingham in June.

As of Sept. 30, the end of the 2018–2019 fiscal year, gifts received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) for distribution through the CP Allocation Budget totaled \$196,731,703.44, more than \$2.7 million more than the projected budget. CP allocation receipts for SBC work for the month of September totaled \$15,259,623.92.

The SBC’s new fiscal year began Oct. 1, 2019, and the convention adopted budget is set at \$196.5 million.

## ‘More together’

“Southern Baptist churches continue to do more together than we could ever do on our own,” said SBC EC President and CEO Ronnie Floyd. “Cooperating together to reach every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation is exactly what the Cooperative Program is all about.” (BP)

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# VBS

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”  
Luke 9:23

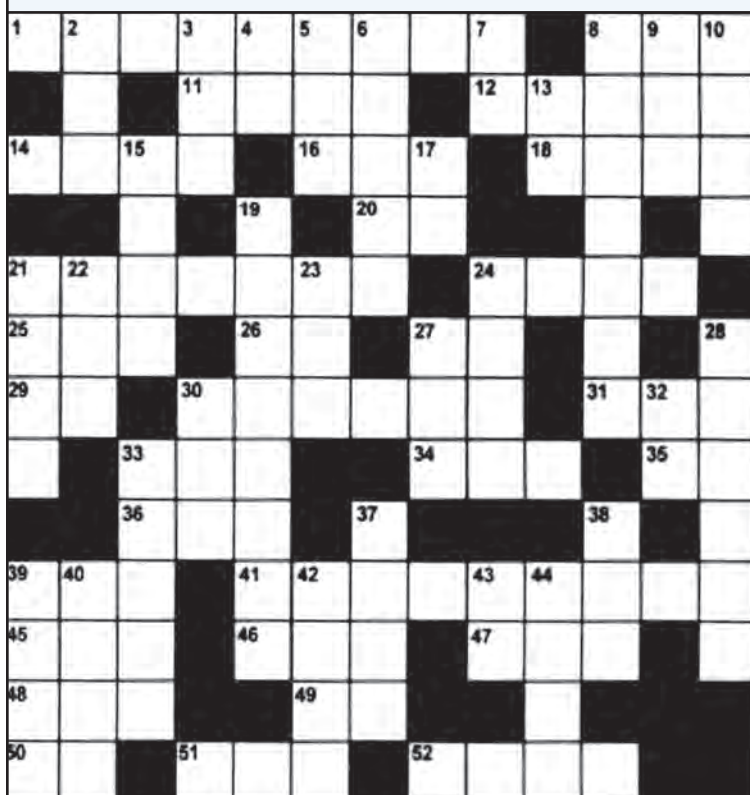
## BRINGING SPIRITUAL GROWTH TO KIDS AND ADULTS

ALPINE ASCENT  
VBS 2020  
FIND STRENGTH IN GOD'S WORD

**October is Cooperative Program Emphasis month in the Southern Baptist Convention.**

# Christian Crossword

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### Across

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_. (Prov. 1:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ the kine to the cart. (1 Sam. 6:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Domini.
- To use oars. (2 words)
- I shall be a \_\_\_\_\_ forever. (Isa. 47:7)
- In all the region of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Kings 4:11)
- Tasted the water that Jesus made \_\_\_\_\_. (John 2:9)
- Registered Nurse. (abbr.)
- Pierced themselves through with many \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Tim. 6:10)
- Keepers at \_\_\_\_\_. (Titus 2:5)
- David did \_\_\_\_\_ the shew bread. (Matt. 12:4)
- Los Angeles (abbr.).
- The end is not \_\_\_\_\_ and by. (Luke 21:9)
- “Entertainment Tonight’s” popular name.

- The mouth of the righteous speaketh \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 37:30)
- Shem, \_\_\_\_\_ and Japheth. (Gen. 5:32)
- To forbid something.
- He will hate the \_\_\_\_\_, and love the other. (Matt. 6:24)
- Exclamation of satisfaction.
- And \_\_\_\_\_ not his sisters here with us? (Mark 6:3)
- Charged particle.
- Did all eat the same \_\_\_\_\_ meat. (1 Cor. 10:3)
- Gathered the good but cast the \_\_\_\_\_ away. (Matt. 13:48)
- He was \_\_\_\_\_ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
- 2,000 pounds.
- Tax department. (abbr.)
- Neither \_\_\_\_\_ there any rock like our God. (1 Sam. 2:2)
- Detached Service. (abbr.)
- This is my beloved

- \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 3:17)
- Universally. (prefix)

### Down

- Sportsmen’s group. (abbr.)
- The Lord ... will prosper thy \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 24:40)
- \_\_\_\_\_, M, \_\_\_\_.
- In the \_\_\_\_\_ of this world. (Matt. 13:40)
- Opened the prison \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 5:19)
- Eastern time. (abbr.)
- Shout unto God with the voice of \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 47:1)
- Charged particle.
- He chose David ... from following the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 78:70, 71)
- Expression of pain.
- Thrust through with a \_\_\_\_\_. (Heb. 12:20)
- Symbol for radon.
- Continue in faith ... and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Tim. 2:15)
- The Greeks \_\_\_\_\_ after wisdom. (1 Cor. 1:22)
- A grain.
- Of whom the world \_\_\_\_\_ not worthy. (Heb. 11:38)
- When they had sung an \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 26:30)
- What a ghost says.
- A Pharisee might say: “I \_\_\_\_\_.”
- The beast shall make \_\_\_\_\_ against them. (Rev. 11:7)
- Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)
- The centurion loosed Paul from his \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 22:30)
- Offers to buy at auction.
- Joshua the son of \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 1:1)
- Ibidem. (abbr.)
- Wherein shall go no galley with \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 33:21)
- Look upon mine affliction and my \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 25:18)
- Impersonal pronoun.
- The unclean spirit had \_\_\_\_\_ him. (Mark 1:26)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 20

## Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### WALKING FORWARD Ephesians 4:11–16

#### Equippers Given (11)

In order to help believers preserve unity God gives gifts to His followers. While God gives all Christians gifts four types of leadership gifts are to be used to help build up the Church.

The first of these is the gift to be an apostle. Technically speaking an apostle is one who had seen the risen Savior and is sent out to testify to that truth. Some people in evangelical circles believe this gift was limited to the first generation of believers and is no longer available to Christians because its purpose of testifying to Christ with signs and wonders has been fulfilled. Typically Baptists don't use the term to refer to Christians other than the specific ones in the Bible. However, it is possible to understand the term as relating to all believers since all of us are to testify to the risen Christ.

A prophet is one who can predict future events or, in the New Testament, proclaim God's word. The reason this office was important in the New Testament is the Bible was not widespread. The New Testament was in the process of being written during the first century so there was a need for God's will to be known. However, we have a complete Bible that is easy to access. In the first century there was no completed New Testament because the final books of the Bible (the books John wrote) were not completed until the end of that century. Because we have the Bible most Baptists believe this office is no longer in effect. God's will is readily known to us by reading the Bible. Further believers have the Holy Spirit which helps us to understand the Bible and convicts us; therefore, many believe the role of prophet in its original understanding no longer applies.

The third gift mentioned by Paul is that of evangelist. All Christians are called to evangelize (see 1 Pet. 3:15). However, some are actually given this as a gift. An easy example of this is Billy Graham, who

preached the gospel to thousands upon thousands.

The last gift mentioned in this passage is that of pastor and teacher which is one office with two ministries. The word pastor means "shepherd" which demonstrates how a pastor is supposed to interact with his "flock" of parishioners. The pastor does this by leading and teaching. One of the pastor's main roles in the church is to present and expound on the word of God so the church can be nourished and grow.

#### To Move Believers Forward (12–14)

The purpose for these gifts is to build up the body of Christ. Many Baptist churches think the pastor's job is to motivate and convict, but the idea of knowledge is often neglected. I have heard it said many times by Baptists that theology is not important. This probably explains why Baptists are one of the groups most likely to be converted to Mormonism. When we focus only on emotions and feelings we open ourselves up for deception because feelings and emotions change. We need to be grounded in the Scriptures and understand what we believe so we will not be swayed by unbiblical teachings that come our way.

#### As a Body (15–16)

Paul mentions how the truth must be spoken in love. One of the problems our current society faces is the question of truth. Pilate wasn't the only one to ask "What is truth" — our society often asks the same thing. As Christians we know God is a God of truth and we know truth by knowing God's word. This means we need to rely on the Bible, not what society says, to be our guide for truth. Many people today associate love with allowing others to do whatever they want to do. However, this is not love. Love for others demands we intercede and show them right from wrong using the Bible as our authority so we can help them be involved in the life of the church, helping it to grow and flourish. 🌿

## Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



### GOD'S WILL AND THE BIBLE Psalm 19:7–14

Human beings have an insatiable desire to know what we might call "secret knowledge." We want to know what the future (or even the present) holds for us and thus what our next steps ought to be.

Taken to extremes this desire can drive people to consult horoscopes or psychics or to dabble in tarot cards or Ouija boards or séances. Other simpler and perhaps more innocent examples of this same desire exist, however.

We might wonder who ought to start off with the ball in a football game so we flip a coin. A young lady might wonder whether that strapping young man likes her so she pulls petals off a flower saying, "He loves me; he loves me not."

Whether by drawing straws, picking a number or playing Rock, Paper, Scissors we have developed innumerable ways of trying to find the hidden secret to determining what we ought to do next.

More often than we might like to admit individuals have made decisions by relying on the Bible ... not by consulting the actual teaching of Scripture but by a method we might call "pick a verse." The question is posed, "Should I ask Suzy to marry me or not?" Then the hopeful young man opens his Bible to a random page and points at a random verse to see what guidance Scripture has for him. Should he land on Proverbs 18:22 he may run to buy the ring; if he finds Proverbs 7:27 instead he might just run and keep on running.

I trust we would all find this to be a terrible way of making a life decision. But if this is a bad strategy what exactly would a good one look like?

Even if we are not attracted to crystal balls and psychic hotlines almost all of us would admit to wondering what God's will is for our lives.

#### God's word can be fully trusted to reveal God's will. (7–10)

Normally when we ask what

God's will is for our lives we have in mind dilemmas related to the college we should attend, the person we should marry, the job we should take or the house we should buy. Truth be told neither God nor the Bible tends to be very forthcoming on these sorts of decisions.

We aren't likely to get a visit from Michael the archangel with instructions on whether to buy the three-bedroom ranch or the four-bedroom Tudor. Here God expects us to follow the path laid out by the book of Proverbs and simply proceed with wisdom.

As He did with Paul and the man from Macedonia (Acts 16), God, being God, can intervene to stop us if our "wise" choice turns out not to be the right choice.

When the Bible does discuss our relationship to the will of God it almost always does so in terms of our following the path of instructions He has already given us in His word.

The second half of Psalm 19 beautifully illustrates this idea as it extols the virtues of God's law.

The psalmist declares it to be perfect and sure, right and pure, reviving the soul and rejoicing the heart and, most importantly for our discussion, able to make wise the simple.

#### Obedience to God's word leads to right living. (11–14)

As Deuteronomy 30:11–17 affirms God's will for us is not hidden or inaccessible; it is readily available for us in His commandments. The task that remains to us is to follow and obey those commandments.

Again in Psalm 19 the psalmist celebrates the fact that keeping God's law both steers him away from errors and helps him find great reward. This dynamic is equally evident in our lives today.

As we live in accordance with God's word we take steps to avoid those potholes and pitfalls along the path of life and we make the sort of wise choices that evoke God's blessing. 🌿



# Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

## Netflix's 'Abstract: The Art of Design' tops October streaming

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Everyone has a talent though most of us weren't born with the artistic skill to be designers for the world's top companies.

These are the geniuses who design your car. And your shoes. And that incredible stage at the rock concert.

They're the people behind the scenes who make the world colorful and unique — and they're always looking forward into the future.

They also rarely get front-page publicity ... until now.

The new Netflix documentary "Abstract: The Art of Design" probes the minds of the world's top designers, examining the art, science

and philosophy of their creations.

Season 2, which just launched recently, includes six episodes featuring individuals such as Ruth E. Carter, who won an Oscar for her costume designs for "Black Panther," and Jonathan Hoefler, who worked for the Obama campaign.

If politics and movies aren't your thing consider Season 1, which featured Tinker Hatfield, who designed Michael Jordan's Nike shoes, and Es Devlin, who designed concert stages for U2.

### Exploring creativity

Each episode features an interview with the designer as well as friends and co-workers. It probes the reasons behind their designs — and how their creativity changed society forever.

It is one of my favorite new documentaries even if it's not fully family friendly. "Abstract" is rated TV-14 and includes minor language. But if you can overlook that one flaw you'll be entertained and inspired — and perhaps even motivated to do a little creation yourself.

We serve a creative God who created humans to be creative. Abstract wonderfully demonstrates that truth.

### Also worth streaming:

#### For children

► *"Carmen Sandiego, Season 2 (Netflix)* — The thief-turned-good girl continues her travels around the



'Abstract: The Art of Design'

Photo courtesy of Netflix

globe to stop the evil organization V.I.L.E. which is comprised of bad guys who want to steal. Along the way children learn about geography. Rated TV-Y7-FV.

► *"The Beverlys" (Pureflix)* — This musical comedy is aimed at children,



tweens and teens and features Christian recording artist Jamie Grace — and plenty of goofy humor. The plot spotlights three orphaned girls taken in by a failed recording executive and dream of forming their own group.

#### For adults/teens

► *"Tall Girl" (Netflix)* — A high school girl gets bullied for her 6-foot-1-inch height but learns to be comfortable in her own skin. This Netflix original comedy has a few caveats — minor language and a few kissing scenes — but has a great message about beauty for today's teens. It also has quirky "Napoleon

Dynamite"-type comedy that had me laughing out loud. Rated TV-PG.

► *"Superman Returns" (Netflix)* — Superman returns to earth after a five-year absence to learn the world is much different than when he left. But not everything is different: Lex Luthor is still on the loose. The film includes minor language, which you can cut out on Vudu's new streaming service. Rated PG-13 for some intense action violence.

► *"Amazing Grace" (Hulu)* — It's an inspirational trip back in time to 1972 when Aretha Franklin recorded a new album in front of an audience at New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles. 🇺🇸

### Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

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# 'Gifted differently'

## Kenya's 'King of Skate' uses celebrity platform to share the love of Christ

As a boy Kelvin Murage took the wheels off a suitcase and the back off a chair then screwed them together to craft a skateboard.

As time passed Murage continued to tinker with skateboards he made himself. When his school received computers and the internet during his last year there, like most teenag-

ers across the world, he discovered YouTube. One day he watched a video about a competition in Nairobi where one of his classmates had taken second place.

Murage bombarded the classmate with questions and then bought his first board for 2,300 Kenyan shillings (about \$23), which took several months — and refraining from after-school donuts — to save from his allowance.

When Murage finished school he headed off to the University of Nairobi, books under one arm, skateboard under the other, and quickly found a community willing to accept him — skateboarders.

One day a missionary approached the group because he also was interested in skateboarding. As the conversation progressed Murage heard the gospel and was invited to a Bible study. Sitting among people with open Bibles he finally under-



Photos by Anthony Rivers

Kelvin Murage uses his unexpected platform — skateboarding — to share the gospel in Nairobi, Kenya, and in the global skateboarding community.

stood the difference between Christ as his Savior and “Christian” as a cultural label. He claimed a life in Christ that day and left the Bible study a changed man.

### Burdened to tell the truth

From that point on Murage wondered how many young Kenyans faced the same struggles he did growing up. How many of his skateboarding friends needed to hear this same truth? As Murage grew in his walk with the Lord he was burdened with a desire for his friends.

In 2016, Kenya's popular communications company Safaricom launched a television network to provide resources and training for the country's large youth population. They debuted the initiative

with an advertising campaign showcasing a drummer, an artist, a dancer, a Muay Thai fighter and a skater. Murage was selected as the skater and he instantly became one of the faces of Kenya's skateboarding culture.

He suddenly had an unexpected platform to share the truth of the gospel — not just with his friends in Kenya but through connections in international skating ministries like Skaters for Christ.

He knows his skateboarding talent is the way God is sending him to herald the good news in Nairobi and beyond.

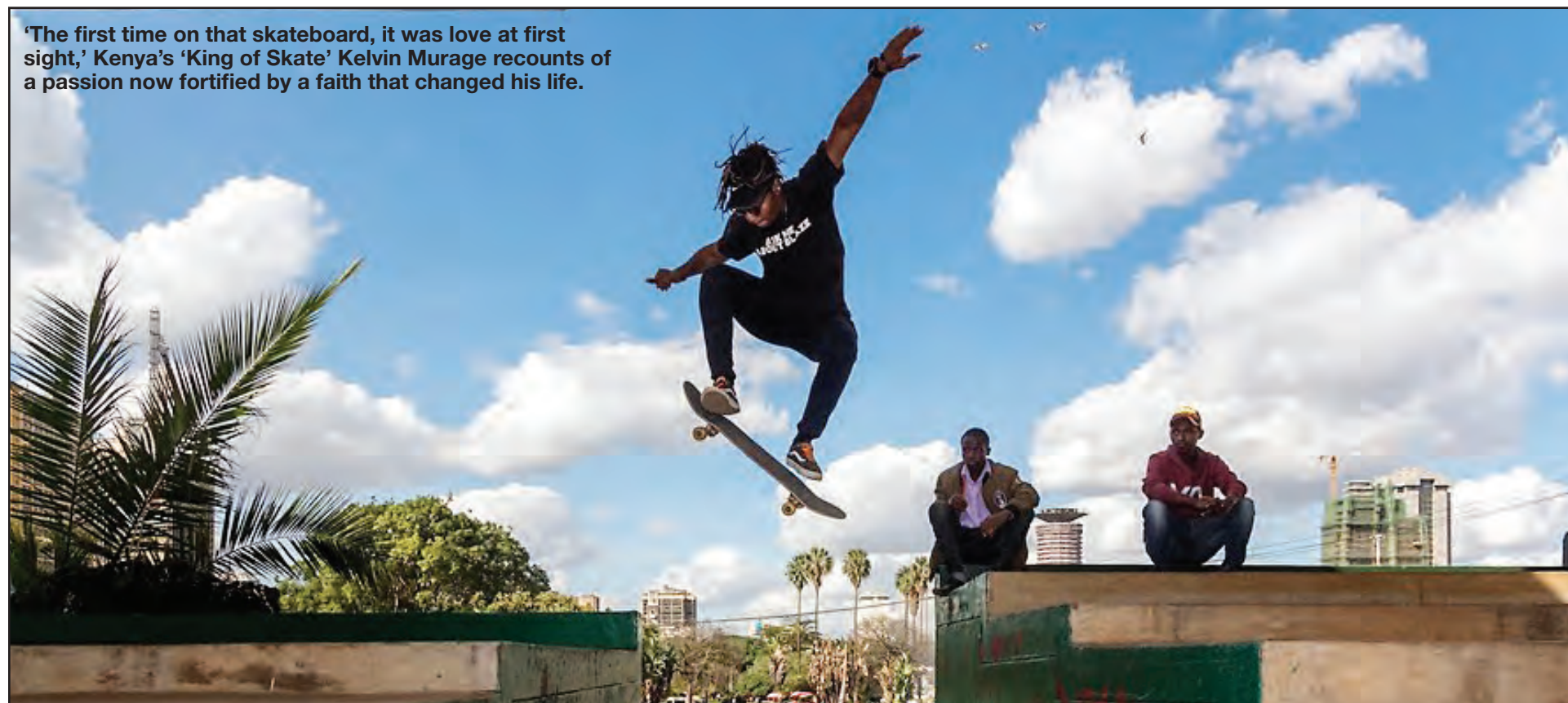
“We are all gifted differently and it is all for the glory of God,” Murage said. “People need Jesus.” (BP)

## How to pray:

▶ Pray Kelvin Murage will continue to use his platform to share the gospel with others in the skateboarding community.

▶ Pray ministries like Skaters for Christ will continue to reach people and that new chapters will be formed.

(TAB)



'The first time on that skateboard, it was love at first sight,' Kenya's 'King of Skate' Kelvin Murage recounts of a passion now fortified by a faith that changed his life.

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  
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THE MARK WHITE SHOW  
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