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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Montgomery children's leaders reach children during pandemic

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Virtual Worship Conference

Consultants from 17 state conventions organize new way to equip leaders

By Lanell Downs Smith
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The Resourcing Worship Virtual Worship Conference scheduled for Aug. 1 may be the first training of its kind: developed through the cooperative efforts of worship consultants from 17 state Baptist conventions across the U.S.

Featuring keynote speakers Matt Redman, Keith Getty and Mike Harland plus more than 65 breakout classes, the conference is designed to renew a passion for worship and to equip leaders to better serve in these unusual days.

“We want people to be encouraged, motivated, stretched and [to] find God’s power in their ministry

through their encounters in the Virtual Worship Conference,” said Kenny Lamm, senior consultant for worship and music for Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Overwhelming support

State worship consultants meet virtually each week for development, fellowship,

idea sharing and resource creation. Lamm said that with most conventions canceling their annual in-person training events, he began to look toward virtual conference options and discovered overwhelming support within the group.

“We kept the price really low to be able to make this (See ‘Open,’ page 15)



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BACK to CAMPUS



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Photo courtesy of William Owens

A man prays at the altar displayed in downtown Montgomery over Fourth of July weekend. The altar is in Selma this week as it continues its tour.

Two Montgomery evangelists kick off tours

The wooden altar that was in downtown Montgomery a couple of weeks ago is now in Selma. It will be there through July 25, and everyone is invited to come pray, said William Owens, a traveling evangelist based in Montgomery.

It will be the altar's second stop, and from there, it will travel on to Birmingham, Tupelo and beyond, Owens said. The display — a simple wooden altar — is simply meant to draw people to prayer and repentance, and Owens will be on hand to talk with people or answer questions.

One man prayed to receive Christ at the altar in Montgomery, Owens said. "The experience there was wonderful."

Supporting him in that effort was Terry Veazey, another Montgomery evangelist and a member of Eastern Hills Baptist Church who is just starting his own tour of sorts. He calls it Repent America, and he plans to travel to every state capitol building to preach a message of repentance and love.



Photo courtesy of Terry Veazey

Evangelist Terry Veazey preaches a message outside the Kentucky State Capitol on July 13, the first stop on his Repent America tour.

His first stop was the Kentucky State Capitol in Frankfort on July 13.

"I want to challenge the legislators and governors in our nation," Veazey said.

He also wants to call the nation to a place where it can find healing in Christ. His plan is to visit the Southern states first, then travel to Alaska — his birth state.

For more information about the altar's tour or Repent America, visit americasaltar.org or terryveazey.org. (TAB)

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 17.

Back to Campus special issue

Shout out to Judson College, Carolina University, Boyce College at Southern Seminary, Samford University, University of Mobile, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Mississippi College, Baptist College of Florida, Luther Rice College and Bob Jones University for reserving a spot in TAB's Back to Campus issue.

MY RASHIONALE

By Jennifer Davis Rash
President and Editor-in-Chief

jrash@thealabamabaptist.org
@RashionalThts



Look around to see who you can help out of a bind today

Have you ever over-promised what you could really deliver? Or maybe overcommitted yourself to unrealistic projects?

If yes, then I'm right there with you (I'm sure you are shocked ... ha!). If no, then we need you to mentor the rest of us. What guidance would you offer us?

I'm learning there are many reasons we find ourselves in these moments of indebtedness to others who are depending on us to fulfill what we said we could, and would, do. The reasons vary according to the person, the season and the request.

But what we likely all have in common is a bit of regret at that moment of realizing we are drowning under the deadline pressure — kicking ourselves for not counting the cost before taking on the assignment.

The actual project itself deserves quality attention, and we most likely have the ability to achieve the goal or we would not have been recruited.

The issue that takes the project from doable to overwhelming for me comes down to timing and what other circumstances are swirling at the moment.

In some cases, an unexpected event hijacked my time and brain space after I committed to take on the project.

In other cases, I truly wanted to help the person achieve his or her goal and was excited to be part of the team making it happen, but I did not slow down to recognize I would actually be more of a hindrance than a help

because of other responsibilities on my plate.

Either way, I'm learning to pull back and assess what support is realistic for me to offer new requests in order not to take away from existing commitments — and so I leave enough margin to participate in ministry opportunities as they surface.

I'm also continually evaluating existing routines to make sure they are all still needed.

The more often we review, refresh and reboot, the easier it is to let go of outdated and unnecessary systems and routines.

I'm also learning that many times we let the enormity of the project paralyze our efforts, when chipping away at it a little each day or several times a week would actually get us to the finish line on time.

Sometimes the hands-on help from a friend can make all the difference; and other times we have to block out a day and dive in to tackle it by ourselves.

One thing that doesn't help, however, is to be scolded about overcommitting in the midst of the project, even by well-meaning friends who think they are expressing concern.

A friend showing up with sleeves rolled up and a willingness to do whatever we need in the way we prefer (rather than what he or she thinks is the best strategy — unless of course we ask for help determining a strategy) makes everything better.

Once the task is accomplished, we can work on how to avoid getting into future binds, but in the midst of the current one, a helping hand and encouraging spirit is what we need.

Another gift we all can grant each other is a guilt-free release from an overcommitment once we realize what has happened. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

Prayer, compassion and assistance offer three simple actions we all can share with the world on a daily basis

Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, shared a message with his church family recently that reminded me how we all should be intently looking for ways to make life better for others around us. And in the process, we can share Christ's love and grace with them.

In part he wrote: "America has its problems, but compared to [many other difficult places in the world], we are still a shining city on a hill serving as Good Samaritans to countless hurting people.

"God has blessed America and called us to be His blessing to others. [We all] can find an at-risk person who feels 'less than' and make them the object of our prayers, compassion and assistance.

"Let's be the change America needs. Let's serve as God's key, sharing Christ's love and light to set others forever free."

My mind raced with ideas as I read his words.

What if every one of us intently looked for ways to bless those who cross our paths each day?

Can you imagine the difference we would make in the world?

Thinking about the three areas Pastor Jay mentioned — prayer, compassion and assistance — it actually seems like a simple plan.

Intentionally **praying** for specific needs and finding ways to be a source of encouragement is something we all can do.

We also can commit to be sensitive to the moments when God lays a person or situation on our hearts, even if we don't why.

Along with praying, reach out to the person to check on him or her. If God puts someone on your heart, there's most likely a reason.

Compassion should come easily to us as believers.

Authors Henri Nouwen, Donald McNeill and Douglas Morrison in their book "Compassion" describe the virtue as "a force of prayer and action — the expression of God's love for us and our love for God and one another."

They say compassion is at the heart of the Christian life.

And when it comes to **assistance**, the options are limitless.

We can assist financially or with time, effort and/or training.

We all have something to share with others if we are willing to give it away. 🌈

Your Voice



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

Take time to seek God and meditate on His word

By **Susan Lafferty**

Missionary, Alabama native, Samford graduate

My mother tells a funny story. Her dad was going blind, so every morning she or her sister would stop by and read the Bible to him.

One particular day, Mom was in a hurry. She rushed in with no time to spare. “So, Daddy, which chapter do you want me to read today?”

In his slow southern drawl, Granddaddy said: “How about Psalm 119?”

We’ve laughed about that story and my grandfather’s sense of hu-

mor when his daughter had places to go and people to see.

The truth is, we often live life that way — in a rush, not making room for the Word of God, much less the longest chapter in the Bible.

We live forgetful of its priority, reluctant to take the time when we’ve got so much else to do. We miss its strategic importance and find that we need that long prayerful read in the Word more than ever.

To be honest, when I was younger I found it odd that the psalmist in Psalm 119 waxed eloquent about

laws. And ordinances. And statutes.

But it wasn’t odd once I began following the psalmist’s example. He asks. He pleads. He pursues and seeks after God, spending time in prayer and meditation on His Word.

The more I truly seek God — in prayer, asking the hard questions, listening, reading and dwelling on His Word — the more I desire Him. The more I hunger and thirst for His truth. [His plan] is woven throughout the law and prophets and poetry and leads to the power of the gospel and the beginnings of the Church.

It culminates in the future vision of that glorious Day, when those from every nation, tribe, people and language will gather around the throne, knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ.

Travel through the stanzas of Psalm 119. Listen and learn. The psalmist proclaims His Word is better than gold or silver and sweeter than honey. It is perfection without limit, a vast treasure.

His truth helps us see as a lamp to our feet, a light on the path, full of insight and wisdom. His Word gives life and hope, comfort and joy. It is our delight, our counselor.

The psalmist declares the entirety of His Word is truth. It is altogether trustworthy and righteous forever.

Take the time for a slow, meditative walk through Psalm 119. Ask Him to make you hungry for His Word. For Himself. He will do it.

(Susan blogs at susanlafferty.com; reprinted with permission from BP)

I was convicted to respond to psychologist Diane Langberg’s simplistic suggestion in the Your Voice section of the June 18 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* that a (former sex) offender not be allowed in church because children are there.

Scripture provides clear instructions as to how sin is to be handled within the church:

► If any member of the church sins, one other member is to go to that person to confront him or her with the sin, to bring about repentance, i.e., turning from sin, and effecting a change in behavior.

► If the individual persists in the sin, other members are to go to him or her as a small group, and again confront the individual with the sin to bring about repentance.

► If there is still no repentance, the situation is to be told to the church publicly.

► If contumacy persists, the individual is to be put out of the church and its fellowship until repentance is achieved.

Once the public shame has had its effect and the individual repents of the sin, he or she is to be restored to the fellowship of the church.

Reasonable boundaries may be set, individually or corporately, to reduce temptation for repeating the sin in the future. (See Matt. 18:15–17, Gal. 6:1.)

Bob Cosby
Birmingham, Ala.

Supporting the police

I read your Letters to the Editor section in the June 25 issue, and I couldn’t agree more with the two letters on police.

We need the police.

Most of them are good Christians and veterans. They are so disgusted with these city mayors not backing them up that they are retiring or resigning in record numbers.

Since the George Floyd incident, [I have read that] 20 cops have been murdered and 800 more injured. Many more have contracted COVID-19.

It is time for Baptists to take a stand for the police and denounce burning, looting and bottle and brick-throwing protesters.

I am a volunteer fire fighter, but

I would never want to be a cop. It is the most thankless job in America today.

May God help our land.

John T. McGraw
Eldridge, Ala.

EDITOR’S NOTE — TAB has not been able to verify the number of police officers injured in the U.S. since Memorial Day weekend (when Floyd died while in custody of police officers). As far as deaths, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (nleomf.org) reports 68 officers died between Jan. 1 and July 10. The Officer Down Memorial Page (odmp.org) reports 30 active-duty U.S. officers have died since May 26 of various causes.

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“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

J E S U S
Matthew 5:9

When we get to heaven, there will not be a white section, a black section, a Latino section, an Asian section and a Native American section. No, there is no homogenization in heaven. There is no separation. What we see is something different: reconciliation. We see a reconciling gospel that does not just reconcile us to God, but it also tears down the dividing wall of hostility between us. It reconciles us to one another.

Pastor Albert Tate
Fellowship Church
Monrovia, Calif.

Jesus is the perfect example of someone who equipped His disciples — He showed by example how to pray, how to love your enemies, how to esteem others, how

to be compassionate and how to be faithful in times of great distress. ... God’s ways are not our ways, and we should trust Him to put the right people in our line of sight. And when He does, may we all take that responsibility seriously and be diligent in equipping others.

Chip Hutcherson
Interim Managing Editor
Kentucky’s *Western Recorder*

I can’t think of something that shuts someone down faster than someone who tries to either tell them the quick fix to their problems or who tells them it’s not as bad as they say it is.

One of the things I have said during this pandemic is it feels hard because it is hard. I think the power

of validation cannot be overstated in this time. This is a big deal.

Author Aundi Kolber
Castle Rock, Colo.

I want to give a hearty Amen to the opinion expressed by Sethany Hagel of Wetumpka in the July 9 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Allowing a “forgiven” pedophile to work with children is too big a leap of faith in any setting.

Betty Gale
Huntsville, Ala.

When God created the world, He did not distinguish just some to be made in His image. Every person, all ethnicities, are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

Trillia Newbell, “United”

From the *Twitterverse*

@richardblackaby

God has ways of raising His voice until society can no longer ignore Him.

@MichaelCatt

I’d rather have a conversation with a new believer who doesn’t know much than a theologian who thinks he knows everything (including taking the mystery and wonder out of faith).

@brocraige

“Many are sorry they ever spoke, but few ever mourn that they held their tongue.” — Spurgeon

@BillyGraham

“God is in control. He may not take away trials or make detours for us, but He strengthens us through them.” #BillyGraham

@edstetzer

The most dangerous man or woman in your church is the one who forgot he or she is a sinner.

@ConradDMills

In the Old Testament Jesus is predicted, in the Gospels He is revealed, in the Acts He is preached, in the Epistles He is explained and in Revelation He is expected.

— Alistair Begg

@MattSmethurst

It’s a bad sermon if people can follow along with their Bibles closed.

@ostrachan

The “me” that is the endless focus of our therapeutic self-esteem culture, the “me” that supposedly deserves unending affirmation and

applause and attention is the same “I” that in Christian faith needs to decrease. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

@CarlMWilliams

Say less of this:

1. How could you?
2. How dare you?
3. When will you?
4. Why didn’t you?
5. I am disappointed in you.

And say more of this:

1. How can I pray for you?
2. How can I help you?
3. When do you need me?
4. Why don’t we?
5. I’m thankful for you.

@KB_HGA

He has more grace to give than you have sins to commit ... begin again. #forgiven

Beyond the Divisions

For all the complexities and sharp disagreements among Christians on matters that shape our citizenship, a certain foundation of shared faith can guide all of us who believe we have a constructive, even transformative, role to play in society.

Consider these principles of 20/20 vision for 2020 Christians:

▶ We anchor ourselves in the Triune God rather than one political party or another. Remember, Jesus prayed that we would be in the world but not of it (John 17:13–19).

▶ We cultivate our inward lives as ones vivified by the Spirit.

▶ We discipline our relational lives as imitators of Christ.

▶ We shape our public lives with a missional mindset.

▶ We deepen our congregational lives as diverse members of the one body of Christ.

When the first four principles get translated into congregational life, new possibilities are born for understanding God, one another and the world. New possibilities for personal and collective action arise as well.

It becomes safe — and increasingly fruitful — to come out of hiding and talk about difficult, important things that matter to our time and place, acting in concert when we can, disagreeing agreeably when we can’t and loving each other unconditionally, always.

These principles of 20/20 vision for Christian citizenship take us beyond the divisions of our day into deeper considerations of our presence in culture as the people of God.

They enhance the likelihood that we actually will be what God calls us to be: the salt and light of the world.

Greg Hunt
Central Baptist Theological
Seminary; Shawnee, Kan.

Greg Gosselin (kneeling) and Houston Boggs serve ice cream from Boggs' truck to Lilly, Kloe, Addy and Brody Hilliard as part of an outreach during the COVID-19 shutdown.

'The church cares'



Photo courtesy of Greg Gosselin

Montgomery children's leaders get creative to reach children during pandemic

Like most everybody else this year, Greg Gosselin realized back in the spring that he was going to have to pivot a little.

"In the past, we've always hosted a huge Easter event at my house," said Gosselin, who serves as minister to children at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery.

That means hiding somewhere around 10,000 eggs, fishing on the pond and sharing the Easter story.

But this year with COVID-19, it just wasn't going to happen. So he started thinking, "What else could we do that the kids might like that would give them the opportunity to hear the story of Easter?"

That led to him buying eggs and hand delivering them to the home of each child in Eastern Hills' children's ministry. Each delivery came with instructions for using the eggs to tell the resurrection story and a guide for conducting a related scavenger hunt around their home.

"It was supposed to just be a simple surprise, but the response was overwhelming," Gosselin said.

So next, he and his wife, Karen, started thinking of other ways they could reach out to the children. And

before they knew it, they'd rented an ice cream truck.

"We took it around to all of their homes — about 60 families," Gosselin said. "We were also able to connect with probably 100 other children and their families just out in the community."



Photo courtesy of Greg Gosselin

The Gosselins help Lynleigh Benefield choose the ingredients for her mom's Mother's Day cake in a mug.

For Mother's Day, the Gosselins traveled around to each home and let the children make a cake in a mug for their mothers using ingredients they brought with them.

"We had chef hats on and started playing 'Be Our Guest' when we arrived," Gosselin said. "It was so much fun."

Then for Father's Day, they did the

same thing and let the children make and shake up bottles of marinade.

'One-on-one' time

"We really enjoyed all of it," Gosselin said of him and his wife, who leads the children's choir and teaches Vacation Bible School. "We wanted it to be from both of us."

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions, he said some parts of ministry during social distancing were refreshing.

"I've been able to minister in a way I could've never done," Gosselin said. "We got quality one-on-one time with the children and

their parents and were able to let them know that the church cares. We were also able to talk with them and see how they were feeling during everything that was going on. We were able to truly minister — which is what we're called to do."

A blessing

Josh Wootton, Eastern Hills' pastor, said it was a blessing to see

Gosselin's ideas become a reality.

"When we were hit with quarantine, we met together as pastors and started talking about ways we could continue to connect with our congregation," Wootton said. "Greg said he had an idea. A week later, he was riding down the road in an ice cream truck surprising our families. The kids loved it, the parents loved it, and I believe God was glorified." (Grace Thornton)

Alabama officials require masks in public to slow COVID-19 spread

Masks are now required statewide in Alabama to help slow the spread of COVID-19, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey announced July 15.

The order calls for individuals to wear a mask in public and/or when they come in close contact with people from another household in indoor public spaces and in outdoor public spaces where 10 or more people are gathered.

Some exceptions apply. An additional category carves out narrow exceptions for protected activities like voting and religious worship — but even then, wearing a mask is strongly encouraged, the order states.

Scott Harris, Alabama's state health officer, noted Alabama hospitals have recorded a new high in hospital inpatient numbers. More

than 2,000 hospital patients in the state have COVID-19 and many hospitals have limited or no ICU capacity left, he said.

"Alabama is not headed in the right direction," Harris said. "We don't really have a lot of options at this time."

Alabama has reported more than 60,000 COVID-19 cases statewide since March. Nine of the first 13 days in July saw daily increases of

more than 1,000 cases, Ivey said. Harris said the state's economy doesn't have to be shut down if people cooperate with state health orders.

The mask mandate began July 16 at 5 p.m. and goes through July 31. Alabama's current Safer-at-Home public health order also is set to expire July 31. (TAB)

Read more at tabonline.org/masks-required.

Partnership and friendship

Heflin church catches vision of SEND Cities, supports Utah church plant

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Brent Thompson can't explain it, other than he felt God drawing him toward the West.

"I grew up here in Heflin, but I was gone 18 years and served two churches in Georgia," said Thompson, who came back to his hometown as pastor of Heflin Baptist Church in 2016. "The latter part of that time in Georgia was about the time the North American Mission Board put out the study on the 32 Send Cities, and for a year I prayed over those cities."

The Send Cities — 32 of North America's highest populated areas with the greatest need for the gospel — included Salt Lake City, the place Thompson's heart kept gravitating toward.

A burden for the lost

And he wasn't alone.

Derek Duvall, a youth pastor in Tennessee, felt God draw him there in a similar way.

"When my wife and I were on our honeymoon, we met an LDS (Mormon) couple from Salt Lake City,"

he said. "One night we stayed up until 5 in the morning talking, and it stirred a desire in us to learn more about what they believed. It just began to give us a burden for those who are lost in the LDS religion."

Sharing the dream

Duvall had "never had any desire to be a lead pastor," but he felt God leading his family there to plant a church. Now he leads Awaken City Church in Herriman, Utah.

That's where his path crossed Thompson's.

Thompson, feeling drawn to Salt Lake City, reached out to the Send coordinator there and began to work toward the idea of a partnership while he was still in Georgia. By the time he got to Heflin, he was ready to put feet to the burden God had placed on his heart.

"I began to share the dream with these guys here, and they embraced it immediately," Thompson said.

He took a vision team out to Utah to pray for God's direction, and they felt God drawing them to Herriman, an area south of Salt Lake City that's one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S. — and



Photo courtesy of Awaken City Church

Awaken City Church in Herriman, Utah, celebrates as a new member is baptized in a hot tub during COVID-19 gathering restrictions. The church plant gets support from congregations like Heflin Baptist Church.

one of the least reached. After that, Heflin Baptist linked up with Duvall and began to take teams and send finances to support the ministry of Awaken City Church, which is investing time and resources to reach young families with the gospel.

Before COVID-19, Heflin Baptist had planned to send its fifth team to Utah this summer.

"We had 24 people signed up to go and help with a kids' camp," Thompson. "It didn't happen, which is heartbreaking, but we are still committed."

Blessings all around

They've hosted the Duvall family at Heflin Baptist, along with a former LDS couple who shared their story of how the gospel changed their lives.

Heflin Baptist also has envelopes in the backs of the pews specifically for giving to Awaken City Church.

Duvall said Heflin's support has

been a blessing to his church.

"Pastor Brent has just been a great friend and partner in this whole process," he said. "It's been great to meet the people at Heflin Baptist

and get to know them better and have them get behind the vision of what's going on."

Thompson said the blessing has been all theirs.

"A lot of people in small rural towns don't think they can be a part of something like that, but you can,"

he said of the Send Cities effort.

"It's really been a God thing. I just hope we can encourage churches of all sizes to get involved. It will capture your heart when you see God taking the dollars you send and people you send and transforming lives."

For more information about Heflin Baptist's work in Utah, visit heflinbaptist.org/missions. To learn more about NAMB's Send Cities, visit namb.net/send-network/where-we-plant.

For more information about Heflin Baptist's work in Utah, visit heflinbaptist.org/missions. To learn more about NAMB's Send Cities, visit namb.net/send-network/where-we-plant.



Photo courtesy of Brent Thompson

Heflin Baptist Church members (from left) Mark Vise, Pastor Brent Thompson, Glenn Hyatt and Robby Brown stand in Salt Lake City's Temple Square during a 2018 vision trip to explore missions opportunities in Utah.

Pine Level, Opp, keeps traditions of faith going

It's possible that parts of the one-room church building were made from some trees busted up on the land. It's got that primitive quality to it, according to James Preachers, director of missions for Sardis Baptist Association.

"They do have gas heat and an air conditioner," he said of Pine Level Baptist, Opp,

a church that's been around for more than 130 years. "But they want to keep it like Mom and Dad and Grandma and Grandpa."

For pastor Dewey Elmore, that's the part that makes it great.

"As far as I know, they never had a split or a bust-up," he said. "Basically, the same families through the years have been associated with it, and they're good people — easy to preach to."

Elmore's own family has connections to the church too — his brother, James, served as pastor there years ago. But that's not what drew Elmore to the pastorate back in 2000.

Pine Level Baptist hadn't had a

pastor in a while, and a man in one of those original families confessed to Elmore he hadn't been to church in quite some time either.

"He said he'd come back to church if I came down there and preached, so I did, and I've been preaching ever since," Elmore said.

The man who extended the invitation kept his end of the bargain too, and even though he's since passed on, his son attends church at Pine Level Baptist now.

"There aren't many of us, probably eight or 10 on a Sunday morning, sometimes more," Elmore said.

But for a long time, they've been a mainstay of the community. For years, even after she moved away to Pensacola, one church member drove back on Sundays. And on the last weekend of July every year, they have homecoming and kick off a weeklong revival.

They'll do that again this year on July 26.

"It's just a part of who we are," Elmore said. "It's a great group of people here." (Grace Thornton)



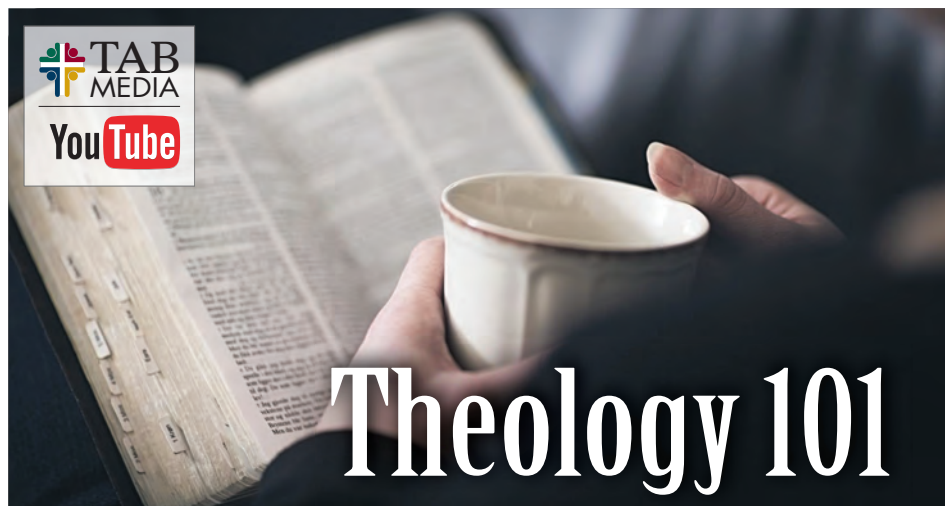
Photo by Cindy Elmore Gast

The interior of the 130-year-old Pine Level Baptist, Opp, has not changed much since the church was built.



Photo by Cindy Elmore Gast

Pastor Dewey Elmore stands in front of the sign pointing passersby to Pine Level Baptist Church. The church has a small but faithful congregation of families who have attended the church for generations.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Christology Through Figures

Door

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

The figure of Christ as a shepherd, which was last week's point of reference, also has interwoven with it the additional figure of the door of a sheepfold as one of Christ's verbal self-portraits.

In John 10 He twice declared, "I am the door" (vv. 7, 9). This figure, like that of a shepherd, draws attention to common sheep-keeping practices of Christ's day. At the close of day, several shepherds would lead their flocks into a common sheepfold for the night. The fold, usually constructed of stacked stones, had but a single door to enter and exit. This door was one of the figures of speech Christ chose by which to speak of Himself and His mission.

Entranceway

When we think of Christ as an entranceway, we might envision Him as the divinely provided entranceway into the presence and family of God. Such would be the significance of Jesus' well-known declaration, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). He not only embodied the very life of God and declared the truth about God, He came as the only way to God.

Since Christ is the entranceway to God, He is also the entranceway into heaven and into eternal life. There is a decided or definite singularity about Christ as the door; He is the only door. Many routes to heaven do not exist —

only one. Jesus was quite clear, "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). He termed anyone who tries to enter other than through the designated door as "thieves and robbers" (10:8). The kingdom of God has no back or side door.

Exit path

The same door that was the entranceway into the sheepfold was also the only exit path to the sustenance found in the nearby pastures and streams. Hence by analogy, Christ is the God-appointed way to spiritual nourishment and its resultant spiritual health. Jesus said this healthy life was intended to be abundant life. As He explained, "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Since Christ is both the entranceway and exit, personal faith in Him is the required key to the opening of the door. By faith we enter His fold and by faith we go forth to receive nourishment. He is firmly and eternally positioned as the door.

The ascended Christ described Himself as "He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" (Rev. 3:7).

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.



‘Choose life’

Planned Parenthood relocates to new Birmingham building; pregnancy ministries step up efforts

By Tracy Riggs
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While the global COVID-19 pandemic dominated headlines, a newly constructed Planned Parenthood clinic quietly opened in Birmingham this summer.

The new clinic, termed the Birmingham Health Center on the Planned Parenthood website, is located in downtown Birmingham. The clinic formerly operated in a building in the Highlands area of the city.

The Planned Parenthood website notes a range of medical services offered at the clinic, including pregnancy testing and birth control, but no surgical abortion services currently are provided.

Early in the pandemic, efforts in several states, including Alabama, to close abortion clinics were thwarted by federal courts. In Texas, however, a court upheld a prohibition on the procedure.

Alabama currently has three abortion clinics, one each in Tuscaloosa, Mont-



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Birmingham's Planned Parenthood recently relocated to a new facility downtown where it advertises a range of services, but surgical abortions are currently not available at the facility.

gomery and Huntsville. Planned Parenthood operates an additional location in Mobile but currently does not provide surgical abortions at that location either.

Deemed ‘essential’

Because abortion clinics are deemed “essential services” during the COVID-19 pandemic, faith-based preg-

nancy resource centers are doing their best to continue serving women experiencing crisis pregnancies.

Alabama has a network of nearly 60 pregnancy resource centers, including several Sav-A-Life locations and multiple other faith-based centers, some of which are mobile.

The centers provide pregnancy tests and ultrasounds. Many provide parenting classes and other resources for mother and child, and even fathers, to help meet their physical needs, as well as counseling to address their spiritual and emotional needs.

A little more than a mile away from Birmingham's new Planned Parenthood clinic is Her Choice Birmingham Women's Center, a pregnancy resource center offering a full range of free services to pregnant women.

Her Choice Birmingham sees about eight clients a day who are abortion minded, abortion vulnerable or who want to carry to term but are scared or need help, according to Joy Pinto, executive director of Her Choice Birmingham.

Staying available

In March, Her Choice Birmingham shut down due to the pandemic. Volunteers continued to monitor phones, check on clients and make sure those currently pregnant had the resources they needed.

For new clients who were abortion minded, Her

Choice Birmingham worked with them by phone, Pinto said.

“COVID or no COVID, babies come due,” Pinto said.

Her Choice Birmingham opened again May 1 and got busy quickly due to the backlog of women who hadn't been able to get help.

“We had one client who was homeless and pregnant, so we were working with her before COVID. When COVID hit, it got worse for her. ... We made sure she had food; she had shelter. ... Now she's waiting to deliver,” said Pinto.

Alabama law requires a woman have an ultrasound, full disclosure about abortion procedures and types, and a 48-hour waiting period, which gives women time to consider their decision more carefully, Pinto said.

Changing minds

“We've had hundreds of cases of girls who thought abortion was their answer and would solve all of their problems. Once they've gone through counseling, [seen their baby on the ultrasound] and were able to bond and calm down the fear, they'd choose life,” Pinto said. “Usually it takes one person, just one person, to come alongside a girl with an unplanned pregnancy ... to say, ‘We can do this’ ... and she'll choose life.”



Photo by Tracy Riggs

Joy Pinto (left), executive director of Her Choice Birmingham pregnancy resource center, and student volunteer Elizabeth Kunbur sort baby clothes to give to expectant mothers.

“Usually it takes ... just one person to come alongside a girl with an unplanned pregnancy ... to say, ‘We can do this’ ... and she'll choose life.”

Joy Pinto, executive director, Her Choice Birmingham

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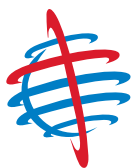


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Fortify event for teen guys set for Aug. 29

The world can be tough on teen guys, and Larry Hyche said that's exactly why there's a need for Fortify, a one-day event to help teens shore up their faith.

The event, which will be held Aug. 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (doors open at 9:30) at Journey Church, Prattville, will "hit a hot topic that no one else seems to be addressing (for teens)," said Hyche, who leads men's spiritual development for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

That topic is porn — ways to guard yourself against it and, most importantly, cultivate a strong faith that leads you to pursue a life as a godly man, he said.

"In a godless culture, we need to meet some critical needs for our young men," he said.

Through Fortify, Hyche hopes to build up guys from 7th to 12th grade and show them how to have Christ-centered character.

"Our goal is to rise

above society's confusing messages about 'masculinity' and equip young men with a biblical approach to their identity," he said.

The topics and speakers for the conference are:

► **Biblical Manhood** — Cody Hensley, student/family pastor of Glynwood Baptist, Prattville

► **Authentic Christianity** — Terrance Andrews, student pastor of Westmeade Baptist Church.

Breakouts are:

► **Boundaries in Technology** — Clint Bryant, student/tech pastor at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

► **Helping Those Addicted to Pornography** — Chris Langley, business owner and lay leader at Taylor Road Baptist.

Fortify was originally set for April but rescheduled for August because of COVID-19 gathering restrictions. For more information or to register, visit alabamamen.org/events/fortify. (Grace Thornton)

For more information or to register, visit alabamamen.org/events/fortify.

"In a godless culture, we need to meet some critical needs for our young men."

Larry Hyche
men's spiritual development, SBOM

Senior adult ministry and COVID-19

SBOM webinar explores common concerns, tips

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Senior adults may feel especially vulnerable during the current coronavirus crisis, but engaging and reaching out to them is an important ministry for churches.

"We've had care group leaders in our senior ministry to stay in touch with other seniors, and I've asked them to report to me if they talk with some who are especially depressed, [so] then I can reach out too," explained Ronnie McCarrson, senior adult minister at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile.

Enlist volunteers

McCarrson was one of three senior adult ministers featured in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions webinar "Ministry to



123rf.com

Senior Adults in Challenging Times" held in June.

Bob Smith, who leads senior adult ministries at First Baptist Church, Trussville, said his church enlisted about 75 volunteers to call senior adults every week and also had a weekly email newsletter for those they call their "seasoned adults."

"We've tried to get others

involved in doing the work of ministry," he said.

And now that many churches are gathering again, staff members say they are remaining aware of senior adult concerns.

Eloise Crossley, senior adult ministry director at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, said her church had removed hymnals and Bibles from the sanctuary and learned more about cleaning and sanitizing.

"Since seniors are susceptible to colds and flu, we think this will be a long-term gain for us," Crossley said.

But Crossley believes many senior adults aren't yet ready to regather.

All three ministers said they've offered Facebook posts, online worship and Zoom video Bible studies and training conferences. McCarrson teaches the Explore the Bible Sunday School lesson on his personal Facebook page.

'Hooks' in the water

"Our approach has been the trot-line approach," Smith said. "We try to have as many 'hooks' in the water as we can, so we've used every electronic means possible."

Smith said many of his senior adults who were a little wary of technology, especially online giving, now have begun to do it more.

"I tell our seniors the secret of getting online is to call a grandchild," he said. "For those who continue to have difficulty, we've recorded DVDs of services and Bible studies we deliver to them."

View the full webinar and additional ministry resources at vimeo.com/alsbom.

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3 stories you should know



AP Photo/Muhammad Sajjad

Elizabeth Lal, a Christian woman who was injured because her son-in-law Nadeem Jordon rented in a Muslim neighborhood, shows a picture of Jordon on her phone during an interview with the Associated Press, in Peshawar, Pakistan, July 9. He was killed by gunmen.

Analysts and activists say minorities in Pakistan are increasingly vulnerable as Prime Minister Imran Khan vacillates between trying to forge a pluralistic nation and his conservative Islamic beliefs. (AP)

Alabama CP giving exceeds mid-year goal

Cooperative Program giving in Alabama is 1.1% over the state's mid-year budget goal, a good sign following a turbulent period in church life due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Alabama Baptists have been faithful in giving toward the 2020 CP budget goal of \$37.5 million.

"CP giving in Alabama typically hinges on two months of the year — January and December," DuBois said, noting January 2020 was an "exceptional month" in CP gifts, which allowed the mid-year budget to remain in the black as of June 30.

In March, many churches stopped meeting and/or went online in accordance with state efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. (TAB)

Comedian John Crist comes back online

Christian comedian John Crist appeared online July 15 to thank fans for their "undeserved" support as he sought treatment for sexual sin and addiction.

In a Facebook video, his first in eight months, Crist said he spent four months in a treatment facility and plans to continue in recovery.

In November 2019, a *Charisma* magazine investigation reported allegations of sexual misconduct by Crist, 36, toward young female fans.

Crist said he takes full responsibility for the choices he made.

"All my comedy videos were pointing out hypocrisy in some way ... and the most embarrassing part of this whole thing is the biggest hypocrite was me," Crist said.

In comments, thousands of fans expressed their support and excitement over his potential return. (TAB)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Mobile Association's Chuck Davis retires after 30 years with ministry



Chuck Davis says as he looks back over his 30 years as Mobile Baptist Association's church development director, he sees a God who built his ministry with intentionality.

"So many of the experiences God allowed me have been building blocks in His call of ministry in my life," Davis said. "As I look back, it is exciting to see how God has worked in my life. It is also exciting, and with a sense of awe, that I look forward to what God has in store for me in the future."



DAVIS

Mobile Association honored Davis' retirement with a reception July 13. Before his work with the association, he also served as a youth minister and minister of education at several churches in Kentucky and Florida. His ministry began with him serving as his home church's bus evangelism director.

Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for Mobile Association, said Mobile Baptists "have been richly blessed by Chuck's faithfulness to the Lord and commitment to serve our churches."

Davis and his wife, Becky, have three grown children and one grandson. (Grace Thornton)

Tucker, longtime pastor of Prattmont Church, Prattville, dies at age 69



Randall "Randy" Jackson Tucker — pastor of Prattmont Baptist Church, Prattville, for the past 37 years — died July 9. He was 69.

Tucker surrendered his life to the ministry as one of the "preacher boys" in the youth group at Highland Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, and became youth director at Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery. After that, he served as a pastor of several churches — Brewer Memorial Baptist, Cecil; Indian Grave Baptist, Billingsley; Mount



TUCKER

Pleasant Baptist, Georgiana; River Falls Baptist; and Sweet Water Baptist before going on to serve at Prattmont.

Tucker is survived by his wife of 51 years, Brooke; sons, Thomas Jackson and Robert Brassell; and two grandsons. (Grace Thornton)

Tennessee enacts strong pro-life law; joins legal battle over heartbeat bills



Tennessee enacted a law July 13 that provides some of the country's strongest protections for unborn children.

The bill prohibits an abortion when a fetal heartbeat can be detected, which can be as early as six weeks. The measure also bans an abortion when the doctor knows the request for the procedure is driven by the race, sex or health/disability diagnosis of a child.

A federal judge quickly blocked enforcement of the law at the request of Planned Parenthood and other abortion rights advocates.

Other pro-life efforts to protect unborn babies and their mothers have received setbacks recently. On July 13, a federal judge permanently blocked Georgia's heartbeat law. On June 29, the U.S.

— SBC NEWS —

Majority of 16-and-under group in U.S. now nonwhite; student ministries ‘must’ be diverse

For Ricardo Vides, young adults pastor at Ministerios Betesda Church in Orange, California, approaching ministry from an ethnically diverse perspective is just reality — a more pressing reality all the time.

According to recent U.S. census data, for the first time ever, the majority of people age 16 and under are nonwhite, as reported by the Associated Press.

It is critical for ministry leaders across America to recognize the shift in demographics and to make adjustments, Vides said.

“We have to understand the reality that we live in a country that is so diverse and unique with all the people that come to live in this country from all over the world,” Vides said.

Richard Ross, professor of student ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, says the shift in racial balance was expected.

“What is newsworthy right now is the fact that nonwhites and Hispanics became the majority for the first time. That shift will continue for decades,” Ross said.

Shane Pruitt, National Next Gen Evangelism Director with the North American Mission Board, agreed. He said the question to be asked in the

current environment is no longer, “Why are you a diverse church?” but instead, “Why are you not a diverse church?”

Ross noted that hot topic issues for the 16-and-under generation include science and the Bible, gender issues and racial attitudes.

“If teenagers have friends at school who would not be welcome at their church, that can be a deal-breaker,” Ross said. “We need strong, biblical preaching and teaching to precipitate a change in adult attitudes. If attitudes in the adult church change, then student ministry can be effective in reaching all students in the community.”

Biblical unity calls for action, Ross emphasized.

“If our teenagers see their churches creating biblical unity

among all God’s people,” Ross said, “then they can turn their attention to King Jesus and all He may have in store for a young generation.” Pruitt said understanding must come before action.

“We have to figure out bridges we can build and what barriers we can remove,” Pruitt said. “If we’re going to have a future as evangelical churches, it must be a diverse future.” (BP)



Submitted photo/BP
Members of Ministerios Betesda lead in worship.

Persecuted church

16-year-old Christian in India killed for practicing faith

KENDUGUDA, India — Incited by Hindu extremists, tribal animists on June 4 murdered 16-year-old Sambaru Madkami (pictured) for his faith, later celebrating with a feast.

Six villagers were arrested for Madkami’s murder. His mutilated body was found in the jungle a few miles from his home in Kenduguda village.

Reports indicate Sambaru had been dragged miles, stabbed, and suffered blunt force trauma to his head and face, a slit throat and broken limbs.

Claiming the Christians practice “black magic,” villagers decided to kill

the heads of the only three Christian families in Kenduguda. Sambaru was abducted while his father was not home. Heads of the other two families escaped. Villagers later decided to kill all Christians, and the Christians fled the village.

Sambaru, described by a pastor as having “great zeal for God,” had been leading daily house church meetings in his home.

India ranks No. 10 on Open Doors’ 2020 World Watch List of places where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)



Morning Star News photo

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law that requires a physician to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of a facility where he or she performs an abortion.

Several states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio and Utah, have enacted versions of abortion bans in the past year. (BP)

Mississippi: Old flag removed, new flag must include ‘In God We Trust’

Mississippi will have a new state flag design before the end of this year, and the new design must include the words “In God We Trust.”

On July 1, Mississippi’s state flag, a design adopted in 1894 that included the controversial Confederate battle emblem, was retired.

Among the leading voices that called for the former flag’s removal were representatives of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

“Our position on this is motivated by our understanding of the teaching of Jesus Christ,” said Shawn Parker, executive director and treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The MBC’s rejection of symbols of the Confederacy echoed a resolution passed by messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention’s 2016 annual meeting, titled “On Sensitivity And Unity Regarding The Confederate Battle Flag.”

“In God We Trust” was added to Mississippi’s state seal in 2014. Mississippi legislators have stipulated the new flag design must also include the words.

The inclusion of the phrase has wide support in Mississippi despite criticism from national religious freedom organizations. (TAB/RNS)

Jim Moebes, longtime Mountain Brook pastor, dies at age 78

James D. “Jim” Moebes — senior minister of Mountain Brook Baptist Church for more than 30 years — died July 14. He was 78.

A Decatur native, Moebes was ordained to the ministry at Mountain Brook Baptist in 1963, the year he graduated from Samford University. He later earned a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and a master of arts and doctorate

in counseling and educational psychology from the University of Alabama.

At the beginning of his ministry, he was on staff at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, and pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church near Aliceville.



MOEBES

Moebes also served as a pastor in Kentucky and interim pastor in Georgia and Huntsville.

In 1975, he became Mountain Brook Baptist’s executive minister, then in 1981 he became the senior minister.

Through the years, Moebes was active in national and international missions and took dozens of Builders for Christ trips.

He also served as the chair of the Alabama Baptist Education Commission, on the board of directors of the Baptist Health Foundation, on the board of trustees of Trinity Medical Center in Birmingham and was involved in various other organizations. He retired in 2011 after more than 53 years total in the ministry.

Moebes is survived by his wife, Gail; son, David; daughter, Stacey; and five grandchildren. (TAB)

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James Watford, Bay Minette, Alabama: Durant Chapel BC
Doris Bracknell, Bessemer, Alabama: Concord BC (Bessemer)
James Melvin Morgan, Pine Hill, Alabama: County Line BC
Sue Ellen Sloan, Crown Point, Indiana: Durant Chapel BC
Leatha Wynn Seale, Alabama: Pleasant Grove BC (Tuskegee Lee)
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‘Open and ready to hear from God’

Virtual worship conference to focus on theological foundations, practical tips

(continued from page 1)
accessible to every person who is involved in the worship ministry of the church, including pastors,” Lamm said.

Breakout sessions will cover a variety of topics including pastor/worship leader relationships, ministering through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, racial and cultural diversity in worship, biblical foundations and worship theory, practical tips for leading children’s choirs, plus a host of others.

‘In constant contact’

“Our state missionaries have been in constant contact with our local churches

during this time,” said Keith Hibbs, director of the office of worship leadership and church music for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

“A big majority, 85% or 90%, will continue conducting services online, so this training will help them meet that need. [Churches] also tell us they know things can’t stay the way they are, and adjustments are needed. The conference will help to guide them in those areas.”

Small churches and bivocational worship leaders will want to check out sessions geared toward their specific needs, like “10

Tips for Leading Worship in a Small Church,” led by Sarah Bohrer, children and worship consultant for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. Lamm’s session — “A Week in the Life of a Worship Leader” will offer bivocational leaders a firsthand look into Lamm’s time as an interim worship leader, with practical tools for serving as a bivocational worship leader.

Racial division

According to Lamm, panel discussions on diversity are designed to help the church lead in tearing down the walls on racial division. Two sessions will focus on “Worship and the Racial Divide” and moving “From Mono to Multicultural Worship.”

Lamm noted that worship leaders are adapting to what many call a “new normal” and COVID-19 has stripped away many habits of weekly worship.

New opportunities

As churches regather, he added, leaders possess the opportunity to sort through old practices, eliminate

what is no longer effective and adopt new ways of discipling the church body and the community.

“As the church is rebooting, now is the time. As probably never before, we need to have a clear sense of the theology of worship and what we are to be about so we can reform what we call the worship ministry of our churches into what God has for us. The extensive list of classes here will help us wrestle with these issues.”

Lamm said he is reminded of the story behind Matt Redman’s song “The Heart of Worship” in which Red-

man tells of how his church experienced a period of stripping away the productions of worship to regain a focus on Jesus and a heartfelt worship of Him. “Before COVID, I have often felt like so many of our churches had lost sight of true worship,” Lamm said. “Many have begun to worship the worship event — the band, the singers, the songs, the pastor — and not the One to whom we owe our all. In ways, I can see Jesus clearing the temple of all this. Perhaps COVID is God’s way of overturning our table of misdirected worship and

old, useless practices of the church. Just perhaps, God is using COVID-19 to strip us of all the church was doing, so we can carefully put it all together the right way this time, that we simply come with hearts open and ready to hear from God.”

One-stop resource

Lamm developed the website resourcingworship.com to help churches navigate the current season of change.

The site offers a one-stop resource for worship leaders for working through COVID-19.

Conference tickets are available on the website resourcingworship.com.



REDMAN



GETTY



HARLAND

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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Trinity Memorial Baptist Church, Montgomery, is seeking a music minister. Please contact Brett Lanham, 334-782-5284, if interested.

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“As the church is rebooting, now is the time. As probably never before, we need to have a clear sense of the theology of worship and what we are to be about so we can reform what we call the worship ministry of our churches into what God has for us.”

Kenny Lamm
senior consultant for worship and music
Baptist State Convention of North Carolina



Pinnacle

Here's just a sample of what's coming up in the next month!

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

General

Sunday School Leader Focus: Ministry, Tuesday, July 28, 6:30-8 pm

Sunday School Leader Focus: Groups, Thursday, July 30, 6:30-8 pm

Sunday School Leader Focus: Evangelism, Saturday, August 1, 8:30-10 am

Sunday School Leader Focus: Advice for Leaders, Sunday, August 2, 2-3:30 pm

Preschool

Choosing the Best Curriculum for Your Preschool and Children's Ministries, Tuesday, August 25, 6:30-8 pm

All Around the Room, Thursday, August 27, 6:30-8 pm

Using Sensory Boxes to Teach Biblical Content, Saturday, August 29, 8:30-10 am

Preschool Sunday School is Not Just Childcare, Sunday, August 30, 2-3:30 pm

Children

4 Ways to Teach Bible Skills in a Socially Distanced World, Tuesday, August 4, 6:30-8 pm

Discipling Our Children, Tuesday, August 18, 6:30-8 pm

The Use and Misuse of Technology with Children, Thursday, August 20, 6:30-8 pm

Nothing Less, Saturday, August 22, 9-10:30 am

Safety First, Sunday, August 23, 2-3:30 pm

Youth

Engaging Students Beyond the Typical Sunday Morning or Wednesday Night Program, Tuesday, August 11, 6:30-8 pm

Teaching Students in a New Era, Thursday, August 13, 6:30-8 pm

Championing Their Walk: Making Sunday School Drive the Individual Walk with Jesus, Saturday, August 15, 8:30-10 am

Getting My Questions Answered for Leading Students Today - Panel Discussion, Sunday, August 16, 2-3:30 pm

Single Adults

Starting from Scratch and Itching to Quit Singles Ministry, Tuesday, July 28, 6:30-8 pm

To Infinity and Beyond: Contacting, Connecting, and Keeping Folks in Your Small Group, Thursday, July 30, 6:30-8 pm

Hello, My Name is _____: Creative and Fun Events for Your Sunday School/ Small Group and/or Ministry, Saturday, August 1, 8:30-10 am

Leaders That Last: Developing Single Adult Leaders, Sunday, August 2, 2-3:30 pm

Median Adults

How to Build a Strategy to Engage Your Group When Using a Virtual Platform, Tuesday, August 4, 6:30-8 pm

How to (Re)Build Effective Teaching and Community in Your Class, Thursday, August 6, 6:30-8 pm

Communication Lessons from the Life of Christ, Saturday, August 8, 8:30-10 am

Keep Your I's on the Future: Leading Adult Groups to Embrace New Realities, Sunday, August 9, 2-3:30 pm

Senior Adults

Reaching and Keeping Senior Adults, Thursday, August 6, 6:30-8 pm

Getting Out of the Teaching Rut, Sunday, August 9, 2-3:30 pm

DISCIPLESHIP

Lunch and Learn with Kie Bowman, Thursday, August 27, 12-1:30 pm

EVANGELISM AND APOLOGETICS

Ten Characteristics of a Genuine Revival, Monday, August 10, 7-8:30 pm

Five Talking Points for a Pro-Life Discussion, Monday, August 17, 1-2 pm

MISSIONS DISCIPLESHIP LEADERCONNECT

Preschool, Tuesday, August 18, 6-7 pm

Adults, Tuesday, August 18, 7-8 pm

Children, Thursday, August 20, 6-7 pm

Students, Thursday, August 20, 8-9 pm

WMU Directors and General Leaders, Saturday, August 22, 9-10 am

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

LeaderConnect: Women's Ministry, Thursday, August 20, 7-8 pm

MEN'S MINISTRY

A Plan for Discipling Men, Thursday, August 20, 6:30-8 pm

MUSIC LEADERSHIP

Survival Kit for Children's Music, Wednesday, August 19, 6-7:30 pm

LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY IN CHALLENGING TIMES SERIES

Ministering to Preschoolers and Children, Tuesday, July 28, 10-11 am

Forecasting the Near Future, Tuesday, August 11, 10-11 am

COMMUNICATIONS/TECHNOLOGY

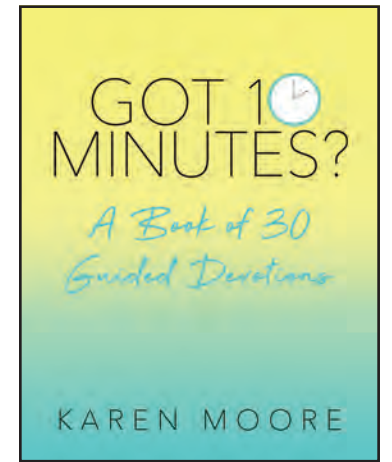
Tech Talk: Live Streaming, Thursday, August 6, 10-11 am

All times CST

For more information about individual webinars or to register, visit PinnacleAlabama.org.

These training opportunities are free and made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

GOT 10 MINUTES?



By Karen Moore

Special to The Alabama Baptist | ©2020 Karen Moore | got10minutesforgod.com

A Sip of Living Water

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

I S A I A H 55 : 1 (N I V)

Devotional Moment

As summer days get warmer, there’s often nothing quite as refreshing as a cool glass of water. A little ice, a splash of lemon, and

you’re cooler and happier. Water is something we can never take for granted, knowing as we do that much of the world suffers from a lack of good clean water.

As Thomas Fuller said, “We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.”

Every day that you choose to meet Jesus for just 10 minutes though is like going to the well and getting a generous cup of water,

Living Water, the kind that will always refresh you and never leave you thirsty again. It’s everlasting water that God faithfully shares with you throughout your life.



MOORE

If you’ve got a little dryness in your throat today, grab your Bible and a cup, ready to be refilled, refreshed and reenergized by the grace of Him who can truly make a difference in your life. Come to the water and

quench your thirst. Jesus is already at the well waiting for you.

and share Your love with others who may yet be thirsty. Amen.

Prayer

Lord, I am so thankful that You are always near to refresh my spirit and draw me closer to You. Help me to spend time in Your word

Action Step

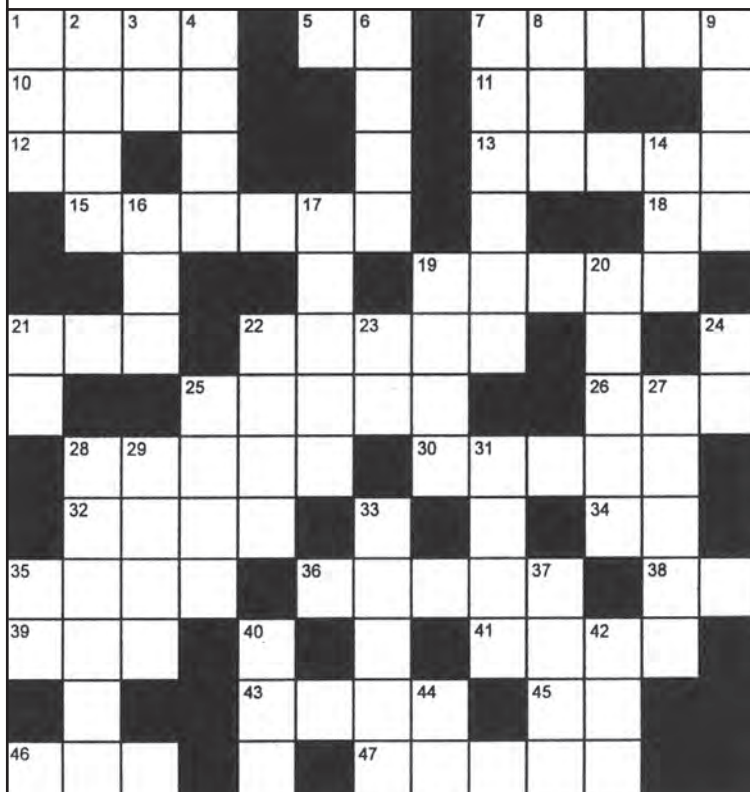
Find one person you might share a refreshing glass of water or iced tea with and help to renew his or her spirits today.✝

“Every day that you choose to meet Jesus for just 10 minutes ... is like going to the well and getting a generous cup of water, Living Water, the kind that will always refresh you.”

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Christian Crossword

By Susan F. Weimer Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- To go away.
- Citizens Band. (abbr.)
- ____, an apostle of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:1)
- Blessed are the ____ in spirit. (Matt. 5:3)
- Lakers’ hometown.
- Before noon.
- A book of maps.
- Breathed into his nostrils the ____ of life. (Gen. 2:7)
- Prefix meaning “to do again.”
- I stand at the door and _____. (Rev. 3:20)
- Club used to strike a ball.
- Because he ____ for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)
- I will ____ and will deliver. (Isa. 46:4)
- By the hearing of the _____. (Job 42:5)
- Endured the ____, despising the shame. (Heb. 12:2)
- He breaketh the bow and cutteth

- the ____ in sunder. (Ps. 46:9)
- My people hath been ____ sheep. (Jer. 50:6)
- Near. (abbr.)
- Then he got into the _____. (Matt. 8:23)
- Gather his ____ into the garner. (Matt. 3:12)
- Not off.
- Cheweth the ____, among the beasts. (Lev. 11:3)
- An exclamation often used in cartoons.
- An object used to stop up a hole.
- A negative.
- Fine, volcanic particles.
- Escaped with the skin of my _____. (Job 19:20)

Down

- A health resort.
- Sweeter also than honey and the honey _____. (Ps. 19:10)
- Account of. (abbr.)

- Every ____ which bringeth not forth good fruit. (Matt. 3:10)
- A person who has had a _____. (John 13:10)
- That were in the low ____ was Baalhanan. (1 Chron. 27:28)
- We may ____ of the fruit. (Gen. 3:2)
- A Sceptre shall ____ out of Israel. (Num. 24:17)
- In the ____ thou shalt put the testimony. (Ex. 25:21)
- A long-tailed rodent.
- They that sow in _____. (Ps. 126:5)
- Have the ____ of hell and of death. (Rev. 1:18)
- Now ye are ____ through the word. (John 15:3)
- That holy thing which shall ____ born. (Luke 1:35)

- lots upon my vesture. (Ps. 22:18)
- Rural route. (abbr.)
- Having done any good ____ evil. (Rom. 9:11)
- Sitteth not down first and counteth the _____. (Luke 14:28)
- Nor for the ____ that flieth by day. (Ps. 91:5)
- Behold, he cometh with _____. (Rev. 1:7)
- Wide is the gate and broad is the _____. (Matt. 7:13)
- ____ that ye enter not into temptation. (Luke 22:40)
- ____ unto God with the voice of triumph. (Ps. 47:1)
- Before Christ.
- The tabernacle of the ____ of the congregation. (Ex. 40:2)
- Primate.
- An exclamation of surprise.
- General Electric. (abbr.)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 26

Explore the Bible

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



PLEASING GOD Proverbs 15:33–16:11

Wisdom Demonstrated (15:33; 16:8)

As the believer realizes the presence of the holy God, he will be full of humility. Indeed, no Christian grace can exist without it. The phrase “the fear of the LORD” occurs more than 12 times in the Book of Proverbs. This phrase describes Christians who live with a keen awareness of God’s nearness and holiness. A believer who possesses the fear of the LORD is conscious that God is holy, and humanity is sinful.

Wisdom is the righteous application of true knowledge. “Teaching” is correction that leads to learning. The goal of God’s discipline is to transform His people and motivate them to live a God-centered life. Our Father’s discipline is so wise.

“Humility” means modesty and gentleness. “Honor” comes from a root that means to be heavy and can be translated glory. Without humility, honor would be our temptation rather than our glory. True humility realizes our wickedness and causes us to depend upon the full resources of the gospel.

Solomon writes that it is better for a person to be poor yet be characterized by righteousness than to have great income acquired unjustly. The love of gain is so blind that it looks only at its own selfish end and to the present moment. God does not measure religious piety based on material wealth.

Accountability Established (16:1, 4–5, 9)

Humans can think and act for either good or evil, but God is sovereign and will hold all ultimately accountable for their choices. Humans can process multiple pieces of information in order to make various decisions. But the opening verse focuses on God’s control of events. People may carefully think through a course of action, but the sovereign God has the final say in what happens.

In verse 4 Solomon writes that everything was created by God and for God. This includes all the work of creation, all the events that take

place in the nations and all of God’s providential activity in the affairs of man.

Along with divine sovereignty we also see human accountability. Even the wicked are being prepared for the day of disaster — the day they will appear for judgment.

Everyone who thinks he or she knows better than anyone else is a person with a “proud heart.” A person with a proud heart uses his or her own decision-making as the standard by which to measure everyone else’s decision-making. The proud person is always right and everyone else is always wrong. God abhors the person with a proud heart. He will hold all with a proud heart accountable for their sin, unless they repent.

Verse 9 is a good description of God’s sovereign rule. It is a mystery how God accomplishes His purpose by human agents who exercise their will. Humans without a will are machines. God without His unchangeable purpose ceases to be God. Mysteriously, God orders our will without infringing our liberty or stopping us from being responsible creatures. We act but are accountable to God.

Motives Matter (16:2, 10–11)

Pleasing God involves right motives as well as right actions. What is down in the well comes up in the bucket. People often evaluate attitudes and actions based on what feels right to them. People are tempted to evaluate their own actions by personal criteria rather than the Word of God. God weighs our motives deep within our hearts.

God is concerned about government and commerce. Solomon teaches that even a king is still accountable to God. A king should seek God’s guidance before declaring a verdict and a merchant should be honest in his business dealings.

Blessing Assured (16:3, 6–7)

Solomon identifies blessings that come to people who are in right relationship with God and seek to live for His glory. Those blessings include spiritual stability, deliverance from evil, and true peace.✠

Bible Studies for Life

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



WE ARE JOINED TOGETHER Ephesians 1:20–23; 2:8–10, 19–22

God has created us with a natural desire to belong, whether to a family, a group of friends or some other group that provides us with a sense of identity and belonging. The church, the body of Christ, is where we are intended to find our ultimate identity. It provides us with our ultimate family, citizenship and community identity.

The church is the body of Christ. He is head over all things. (1:20–23)

Paul has reflected on Psalm 8:6 and Psalm 110:1 and it shows in these verses (as it does in 1 Cor. 15:25–27). That Christ has been seated at God’s right hand (v. 20) was anticipated in Psalm 110:1.

In verse 21, Christ’s superiority over “all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named” is probably Paul’s way of referring to “the enemies” who would be made His footstool according to Psalm 110:1: all the spiritual and human powers who might try to compete for ultimate authority.

That “all things” are placed under Christ’s feet (as Paul mentions in v. 22) was anticipated by Psalm 8:6.

Paul’s reference to “feet” in verse 22 echoes Psalms 8:6 and 110:1. Psalm 8 applies to Christ not because it only ever had Him in mind but because it speaks of God’s original and ultimate intention for human beings, which is realized in and through Christ, our representative King.

Depending on the translation, Christ has been given “to the church” as head over all things (ESV) or, alternatively, Christ’s role as head over all things “for the church” (CSB, NIV, NRSV). Either way, Christ uses His authority for the benefit of the church, His body (v. 23).

We have been united with Christ, and we are raised up from death and seated with Him at God’s right hand (Eph. 2:5–6). That part of Christ’s story (being raised and

seated at God’s right hand) has become our story as well. Christ exercises His authority for our sake and, as Christ’s body, we are to express His presence in this world.

Christ brought us into His church by His grace. (2:8–10)

The church is made up of people who have come to be redeemed on the same basis: by God’s amazing grace.

This makes us a community uniquely qualified and empowered to share grace and mercy since we know it is by God’s rich mercy and great love (v. 4) that we have come to experience salvation. Any sense of spiritual entitlement or moral superiority is undermined by the knowledge that God’s grace, His unmerited and unexpected kindness and favor, is what qualifies us to be in God’s presence, now or ever.

We are members together in God’s household, Christ’s church. (2:19–22)

As God’s church we are given new identities related to institutions of nation (citizens), family (household) and worship (holy temple). We are God’s citizens, household and temple. And none of these can function on an individualistic basis. Citizens work together collaboratively for a nation to flourish. Households depend on each family member to love and support the flourishing of the whole family. As for temples, just as the physical structure depends on a cornerstone, a wider foundation and the parts of the superstructure (all mentioned in vv. 20–22) working together to maintain structural integrity, those who carry out the work of the temple are part of a team who promotes and supports the worship of the one true God. As Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:12, we are one body with many parts, and each of us depends on the others (and they all depend on us and the proper use of our spiritual gifts) for the health and vitality of the church and for the glory of God who has made us for Himself.✠



Media reviews

BOOKS

Evans, Perkins, others point readers toward biblical reconciliation

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Accounts of the night tell a harrowing story. Thousands of rioters gathered in the streets. Some fired guns into homes. The mob turned over a car, then began throwing rocks, bricks and Molotov cocktails. Law enforcement officers struggled to control the protesters, eventually firing tear gas into the crowd.

We saw such rioting in the days following George Floyd's death in May. But the events described here did not happen in 2020.

The rioters that night — May 21, 1961 — were white residents of Montgomery. The targets of their anger: the Freedom Riders and their challenge of segregated interstate public transportation.

Nearly three decades have passed since the Freedom Riders made their stand, but issues of violence against African Americans and racial inequity in communities, commerce and the American justice system continue to be part of the national conversation.

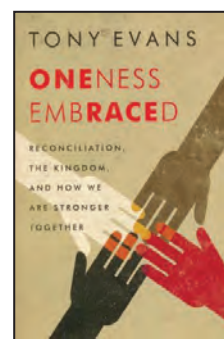
If you're like me, you may feel ill-equipped to engage in difficult conversations about race and the Church. My first step was to seek out authors who have written about the Church's complex history on race, those who have firsthand experience and insight into not only the problems of the past but solutions for the future. Here are some I've found helpful.

Oneness Embraced: Reconciliation, the Kingdom, and How We Are Stronger Together

Tony Evans.
Moody, 2016.

Respected as a pastor and Bible teacher, Tony Evans draws large, often predominantly white crowds to his "Kingdom Man" events. But as a black man who came of age during the Civil Rights Movement, Evans understands the

frustrations of the current generation of African Americans. In "Oneness Embraced," Evans calls on the Church, white and black Christians alike, to "execute a Kingdom-based theology on both righteousness and justice" (Ps. 89:14). Calling America's racial divide a "disease" whose only cure is a "prescription from the Creator," Evans contends that "if the church can ever get this issue



of oneness right, then we can help America to finally become the 'one nation under God' that we declare ourselves to be."

When Heaven and Earth Collide: Racism, Southern Evangelicals, and the Better Way of Jesus

Alan Cross.
NewSouth Classics, 2014.

A former pastor in Montgomery, Cross examines the cultural beginnings of the "Southern way of life," an attitude threatened by the Civil Rights Movement's focus on racial equality. His retelling of the Freedom Riders' arrival in Montgomery prefaces an in-depth look at how easily the gospel message can get warped when family, community and economic commitments become believers' primary focus.



One Blood: Parting Words to the Church on Race

John M. Perkins.
Moody, 2018.

In his 90 years of life, Perkins — a minister, civil rights activist and author — has witnessed the

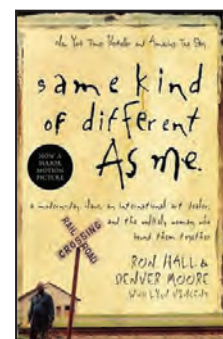
history of America and the church. "One Blood" looks at biblical reconciliation, which he defines as the removal of tension between parties and the restoration of loving relationship, past and future. The future is critical, he emphasizes. "We have only to look at the signs of

the times to realize that the Church may not have long to get this right. We may not have much time left to offer the world a glimpse of this unity that will point the eyes of the watching world to the power of our great God. ... Time is running out, for all of us," Perkins writes.

Same Kind of Different as Me: A Modern-Day Slave, an International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together

Ron Hall and Denver Moore.
Thomas Nelson, 2006.

Told through the eyes of Ron Hall, a wealthy Texan whose wife, Debbie, is dying of cancer, and Denver Moore, a homeless black man Debbie wants to help, "Same Kind of Different as Me" is a moving story of how serving the marginalized in Christ's name can lead to greater understanding and greater love. The authors also wrote a sequel, "What Difference Do It Make?: Stories of Hope and Healing,"

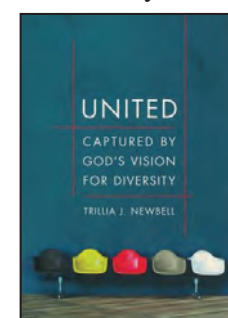


and Hall wrote a third book after Moore's death, "Workin' Our Way Home: The Incredible True Story of a Homeless Ex-Con and a Grieving Millionaire Thrown Together to Save Each Other."

United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity

Trillia J. Newbell.
Moody, 2014.

Sharing experiences from her Sown life and encouraging readers to get past the fear of talking about race, Newbell — director of community outreach for the Eth-



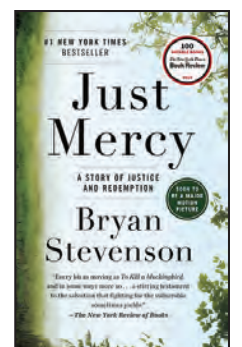
ics & Religious Liberty Commission — explores a Revelation 7:9 vision for Christ's church on Earth. "Racial reconciliation, harmony and diversity aren't out of the

reach of God," she writes. The starting point is finding identity in Christ and truly recognizing that "every person, all ethnicities, are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27)."

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

Bryan Stevenson.
Random House, 2014.

Stevenson, founder of Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, has dedicated his life to aiding individuals unjustly sentenced to death or life in prison. In "Just Mercy" Stevenson tells the story of a black Alabama man sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit and other stories that illustrate equity concerns in the American justice system. In a 2019 interview with The Christian Post, Stevenson talked about how Scripture, particularly Micah 6:8, has guided his work. "It's easy to look away, but if we want mercy, we have to be willing to give mercy and you don't give it to just people who you think deserve it. You have to give it to the undeserving," he said.



God's word *is alive*

Journeyman finds identity in the Lord during two-year term in the Amazon

When she was 16 years old, Haylee Belcher felt called to serve overseas. As she read through the Bible, specifically passages like the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20), Haylee said she could not help but ask herself, “Where is God sending me?”

Six years later, God sent Haylee to work in the Amazon. In college at Oklahoma Baptist University, Haylee went on several short-term missions trips to Northern Brazil and sensed the Lord leading her to serve there. In July 2018, she began her journeyman term, serving in the Amazon through the International Mission Board.

IMB journeyman are college graduates under the age of 30 who are sent by their church as missionaries for a two-year term.

Haylee said her ever-growing closeness to the Lord is one of the most rewarding parts of her experience as a journeyman.

“At the beginning of my term, it was easy to feel lonely or discouraged because I didn’t know the language yet and couldn’t build community with those around me,” she said. “I really had to lean into the Lord for comfort and encouragement.”

During her time in Brazil, Haylee has seen God at work not only in her life but in the life of her Brazilian friends.

Ana, a national friend, began to attend a Bible study Haylee and her journeyman partner,

Jazz Jones, held at a neighbor’s house. The more Ana attended the Bible study, the more she asked hard, challenging questions about God and the Bible.



IMB photo

Ana, a national believer in Northern Brazil, was baptized March 11 by a Brazilian pastor.



IMB photo

Ana, a national believer in Northern Brazil, studies the Bible. IMB journeyman serving in the Amazon helped lead Ana to the Lord.

The Bible study focused on Creation to Christ, a Bible storying curriculum that details Bible stories from creation to the gospels. As Ana heard different stories from the Bible about who Christ is and how He came to save, she asked, “What if I wanted to become a Christian today? What do I do?”

Haylee and Jazz walked Ana through the Bible passage of Acts 2 and shared how those in the story asked the same question of the Apostle Peter. Ana wasn’t ready to surrender her life to Christ at that moment but returned about a month later eager to ask more questions about becoming a Christian.

Less than a week later, Ana met up with Haylee and Jazz again and told them she had prayed, repented of her sins and surrendered her life to Christ that very morning. Haylee said it was so encouraging to see the Holy Spirit prompt Ana and to have Ana respond immediately.

For the past eight months Haylee and Jazz have been discipling

Ana as she has grown in her walk with the Lord. Throughout their discipleship meetings, they have encouraged Ana to share her faith with others and in turn, they too challenged each other to share the gospel. During quarantine Ana has had the opportunity to spend time with her family and is working on sharing the gospel with them.

Although Haylee grieves the fast approaching end of her two-year term in Brazil, she said she is encouraged by all she has seen God do during her time there.

Appreciation for the Word

“When I came to Brazil my identity was stripped from me. I lost a lot of things that defined me. I had to find my identity in my relationship with Christ,” said Haylee. “As I focused on my identity in Christ, my appreciation for God’s word only grew. The word of God is alive and still working, and the word of God is sufficient.” (IMB)

To learn more about the Journeyman program, visit imb.org/go/options/journeyman.



IMB photo

Journeyman Jazz Jones (left) and Haylee Belcher (right) rejoice with their friend, Ana, after her baptism in Northern Brazil.