



The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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Photo by Jessica Ingram

An artist with Mammoth Murals and Signs paints a plywood wall covering the damaged storefront of Wheelhouse Salon (right). The face of George Floyd on the mural was defaced with a black X after it was completed, but the artist was able to restore it within hours.



Photo by Johnny Grimes

Birmingham pastor, police officer reflects

By Carrie B. McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Pastor Elisha Smith's 4-year-old daughter doesn't really understand her parents' new work schedules.

Elisha Smith, and his wife, Chundra, both serve as officers with the Birmingham Police Department, and since peaceful protests that began on May 31 devolved into violence and destruction later that night, the Smiths have been working seven days a week.

'A great concern'

"I really want to let her know that everything's going to be all right," Smith said.

"But all four of our children have a great concern for what we do, and that's our biggest challenge at home right now."

Smith knows the situation on the streets of Birmingham as well as anyone.

In addition to his work as a police officer, he is pastor of House of Miracles, a church plant in Birmingham's Eastlake community.

In the days following the death of George Floyd (See 'Ministry,' page 14)

Undeterred

Missions-minded business owner continues serving community

By Caleb Yarbrough
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

What started as a peaceful gathering in Birmingham's Linn Park on May 31 escalated as night fell, with downtown businesses burned and looted following protests over the killing of George Floyd.

Wheelhouse Salon had its storefront windows shattered,

and looters ransacked and robbed the business.

Late-night call

Johnny Grimes is the owner of Wheelhouse Salon, a local business also hit hard by the recent coronavirus-related business closures.

Grimes was asleep when one of his employees from Wheelhouse called and woke him with news of the riots.

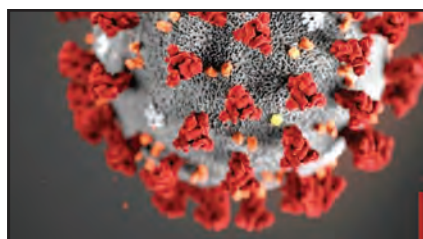
After hearing the news, he pulled up security footage from the salon and saw members of Birmingham's SWAT team enter and clear Wheelhouse's building.

After watching from home and waiting there until he felt it was safe, Grimes went to the salon, surveyed the damage and began securing the store.

While he and an employee (See 'We stand,' page 15)



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COVID-19

See pages 6–7 for information and updates

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Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Jessica Ingram (right), TAB's event coordinator, helps The Writing Minister leader Denise George set up for the June 1 workshop in TAB's seminar room.

Jessica Ingram named TAB's new event coordinator

These days, *The Alabama Baptist* isn't just the newspaper you get in your mailbox. You can interact with TAB in many different ways.

And Jessica Ingram is excited about the part of that she's getting to handle these days.

Ingram, TAB's new event coordinator, got to host her first hybrid event at TAB Media's office in Birmingham on June 1 — The Writing Minister workshop led by author Denise George. In her new role, Ingram will be coordinating the speaking schedules of staff members, handling outside events and running workshops on-site.

"I'm a planner, and this is going to be where I really thrive," said Ingram, who formerly served on the editorial team as production manager. "I'm looking forward to planning



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Jessica Ingram preps coffee and snacks for workshop participants.

the events from start to finish and interacting with the people involved."

The next TAB event — a workshop on book publishing with a traditional publishing house — will be scheduled for mid to late August. Events like these are free or discounted for TAB subscribers. For more information, call 205-870-4720. (TAB)



Photo by Jessica Ingram

The June 1 Writing Minister workshop included on-site and virtual participants.

TAB Media

"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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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

MY RASHIONALE

By Jennifer Davis Rash
President and Editor-in-Chief

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@RashionalThts



Is it any wonder our hearts are hurting right now?

Disagreements are unsettling, but intense division shreds our soul. None of us remains whole when we are at odds with one another.

And if we really think about it, it makes sense because Christians are people of peace.

We are not at our best nor where we ought to be when conflict exists in our lives.

Genesis 1:27 and several other verses in Scripture confirm all humankind is created in God's own image.

And Scripture also describes our God — the One we worship and serve, the One in Whose image we were created — as a God of peace.

1 Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

2 Corinthians 13:11 reads, "Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:9 states, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

2 Thessalonians 3:16 says, "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all."

And one we all know well from the Christmas productions each year, at least the first part

anyway, comes from **Isaiah 9:6-7**:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

And along with loving, worshiping and serving a God of peace, we also are called to be His witnesses by our individual demonstrations of peace, love and several other traits of a believer as outlined in **Galatians 5:22-23**:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

John 13:35 reminds us that "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

So is it any wonder our hearts are hurting and our anxiety is high right now?

We may not know what to do and, while we know there's serious work that needs to be done, it may be tempting to just want it all to go away rather than doing the hard work to truly make a difference.

We are people of peace, so it makes sense to slow down and listen to each other. We must seek to understand as much as to be understood. And we must turn our eyes upon Jesus and "look full into His wonderful face."✝️

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**He has told you, O man,
what is good; and what
does the Lord require of
you but to do justice, and
to love kindness and to
walk humbly with your God?**

— MICAH 6:8 —

Your Voice



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

The church was always built for ‘out there’

By Keelan Adams

Associate pastor, Flatline Church at Chisholm

As a pastor of God’s people, this empty sanctuary presses me to really reflect upon what the “ekklesia” truly is, what it does and what used to take place in this house week after week. Where are the hugs, greetings, laughter? Where are the saints who go to the altar to intercede for others? Where are the pastors of this sanctuary and what is their activity? Does the healing still happen at the altar like it used to after being immersed with sorrow and tears? Where are the saints who lift praises unto a God, singing our souls happy? Where are the evangelistic outreaches? Where, where, where has the church gone?

Is the church this building or is it actually the people who used to occupy this space and who have been filled with God’s Spirit?

The “ekklesia” must not be this temple because this place is lifeless. It must indeed be God’s people.



Pastor Keelan Adams

Photo courtesy of Keelan Adams’ Facebook page

The church is not dead. The activity of God’s “ekklesia” is always to transfer beyond those four walls on Sunday. “Out there” is that for which we are built.

Pastors, we are to never allow the communities immediately surrounding the building to wonder why we are missing in action.

Let’s learn during this season to use our churches as a missions base to weekly affect and “touch” our immediate context with the love of Christ. Ask the Lord for wisdom to lead your people to hit the streets and have a burden for those who have yet to be reached. You, dear pastor, take the lead.

Thomas Jefferson

U.S. president 1801–1809
Author of Declaration of Independence

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these

are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” —1776

“Who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment & death itself in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment ... inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught

with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose.” —1786

“Bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm of the free and buoyant. Education & free discussion are the antidotes of both.” —1816

Secret is getting in the habit

In 1979, we called a new music minister to First Baptist Church, Fort Payne, who happened to be my age, and we became lifelong friends. He started a Sunday School class that became very popular and challenged all the class to begin a daily devotional if they didn’t already have one.

I was pretty lax at that time, trying to have a quiet time every evening but between job, marriage and a soon-to-be-born son it was hard. The teacher recommended Moody Bible Institute’s Today in the Word, and I signed up for the mailing.

I will be 72 in July, and I can count on the fingers of one hand the days I’ve missed opening my Bible and Today in the Word every morning since then. It has become such a habit that I automatically turn to it (online now) as soon as I pour my orange juice (and unfortunately take my pills now). It is short, but offers opportunities for more study if I have time and desire, and I guess that’s the secret to my devotion to my devotional — getting in the habit.

I have a weekly Bible study with men in the community from a variety of faiths (suspended temporarily) and study material for the class I now teach along with other readings from Scripture, but my early morning Bible reading is my anchor. I can’t imagine starting a day without it. Evening Bible reading is fine, but first thing in the morning before life gets in the way is better for me.

I recommend it.

Bill Mitchell
Fort Payne, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Sometimes we think we'll become useful “someday” because we are challenged by the events in our world today. But the secret to making a difference is to do something now.

Think of some little change you can make in your routine or a small improvement you can try at home.

Tuck your preschooler in with prayer. Post a Bible verse on the refrigerator each week to memorize. Hug your family each day. Make one night a week a screen-free evening — no television, phones or computers.

Jot a note of encouragement to someone who is alone or ill. Send your church staff an email of appreciation. Thank those around you who are working on the frontlines

of the coronavirus pandemic with a smile and a thumbs up. Seek out opportunities where you can make a difference in someone's life.

David Jeremiah
Pastor and radio host

We must ask each pastor and each church to work even harder to love one another. The world needs to see all of us loving one another, sincerely and honestly. We may not be able to change the world, but we can make our communities safer places for all of the image-bearers of God.

Marshal Ausberry
SBC first vice president

Years ago, John Piper wrote a book to pastors titled “Brothers, We Are Not Professionals.” It reminded

me that pastors have some responsibility for the crude, business-only-like way we are sometimes treated by deacons and personnel committees. When we pastors treat ministry like just another job, we cannot complain when we get treated like a hired hand.

Chris Crain, executive director
Birmingham Metro Association

All of the signs are here. We are in the last days of the rapture. I want all of our children to be caught up with us. Once they reach the age of accountability, if they have not accepted Christ at the time of the rapture, they will be left behind. Do you want this?

Kent Owen
Phil Campbell, Ala.



University of Mobile photo

Rob Jackson is chairman of the board of directors for TAB Media/The Alabama Baptist.

Our silence is deafening

Far too long, we as white Christians have not done all we should in support of our black brothers and sisters.

In all honesty, many of us have African-American friends, and we see them no differently than any of our other friends. Therefore, it is difficult for us to understand how they feel, but we need to wake up and take their cries of injustice seriously. Our silence is deafening to them.

It is a crucial time for the Church to mobilize in the power of the Holy Spirit, reaching across the ethnic lines to lift the suffering of our brothers and sisters. The Father has given us another opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others for the sake of the Kingdom.

As we join hands with our African-American brothers and sisters, we “stand under” and lift with them the cross of their suffering. In so doing, we expose the beauty of the gospel of Christ.

A unified Church from every tongue, tribe and nation is a glorious sight that Christ works through to burst forth and dispel the darkness in a lost and dying world. Let us extend our hands across racial lines and take a stand in both words and deeds. May God alone receive all the glory.

— Rob Jackson

From the *Twitterverse*

@jdgrear

Thankful that @SBCCP leadership stands united in the need for prayer, justice and action during these difficult days. #GeorgeFloyd

@MattMason3

A good news church says, “You’ve suffered this week and we have an unshakable hope to offer you. You’ve sinned this week and we have a gospel, a Savior with open arms.”

@revandyfrazier

Worship that costs nothing is worth nothing. Sacrifice and worship go hand-in-hand.

@AdamGreenway

“Why is it that for some people, there’s never enough time to do it right but always enough time to do it

twice?” — Various I’m sure, but I’ll attribute to @RandyStinson #PointToPonder #Leadership

@PaulTripp

When you create something, you design it with a purpose in mind. The foundational question of life is, “Why did God make me?”

@MattSmethurst

Not sure there’s ever been a more humbling season. I pray all pastors and churches are humbled at the opportunity to reopen and regather.

@FollowRadical

“My prayer is that instead of a local church trying to create a brand, the church would become all that Jesus prayed for it to be so that all nations would be disciplined for the glory of His name.” — Jeff Lewis

@tonymerida

Praying for pastors across America today. Never a better time in my lifetime to be a pastor. Conflicts are opportunities for growth and change and revival. America needs the church, a biblical church not a political church. Lead with courage and wisdom and grace today.

@brocraig

“One sign you’ve encountered God is you walk with a limp, not a strut.”

@edstetzer

You can simultaneously speak out against systemic racism and about looting and violence. Evangelicals sometimes struggle with the former but demand the latter. Followers of Jesus can do both.

HIGHER RATES

of infection, death from COVID-19

African-American communities struggling to recover physically, economically

By Margaret Colson
The Alabama Baptist

While COVID-19 has impacted all sectors of the population, studies show African-American communities are experiencing disproportionately higher rates of infection and death.

In Alabama, African-Americans, while comprising about 27% of the population, account for approximately 42% of COVID-19 infections and 44% of virus-related deaths, according to data released June 1 by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

In Montgomery, where about half the city's residents are black, cases of COVID-19 are continuing to rise. More than 1,800 cases have been confirmed to date in Montgomery County — more than half of those in the past two weeks.

Survey results

The results of an April Pew Research survey found that about one-in-four black adults (27%) said they personally knew someone who had been hospitalized or died as a result of having COVID-19, roughly double the shares who said this among Hispanic or white adults (13% each).

Additionally, Pew reports 44% of black adults said they or someone in their household had experienced a job or wage loss as a result of the pandemic, compared with 38% of white adults.

As disconcerting as these statistics are to many Alabama Baptists, Dewayne Rembert, pastor of Flatline



Unsplash.com

Church at Chisholm, Montgomery, knows COVID-19 is about more than statistics; it's about individuals.

Flatline Church at Chisholm is in a "very impoverished and somewhat neglected community," Rembert said. COVID-19 has only intensified the challenges of living in Chisholm.

"While many people are privy to updates throughout the day, that's not the case for many of our residents," Rembert explained.

When updates are received, confusion seems to be a typical response, with some residents downplaying the seriousness of the issue while others take it seriously.

Difficult to shelter in place

"Some of our residents' water and lights were already off before the quarantine" because of widespread poverty, he said, which makes sheltering in place more difficult. Due

to depression and worry, many residents are consuming more alcohol and illegal drugs, while others turn to socializing, Rembert noted.

"Many want to come out and socialize due to the relief it brings you when you feel like your life is depressing," he said.

Young people in the community, who often found "their escape" in churches, schools and after-school programs that are now closed, "are reporting some hard things they are having to endure at home due to sin," Rembert said.

"The manual labor jobs that most of our residents were on have now ceased," he noted. Yet residents "still need to eat and just survive."

Grateful for the stimulus checks provided by the federal government, Rembert said receiving them is not without challenges for Chisholm residents.

"The problem arises in the African-American communities of not knowing where to send the checks since many of them are staying at their relatives' homes. Also, most of our residents don't have a bank account. We were in the pro-

cess of trying to address this issue before COVID-19," he explained. Some residents are concerned it may take months to "track down" the stimulus checks.

"So the needs are still saving the lost, strengthening the weak and helping the poor," Rembert said.

"Let's be intentional about making sure they (Chisholm residents) are being treated fairly because they are made in the image of God, just like you and me," he continued. In the midst of the bleakness, Flatline Church has continued to "get the Word to our people" through online streaming, television and radio. Additionally, the church has distributed food to, prayed with and counseled many in need.

Rembert asked for prayer: "Please continue to lift us up in prayer and ask the Lord to deal with each one of us on what it is He is trying to teach us in this season."

Prayer is vital, agreed Marshal Ausberry, president of the National African-American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention and SBC first vice president.

COVID-19's disparities along racial lines could make it more difficult for African-American Southern Baptist congregations to recover from the pandemic, he said.

In considering when and how to resume onsite worship services, African-American church leaders must address these disparities as well, balancing the need and desire to gather for worship while also protecting the health of congregants.

"Some congregations may be on the verge of closing and not reopening (their) doors. This may be an opportunity to connect with an African-American ... congregation to develop relationships with the pastors and (members). I believe it all begins with prayer," he said. (Baptist Press contributed)



REMBERT

In Alabama, African-Americans, while comprising about 27% of the population, account for approximately 42% of COVID-19 infections and 44% of virus-related deaths.

Alabama Department of Public Health



123rf.com

PTSD among HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Fears, grief of COVID-19 crisis may affect mental health; counseling can help

By Lanell Downs Smith
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Bob, a registered nurse, works in an intensive care unit hit with an influx of COVID-19 patients. He has witnessed the effects of the virus on his patients, the toll the restrictive visitor policies have taken on their families and the death of several patients. Some patients have survived, but Bob has witnessed the pain and emotional trauma they have endured.

The long hours and tremendous stress of working during the pandemic has deeply affected Bob. He has been short-tempered and has experienced bouts of insomnia, nightmares, feelings of hypervigilance and panic attacks. Friends and family have noticed that he appears emotionally detached.

What is PTSD?

This scenario represents someone who may be experiencing PTSD and who needs to seek professional help, said Steve Trader, a licensed professional counselor for Pathways Professional Counseling.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder occurring when a person experiences or witnesses an event of a traumatic nature and afterward begins to exhibit symptoms such as hypervigilance, irritability, emotional numbness and panic attacks.

Traumatic events leading to PTSD may include a serious accident, a terrorist act, war or combat, personal assault or a natural disaster.

And as health care professionals experience the consistent physical

and emotional strain of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of them struggle to remain mentally healthy while working with their patients.

The COVID-19 crisis has the potential to affect individuals in multifaceted ways that can include fear of death or death of a loved one, loss of financial stability due to the societal changes that have taken place and forced isolation through stay-at-home orders, Trader said.

Health care workers are on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19 and may develop PTSD symptoms from the perceived threat of the virus to themselves or their families. The perceived threat can create a sense of hypervigilance within the individual, leading to a variety of psychological issues.

High anxiety

LaShay, a hospital worker, said she is terrified to go to work, fearing she will contract the virus and spread it to her son, who suffers from uncontrolled asthma.

“When I get [to the hospital] I cry before I go in every day,” LaShay said. “You don’t know whether you’re going to come out with [COVID-19]. My anxiety is high and I’m scared. If I have to go in the

room where [patients] have symptoms, I don’t know what I’ll do. I need the money, but I just can’t go [to work].”

LaShay said she prays for strength, but the fear of exposure has led her to consider employment outside the health care profession.

The United Nations policy brief, “COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health,” called for world leaders to recognize the COVID-19 stressors confronting frontline health care workers and first responders and outlined the need to ensure the mental health of workers to sustain

preparedness, response and recovery throughout the pandemic.

“We could assert that countries all over the world are waging war against this invisible enemy,” Trader said. “Some have been waging this war early on. Consequently, the countries in the Eastern Hemisphere have been the first to see the effects on their population. We may see front-line personnel (first responders) prone to a quickened level of emotional reactivity, sleep issues, feelings of emotional numbness, concentration issues and hypervigilance.”

While PTSD can take six months to diagnose, Trader stressed that

now is the time to increase awareness of what PTSD is, how to recognize the symptoms, who is most susceptible and where to go for help.

If an individual doesn’t recognize his or her need for support, it’s important for loved ones to encourage that person to seek help, Trader said.

Family and friends should listen, love and pray while letting the individual know hope exists.

Patterns of thinking

A person with PTSD is often hesitant to seek treatment due to feelings of embarrassment, shame or fear of being perceived as “crazy,” Trader said.

The individual should be reminded these feelings are normal and encouraged to seek help from a trained and licensed professional counselor who can help the person overcome these patterns of thinking.

Several resources from Woman’s Missionary Union are available to help as well.

Alabama WMU offers a free resource to help churches in the work of ministering to those with PTSD. “Trading Up: Bible stories that move us from pain to peace” by Murselle McMillan and Janet Erwin is a National WMU publication created as part of Project HELP: PTSD. The study features 11 Bible stories and one personal story with strategic questions that offer hope and healing. The study reminds groups that the work of the church is to befriend hurting people and their families and offer prayer and support.

Find the “Trading Up” resource at alabamawmu.org/resources.

Symptoms universally common to people experiencing PTSD

- ▶ Flashbacks
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Panic attacks when triggered
- ▶ Emotional numbness
- ▶ Detachment from other people
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Hopelessness about the future

Linden Baptist reaches families through Saturday children's show

William Faircloth can see the gospel in a home-made lava lamp. The water, cooking oil, Alka Seltzer and food coloring swirling around in a mason jar looks like chaos to him, and that reminds him of sin.

"Last week we began looking at the book of Genesis," Faircloth said May 23 on the Saturday Morning Kids Show he posted on Facebook. "We learned that we are created by God and designed to know Him and be in community with Him. But there's also a part of the story that's not so great."

That part is sin, the fact that humanity made choices which broke that relationship and brought chaos into the world, said Faircloth, associate pastor and minister to students at Linden Baptist Church.

But the story of Noah shows us the beginning of how God planned to rescue His people, he said.

Staying connected

He told that story on the second episode of the roughly 10-minute-long children's show, which starts with his family teaching viewers how to construct a craft. It then offers a Bible story and shares a short message from one of the church's youth. On May 16, homemade slime was featured, followed up by the lava lamp May 23. He created

this show as a way to connect with children in the church in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

"I also have the hope that if we can present the gospel in a simple way for kids, maybe the parents will be watching too," Faircloth said.

'Just phenomenal'

He's committed to doing the Saturday Morning Kids Show at least through the end of July. He

and others at Linden Baptist hope they'll be able to conduct Vacation Bible School in person in August — they've already pushed it back from June. But if that doesn't seem like a safe option when

the time comes, they've already found a platform to consider taking it online.

Pastor Chris Kynard said the Saturday Morning Kids Show is "just phenomenal."

"The kids have really enjoyed that," he said. "What I think has happened in this time of COVID-19 is that it's made us try things we've never tried before, and we've realized that there is great potential to do new kinds of ministry online."

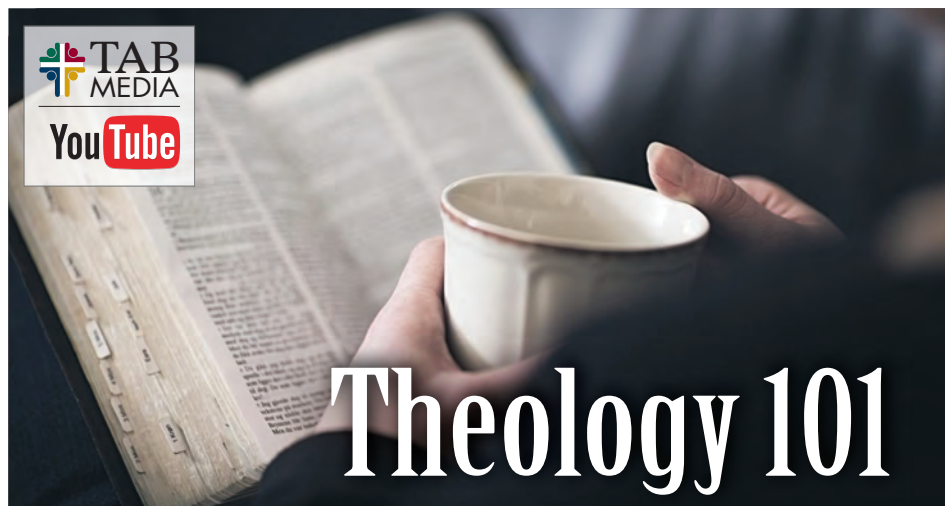
To check out the Saturday Morning Kids Show, visit Linden Baptist Church's Facebook page. (Grace Thornton)

To check out the Saturday Morning Kids Show, visit Linden Baptist Church's Facebook page.



Linden Baptist Church Facebook screen shot

William Faircloth, associate pastor and minister to students at Linden Baptist Church, creates a lava lamp out of water, cooking oil, Alka Seltzer and food coloring with his wife Whitney, son Liam and daughter Sadie during the Saturday Morning Kids Show he posted on Facebook May 23.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Figures

Lamb

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

The biblical figure of a lamb can be a window through which we see truths related both to the person of Christ and His work. The nature of a lamb makes it an instructive figure for several aspects of the person of Christ: meekness and innocence leap immediately to mind. People have often used the expressions "meek as a lamb" and "innocent as a lamb" as ways of communicating these characteristics. To be sure, the two qualities find their height of demonstration in Christ — He walked in this world totally without self-seeking ambitions or moral blemishes.

Unblemished

When God gave His chosen people instructions about the Passover feast, He specified that it should feature a sacrificial lamb, and He was quite clear: "Your lamb shall be without blemish" (Ex. 12:5).

The unblemished lamb prefigured the unblemished or sinless Son of God. First Peter 1:18–19 reminds us that our spiritual redemption comes by means of "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

God chose John the Baptist to be the forerunner of His incarnate Son at the outset of His earthly mission. In faithfulness to his God-assigned task, John chose to introduce Christ as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The figure of a sacrificial lamb

became one of the earliest by which people were called to understand the Messiah's mission. Hebrews 9:28 puts it succinctly: "Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many."

Centuries before He came, the prophet Isaiah painted a word picture of what happened to Christ at the cross: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (53:7).

God's eternal plan

The climactic book of the Bible uses the figure of a lamb to illumine God's eternal plan for saving sinners, in which He gave His only begotten Son, declaring Him to be "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

Before Jesus was born and even before the world was created, God envisioned the time when His Lamb would need to come into the world to die for the world.

The person and work of Christ were not a last-minute emergency plan necessitated by human sin but were integral to God's eternal plan. 🌿

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.



Comfort & quality of life

Palliative care assists patient, family with physical, emotional, spiritual needs

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

Near the end of her life, Rachel Shank had a dream — she wanted to meet Vince Gill and Amy Grant.

So when the musical superstars came to Birmingham for a performance, Shank's palliative care consultant Tara Strickland took Shank, her daughter and her hospice nurse to the show and arranged a meeting. Gill and Grant even sang to Shank during the show.

Making Shank's dream come true was a boost for the woman who was nearing the end of her life from congestive heart failure — and just one of the ways palliative care specialists like Strickland help meet the emotional, social and spiritual needs of patients in their care.

Managing pain

Palliative care is medical and related care provided to a patient with a serious, life-threatening or terminal illness where the care manages symptoms, relieves pain and discomfort and improves quality of life.

"Palliative care is for anyone who has any kind of serious illness," said Paige Butler of Baptist Hospice in Montgomery. "It can be offered at any time during the disease trajectory and actually it should begin closer to the beginning. It's for anybody who has any kind of pain or suffering, who needs help with the goals of care or navigating the health care system."

Patients receiving palliative care are usually experiencing severe pain, Strickland said, and palliative care specialists help them manage that pain until it is eliminated, or the patient is ready for hospice care, a next level of care for patients with a terminal prognosis.

Neither palliative care nor hos-



Photo courtesy of Tara Strickland and Shank family

Rachel Shank's palliative care team made one of her final dreams come true. Shank (front, center) is pictured with (clockwise) Tara Strickland, Vince Gill, Lisa Jones (Shank's nurse), Judie Vinzant (Shank's daughter) and Amy Grant.

pice provide curative measures, Butler said.

"We focus at that point on quality of life," Butler said.

Palliative care provides a team approach to caregiving, and doctors, nurses, social workers, pastoral care providers, chaplains and counselors are all part of the team. A patient's team often helps with management of health care providers, coordination of home care services and emotional and spiritual support for the patient and his or her family.

Palliative care services can be

offered in the home, as well as in nursing homes, palliative care units and other long-term care or assisted living facilities.

Relieving symptoms

Care teams strive to relieve symptoms such as pain, anxiety, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea and loss of appetite, while helping to improve the patient's ability to meet the demands of daily life, increase his or her ability to tolerate medical treatments and aid the patient in understanding his or

her condition and options for treatment.

"Anxiety is something we see as much as anything because [the patients] are in pain," Strickland said. "They either don't know where it's coming from, or they do and they can't do anything about it."

Palliative care teams also can help to guide patients toward hospice and end-of-life care when that time comes.

Reassuring the dying

"There is a different level of anxiety if the illness is terminal," Strickland said. "Terminal restlessness can develop during the last few days the patient is alive as they transition to actively dying. They are experiencing changes in their body, mind and spirit, including high blood pressure and fidgeting, and often they don't know what they're saying. We treat their anxiety to make sure the patient is comfortable."

Strickland said often palliative care teams help the family even more than the patient. When a patient's illness is terminal, waiting can be the hardest part.

"A lot of times our job is as important for the family as it is for the patient. Once the patient's symptoms are managed, our biggest goal is to make sure the family is taken care of," she said.

Strickland added that it's important for families to choose palliative or hospice care early in the process to provide the best care from the beginning to the end of an illness.

"Hospice/palliative care is choosing comfort and quality of life versus further treatment and quantity," Strickland said. "It doesn't mean you've given up. It means you've chosen to be at home in your environment, surrounded by your loved ones, in peace and comfort, until God calls you home."✝

Danny Moseley (left) meets with his D-Group on Friday mornings at Chick-fil-A. Once a 'growing believer,' Moseley's pastor Bill Wilks now calls him a 'multiplying believer.'

Choosing to follow Christ



Photo courtesy of Bill Wilks

Small group discipleship, investment by others leads to drastic life change

When Danny Moseley was 16, he was introduced to pornography, and one thing led to another.

"It took hold of me and led me down a very, very dark alley," he said. "For a very long time, I was a practicing homosexual."

Porn had been "the gateway to everything that went wrong," Danny said. "I had a hard time coping with things as a young person, and even though I had very loving parents, I didn't talk to them. I didn't confide in them my personal stuff that was going on with me."

So one step at a time, he walked into darker and darker corners of the world, he said.

After high school, he moved out of his parents' house and eventually moved out of Alabama to places where he felt it was more acceptable to live a gay lifestyle. He spent his money on porn, to the point where he couldn't pay rent and got evicted several times from the apartments where he lived.

A destructive path

"There were points in my life where I didn't know where I was going to live or where I was going to get my food," he said. "I never did live on the streets, but I did things to allow me a place to live, things I'm not very proud of and that hurt me in the long run."

But all during the 30

years Danny "lived a gay lifestyle," he couldn't shake the feeling that he wasn't made for that, he said. "Deep down inside me, something in my gut just turned. It was telling me that it was wrong, that I didn't want this life anymore."

Even so, all through those years, he couldn't figure out how to forge a new path. A few times when Danny visited churches, he was kicked out, he said. He remembers sitting in the parking lot of a church late one night sobbing because he didn't know what to do.

"The guilt and shame were way too thick for me to go back to church," he said.

So Danny kept on living his life. He tried to make things better and worked on his nursing degree. One day along the way, his mother asked him to take her to visit NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, and he said yes.

Lightbulb moment

"I couldn't say no to Mother," Danny said.

Not too long after, his father died and NorthPark's pastor, Bill Wilks, helped with the funeral. That's where Bill and Danny first met. Then years later, when

Danny's mother died, he found his way to Bill's office.

Bill said he remembers thinking that Danny seemed like "a broken individual" that day.

"He told me, 'I don't

know what I'm going to do,' and I said, 'Danny, you need the Lord,'" Bill said. "He said, 'Well, you know the lifestyle I'm living,' and I said, 'Danny, you can choose not to live that lifestyle anymore. It's not important what we're tempted to do — it's important what we do.'"

At that point, it was like a lightbulb came on, Bill said.

"I think Danny was thinking in order to follow Christ, he would have to change the way he felt," he said. "I explained to him it's not about how you feel, it's about what you do. That kind of liberated him."

That day, Danny decided he wanted to choose Christ. Bill prayed with him and introduced him to his D-Life group, part of a small-group reproducing discipleship model started by Bill.

For the next five years,

Danny was there every week for that small group's 6 a.m. meeting at Cracker Barrel. It took eight months of walking through the New Testament alongside those other men for Danny to get up the courage to share his story with

them — he feared rejection or worse, he said.

"After I shared, they stood up, and I got scared — I thought either they're going to leave or beat me up or blame Brother Bill for bringing me into the group," Danny said. "But they came over and laid their hands on me right there in Cracker Barrel and prayed."



Photo courtesy of Bill Wilks

Danny Moseley shares his testimony at a D-Life Boot Camp Bill Wilks led for Hope Everlasting Ministries in Trussville.



Photo courtesy of Bill Wilks

NorthPark Baptist Church Pastor Bill Wilks (right) helped Danny Moseley understand the gospel is 'not about how you feel, it's about what you do.' Moseley accepted Christ that day.

After experiencing their love and support, Danny got up the courage to go forward for prayer at church the following Sunday — and his D-Life group went forward with him.

“It proved to me that I am loved, that God loves the sinner even though He hates the sin,” he said. “Because of that, I gained more strength.”

It’s still a daily struggle against temptation, Danny said. “It’s still a battle. You don’t get over an addiction in 24 hours.”

He also battles major

health issues as a result of his past choices — nearly 30 years ago, he contracted HIV. He’s fought to try to get rid of the remaining existing copies of magazines he posed for in the past.

He also faces persecution from the gay community at times, he said.

Sharing freedom

But Danny also talks with people wanting the same freedom he’s found. He’s currently discipling several men who are choosing to follow Christ instead of pursuing the lifestyle they once had, Danny said.

Along the way, as he’s been discipled, he’s also led two D-Life groups of his own. One met at Bojangles, and not too long after it started, he led a worker there to Christ and went back after hours to disciple her. He also led a group in the clinic where he goes once a week for kidney dialysis.

“We were able to pray for other patients and talk to the doctors,” Danny said. “Everyone else in that group has now passed away, but we were a light in that dark, gloomy place.”

Bill said Danny is the “most resilient person” he knows.

Discipling others

“He’s HIV positive, has diabetes and has lost both of his legs and some of his fingers,” Wilks said. “But he’s never missed D-Life. He went from a growing believer to now being a multiply-

ing believer, and he’s discipling people through Zoom in other cities. I tell him all the time, ‘God’s preserving you because He’s using you.’”

Danny said he gets up every day with the strength God gives him.

“This temptation, this pain, it’s a thorn in my side, but God says His grace is sufficient for me. I’m supposed to be an example to glorify God, and I try to do that all the time,” he said.

And as for the men who discipled him and led him to Christ, Danny said, “I would be dead or in a homeless shelter if it wasn’t for my D-Life group. It gave me the accountability to read the Bible, and it gave me guidance. Now I want everyone to know they can have that same kind of hope.”

For more information about D-Life, contact Bill at 205-602-2888 or bill@livedthelife.com or visit livedthelife.com. (Grace Thornton)

For more information about D-Life, contact Bill at 205-602-2888 or bill@livedthelife.com or visit livedthelife.com.

“It proved to me that I am loved, that God loves the sinner even though He hates the sin. Because of that, I gained more strength.”

Danny Moseley

‘Heart and call for church revitalization’

Friendship forged at hardware store leads to ministry

Jeff Hardy knows a lot about building and rebuilding things. He’s worked for a long time in the hardware business, helping people figure out how to put their houses back together.

But a while back, God started laying a different kind of work on his heart — to come alongside a struggling church and help build it back up.

“Last summer, my wife and I had gone through some revitalization training with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and we really felt the Lord was leading us in that direction,” he said.

Encouragement

And one day Hardy got a call from Mel Johnson, lead mission strategist for Autauga Baptist Association, whom he’d gotten to know from Johnson’s visits to the hardware store.

“He asked me if I would be interested in possibly a revitalization at Marbury Baptist Church, and I said, ‘Sure, I’ll come down and talk to them,’” Hardy said.

That was around the beginning of the year. Hardy filled the pulpit for a couple of weeks, then felt like God was moving him in that direction. The church, which at the time had six regular attenders, agreed. Together, they rolled up their sleeves and got to work, and by the time COVID-19 meeting restrictions started, they had more than



Photo courtesy of Marbury Baptist Church

Members of Marbury Baptist Church gather in the church fellowship hall for in-person worship following several weeks of online worship. Volunteers have continued renovations on the church campus during the pandemic.

40 people showing up for services.

“We just encouraged our church to invite people, invite your neighbors, invite your friends and coworkers,” Hardy said.

And even though most of the growing congregation had only been there a few weeks when they had to stop meeting in person, they’ve stuck with Marbury Baptist’s services on Facebook and volunteered to come up on different days to help renovate the church building while meetings were canceled. They’ve cleaned up the rooms, remodeled a couple of bathrooms and worked to make the outside of the church look more presentable.

Excitement

“Our new members are excited about what’s happening here, and they’re ready to go to work,” Hardy said.

They’ve also actively reached out to the community and when they’ve found needs, they’ve helped pass them along to people who

could help meet them.

Hardy said he’s seen God draw the growing group closer together through this time of rebuilding in the middle of social distancing restrictions.

“We grow the most when we’re out of our comfort zone, when we are struggling,” Hardy said. “God’s using this as a way to grow me and hopefully in the process others are growing as well.”

Joyful fellowship

Johnson said for him it’s just a joy to watch what God’s doing at the church.

“Jeff has got a heart and a call for church revitalization,” he said, noting that Hardy has persevered even when “there’s no training” for church revitalization during a global pandemic. “I’m thrilled to death to have him out there. He’s got a real passion for Christ, a real passion for the fellowship.” (Grace Thornton)

3 stories you should know



RNS photo

A 'prayerful protest' in downtown Brooklyn, N.Y., saw several thousand people from more than 80 New York City churches gather on June 2 to march peacefully for the cause of justice. Organized by The Bridge Church, a 6-year-old ethnically diverse SBC congregation, and led by James T. Roberson III (above), church planter and pastor of The Bridge Church, the march was held in response to the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police. (RNS)

Supreme Court upholds church restrictions

In a 5–4 ruling May 29, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld California's restrictions on church services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some organizations and individuals have said restrictions on in-person worship services for any reason are a violation of the First Amendment — especially in light of the fact that grocery stores, liquor stores and other establishments have been allowed to stay open in many locations throughout the crisis.

The Supreme Court's recent decision supported California's restriction limiting churches to 25% of their regular capacity, or a maximum of 100 attendees.

Chief Justice John Roberts cast the pivotal vote in the case, noting churches are social in nature unlike "grocery stores, banks and laundromats." (AP/The Conversation)

SBC statement issued on death of George Floyd

Alabama Baptist leaders are among SBC leaders who published a joint statement May 30 grieving the death of George Floyd and calling for the end of "racial inequity in the distribution of justice in our country."

The statement, co-authored by SBC president J.D. Greear and New Orleans Seminary president Jamie Dew was unanimously signed by all SBC officers, entity heads and state convention executive directors including Alabama's Rick Lance.

"[A]s a matter of Christian obedience and devotion, followers of Jesus Christ cannot remain silent when our brothers and sisters, friends and/or people we seek to win for Christ are mistreated, abused or killed unnecessarily."

To read the full statement, visit tabonline.org/statement. (TAB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

IMB Student Team introduces Stateside Summer initiative



The nearly 2,500 students who planned to serve overseas this summer with the International Mission Board have a new opportunity to serve.

The IMB Student Team's Stateside Summer initiative will provide opportunities for students to participate with IMB missionaries in mobilization and discipleship strategies online, learn about unreached and unengaged people groups, connect with missionaries and share the gospel with their family, friends and communities.

Every year, students help advance the gospel and enable missionaries to expand their gospel reach. This summer will be no different.

Chris Mills, student missions mobilizer for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, expressed appreciation for the IMB's opportunities for students to serve despite the pandemic.

"Students made plans to give their summer to serve all across the globe. The challenges from COVID-19 have prevented that ... or so they may have thought," Mills said. "I'm grateful for IMB reminding students of this calling and commit-

ment, providing Stateside Summer as an encouragement to be engaged with the nations here, while praying and being equipped to serve the nations there [internationally]."



IMB photo

Student missions trips during 2020 fall and winter breaks as well as missions trips scheduled for spring break of 2021 re-

main on schedule, according to the IMB. More information is available at cloud.connect.imb.org/statesidesummer. (IMB, TAB)

Third party sex abuser database goes online for Baptists



A new database of Baptist sex abusers is now online. Baptistaccountability.org is based on sexual abuse survivor advocate Christa Brown's stopbaptist-predators.org, which she managed from 2006 to 2012, and the *Houston Chronicle's* "Abuse of Faith" series and database, an exposé published

in 2019. The database is managed by Megan and Dominique Benninger, who brought to light their former pastor's record as a convicted child molester after the leadership of their Pennsylvania church failed to disclose it.

Third party databases only highlight the need for a sanctioned SBC database, Brown said. Most cases of sexual abuse are never criminally prosecuted, meaning many predators are simply able to "church-hop" with no accountability.

Brown calls for the SBC to work with an independent review organization who can document cases of abuse by clergy and others involved with church work and to create a review panel to advise churches and support victims.

Rejections of such a project by many SBC leaders have usually been based on appeals to the polity of the denomination — each church is fully autonomous and is under no obligation to participate in such a database. (RNS)



RNS photo

— SBC NEWS —

SBC Advance provides online ministry update from entities, seminaries

Using prerecorded messages from denominational leaders, interviews and videos, SBC Advance provided an online ministry update from various Southern Baptist Convention entities on June 2.

The two-hour online event, organized by the SBC Executive Committee, was not intended to replace the 2020 SBC Annual Meeting, canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic, but instead to provide Southern Baptists the opportunity to hear how God has continued to work through the SBC, organizers stated.

In opening remarks, Ronnie Floyd, EC president and CEO, addressed racism and the current unrest sweeping across the nation since the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. He called Floyd's death "another horrendous act of racial injustice."

"We, the churches in America, are the ones that must be faithful to call upon God to come and to give us His guidance and provide His pathway to healing in our nation," Floyd said. "We are the ones that must answer this moment."

SBC President J.D. Greear encouraged Southern Baptists to persevere during the national turbulence.

Other highlights of the program included:
 ▶ Recognition of the role state conventions play in Great Commission ministries

▶ Reports from all the various SBC-related entity heads

▶ Updates from presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

A panel discussion on diversity also was part of the event. Approximately 23% of Southern Baptist churches are racially and ethnically diverse, said Willie McLaurin, SBC EC vice president for Great Commission relations and mobilization.

McLaurin reported about 3,500 Southern Baptist churches have majority Hispanic congregations, and Southern Baptist Asian American congregations number about 2,000.

Floyd led prayer for pastors across the nation impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full SBC Advance video is available at SBC.net/Advance. (Margaret Colson)



Screenshot
 Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, speaks during the SBC Advance webcast on June 2.

Persecuted church

Uganda woman beaten, burned after converting to Christianity

NAIROBI, Kenya — A 24-year-old western Uganda woman was hospitalized after her Muslim father beat and burned her for becoming a Christian. Rehema Kyomuhendo had accompanied her father — a Muslim sheikh — on a business trip to eastern Uganda.

During the visit, Kyomuhendo heard Christian radio programming. On May 4, she called a Roman Catholic business associate of her father to talk about Jesus. Kyomuhendo asked Jesus to be her Savior and Lord. Her vocal expression of joy woke her father, who beat and burned his daughter for converting to Christianity. He vowed to kill her.

The woman sustained serious burns to her leg, stomach, ribs, neck and back.

Kyomuhendo was expected to be in Mbale Regional Referral Hospital for a month.

Uganda's constitution and laws provide religious freedom, the right to convert and to proselytize. Less than 12% of Uganda's population is Muslim. (MS)



CIA.gov map

News near you

CAHABA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Joe Bob Mizzell** will be honored by **Hopewell Baptist Church, Marion**, on June 28 with a special "Red, White, Blue and Joe Bob too" event. Mizzell, who has served in Alabama Baptist life for decades, will preach and be installed as pastor emeritus of Hopewell Baptist during the service, which will begin at 10 a.m. Lunch will be served. RSVP is requested by email to Hopewell1822-JoeBob@yahoo.com or by mail to Hopewell Baptist Church, c/o George Washburn, 410 W. Dekalb St., Marion, AL 36756. Those who want to send cards or letters for

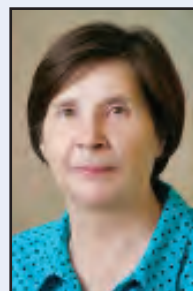


MIZZELL

Joe Bob can send those to the same mailing address. George Washburn is pastor. ▶ **Ocmulgee Baptist Church, Selma**, is postponing its 200th anniversary celebration until Sept. 20 at 10 a.m. For more information, email secretary@ocmulgeebc.org. Bill Goodwin is pastor.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Barbara Young**, the financial secretary at **Guntersville First Baptist Church**, retired on May 29 after 46 years with the church. She worked with three pastors, an interim pastor and many other music and youth ministers in her career. "I have been blessed," she said. Joel Samuels is pastor.



YOUNG

OTHER

▶ **SPEAK**, an annual youth conference hosted by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, is canceled for this year. Scooter Kellum, SBOM youth ministry strategist, said they are already planning for the 2021 event to be "bigger and better than ever." **Super Summer Alabama**, a camp that's been described like seminary for

youth, has also been canceled for 2020 "out of an abundance of care for the health and safety of our students and their leaders," Kellum said. But students will be able to complete their schools online with help from their youth leaders with information sent to them by email.

▶ **Matt Burford** is the new associate director of the grant-funded **Thriving Pastor Initiative** at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham. Beeson associate dean Tom Fuller serves as director. Thriving Pastors is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., as part of its Thriving in Ministry initiative.

Burford also serves as an apologetics and evangelism specialist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and is president of Tactical Faith, an apologetics and theological training group. He and his wife, Holly, have two children and are members of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover. ☠



BURFORD

'Ministry of presence could bring healing'

(continued from page 1) in Minneapolis, Smith described himself as "heartbroken and disappointed" as he heard reports of yet another incident where an African American died at the hands of a fellow police officer.

"When we chose to walk in the calling of a police officer, we were sworn to fulfill the obligation to protect and serve the community," he said. "And when someone amongst the calling tarnishes the badge and brings dishonor to something that was put in place to be effective in a positive way, it affects us directly, affects our families. Because now there's a target on our backs. That's where we are as a police department."

Tension in the city's atmosphere ran "very high" after Floyd's death, Smith said, eventually leading to protests that devolved into violence in the early morning hours of June 1.

'What is the answer?'

"Anger, rage, misunderstanding between people has been very present," Smith said in an interview on June 2. "A lot of destruction has taken place within these last few days that has affected businesses, the community and families, and it's just caused me to take a step back as a police officer and a pastor and say, 'God, what is the answer to the chaos that is transpiring in our city?'"

The answer God gave him — fellowship.

"The Lord began to speak to me and tell me that partnership is a tool, but fellowship is what really

bridges the gap between people," Smith said. "Without fellowship, how can we walk across that bridge together into a place of agreement, understanding and love.

"I believe the solution to the chaos that has happened in our city is love," he said. "One

thing I have realized in the last few days about the people leading the rioting and protesting — I don't think they understand what love really is. Our job is to show them the love of Christ."

Smith said the coronavirus pandemic has been difficult

on already poor communities. The economic pain also affects the church, especially a church plant like House of Miracles.

One way predominantly white churches can help address the current crisis is to help struggling churches in the inner city, Smith said.

"One way our brothers and sisters in Christ can be a blessing is to support us," Smith said.

For example, Smith dreams of activities and games at the church to draw in youth, so "they would have things to do at a place of God instead of being corrupted by the streets." Or funds to help single mothers when they're in a financial crisis. But such extras are out of reach for a church plant trying to revitalize a building and keep the utilities paid.

'A time such as this'

"I wish my white brothers and sisters would come and lend their aid in a time such as this — grab our hands and we'll grab their hands

and walk together," Smith said. "A lot of times, pastors and others will say, 'Let us know if you need something.' Well, we need you."

There is plenty of missions work to be done here in Alabama, and in Birmingham specifically — people are crying for help, Smith said, but they are not being heard.

The ministry of presence, of serving in these communities, could bring "a level of healing."

"I am all for going abroad to do missions. God has called us to do that," Smith said.

But missions close to home brings a particular long-term spiritual benefit, he believes.

"If I'm doing missions in Birmingham, I can drive my children to a place where we have served and see the results of our missions work. And that pro-

vides a witness to my family and my church, to your family and your church. We can actually go and see the results and continue to see the results."

The Church for too long has been reactive rather than proactive, Smith said. That needs to change.

The time is now

"We shouldn't wait to come up with a plan of action after something tragic has impacted the community

or our city or state," he said. "This situation, it's impacted our whole nation. God has showed us how to be disciples. Our prayer is that we

won't be overlooked, that people will embrace the fact that there is a problem and there is a solution through the ministry of presence." ✝



Photo courtesy of Elisha Smith
Elisha Smith

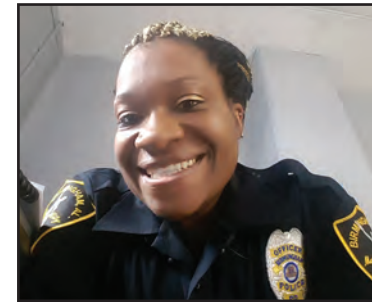


Photo courtesy of Elisha Smith
Chundra Smith

**Don't let
SOCIAL DISTANCING
become spiritual distancing.**

*"Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God."*
ISAIAH 41:10

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Photo by Jessica Ingram

Among the businesses damaged in the early morning hours of June 1 were Alabama Power, People's Bank of Alabama, The California Fashion Mall and the Alabama Theatre.

'We stand united'

Businesses repair, reopen following night of unrest that began peacefully

(continued from page 1) began cleaning up, Grimes saw rioters set fire to The California Fashion Mall, which is located down the street from Wheelhouse.

Quickly reopened

Grimes and other employees boarded up Wheelhouse's broken windows and cleaned up the mess left by the rioters in the early morning hours of June 1.

The store was only closed

for one day, however, and reopened — while still in ill repair — on June 2.

"We felt that it was important to get back open as soon as possible," said Grimes.

Grimes said the decision to reopen quickly was necessary due to the recent financial constraints related to COVID-19.

He emphasized that he and Wheelhouse's staff care

deeply about Birmingham and believe that the recent riots do not reflect the values of the city.

Grimes hopes the protests spark a national conversation on racial reconciliation.

"I felt the need to stand up and say, 'These types of actions

don't define us, and they aren't going to deter us. We

are Birmingham and we are going to stand united with our African American brothers and sisters,'" said Grimes.

"We are going to open up and we are going to continue to serve the community."

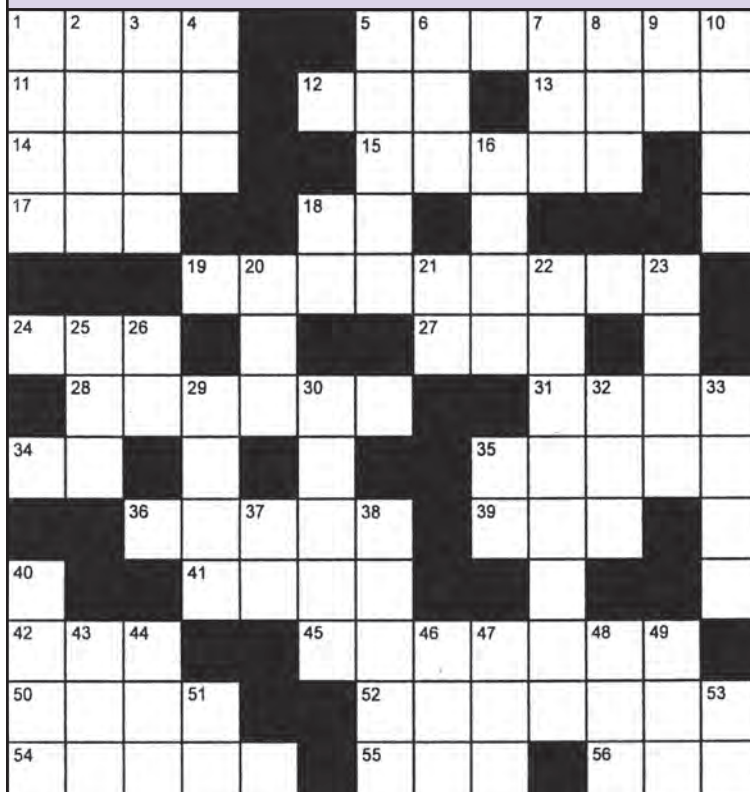
Grimes and Wheelhouse Salon plan to create a GoFundMe site to raise money to repair their salon, as well as other businesses damaged during the riots.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Wheelhouse Salon was featured in an earlier issue of The Alabama Baptist. Read more about the business' missions-minded focus at tabonline.org/wheelhouse.

For more information on how to give, visit wheelhousesalon.com, [facebook.com/wheelhousesalon](https://www.facebook.com/wheelhousesalon), or [instagram.com/wheelhousesalon](https://www.instagram.com/wheelhousesalon).

Christian Crossword

By Amy Rognlie Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Matthew, Mark, Luke, ____.
- Yet will I leave a ____.
- Jesus cried ... ____.
- Sun. (Spanish)
- Ancient South American Indians.
- Jesus ... touched him, saying, I ____.
- ____ yourselves unto God.
- Jacob ____ pottage.
- Mom.
- Ye say that I cast out devils through ____.
- Under oaks and poplars and ____.
- North northeast. (abbr.)
- Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but ____.
- But ____ found grace

in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:8)

- Maine. (abbr.)
- Sharpen every man his ____.
- ____ thy wife shall bear thee a son.
- Give ____ to my words, O Lord.
- Texas city: El ____.
- Choose.
- Joseph took them both, ____ ... and Manasseh.
- Butter substitute.
- I beseech ____.
- No scrip, no bread, no ____.
- A time to rend, and a time to ____.
- Cow noise.

Down

- Where is He that is born King of the ____?
- A dish of many

ingredients.

- God will ____ thy right hand.
- Nothing.
- Ye are a chosen generation, a ____ priesthood.
- The child did minister unto the Lord before ____.
- Same as 4 down.
- With; as well as.
- North Carolina. (abbr.)
- Weed.
- Thou has been in ____ the garden of God.
- Myself.
- Period of time.
- Zinc. (abbr.)
- ____ the king of Syria was sick.
- The ____ out of the wood doth waste it.
- A faithful witness will not ____.
- Master of Science.

(abbr.)

- They that sow in tears shall ____ in joy.
- To obliterate.
- All that handle the ____.
- ____ me, O Lord.
- Southeast. (abbr.)
- Egyptian sun god.
- (Love) always protects, always trusts, always ____.
- Space.
- Palestine Liberation Organization. (abbr.)
- There met Him ____ men that were lepers.
- Color.
- The second ____ shall be an emerald.
- They departed from ____.
- Deceased Chinese leader, ____ Tse-tung.
- Old English. (abbr.)
- He had sent messengers to ____ king of Egypt.

GOOD NEWS For You!



Share **YOUR** stories of how God is at work in your church and community on our Facebook page or at alsbom.org/goodnews.

During recent days, numerous Alabama Baptist pastors have shared on Facebook how God is blessing their congregations during these unusual times. Here are just a few of the good news testimonies we found:

"We have had a few drive-in services and placed offering buckets at the entrances and exits. We were amazed that the offering collected at each service doubled what would be taken up on a normal Sunday. God is good!" –**Randy Pate, TAYLORVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH** (Tuscaloosa Association)

"Praise the Lord for our partnership with the Montgomery Baptist Association's rolling store ministry and with the Montgomery Area Food Bank that helped us feed more than 50 families in Washington Park!" –**Terrence Jones, STRONG TOWER AT WASHINGTON PARK** (Montgomery Association)



"I'm in the seventh year of serving as pastor, and May was the best month of giving ever. Also, one of the young mothers in the church emailed me to say that her daughter made the decision to trust Christ in March, and her son trusted Christ in April." –**Mark Smith, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF REMLAP** (Friendship Association)

"A first-time viewer of our online worship service made a profession of faith during a follow-up call. We've had several phone conversations with her and have sent her a new believer's workbook and a Bible." –**Glenn Sandifer, DEERFOOT BAPTIST CHURCH, TRUSSVILLE** (Birmingham Metro Association)

"One person made a profession of faith right before the COVID-19 shutdown, one profession of faith happened during 'shelter in place' and one happened recently. We're ready to baptize three people!" –**Scott Delashaw, MT. HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, SPRUCE PINE** (Franklin Association)

"God drew to Himself, saved and transformed a young 20-something who was a thoroughly church-ed unbeliever. The God-wrought change in this person is unmistakable. For His glory alone!" –**Cecil Sanders, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, HEADLAND** (Judson Association)

"After our online worship on May 17, one youth was saved after the morning service. Another youth was saved a few weeks earlier after she continued asking questions during her family's devotion time." –**Luke McKay, IDER MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH** (Sand Mountain Association)



Larry McDade and his dog, **Harley**, attend drive-in worship at **ROCKFORD BAPTIST CHURCH** (Central Association).

Remember - visit alsbom.org/coronavirus and our COVID-19 Resource Group Facebook Page for a variety of helpful resources!

UPCOMING FREE WEBINARS VISIT [ALSBOM.ORG/EVENTS](http://alsbom.org/events) TO REGISTER



MINISTERING TO SENIOR ADULTS IN CHALLENGING TIMES Tuesday, June 16, 10-11 a.m.

We'll discuss how churches have been reaching out in these days of isolation and how they are preparing for senior adults to re-enter the building. On the panel will be State Missionary Eileen Mitchell, and senior adult ministers, Ronnie McCarron (Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile), Eloise Crossley (FBC, Jacksonville) and Bob Smith (FBC, Trussville).

CHURCH TAX CONFERENCE FOR SMALL CHURCHES Tuesday, June 16, 10 a.m.-Noon

Do you need a W-2 if the pastor is the only paid employee? Do you have to complete the form 941? Can the minister take 100% of his income as housing? How does a small church of 100 or less differ from a large church in tax issues? These questions and more will be answered at this free webinar led by State Missionary Lee Wright, Office of LeaderCare & Church Health.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES: A TWO-PART WEBINAR

Tuesday, June 23, 10 a.m.-Noon

TOPIC: The Documents You Need for Incorporation and Bylaws

Thursday, June 25, 10 a.m.-Noon

TOPIC: Writing/Revising Your Documents for an Emergency Like the Coronavirus

Both sessions will be led by State Missionary Jim Swedenburg.

Note: You will need to register separately for both parts of this webinar.

JUNE DISCIPLESHIP LUNCH AND LEARN Thursday, June 25, 12-1:30 p.m.

During your lunch hour (12-1 CST), hear and interact with featured speaker Alan Briggs, pastor, author and network leader for making disciples who can make disciples. Following the hour, there will be an additional 30-minute Q&A with the Alabama hosts.

Missed a Webinar?

Visit vimeo.com/alsbom to view completed webinars.

PREPARING FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Your Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has developed a document that will help you ask the right questions, consider helpful suggestions and access a variety of resources as you reopen your church facilities. It is available as a PDF to download and/or view by visiting alsbom.org/reopen.



Join us in a 30-day prayer emphasis for missions in Japan and the missionaries who serve there.

From June 25-July 24, you can receive daily text reminders and prayer prompts. Sign up via text message. Text **jp2020** to **94090**.

More information (printable prayer prompts, videos, other resources) is available at a18c.org.



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Pastors pass active faith to the next generation

Every Saturday night, Bill Harper gets a text, and he suspects he's not the only one.

The text lets him know that Steve Sellers is praying for him as he prepares to preach at his church the next morning, and it comes without fail. It came even when Sellers was in the middle of cancer treatments.

But Harper — pastor of First Baptist Church, Red Bay — said Sellers has been using Saturdays to encourage him for a while. It all started when Harper was a teenager and he heard Sellers — then pastor of Berlin Baptist Church, Cullman — preach a revival at another church in the area.

"Probably a week or so later, I became a Christian," Harper said.

He joined Berlin Baptist, and Sellers baptized him. Then Sellers took Harper along on something that became a standing Saturday activity — youth visitation.

"What it consisted of was Steve going and witnessing to people and us tagging along and watching," Harper said, noting that sometimes it was just the two of them and other times it might be several youth.

He started picking up Sellers' habits and his boldness, and one Saturday when Sellers had a schedule conflict and left the youth to go by themselves, Harper led a high

school classmate to the Lord.

"I jokingly tell people that Steve double-crossed us that day," Harper said.

But he quickly adds he's grateful — Sellers taught him how to be hands-on with discipleship, and not too long after that Harper took his first youth pastor position at a nearby church.

Sellers "has been a model to me of spending time with people and pouring into them," Harper said.

Consistent example

Sellers said he has "fond memories" of those Saturdays, but the way he remembers it, he was just passing on what was given to him. When he was a young man, he had strong mentors in his life. His dad, for one, led him to the Lord and was a consistent example of leading others to Jesus. And James Johnson, the pastor who baptized him in Waco, Texas, also had a hand in discipling him.

"He made an impression on me," Sellers said.

Johnson later followed Sellers to Alabama — he is now pastor emeritus of Cherry Hill Baptist Church, Russellville.

Sellers said he loves seeing God's ministry through Johnson continue through Harper.

"I appreciate Bill's heart to win people to Christ and disciple people to Christ," he said. (Grace Thornton)

Stone Ridge Church continues to grow, starts construction

About 16 years ago, Sixth Street Baptist Church, Alexander City, got a vision to buy some land on Airport Road so they could one day expand.

And back in October 2019, they finally broke ground — or rather, stone — on the place that would become their new church building.

"There was so much stone they needed to remove from the land that the church's new name was derived from there," said Brett Self, pastor of the former Sixth Street Baptist, now called Stone Ridge Baptist Church.

And they hold a lot of hopes for that rocky ground. For one, a bigger building will allow them to accommodate almost double the number of people on a Sunday morning. They will be closer to the center of Alexander City and to Highway 280.

And they will have better access to a big missions field — the new church facilities will be right across the street



Photo courtesy of Stone Ridge Baptist Church

The new campus of Stone Ridge Baptist Church, Alexander City, will give the church a prime location near Highway 280 and across the street from Central Alabama Community College.

from Central Alabama Community College.

Great opportunities

"It's going to create some great ministry opportunities for us," said Self, who came to Stone Ridge Baptist in April.

As the sanctuary, state-of-the-art children's facilities and new adult and student meeting space have been framed up over the past few months, the church has been

continuing to grow stronger while they've been meeting online during COVID-19. They're now back meeting together with some safety guidelines in place and looking forward to later this year when they can hopefully get in their new building.

"We are very, very excited about what God has done up to this point, what the future holds and all the things He's going to accomplish," Self said. (Grace Thornton)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 14

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



DIRECTION OFFERED Proverbs 3:1–12

We are studying the book of Proverbs because we need more than ethical principles. We need new hearts. We need God's wisdom deep within as we navigate the concrete realities of our daily lives. Without God's wisdom we cannot understand the true nature of reality nor our God-given purpose in this life.

Remember (1–4)

Solomon stressed the necessity of his son staying on the right path in life. He urged him not to forget his teaching but from his heart to obey and maintain his commands. This reminder is a necessary one — constant vigilance is required as we live in this Genesis 3 world.

Solomon was saying, "Pay attention to me. You are going to pay attention to something, but only my teaching will lead you into shalom." This Hebrew word refers to much more than an absence of strife. Shalom means wholeness or completeness. God created humanity with the fundamental need for a relationship with Him. When we attempt to fill that need in our lives with anything or anyone other than God, we find that it brings only emptiness, inner turmoil and broken relationships.

The Apostle Paul declared Jesus Christ is our only hope to be restored to the wholeness God created us to experience (Phil. 4:7).

In verses 3–4 Solomon taught his son to embrace and demonstrate loyalty (hesed) and faithfulness in his life. Inner integrity should manifest itself in all interactions with God and people. For believers this means first of all a right relationship with God that results in a right relationship with other people in the covenant community. No one can live in harmony with others if he does not live in harmony with God.

Trust (5–8)

Solomon commanded his son not to put his confidence in an impersonal ethic or his own knowledge but rather to trust in the Lord with all his heart. Personally trusting in the Lord is necessary for fulfilling any

of the wise ways of life taught in Proverbs. The expression "with all your heart" indicates that trust goes beyond intellectual assent to a deep reliance on the Lord, a settled confidence in His care and His faithfulness to His Word.

The wise son will not rely on his own understanding. The wise son will govern himself by what the Lord declares and will not set his own finite and often mistaken understanding against the Lord's wisdom.

Acknowledge the Lord in all your ways and He will make your paths straight. The Lord will guide you in the path of wisdom. "Do not be wise in your own eyes" is a warning against a spirit of self-assurance. It is the opposite of trust in the Lord and brings no healing or refreshment.

Honor (9–10)

Solomon stated that remembering the commandments and trusting in the Lord leads us to honor Him with our possessions and the first produce of our harvest. The Hebrew verb translated "honor" means "to treat the Lord as weighty." It is also the Hebrew word for glory. We honor the Lord by making the Lord famous and prominent by means of our wealth. We are to use our money to increase God's prestige in the world.

The opposite of honoring the Lord is making light of or regarding Him frivolously. As God looks at our financial priorities, should He consider Himself honored or slighted? Someone gets the honor of first place in your monthly budget. Who is in that first place of honor?

We should honor the Lord by giving Him the best of the harvest, and He will bless us with more to invest for His glory.

Accept (11–12)

Solomon reminded his son he should accept the Lord's discipline as loving correction and not as unloving rebuke.

Love is an action that is accompanied by emotion that leads to good on behalf of its object. The Lord disciplines us because He loves us. 🌿

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University



THE EXPRESSION OF OUR HOPE 1 Peter 1:13–25

Some say, "He who dies with the most toys wins." But today's passage teaches us that our Father's love has invaded our lives so our relationship with Him can transform every part of our lives, leading us to pursue things of eternal value rather than merely temporary pleasures.

While verses 1–12 focused primarily on what God has done for us in Christ, this passage (13–25) stresses how we should respond to our Father's redeeming love.

Live in grace and holiness rather than conformity to the world. (13–16)

Peter reminds us to live in light of the hope we have that will be realized when Christ returns.

We must no longer give in to our evil desires as we did before coming to know Christ. Our lives must and can be different now.

We are to be "obedient children" and we must be holy, just like our heavenly Father (see Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7).

So much flows from knowing God is our Father: He gives us new birth (vv. 3, 23), provides us with an inheritance (v. 4), protects us from various dangers (v. 5) and expects us to reflect our Father's character (vv. 15–16).

Live as God's people because we have been redeemed from the world. (17–21)

Our ultimate loyalty must not be to this world, where we are foreigners passing through, but to our Father, who is the ultimate judge and an impartial one at that.

He is the one to whom we are ultimately accountable.

Our new lives must contrast as sharply with the empty way of life of those who don't know God as the perfect blood of Christ contrasts with perishable things like silver and gold.

Our Father has redeemed us from condemnation and from the

empty way of life that would be our fate if He had not chosen Christ

to be our redeemer. Because of Christ, chosen and revealed "in these last times," we can place our faith and hope in the God who raised Him up and glorified Him.

We live our new lives before God and others because our loving Father has provided everything for our salvation and sanctification.

Live according to God's word in order to remain pure in this world. (22–25)

Peter expounds on what it looks like to live in reverent fear of God.

Purifying ourselves by obeying the truth must reflect a deep and pure love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peter uses two different words for love. The first one is "philephilia," the love of one's siblings (often called "brotherly love"), which must be genuine or sincere. Because God is our Father, fellow believers are our spiritual siblings, and we are to love them as true family members.

The other word is the verb form of "agape" (the word most often used for God's love): we must love one another earnestly (or intently) from a pure heart.

Verses 23–25 stress the eternal nature of our new life in Christ. Our new birth is not like our original births.

Our original births came about in the normal human way, which results in a temporary mortal life.

The quote from Isaiah 40:6–8 in verse 24 stresses that human life is like grass and flowers that temporarily flourish and then wither and die.

But as Isaiah 40:8 says, the word of the Lord "endures forever," and it is through that eternal word of God that Christians have been born into eternal life (since it is not perishable but imperishable seed).

That word was preached to us and is the key to the new birth and our life in Christ that endures forever. 🌿



Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

Thrilling 'Dude Perfect' documentary leads June streaming lineup

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

It's not wise to let your children watch something without screening it first, but thankfully there may be a few exceptions.

For example: Dude Perfect. This quintet of basketball trick shot artists and comedy geniuses has amassed 51 million subscribers even though they don't curse or make off-color jokes. Dads love them. Moms love them. Most of all, though, it's children, tweens and teens who binge their zany, creative videos.

The best news? They're all Christians.

But if you've never heard of Dude Perfect, this month is the perfect opportunity to get ac-

quainted. That's because the group has a new documentary — "Dude Perfect: Backstage Pass" — that's free on YouTube and every bit as fun as their viral videos.

It follows their history — they met in college — but also takes viewers behind the scenes of their 2019 "Pound it, Noggin'" tour. It includes their basketball trick shows (even one from a blimp), their crazy variety program (one of them loses a game and has his eyebrows shaved) and their interaction with fans.

It also offers viewers a peek at their family and faith.

"If we lost everything tomorrow, it doesn't matter. We know the

most important thing we have is Jesus," Dude Perfect's Garrett Hilbert says. "So it's very important to the decisions we make and the content we produce."

Fellow member Tyler Toney agrees: "Faith is really the underlying principle and theme behind everything Dude Perfect does."

(The other members are Cody Jones and twins Cory and Coby Cotton.)



"Dude Perfect: Backstage Pass" amassed 4 million views the first two days it was online. Not bad for a film that would be rated G if it were in theaters.

Search for "Dude Perfect documentary" or "Dude Perfect: Backstage Pass" on YouTube.

Also streaming this month:

Adults/teens

► **"Nadiya's Time to Eat" (Netflix)** — If simple recipes are your thing, then this is your show. Host Nadiya Hussain, a past winner of "The Great British Bake Off," delivers tips, tricks and easy recipes to save time in the kitchen. TV-G.

► **"Soul Surfer" (Netflix)** — It's a faith-based film about Bethany Hamilton, the professional surfer who lost her left arm due to a shark bite but persevered and relearned how to surf. (Ham-



'Dude Perfect'

Photo courtesy of 'Dude Perfect'

ilton is a Christian.) Rated PG for an intense accident sequence and some thematic material.

► **"The Rise of Skywalker" (Disney Plus)** — It's the final film in the so-called "Skywalker Saga" and follows Rey as she battles an old villain in the Star Wars universe. Because of violence, scary images and some language, this one is not for small children. Rated PG-13 for sci-fi violence and action.

Children

► **"Shaun the Sheep: Adventures from Mossy Bottom" (Netflix)** — It's a 10-episode series featuring the funniest stop-motion farm animals on the planet. In the first episode, Shaun and his animal friends start a pizza business but accidentally burn all their money. It only gets better from here. Rated TV-Y7.

► **"Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa" (Netflix)** — A group of domesticated zoo animals get stuck in Africa while traveling to their New York City home. It's a fun film with only a couple of caveats.

(An elderly woman gets in a fight; we also hear some brief sensual dialogue.) Rated PG for some mild crude humor.

► **"Abominable" (Hulu)** — A young Chinese girl mourning the death of her father befriends a creature — the abominable snowman — who is trying to find his way back to the mountains. "Abominable" is a DreamWorks film that has a couple of worldview caveats (such as a character saying the stars are "ancestors who watch over us"). It's fun ... but may be worth a short worldview talk. It also has solid lessons on death, family and mourning. Rated PG for some action and mild rude humor. 🇺🇸

"If we lost everything tomorrow, it doesn't matter. We know the most important thing we have is Jesus."

Garrett Hilbert
Dude Perfect

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.

Focused on missions

Church replanters' online ministry strategy helps Indiana church bridge social distance

By **Trennis Henderson**
WMU National Correspondent

It wasn't quite the celebration that Dan and Chris Conrades had in mind as Crosspoint Church marked its fourth anniversary as a vibrant, growing church replant in Richmond, Indiana. But they still were determined to make the best of a challenging situation as church members sheltered at home and gathered online to mark the congregation's ministry milestone.

"I cannot believe that today is Crosspoint Church's 4th birthday!!!" Chris posted on her Facebook page May 1. "Four years ago today we officially opened our doors and began our ministry here in Richmond.

"Today, I wish we were gathering at the church for a big party or cookout," wrote Chris, Crosspoint's praise team leader. "I miss my church family. But I am celebrating all that I am seeing God doing even during this quarantine to grow our church's faith and to give them a deeper love for each other."

Surprise messages

"I can only imagine what God is going to do in this upcoming year," she added. "I will warn you now that there WILL be a party as soon as this is all over." In the meantime, the Conrades posted a video on Facebook highlighting church activities and achievements from the past year.

They also secretly installed yard signs on church members' front lawns with the message, "We are



Chris Conrades teaches preschool Sunday School at Crosspoint Church in Richmond, Indiana. Noting that she has missed the children amid the coronavirus crisis, she hosted a Zoom video call so they could visit online.

praying for you! — Crosspoint Church." Several families responded on social media with notes such as: "I absolutely love my church! I mean, what other pastoral families would sneak into my yard late at night to leave an encouraging little gift for my family to wake up to?"

As church replanters, being flexible isn't anything new for Dan and Chris. They quickly discovered, however, that the coronavirus crisis created a slew of new ministry challenges and opportunities.

Like most everyone else, they have turned to Facebook, Zoom and YouTube to stay connected with church members and the community, explained Dan, who serves as

Crosspoint's lead pastor. A typical week includes live streaming Dan's Sunday morning sermon on YouTube, Chris leading a women's video conference call and their 16-year-old daughter Ellie leading a Monday Zoom call for Crosspoint's children and youth. Chris, who also teaches preschool Sunday School, hosted a Zoom call with her 3- and 4-year-old "little people," an entertaining online experience she described as "a little bit crazy."

The Conrades also are coordinating a churchwide family missions night via Zoom each Wednesday evening. It has become the online version of an innovative missions program they launched last year to merge Crosspoint's missions discipleship efforts into one intergenerational gathering.

Before social distancing kicked in, the basic premise was that "everyone is together in one room and we are using our WMU curriculum to pray together, do crafts and Bible studies," Chris said. She said a key attraction of the study is the congregation learning about mis-

sionaries and missions discipleship as an interactive group ranging from preschoolers to adults.

"One of the greatest impacts I've seen is that people are just assuming we are going to be doing missions," she said. "It's not a question in their mind. It's a given."

As sheltering restrictions gradually are lifted, the Conrades are committed to continuing some version of Crosspoint's family missions emphasis, including Zoom gatherings and a parking lot prayer night.

Their family missions focus "is a resource that helps our people learn how valuable missions is," Dan said. "One of my heartbeats as a pastor is to get our people on mission."

The Conrades' missions journey to Crosspoint started several years ago when they began sensing God's call to serve as church planters. They became church replanters in partnership with the North American Mission Board and moved with their four children to Richmond, a county seat town with a population of 35,000. They helped Central Baptist Church officially conclude its ministry and then reconstituted in the same facility as Crosspoint Church.

Discipleship emphasis

"Our vision was to really build a healthy church that was focused on getting the gospel out to people but also was very focused on discipleship," Dan said. He and Chris also share a strong heart for missions, nurtured in part by Chris' strong background in WMU organizations from Mission Friends, Girls in Action and Acteens to WMU involvement on the associational, state and national levels.

As an Acteen, Chris attended the National Acteens Convention in Birmingham in 1994 "and that is where God called me to vocational ministry," she said.

"WMU has always just been exciting for me," she shared. "I know if it were not for WMU, I would not be who I am today."✠

"One of the greatest impacts I've seen is that people are just assuming we are going to be doing missions. It's not a question in their mind. It's a given that that's just a part of who we are."

Chris Conrades
Crosspoint Church, Richmond, Indiana