



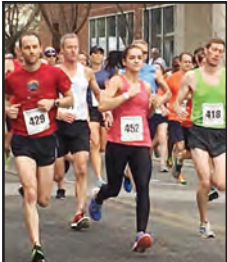
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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Staying fit for active ministry — Part 1

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



October is Clergy Appreciation Month

Pastors and their families experience challenges like everyone else. In times of struggle and crisis they need fellow believers to come alongside them to encourage and minister to them in the difficult times.

Pastoring pastors

Ministering to the unique needs of pastors, church staff and their families

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Miles away from home while her minister husband waited for a heart transplant, Marilyn understood the need for a pastor.

"One morning I arrived for a visit in the intensive care unit and was told my husband's condition had deteriorated and he had been taken off the donor list. Imagine being hundreds of miles from our church, no family present and no one to really care."

"After years of others depending on my husband now we were the ones in need," she said.

When crisis strikes pastors, pastor's spouses and their children too often are alone. One pastor described it this way: "We are the forgotten people."

The minister's family experiences the same needs as other members of the congregation. They need Christian friends to support them in difficult times and listen as they talk through tough questions.

The following suggestions — compiled from interviews with ministers, spouses and adult children of ministers — may help pastors prepare for times when they will need a pastor themselves.

Ministry friendships

► Develop a relationship with ministers in other churches. Who comes when the minister's family needs help? Often it is a pastor from a neighboring congregation. Perhaps it is an unspoken agreement. For some it is a friendship that develops

between couples serving in nearby churches. Whatever the reason the ministers develop an understanding of helping one another in times of need.

► Pursue the friendship of ministers from other denominations. When Richard accepted the call to another church he found a particular need awaiting him. A young minister in another denomination had recently lost his wife as a result of a fatal heart attack.

"In every sense of the word, I became his pastor," said Richard. "We talked over (See 'Pastors,' page 9)

First-person: Impressions at the border

What an incredible experience. Even though we didn't get to see everything we originally wanted to see we still learned a great deal about the border crisis and the ministries happening along the border in Mexico.

It's always good to be reminded that churches in other countries are helping too. I think we tend to forget that we as Americans aren't the only ones leading ministries and helping in these countries.

The churches who know the culture and communities should be the ones leading the way in ministry and we should be supporting them. They are the churches that will disciple and impact these people in the future. We should be working through them, not around or over them. They are the ones who will still be there when our missions teams leave.

I was particularly struck by the banners I saw hanging in one of the churches we visited. They highlighted Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

One banner read "Judea" and included photos of the local community; another banner read "Jerusalem" and included photos of Baja California and Tijuana; another read "Samaria" and included photos of Haiti and the U.S.; the final banner read "To the ends of the earth" and included photos of Turkey, Nepal and Morocco.

Those banners were a reminder to

me that these churches aren't just focused on reaching and helping their communities. These bodies of believers also desire to spread the gospel across the globe — even to us in the U.S. We are Mexico's



INGRAM

Samaria. We are in just as much need of Christ as any other country around the world.

It was a powerful reminder that we as Americans aren't the only ones on mission to go to the ends of the earth — and a powerful reminder of the lostness right here in our country. Instead

of thinking everyone needs our help and intervention, we should join forces with the churches and pastors in these places who are passionate about helping their communities.

We have resources they don't have and they have resources we don't have. They have valuable connections and relationships within the community that we don't have. We shouldn't see any divides

between us. We are all the family of God working toward one common goal.

These pastors and churches are pouring everything they have into ministries to help the community whether it's housing migrants waiting on appointments to obtain U.S. visas, feeding the migrants, helping them settle into a new life in Mexico or providing a church service for them in their language and culture.

Support and encourage

Let's not try to reinvent the wheel and do things on our own or the way we want or think they should be done. Why don't we just pour into the churches and pastors and support them in the ways they need?

I just think it's important for us to remember that we (Americans) aren't the saving grace of anyone. We have all been saved by grace alone and should show that grace to those we meet no matter where they are from, what language they speak or the color of their skin.

(Jessica Ingram)

TAB's Watts speaks at Judson



Photo by Mary Amelia Taylor

On Oct. 8, Cynthia Watts, executive assistant to the president and editor-in-chief at *The Alabama Baptist*, spoke during the chapel service at Judson College in Marion. Watts encouraged students to 'leave your mark' on the lives of others even in seemingly small, sometimes unseen, ways — through a conversation, a quick 'helping hand' or a note. (TAB, Judson)



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.



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

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Make plans to join your fellow Alabama Baptists at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, on Nov. 11-13 for the Alabama Baptist State Convention and Pastors Conference.

MY RASHIONALE

By Jennifer Davis Rash
President and Editor-in-Chief

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Simple decluttering of the brain helps when overwhelmed

Have you ever tried brain dumping — writing down what is swirling around in your brain?

It really is simple and can be a quick exercise of jotting down what has to be done that day or a longer, diving-in-deep type experience.

Either option works based on how overwhelmed you might be and both options always prove therapeutic when practiced.

While brain dumping really can be done anywhere at anytime, I find it provides the most calming effect when I pull away from everything happening around me for a few minutes.

A quiet environment helps the mind focus and fire off the items needing urgent attention, random things you should or want to do, concerns, fears, frustrations, various ideas to develop and anything else that surfaces.

Writing them down on paper or putting them in a document on your phone, tablet or computer declutters your mind and thoughts. It allows you to focus and feel less frantic.

The calming effect takes away the fear of forgetting something or the overwhelmed sense of not being able to get it all done.

A calm, clear, decluttered mind will be more productive and more energized which allows you to tackle your to-do list with purpose and confidence.

Brain dumping can be done as often as needed and the list that results can then be organized and prioritized.

Sometimes I start with a calendar and walk through the days and other times I let all that I'm attempting to remember flow out in whatever order it wants.

Using bullet points helps me as I jot down the items and transferring them to my calendar or a priority list ensures they actually get done.

One negative side effect of brain dumping happens when I don't prioritize the list or look back at it often — I will likely forget to do something because my mind has "released" it.

Using the same notebook or

document for the lists each time helps as does reviewing the information frequently.

Transferring the items to a daily list and crossing them off the original list also helps keep them front and center.

Taking a few minutes to tackle several of the easy items always helps me feel a sense of accomplishment.

And if you want the items dumped from your brain to actually be accomplished before you drown in the lists you are making then it is important to select at least one major item

on the list each week to dissect into manageable parts. Develop a game plan for completing the project and work the plan, adapting and adjusting as needed along the way.

Of course all of us have different situations, environments and responsibilities that impact how, when and where we do what we do each day as well as what all clutters our minds.

Even the basic form of brain dumping without the extra effort toward productivity brings a calmness we all need which adds the ultimate bonus — more room for Jesus.✠

TAB FALL BOARD MEETING



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Arthur Williams (seventh from the left), 2017–2019 chairman of the board of directors of *The Alabama Baptist*,

leads the Oct. 5 fall board meeting at TAB's office in Homewood.

Along with approving the 2020 budget and taking care of other busi-

ness, board members elected new officers: chairman, Rob Jackson; vice chairman, Gary Fenton; and secretary, Chris Roberts.✠

Your Voice



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

A better way to share political opinions?

By **Karina Philip**
www.karinaspeaks.com

Expressing one's political views on social media these days is like dropping bloody fish guts into a shark tank. It's downright scary at times. That's why I often sit out these exchanges.

But I've seen brothers and sisters in Christ trash each other too often. I cringe every time I see some iteration of: "You're a smart guy. Take down this garbage."

Could there be a better way?
I hope so.

Jesus said that without unity, we (the Church) cannot be effective witnesses to the world (John 17:20–23).

With that in mind, here are some questions to ask ourselves as we engage in these difficult but necessary conversations:

1. Is my objective simply to make

a point or to point people to Christ?

2. Am I regarding the person I disagree with as a fellow image bearer of Christ?

3. Are the things we agree on of more consequence than the things we disagree about?

4. What if neither of us has a full grasp on all the issues and we need each other to see a more complete picture?

5. Can I acknowledge the inherent conflict, tension and trade-offs of siding with any political party?

6. Can we acknowledge that no political party has a monopoly on what we believe? That in some cases it's not as simple as "this versus that"?

7. Could we work together outside of the current political environment to demonstrate the love of Christ and improve things in our country?

8. Am I placing my culture, region, traditions or any other affiliation or ideology above identification with Christ and what He commands?

9. Am I defending the truth of God's word or striving to preserve power, wealth and entitlements that favor me above others?

10. Has my personal apathy and compromise contributed to our country's current societal ills?

11. Is my aversion to our leadership so acute that it impedes me from obeying the biblical commands to honor (1 Pet. 2:17) and pray for our leaders (1 Tim. 2:1–3)?

12. Is my defense of our leadership so unequivocal that it impedes me from obeying the biblical command to speak up and defend the rights of the weak and destitute (Prov. 31:8–9; Jer. 22:3)?

13. Can I call out any unbiblical views my brother or sister might have in humility and love?

14. Can I accept being called out for any unbiblical views I might have in humility and love?

15. How can I gracefully exit this conversation if or when it becomes apparent we cannot agree?

EDITOR'S NOTE — Karina Philip is a writer, blogger and educator who shares her thoughts on the Bible and life at www.karinaspeaks.com. She lives in the New York City metro area with her husband and 3-year-old daughter.

Let's not be content with mediocrity in our Christian lives. There is already too much apathy [and] spiritual laziness in the church today. Don't be ordinary, be extraordinary for Christ! Be a bright light shining for the Lord in this present darkness.

Charlie Howell
DOM, Madison
Baptist Association

Congregations do not know everything about their pastor, his life or his wife and you don't have to. ... He may need you to love on him and his family just a little bit.

Mike Snow
DOM, Bethel Baptist
Association

It's healthy for us to remember that our identity is not tied to what we have to offer but what Christ has offered us. ... [God] did not accept us based on wholeness but our brokenness. He gave us His Son to heal us from our sins.

Pastor Brent Thompson
Heflin Baptist Church

When a Holy Spirit-concept gets into our heads, [our] old, outdated, entrenched thinking gets dislodged and a powerful new way of life emerges.

Pastor Gary Burton
Pintlala Baptist Church

Letters to the Editor

I've noticed that you have such a positive and full presence on social media. I enjoy seeing what you and *TAB* are up to and all that you are making available to your followers. You are doing an excellent job!

Keep up the good work. You guys are doing great things.

Melissa Carlisle-Golden
Birmingham, Ala.

I've been a reader of *The Alabama Baptist* for several years and I love the changes that you have made. One word to describe it: relevant. *TAB* is filled with attractive and relevant content that is especially helpful to pastors and others who have an interest in the church making disciples.

Pastor Arnold Hendrix
South Mobile FBC, Theodore

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“You are limited only to your imagination and the power of the Holy Spirit to reach, teach and disciple.”

RANDALL STONER

Director of Missions, Marshall Baptist Association

Live unselfishly and love your communities and see the beauty in every single person you encounter.

Lisa Rose
Montgomery, Ala.

We should also do everything in our power to expose as many people as we can to the life-changing gospel. ... As people come into the church, we should love them enough to, with great understanding and grace, not allow them (or ourselves) to settle for less than God's best plan.

Pastor Josh Cook
Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church
Hueytown

There are times in our lives that we can get so overwhelmed by our

circumstances that we will refuse to hear what our Father is telling us. Days of trouble need to be days of prayer. ... Prayer is the initial and essential action of every believer, especially when trouble comes.

Pastor Bill McCall
The Baptist Church at McAdory
McCalla

The Holy Spirit convicts us very clearly when we are not under His full influence.

Pastor Matthew DeBord
FBC Clanton

If you follow Matthew 28:18–20 and go out to make disciples, you will always end up building the true church. However, if you start out to make a church, you rarely get disci-

ples. This concept is true in every instance! I have always been attracted to soul winners because they are the first line of defense against our community, our culture and our country turning against God. ... If we fail in making disciples of those who are outside of our church we will never reach those who God called us to reach.

Pastor Jerry Light
FBC Selma

Jesus said, “I will come again.” This is a wonderful promise for the Christian. The coming of the Lord Jesus to gather His people unto Himself! ... He will return!

Pastor Eugene Carver
Hillview Baptist Church
Birmingham



IMB photo

Paul Chitwood is president of the International Mission Board.

Cooperation starts at home

During [this] Week of Prayer for associational missions I want to give a shout out to those who serve through the local associations and the churches who partner together in the local setting.

Southern Baptists have always been able to get more done through working together. Cooperative missions efforts start at home as local churches in an association join themselves together to reach their community.

We know that model continues on as churches cooperate across the state, across the nation and literally around the world through the International Mission Board.

But during this week I want to say thank you to those who are leading the association work. I want to say thank you to those churches who are still investing in that work.

Might the Lord use us as Southern Baptists to share the gospel — the good news of the Lord Jesus — locally, across the state, across the nation and around the world.

God bless you as you seek to share His good news.

—Paul Chitwood

EDITOR'S NOTE — The Week of Prayer for Baptist Associations is Oct. 20–26. For prayer resources, go to www.ameresources.org.

From the *Twitterverse*

@vancepitman

Our nation desperately needs a generation of pastors who are more prophetic than pundit.

@myarnell

“It is of little importance to me that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I don't even judge myself. For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. It is the Lord who judges me” [1 Cor. 4:3-4]. Why is Paul so confident? His gospel call.

@dandarling

[A] key part of leadership, something God has had to teach me over the years, is to tell those who work with you how much you appreciate them before they expect it. Don't make people scratch and claw for affirmation. Give it freely.

@Fikkert

“Nothing short of a change of church culture will suffice — from a culture of entertainment, politics, personality and program to a culture of discipleship.” [— Gerald L. Sittser @CTmagazine]

@EdLitton

Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Matt. 9:38)

@brocraige

“Selfishness is as foreign to Christianity as darkness to light.” — Charles Haddon Spurgeon

@trillianewbell

Sometimes I wonder if we are most critical of people not because they aren't walking in a manner worthy of the gospel but rather because they aren't walking in a manner worthy of what we think.

In other words, they aren't reflecting us. We want people to be made in our image.

@bellevuepastor

Does anybody remember when people in general seemed a little kinder? I think it's providential that “kindness” is located right in the middle of the nine attributes that make up the fruit of the spirit. Ask the Lord to help you be kind today — to everyone.

@DrStevenJLawson

The hard sayings of Jesus are not hard to understand, just hard to swallow.

@OSHawkins

For those new to SBC life there once was a time when the main thing talked about was evangelism and missions.

'Created to move'

Exercise boosts immunity, benefits brain health, improves sense of well-being

By Denise George
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

God created the human body to move which is why consistent physical activity is essential to good health.

Unfortunately Alabamians tend to live sedentary lives. According to 2018 data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly one-third of Alabama adults reported doing no physical activity or exercise other than their regular job in the 30 days preceding the survey.

The state ranks fourth in the nation for physical inactivity and studies show that individuals with lower income and education levels tend to be more inactive than those with higher income and education levels.

Such trends are disturbing because research affirms that consistent physical activity is essential to good health. Regular exercise discourages chronic disease and health problems in the following ways:

- ▶ Helps control weight by burning calories and increasing metabolic rate

- ▶ Discourages disease and health problems including stroke, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, depression, some types of cancer, anxiety, arthritis and osteoporosis

- ▶ Builds bone density, delivers nutrients and oxygen to body tissues, increases energy levels, improves muscle strength

- ▶ Improves cardiovascular health
- ▶ Boosts immunity, limiting colds and flu

- ▶ Reduces chronic pain and raises pain tolerance

- ▶ Promotes the body's production of natural antioxidants, helping to protect skin cells

- ▶ Stimulates blood flow, delaying the appearance of skin aging.

Exercise also provides emotional



Dawson Recreation Ministry at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, hosts the Perseverance 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run.

Facebook photo

and brain benefits by:

- ▶ Stimulating brain chemicals that bring feelings of relaxation, happiness and well-being

- ▶ Reducing anxiety, stress and depression

- ▶ Promoting deeper sleep and stimulating energy-depleted recuperative processes

- ▶ Enhancing mental performance, alertness and work productivity
- ▶ Reducing risk of dementia.

Before beginning a new exercise routine a person should consult a physician and discuss any concerns.

General recommendations on physical activity suggest an adult needs at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week (or a combination of both). Get started by choosing enjoyable activities that make exercise fun. Start with light exercise and build up. Warm up before exercise to prevent injuries. Rest between exercise days, eat a healthy, nutritious diet and stay hydrated.

Many Alabama Baptist churches are addressing the growing problem

of inactivity among its members by providing:

- ▶ Family life centers promoting exercise for church members and families. Alabama churches provide recreational opportunities that include age-appropriate basketball, volleyball, racquetball, table tennis and baseball leagues, as well as classes in kickboxing, strength training and other body toning and aerobic exercises.

- ▶ Fitness centers offering cardio/weight machine and free weights, indoor and outdoor running/walking tracks and courses.

Wake-Up Workouts

- ▶ Activity groups, such as the Wake-Up Workouts for ladies at Shades Crest Baptist Church, Hoover, where women meet two mornings a week in the church gym and exercise together with music.

Others include the FIT4U senior adult exercise class at First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove; the Silver Sneakers group at Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile; and the Soul-Fit 4 Seniors class at Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery.

These groups meet several times a week to walk, improve balance and agility, tighten and tone muscles, stretch and participate in low-impact exercise classes.

- ▶ Screenings for high blood pressure and cholesterol.

- ▶ Partnerships with groups like the American Heart Association to educate their congregations on the importance of health and wellness.

Churches that offer fitness centers and sponsor activity and exercise groups provide more than just physical activity to their congregation and community. For instance, the mission statement of the recreation ministry of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan, states the program "exists for the purpose of evangelism, discipleship and fellowship ... reaching out to church and community in a casual setting to testify to the gospel of God's grace; encourage seekers/believers to participate in recreation, leisure and sports activities that strengthen their families as well as their spiritual, emotional and physical well-being."

The number of Alabama churches adding a health or fitness component to their ministry is on the rise. Not only do these programs offer opportunities for members to be more active, they also are encouraging new friendships, strengthening family relationships and bringing people closer to Christ. ✝

Four types of exercises

1. **Simple stretching** aids flexibility, helps muscles recover and for older adults maintains range of motion.

2. **Aerobic exercise** can be swimming, dancing, running and other activities that provide continuous movement.

3. **Strength exercises** increase muscle strength and include resistance training, sprinting and weightlifting.

4. **Calisthenics** are basic movements at medium aerobic pace and include sit-ups, push-ups, squats and jumping jacks.

Source: www.healthline.com


**Staying fit
for active
ministry**
Part 1



Unsplash.com

Bodies are temples

Healthier eating habits set better example, enhance ministry longevity

By Denise George
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Many Alabamians are losing the weight control battle. Highly processed foods loaded with chemicals, saturated fats and refined sugars remain inexpensive and popular but often lead to expanding waistlines, obesity and poor health.

Alabama now has the sixth highest adult obesity rate in the nation and the ninth highest obesity rate for youth ages 10 to 17. More than 36% of Alabamians are obese.

The World Health Organization defines obesity as “abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health,” causing major risk factors for a number of chronic diseases.

What causes obesity?

Obesity occurs when a body takes in more calories than it can

burn through exercise and normal daily activities. These excess calories are stored in the body as fat. According to the Mayo Clinic, excess body weight can be caused by a variety of factors including genetics, family lifestyle, inactivity, unhealthy diet, age, medical problems, certain medications and behavioral or hormonal influences.

Obesity and health

Obesity affects one’s overall health, often diminishing quality of life and sometimes resulting in disability, depression or social isolation. Serious health problems may result from obesity, including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, cancer, breathing disorders, sleep apnea, gallbladder disease and osteoarthritis and other health problems.

But obesity is more than a physical issue. The Bible teaches that our bodies are temples of the Holy

Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20) and Christians are to be good stewards of their lives and treasures. Failure to be good stewards of physical health is a poor witness to the surrounding culture, according to a 2010 resolution adopted by the Alabama Baptist State Convention on gluttony and self-control.

How can church leaders address the growing problem of obesity?

Activities at church often revolve around food — and unhealthy foods at that like morning coffee and doughnuts, ice cream socials and potluck dinners.

Church leaders can help themselves and their church members when they:

- ▶ Plan church activities that don’t include food.
- ▶ Invite nutritionists to conduct seminars, teaching the church’s youth and adults to read and understand food labels in order to make better food choices.
- ▶ Find healthy substitutes to replace highly processed foods, rich desserts and dishes high in saturated fats at meals served at church.
- ▶ Give members opportunities to move more and have fun by encouraging regular exercise classes for adults and sponsoring active games for youth.
- ▶ Research medical weight-loss programs in the community and

present information to church leaders, staff and members.

▶ Learn about church/faith-based health promotion programs. Such programs provide support to

church communities who wish to help members improve their health through education, group support, screening and treatment referrals.

▶ Set a good example for church members. Recent reports show that clergy are in worse health than the average American, many suffering from a number of weight-related conditions.

GuideStone Financial Resources reports that 73% of Southern Baptist pastors who participated in health screenings at [a recent] Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting were obese ... and an obese person spends on average \$179,000 more in health care than those who weigh less.

Ministries can suffer

When pastors, church leaders and members struggle with the ill effects of obesity and being overweight ministries can suffer. When individuals take care of their bodies through proper nutrition and teach others in the church to eat healthy and eliminate excess weight, the church can more actively honor God and reach out in Christ’s name in active ministry.✠



Unsplash.com

The ill effects of obesity can negatively impact ministries of the church.

Inactivity in Alabama

Age/Gender Breakdown

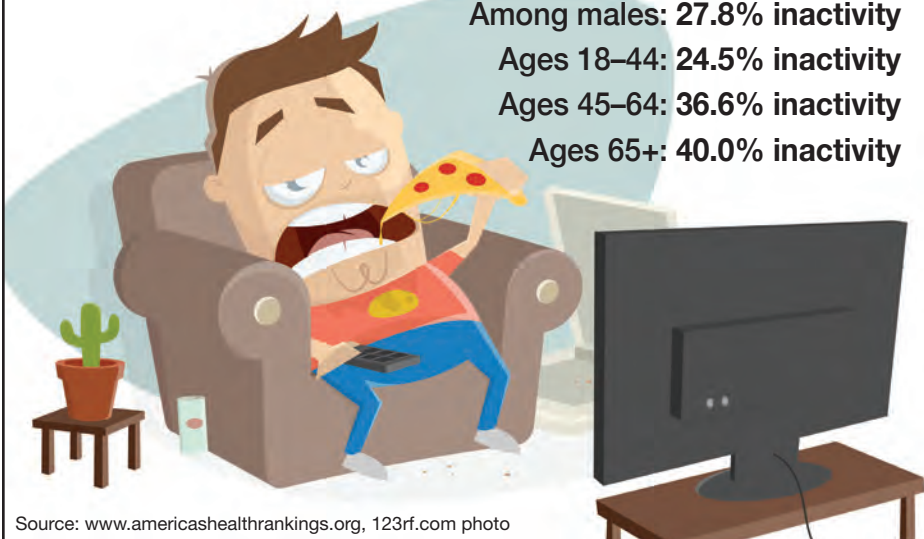
Among females: 35.8% inactivity

Among males: 27.8% inactivity

Ages 18–44: 24.5% inactivity

Ages 45–64: 36.6% inactivity

Ages 65+: 40.0% inactivity



Source: www.americashealthrankings.org, 123rf.com photo

Facing eternity

'Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames' has been put on by churches across the United States and around the world. This year Choctaw and Washington Baptist associations will host the production at FBC Butler on Nov. 3-5.



Screen capture from Reality Outreach Ministries

Choctaw, Washington associations partner to sponsor evangelistic production

By **Lanell Downs Smith**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Choctaw and Washington Baptist associations are partnering to sponsor the evangelistic drama "Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames" on Nov. 3-5 at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church, Butler.

According to Terry Long, director of missions for Choctaw Association, the production will feature seven or eight skits that present scenarios through which people face death and eternity. A large staircase being built by a construction team out of Washington Association and other volunteers leads to the entrance of heaven where an angel holding the book of life reveals whether the characters will enter or be turned away.

Some characters experience great joy as they reunite with the Lord and loved ones who have gone before. Others are shocked to discover their good deeds were not enough to gain entrance into heaven.

Dispelling myths

"It becomes very obvious that if your name's not in the book of life you're not going to get into heaven," Long said. "We dispel all the myths about being good and going to church. It depicts

the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection. In the very end it is so powerful."

The gospel will be shared each night and trained counselors will be ready to speak with those who go forward at the invitation, Long said.

Reality Outreach Ministries produces the drama at churches across America by sending a ministry team to the host church. The team brings a motorhome and trailer filled with equipment, sound, lighting, props, special effects, screens and everything the church needs for the production.

The host church supplies 30-50 volunteers who are trained by the ministry team to present the drama.

The First, Butler, production will be cast Nov. 1 with rehearsals following throughout the weekend. First, Butler, deacon Neal Nix is set to assume the role of Jesus.

Long said this is the first time he has performed the drama on an association-wide level. Back in the mid-1990s, Long pastored North Wynona Baptist Church, in Wynona, Mississippi, and partnered with First Baptist Church, Wynona, to present the drama. Attendance exceeded 700 each night with more than 500 salvations resulting from the event.

Long said the event de-

mands a lot of prayer, work and promotion. Leaders have been planning the event for more than two years.

"We are always looking for ways to reach the lost," Long said. "It takes a big goal to pull all these churches together. They see that this has great potential to do a lot of good. I believe we are going to have hundreds of people saved."

'Reach the lost'

Long added response cards will be collected at the event and distributed throughout the churches as part of a plan to follow up with decisions.

Prior to the event teams will post more than 400 posters and distribute 4,000 free tickets throughout the community. Students in four local schools will watch a preview video and receive tickets to attend the play. Tickets are not required to attend but will be used to advertise the event.

Long said the production has brought churches and people together from both Choctaw and Washington counties who are now partnering across racial and denominational lines to reach the community for Christ.

"In the last three or four years Choctaw Association has been working hard to bridge those gaps and pull God's people together for one common purpose of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the county. All our people and denominations have worked well together," Long said.

Larry Thompson, associational missionary for Washington Association, said the leaders and members of

churches in Washington Association are excited about the production.

"They're glad we're doing it," he said. "We're all in this together and the goal is to reach people in our counties for Christ. We want to bring our people together and renew their desire to reach the lost."

Child care will be available throughout the event for children up to age nine. Long anticipates large crowds and encourages visitors to arrive early.

To learn more please call First, Butler, at 205-245-4286 and check out the promotional video at www.tabonline.org/heaven.

"They see that this has great potential to do a lot of good. I believe we are going to have hundreds of people saved."

DOM Terry Long
Choctaw Baptist Association

PASTORS' WIVES DINNER



An Evening with
Megan Woodham
One Step Ministries



Megan Woodham — Child of & devoted follower of Jesus.
Wife to Jonathan & mother of three children.
Bible teacher, writer & event speaker.
Children's Ministry Director, First Baptist Church, Prattville.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2019
4:45-6:00 p.m.

Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne Student Building

Theme:

A Seat at the Table
1 John 4:16

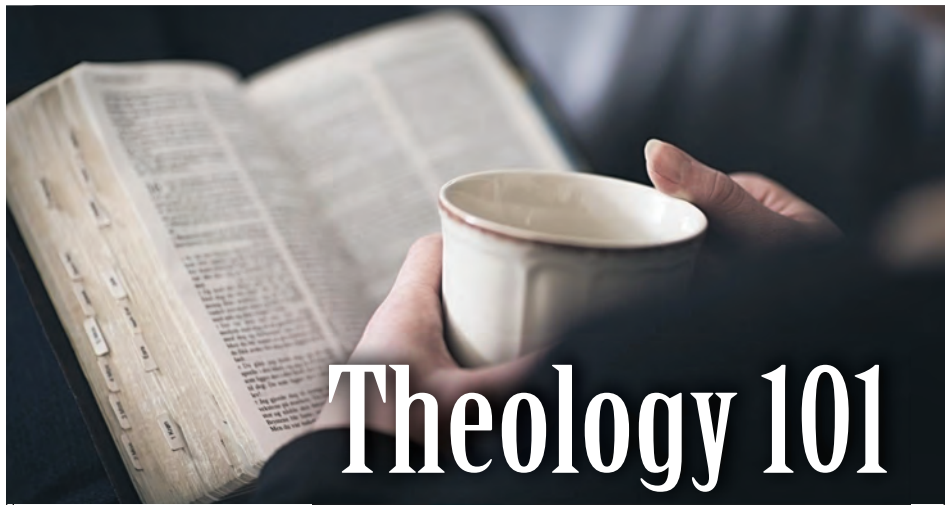
God has prepared a feast for His children — A great feast of love that He offers to us all, and YOU have a seat at the table!

Menu:

Garden Salad — Raspberry Vinaigrette
Alice Chicken
Twice Baked Potato Casserole
Italian Green Beans
Dessert
Tea
Rolls

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Space is Limited. Pre-Registration is Recommended.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Aspects of an Abundant Life

A Fruitful Life

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

An abundant life is one characterized by words of fullness such as those considered in prior weeks: joyful, prayerful and purposeful. This week we add another aspect of an abundant life: a fruitful life.

Jesus gave classic expression to fruitfulness in His analogy of the vine and branches in John 15:1-8. In the analogy He pictured Himself as the true Vine and God the Father as the Vinedresser.

His followers are portrayed as branches that bear fruit. Careful attention to His word choice is instructive. He spoke of branches bearing fruit, not producing fruit. The vine produces grapes; the branches simply bear what the vine produces. According to Jesus' analogy, fruit-bearing in the Christian life is a matter of bearing what the true Vine produces.

Abiding in Christ

The essential responsibility of Christians is abiding in Christ and allowing His life to flow through us as the means of fruit production. As He said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Bearing spiritual fruit is a vital part of experiencing an abundant life.

Next to the necessity of a life of abiding in Christ an important part of fruit-bearing is pondering the kind of fruit Christ seeks to produce in and through us. Several ideas come immediately to mind. For example there is the fruit of Christlike character identified in Galatians 5:22-23 as fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Another type of fruit we can bear is that of Christian converts. As has often been said, "The fruit of a Christian is another Christian." Those who become Christ's disciples are commissioned to go and make other disciples. Christ, working by means of the Holy Spirit, produces other believers through a process of conviction and conversion. After all we are witnesses but Jesus is the Savior.

An abundant life that is fruitful also practices generous giving. Romans 15:26-28 refers to such generosity demonstrated by believers in Macedonia and Achaia toward poorer believers in Jerusalem.

The Apostle Paul commented about his role in delivering their relief offering, termed as "fruit," in these words: "When I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit I shall go by way of you to Spain."

Our prayer for one another may well mirror Paul's prayer for the Colossian Christians: "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10).✠

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.



Pastors need encouragement, friendships in church family

(continued from page 1)
coffee every morning. We ate lunch out several times a week. We cried together. My wife helped his children. Perhaps this was one reason God placed me in this situation — to become a caretaker of a minister."

▶ Recognize the emotional vulnerability of the ministry. Louis McBurney, a psychiatrist and author of "Every Pastor Needs a Pastor" suggests, "perhaps the most destructive and dehumanizing of all ridiculous notions about pastors is that you have no emotional needs. People expect you to be a thick-skinned automation as they criticize and abuse, but if they are hurting you are to be warm and comforting. This expectation probably survives because most clergymen are afraid to admit their own vulnerability. You accept the challenge to be supermen and in pursuit of that goal you rigidly conceal your feelings."

▶ Form a support group with denominational personnel. Ministry does not exempt an individual from problems such as illness, financial concerns, issues with marriage and children, job security and other concerns common in today's families. Friendships forged in times of peace are invaluable in times of conflict.

Invaluable relationships

▶ Develop friends within your church. In preparation for the ministry husbands and wives often are advised to refrain from forming close friends within the local church.

A retired pastor says, "When I was pastoring churches my wife and I worked to make close friends within the local congregation. Who says this is wrong? Who says it won't work? Throughout my ministry in several states these same friends continue to be the ones we contact regularly.

Friendship is a gift from God. And He allows these bonds to be formed in the churches we serve."

▶ Seek out the Lord. Sharing personal feelings are often too uncomfortable for some ministers and spouses.

A matter of trust

"I had this fear of confidentiality being used against me," said Rachel, a minister's wife. "Therefore, I never trusted anyone. If I had a problem I took it to the Lord. In many ways this helped me become a stronger Christian. Of course my prayer life and Bible reading increased. But honestly there were times when I needed someone to look me in the

eye and say, 'I hear what you're saying. I've had similar experiences also.'"

▶ Care for the needs of your children. Ernest E. Mosely discusses the importance of parenting in his book, "Priorities in Ministry." Too often, he writes, ministers' children are expected to be "perfect." Children of ministers commonly

say their fathers were "always so busy helping everyone else (they never had time for me.)"

▶ Share feelings with your spouse. The minister needs a home where private feelings can be shared. G. Curtis Jones, author of "The Naked Shepherd," writes, "Most parishioners expect the minister's home to be different, perfect, as if some guardian angel sat on the gatepost ... keeping the family safe and comfortable, relevant and religious. (But) temptations of secular culture have not 'passed over' the parsonage."

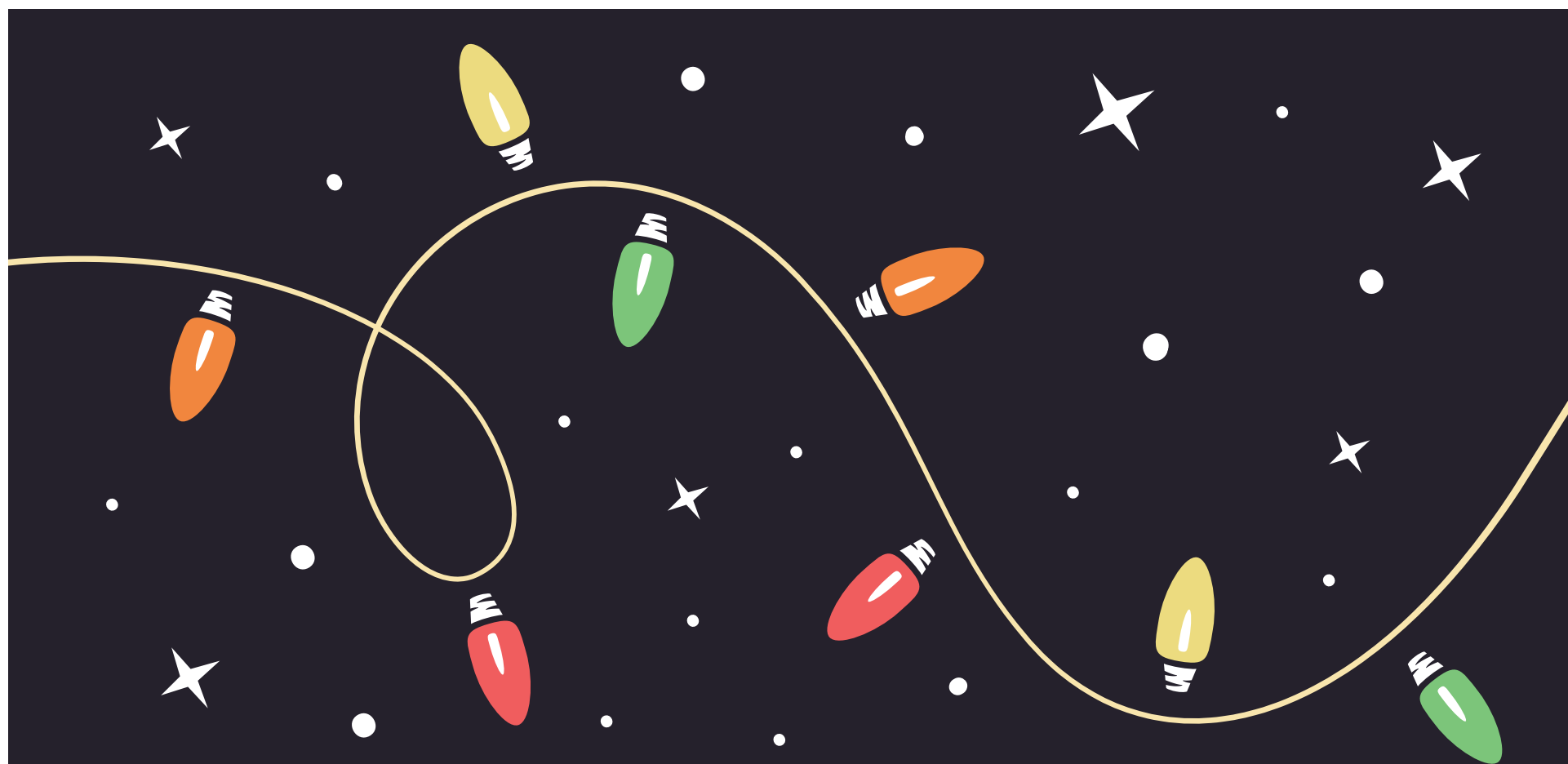
Recognizing the special spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the pastor and his family takes intentional effort but the result of the effort is healthier pastors who are better equipped to lead healthier churches.✠

"Friendship is a gift from God. And He allows these bonds to be formed in the churches we serve."

Retired pastor

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God’s calling

Northport church reaching all the way to Phoenix

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Chris Parker says he thinks he’s a decently persuasive person. He can get people excited about something. But when the rubber meets the road getting someone to move 25 hours away from home takes more than persuasion.

“God has to call them to go,” he said.

Cast a vision

Parker, now a church planter in Phoenix, said that’s what happened for him. Several years ago he was serving as a student pastor in south Georgia when his pastor, John Jenkins, moved to Northport Baptist Church and asked him to consider coming too.

But Jenkins didn’t just want him in Northport — he wanted Parker to go to Phoenix.

“He told me that the calling he felt God had put on his heart was for Northport Baptist to be a church that plants churches,” Parker said. “He wanted me to pray about being their first church planter.”

The plan would be for him to come to Northport first for a couple of years as a college pastor, build relationships with students, cast a vision — and build a team of new college grads to take to Phoenix with him.

“The idea is that they, as new college graduates, would be able to get a job in any major city. They could move to Phoenix and work as a nurse or teacher while they work with the church plant,” Parker said.

It sounded good but for Parker the rubber finally met the road when he got to see it for himself.

“It took coming to Phoenix multiple times before I knew in my heart that God had called me to Phoenix,” he said. “It was in Phoenix that God broke my heart for the people of Phoenix.”

That’s why he’s such a big fan of the North American

Mission Board’s GenSend program, an opportunity for college students to spend six to eight weeks in the summer exploring a city, investing in it and learning from church planters.



Photo courtesy of Kate Atkinson
Alabama students Kate Atkinson (left) and Bethany Patterson (right) work with teammates in the Phoenix area to deliver supplies to a local school.

This summer Parker had two of his former students from the University of Alabama come and serve with his team at Freedom Church in Phoenix, something he believes changed them.

“It’s those kinds of experiences when you go it changes you — you don’t have the

choice to ever be the same again,” he said. “They’re really wrestling with God’s call on their life and whether or not Phoenix is a part of that.”

‘God made me’

Bethany Patterson said the summer really pushed her out of her comfort zone.

“Even though I’m a pretty quiet person I think I became a lot more bold,” she said. “I really got a peace about being who God made me to be and seeing Him use that to reach people.”

For more information about GenSend visit sendrelief.org/gensend.



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3 stories you should know



RNS photo

The Museum of the Bible has acknowledged that as many as 17 ancient Bible fragments in its collection were apparently stolen by Oxford University professor Dirk Obbink, a U.S. native who won a MacArthur Foundation 'genius' grant in 2001 for his study of antiquities. Obbink is believed to have sold the artifacts while editing the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, the largest collection of ancient papyri in the world, which is held by the Egypt Exploration Society. (RNS)

Chemical abortions OKed at some student health centers

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation Oct. 11 that mandates student health centers of the University of California and California State University systems offer what are known as medical or chemical abortions — reportedly making the state the first with such a requirement.

According to pro-life physicians and others, the chemical abortion process is riskier to a woman's health than surgical abortion.

The California Family Council (CFC) — a partner organization of the California Southern Baptist Convention — worked with other pro-life organizations in an effort to prevent passage of the mandate.

CFC President Jonathan Keller said the governor "has chosen the accolades of abortion activists over the safety of students." (BP)

Christians among those killed in bombing attacks in Syria

Reports say Syriac Christians were among those killed in a bombing campaign Turkish forces launched across northeastern Syria beginning Oct. 9.

The bombing campaign appeared to target Christian and Kurdish enclaves in the cities of Qameshli, Kobani and others. Shelling also hit the border town of Nusaybin, in Turkey, where the oldest church in a region once dominated by the earliest Christians is located. In Qameshli a bomb struck Mar Gorgios Assyrian Church.

The Syriac Union Party, led by Christians from the Hasakah region, issued a statement condemning Turkish attacks and warning that the existence of Syriac Christians and other Christian communities in northeast Syria is in danger if the conflict continues. (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Tuscaloosa pastor celebrates 10 years at Calvary Baptist Church



Pastor Tim Lovett said the last 10 years at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, have passed so quickly — but they've been packed with blessings.

"We are well known for our college ministry but the church is so much more than that — it is a place where people live out the story of God," he said.

The world comes to the church every year — a reality that drew Lovett to Calvary from day one.

"The international and out-of-state students at the University of Alabama was the thing that caught my eye about Calvary," he said. "These students are much more open to the gospel than many of our students from the South. We have had the privilege to baptize students from almost every state and several nations."

This summer the church baptized two children of a visiting professor from Korea. Calvary also



LOVETT

hosts a Chinese fellowship, a Korean church and an African-American church in its facilities.

"I often quote Psalm 16:6 when people ask me about serving here — 'The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places,'" Lovett said.

Billy Austin, interim director of missions for Tuscaloosa Baptist Association, said Lovett "has led Calvary to be a church with the community in [its] heart."

"While my friendship with Tim Lovett goes back many years I am perhaps most impressed with his leadership at our beloved Calvary Baptist Church, having led them into a far reaching and deeply appreciated church emphasis on community outreach ministries," Austin said. (Grace Thornton)

FBC Eufaula's Wilkinson marks 25 years as student minister



Chris Wilkinson said it's been amazing to watch God work during the 25 years he's served as student minister at First Baptist Church, Eufaula, in Barbour Baptist Association.

"I'm most thankful for the many students I

have been able to build relationships with over that time and to watch them grow in their relationship with Jesus," he said.

"Some of those students now have kids in our student ministry which is pretty cool to me."

Wilkinson joked the milestone means he's getting old but Pastor Ken Bush said it just means Wilkinson has a long history of faithfulness.



WILKINSON

Wilkinson and his wife, Lori, "have done a magnificent job for the Lord," Bush said. "He has led young people to love Jesus and be committed servants. What a testimony for Chris to have several young people go into the ministry," Bush said. "Chris has cared for young people as faithfully as any person ever could." (Grace Thornton)

Christian woman killed during ambush on Baptists in Nigeria



Less than a week after Muslim Fulani herdsmen kidnapped six teenage girls from a Christian-run high school

News near you

BESSEMER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Charles T. Carter** is the new interim pastor of **Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer.**



CARTER

Carter is pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, and has regularly served as an interim pastor across the state since retiring in 1998. He currently serves as the James H. Chapman Fellow of Pastoral Ministry at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham.

BUTLER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Butler Baptist Association** will participate in the Butler County Bicentennial Celebration on Nov. 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The celebration will be held at Confederate Park in Greenville. The event will include local history displays, a vintage auto show, historic tours, a children's hands-on discovery area, refreshments and more. Danny Dean is associational missions director.

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

▶ **West Side Baptist Church, Jacksonville,** will celebrate its 100th anniversary Nov. 3 at

10:45 a.m. A reception will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. Jim Jones is pastor.

DEKALB ASSOCIATION

▶ **Aaron Britt** is the new pastor of **Lea's Chapel Baptist Church, Hammondville.** He previously served at Clear Creek Baptist Church, Dayton, Tennessee. He also has served various other churches in Alabama and Tennessee. Britt and his wife, Regina, have three children.



BRITT

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

▶ In 1894 six people started **Center Grove Baptist Church, Cullman.** And 125 years later, on Sept. 22, the church celebrated a milestone anniversary.

Interim pastor Tony Tidwell was the guest speaker and Wes Mattox led congregational singing. Jerry Armor, with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Randy Makemson, East Cullman Baptist Association director of missions, presented certificates to the church.

"It was a good day," said church member Donna Gorham.

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

▶ **Cove Creek Baptist Church, Glencoe,** will host a Harvest Fest on Oct. 27 from 4 to 7 p.m. Activities will include music, games, Trunk-or-



Photo by Jerry Armor

Treat, hayrides, photo booth, food and more. Kevin Garrett is pastor.

MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Adam Bishop** is the new pastor of **Vaughn Forest Church, Montgomery.**

He previously served at churches in Colorado, Georgia and New York.

Bishop holds degrees from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He and his wife, Morgan, have three children.



BISHOP

NORTH JEFFERSON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Mount Zion Baptist Church, Warrior,** will host its annual 5K run/walk Nov. 2 to support the Pure Water, Pure Love ministry. To register visit www.mzbc.com/forms. Sammie Reid is pastor.

WALKER ASSOCIATION

▶ On Sept. 15, **Sunlight Baptist Church, Jasper,** celebrated its 50th anniversary. Former pastor Mark Turner preached and David Miller, director of missions for Walker Baptist Association, presented a certificate from the association. Former pastor Tommy Graves also attended the celebration.

A singing took place in the afternoon with The Barnett Family and The Carter Family. Lunch followed the service.

"The day was a special day to celebrate and it went very well," said church member Peggy Bennett. Richard Meeks is pastor. 🇺🇸

— NEWSBRIEFS —

in north-central Nigeria, another attack in the same county led to the killing of a Baptist woman and the kidnapping of four others.

Muslim Fulani herdsmen killed Ezra Haruna, a member of Godiya Baptist Church in Ungwan Barau village, in an attack on the village on Oct. 7. Four other church members, including the pastor's wife, were kidnapped in the attack. The pastor said the armed men stormed the community and shot into houses, forcing residents to flee into bushes surrounding the village.

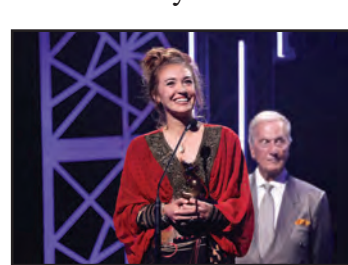
Nigeria ranked 12th on Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution. (MS)

GMA Dove Awards celebrate 50 years of gospel music; Daigle wins 3 awards

Christian artist Lauren Daigle won three awards, including Artist of the Year (her second time to receive the honor), Song of the Year for "You Say" and Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year for "Look Up Child" at the 50th annual Gospel Music Association Dove Awards held Oct. 15 in Nashville.



Gospel music veteran Kirk Franklin was named Gospel Artist of the Year and his song "Love Theory" won for Contemporary Gospel



Facebook photo

Recorded Song of the Year.

Other honored artists include TobyMac, Contemporary Christian Artist of the Year; Aaron Cole, New Artist of the Year; and Gaither Vocal Band, Southern Gospel Artist of the Year.

Phil Wickham's "Living Hope" was named Worship Recorded Song of the Year and "I Know I'll be There" by Karen Peck & New River was named Southern Gospel Recorded Song of the Year. (BP)

Peaceful protest leads to more church closures in Algeria, leaders say

A Christian protest against efforts to close churches in Algeria resulted in an Oct. 13 order to close more churches,

according to Salah Chalah, head of the Protestant Church of Algeria (l'Église Protestante d'Algérie or EPA) umbrella group.

Chalah said the order to close the Protestant Church of the Full Gospel of Tizi-Ouzou came in retaliation for a peaceful sit-in Christians organized in the Bejaia Province on Oct. 9.

Since November 2017 authorities in the northwestern African nation have closed at least 11 churches with at least three more in danger of closure. Officials also have restricted the import of Bibles and other Christian literature.

Islam is the state religion in Algeria, where 99% of the population of 40 million are Muslim.

Since 2000, however, thousands of Algerian Muslims have put their faith in Christ.

Algeria ranked 22nd on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of the countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)



Photo by Morning Star News

Church library event set for Nov. 2 in Decatur

Church Libraries: More Than Books on a Shelf” is the theme of this year’s North Alabama Church Library Conference, set for Nov. 2 at Central Baptist Church, Decatur.

The annual conference is open to church library staff, volunteers and others interested in church history, books and disciple making. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the conference will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

Covering all aspects

Sessions include all aspects of church library work from collection development and weeding to book and Bible repair. Sessions also will address discipleship, upcycling, church history, promoting the church library and automation software.

Lisa Worthey Smith, author of “The Ground Kisser” and “The Wisdom Tree,” will speak.

Rob Jackson, associate professor of Christian studies at University of Mobile

and former pastor of Central Baptist, also will speak. Jackson is author of “Moments with God,” a discipleship guide for parents.

Morlee Maynard, LifeWay Christian Resources’ consultant for church libraries, will speak on the subject of disciple making and church libraries.

Other conference leaders will be Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission; Sandy Shepard and Amanda Thompson, Central Baptist Church; Allison Maynard, Book Systems Inc.; and church library consultants Sandra Fitts, Eva Nell Hunter, Bev League, Carolyn Walker and Marty Woodall.

Registration will be held on the day of the conference but advanced registration and lunch reservations by Oct. 30 are appreciated. For more information go to tabonline.org/NACLCLC, email library@cbcdecatur.org or call 256-353-5912. (TAB)

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

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

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. Resumés 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.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP LEADER

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is seeking an individual with experience to provide full-time leadership in developing a comprehensive music ministry that will lead our congregation into authentic worship. This individual needs to be experienced in leading contemporary worship, a worship choir, praise band and in developing the music ministry with multiple teams of all age levels. Experience in utilizing the areas of sound and video technology within the sanctuary and through various types of social media is desirable. For more information visit www.sbc.net and go to job openings. Send resumés to: ATTN: Southside Baptist Church Search Committee, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420 or southside@sbcandalusia.com.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Pate’s Chapel Baptist Church is searching for a bivocational worship leader. Please mail resumé to: PCBC, ATTN: Music Search Committee, 190 CR 295, Jemison, AL 35085, or email: pbcmusicsearch@gmail.com.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN

Mexia Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of children and youth with experience (leadership

preferred). The person selected for this position will lead children and youth ministry as well as assist with the total ministry of the church. Send resumé by Oct. 31 to: Mexia Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, P.O. Box 218, Mexia, AL 36458 or email: office@mexiabaptistchurch.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

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

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The DeKalb Baptist Association is now receiving resumés 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. Resumés may be mailed to: DeKalb Baptist Association, ATTN: DOM Search Committee, 218 Parker Avenue SE, Rainsville, AL 35986. Resumés may also be emailed to: david@rainsvillefirst.com. Deadline to receive resumés is Nov. 4.

OFFICE/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

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

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/book-keeping experience. A degree in accounting is preferred. Salary negotiable. Please send resumé

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WEEKDAYS AT 8:30 AM

Pumpkin patch turns into year-round ministry center

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

One day in 2007, Cathy Ellis spotted a Christmas tree farmer working on the side of the road and she told her husband she wanted to turn around.

"We had bought a piece of property and I was wanting to plant Christmas trees," she said. "So I said, 'Honey, let's pull over and talk to this Christmas tree farmer.' And of course he made the U-turn with a heavy sigh."

Unexpected turn

Ellis' husband, Tom, thought their journey was leading straight to pines and Douglas firs, but then things took an unexpected turn.

"That farmer told us, 'Oh, you don't want a Christmas tree farm — it's too much work. You want a pumpkin patch,'" Ellis said.

The couple took him at his word and a year later Dream Field Farms opened as a pumpkin patch. But it wasn't long before they began to use the farm for a variety of work.

"We began to see the need to host summer camps for inner city kids," said Ellis, who along with her husband is a member of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Union Springs, in Bullock Baptist Association.

So in 2009 they hosted their first camp and 11 seasons later they're still



Facebook photo

Since Cathy and Tom Ellis opened Dream Field Farms in 2008 they have grown it into much more than simply a pumpkin patch. They now host summer camps, started a nonprofit organization, built additional cabins and facilities, provided jobs for the local economy and built a ropes course.

expanding. Ellis said the camps are like Vacation Bible School with a farm twist — instead of normal games for recreation they go fishing, canoeing and help with the animals.

This summer more than 30 children made decisions

They have helped the local economy by providing jobs and also have used volunteers to help them build a ropes course for tweens and teens.

Gene Bridgman, director of missions for Bullock Association, said they've

to follow Christ.

"We're looking for churches to come and partner with us so we can have camp for more weeks next year," Ellis said.

As the farm's ministry has grown they've started a nonprofit organization and built more cabins and facilities.

been an incredible ministry partner.

"Everything they do is for ministry," he said. "They're humble and believe that Dream Field Farms is God's not theirs. They want to present Jesus to everyone who comes there and they want it to be a place where Jesus brings people together."

'I'm honored'

Ellis said it's a blessing for her to see what's happened out of that first seed of an idea 12 years ago.

"I'm just grateful to be the vessel to watch this happen," she said. "To see children learn to love the Lord and see families come to a farm and take a breath — I'm just honored I get to be a small part of it."

For more information visit dreamfieldfarms.com or check out the Dream Field Farms page on Facebook.

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for the
Cross

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<http://albaptistpc.com>

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1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 (NIV)

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OCTOBER

Cooperative Program Month Minister Appreciation Month

- 25-26 **Church Security Training**, Northbrook Baptist Church, Cullman, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 28-29 **Tutoring Children and Youth Workshop**, First Baptist Church, Greenville, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311

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, Rick Barnhart, ext. 220
- 11 **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders**, University of South Alabama BCM, Mike Nuss, ext. 276
- 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**

JANUARY

- 5-12 **January Bible Study**, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 285
- 9 **Church Tax Conference**, Decatur First, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 12-13 **Who's Your One? Tour**, Gardendale FBC, Lori McGough, ext. 258
- 14 **Church Tax Conference**, Birmingham Metro Baptist Association Office, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 16 **Church Tax Conference**, Mobile Baptist Association Office, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 17-18 **Student Missions Weekend**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Kaley Stephens, ext. 278
- 21 **Church Tax Conference**, Eastern Shore, Daphne, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 23-25 **Southeast Youth Conclave**, Chattanooga, Tenn., Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 23-24 **Alabama Baptist Church Planting Basics**, House of Hope and Restoration Church, Huntsville, Rick Barnhart, ext. 220
- 23-24 **Discipleship Network of Alabama**, Hunter Street, Hoover, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 285
- 28 **Church Tax Conference**, Calvary, Dothan, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 30 **The Secret of Teams: What Great Teams Know & Do**, SBOM Facility, Prattville, Mike Jackson, ext. 210
- 31-2/1 **Alabama Bible Drill Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 31-2/1 **Activators Training**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Laura Glass, ext. 226

Georgia Baptist develops election-cycle plan to cover U.S. with prayer, fasting

Kim Strickland favors the serenity of a pond on the edge of her property in Blackshear, Georgia, for prayer.

“It is where me and God can get some business done for sure,” she said.

It was at this pond God birthed within her a plan to saturate the United States with prayer and fasting every day leading up to and including the 2020 national, state and local elections.

Enlisting others

This Southern Baptist layperson has enlisted a few Georgia pastors and the Piedmont Okefenokee Baptist Association (POBA) to help, including fellow Christians at Bridge Community Church, Blackshear.

The 365-Plus Prayer Project encourages Christian churches in every state to enlist 365 people to fast and pray one day each in succession leading up to the elections.

“Here I am just doing my best to do what God said,

to implement this plan and I want it to be in all the states,” Strickland said. “Can you imagine if we just had 10 churches in every state with 365 people praying on election day we would have 182,500 people fasting and praying for our elected officials.”

POBA Mission Strategist Greg Benfield serves on the project’s leadership team.

“The idea is to have someone praying and fasting from each church that participates, ... praying and fasting for the local leadership, state leadership, national leadership as we’re leading up to that election,” Benfield said. “Regardless of who (wins) that we are praying for that person to seek God’s will.”

Strickland unveiled project plans at the Southern Baptist PrayerLink meeting Oct. 3–5 in Pittsburgh.

The project kicks off Nov. 3 and continues through

Nov. 3, 2020. Resources for the prayer initiative are available at mypoba.com.

Though prayers can take many forms, recommended prayer supplications and pleas include:

- ▶ that people are saved and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone, and that families and relationships are restored and healed;

▶ that as people come into the family of God they are also able to recognize the enemy who desires to hurt our nation and will boldly stand in opposition to him;

▶ that the church of Jesus Christ will grow in every community where it is not currently thriving;

▶ that all leaders elected at every level will have the heart of the Living God, including earnest prayer for the U.S. president, U.S. senators and representatives, governors, state legislators and local government leaders. (BP)

For more information and resources visit www.mypoba.com

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Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Belonging to a minor prophet.
7. Belonging to the son of Issachar. (Gen. 46:13)
9. I'm ___ the end of my rope.
10. Each. (abbr.)
11. The beloved disciple.
13. Spoken of by ___ the prophet. (Matt. 24:15)
16. Abbreviation meaning "all right."
17. Though they have ___ chariots. (Josh. 17:18)
20. Woodworking tool.
21. Cupbearer to the king. (Neh. 1:1, 11)
23. Styling ___ for the hair.
24. ___ is the father of Canaan. (Gen. 9:18)
26. Negative.
27. They set the ark ... upon a new _____. (2 Sam. 6:3)
30. ___ lamented for Josiah.

Down

2. Written in the ___ of the prophets.
34. ___ of the Chaldees. (Gen. 15:7)
35. And ___ shall rule over thee. (Gen. 3:16)
36. Type of armament.
37. "I ___ that test!"
40. ___ have and to hold.
41. 28th book of the Bible.
43. Belonging to a man of mount Ephraim. (Judg. 17:1)
45. Compass direction.
46. He dwelleth in _____. (John 6:56)
48. Tyrone (abbr.).
50. "___ top of old Smokey."
51. Pharaoh's daughter called his name _____. (Ex. 2:10)
52. Before the Israelites had kings, they had _____. (2 Chron. 35:25)

3. He had the gift of interpreting dreams.
4. A word ... in due season, how good is ___! (Prov. 15:23)
5. Where is ___ that is born King of the Jews? (Matt. 2:2)
6. Why is thy countenance ___? (Neh. 2:2)
7. Prophet to Nineveh.
8. Part of a shoe.
11. The patience of _____. (1 Sam. 8:2)
12. The name of Samuel's firstborn was _____. (1 Sam. 8:2)
14. ___, ego, superego.
15. Seraiah, Jeremiah, _____. (Neh. 12:1)
18. Blood factor.
19. Southwestern state. (abbr.)
21. Compass direction.

22. As my servant ___ hath walked naked. (Isa. 20:3)
23. ___ in peace. (Luke 7:50)
25. Barnabas took ___, and sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 15:39)
26. 34th book of the Bible.
27. 900 in Roman numerals.
28. Radar beacon.
29. Solomon was not arrayed like one of _____. (Matt. 6:29)
31. For example.
32. Boaz begat Obed of _____. (Matt 1:5)
33. Seth called his son's name _____. (Gen. 4:26)
38. Defensive End. (abbr.)
39. ___ of the Apostles.
42. Prophet who was a herdsman of Tekoa.
44. Yes (nautical).
47. Printer's measure.
49. Middle Atlantic state. (abbr.)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 27

Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



WALKING DIFFERENTLY Ephesians 4:17–32

The Old (17–19)

Since we are chosen in Christ we belong to God and not to the world. The people of the world live accordingly as they are spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) which is easily visible in daily life.

Many people deny the existence of God altogether and think this will somehow lead to freedom. However, as evidenced in the culture, apart from God there is no wisdom and society is drowning in a morass of confusion witnessed by people not even knowing the difference between genders.

Others seek to use the government to try to find meaning and happiness, appealing to public officials to make laws that align with their own views.

Still others try to find meaning in the spiritual realm as seen in commercials for psychic hotlines advertising the ability to predict the future. In all these ways their ignorance and hardness of heart is evidenced.

The Change (20–24)

In contrast Christians live according to the truth which is made known in Scripture. Paul mentions that Christians are to have their minds renewed.

Some Christians believe we are called only to love others and thus theology is not important.

However, we cannot understand what love is unless we understand Scripture. Love of biblical knowledge needs to go hand in hand with love of others.

The New (25–32)

How do Christians live apart from the world? First Christians are to abstain from lying. God is a God of truth and hates lies.

Second we are not supposed to sin in our anger. This does not mean that Christians should not get angry. Christians should be angry about many things — oppression, addiction and injustices in the world, for example.

But anger often leads to sin because sin has tainted every area of life including emotion. It is dif-

ficult to be angry without acting on the anger. Jesus points out in Matthew 5 that if we harbor anger toward our neighbor we are guilty of murder. That is how seriously God takes the misuse of this emotion.

Third Christians are not to steal. This not only protects others from being robbed but also motivates Christians to have a legitimate job so they can earn money to share with those in need.

However, a Christian who wastes time at work, cheats the government or is likewise untrustworthy is also guilty of thieving. Christians are to be honest workers who bring glory to God in their dealings with others. This is one way we model Christ to others in our society.

Fourth Christians should not use foul language but instead speak in a way that builds up others. Christians are to be above reproach and speak in a positive way that encourages others.

These ways of living distinguish Christians from the world around them. We show the example of Christ to the world when we follow these exhortations.

And one of the greatest examples of Christ we can exhibit is that of forgiveness.

The world operates in a way that focuses on getting even or getting what one deserves (i.e. if someone does wrong he or she deserves to be punished). I have seen many crime shows where the victims express hope that the attacker “rots in jail.” Christians are not supposed to act this way.

While there are consequences to wrongdoing and we have a justice system in place to punish evildoers appropriately, we as Christians are called to forgive the individual when he or she sins against us.

We forgive others just as Christ forgives us. This forgiveness is of eternal magnitude. Because everyone has sinned against a perfect and holy God we deserve to be separated eternally in hell. However, Christ died for us while we were still sinners.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



GOD'S WILL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT 1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Jerusalem is a city built on a labyrinth of intersecting hills and valleys, rises and ridges. Plunging south through one of these valleys in Jesus' day was a long, stair-stepped road that led from the Temple Mount far downhill to the famous pool of Siloam.

In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel we find a story in which this steep road plays a key role. John tells us that as Jesus left the temple on a particular day He encountered a blind man sitting on the ground begging for charity.

Having seen Jesus heal countless people before, the disciples could hardly have been surprised to see Jesus stoop down to restore sight to this man as well.

But instead of healing the blind man Jesus instead spat on the ground, mixed the saliva with dirt to make mud and then smeared the mud on the man's eyes.

He then gave him the most extraordinary command: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” What must have been going through the blind man's mind at that moment? It is not clear from John's account that the man knew it was Jesus who had touched him or even that he had any idea who Jesus really was.

The man had no explanation at all for why Jesus smeared mud on his eyes. Additionally the command he was given to wash in the pool made no mention of his being healed if he obeyed.

Just getting to Siloam would be difficult. The stairs were steep and irregular. Merchants and their wares lined the sides. Crowds of people would be hurrying up and down. And yet the blind man went. Stumbling, groping, surely falling more than once along the path, he made his way to the pool and washed away the mud.

The man obeyed Jesus and his sight was restored. He went not because it made sense to go — it surely did not — but because the Spirit of God compelled him to go and wash his face.

On our own we can't understand God's wisdom or comprehend His will. (6–8)

As we seek to know God's will for our lives there are moments when we think we can clearly see the “wise” choice. This seemingly wise choice may not always be the right choice, however. At times God through His Holy Spirit calls us to follow a path that parts company with what human wisdom would counsel.

The Apostle Paul describes just such a situation in 1 Corinthians 2. He instructs his Corinthian readers that human wisdom and divine wisdom do not always align.

The Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God. (9–11)

There are moments when God calls His children to follow an unexpected and seemingly illogical path. Like the blind man in John 9 the path God's Spirit directs us toward may be one fraught with obstacles and difficulties. The path may be the opposite of the well-worn euphemism, “God opened a door for us.”

And yet it will be the right path because it is the one the Holy Spirit intends for us. Paul assures us that just as our own spirits know our inmost thoughts, the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God. It is this knowledge He conveys to us as He directs our steps.

We must depend on the Holy Spirit in order to distinguish God's will from human thinking. (12–16)

It is not always easy to distinguish between taking the path we would judge as wise and taking the path God truly intends for us. Too often our discernment of the will of God devolves into gauging the path of least resistance, assuming the path with the fewest obstacles is the one God has leveled out for us.

This idea accords poorly with the way God's people have traditionally chosen a path. Often the path of God's people is filled with obstacles but they walk the path because they know it is the path ordained by the Holy Spirit even if it proves to be toughest road.✠



Media reviews

COMEDY

Pierce's comedy, storytelling encourage women to 'trust God more'

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

If comedian Chonda Pierce had a motto it might be “Trust God and keep laughing.” Calling herself “practically a doctor” because Proverbs 17:22 says “a cheerful heart is good medicine” Pierce has been “treating” audiences for

more than 26 years through her stand-up comedy and related books, videos and albums.

The “Queen of Clean,” as she’s often called, will be back in Alabama on Nov. 17 at Samford University’s Wright Center.

Pierce recently spoke to TAB News host Jennifer Davis Rash and co-host

Debbie Campbell about the challenges she’s faced along the way and how laughter and the Lord have gotten her through the tough times.

“[Laughter] is absolutely this beautiful release of endorphins [from] a physical standpoint,” Pierce said. “Why not laugh? There’s plenty to cry about.”

Pierce has seen her share of difficult times.

“I always feel like if I’m going through something — since I’m as ordinary as they come — that means somebody else is probably walking down the same path,” she said. “So maybe the good, the bad and the ugly of who I am can save them a few steps or guide them a little bit.”

Early career

Pierce’s career got started because she was “trying to make the choir laugh after choir practice.”

After getting stage experience impersonating Minnie Pearl at Opryland USA, Pierce got invitations to churches to tell her stories and make people laugh.

“I wanted to use comedy as a vehicle to speak truth,” she said.

Pierce’s own story has been painful and messy at times.

Growing up Pierce was part of what she calls a dysfunctional family. She lost two sisters before she left home. Later she lost her mother, her husband and her relationship with one of her two children.

She is the Recording



Chonda Pierce

Photo courtesy of Chonda Pierce

Industry Association of America’s most-awarded female comic in history but at one point she was hospitalized, suicidal and clinically depressed.

Her experiences resonated with her female audience, she said.

“What I thought would be the end of my career became a resurgence of women, crying out to be heard during these dark times of their lives,” Pierce said.

And working so hard, especially when her children were little, took a toll on her family life.

“I have lots of regrets

about that. But I can’t linger in the regret because there’s nothing I can do about it now,” she said.

“The best thing you can do is relinquish it all to the Lord — everything good and everything bad. Sometimes that’s a daily thing.”

A bit of advice

If she could go back in time to the early days of her career Pierce said she would tell herself one thing: “Trust God. Just trust God more.

“The times I’ve gotten the idea that I could handle something on my own or straighten something out, it’s been a mess,” she said. “The times I’ve ... trusted God to work things out have always worked.” ✝

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Chonda Pierce
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'Overflow of disciples'

California church focuses on nurturing next generation, 'Kingdom expansion'

Children come first at the nearly 5-year-old Parkside Church in Oceanside, California.

"We have a massive focus on the next generation," church planter and pastor Jim Britts said. "This is not a church just for young families but it is a church for people who care about the next generation."

How to pray:

► Pray Parkside Church will continue to reach the next generation in its community for the gospel.

► Pray the ministries of Parkside Church will not just bring children to Christ but will bring whole families to saving faith. (TAB)

Parkside is an example of a Southern Baptist church plant that has become a "multiplying" congregation, making inroads on lostness in a state where people are not looking for churches, Britts said. The church is sending out church planters as well as starting other churches even as it has grown to about 225 in Sunday morning worship.

"It's not about this church; it's about the kingdom of God," Britts said. "Church planters need to be more like a missionary than a pastor: engaging the city and making disciples. That's what Jesus called us to do.

"He will build the church from the disciples," Britts said. "And out of the overflow of disciples more churches are planted."

One of the congregation's five values is that children from birth through age 18 come first.

"Every church in our country



Photos courtesy of California Southern Baptist newsjournal
Members of Parkside Church in Oceanside, California, lead neighborhood children in recreation as part of their efforts to reach the next generation.

should have that same focus," Britts said. "If we figured that out it would change the way we do church."

'All about discipleship'

"There's a race in today's culture to the heart of every child and the first one there wins," he said. "If we can disciple and raise up and empower kids and teens they're actually the best way to reach our city."

Discipleship starts at Parkside with Nehemiah Kids, a midweek program for students in first through fifth grade that includes quiet time, Scripture memorization and serving in a ministry.

Those in sixth through 12th grade engage in similar age-appropriate activities as part of Leaders In Training.

Adults are disciplined in small groups that meet throughout the week.

"It's all about discipleship," Britts said. "Without it where would our kids be five years from now? Where would undisciplined Christian adults be? If we're not making disciples we're missing the whole point.

"The metrics of salvations and attendance and offerings are important, but the bottom line is, are we making disciples who make disciples?"

Those who are disciplined start serving in ministry and some experience God's call to become leaders, pastors, church planters and volunteers at church plants, Britts said.

"It's about Kingdom expansion, not just growing our church." (BP)



Parkside Church in Oceanside, California, holds a baptism.

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



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