



# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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# #50FOR50

## Alabama Baptist family shows love of Jesus in Big Sky Country

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**W**hen Darryl Brunson and his family moved to Livingston, Montana, to plant a church in 2016, they didn't know exactly how that process would look.

But they did know one thing — the community was going to need to see what the love of Jesus looks like.

Less than 10% of the popu-

lation of Livingston claims Christianity, which was a bit of a “shock to the system” for Brunson, his wife, Veronica, and their children.

### ‘Started from scratch’

“We didn't know anybody in town, so we started from scratch,” he said. “We just started serving in the community and meeting people, going to coffee shops and hanging out. Anything that could put you in people's way, we

did. That first year, we did all manner of community projects.”

They also hosted dozens of missions teams — many from their home state of Alabama — who could show the area a kind of love they'd never seen before. Before the Brunsons moved to Montana, he served as pastor of Tibbie Baptist Church. He also grew up at Grove Hill Baptist Church, and his wife grew up at Tompkins Baptist Church, Grove Hill.

Over the past six years, the area has been a sort of church planting factory for Montana — in 2014, Chris Baker, who at that time served as director of missions for Clarke Baptist Association, moved with his wife Kim and family to plant Summit Life Church in Whitefish, Montana.

### Broken heart

Brunson brought a missions team from his church the following year, and (See ‘Extravagant,’ page 9)



Photo courtesy of Darryl Brunson

Darryl and Veronica Brunson and their children (from left) Jake, Tucker and Rivers left Alabama in 2016 to join a church-planting effort in Montana.



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# Evans returns to TAB as special assistant to the editor

A recurring theme we see here at The Alabama Baptist and TAB Media is that when God leads a staff member away for a season, He often brings them back.

Recently that happened with Maggie Walsh Evans, who first came to TAB Media as a summer intern in 2012, then rejoined the staff as an office assistant in June 2014 before becoming part of the editorial team that October and eventually becoming assistant editor.

She left in 2018 to be a part of the team at Gooch Family Dental in Birmingham, where she worked as financial coordinator. And she added the “Evans” in 2019 when she married Sam, who serves in a consulting role with TAB Media through his business, Rhythm Creative.

Now Evans is back as special assistant to the editor. In that role, she

helps with research, project management, systems and efficiency efforts, marketing, prep for the TAB Talks podcast and various presentations for Editor Jennifer Davis Rash.

“We are so excited to have Maggie back on staff at TAB Media,” Rash said. “She captured our hearts when she was here as a student intern and then showcased just how much she can shine as she embraced multiple areas of the work when she came on staff full-time.”

Evans said she’s thankful God opened the door for her to come back.

“The organization has expanded and evolved so much since my first tenure here, and this opportunity to be a part of the growth is really exciting,” she said. “I can’t wait to see how the Lord uses TAB in the coming seasons.” (Grace Thornton)



EVANS

## TAB appreciates volunteer Tommy Ellison



Photo courtesy of Tommy Ellison

Tommy Ellison came onboard as a volunteer at TAB in April, helping out with our TAB News podcast by reading the Explore the Bible Sunday School lesson each week. Ellison is a member of The Baptist Church at McAdory.



“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.



THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, INC.

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# MY RASHIONALE

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

[jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)  
@RashionalThts



## Celebrate grandparents every day and a little extra Sept. 13

**G**randparents, we celebrate you this month, especially the tremendous role you play in the lives of your grandchildren.

And for the grandchildren out there, be sure to take a little time with your grandparents at least monthly, if not weekly.

The best gift you could give them for Grandparents Day is a phone call or visit where you focus on a real conversation.

Share what's happening with you — what's going well and

where you are struggling — and let them share their memories.

You may hear some of the same stories over and over, but I promise those are the ones you will always treasure and may end up telling your own children and grandchildren one day.

For the grandparents, you have a lifetime of lessons to share and have been given a tremendous opportunity to speak wisdom into the lives of these precious ones you also get to spoil.

For those without grandchildren, there are plenty of kiddos

who could use someone with spiritual maturity to pour into their lives. Pray for God to make your heart sensitive to those who need a grandparent.

And for the grandparents raising their grandchildren, know we realize your situation moves to an entirely different level.

I can't begin to understand the complexity of what that means for you, but I do know it takes you to hero status. Be willing to share with your support system how they can pray and help.

The appreciation and recogni-

tion for being a grandparent — however that is defined in your family — may not always be apparent, but be assured your legacy will outlive you.

You may not always understand all the lingo swirling around with the grandkids, and their decisions may definitely concern you. But don't give up.

Pray diligently for each grandchild by name and situation, and pray for God to show you what to share and when to share it — and exactly how to best invest in and love each child.✠

## FROM THE GRANDPARENTS AT TAB ...

### Grandchildren of TAB team members range in age from 'on the way' to having kids of their own

**Linda Harrison**

**From Winna and Graddy**

**To:** Lily, 13; Parker, 11; Gabby, 10; Brynlee, 10; Conner, 9; Addy, 7; Baylee, 6; and Gwenie, 6

"My prayer for my grandchildren is that they learn who they are in Jesus. That He will be their best friend. To watch them grow spiritually has been a grand gift for me and my husband. It is a gift we cherish every day."

**Annette Brown**

**From Honey and Bear**

**To:** William, 2, and baby girl on the way

"We hope to instill the love of God, family and country. Thank God for His mercy and grace are renewed each day. Also 1 Thesalonians 4:11-12: '... and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders so that you will not be dependent on anybody.'"

**Janet Erwin**

**From GeeGee and PawPaw**

**To:** Meredith, 2, and Micah, 4 months

"I want them to know that if they will seek God, He will let them find Him (2 Chron. 15:15). He is the God who 'sees' them and loves them."

**Pam Holt**

**From Mem**

**To:** Great-grandchildren: Colton, 10; Hadley, 3; and Ainsley, 1; and grandsons: Josh and Clay

"These are the light to my life that I treasure each day. First, and most important, I want to instill in them that they are so loved by me and hopefully will feel that love even after I'm gone from this earth. I want them to enjoy the fun we have together, the adventures we have and the love we show to each other and to others, especially to the animals. And most important, to thank God daily that He gave each of us to each other for many reasons to love throughout their lives."

**Richard Maddox**

**From Pop and Mimi**

**To:** Audrey, 13, and A.J., 2

"We hope to instill in A.J. a love for God's Word so that he will acquire skill in the art of godly living. As he grows and learns, we love to point out to him the ways God works in his life and provides for him each day. We will continue investing in Audrey's Christian growth by encouraging her to stand firm in her faith as she has entered her teenage years."

**Cynthia Watts**

**From Lulu**

**To:** Grant, 18; Jade, 18; Lauren, 18; and Dade, 6

"I hope that I can instill an 'attitude of gratitude' in the hearts of my grandchildren. My heart's desire is that this gratitude applies to all of life's gifts — not only our relationship with Jesus Christ, but also for the love of our family and friends, what we glean at church, the songs we hear, seeing the sunsets, hearing the birds

singing, smelling the beach on vacation, tasting ice cream and experiencing special surprises. This perspective gives us a view of a glass more than half full and not taking God's bountiful blessings, including His presence, for granted."

**Margaret Colson**

**From Mo and Pop**

**To:** Clayton, 5; Haley, 4; Caroline, 3; Molly, 2; Ellie, 1; Benjamin, 6 months and baby boy on the way

"Above all, I want my grandchildren to know three truths: God's love is unwavering; His peace and joy, which are beyond human understanding, are possible in our lives; and His faithfulness inspires us to hold unwaveringly to our hope in Him."

**Debbie Campbell**

**From Nan and Pop**

**To:** Jackson, 11, and Bryson, 9

"Our greatest goal and joy is to see both boys following Jesus as young men and to instill in them integrity, honesty and a love and concern for all people. Above all else, follow Jesus, not the crowd, Matthew 6:33."✠

# Your Voice



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

## Masks off: Cast off pride to find community

By Myriah Snyder  
theropetab.com

I recently moved into the basement of my senior pastor's family home for a short transitional period.

These people loved me, but I knew that there was a lot they didn't know about me. This last week, though, I began to realize that I can leave here this fall with a savings account due to the discounted rent and a better idea of what a two-parent, ministry home looks like.

Or I could leave their home strengthened spiritually and set up to thrive.

But to do the latter, I'd have to

be vulnerable, and from my perspective, I'd have to obliterate the Myriah this family knew and loved.

That was a high price for me, so I waited and considered my options.

Would they still love me after I took off my carefully curated mask?

Would they still be so supportive of my ministry/calling/career?

Would they be scared if I ugly cried in front of them?

All my insecurities surrounded me as I texted and asked if we could sit down and talk.

And, you know what? All those insecurities were lies from the enemy. As I poured out my heart, I felt loved, understood, supported

and cared for. I felt overwhelming acceptance.

The next day, I walked upstairs after work needing to unload from my day. And they listened and gave me advice, with the exact same amount of respect they had before.

My vulnerability hadn't changed me in their eyes. I think it just made them care more.

I realized what was holding me back from genuine community was pride. And that makes God's list of most detestable sins multiple times (see Isa. 2:12; James 6:4; Prov. 8:13, 16:5). Confessing and forsaking that was my first step.

We're all at the point in this pandemic where we're sick of masks, whether we're for them or against them. This mask though — the polished Christian seeking people's approval — is one God has called us to remove (Gal. 5:16).

Wouldn't it just be so nice if we could find safe spaces to remove these spiritual masks?

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Adapted from theropetab.com. Myriah Snyder is a regular contributor to The Rope, a blog for college students and young professionals. Snyder is associate editor of The Christian Index, the newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, a two-time graduate of the University of the Columbians and a member of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia.*

To love Jesus means no excuses are offered that allow us to give way to fear and anger because "these days are so hard." Godly love responds to surrounding chaos quite differently. Consider Jesus. The greater the crisis, the more clearly His love is displayed.

**Bob Adams**  
Retired pastor

Happiness is discovered when we sympathize with those around us who suffer. Hardened hearts are resistant to God's blessings, but when our hearts are tender toward others, they are also receptive to God's care and concern. Sympathizing with others helps us discover happiness.

**David Jeremiah**  
Pastor and author

The condition of our hearts will set the tone for all our relationships — including our relationship with God.

**Tony Dungy**  
Sports analyst and former NFL coach

Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things.

**Henry Ward Beecher**  
American clergyman

## Letters to the Editor

I want to praise Pastor Bryan Taunton for his "Your Voice" article in the Aug. 6 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* regarding restrictive visitation limits in hospitals and nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic (tabonline.org/taunton). I look at this petition as an answered prayer.

My stepdad had to have surgery in August after three ER visits in two weeks and doctor's appointments that my mom couldn't go to with him. He can't hear well nor understand what the doctors are doing or saying.

My mom is his advocate but

was not allowed to be present.

This has been wrong on all levels — being allowed to do some things but not visit loved ones on their death beds or visit dementia or Alzheimer's patients. I've heard so many awful stories.

It's as if Pastor Taunton's words were taken out of my mouth and printed. I've said over and over how inhumane this whole process has been.

I'm so thankful there is a petition. Something has to change and be done soon.

**Lynn Dobbs**  
Deatsville, Ala.

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

“Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

J O S H U A 1 : 9 b

Teenagers want to be a part of something important and significant. They rally to causes they believe in. We need to take that desire and direct it to Kingdom work. Help your students find places to serve within your church. Teach them to identify their skills and desires, then show them how they can use those strengths to serve. ... Giving students a place to serve will help them realize they are active participants in the kingdom of God, and it will make it easier for them to remain connected to the church even when they graduate from the student ministry.

**Jarrold Horne**  
Minister of students and discipleship  
Sixth Street Baptist Church  
Alexander City, Ala.

The Apostle Paul had the right idea. “Let us stimulate each other to love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24). Could this be the end goal of relationships? To stimulate others to live the character of Jesus’ love that makes for excellent people interaction? What are some ways to encourage strong relationships?

1. Hear. Really hear what people say to decipher what they mean.
2. Trust. Let loose of the fear of being hurt.
3. Honesty. Tell the truth if you want to hear the truth.
4. Give. Invest yourself in people.

A true connection with God informs human relationships. He’s the glue for meaningful people bonds.

**Darryl Wood**  
via Facebook

Fear is an emotional default for us. It is an emotion we don’t like to feel and one that can disable us, rob us of faith, and throw us into a never-ending prison of chaos. ...

When we are on the battlefield of fear, we can’t shove it away or stuff it neatly in a back drawer. Until we courageously confront our fear and back it up with God’s Word, we can never be free of the pit of perpetual fear. When we are courageous and face the fear by backing it down with God’s word, there is a particular power that Scripture unleashes that backs the enemy down.

It is a huge victory that God has fashioned for us, and it is ours if we will believe Him for it.

**Cindy Evers**  
Tifton, Ga.

## TAB staff members help double our reach

I’m sending a gift subscription to a pastor whose church has been through a lot in the past couple of years. I hope it will encourage him to know even more that his church is part of a bigger body of Christ followers that are all in this together.

**Grace Thornton**  
Special assignments editor

I found out about a long-time reader who had lost touch with us after changing churches and now lives on a fixed income. I purchased a subscription for her so she can be reconnected.

**Jennifer Davis Rash**  
President and editor-in-chief

I’ve been inviting friends on Facebook to like TAB Media’s page. And recently, while on vacation, a salesman asked where I worked. After I described TAB, he handed me his phone and asked me to sign him up online. When I didn’t purchase anything, he said, “Can I still get the paper?” I assured him that he would receive the paper.

Finally, I asked my daughter and two friends, “Are you getting TAB?” They weren’t, but they asked to get subscriptions.

**Cynthia Watts**  
Executive assistant

On Facebook, I sent a direct message to several of my friends inviting them to like our page. It was so easy — it only took 5 minutes!

**Maggie Evans**  
Special assistant

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @shanepruitt78

If the tomb couldn’t stop Jesus, neither can 2020.

### @dandarling

There is so much going on in the country — turmoil and tumult. I’m personally convicted this morning that times like this should drive us to our knees in prayer rather than our keyboards with opinions. We need to pray for our country.

### @haines\_matt

God’s word is not a tool to be used to advance our political agendas, it is a light given to illuminate our path and lead us to Christ, our only true hope.

### @nathanrose33

When I preach a passage I attempt to make the tone of my sermon

match the tone of the text. If it’s shocking, I want it to feel shocking. If it’s encouraging, encouraging. If it’s sobering, sobering. I want the Spirit’s tone (and not mine) to be the tone of every message.

### @brocraige

“A godless world is a lawless world. Anarchy comes in when the fear of God goes out; and all the mischiefs you can imagine, and much more, rush in like a flood.” — C.S. Spurgeon

### @macbrunson

Pastors if you hold the word of God in your hand and you actually preach it:

- you may have larger churches close to you
- you may have more popular preachers around you
- but you will have no competi-

tion near you. No-where-near!

Getting ready for @NOBTS preaching class.

### @Blackwell\_Kevin

I long for the day when I no longer have to see the word “decline” related to Southern Baptists. I pray that post-COVID, the SBC will see a surge in baptisms, attendance and spiritual vitality.

### @richardblackaby

Every day of political turmoil, pandemic, social and economic upheaval and worldwide violence that passes, we are closer to Jesus’ return than we have ever been.

### @drtonyevans

Sometimes God lets you hit rock bottom so you will discover that He is the Rock at the bottom.



IMB photo

# Strategic IMPORTANCE

## Nigeria critical link between Africa and the world, watchdogs say

By Martha Simmons  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**P**olicymakers and news media are loath to view on-going violence in Nigeria as religious persecution, instead framing the conflict as cultural or even the result of poverty and famine due to global warming.

That's according to Lela Gilbert, a senior fellow for International Religious Freedom at Family Research Council, a fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom and author of a recent FRC report on Christian persecution in Nigeria.

### Violence on two sides

Last December, the U.S. State Department reported that the Secretary of State had placed Nigeria on the Special Watch List "for having engaged in or tolerated severe violations of religious freedom."

However, in that same report, the State Department cited Nigerian

government persecution against both Muslims and Christians and generally framed the violence as something perpetrated by both sides — a tit for tat between Fulani herders and Christian farmers competing for resources.

The U.S. has addressed the violence primarily through diplomatic dialogue, interfaith dinners and conferences, and sponsoring training sessions for journalists "to help reduce bias in their reporting and prevent tensions from becoming further inflamed."

But less talk and more action are what's needed, contends Gilbert, who is pushing for cuts in foreign aid and other U.S. sanctions against the Nigerian government, which has done little to stem the violence or protect Nigerian Christians.

It is in the interest of not only Christians but also the world at large to pay attention to what's going on in Nigeria.

Despite the abject poverty that 40% of Nigerians endure — especially Christians who are denied many jobs and resources because of their faith or are forced out of their homes and off their land — Nigeria is Africa's premier economic powerhouse. The country is geographically immense, rich in petroleum reserves and involved in extensive global enterprises.

### Africa's bellwether

Eventually, Gilbert warns, the events scarring Nigeria will impact the rest of the world.

To illustrate that, Gilbert quoted well-known singer and human rights activist Bono, who in 2016 commented, "There's so much strategic importance in Nigeria — that's why it's odd that there's not more focus on what's happening. It's pathetic. If Nigeria fails, Africa fails. If Africa fails, Europe fails. And if Europe fails, America is no longer America." ✠

## How to help persecuted Nigerian Christians

**H**ow can you help persecuted Christians a world away in Nigeria? Here are some suggestions from religious freedom advocates.

### ► *Pray* (Open Doors USA):

Pray for Christians who live under constant threat of attacks by Islamic extremists. Ask God to protect them and give them hope and peace.

Pray for Fulani militants and other extremist groups like Boko Haram. Pray that God will touch their hearts with the truth of the gospel.

### Awareness matters

Pray for pastors and church leaders who are helping rebuild communities and restore their churches after violent attacks.

### ► *Activate and Educate*

(Lela Gilbert, Family Research Council):

Contact U.S. government officials to urge sanctions and the appointment of a special envoy to Nigeria, a move that would improve documentation of violent acts against Christians and spur more concrete action from the U.S. government.

Educate others about the situation in sermons, through speakers and in articles for local newspapers, church newsletters and social media.

► *Stay informed* (current news and recent analysis):

**Morning Star News** — [morningstarnews.org/region/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/](http://morningstarnews.org/region/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/)  
**World Watch Monitor** — [worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/nigeria/](http://worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/nigeria/)

**Family Research Council** — [frc.org/issueanalysis/the-crisis-of-christian-persecution-in-nigeria](http://frc.org/issueanalysis/the-crisis-of-christian-persecution-in-nigeria)

**U.S. State Department** — [tabonline.org/nigeria-report](http://tabonline.org/nigeria-report) ✠

# It's COMPLICATED

## Nigerian violence sparked by history, grudges, poverty and religion

By **Martha Simmons**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**W**hile some religious freedom advocates characterize the violence in Nigeria in very black-and-white terms — nothing short of Muslim persecution of Christians — a Southern Baptist representative who has seen it first-hand says it is more complicated.

“It’s a very complex environment,” said Alabama-based representative Daniel Smith, who with his wife, Donna, just marked their 15-year anniversary on the missions field, all but one year of it in Africa.

“Christianity and Islam certainly are factors,” Smith said in a recent interview with TAB Media. “But it tends to be a little bit more nuanced.”

Regardless of the trigger for the incidents, the only solution is forgiveness, he said.

### Cycle of violence

“The problem in Nigeria is it’s just a cycle of violence,” Smith said. “It just spirals out of control. The only real tangible thing to do is to turn the other cheek and make positive steps to show love to the people who have hated us.

“I’ve been working with a number of local Baptist leaders there whose villages have been attacked by mercenaries — homes, churches and clinics burned to the ground, lootings, rape, murder,” Smith said. “We’ve worked with Baptist Global Response, recently renamed Send Relief. We would work with the local leaders to write project requests to provide not only humanitarian and food relief, but also to rebuild homes, buy sewing machines, buy grinding machines and so on, so people could rebuild businesses.

“We conduct trauma healing workshops, walking victims through a biblically based program that will help them to find healing and forgiveness and eventually move on with their lives. And we’ve been getting the local leaders to work



Wikimedia Commons photo

with the people and build in ways that they can actually minister to the communities that sponsor those attacks.”

The Smiths returned to Alabama in April, having spent the previous year in Nigeria. The Smiths began their missions career in Nigeria and hope to return there in the near future.

“We started off in Nigeria when we were just a couple with no kids,” he said. “We lived in a little mud hut with no electricity or running water, farming by hand, getting up to the sound of bleating goats in the morning.”

After those first few months in Nigeria, the Smiths were sent to France to study French so they could serve in French-speaking West Africa for the next 13 years.

When they returned to Nigeria last year, the Smiths saw much of the same poverty and violence that had plagued the country nearly a decade and a half earlier, only more so.

Smith said representatives must be much more careful now when they travel, going to villages only in daylight and not staying too long.

“There’s too much chance that you would be an easy target. Every time we travel on the roads, we give

a very passionate prayer for safety,” he said.

Although Nigeria is Africa’s most economically important nation — blessed with significant oil reserves and international businesses — the abject poverty suffered by most of its citizens and the intense competition for resources are key drivers in the pervasive violence plaguing Nigeria.

“The violence and banditry are not usually motivated by religion,” Smith said. “The bandits will often target Christian leaders because they know that their churches will pay. There are kidnappings all the time of pastors and pastors’ wives. These bandits will kill people who don’t pay up. That makes being a Christian minister in Nigeria a very risky proposition.”

### Constant fighting

Villages often hire mercenary soldiers — typically unemployed or under-employed angry young men — to kidnap people for ransom or seize territory or property, he said.

Herders fight farmers. Muslim tribes attack Christian tribes, and vice versa. Fulani herdsmen — a predominantly Muslim group blamed for a recent spate of violent

acts committed against Christians — are often “getting a bad rap” in news media accounts for religious persecution when the fight can actually be traced to longstanding personal grudges unrelated to faith, Smith said.

Still, religious ideology is a wedge sharply dividing Nigerians and pitting region against region, neighbor against neighbor, father against son.

### An either/or choice

Nigerian tribes typically adopt either Christianity or Islam exclusively, Smith said, and battles erupt “because some girl marries into the wrong family, say a Christian girl marries a Muslim and is forced to convert.” Such religious conversions, Smith said, can provide “the impetus for absolute mayhem.”

Nigerian Christians are not without sin in all this, he said.

“The Christian community shuns these Muslim-background people because they’re Fulani,” Smith said, and recalled hearing one Nigerian Baptist minister in an official public meeting casually saying some “horribly racist” things about the Fulani.

Despite the dangers, Smith said, “There is a movement of people coming to Christ among the Fulani. It’s very underground. They are typically abandoned and persecuted by their own family. It’s common for physical violence to be done to them by somebody close to them.”

The viciousness of such violence can be “jaw-dropping,” Smith said. He recalled meeting with a group of Nigerian Christian converts sitting around in a circle. Without fail, each one told a story of something horrible done to him or her at the hands of that person’s own family.

“I met a guy who had a big scar right across his forehead because his dad or his brother attacked him with a machete,” Smith said. “He survived and is doing great things for the Kingdom.”

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons.*

# Mobile health clinic reaches patients physically, spiritually

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Two years ago, Linda Perdue went with her church's 55+ group to help clean one day at Victory Health Partners.

And in a way, she never left.

"I saw what they were doing, and I just fell in love with it," said Perdue, a member of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile. "So, I reached out to their volunteer coordinator to see how I could get involved."

Victory Health Partners, a clinic aimed at providing affordable care for community members without medical insurance, is "like a family," she said.

It got started in 2003 when Dr. Robert D. Lightfoot and his wife, Tami, returned from medical missions trips and decided to start caring for the underserved in their own community too. Now Victory has grown into a partnership of hundreds of volunteers, medical providers and churches.

And that includes Perdue.

"I started out working one day a week, but now I work Mondays and Tuesdays," she said. "I greet patients, check them in — whatever needs to be done."

On the clinic's first day in 2003, they saw 12 patients. Now they see around 19,000 annually from all over the Gulf Coast region. It's grown to be

a multispecialty clinic — they provide primary care as well as optometry, wound care, women's health, minor surgery, x-rays, EKGs and lab diagnostics.

They can also offer low-cost options for referrals to specialists like orthopedic surgeons. Kimberly A. Garrett, director of Victory Health

Partners, said that's a big part of how sponsorships have "come together to solve a community problem."

"We are first and foremost a Christian ministry. We're able to pray with our patients and share our faith with people from all walks of life, beliefs and backgrounds," Garrett said. "In sharing our faith with kindness and compassion and through our actions, we've seen testimonies and stories of God working through this place. People

have heard about Jesus here for the first time. It's just amazing."

Perdue said she's watched firsthand how the clinic makes an impression on its patients. Talking about it brings tears to her eyes.

"Just recently, I had an older lady tell me as she was leaving

how much it meant that our staff treated her like a real person even though she didn't have insurance," Perdue said. "It's a blessing to get to

work here and help reach them not only physically but spiritually. I love it."



Photo courtesy of Victory Health Partners

Linda Perdue, a member of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, was named a United Way Heart of Gold award winner Sept. 2 for her volunteer work at Victory Health. Perdue is one of a number of area Baptists who lend a hand at the medical ministry.

For more information, visit [victoryhealth.org](http://victoryhealth.org).

*"In sharing our faith with kindness and compassion and through our actions, we've seen testimonies and stories of God working through this place."*

Kimberly A. Garrett  
director, Victory Health Partners

TAB  
MEDIA

YouTube

## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Biblical Mysteries

## Godliness

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

The definition of a mystery typically reads as something difficult or impossible to understand or explain. The Bible labels a number of different truths as mysteries. However, the biblical meaning of a mystery is something that would not be known unless God revealed it. Thus, a biblical mystery is some aspect of God's revealed truth that humans would not be able to understand through earthly means.

This week's focus is on one of these — the mystery of godliness. In light of the biblical meaning of the term mystery, we might think of the mystery of godliness as the revealed truth of what God is like. The verse that speaks of this is 1 Timothy 3:16. In this passage, godliness points to what God is like as revealed in Jesus. The verse elaborates on this in a series of assertions about Christ.

### Incarnation

The first statement points to His incarnation, in which God moved to make Himself known by declaring that He was manifested in the flesh. This truth was attested on the occasion of Jesus' baptism. The voice from heaven affirmed, "This is my beloved Son."

The next declaration in 1 Timothy 3:16 draws attention to Christ's resurrection by saying He was "vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels." Romans 1:4 says of Christ that He "has been declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of

holiness." Not only was the Holy Spirit active in accomplishing His resurrection, but also angels were present as witnesses. The angels at the tomb were the very first witnesses to that resurrection.

With His saving death and victorious resurrection as undergirding truths, the good news of Christ began to be "preached among the nations," a ministry that continues to the present hour in the missionary outreach of churches and denominations, thereby extending the truth of what God is like to all nations.

### Revelation

The response to the missionary message has resulted in Him being "believed on in the world." That millions have turned in faith to Christ in the course of church history is further attestation to the truth of what God is like: He is revealed as the loving, seeking and saving Father of Jesus Christ.

The crowning attestation of God's hidden truth now revealed was the ascension of Christ when He was "taken up in glory." The cycle was thereby completed. God has acted to make Himself known. Such is the mystery of godliness fully revealed!

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.



# 'EXTRAVAGANT PROVISION'

## Heart for sharing gospel in Montana continues to grow among Alabama Baptists

(continued from page 1)

God broke his heart for the lost there.

"We were over here one of those days and prayer walked Livingston, and we stood on the hill overlooking the town. Two of my deacons and I prayed for the next church planter," he said. "Six months later, we realized it was us."

And in late 2019, Morris Hill — then pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Thomasville — and his wife, Barbara, moved to St. Regis, Montana, to replant New Day Fellowship.

Along the way, others from Alabama also have lived and worked in the area or joined in the work by bringing missions teams.

For one, Kyle and Marisa Rosas and Bruce and Jessica Crockett — both with Scottsboro connections — planted Gateway Church in nearby Columbia Falls.

"It's cool," Brunson said. "God has definitely done a work in recent years in the heart of Alabama Baptists for Montana."

After their first summer in Livingston, the Brunsons were able to gather a group for Bible study and

a meal and from there launched worship gatherings for Expedition Church in May 2018. They've baptized 13 so far, including six recently baptized in the nearby Yellowstone River.

But when the pandemic hit, it brought Brunson's plans for the year to a grinding halt.

"We had a huge year planned, and COVID-19 wiped

that out," he said, noting that 24 missions teams had been forced to cancel their plans to help out in Livingston this year. "Our teams also bring money with them to do projects, and we put that back into the community. We didn't have that this year."



Photo courtesy of Darryl Brunson  
Darryl Brunson baptizes a new believer in the Yellowstone River.



Photo courtesy of Chris Baker

Chris and Kim Baker and their sons Andrew (left) and Samuel moved from serving in Clarke Baptist Association to plant Summit Life Church in Whitefish, Montana, in 2014. Since then, other Alabamians have joined them in Montana.

That meant the community wasn't getting the exposure to so much salt and light, something that had opened up avenues for conversations in the past, Brunson said.

So he got another idea — he posted on social media asking friends and family back home to help raise \$50,000 for community needs for his 50th birthday. He called the effort #50for50.

At press time, Brunson had raised more than \$46,000, around \$34,000 of which came from Alabama Baptist churches and individuals.

With the money — all of which goes straight to the community — Expedition Church has been able to give \$20,000 to meet needs at a local elementary school. They've also been able to help Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch, which pro-

vides support and counseling for foster families and foster children, and they've made progress toward buying a refrigerated box

truck for a local food pantry and covering the cost of a service dog for a young girl in the church who has autism.

"God has truly been amazingly faithful," Brunson said. "We have prayed for His favor with people we meet

and for churches and individuals to partner with us. He has answered that prayer again and again."

He asked for Alabama Baptists to pray for "God's extravagant provision" to keep showing love to their community so that they might build relationships and see the gospel spread.

"No one loves Livingston like Jesus does, and we believe that the church should reflect that love," Brunson said.

For more information about #50for50, visit [facebook.com/ExpeditionMt](https://facebook.com/ExpeditionMt).

**For more information about #50for50, visit [facebook.com/ExpeditionMt](https://facebook.com/ExpeditionMt).**



Morris and Barbara Hill Facebook photo

Morris and Barbara Hill (bottom) and others from their church replant in St. Regis, Montana, join in a community Fourth of July parade.

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

More  
Than Ever



# Myers-Mallory

State Missions Offering

# Week of Prayer

FOR STATE MISSIONS

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ALABAMA WMU

DISASTER RELIEF

CHURCH PLANTING

PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS

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# Week of Prayer for State Missions

## September 13-20

(or choose any time that works best for your church)



*day one*

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



*day two*

**DISASTER RELIEF**



*day three*

**ALABAMA WMU**  
Pat Ingram  
Missions & Ministry Consultant  
Alabama WMU



*day four*

**CHURCH PLANTING**  
Brian Harper  
Church Planting Strategist  
State Board of Missions



*day five*

**PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS**  
Scotty Goldman  
Director of Global Missions  
State Board of Missions



*day six*

**CHURCH REVITALIZATION**  
Ken Allen  
Church Health Strategist  
State Board of Missions



*day seven*

**DISASTER RELIEF**  
Mark Wakefield  
Disaster Relief Strategist  
State Board of Missions



*day eight*

**ALABAMA WMU**  
International Friends Retreat

**You're encouraged to be part of a brief but very important online Call to Prayer for State Missions via Zoom and Facebook on Wednesday, September 16, at 10 a.m. Visit [alsbom.org](http://alsbom.org) for a link to join.**

*Visit [Myers-Mallory.org](http://Myers-Mallory.org) for downloadable print and video resources, including the full prayer guide and accompanying Week of Prayer videos.*

# 3 stories you should know



Facebook photo

Around 40 members of East Leesville Baptist Church gathered Aug. 30 for an outdoor worship service on the church's front lawn. The congregation was unable to meet in its building because of water damage from Hurricane Laura. The campus is a host site for Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief operations. Several teams and volunteers from Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief have been deployed to Leesville to assist. Read more at [tabonline.org/laura-relief](http://tabonline.org/laura-relief). (TAB)

## Liberty University opens investigation

Liberty University is opening an independent investigation into Jerry Falwell Jr.'s tenure as president, a wide-ranging inquiry that will include financial, real estate and legal matters, the school's board of trustees announced Aug. 31.

In a statement, the executive committee of the board said trustees had retained an outside firm to investigate "all facets" of the school's operations under Falwell, and that it was "committed to learning the consequences that have flowed from a lack of spiritual stewardship by our former president."

Calls for such an investigation had been mounting since Falwell's departure Aug. 25 from the post he had held since 2007. Falwell resigned after a flurry of allegations of improper behavior. (AP)

## Trafficking operation rescues 39 children

Nearly 40 missing or endangered children have been rescued by federal and state agents during a law enforcement operation in Georgia, authorities say.

The U.S. Marshals Service announced Aug. 27 that 13 missing children were found and an additional 26 endangered children were rescued during the two-week operation centered on Atlanta and Macon.

The missing children were considered to be "some of the most at-risk and challenging recovery cases" and some were likely victims of child sex trafficking, child exploitation, abuse and had medical or mental health conditions, authorities said.

Nine people were arrested on charges including sex trafficking, parental kidnapping and custodial interference, as well as other charges. (AP)

## Headline news from around the Southeast

### Georgia

Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia, recently raised \$17,000 to help families pay off medical debt. Partnering with the nonprofit organization RIP Medical Debt, the church saw those funds escalate, with an average of one dollar paying off \$100 in medical debt. In Marietta alone, \$1.25 million in medical debt will disappear for 575 families, *The Christian Index* reported. Altogether, more than \$2.9 million in medical debt is being cleared for 1,516 families.

### Florida

After twin tornadoes tore a 4.6-mile path of destruction through Deland, Florida, on Aug. 18, seven Florida Baptist disaster relief teams, along with additional volunteers from Stetson Baptist Church, responded by covering roofs with tarps and removing downed trees, the *Florida Baptist Witness* reported. The 120 volunteers completed

their work on Aug. 26. "These tornadoes are another unfortunate stamp on a difficult and challenging year for so many already suffering," said Dan Glenn, senior pastor at Stetson Church.

### Louisiana

More than 70 Baptist Campus Ministries students from LSU, along with 15 adult volunteers, have responded with chainsaws and Christ's love to those whose homes were damaged by the fierce onslaught of Hurricane Laura on Aug. 27. The BCM team included 15 international students from seven countries, Louisiana's *Baptist Message* reported.

### Mississippi

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief teams have recently deployed to southwest Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura's destructive path in late August. Teams deployed include a feeding

team and four chainsaw/debris removal teams. These teams are working alongside other relief organizations and Baptist disaster relief teams from other states. Mississippi Baptist leaders anticipate the need for additional teams will be ongoing, Mississippi's *Baptist Record* reported.

### Tennessee

Pandemic-related decisions by local school districts on whether to have in-person school or virtual learning have inspired Tennessee Baptist churches to find "creative new ways for reaching, teaching and ministering to kids and families," said Vicki Hulsey, childhood specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board. Among other options, some churches are exploring having trained educators available to students during school hours, offering before- and after-school care or opening up rooms for study space, Tennessee's *Baptist and Reflector* reported.

NEWS

# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

► **Laurelle Stoudenmire** — former missionary, missions advocate and Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union president — died Aug. 20. She was 80.

Stoudenmire worked for many years as a registered nurse in hospitals in Selma, Thomasville and Grove Hill. Inspired by her mother’s involvement with WMU, Stoudenmire began serving as WMU director for Thomasville Baptist Church and Clarke Baptist Association in 1988 and later became an International Mission Board trustee.



STOUDENMIRE

In 1999, when her daughter and son-in-law were appointed as Southern Baptist representatives to the Philippines, she and her husband, Allen, began to get more personally involved in missions. She cofounded Missionary Parents Fellowship, then in 2006, the couple was appointed as IMB missionaries

to Guatemala, where they served for two years.

Stoudenmire served as president of Alabama WMU from 2013 to 2015, and over the years she also faithfully served her church and community as a Bible study teacher, president of the Hospital Auxiliary and president of the Worthwhile Club of Thomasville.

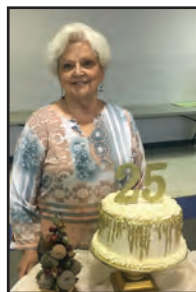
She is survived by her husband, Allen; daughters, Jackie and Judy; sons, Jimmy and Jeffrey; 14 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. (Grace Thornton)

## CAHABA ASSOCIATION

► **Ocmulgee Baptist Church, Selma**, has postponed its 200th anniversary celebration previously scheduled for Sept. 20 until spring 2021.

## CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

► **Faye Bagn**, financial secretary at **Meadowbrook Baptist, Oxford**, was honored recently for 25 years of service to the church. She is the longest tenured staff member in the church’s history.



BAUGHN



CHRISTMAS

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Ryan Christmas** celebrated his 10-year anniversary at **NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville**, in August. Christmas currently serves as minister of missions and operations. He previously served as minister to students. Bill Wilks is pastor.

## COLBERT-LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

► **Brett Pitman** says serving alongside the

people of **Highland Park Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals**, for the past decade has been “one of the greatest joys” of his life.

“During these 10 years, we have experienced some of the most amazing ‘God moments’ I have ever known,” said Pitman, who serves as senior pastor. “At the same time, we have walked through some of the darkest valleys I have ever known as well. Through it all, God has been forever faithful.”



PITMAN

In the past decade, more than 900 people have made decisions for Christ and been baptized at Highland Park, and missions project involvement has increased by 84%.

“Seeing life change happen is all because of His faithfulness,” Pitman said. “I am just honored that I have gotten to be a part of it.”

The church celebrated Pitman’s 10th anniversary Aug. 23. (TAB)

## FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION

► **Jonesboro Baptist Church, Russellville**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sept. 13 at 10:30 a.m.

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile** recorded its highest enrollment in five years for fall 2020, bucking a nationwide trend of declining college enrollments during a global pandemic. UM reported a total enrollment of 2,016 for fall 2020, up from 1,989 in 2019. The increase includes the largest class of graduate students in UM’s history. (UM)

# Samford nursing school renamed

Samford’s Ida Moffett School of Nursing will be renamed to honor current namesake Ida V. Moffett and former dean Nena F. Sanders, who retired in May. The school will now be known as Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing.

Samford University President Andrew Westmoreland announced the trustee-approved change Aug. 25 during the university’s fall semester opening convocation.



Photo courtesy of Samford

Westmoreland called both women “trailblazers within the profession” and said “their work will continue to benefit students here at Samford and patients around the world.”

The name change honors the legacy of Moffett, whose vision for the nursing school and the role of the bedside nurse has transcended nearly 100 years, according to a statement from Samford.

Likewise, Sanders transformed numerous health care systems throughout her career. Under her two decades of leadership at Samford, the nursing school earned numerous rankings and recognitions, expanded its degree programs, set new enrollment records and pioneered online education at Samford.

Sanders also played a central role in the development of the College of Health Sciences which is comprised of the Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing, McWhorter School of Pharmacy, School of Health Professions and School of Public Health. In addition to her role as the dean of the nursing school she also served as the college’s founding vice provost. (Samford/TAB)

# Persecuted church

## Christian pastor, church member drowned for sharing their faith

KAMPALA, Uganda — A Christian pastor and church member were beaten and drowned in June by Muslim extremists in eastern Uganda, apparently for telling people about Jesus.

Pastor Peter Kyakulaga, 25, and Tuule Mumbya, 22, were killed June 22 while fishing at Lake Nakuwa in Lugonyola village. Police recovered the bodies from the lake on June 23. Three suspects were arrested in the men’s deaths.

Christians across the lake in Namuseru village saw the Lugonyola shoreline as a missions field. They would cross the lake not only to fish along the shore but also to be “fishers of men” by inviting Lugonyola villagers to evan-



CIA map

gelistic meetings.

Hardline Muslims warned the Christians numerous times to stop evangelizing. The last warning reportedly was issued June 21, the day before the two men were killed on June 22.

Uganda’s constitution allows religious freedom and prohibits religious discrimination. The country is predominantly Christian (84%). About 12% of Uganda’s population is Muslim, making Islam the nation’s largest religious minority. (MS)

# Someone You Should Know

## WINTFORD & MARTHA HAYNES

By Leigh Pritchett  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Missions work has taken Wintford Haynes, 82, and his wife, Martha, 79, to 41 states. They are chaplains with the North American Mission Board and Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief. For their work with Campers on Mission, the Cullman couple received the lifetime achievement award and were recognized for 45-plus years of membership.

Wintford was a pastor for 15 years and a bivocational music minister for 21 years. He brings his Christian humor and music to people through his “Laugh with Wintford” ministry.

Wintford retired from Liberty National Life Insurance Company after 31 years. Martha has taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School for 35 years. Martha has been involved in Woman’s Missionary Union at the local, associational and state levels.

**Q: Describe the focus of your ministry efforts:**

A: The couple organized the Alabama chapter of Campers on Mission in 1972 and served 12 years as national Campers on Mission coordinators for NAMB. Wintford helped to organize the East Cullman Baptist Association Disaster Relief team and served on the Alabama Disaster Relief Task Force. He is also law enforcement chaplain for Cullman Police Department and

Cullman County Sheriff’s Department.

**Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?**

A: Wintford: Mrs. Gray, who led me to Christ at age 12. My pastors and teachers through the years. As a young pastor, director of missions Jack Joyner, who took me under his arms and encouraged me.

Martha: Pastor Jack Collins. He was a true friend to me when I needed one.

**Q: Tell about a “turning point” in your life and how God was involved.**

A: Wintford: A message preached from Ezekiel 3:16: “I have appointed you as a watchman. Warn the people, and if you do not warn them, I will require their blood at your hand, but if you will warn them you have delivered yourself.” God spoke to me through that message and the next day, I witnessed to one of my friends and he accepted Christ as his Savior. Several verses have spoken to me since, like Philippians 4:19, knowing God will provide, and Isaiah 40:31, waiting on God to provide, knowing He will.

**Q: What has God been teaching you lately?**

A: Wintford: With this COVID-19, patience to wait on Him.

Martha: To trust Him with everything, even if I can’t see it.

**Q: If there were one thing you could tell your younger self about faith, what would it be?**

A: Wintford: God is faithful, His love is everlasting and you can trust Him all the time.

Martha: To turn to God first of all.

**Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?**

A: Wintford: I was on the way to the hospital to see my granddaughter, who was in critical condition, and heard the song, “I Found the Lily in My Valley.” The song goes, “If you’re down and broken-hearted, and you just can’t seem to find peace of mind. You’re searching for your answers, but your problems are getting worse all the time. Just reach your hands to Jesus; He’ll take you in and break the ties that bind. He’ll be your lily in your valley, and you can watch Him bloom all the time.” God really spoke to me through that song and



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A blog for young adults

**MINISTRY:** Full-time volunteers and active church members

**CHURCH NAME:** Friendship Baptist Church, Cullman, in East Cullman Baptist Association

**WINTFORD’S LIFE**

**VERSE:** “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:31)

**MARTHA’S LIFE VERSE:** “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13)



gave me assurance to put my faith in Him that all was going to work out because He is in control.

**Q: Does your church have any special traditions that mean a lot to you? What are they?**

A: Wintford: A minister-

ing church with Sunday School, followed by morning worship service; choir practice in the evening followed by worship service; and Wednesday prayer meeting with Bible study. Our church is truly “The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church.” ☕

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Famous Christians from previous centuries

# Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

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



## 2020 marks 125th anniversary of death of Baptist preacher, writer

**A**.J. Gordon (1836–1895) was an American Baptist preacher, writer, hymn composer, advocate for foreign missions and founder of Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

This year is the 125th anniversary of his death.

He was born on April 19, 1836, in New Hampton, New Hampshire, to John Calvin and Sally Gordon. His father, a Calvinist, was named after John Calvin. A.J. was named after Adoniram Judson, a Baptist missionary to Burma.

### Conversion experience

He was about 15 years old when he had a conversion experience and was baptized in a stream near his father's mill. The next year he felt God leading him into the ministry.

In 1860 he graduated from

Brown University (then Baptist-affiliated). In 1863 he completed Newton Theological Seminary.

### Becoming a pastor

He married Maria Hale in 1863 and became pastor of Jamaica Plain Baptist Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. He had six successful years at the church.

In 1869, he became pastor of Boston's Clarendon Street Baptist Church and served there until his death. The church was described as "one of the most spiritual and aggressive in America."

Gordon was an influential evangelical leader. An avid promoter of foreign missions, he spread the gospel worldwide through his traveling, preaching and writing.

He served on the executive com-

mittee of the American Baptist Missionary Union from 1871, and as chair after 1888.

He was a favorite speaker at evangelist Dwight L. Moody's meetings. In 1886 he addressed Moody's Northfield Conference when the initial 100 student volunteers launched what became the Student Volunteer Movement.



GORDON

Speaking at the 1888 London Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World, he became an international apologist for missions. He traveled through Scotland to strengthen missions.

In 1889, he founded the Boston Missionary Training Institute. It graduated 50 missionaries in its first decade and later evolved into

Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

He wrote many books, including "The Ministry of Healing," a highly regarded book about divine healing.

He composed hymn tunes for at least 15 hymns. One of his most famous tunes was for "My Jesus, I Love Thee," found in Baptist hymnals for many decades. Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Casting Crowns and others have recorded the beloved hymn.

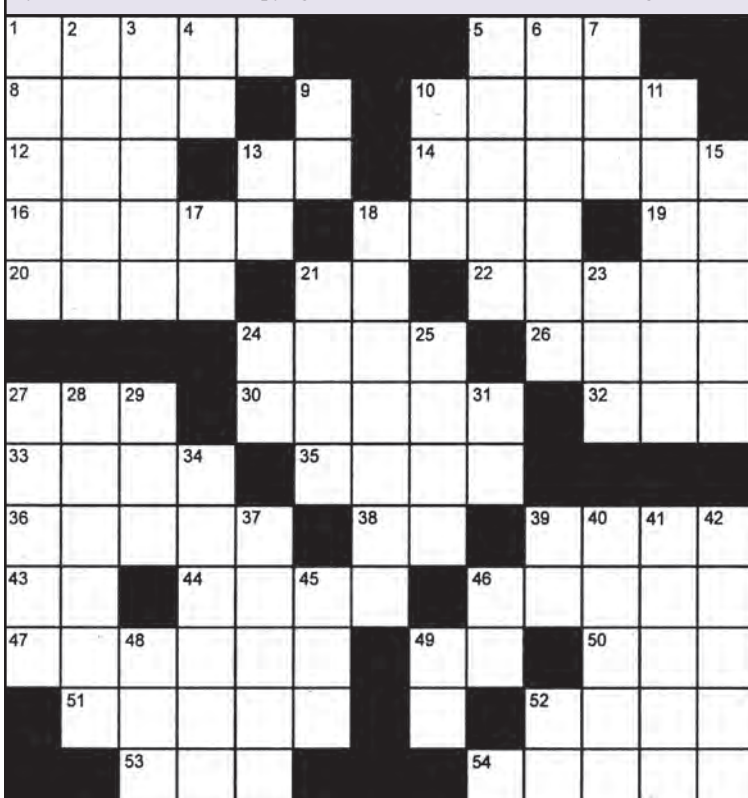
### 'Victory'

Gordon became suddenly ill with influenza and bronchitis and died on Feb. 2, 1895. His last audible word was "victory."

One of his famous sayings was, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed." 🙏

## Christian Crossword

By Janet Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- And next unto them repaired ... the Meronothite. (Neh. 3:7)
- And in the 20th year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned \_\_\_ over Judah. (1 Kings 15:9)
- Israeli leader Abba \_\_\_.
- Dropped the first atomic bomb.
- Pale.
- Digraph.
- My spirit shall not always \_\_\_ with man. (Gen. 6:3)
- Rejoice not when thine \_\_\_ falleth. (Prov. 24:17)
- Arabian prince.
- Plural suffix.
- Girl.
- Place. (abbr.)
- Flies high.
- He that is now called a Prophet was before time called a \_\_\_.
- He that winneth souls is \_\_\_.

- (Prov. 11:30)
- Bone. (comb. form)
- Every wise \_\_\_ buildeth her house. (Prov. 14:1)
- \_\_\_ virgins or lepers.
- Norse god of thunder.
- Captain of the "Nautilus."
- Moses ... came to the mountain of God, even to \_\_\_. (Ex. 3:1)
- Continent. (abbr.)
- But there was none like unto \_\_\_ ... to work wickedness. (1 Kings 21:25)
- Electron volt. (abbr.)
- Abstain from eating.
- A swelling.
- \_\_\_ a wise man, and he will love thee. (Prov. 9:8)
- 365 days. (abbr.)
- The sun and the \_\_\_ were darkened. (Rev. 9:2)
- The heathen \_\_\_, the kingdoms were moved. (Ps. 46:6)
- Trieste liquid measure.

- German article.
- And \_\_\_ the priest ... before the tabernacle ... at Gibeon. (1 Chron. 16:39)
- Down
- As a \_\_\_ of gold in a swine's snout. (Prov. 11:22)
- Are not \_\_\_ and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better? (2 Kings 5:12)
- People of Denmark.
- Potipherah priest of \_\_\_ (Gen. 41:45)
- Those opposed.
- No more death, neither \_\_\_, nor crying. (Rev. 21:4)
- Mohammad \_\_\_.
- Interjection.
- Samantha Steven's Aunt \_\_\_ erelda.
- Reluctant.
- \_\_\_ Cobb of baseball fame.
- German city.
- Woman's title of address.
- A fundamental part.
- A drudge, menial.
- Island.
- Compass point.

- Incarnation of Vishnu.
- He will hate the one and love the \_\_\_. (Matt. 6:24)
- Pusher.
- Craggy hill.
- I will punish the multitude of \_\_\_. (Jer. 46:25)
- Thou hast been my defence and \_\_\_. (Ps. 59:16)
- His \_\_\_ had offended the ... king of Egypt. (Gen. 40:1)
- Commercial.
- Thy prayer is \_\_\_. (Luke 1:13)
- Acid component of protein.
- So \_\_\_ went down from mount Tabor. (Judg. 4:14)
- Sediment. (abbr.)
- And she ... bare a son; and he called his name \_\_\_. (Gen. 38:3)
- They were so \_\_\_. (Jer. 24:2)
- Hear this, all \_\_\_ people. (Ps. 49:1)
- Digraph.

On November 8,  
**TAKE A STAND**  
for children in foster care in Alabama.

**A teenager reunited with her mother after many years apart.**

**A young foster child, joyfully reading scripture on his church's live-streamed worship service.**

**A teenage girl who came into our care during the COVID crisis, who heard and saw the gospel displayed and decided to follow Jesus with her life.**

These are just a few of the lives impacted this year through Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries because of your support from all across Alabama. On November 8, whether meeting in person or online, you and your church can raise awareness and support for even more children in foster care on **Stand Sunday**, in connection with Orphan Sunday! Listed here are a few ways you can take part.

More details and resources for Stand Sunday are available at [alabamachild.org/StandSunday](http://alabamachild.org/StandSunday).

**PLAN A PRAYER EMPHASIS** | We believe prayer is the most significant gift God's people can give to our ministry! Visit us online for specific ways you can pray for our ministry to children and families across Alabama: [alabamachild.org/standsunday](http://alabamachild.org/standsunday)

**SHARE A VIDEO** | There are many great stories of how God has worked in the lives of those in our care— stories of redemption, healing, and restoration. Visit [alabamachild.org/videos](http://alabamachild.org/videos) to view or download a video.

**PROVIDE AN OFFERING** | If your church was unable to meet and participate in your annual Children's Homes offering in conjunction with Mother's Day, Stand Sunday may be a great time to remember our children through a special offering. Resources to assist may be downloaded or requested at [alabamachild.org/abide](http://alabamachild.org/abide).

**HOST A NEEDS LIST DRIVE** | We have a variety of specific needs at our locations across the state, ranging from household items, cleaning supplies, pantry items, and more. Encourage your church to host a drive: [alabamachild.org/needslist](http://alabamachild.org/needslist)



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stand  
sunday

\*For privacy purposes, photo is representative of children in foster care.

# Eden Westside to host tent revival in Pell City in October

Eden Westside Baptist Church will host the “Come to Christ Crusade” tent revival Oct. 4–8 from 6:30 to 8:30 nightly on the church’s campus in Pell City in St. Clair County.

Speakers include C.T. Townsend of North Augusta, South Carolina; Scott Dawson of Birmingham; Steve Gaines of Cordova, Tennessee; Ted Traylor of Pensacola, Florida; and Johnny Hunt of Woodstock, Georgia.

Birmingham’s ABC 33/40 Chief Meteorologist James Spann also will speak at the crusade. Musical guests include Charles Billingsley, Jonathan Wilburn and University of Mobile vocal performing ensemble Voices of Mobile.

The tent will accommodate some 1,600 people, and Eden Westside Pastor Jacky Connell said the crusade will

follow current state health regulations and take every precaution “to ensure that people are as safe as possible.”

Connell said God planted the idea of a tent meeting in his heart in April 2019, and he began to plan, never imagining how different life would look in October 2020 due to a global pandemic.

“When you look back, there was really nothing going on back then that would call for something this unconventional,” Connell said. “But God knew what was going to happen in 2020. ... I am absolutely and utterly convinced that this (crusade) is of God.”

The purpose of the “Come to Christ Crusade” is evangelistic, Connell said.

“It is for people to come to a place where they are introduced to Jesus; it’s not come to a denomination, not come to a particular church, such as Eden Westside, but it’s come to Christ. Anybody can come. It’s for everyone to have an opportunity to respond to the gospel message.”

All ages will hear the gospel, he said. A children’s crusade for ages 4 to 6th grade will be held on Eden’s campus inside the children’s building. Child care will be provided for children 3 years old and younger.

A baptism at Lake Logan Martin will be held at 2 p.m. on Oct. 11 at Lakeside Park in Pell City for those who accept Christ at the crusade. (Pam Childs)

For more information, visit [edenwestside.org](http://edenwestside.org).



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 13

## Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### GOD SENDS Isaiah 6:1–13

#### God's Glory (1–4)

Isaiah received his calling directly from God, as do all true prophets. The vision seen here is the calling of Isaiah. This is one of the more famous passages in Scripture involving the holiness of God. The seraphim surround God, saying “Holy, Holy, Holy,” indicating the emphatic nature of God’s holiness.

Of course, God’s holiness is seen throughout the Bible, and it is often seen as one of God’s two main attributes, the other being love. This is very important for Christians to understand in our modern setting.

In Western societies, we tend to focus on God’s love and mercy often at the expense of His holiness. This leads to the next point.

#### God's Forgiveness (5–7)

Isaiah recognized his unworthiness to be in the presence of a righteous and holy God. When one is faced with God, one immediately realizes how unworthy he or she is, and it results in terror and woe.

Isaiah was aware of his sinfulness, but God cleansed him in order to allow him to speak His word to the people of Israel.

It is important for people today to understand that no matter how good they may seem, sin has rendered each of us unworthy (see Rom. 3:23). Many people believe they are “good” or their friend who is not a Christian is a good person; therefore, God will extend salvation to him or her because God is love.

However, holiness means God is pure and righteous and cannot be in the presence of sin. The only way for people to be made right with God is if our sins are forgiven and we are deemed righteous.

This happens in Christ alone (see Eph. 1:7, 2 Cor. 5:21). Just because someone is “religious” or “a good person” in our estimation does not mean God will accept that person as somehow being righteous.

#### God's Call (8–10)

God asked, in the presence of Isaiah, who was willing to go and

speaking His word to Israel. Isaiah, now having been purified, did not want to miss out on serving God, even though his message was going to be one of judgment. He knew most of the people hearing the message would not repent and turn back to God.

Notice how Isaiah was willing to serve God even though the task was daunting and likely frustrating. It did not matter to Isaiah because serving God is what brought him satisfaction.

We all should approach serving God with gladness, not with grumbling and annoyance.

Being chosen to serve God is a great privilege, and Christians should jump at the opportunity.

Of course, serving God looks different for each person. We cannot choose someone else’s calling.

We need to be obedient and content with what God has called us to do, whether it is going overseas to a country and people who need to hear the gospel, teaching middle school in a local school, being a mother to children at home or being a truck driver delivering supplies.

Each of these is a calling from the Lord and needs to be done with the utmost concern because we are serving God in our calling (see Col. 3:23).

#### God's Persistence (11–13)

Isaiah’s ministry would not result in Israel turning from her sins. In contrast, Israel would persist in her sinful ways, bringing God’s judgment. In spite of all of this however, God would preserve for Himself a remnant, a small group of people who would listen to the words of God through His prophet.

Isaiah’s ministry shows us that we cannot judge the success of our ministry by the result; instead, the success is in our obedience to our calling. I have seen Christians defeated because their ministry did not meet with the success they hoped for, but we need to keep our eyes on God not on our circumstances.✠

## Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



### HONOR GOD Exodus 20:7–11; Psalm 145:1–7

What’s in a name? Well, in the Bible, a great deal actually. Biblical names often capture the character of the person they belong to.

Abraham’s name means “father of a multitude” or “exalted father,” both meanings that tell us about the man Abraham would one day become. “Isaac” is a wordplay on the word “laughter,” capturing Sarah’s derisive laughter when she heard she would have a son and her joyous laughter when she finally did. “Jacob” is connected in a folk etymology to the word “heel,” reminding us of the time he grabbed Esau’s heel and tried to steer him in the direction Jacob wanted him to go.

A person’s name in the Bible is often much more than a title; it is a statement of a person’s reputation and character. This is the reason God replied so forcefully to Moses when Moses asked God what His name was in Exodus 3.

When God told Moses he was the man chosen to set God’s people free, Moses asked, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” God’s reply was that He would be with Moses, and that would be enough.

God had seemed to do very little for the Israelites as they descended into slavery and oppression in Egypt. Moses’ objection seems to capture this fact as he asked, “Fine, then what is Your name?” God responded strongly — “I AM WHO I AM! You tell them I AM has sent you!” — not because Moses had inquired about His title but because Moses was questioning God’s reputation. He was questioning God’s character.

#### We are to honor God's name and everything about Him. (Ex. 20:7–11)

The pages of Scripture draw an extremely strong connection between God and God’s name. His name is treated as a representation of all God is and all God has done. It becomes a monument so closely connected with God that to mistreat the monument is to mistreat God Himself. The connection between God and God’s name is so impor-

tant in Scripture that a prohibition against misusing the Divine Name is included even in the Ten Commandments. Interestingly, the Decalogue’s command concerning the Divine Name goes beyond merely forbidding abuse of God’s name. The command in Hebrew is literally, “Do not take up the name of the Lord your God for nothing”; it is a command against invoking the Divine Name thoughtlessly or for an empty purpose.

#### We are to honor God through our worship. (Ps. 145:1–3)

As if to underscore why the name of God should be treated with special reverence and care, the psalmist explains why he is determined to “praise your name for ever and ever” and “extol your name for ever and ever.” The reason, he insists, is because, “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.” When the psalmist praises God’s name, he is praising God for who He is; he is praising Him for His greatness.

#### We are to honor God through our testimony and actions. (Ps. 145:4–7)

The psalmist goes on in verses 4–7 to speak not just of who God is but of what God does. Here, the psalmist assembles a litany of terms that flesh out the meaning of God’s name: “your works,” “your mighty acts,” “your wonderful works,” “your awesome works” and “your great deeds.”

God’s name is the tangible expression of His reputation. To utter His name is to recall all God has done.

It is important to note that reverence for the Divine Name is not limited just to the Ten Commandments or even to the pages of the Old Testament. The Lord’s prayer itself begins with the words “Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.” “Hallowed” is an old English expression meaning “let be holy.” Thus, Jesus’ instruction is that even His disciples should approach God with reverence and continue to treat His name as holy.✠



# Media reviews

## Gulf Shores worship leader, UM grad ready for where God leads next

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Just over a year ago, Blake Walker developed a vision for an album he hoped would launch his songwriting career.

“Generation to Generation,” an extended play album, debuted in January. The four-song project, written with songwriters Dick and Melodie Tunney, eventually led Walker to a position as LifeWay Christian Resources staff songwriter.

Orchestration and accompaniment tracks for the EP are scheduled for release by LifeWay Worship in March 2021.

“I wrote the song ‘Through the Valley’ at the end of a long week,” Walker said. “I remember God putting this phrase in my head — you may be walking through a valley, but you’re not walking it alone. You never walk it alone.”

### ‘Lord just spoke’

“I sat down at the piano and the Lord just spoke that song through me. That’s a song for the Church today, (one) we need to hear.”

As a LifeWay songwriter, Walker composes contemporary and traditional music, some suited for younger generations and others for choirs or orchestras.

Walker enjoys writing for LifeWay, which he said has been good to him and to the Church.

“LifeWay is doing what they can to put out good, new music. We are writing songs that can resonate with the Church today,” Walker said.

### ‘Gift of music’

A recent composition, “Gather in Glorious Light,” was designed to inspire churches as they reopen after COVID-19, he said.

Growing up, Walker loved to sing and lead worship, and aspired to become a band director.

He credits University of Mobile with nurturing his passion for songwriting. It was there he sensed God’s call to songwriting and learned that singing and performing are all about reaching people.

“You’re more than just a number there,” Walker said. “They care about you as a person and about your spiritual life. I’m thankful for my time at University of Mobile and for people like Roger Breland who took time and invested in me. They taught me what it means to not just get up and sing a song in front of people. As a worship leader, God has given us the gift of music to communicate His gospel.”

As a member of the vocal ensemble,



BLAKE WALKER

Photos courtesy of Blake Walker

ble, Voices of Mobile, Walker was prepared for ministry with ample platform experience. He also surrounded himself with other writers. It fostered his passion to write from the heart, Walker said.

In 2018, he sang with the group UniVoice in Concert of the Ages at the Museum of the Bible in Washington. The production, created by the Tunneys and Stan Moser, gave audiences a deeper understanding of God with songs that led them through the Bible.

The group performed at Billy Graham’s U.S. Capitol memorial service and also sang with Michael W. Smith during his release concert for the album “Surrounded.”

### Pandemic challenges

Walker also recently served as contemporary worship leader at First Baptist Gulf Shores under worship pastor Jim Van Matre.

Providing safe worship experiences, including a drive-up in-person Easter service, during the coronavirus pandemic presented a new set of challenges for worship leaders, he said.

Walker found that worshippers weren’t as concerned with the quality of sound or overall experience

as they were in coming together.

“It was such a joy to see people, to see their smiles,” Walker said. “They were so excited to come out in their cars to worship each week. It felt right, and I believe we honored the Lord by doing that.”

### Future plans

Blake Walker Music has produced two online projects: a band arrangement of “Everything to Me,” which Walker released in college, and Generation to Generation, a modern choir book.

And after two years at First, Gulf Shores, Walker wrapped up his time there on Sept. 6. In a Facebook post, Walker said he is thankful for his time there and for the friendships he’s made.

Walker wrote, “God is opening some new and exciting doors for me, which I’ll share down the road. He is Faithful!”

Walker told TAB Media he looks forward to watching what God will do through the songs he writes for LifeWay and desires to continue leading worship and writing worship songs.

“I’m where God has planted me and I’m trying to be as faithful as I can until He opens more doors.”



# Finding freedom

## Yee Haw: Cowboy Church deems first Cowboy Camp a success

By David Moore  
Florida Baptist Witness

**W**hen it comes to summer camp experiences, the teens and tweens who attended Cowboy Camp at Rafter Cross Cowboy Church in Williston may have quite the leg up over their peers.

Instead of the more traditional canoeing, archery and lake swimming, cowboy campers were roping and tying steer, catching greased pigs with their bare hands and doing a little donkey jousting, shovel surfing, steer skiing and more.

“This is probably the first one that has ever been done like this in Florida,” said Pastor Billy Keith, who organized the camp with a crew of volunteers. About 90 students, ages 8–18, from Williston and the surrounding area, attended.

### Camp with a twist

Cowboy Camp was held over three days at the church property in Williston, running each day from about 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. For this event they brought in a camp pastor and a camp band that had partici-

pated in previous cowboy camps through the American Fellowship of Cowboy Churches.

About 70 additional volunteers helped make the camp possible including a security team, activity leaders, food team, crafts team and three nurses and a paramedic.

### New experiences

Like Vacation Bible School, the camp started each morning with music from the band and a short challenge from the pastor. Then campers, separated into herds according to their ages, were led to various activities throughout the day. Lunch was followed by more activities, then dinner and an evening worship experience. A final hour of fun and games ended each day.

Campers got to try their hands at roping, tying and even painting branding steer. They also roped goats and chased greased pigs. With pool noodles in hand, students took part in donkey jousting. They also had fun with water slides and games like muddy kick ball, wet volleyball and tug of war.

Crafts included leatherwork,



Photo courtesy of Florida Baptist Witness

A new believer is baptized ‘the cowboy way’ following Cowboy Camp in Williston, Florida. ‘Our whole purpose is for kids to find Jesus,’ said Rafter Cross Cowboy Church Pastor Billy Keith, who organized the camp.

woodburning and tie-dying T-shirts.

Throughout the day, campers also were taught about the love of Christ. As the youngsters rotated to each activity, they were led in an opening and closing prayer, as well as a short devotion from the activity leader.

“All day long they were hearing about Jesus,” Keith said. “Our whole purpose is for kids to find Jesus.”

This year’s theme was Camp Freedom, and students learned about finding freedom through Jesus, like freedom from fear, for example.

“Freedom from fear took on a whole new meaning for a lot of them because on the first day they were scared to death,” Keith said of students interacting with the animals, many for the first time. “But by the second day it was amazing to see how that fear had dissolved.”

And before camp was over, 15 students had made professions of faith and were baptized the cowboy way in a horse trough.

Several campers and their families have even started attending the church, which is the goal of outreach events like the camp.

The church was originally sched-

uled to take its youth to a cowboy camp in Alabama as had been done in previous years. When that camp was cancelled due to COVID-19, the church decided to conduct its own camp, said Keith, who helped start the cowboy church back in 2006.

### God-led effort

“These kids have been stuck at home, away from their friends, out of school. Their lives have been turned upside down,” Keith said. “We wanted to give them something before summer was up. It didn’t seem like anyone else was doing anything, so we decided we’d let God lead this thing and we’d try it.”

The camp was so successful that organizers have decided to do it again next year. With rave reviews from campers, plus changes and improvements already planned for next year, organizers are expecting an even bigger crowd. And they like the idea of reaching the locals.

“Instead of sending our kids off somewhere, we feel that it’s important that we focus on our own backyard and reach out to our community and the surrounding places.”



Photo courtesy of Florida Baptist Witness

Campers at Cowboy Camp practice roping and tying a steer, a popular rodeo event. About 90 students ages 8–18 participated in the first-ever Cowboy Camp held in August at Rafter Cross Cowboy Church in Williston, Florida.