



The Alabama Baptist

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Vol. 184, No. 47
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Alabama's quarterback uses football to share his faith

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Faith & Family — Easing holiday stresses for new families

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Express gratitude to God by helping others during holiday season

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Soo Seok Yang (with microphone) shares with Michael English (standing) at the conclusion of the Nov. 5 concert at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, how English's 1991 song 'In Christ Alone' impacted his life. Photo by Tracy Riggs

Power of a song

Courageous request results in special surprise experience

When Soo Seok Yang made a quick U-turn on Nov. 5 he had one song in mind — “In Christ Alone.”

He had turned on the radio on his way home from work and heard a Michael English concert was scheduled for that night at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery. So he

called his wife to let her know he was taking a little detour.

“Ever since I have known that song I have sung it many times,” said Yang, a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery. “The words of the song are so powerful — ‘My source of strength, my source of hope is Christ alone.’ It has made a big impact on my life and I just wanted to hear him sing it in person.”

So Yang went and he sat on the front row. And he waited.

“During the concert I was inspired and so touched by his testimony, his story,” Yang said. “He had to go through

many dark moments in his life and he was sharing with us a lot of the details of how God was delivering him from those moments. His testimony was great, very powerful.”

‘A request’

But Yang was still waiting for that one song — and it never came.

English sang “all the other famous songs,” but still not “In Christ Alone.” And when Yang realized the concert was over, he piped up.

“I mustered the courage and spoke up — ‘Mr. Michael English, I have a request for (See ‘Perfect,’ page 12)



BURNETT

UM alum, dean steps into role of president

University of Mobile (UM) alumnus Lonnie A. Burnett was named president of the university Nov. 22 after serving six months as interim president.

The UM board of trustees initially appointed Burnett, UM history professor and executive dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as interim president in May with a term of 16 months.

Board Chairman Fred Wilson said Burnett stepped into that role with vision, energy and a deep love for UM.

“It quickly became obvious there was no ‘interim’ in Dr. Lonnie Burnett’s commitment to lead the university to becoming all that it can be. The board’s action today makes it official. Dr. Burnett is the 5th president of the University of Mobile and we are enthusiastic about the future with his leadership,” Wilson said.

(See ‘Burnett,’ page 8)

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

Pastors Conference officers elected

PRESIDENT



Nathan Daniels, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Andalusia

PRESIDENT-ELECT



Blake Kersey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Decatur

VICE PRESIDENT



Robert Mullins, pastor of Crossroads Community Church, Elmore

TREASURER



Richard Richie, pastor of Blue Springs Baptist Church, Somerville



A special Thanksgiving crossword can be found on page 17.

Shout out to churches adding, expanding partnership with TAB

We are having a great time working with our church partners to expand TAB Media (*The Alabama Baptist*, TAB News, TAB Online, etc.) resources to their members.

And in some cases churches are helping make TAB available to their congregations for the first time ever or the first time in a long while.

During Read TAB Day in August, we customized video and promotional materials for five churches:

- ▶ Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton, and Pastor Andy Frazier
- ▶ Fultondale First Baptist Church and Pastor Mark Gainey
- ▶ Bethel Baptist Church, Dora, and Pastor John Foles
- ▶ Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville, and minister of education and outreach Greg Platt
- ▶ The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla, and Pastor Bill McCall.

Also for Read TAB Day, TAB's Jennifer Rash and Cynthia Watts shared during a special service in

August at First Baptist Church, Abbeville.

More recently the TAB staff has been working with churches to encourage subscriptions and/or to provide subscriptions for key leaders at the following churches:

- ▶ Macedonia Baptist Church, Ranburne, and Pastor Morgan Bailey
- ▶ Eastaboga Baptist Church and senior adult pastor John Whetstone
- ▶ East Brent Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida, and Pastor Wade Rials.

Rash and Debbie Campbell also had opportunities to share with two groups in September. They shared with the senior adults at East Highland Baptist Church, Hartselle, and with the Woman's Missionary Union group at First Baptist Church, Birmingham. Watts also participated in the First, Birmingham, event.

Several team members have been participating in a variety of other church, associational and state meetings. (TAB)

ABDR work wraps up in Adamsville, Tenn.



Photo courtesy of Tom Stacey

Tom Stacey, director of missions for Selma and Cahaba Baptist associations, works with a team of disaster relief volunteers in Adamsville, Tennessee, to clean up following Tropical Storm Olga. Disaster relief volunteers wrapped up their efforts the week of Nov. 17.

Correction

In the Nov. 21 issue it was incorrectly stated that 2020 will be the second year for the 50-50 split of Cooperative Program funds between the Alabama Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. The 2020 budget is actually the third year for the 50-50 split.



"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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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

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



This year's Thanksgiving may be hard but know you are not alone

As we put this edition of *The Alabama Baptist* to bed — that's old school newspaper talk for handing the pages over to be printed and mailed — staff members' minds turned to preparing for Thanksgiving.

Some take the full week off for a family vacation while others are responsible for cooking the spread of food for the holiday weekend.

Others spend hours cleaning, organizing and preparing for guests while a few travel for their family gatherings — one team member even going as far as Pennsylvania this year.

During the final moments before deadline my thoughts rushed to the friends and family whose Thanksgiving will be clouded with grief and sadness.

The holidays tend to magnify how much we miss those we've lost through the years anyway and when the loss happens so close to the holidays it becomes even more difficult.

I'm thinking of our friend Chette Williams, Auburn's long-time football chaplain, as he and his family grieve the recent loss of 18-year-old Chette Jr.

I'm thinking about a high school buddy and his sisters who said goodbye to their mother recently.

I'm thinking about a dear friend who is separated from his daughter right now.

I'm thinking about close friends and family who are desperately missing their precious children.

I'm thinking about a sweet friend who knows this will be the last Thanksgiving with her brother; and another friend who fears the same for his brother.

I'm thinking of the young couple who are trying to survive the holidays for their children's sake but aren't sure they will make it much past the new year.

I'm thinking of a grandmother who prays desperately for her grandchild to find his way through the current bad patch.

I'm thinking of several families working around dementia-related issues as they attempt

some type of Thanksgiving experience.

I'm thinking of several who will be alone on Thanksgiving and the days that follow, whose Nov. 28 will look the same as every other day in November.

I'm thinking of so many others who will power through the holiday weekend in survival mode.

If your name could be added to this list then please know we are here for you. We would love to know how we can pray for you and to hear your story if you would like to contact us.

Also know you are not alone as you walk this path. Sweet Alabama Baptists truly do exist all around you and would love to be part of your support system.

Look past the fear of being a bother, the not knowing what to say or even the guilt and shame, if that's an issue. Reach out and let others in to help carry the load.

I've learned it's OK to take some time to walk through grief and pain and do the best you can in that moment — and to truly work through it all rather than attempting to stuff emotions and just move on. 🙏



Your Voice



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

Six common traits of Gen Z and why they matter to the church

By Shane Pruitt

National director of next gen evangelism, NAMB

Through the last year while speaking at student events, I took the opportunity to ask them, “What do adults need to know about your generation, known as Gen Z?” Here are six things we need to know about Gen Z in their own words:


1. This generation wants to be a part of “doing” something. They’ll want more out of their church than sitting in a pew, listening to sermons and going to potluck dinners while waiting on the “Rapture Bus” to swoop down to pick them all up.

They are not scared to die young; they are terrified, however, to die while not having done anything significant with their lives in their own eyes. They are not typically impressed by a church’s size or budget.


Desire to be noticed

They’re interested both in being noticed relationally and in what the church is doing outside the walls of the building.

2. They are not ageist. Gen Z is in desperate need for older generations to invest in them. This is largely a fatherless generation. They often seek out or are more open to discipleship or mentorship than we tend to think. But they won’t know how to ask for it. They may ask you to “hang out.” But if this generation wants to spend time with you, they are giving you the most valuable thing they have to offer and you have to give — time.



GEN Z



- Birth years: 1995 to present
- Current age: 0–24
- Average age of first cell phone: 10
- Quick to adopt new technology and communication channels
- Projected to be 10% of votes cast in 2020 presidential election

Sources: Pew Research, Influence Central

3. They largely value the “why” over the “what.” Students are not typically open to doing something just because it’s the way it’s always been done. They are not driven by heritage. For example, students are not going to be Southern Baptist just because their parents were. If we can’t answer their “why” questions or we get defensive over their questions, we’ll lose them. Be ready to answer their honest questions with love, patience and kindness.

4. They don’t want to be seen as the future of the church. Remember, the younger generation is not the future of the church; if they’ve been redeemed with the blood of Jesus, then they’re the church of right now. Let them have some ownership.

Sometimes we’ll schedule an event to reach Gen Z using all older generations to plan it, then plead

with students to bring their friends. Then we get upset when they don’t show up. Want them to show up? Want them to invite their friends? Let them have a voice in planning it.

5. They want authenticity and transparency. Nearly all students grow weary of gimmicks and “sleek presentations” very quickly. The more transparent and vulnerable a communicator is the more students connect.

Desire for authenticity

There was a time when speakers/teachers were told not to use themselves in personal illustrations. This generation, on the other hand, wants to hear those personal stories. If we act as if we have it all figured out and are not in desperate daily need of God’s grace, we’ll lose their attention. They won’t believe that we’re “being real” and they’ll think

our faith is unattainable for them.

6. They know brokenness. They are exposed to more violence, graphic images and evil at an earlier age. Exposure to these things on the internet, in media coverage and through broken homes is unfortunately the norm for far too many.

They don’t know a world without the fear of mass shootings and terrorism. This is also a pornography-saturated generation where the average age of first exposure is 11. Seventy percent of guys and 50% of girls admit to interaction with internet pornography.

This generation is looking for solutions at a much earlier time in their lives. They know they’re broken. Thank God for the gospel because it is mighty to save Gen Z. Share it with them. They’re starving for it, whether or not they know it.

I’m personally encouraged by this generation of students. Even as an adult, I resonate deeply with their views. According to a recent Wall Street Journal survey, 30% of Gen Z says, “religion is very important to them,” the lowest in U.S. history. But 78% say, “living a self-fulfilled life is very important to them.”

This should be extremely eye-opening to us. That’s the threshold to cross in communicating to Gen Z. Help them see that a “fulfilled life” only comes from Someone outside of “self.”

Let’s mobilize a generation. They will make mistakes, but so do we. That’s why grace is so amazing. (BP)

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“God does not withhold hard things nor does He withhold Himself.”

PASTOR ED LITTON

Redemption Church, Saraland

Any educator who has worked with students in poverty understands that if life outside of school is chaotic, the task of education is that much harder. Thankfully, there are many individuals and organizations committed to helping residents break the cycle of generational poverty.

Matthew Stokes
Alabama Policy Institute

No matter what you've done ... God is still a God of redemption.

Jaterrius “Rockstar Jt” Johnson
Montgomery, Ala.

When church leaders learn the statistics of child sexual abuse and hear real stories of abuse in

churches, they often gain an understanding for the need of preventive measures.

Faye Scott
Minister to children
FBC New Orleans

Nov. 20 [marked] the 10-year anniversary of the publication of “The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience.” The document ... outlined three issues that were under assault in American culture in 2009 — the sanctity of every human life, the traditional biblical understanding of marriage and religious liberty for all people ... from the complementary standpoints of holy Scripture (our ultimate authority), the best of the

Christian intellectual tradition and human reason. ... The Manhattan Declaration issued a clarion call that was clearly necessary 10 years ago. Subsequent events have shown this call is even more important in 2019.

Nathan A. Finn
Provost and dean of the faculty
North Greenville University
Tigerville, S.C.

That's why we exist as a church — to bring the love of Christ to people who are hurting and we don't want to leave the [shooter's] mom out.

Pastor David Hegg
Grace Baptist Church
Santa Clarita, Calif.



Samford photo
Andrew Westmoreland is president of Samford University in Birmingham.

Faithful to the Rock

There is a quarry in Franklin County with a band of limestone I'm told that's 20 miles long just northwest of Bankhead National Forest. All of the limestone on the Samford Campus came from one quarry up there.

When I learned that I remembered Isaiah 51:1: “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.”

It's a great verse. It doesn't refer to Alabama limestone, as great as it is. We know it refers to the rock of Christ. As long as we will adhere to that Rock, then I think we will be faithful. That is being lived out these days in the arrival of new faculty and the programs for Christian ministry at Samford.

At Samford we are all together and we are all together to serve the Lord and to serve Alabama Baptists. We seek to be faithful in that regard.

I'm deeply grateful to each of you and to the entire Alabama Baptist family for Samford's continued and fruitful affiliation with you.

(Adapted from remarks during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting)

—Andrew Westmoreland

From the *Twitterverse*

@bobgoff

Faith doesn't mean we're not afraid anymore, it just means our actions aren't controlled by our doubts.

@AdamGreenway

“When you separate biblical truth from Christian love, you end up with a false religion.”
— @manorjuan in #SWBTSChapel

@Pastor_Cory

How could God possibly love sinners? He might be able to forgive them but this is not what Jesus taught. In actions and words He proclaimed that God loves sinners as they are, and not as they should be. — James Bryan Smith

@greglaurie

A key to personal revival is to

share your faith. The gospel is not to be hoarded but shared. As you share this life-giving message with others it's also a life-giving message to you. As you declare it to others, you are reminded of what God has done for you. Share the gospel!

@DannyAkin

Never allow bullies to intimidate you and set your agenda. Always strive to do the right thing in the right way and for the right reasons. Seek God's approval and rest well at night. What the Lord thinks is all that matters anyway.

@DustinBenge

Destroy church buildings, burn the Bibles, imprison pastors, suppress religious freedom: Christ will still build His church and governments, tyrants, ideologies and dictators can't stop Him!

@DustyMcLemore

@johnnymhunt was bringing the word @LLBCAthens! “One thing worse than being lost is being lost and no one is looking for you!” ... “Forgiveness is the greatest miracle Jesus ever performed.”
@whosyour1_

@KevinBumgarner1

Repent means “to go in the opposite direction.” Think about that the next time you come to God repenting of your sin.

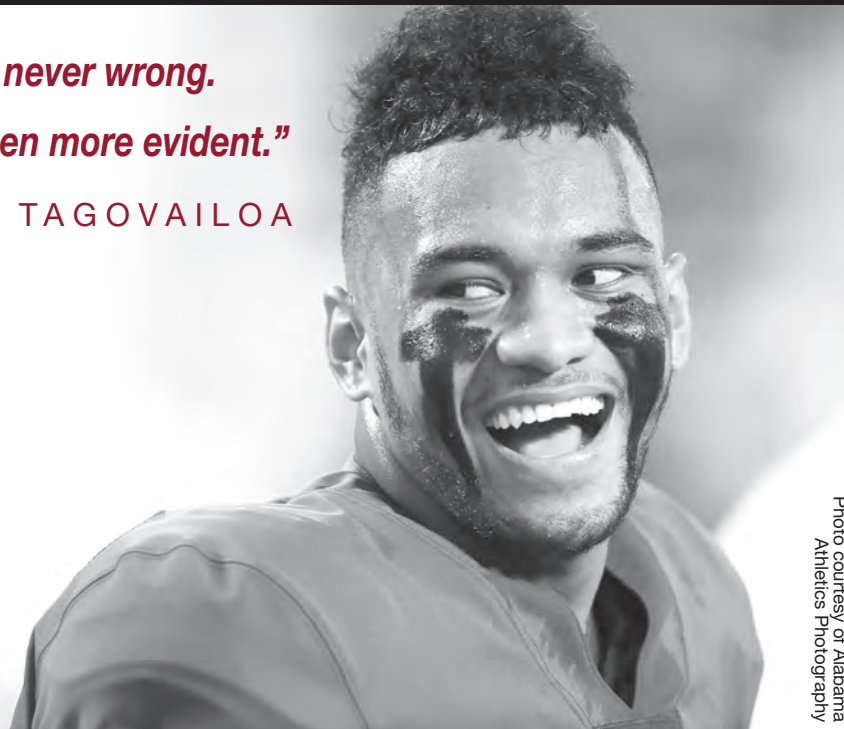
@bellevuepastor

Preacher, get to know other pastors that love Jesus in your community. Even those of a different denomination or ethnicity. Make some new friends outside your normal network. Talk, pray and serve with them. Get out of your bubble. All of us are better than any one of us.

“We have total faith in God’s plan for Tua and we know His plan is never wrong. God’s grace, mercy, love and faithfulness in our lives has never been more evident.”

— GALU AND DIANE TAGOVAILOA

Faith is NO. 1



Alabama’s quarterback uses football as platform to share his faith

On Nov. 16 the college football world was shaken when Heisman candidate and starting quarterback for the No. 5 University of Alabama Crimson Tide, Tua Tagovailoa, suffered a season-ending hip injury in the second quarter of Alabama’s game versus the Mississippi State Bulldogs.

Tua had successful hip surgery Nov. 18 and most are hopeful his future in football will continue.

But football isn’t the No. 1 priority of Tua’s life — it’s his Christian faith.

Just like folks don’t understand Coach Nick Saban’s “process” and why his method of coaching yields the kind of results it does, the same

goes for Tua’s ultimate mission for the gospel.

As much as fans want to praise him and slap him on the back, it really isn’t about football or the acclaim that comes with it for Tua. Sure, football is the medium by which Tua delivers his message, but it’s about sharing the gospel with the world. And it’s about having the biggest platform to be able to do that. Alabama football has provided him such a podium.

Eternal things

His parents, Galu and Diane Tagovailoa, have instilled in Tua the belief that his mission transcends the game itself. They are careful this is done not in a self-important way or a

way that says, “I’m better than you,” but rather by offering a lost world an invitation to something better than it is currently offering them. Simply put, the Tagovailoas want others to taste the sweetness of things eternal.

Tua wants to tell others the type of abundance that’s readily available in this life if they only believe. And his mission is to use his podium to affect as many lives for the gospel as he can.

When the Tagovailoa family moved from Hawaii to Alabama in 2017 they were purposeful in that decision and certainly football played a factor. But in an interview with WBRC’s Rick Karle in October 2018, Galu publicly stated the family’s main purpose in being in Alabama is to have a platform to praise Jesus Christ.

“We’re here because it’s bigger than football,” Galu said. “It’s so much bigger than football.”

Every day, win or lose, the Tagovailoas keep their eyes fixed on that purpose. Accolades and the shiny accoutrements of football success may inevitably come, but the mission, invisible, remains steady.

“Football is not everything, it’s a part of what the mission is,” Galu

said. “The mission is the platform. To praise our Lord and Savior. What Tua has done or is doing is nothing compared to the real reason why we are here.”

Since the 2nd-and-26 walk-off

chunk to DeVonta Smith in the 2018 National Championship game, Tua Tagovailoa has absolutely exploded. But his platform has grown too.

A few weeks after the jaw-dropping performance on Jan. 8, 2018, Tua gave his testimony at a Disciple Now event at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa.

“Tua was a surprise guest speaker ... so to say our students were excited would be

an understatement,” said Jody Gambrell, student minister at the church.

Trusting God

Though Tua’s football career is temporarily on hold, the Tagovailoa family will continue leaning on their faith and trusting God.

“We have total faith in God’s plan for Tua and we know His plan is never wrong,” they said in a statement. “God’s grace, mercy, love and faithfulness in our lives has never been more evident despite this setback.” (Al Blanton, *TAB*)



Photo courtesy of Alabama Athletics Photography

Tua Tagovailoa was born and raised in Hawaii until 2017 when his family moved to Alabama. Football was a factor in that move, but Tua’s dad, Galu Tagovailoa, said their main purpose in being in Alabama is to have a platform to praise Jesus Christ.



Photo courtesy of Alabama Athletics Photography

Tua Tagovailoa has been the starting quarterback for the Alabama Crimson Tide since he led the team’s comeback in the 2018 National Championship game against Georgia.

Build new traditions

Easing some of the stress of holiday season for new blended families, newlyweds

By Kelly Arant, M.Ed., NCC, LPC
Pathways Professional Counseling

The holidays are my favorite time of the year, but the season is also a stressful time.

All families, whether traditional, blended, single parent, empty nest, newlyweds or any variation between, experience stress around the holidays. It is a universal experience.

When conflict arises around the holidays the root cause typically is either unmet or unexpressed expectations.

The holiday stress of blended families can be compounded by all the schedules that have to be juggled. There are two of everything. Stepparenting coach and author Gayla Grace provides some practical steps for making the holidays enjoyable:

- ▶ Put the children first.
- ▶ Be proactive — it's never too early to start planning.
- ▶ Put aside unrealistic expectations — there will be some unhappy moments during the holidays. Grief is a real part of the holidays, especially if a family has changed due to death or divorce.

▶ Be flexible and agreeable with other family members if possible. It's important to remember that Christmas can be celebrated on any day other than December 25 and still be special and enjoyable.

▶ Start new traditions and continue enjoying old traditions that fit. Traditions are a great way for stepfamilies to create bonds with one another that are strengthened every

year as you come together for an established purpose.

Newlyweds face similar struggles.

I will never forget the first Christmas my husband and I celebrated together.

I come from a large, blended family

and my husband is the second oldest of five children. His tradition was to meet at his widowed father's house for breakfast with his siblings on Christmas morning.

My tradition was to have Christmas lunch at my mom's house with the large blended family that included myself, my six siblings and their families, and then have an evening meal with my dad that just included him and my two older brothers.

As the day approached not having planned ahead, my husband and I decided to just carry on the old



123rf.com

traditions. What this looked like in reality was us getting up at 3 a.m. to celebrate our time together, breakfast with his dad at 6 a.m., lunch with my mom at noon and dinner with my dad at 6 p.m.

We arrived home at 11 p.m. exhausted and then had to go to work the next day.

It had not been a day of celebration for us, but one of endurance.

Newlywed tips

Newlyweds need to know it's ok to set boundaries in a loving way, according to psychologist Nikki Martinez.

In her article "Tips for Newlyweds, On Navigating the Holidays," Martinez reminds couples, "The important thing is that you are together, that you are creating new traditions as a couple, and that you are doing the best that you can to be involved with your families and let them know that you love them and that you want to be with them as much as you can this holiday season."

This is exactly what my husband and I did over the next few years. We had conversations early with each other and our families, we moved some holiday celebrations to other days and times and we built in new traditions just for our family.

The holidays became so much more enjoyable when we did.

For more stepparenting resources, go to www.stepparentingwithgrace.com or www.smartstepfamilies.com.

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

Kelly Arant is a mom of two grown children and a nationally certified licensed professional counselor serving in central and north Alabama with Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.✝

"It's important to remember that Christmas can be celebrated on any day other than December 25 and still be special and enjoyable."

Kelly Arant

licensed professional counselor, Pathways Professional Counseling

More than counting your blessings

Express gratitude to God by helping others during holidays, throughout the year

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As the holiday season approaches we are reminded to count the many blessings God has bestowed on our lives during the past year. This season consider ways you and your family can not only continue to thank God for His blessings but also pay those blessings forward.

Here are some suggestions:

▶ **Volunteer as a family.** Data shows that when

young children are involved in volunteer work they continue this as adults. Look around your neighborhood. What projects need extra hands that your family could support?

Serving as a family

Perhaps you could weed a community flower bed, pick up trash in the church parking lot or serve a meal at a homeless shelter. No matter what project is selected, the important thing is serving as a family and developing compassion for helping others.

▶ **Plan a community food drive.** Invite children in your neighborhood or church

to a pizza party. Mention that donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted. Provide sturdy boxes for packing the cans and packages. As part of the party ask children to pack boxes. Donate the boxes to a local ministry that helps hungry families.

As you pack food boxes talk with children about following the example of Christ when we feed others (see Matt. 25:35-40). Remind children and youth that many people in Alabama go to bed hungry or lack healthy foods to eat. Talk about how it feels to give to people in need.

▶ **Contact your local**



Photo by Carrie McWhorter

Members of the Alabama Network of Christian Community Ministers met Nov. 11 at Prodissee Pantry in Spanish Fort for the organization's annual meeting. They packed apple bags for the ministry to distribute with Thanksgiving meals.

Baptist association to see which community ministries need volunteers and offer the help of your family, Sunday School class or small group. Commit to at least one volunteer project per month in the coming

year and use a shared calendar (print or online) to set the dates and communicate details for each project. As you serve talk with children about following the example of Christ when we help others.✝



Burnett named UM president after serving 6 months in interim position

(continued from page 1)

Burnett said the university will build on its strengths — strong academics, a vibrant college community and Christ-centered mentoring to prepare students to pursue their professional calling.

“The University of Mobile is a special place. While we have a beautiful campus with great academic programs and facilities, it is our people who make the University of Mobile unique,” Burnett said. “It’s a place where students are known, educated and mentored by dedicated faculty and staff who ensure they are gaining more than just

a degree from college. We truly believe we are advancing ‘Higher Education for a Higher Purpose.’”

Burnett’s past leadership roles include vice provost, assistant vice president for Academic Affairs and president of the Faculty Council.

He graduated in 1979 with a bachelor of arts from UM, then Mobile College. His wife, Lynne, graduated from UM in 1996, and daughter Lauren Burnett Wetzel holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from UM, having graduated in 2009 and 2019. He earned a master of arts from the University of South Alabama and doctor of philoso-

phy from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Burnett taught regular and honors U.S. history at the high school and middle school levels in the Mobile County Public School System from 1980 to 2004. He joined the UM faculty in 2005, eventually becoming chair of the UM Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, a full professor and gaining tenure in 2012.

He has two books published with the University of Alabama Press and received UM’s Mitford Ray Megginson Research Award in 2006.

Burnett is an active member of Redemption Church in north Mobile. (UM)

Keown receives service award



Photo by Keith Hibbs

The 2019 Paul Stewart Lifetime Service Award was presented to Charles Keown (left) during the Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women banquet Nov. 11 at First Baptist Church, Bay Minette. Keown has served at Lakewood Baptist Church, Phenix City, since 1982. He currently serves as minister of music and senior adults. David Henderson (right), chair of the Paul Stewart Award Committee, presented the award.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Giving Thanks at Thanksgiving

Expressing Table Thanks

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

Thanksgiving Day is a good time to think about one of the most common times of giving thanks — that of mealtime. One of my earliest memories about mealtime giving of thanks is someone being asked, “Please say the blessing” or “Please ask the blessing.”

This expression about thanksgiving at mealtime might find an early example in the instruction given Israel in Deuteronomy 8:10: “When you have eaten and are full then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.” The most notable change for most of us is that we say the blessing before we eat rather than after we are full although this latter timing might be a refreshing change in something that too easily becomes routine.

‘Bless the food’

A variation of the expression about the blessing at mealtime is the common invitation for someone to “bless the food.” While we understand what is meant it does raise a question about how servings of food are to be blessed. It is easier to think of blessing God who gives us the food or blessing the ones who have earned, prepared or served it.

Even so we do read about Jesus at the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 blessing the fish after having broken the bread: “They also had a few small fish and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them” (Mark 8:7).

In similar expression Matthew

26:26, in recounting the Last Supper reports, “And as they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples.”

So we might conclude the idea of blessing the food at mealtime has a good precedence even though we do not know what Jesus said in either of His blessings. Our intention in blessing the food might simply be to ask that it be nourishing.

A variation of this last expression has occasionally been simply, “Please bless the table.” We might take this as including not only the food and drink but also the fellowship to be enjoyed around the table among family members and friends.

Another expression related to giving thanks at mealtime is, “Please say grace for us.” The implication is that inasmuch as the Bible declares, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17), giving of thanks should focus on divine grace that has been given in the form of good food and good table fellowship. May all of us enjoy a real “thanksgiving” experience at our table.✝

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.



Photo by Cynthia Watts

A panel featuring (l to r) moderator Mark Gainey, Mark Tew, Rob Jackson, Andrew Westmoreland and George Yates discusses church revitalization and keys to being a faithful leader at the 2019 Director of Missions annual meeting.

DOM annual meeting emphasizes church revitalization

The Director of Missions annual meeting was held Nov. 11 at Faith Family Fellowship, Spanish Fort. Mark Gainey, pastor of Fultondale First Baptist Church, was the keynote speaker for the meeting, which focused on church revitalization.



GAINEY

“Church revitalization is like a crockpot, not a microwave,” he said. “There are no silver bullets, no secret sauces. We grow a church discipling a few people at a time, not with mass events. Nothing will happen outside of relationships.”

Following lunch a panel, mod-

erated by Gainey and consisting of George Yates, church health strategist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; Rob Jackson, associate professor of Christian studies at University of Mobile; Mark Tew, president of Judson College; and Andy Westmoreland, president of Samford University, discussed key points to always remember when serving under the Great Commission.

“We are nobodies. It’s all God,” Jackson said. “God can use a nobody. God gets the glory. Don’t neglect the Holy Spirit.” (TAB)



Photo by Cynthia Watts

Those present at the Nov. 11 annual meeting of director of missions/associational missions directors elected new officers (l to r): President-elect Lyle Dease, Pickens Baptist Association; President Thomas Wright, Mobile Baptist Association; and Treasurer Barry Cosper, Bessemer Baptist Association.



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



Happy Thanksgiving

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2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 (NIV)



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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,
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- 25 **Christmas Day**

COMING IN EARLY 2020!

PURSUE

February 21-22, First Baptist Church,
Montgomery
A conference to equip college students to be on
mission (*Register at pursueAL.org*)

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

February 23-24, Heritage Baptist Church,
Montgomery

MAIN SESSIONS

February 23 at 6:30 p.m.
February 24, beginning at 9:30 a.m.
*For a full list of speakers and worship leaders,
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RELATED MEETINGS

- Disciple Making Ministries Dinner**
February 23 at 4:30 p.m. (*Register at alsbom.org/disciplemakingdinner*)
- Ministers' Wives Luncheon**
February 24 at noon (*Register at alsbom.org/ministers-wives-luncheon*)
- Reaching Gen Z Luncheon**
February 24 at noon (*Register at alsbom.org/reachinggenz*)
- Hispanic Pastors and Leaders Conference**
February 24 at 4:30 p.m. (*Free event*)

ALABAMA DISCIPLESHIP CONFERENCE

April 27-28, First Baptist Church,
Fultondale (*Free event. Register at ALDiscipleshipConference.com*)

Serving in Africa

‘Being a part of the plan of God ignites a fire in people ... changes the dynamic of a church’

When one of Adam Montgomery’s friends asked him to go to Africa seven years ago he was unsure.

“I believe in outreach and sharing but I wasn’t sure if I should go on that trip or not,” said Montgomery, pastor of Reno Baptist Church, Woodstock.

Bigger burden

But he began to pray and God began to stir his heart. And what he found waiting for him in Africa was an even bigger burden for outreach.

“In some of these places that are so remote their whole world is in a 10-to-20-mile radius — just the distance they can walk,” Montgomery said. “If we don’t go, how will they know?”

So now he’s actively involved with e3 Partners, an organization that evangelizes,

equips new believers and assists them as they start churches and spread the gospel.

“I’m signed up with them to be a church planter,” he said. He regularly leads trips and seeks to pass on his passion for the Great Commission.

“Getting involved in missions creates a revival and an awakening of a church,” he said. “We’re seeing that. Being a part of the plan of God ignites a fire in people. There’s something about just getting involved in His work that changes the dynamic of a church.”

Richie Farrow, pastor of Olive Branch Baptist Church, Ashland, said he’s seen that happen in his own life and ministry.

He first felt called to Africa in 1999 at an Experiencing God weekend.

“God called me out to go to Mozambique that weekend. I had never even heard



Photo courtesy of Richie Farrow

Richie Farrow (back, center), pastor of Olive Branch Baptist Church, Ashland, in Carey Association, first felt called to Africa in 1999. Since then he’s taken numerous trips to Kenya and Uganda and helped start an orphanage. And through the years at the churches he’s served as pastor he’s taken 17 church members with him — one of whom is now a full-time missionary in Kenya.

of the place,” he said.

But Farrow went and spent two weeks in a tent evangelizing. Since then he’s taken multiple trips to Kenya and Uganda and

helped start an orphanage.

And through the years at the churches he’s served as pastor he’s taken 17 of his church members with him — one of whom is now

a full-time missionary in Kenya.

“You come back on fire, rejuvenated, ready to go,” Farrow said. (Grace Thornton)

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Perfect reflection

'One more song' results in inspirational moment

(continued from page 1)

you. Can you sing one more song?" And I told him that I was originally from Korea and his song was one of my favorites — it had made a big impact on me," Yang said.

Yang even mentioned how he had taught the song to his five children because it was so special to him.

Unexpected duet

English said he would sing the song but might need a little help with the lyrics and the high notes — it had been a while since he had sung it and he was having some vocal problems that night.

And as he sang and Yang recorded from just a few feet away something special happened — Yang helped him with the lyrics and English invited him up to help him finish the song.

"It was a great moment for me; it meant a lot," Yang said. "My simple request was for him to sing so I could hear it in person, but it was a surprise — I did not



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Singer Michael English (right) embraces Soo Seok Yang, a concert goer whose impromptu song request led to a heartwarming finale at English's Nov. 5 concert in Montgomery.

expect he would invite me to sing together with him."

And as English was signing CDs out in the lobby after the concert Yang sang the song for him in Korean.

"I asked him if he knew his song had been translated into Korean and sung by many people in Korea," he said. "He asked me if I could sing it for him. We got to have worship all over again right there in the lobby."

The song was the perfect

reflection of the testimony English had shared and "now it's a part of my story in a new way too," Yang said.

Other performances

As part of English's tour, sponsored by *The Alabama Baptist* in partnership with area churches, he also performed Nov. 4 at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Midland City, and Nov. 7 at First Baptist Church, Fairhope. (Grace Thornton)

The song was the perfect reflection of the testimony English had shared, and 'now it's a part of my story in a new way too.'

Soo Seok Yang
member, FBC Montgomery

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BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, Alabama, has position available for bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: jbshaw@mound.net or cindymathews0126@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 resumé to: River Road Baptist Church, 3352 Warrior River Road, Hueytown, AL 35023 or notiHim@bellsouth.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Uria, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please mail resumé to: First Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 337, Uria, AL 36480.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Sulphur Springs Baptist Association, consisting of 20 churches, accepting resumés for bivocational director of missions. Send to: DOM Search Committee, 4501 Greathouse Road, Dora, AL 35062, or email to: SSBAoffice@gmail.com.

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PROVIDING hope & healing

ABCH expands space to offer more services

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) and Pathways Professional Counseling now have more spacious and specialized facilities in Birmingham thanks to a building project dedicated Nov. 8.

The \$4.5 million project — which renovated the existing ABCH administrative building and added an expansion for Pathways — will better position the ministries to serve the foster children and families in their care, according to ministry leaders.

Rod Marshall, ABCH president and CEO, also announced the

rededicated administrative building would be named The Paul and Diane Miller Administrative Service Center in honor of the retired ABCH CEO and his late wife.

At the dedication Miller prayed that every child in the ministry's care would "find hope, healing and wellness."

The building named after him offers updates including an expanded Pilot Room

that can host nearly 100 for foster parent training classes, conferences and board meetings. It also has an indoor play area and interview rooms that give added ability to host children, biological parents, foster parents and staff.

For more information, visit alabamachild.org or pathwaysprofessional.org.



Photo by Grace Thornton

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) president and CEO Rod Marshall (left) addresses those gathered for the ribbon cutting and dedication of the organization's newly renovated ABCH administrative building and newly constructed spaces for Pathways Professional Counseling.

The new Pathways building expansion has 16 counseling offices for its licensed professional counselors and six dedicated Play Therapy/Thera-Play rooms with observation areas. It also has a walking track and basketball court to offer places for children and teenagers to open up to Pathway's coun-

selors in a relaxed, outdoor setting.

"We are incredibly grateful for the multiple churches, donors and businesses who gave to help see this expansion and renovation project come to fruition," said Michelle Drashman Glassford, ABCH director of communications. (Grace Thornton)



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3 stories you should know



IMB photo

International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Robin Tinley (right) talks with women in a Colombian leather factory where Venezuelan refugees find employment. More than 3 million people have left Venezuela in an attempt to escape hunger, crime, unemployment and lack of medical care. As they do IMB missionaries and churches help as best they can. Tinley is one of the IMB missionaries featured in the 2019 Week of Prayer for International Missions (IMB.org/lmco). (IMB)

College leaders gather in Mobile for Unite

Alabama Baptist campus ministers joined other student leaders in Mobile on Nov. 11 for Unite, an event hosted by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions focused on resourcing, equipping and encouraging those ministering to college and university students.

Jody Dean, associate professor for Christian education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Emily Hamilton, collegiate consultant at Etowah Baptist Association, led a discussion of best practices in college ministries. Topics included facilities management, recognizing the warning signs of mental illness and communications policies.

An estimated 200,000 students on Alabama college campuses are unreached with the gospel, making it the largest missions field in the state. (TAB)

SC convention elects first black president

Messengers to the South Carolina Baptist Convention's (SCBC) annual meeting made history Nov. 12 by electing the convention's first African-American president.

Alex Sands, pastor of Kingdom Life Church, Simpsonville, South Carolina, was elected by acclamation as president-elect and will become president following a year of service.

SCBC President Bryant Sims noted the historic moment.

"After slavery ended virtually every African-American left the balconies of our churches to form their own churches and conventions," Sims said. "Our track record on the race issue over the next 100 or so years was not great, to say the least, but ... I don't want it to be lost on us today, that on our 200th anniversary ... our first African-American will preside as president." (BP)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Coosa River associational missionary set to retire at end of January 2020

Randy Hagan says he looks forward to going to work every day. It's been that way all 11 years he's served as associational missionary for Coosa River Baptist Association.

"It's been a great season of ministry — they've been so good to us," he said.

Which is why it's bittersweet for him that he's planning to transition into a new season of ministry at the end of January 2020. He announced his retirement at the association's recent annual meeting.

"It's a great fellowship of churches, a great bunch of guys here," Hagan said.

He's enjoyed his time as a "pastor to pastors," but in retirement, he's looking forward to serving as a pastor again too. Before serving as associational missionary, he served as pastor of one of the association's churches — Hepzibah Baptist, Talladega —



HAGAN

along with First Baptist Church, Weaver.

"God's been so good to me over the years," he said. (Grace Thornton)

Chick-fil-A announces changes in charitable giving policy



Popular fast-food chain Chick-fil-A announced Nov. 18 it will focus the company's charitable donations on the areas of hunger, homelessness and education beginning in 2020.

The Atlanta-based company has faced intense criticism in recent years over its charitable donations to groups that opposed same-sex "marriage."

Chick-fil-A has not attributed its policy shift to criticism or outside pressure.

Tim Tassopoulos, president and COO of Chick-fil-A, Inc., said in a statement that the company's goal "is to donate to the most effective organizations in the areas of education, homelessness and hunger. ... Faith-based or non-faith-based, no organization will be excluded from future consideration."

In 2019 the Chick-fil-A Foundation, the com-

pany's philanthropic arm, donated to upwards of 300 charitable organizations. Under the new policy the foundation will distribute \$9 million dollars in pledged donations next year and will limit its partnerships to only one charity for each of its three initiatives. (BP)

Fuller, Pasquarello assume new roles at Samford's Beeson Divinity School

Tom Fuller is the new associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham.

Since joining the faculty in 2000, Fuller has served in several administrative roles and has taught courses in pastoral leadership and practical theology. He is a recognized leader in the fields of theological field education and assessment of student learning outcomes.

Fuller, an ordained Baptist minister, served as pastor of churches in Indiana and Alabama for 13 years and continues to serve churches through consulting, supply preaching



FULLER

News near you

BETHEL ASSOCIATION

▶ On Oct. 13, **Forest Hill Baptist Church, Linden**, celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Pastor Matthew Kelley preached and Shannon Knight brought special music throughout the day.

Mike Snow, director of missions for Bethel Baptist Association, and Angie

Cooper, from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, both presented certificates.

Photos were on display and lunch followed the service.

“We could feel the Spirit of the Lord,” Kitty Porter said. “It was a blessed day.”



Photo by Lonette Berg

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

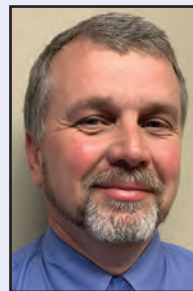
▶ **West End Baptist Church, Clanton**, will host a music and drama presentation of “We Still Believe” on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. The program will include choirs of all age levels, hand bells and a drama group. For more information call 205-755-0625. James Watkins is pastor.

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Coffee Baptist Association’s** Never Alone Widow’s Ministry Committee will host a Christmas party Dec. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the association office. Bring a finger food and a gift to play Dirty Santa. To RSVP call 334-894-6411. John Granger is director of missions. ▶ **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host “A Night in Bethlehem” on Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. It will be an interactive night that ends at a live nativity. A time of fellowship and Christmas caroling will conclude the night. Danny Wiggins is pastor. ▶ **Damascus Baptist Church, Elba**, will host a southern gospel Christmas concert featuring the Troy Burns Family on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. Call 850-238-7284 for more information. Steve Watson is pastor.

HALE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Greensboro Baptist Church** will celebrate its 125-year anniversary Dec. 8 at 10 a.m. The celebration will include music, pictures of missions involvement through the years and testimonies. Former pastor Bobby Dubois will be the guest speaker. Lunch will follow the service. Dee McGuire is pastor.



ADKINS

RANDOLPH ASSOCIATION

▶ **Charles Adkins** is the new pastor of **Zion Baptist Church, Woodland**. He previously served at Lathamville Baptist Church, Crossville. He and his wife, Stephanie, have nine children and four grandchildren.

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Travis Adams** is the new worship pastor at **Bethlehem Baptist Church, Midland City**. He previously served at Calvary Heights Baptist Church, Alexander City. He holds a degree from Troy University and also teaches piano and works as assistant band director at Dothan High School.



ADAMS

TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

▶ At the **Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association** annual meeting Oct. 15 the association celebrated 50 years of ministry.

Terry Long, director of missions for Choctaw Baptist Association and associate in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions office of evangelism, spoke during the meeting.

Tom Grantham, pastor of Purpose Baptist Church, Opelika, read a history of the association.

Tuskegee Lee Association director of missions Bill King (pictured, left) also spoke on the history and ministry of the association.

Lonette Berg (pictured, right) presented a certificate from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission to King commemorating the anniversary. †



Photo by Debbie Campbell

— NEWSBRIEFS —

and interim pastoral service. He holds degrees from University of Alabama, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Samford.

Also in a new position at Beeson is Michael Pasquarello who added director for the doctor of ministry in Christian preaching (D.Min.) program to his roles as Methodist Chair of Divinity and director of the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute. Pasquarello is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and a graduate of Duke Divinity School. (TAB)



PASQUARELLO

Court rules against pro-life advocates who investigated Planned Parenthood

Pro-life advocates decried a court’s decision that awarded \$2.28 million in total punitive and compensatory damages to Planned Parenthood in a suit involving undercover investigations that provided evidence the country’s leading abortion provider traded in the sale of baby body parts.



A federal jury in San Francisco issued the penalties Nov. 15 against the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) and investigators who secretly recorded videos of Planned Parenthood executives discussing their sale of fetal parts, as well as their willingness to manipulate the abortion procedure to preserve organs for sale and use.

The jury agreed with Planned Parenthood that the defendants were guilty of fraud, trespassing, illegal recording, racketeering and breach of contract, according to the *San Francisco Examiner*.

The National Right to Life Committee called the judgment “chilling for anyone acting in good faith to reveal what they feel is criminal activity.”

Planned Parenthood centers performed 332,757 abortions during the 2016–2017 fiscal year and received \$563.8 million in government grants and reimbursements in the 2017–2018 fiscal year, according to its most recent annual report. (BP, TAB)

Longtime Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes staff member dies at 91

Longtime business administrator for the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) Jack



Milton Curtis died Sept. 22. He was 91.

Curtis served ABCH from 1964 to 1998. Curtis received a commendation from the Alabama House of Representatives in 1998 for his achievements with ABCH.

During the Korean conflict Curtis served in the U.S. Navy and Naval Reserves.

Curtis served with the Southern Baptist Business Officer’s Conference from 1966 until 1998 and in 1999 received the Taylor Daniel Award of Merit. Curtis also served on the Annuity Board (now GuideStone Financial Resources) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He was a deacon and Sunday School teacher at First Baptist Church, Troy, and after retiring from ABCH was a member of First Baptist Church, Alexander City, for 17 years until moving to Plano, Texas, to be closer to his son and family.

Curtis is survived by his wife of 69 years, Mattie Lou; his son, Clay; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (TAB)



CURTIS



Since 1845, the International Mission Board has partnered with churches to send missionaries to live and work among those around the world with little to no access to the gospel.

As of October 31, 2019, there are 3,678 international missionaries on the field, engaging with 847 people groups. Of those missionaries, several hundred call Alabama home. Through Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections (a18c.org), a ministry of your State Board of Missions, Alabama Baptist churches have a simple and practical way to connect with these international missionaries from Alabama through prayer, giving and going. It's a point of connection that means the world to missionary families like the Odoms.

Connecting with Baptists from their own state has been a great encouragement to the Odoms. "We can't overstate how much we value churches praying for us," T.J. said. "It means so much to know that people and churches from our own state are lifting us up to the Lord."



T.J. and Dena Odom

Your gifts through the Cooperative Program and to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering are also making a difference, not only to the Odoms but to all of our international missionaries. Those gifts are what allow the Odoms "to have Gospel

CONNECTING CHURCHES WITH MISSIONARIES

T.J. and Dena Odom were both raised in Citronelle. For the past seven years they have been serving in Glasgow, Scotland, where they oversee a team of missionaries seeking to make disciples while also partnering with a local church.

Several Alabama churches, including First Baptist Church, Prattville, have partnered with the Odoms through Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections. For the past two summers, a volunteer team from First, Prattville, has traveled to Glasgow to help the Odoms put on Vacation Bible Schools and English as a Second Language camps.

Through those events, T.J. said, "We've been able to build inroads into the community, which have led to many, many Gospel conversations throughout the year."



Members of First Baptist, Prattville, join with the Odoms to host an ESL Camp in Glasgow.

conversations where the first time someone has heard the Gospel has been out of my mouth," T.J. said. Dena added, "Because of the giving, we can focus solely on the ministry and our family, and not our salary, insurance and things like that."

THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS IS DECEMBER 1-8. THE NATIONAL LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING GOAL IS \$165 MILLION, WITH ALABAMA'S GOAL SET AT \$12 MILLION.

For resources to help you observe the Week of Prayer and the offering, visit alsbom.org/lottiemoon. To learn more about how your church can connect with missionaries from Alabama, visit a18c.org.



Judson College announces new scholarship program

Speaking to Judson College alumnae and later to messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, Judson President Mark Tew had big news for Alabama Baptists in his first convention report.

“God has more for us than we can imagine,” Tew told those gathered Nov. 11 at the Baldwin Chapter of Judson College Alumnae Meet and Greet. “At Judson we are seeking to do higher education in a different way.”

Part of that different way is a new scholarship program which Tew announced to state convention messengers Nov. 13.

Beginning in the fall of 2020 the daughters of several groups of Alabama Baptists will be eligible for a new scholarship program, Tew said.

Students in these categories who meet Judson’s “exacting admissions standards and who become residential students [are eligible to] receive a full tuition scholarship,” Tew said.

In the past daughters of

full-time pastors of Alabama Baptist churches could receive a partial-tuition scholarship.

Under the new program more students are eligible, including the daughters of:

- ▶ Pastors, full- and part-time, including bivocational pastors, of participating Alabama Baptist churches that are in good standing with the local Baptist association and the Alabama Baptist State Convention

- ▶ All other ministers, full- and part-time, who are employed by participating Alabama Baptist churches that are in good standing with the local Baptist association and the Alabama Baptist State Convention

- ▶ All full-time employees of participating Alabama Baptist churches that are in good standing with the local

Baptist association and the Alabama Baptist State Convention

▶ All full-time employees of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, its associational offices and funded entities and organiza-

tions. To receive the scholarship students must become residential students, and the scholarship does not include room, board, books and class/activity fees, Tew said.

“Educating the daughters of our Baptist leaders in the state is a cherished portion of Judson’s distinctive and distinguished mission,” Tew said. “Increasing the amount and extending the reach of this scholarship allows Judson to express appreciation for and render service to our churches and denominational entities across the state.” (Carrie Brown McWhorter)



Photo by Cynthia Watts

Judson College President Mark Tew speaks to those present at the Baldwin Chapter of Judson College Alumnae Meet and Greet.

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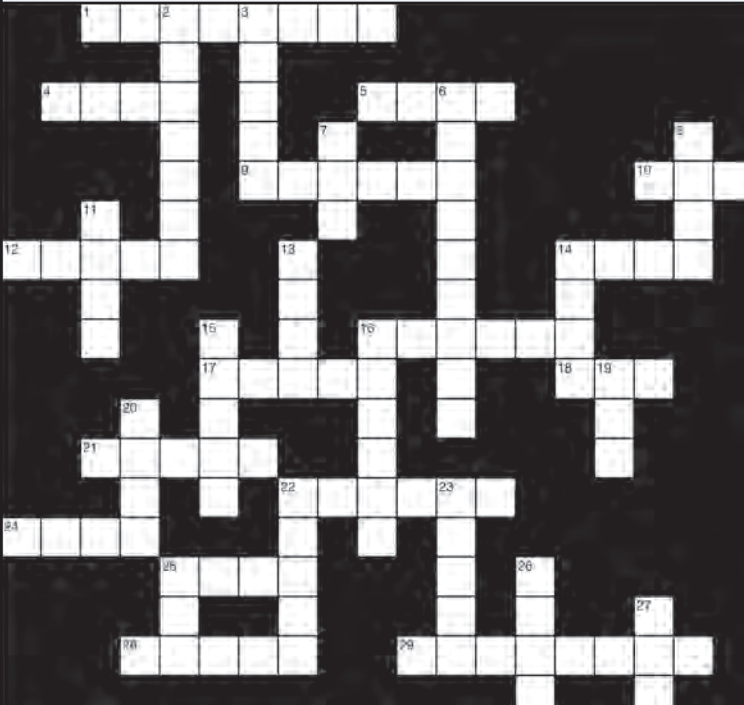
Like The Alabama Baptist, Jimmy covers our state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.



NMLS #207518

Christian Crossword

An original Thanksgiving puzzle from TAB www.CrosswordWeaver.com



Across

1. That thanksgiving may do this (2 Cor. 4:15 NIV)
4. _____ His praises (Ps. 7:17 NIV)
5. Side dish like sweet potato
9. In everything give this (1 Thess. 5:18 NKJV)
10. God’s word gives _____ to the heart (Ps. 19:8 NIV)
12. Peace will do this (Phil. 4:7 NIV)
14. God is _____ (1 John 4:8 KJV)
16. Spoken blessing before a meal
17. _____ from the Spirit (Col. 3:16 NIV)
18. _____ by day (2 Cor. 4:16 NIV)
21. November birthstone
22. People we gather with
24. James calls the tongue a _____ (James 3:6 NASV)
25. Gave thanks for Priscilla and Aquilla
28. God’s are wonderful (Ps. 9:1 NIV)
29. A _____ heart is good medicine

Down

2. Pilgrims left this country for religious freedom
3. A celebration meal
6. They gave thanks (2 Chron. 5:13 NIV)
7. In every _____ (2 Cor. 9:11 NIV)
8. _____ before Him with thanksgiving (Ps. 95:2 NIV)
11. Instrument for celebrations (Neh. 12:27 NIV)
13. Grain native to North America
14. Give thanks to the _____ (Ps. 106:1 NKJV)
15. Abraham’s second son
16. Written mostly by David
19. A numbers term (Jer. 30:19 NIV)
20. His _____ endures forever (1 Chron. 16:34 NIV)
22. He _____ the hungry (Ps. 107:9 NIV)
23. A time to _____ (Eccles. 3:4 NASB)
25. Pumpkin, pecan, apple
26. _____ since I heard (Eph. 1:15 NIV)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For December 1

Explore the Bible

By Douglas K. Wilson, Ph.D.
Dean of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



GOD LEADS Numbers 9:15–23

God calls His people to follow His lead. In the time of wilderness wanderings God manifested His presence visibly for Israel to follow. When the people rejected His reign over them God established an earthly kingdom in which He would lead them through kings and prophets.

In the fullness of time God tabernacled among humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been convicting, sanctifying and conforming believers to the image of Christ.

From Exodus 18 to Numbers 10 the tribes of Israel were camped in the wilderness of Sinai. They were preparing for their journey toward the promised land. In our focal passage here Moses is recounting God's plan to lead the Israelites along their journey, just as it was recorded in Exodus 40.

The Presence (15–16)

Following the creation of tabernacle components by master artisan Bezalel and his fellow craftsmen the meeting place for worship was consecrated for service.

These men had been uniquely gifted by God and they utilized their artistic abilities for the glory of God. Though their work would be used for generations, it was God who was to be the center of worship in Israel.

The Lord made His presence known in tangible ways. During the heat of the day He protected them by means of a pillar of cloud. In the cool and darkness of the desert nights He centered their attention through the light of a pillar of fire.

He began to lead Israel through His divine presence after the first Passover (Ex. 13:21–22), but after the completion of the tabernacle the Presence was displayed over the holy place to let Israel know when to move and when to stay.

Throughout Scripture we see that our infinite God makes His presence known through His created order. The heavens declare His glory (Ps. 19:1). His invisible attributes and sovereign hand are clearly seen so that humanity is without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

The Practice (17–22)

Faith in God is more than simply believing that God exists. Faith is taking God at His word, and obedience to God is the fruit of saving faith. After spending several months at Sinai, Israel received instructions for responding when the presence of God moved.

When the Presence lifted up off the holy place that was the indication for the Levites to pack up the tabernacle. The surrounding tribes followed suit and everyone prepared for following wherever He led.

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” These words of Jesus in the model prayer indicate that disciples of Jesus make it a practice to follow God's direction and to trust God's plan. For believers today God manifests His presence through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Principle (23)

God entrusted Moses to be His spokesman. When Moses said stay, Israel stayed. When Moses indicated it was time to leave, the Levites packed up and the tribes prepared to move.

The principle is: “Remain faithful to your work where you are until God moves you.” The Israelites waited in the wilderness of Sinai until Moses informed them it was time for them to strike camp.

Disciples in the early church witnessed faithfully in Jerusalem until the persecution of Saul scattered them throughout Judea and Samaria. Remaining faithful where you are is essential. After all why would God entrust us with responsibility elsewhere if we run away from what He has already given us to do?

Believers today need to discern God's leadership for their lives. Praying for discernment is critical. Studying God's word offers instruction. Listening to godly counsel from pastors and teachers can provide perspective. Looking at our circumstances is necessary, but this alone must not be our sole means of discernment. Trust and obey.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Dr. Jim Barnette, Professor, Samford University
Senior Pastor, Brookwood Baptist Church



DO WE NEED TO DEFEND OUR FAITH? Jude 1–4, 20–25

Contend for the faith when it is challenged. (1–4)

Jude is a servant who is content with standing behind his more prominent brother, James, who is the leader of the church in Jerusalem. A feature of Jude's letter is the grouping of three words that together offer powerful messages. “Called,” “beloved” and “kept” drive home the reality that salvation is entirely of God. It is the result of His sovereignty, His love and His power. The very next sentence offers a threefold blessing of “mercy,” “peace” and “love.”

Originally Jude intended his letter to celebrate the blessing of the salvation he shares with the church to whom he is writing. However, he has found it necessary to petition the church to contend for the faith. The word “contending” means “agonizing” and is borrowed from the terminology of Greek athletic events. The challenge of living a moral Christian life is likened to competition against formidable opponents.

“Entrust” is a technical term for passing on tradition. Indeed the literal Greek of “the faith ... entrusted” is “the faith ... traditioned.” Tradition was highly valued in both the Greco-Roman world and Judaism. The early Christians carried on this value for their faith which was “once for all” delivered to them. God's action in Christ is once for all (see Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:12 and 10:10) and cannot be presented in any other fashion like that of the false teachers about whom Jude now writes.

Very likely these intruders are itinerant preachers and teachers who were often the source of doctrinal and ethical confusion for congregations. These false teachers were perverting the grace of God into immoral sexual excess.

They were denying the sovereignty and lordship of Christ by their libertine theology and conduct. Jude notes that these heretics were designated for condemnation long ago. God is neither surprised nor threatened as they were prophesied about long before their appearance.

As you defend the faith act with mercy and love. (20–23)

The themes of mercy and love mentioned in verse 2 reappear in this passage. Given the crisis created by these intruders one might expect a final word of judgment or perhaps of damage control. Instead Jude offers words of restraint and Christian love. His comments are not for the intruders but for the church. In these verses are seven phrases of pastoral exhortation.

The first four address the believers' own spiritual welfare, focusing on faith, hope and love. The final three statements address appropriate behavior towards those who are “wavering,” that is, those in danger of being drawn away from the faith and the faithful. The faithful are to offer those who have followed the false teachers the same mercy they themselves expect to receive at the Lord's return with the hope of saving the waverers from judgment. The “tunic” or “garment” indicts the false teachers of the contaminating effect of their sin. Like the lepers whose clothing was polluted by their disease, these heretics are to be perceived as a source of pollution and therefore to be shunned.

Rely on God as you stand for Him. (24–25)

Having completed his exhortations regarding how to handle the troublemakers Jude concludes by bursting into a doxology. These words of praise are often used as a benediction in worship services. The chosen phrases also are quite appropriate to what Jude has addressed in his letter.

The Lord is able to “keep from falling” those who could be swayed by heretics and naysayers. The ascription of glory, majesty, power and authority recalls the doxology added to the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. Many biblical scholars suggest Jude's benediction had become a common liturgical feature during his lifetime. These words of adoration remain in our worship today as we exalt the One who has invited us into His realm of glory, both now and forever.✠



Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

New Disney Plus streaming service leads November lineup

By Michael Foust
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In my home Friday evenings are reserved for family movie night. Sometimes we rent a movie from Redbox. Other times we catch a film on Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime. Occasionally we'll even watch a DVD off the home video shelf.

But it's not always easy to find an appropriate title, especially when my children don't like repeats.

Lots of choices

It's safe to say I'm excited about Disney Plus, which entered the streaming wars Nov. 12 and includes more than 500 movies and 7,500-plus television episodes.

And nothing is rated R or TV-MA.

This doesn't mean everything on Disney Plus is child-friendly (more on that in a moment), but it does mean families like mine will have far more choices than Netflix or anyone else offers.

Remember those quirky-but-funny movies from the 1960s and 1970s — like “Herbie Goes Bananas” and “The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes”? They're on Disney Plus. Have you ever wanted to show your kids the Muppet films, “Benji: The Hunted” or even the well-done Disney Nature films? They're on there.

And what about the excel-

lent Pixar films? They're on Disney Plus too (by my count 18 currently are showing).

Disney Plus has titles from the entire Disney brand, which includes Disney, Pixar, Marvel, “Star Wars” and National Geographic.

The lineup encompasses most of the “Star Wars” films (Netflix still holds the streaming rights to “Solo” and “The Last Jedi”) and most of the Marvel movies (I counted 16 Marvel movies in the lineup including “Avengers: Endgame”).

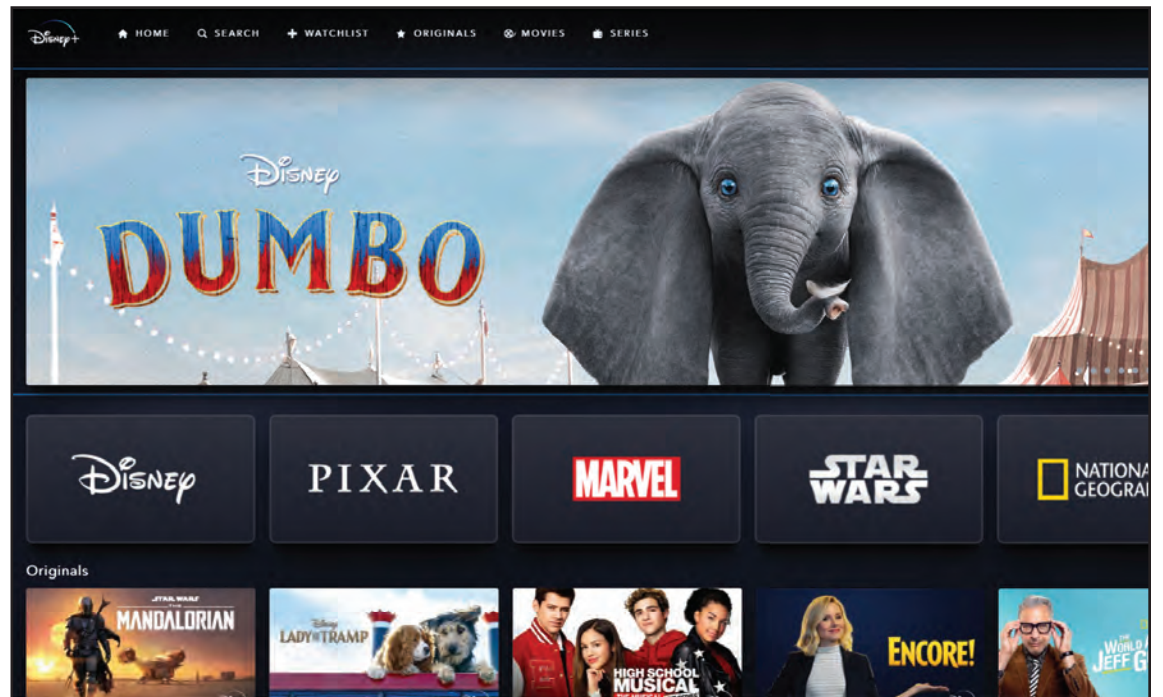
This also includes great documentaries from National Geographic (“Wild Yellowstone,” for example).

But despite the family-centric direction of Disney Plus you probably shouldn't let your kids run wild. Some of the movies are PG-13.

And some of the TV series — including titles from the Disney Channel — have questionable content when viewed through a biblical lens.

Thankfully Disney Plus allows you to set up a profile for your child and block most of the iffy stuff.

The strength of Disney Plus is its collection of movies — many of which could not be rented and are hard to find. It also has a limited amount of original content. Among the original titles: “The Mandalorian” (a series set in the “Star Wars” universe), “The Lady and The Tramp” (the live-action version), a G-rated film



Disney Plus

Screenshot of Disneyplus.com

called “Noelle” and “The World According to Jeff Goldblum” (a National Geographic-produced science and history series).

Disney Plus is great for families who enjoy movies and are looking for child-friendly content. You can test drive the service with a free 7-day trial.

Also worth streaming this month:

For adults/teens

▶ **“Greatest Events of WWII In Colour” (Netflix)** — Yes, there's something nostalgic and romantic about black-and-white film, but sometimes it's fun to watch colorized footage and view the world as it really was. This Netflix original documentary examines World War II from beginning to end in 10 colorized episodes. Rated TV-14.

▶ **“Echo in the Canyon” (Netflix)** — It's a documentary looking back at a slice of 1960s music that helped

define a generation — tunes developed in the Laurel Canyon section of Los Angeles. The Byrds, Mamas and Papas and Beach Boys all came from here. It's a lot like today's music: catchy but often questionable. Rated PG-13 (for drug references, some suggestive content and some language).

▶ **“The Toys that Made Us,” Season 3 (Netflix)** — It's a fast-paced Netflix original series examining the behind-the-scenes stories (and creative decisions) of our favorite toys. Season 3 looks at the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Power Rangers, My Little Pony and wrestling figures. Rated TV-14.

For children

▶ **“Llama Llama,” Season 2 (Netflix)** — The series based on the popular children's books enters its second season with Llama Llama and his friends learning lessons about life. The books are better than the TV

series, but it nevertheless may be worth a watch.

▶ **“Ugly Dolls” (Hulu)** — A group of odd-looking dolls from a village named Uglyville discover another world — the Institute of Perfection — where every toy is perfect. The Uglyville dolls want to be owned by a child just like every other toy is. But does anyone want them?

The film is based on a Hasbro toy line and has a good message, even if it has a word (“ugly”) that's forbidden in some homes. Rated PG for thematic elements and brief action. †

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.



Spiritual movement

Army chaplain baptizes hundreds, sees revival among US soldiers

In the past two years Army chaplain Chris Rice has baptized more than 1,000 soldiers who have come through Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina, for basic training. His road to serving members of the U.S. Armed Services, however, wound through a few twists and turns.

“Everybody in my family, straight out of high school, has served in the military going back to the Civil War,” Rice said.

But when Rice sensed a call to ministry he forsook a career in the military and attended a small Baptist college then Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, for his graduate studies.

For 11 years Rice ministered to different congregations across North America, and while in Georgia in 2008 he decided to pray Jabez’s prayer from 1 Chronicles 4:10.

He sensed God leading him to

resign from his church in anticipation of what God would do. Military chaplaincy consistently showed up in job searches and time spent in prayer along with conversations with his wife pointed too clearly to the opportunity.

When Rice signed up as a Southern Baptist chaplain he joined a network of more than 3,700 chaplains who serve in the United States’ governmental, public services and private organizational settings.

Global opportunities

His arrival at the South Carolina base came after previous assignments at Fort Stewart in Georgia and overseas in Germany. Rice deployed numerous times to locations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey.

When he arrived at Fort Jackson, Rice’s superiors immediately asked him to take over the basic training Protestant service. He agreed.



Photo by Saskia Gabriel/Fort Jackson Public Affairs

Southern Baptist chaplain Chris Rice baptizes an Army soldier during a special baptism ceremony at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

On his first Sunday they had just under 500 soldiers, but Rice knew that was well under the number they could reach with the service. Now attendance has more than doubled.

“I am constantly challenging them to make spiritual maturity just as much a priority as their physical development, emotional development and mental development,” Rice said.

A number of trainees share with Rice that they wonder whether or not God can love or forgive them because of the things they have done and he invites them to the chapel service and counsels afterwards.

He presents the gospel. If they believe or have never been baptized before Rice offers the chance to fol-

low through with their commitment through baptism. He reviews the details with all who ask, letting them know what baptism is, what it symbolizes and who should be baptized.

The baptisms at Fort Jackson help to underscore what many see as a spiritual movement taking place in the lives of young people within the military.

Rice is quick to direct all credit to God.

“It’s all about God. It’s what God is doing. He is doing a work,” Rice said. “God is not dead. He is continuously moving in the hearts and minds of people and He uses people to advance His glory and His Kingdom.” (BP)



Photo by Saskia Gabriel/Fort Jackson Public Affairs

As soldiers at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, near the completion of basic training, those who have made a decision to commit to Christ walk together to the Knight Swimming Pool for the baptism ceremony with Southern Baptist chaplain Chris Rice. Rice has been serving on the base since 2017.