



# The Alabama Baptist

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# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## Amid drop in guests, Shocco adds new options for small group gatherings

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**J**anie Curtis said that in a year where venues were shutting their doors left and right, Shocco Springs saved them.

“We didn’t think having camp was an option at all this year,” said Curtis, director of the ARC of North Talladega County, which supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Their normal camp facility was closed because of

COVID-19 restrictions, so they reached out to Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega to see if they might be able to fill the gap with some safe activities.

### Adapting to needs

“Goodness, they just made it so easy,” Curtis said. “I called, and the first person to pick up the phone said, ‘Absolutely, we can make that happen.’”

Together they put together a four-day camp including time

in the pool, putt-putt golf and mealtime movies. They also accommodated ARC’s mobility needs with golf carts and other provisions.

And the staff bent over backward to make it a good time, Curtis said, noting that one lifeguard worked one-on-one with a teenager with cerebral palsy until the teen was able to accomplish his goal of swimming in the deep end.

“The children have decided

they want to stay at Shocco now — it was hard to get them to leave,” Curtis said with a laugh. “The parents said they realized after this camp how badly their children missed social interaction like this.”

And according to leaders at Shocco, the camp has missed it too. They’ve faced an extreme reduction in guest numbers, which — if the year (See ‘From,’ page 9)



SHOCCO SPRINGS BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER

Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs



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Photo courtesy of Roger Collins

Roger and Debbie Collins, members of FBC Union Grove, serve together on the Marshall Baptist Association Disaster Relief chainsaw team. Most recently, the Collinses served in recovery efforts in Louisiana and Alabama's Gulf Coast.

## Couple serves together in times of crisis

Since Roger Collins and his wife of 51 years, Debbie, retired, they serve together on a chainsaw team with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.

"We know this is where we should be," Debbie said.

The Collinses are active at their church, First Baptist Church, Union Grove, where Roger serves as Brotherhood director and Debbie is WMU director. But when Marshall Baptist Association or Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief calls, they are ready.

The couple recently worked with ABDR in Leesville, Louisiana, and then in Alabama's Gulf Coast region following Hurricane Sally.

But their relationship with the Lord has not always been so dedicated. When Roger's father died, they were not involved in any church.

Bill Barnett, pastor of Union Hill Baptist Church, Oneonta, where

Roger's father was a member, visited with them and talked to them about their relationship with Christ.

Even though it was a 45-minute drive one way, they started attending Union Hill Baptist for worship every Sunday and Wednesday.

After two years, they decided they needed to become involved in a local church, so they joined Union Grove.

### Finishing the job

Roger, who served in the Army and later worked for Goodyear, is not afraid of hard work and keeps at it until the job is done.

Twice while serving in Bay Minette, Roger called the feeding team to say that his team would not be finished with their jobs by supper time, asking politely if the cooks could save them a plate.

Roger also keeps a secret when he is driving the skid steer — no matter how hot or humid the weather conditions, he does not turn on the air conditioning in the skid steer.

"I can't be sitting in the cool while the other men are working so hard in the heat," he said. "I just can't do it."

Roger and Debbie serve despite his heart issues, diabetes and recent foot surgery and her past cancer diagnosis.

"That doesn't matter," Roger said. "This is what God wants us to do." (Cynthia Walker Watts)

## 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 13.

### — Correction —

The Oct. 8 issue incorrectly stated that Alabama Baptists designate the second Sunday in February for the Hunger Offering emphasis, but the correct date is the third Sunday in February.

The next Alabama Hunger Offering emphasis will be Feb. 21, 2021.

For more information, go to tabonline.org/hunger-offering.

# MY RASHIONALE

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

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## What have you learned in 2020? How has it changed you?

**D**id you sense it too? A collective sigh and mental applause rang out when we flipped the calendar to October — the final quarter of 2020 (or Q4 for you accountants, bookkeepers and sales executives out there).

It was as if the intense drowning feeling of this elusive year softened ever so slightly, like we surfaced and inhaled a big gulp of fresh air. An extra boost of oxygen seemed to emerge.

The endless black hole of 2020isms looked a little less daunting as a renewed sense of “we will survive this year” eclipsed the ugliness.

I still feel the pain of so many who are hurting around me. That part seems to intensify by the day.

I’m also still sad at so much of what is happening in our world, and I’m hoping and praying for better days for all in 2021.

But before we put the period on the end of this year in just 77 days (give or take a day according to when you read this) and slam the door tight on 2020 (which is totally understandable), it would be helpful to reflect and see what we learned about ourselves, the world and God.

How are you different now than at the start of this year?

How do you rate yourself when thinking about how you handled the extreme changes and uncertainties we all faced during 2020?

What would you do differently if you knew in March what you

know now? What would you do the same?

What areas need growth in your life? How are you going to achieve that growth?

Where have you gained trust in other people? Where have you lost trust?

What are some ways you personally can help make this world a better place?

What will you do in 2021 to grow closer to God? How are you seeking to know the mind of Christ, see His face, become more like Him overall?

Honest self-evaluation typically hurts a little because we have to face the less than polished parts of ourselves.

But once we take that courageous step, then we can work toward sifting and improving.

In Philippians 3, Paul talks about “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.”

He describes pressing on toward the goal and staying focused on “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

As fellow believers, let’s con-

sider encouraging each other with the same goal Paul outlined. Let’s find a way to let go of the shackles from 2020 and point our eyes toward Glory.

We are merely passing through this land on our journey Home, but let’s not forget our assignment to make sure every person has the opportunity to know Jesus and spend eternity with Him as well.

Philippians 2 reminds us: “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”✠

## A WORD FROM PHILIPPIANS

### Written by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Philippi around the year 62 but still relevant for the Christian life

#### Chapter 1 excerpt

“He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion ... it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent ... be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. ...

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ ... with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents.”

#### Chapter 2 excerpt

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than

yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who ... humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ...

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

#### Chapter 3 excerpt

“One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.”

#### Chapter 4 excerpt

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ...

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (ESV)

# Your Voice



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

## Light shines brighter in unity, not division

By Pastor Michael J. Brooks  
Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster, Ala.

Alabama writer Rick Bragg told about speaking to a group of Southerners, mentioning that the South was wrong on the Civil War and on civil rights.

One man rose from his seat and noisily left the lecture, his displeasure obvious. Bragg remarked that the 60s had been so long ago, he was surprised the man was still angry.

“Oh, no,” one of the man’s friends said. “He’s still mad about the war.”

The Apostle Paul found himself amongst two angry women in Philippi: Euodia and Syntyche.

After founding the church in obedience to his call to Macedonia, Paul

wrote a letter to encourage the congregation.

Philippians has been called “the joy letter” since his preeminent talking point is joy. This is even more striking when we realize Philippians is one of the four prison letters.

It’s not often we find joy in jail. Nevertheless in encouraging the church, the writer felt compelled to identify these two women who weren’t getting along, insisting their discord was affecting the entire congregation.

It’s not like Euodia and Syntyche were evil women. They probably sang together in the church choir.

But we remember them today because they were angry enough with

one another to merit a “shoutout” from the church’s founder.

Since the letters of Paul were read aloud to the congregation, and then became circular letters shared with other churches, it’s interesting that the pettiness of these women became known to their church, other churches in the area and to us 2,000 years later.

We don’t know the nature of their disagreement. Paul didn’t mention the cause and may not have known it. Perhaps Euodia and Syntyche themselves had forgotten what they fought about.

I’ve heard a number of stories over the years from people who were angry with someone in their church. And often the explanations seem so inconsequential.

One lady told me another family was displeased when her son won an award in high school rather than their son. This alleged slight occurred 20 years before. I’m not sure how she knew this or why it mattered after so long. But it’s amazing how trivial some of the things are that separate us from one another.

In the same letter, Paul wrote, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless ... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14–15).

Our light is brighter when we learn to leave the hurt behind and live together in harmony as sons and daughters of God.

## TAB staff members help double our reach

I shared a copy of TAB with my neighbor because I thought the page one article about the “Slow-motion war” in Nigeria would be of interest to her. She has a heart for internationals, refugees and persecuted Christians, so I thought she would like to read that particular story.

**Lauren Grim**  
Creative services manager

I bought a two-year subscription for one of the staff members at my church and plan to let others at church know about the opportunities with TAB.

**Janet Erwin**  
Copy editor

I purchased a multi-year subscription for my grandmother. She first became a subscriber when I was interning with TAB but forgot to renew it when it expired. She told me all the time how much she missed getting it. So this year, for her birthday, that was one of my gifts to her! I appreciate the multi-year subscription offer because it helps me to not have to worry about renewing it each year (and saves money)!

**Hannah Muñoz**  
Digital editor

## Letters to the Editor

Caris Snider’s “Anxiety” article in the Aug. 27 issue was meaningful to me in a special way. I thank you. I tore it out and will use it as a bookmark. While the column will not be read often, when I do need it again the special meaning and refreshing will be there.

**Tony Berry**  
Foley, Ala.

Thank you for the helpful article about QAnon (published on tabonline.org). I shared it on Facebook. Some of my friends liked it and shared it; others ques-

tioned it. As always, *The Alabama Baptist* supported the truth.

**Steve Stewart**  
Decatur, Ala.

My Rationale, Sept. 17, 2020 — “Four ways to make a difference as we await Nov. 3” — is on point and just what I and others, I suspect, needed.

I want to thank you for making TAB more relevant and interesting than I ever remember it being.

Thanks so much for all you do.  
**Lynn Graham**  
Clanton, Ala.

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“We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.”

OSWALD CHAMBERS

Author, “My Utmost for His Highest”

God makes a most unreasonable and outlandish declaration: “I will cause your red stained sins to be like white snow, like pure wool.” Such a response to sin is not reasonable. Sin should bring punishment and condemnation. God’s goal is to redeem and restore, not condemn and punish. This makes His invitation to be cleansed and forgiven perfectly fitted to His purpose in our lives.

**Bob Adams**  
Retired pastor

As I was reading the Book of Genesis recently, the Holy Spirit directed my attention to a key verse:

“The Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden

to work it and watch over it” (Gen. 2:15).

God created rhythms of life. Man was neither intended for idleness nor for workaholicism. Work and rest are both gifts from our Lord. God “worked” for six days and then rested on the seventh. In this example, God teaches us life principles that He intends for us.

Rest is important. Through rest, God revives our souls. Rest is a reminder that we are not the sole providers. We are not God. In rest, I glorify God — the One who is my provider. However, too much rest leads to laziness.

We are also called to work, to action, to productivity. We are called to labor in a garden that is not our own, in one that we did not plant,

and in one that we do not control. Yet we are called to faithfulness in our work. We glorify God by being faithful in the work of the garden where He placed us and in the rest that coincides with our work.

May we faithfully pursue the Lord in both our work and our rest!

**Stephen Hall**  
Executive pastor  
NorthPark Baptist Church,  
Trussville

This is a moment when Christians must be fearless. We are not for sale, and our message is not irrelevant. We have good news for the whole world.

**President Ronnie Floyd**  
SBC Executive Committee

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @MarkRicht

My thoughts and prayers go out to Coach [Bobby] Bowden as he has tested positive for COVID-19. Coach led me to a saving faith in Jesus Christ in 1986. Thank you, Coach Bowden. I love you, Coach!

### @jburnham549

What is the answer for exhaustion? God’s strength and continued presence. Yes, Lord (Ps. 105:4)!

### @louiegiglio

Is your confidence rooted in who God is? “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of our Lord our God” (Ps. 20:7).

### @brocraig

“Learn to trust Christ’s word, whatever sight may say. We live in dark times.” — Robert Murray M’Cheyne

### @DrPaulChitwood

Today is the last day of the @IMB\_SBC fiscal year. Today I’ll report to our trustees that Southern Baptists have given OVER our budget. In 2020. In a global pandemic. Southern Baptists love the lost among the nations and want to see them saved, of that I am certain.

### @timkellernyc

Jesus asks for far more than you ever thought but offers more than you ever dreamed.

### @drtonyevans

Idolatry is when loyalty to the creation is greater than your loyalty to the Creator.

### @MattMason3

Christian, be wary of reading (what appear to be) fortuitous circumstances as divine guidance. You have a Bible to keep you from

being blown around by preferences dressed up as providences.

### @SpurgeonMBTS

“Though we do not know ... why an infinitely gracious God permitted sin and suffering to enter the universe, yet we may at least encourage this practical thought — God will be glorified in the overcoming of evil and its consequences.” — Charles Spurgeon

### @trillianewbell

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1). We can’t be responsible for everyone else, but we can ask ourselves if we truly love or [if] we just like the attention of being a noisemaker.

### @garyfenton07

To love is to desire God’s best for people and work to make it happen.

## Ways to honor your pastor

October is Pastor/Clergy Appreciation Month. Here are some additional suggestions for ways congregation members can show their appreciation to pastors and ministers in October and throughout the year.

**Show your affection for your pastor and his family.**

- ▶ Let the pastor know how God is specifically using him to bless, help and teach you to follow God.
- ▶ Remember your pastor’s birthday and anniversary with a card, gift or social media post.
- ▶ Show appreciation for your pastor’s strengths and give grace in his weaknesses.

**Allow your pastor and his family to be authentic.**

- ▶ Give your pastor’s spouse the freedom to be herself and to find her own niche at church.
- ▶ Let your pastor’s children “be kids.” Care about them, and pray for them.

**Faithfully give to your church and follow the Lord’s leading to help your pastor with:**

- ▶ Marriage conference or retreat costs
- ▶ Christian camp fees
- ▶ Back to school fees, clothing or supplies
- ▶ Children’s college tuition
- ▶ Missions trips
- ▶ Lessons or tutoring
- ▶ Family or couple’s vacation or getaway
- ▶ Pastor’s conference, seminar or training
- ▶ Seminary courses or sabbatical
- ▶ Student loan debt
- ▶ Retirement savings
- ▶ Medical expenses

Need more ideas for how to honor your pastor this month but all year long?

Go to [blessyourpastor.org](http://blessyourpastor.org) for additional resources, and read “Loving your pastor well” at [tabonline.org/loving](http://tabonline.org/loving). ([Blessyourpastor.org](http://Blessyourpastor.org))

# ‘Refreshment and renewal for all’

## As McElwain Baptist marks 125 years, Shades adopts church as second campus

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**M**cElwain Baptist Church, Birmingham, has had a vibrant past — just ask its members and former members.

At McElwain’s 125th anniversary celebration Sept. 27, person after person shared testimonies of how they had heard the gospel, learned to grow in their faith, started a new ministry to the community or felt a call to the missions field at the Birmingham Metro Baptist Association church.

But in recent years, the church has felt a shift as membership has declined, and Mark Clifton, interim pastor, said they’ve felt a call to explore new options God might have for them.

“They just want to make the gospel known in that neighborhood and community,” said Clifton, who is also senior director of replanting for the North American Mission Board.

McElwain Baptist reached out to Clifton earlier this year after reading his book, “Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches.” He met with their vision team, and they talked about their options.

“They didn’t know if they were going to call a pastor to replant, be adopted or fostered by another church,” Clifton explained.

### A process

With a replant from within the church, they would call a pastor who would lead them in a restart in the community — a fresh vision, fresh ministries and fresh outreach.

If they chose fostering, another church or churches would come



Former music minister Chris Kihn leads the congregation in worship during the 125th anniversary celebration at McElwain Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Sept. 27. Photo by Travis Frontz

alongside them and support them with resources until they got back to the point where they were growing again. And if they went with

adoption, they would release all leadership of the church and in most cases all property and assets to another church and essentially become an integral part of that congregation.

“We worked through a process over several months,” said Clifton, who became their interim pastor during COVID-19 and preached for their online services from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. “I didn’t want them to think about what they wanted to do but where Jesus was leading them.”

And over time, the McElwain congregation felt God was leading them toward adoption, Clifton said.

“Someone said, ‘Even if we called a pastor right now, we don’t have the margin and bandwidth to reach the neighborhood like we want to.’”

At the same time, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, was in the middle of a vision plan that included a commitment to “actively pursue churches in need of revitalization” and “lead an existing church to start a new chapter of vibrant ministry.” They had been praying about exactly where and which church that would be, and in June, Clifton reached out to them, said Shades Pastor Danny Wood.

“We met with their vision team a couple of different times and began to look over it and pray over it,” Wood said.

And as they met and prayed, Clifton said God knit the hearts

of the two churches together in a healthy, productive way.

“Jesus was at the center of this,” he said. “The people of McElwain want to reach that neighborhood, but they need help to do that. Shades has the leadership and vision and resources to reach the neighborhood and people who want to see it done.”

Clifton also noted that Birmingham Metro Association, under the leadership of Chris Crain, had played a “huge part” in facilitating the adoption process.

### ‘Critical role’

“That’s so important in these adoptions — the local association and state convention, both of those play a critical role in mediating this,” he said. “It helps to have a third party involved.”

Wood said Shades Mountain Baptist’s hope is that McElwain “can be a multiethnic, multigenerational church on the east side of Birmingham.”

In the coming days, they will select a pastor for that campus and a core team of volunteers will join the existing McElwain congregation to worship there. They will also decide what to call the campus.

“McElwain Baptist is a great church, a legacy church — so many have been touched because of McElwain,” Wood said. “We are glad we get to be a part of it. There is a lot of excitement over here.”

God is going to do a new thing at 4445 Montevallo Road, he said. “This will be an amazing time of

refreshment and renewal for all of us. Our great desire is to see God do something that can only be explained by ‘God did it.’”



Photo by Travis Frontz  
Johnnie Sentell with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presents a plaque for the church’s 125 years of service. Photo by Travis Frontz



Photo by Tracy Riggs  
Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist, gives a ‘Challenge for the Future’ as his church adopts McElwain Baptist Church.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Biblical Mysteries

### Gentile Inclusion

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

Another of God's hidden truths or mysteries was His intention to include Gentiles in His redemptive provision provided in the sending of His Son into the world. In His wisdom, God chose Paul, a devout Jew, to be a leading instrument of setting forth this intention to include Gentiles in His family.

A primary passage that sets forth this revealed mystery is Ephesians 3:1–12, in which that purpose is expressed: “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (v. 6). We note the inclusive ideas expressed in the phrases “fellow heirs,” “same body” and “partakers.”

Paul came to understand this to be God's longstanding plan that was brought to light when this mystery was made known, terming it a mystery that “in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets” (3:5). Paul pursued his ministry with the conviction that his evangelizing to Gentiles was “according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power” (3:7).

The inclusion of Gentiles did not mean the exclusion of Jews. Paul understood the gospel of Christ to be “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

At the time of Paul's conversion, God met the reluctance of Ananias to go to Paul with these words, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

Later, when Paul and Barnabas encountered resistance on the part of Jews in Antioch, the two missionary preachers responded by saying, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46–47).

#### God's eternal plan

When God completes His eternal plan that the gospel should be for all persons everywhere, the vision John saw in Revelation 5 with its new song will pay honor and praise to Christ, saying, “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (5:9–10).✠

*Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.*



## Lassiter serves Cullomburg Baptist for more than 50 years

Eunice Lassiter's eyesight may be failing her, but her mind — and her heart — are as focused and precise as the columns of numbers she's been looking at for more than 50 years.

She views her job as treasurer at Cullomburg Baptist Church, Silas, as something to take very seriously.

“I feel it is a sacred position to be in charge of God's money,” Lassiter said.

And for more than half a century, she's arranged her life around that calling.

“When I got home from church every Sunday, I immediately counted that money to make sure it was right, posted my books and paid my bills,” she said.

It was a routine that started not too long after she and her first husband, Keith Doggett, moved to the area and built a house in the mid-1960s. They ended up at a summer revival put on by Cullomburg Baptist where Keith gave his life to Jesus and Eunice rededicated hers.

“We both became truly dedicated Christians,” Lassiter said.

#### Getting involved

From there, her husband began sharing his testimony as a lay speaker, and she served in a variety of roles in the church over the years. She taught youth and adult Sunday School, sang in the choir, served as music director and was active in Woman's Missionary Union. And, of course, she served as treasurer.

John Singley, chairman of deacons

at Cullomburg Baptist, said she has served in each role with “complete dedication.”

#### Heart for service

“During the last 20 years that I have been a member of Cullomburg Baptist, Eunice has demonstrated her love and devotion to the church through her service,” he said.

The church has changed over the years, and so has Lassiter.

After 15 years of marriage, she and Keith got the opportunity to adopt a newborn — their first child.

At the same time, they discovered Keith had lung cancer. He died while the little girl, Keturah, was still young.

Three years later, Eunice married again — H.J. Lassiter. He died in 1997.

“We can always come to God with

our problems and illnesses,” Lassiter said. “Faith in God is the most important part of our lives.”

And with age comes passing some of that wisdom down to the next generation, she said.

It breaks her heart to give up the position, but as she's suffered from macular degeneration, she's realized that she needs to pass the money handling on to someone else. She's been training someone younger to serve as church treasurer now that she can't focus on the fine print like she used to.

“I'm having to adjust to not doing it,” Lassiter said. “But it's still part of my job to be up there and do what I can.” (Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Tracy Whigham  
Eunice Lassiter has served as treasurer of Cullomburg Baptist Church, Silas, for more than 50 years.

*“During the last 20 years that I have been a member of Cullomburg Baptist, Eunice has demonstrated her love and devotion to the church through her service.”*

John Singley  
chairman of deacons, Cullomburg Baptist Church

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



**I**f anything has been learned during the past several months of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's this: Many people have become familiar with what Deaf people go through in the use of technology through video conferencing, online group meetings for Bible studies and watching church worship being livestreamed.

For the past few months, life hasn't been much different for Deaf people other than the loss of personal fellowship or meeting in person. Enter Zoom meetings.

While many of the Deaf were unaware of the program, it has changed the methods of more than 300-plus Deaf ministries nationwide. Alabama made the change immediately with its handful of Deaf ministries across the state by implementing Zoom to help keep the Deaf people intact spiritually.

**New Deaf Church** of Hoover was one of the first to start a Zoom group for its Deaf

worship services. Pastors Kris Courson and Daniel Lute faced challenges during the first couple of weeks, but the members of their congregation continued to strive to meet and worship together.

Soon afterwards, **Eden Westside Deaf Ministry** in Pell City was to start its own group using Zoom. Leaders Steve Dye and Jeff Farmer also faced challenges in the group, but as the weeks went on the group continued to grow spiritually. Steve also serves as Deaf Ministry Catalyst for the State Board of Missions.

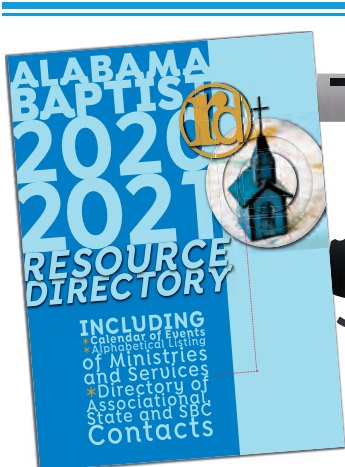


A Zoom group on a Sunday evening led by Jeff Farmer and Steve Dye included 46 people from 19 states. The group is a blessing because so many Deaf people come together to learn about the Lord and to have fellowship.

**Birmingham Community Deaf Church** also used the opportunity to start a Wednesday evening group via Zoom.

Each group saw their numbers grow in attendance. Why were the numbers larger? The biggest reason of all is: accessibility because Zoom is easily downloadable with a free version and paid options as well.

*For more information about Deaf ministry among Alabama Baptists, please contact State Missionary Kristy Kennedy at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 311, or (334) 613-2311, [kkennedy@alsbom.org](mailto:kkennedy@alsbom.org).*



**free**

THIS 16-MONTH CALENDAR

(Sept. 2020–Dec. 2021) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events. It also includes an alphabetical listing of ministries and services along with directories of associational, state and SBC contacts.

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# From birthdays to cheer squads, Shocco says 'come on'

(continued from page 1) finishes out at the projected rate — will amount to a \$4 million loss in income.

"In March of this year, we faced an unprecedented obstacle. Due to the global pandemic, our campus was completely shut down," said Russell Klinner, Shocco's executive director.

The financial losses have been "devastating," he said.

But even so, "God is working and fulfilling His

purpose for Shocco, despite the limitations of this pandemic," Klinner said. "Many of our groups canceled their visits, but the churches who brought groups to Shocco this summer have told us they experienced more intimate bonding time with their youth and children than ever before. Some of these group leaders had never brought their kids to Shocco, and all of them complimented our staff's hospitality and promised to return."

**To book a retreat or learn more about how to help Shocco through the pandemic, visit [shocco.org](http://shocco.org).**

The camp is "deeply appreciative" of Alabama Baptists' support and prayer, he said.

Laurie Mullinax, Shocco's public relations coordinator, agreed that Shocco's mission is continuing at the camp.

## Ways to help

"God has provided for us through successful years in the past and the wise financial stewardship of great leadership, and with His help we will recoup our financial losses and continue the important ministry of Shocco Springs," she said.

Want to help? Mullinax said there are plenty of ways to do that:

► **Try a smaller group retreat.**

This year, many larger groups have cancelled their retreats because of COVID-19 concerns. That means Shocco has plenty of space for individual churches, school groups and others who would enjoy time away at the camp.

"People are wanting a chance to get away, and Shocco is a great venue for their fall retreats, holiday retreats and marriage retreats," Mullinax said. "We need you to bring your Sunday School group, your youth group,



Photo courtesy of Janie Gable Curtis

Campers from the ARC of North Talladega County enjoy the pool at Shocco Springs. Even with COVID-19, the ARC group was able to keep its annual camp, thanks to the adaptations Shocco offered.

your senior citizens group, your company or your organization to Shocco and let us serve you with an incredible camp/retreat experience."

► **Celebrate your birthday at Shocco.**

This is a new offering at Shocco — the chance to host birthday celebrations at the camp and conference center. Shocco can customize parties to include the picnic space by the lake and recreation options like the Adrenaline Jump, basketball pavilion, Basketball, high ropes, night hikes or the paintball course.

In the warmer months, guests are invited to use the Aqua Park on the lake, the Wet Willie water slide

and the pool. Learn more at [shocco.org/services/special-events](http://shocco.org/services/special-events).

► **Bring your school's sports group or cheer squad.**

These same recreation activities are available to school groups, along with facilities and field space that can be used for practice and training.

► **Bring your employees or staff.**

Churches, businesses and other organizations can use Shocco for a day-only team-building time. Build-a-Boat and Build-a-Bridge challenges test brainstorming and teamwork skills as participants think, plan and communicate in order to build an operational boat or bridge, using only the items given to them by Shocco's rec staff.

The low ropes course is also available for building team confidence and trust. And if a group wants a fast-paced scenario, they can schedule an Adventure Race experience.

► **Don't wait for summer.**

Though they're already booking for summer 2021, "our campus is absolutely beautiful year-round," Mullinax said. "Our lodging and meeting options are always available, and we offer many non-seasonal recreation options during fall, winter and spring. Now is the time to reserve space for fall and winter." ❄️

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad for \$1 per word. For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or email [ads@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org).

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### SENIOR PASTOR

CHBC is accepting resumés for full-time senior pastor position. Traditional services, 3 services weekly. Please send resumés to: [Chbc2672@bellsouth.net](mailto:Chbc2672@bellsouth.net) or mail to: 105 Concord Highland Dr., Hueytown, AL 35023.

#### PASTOR

Chappell Hill Baptist, a small church in rural Choctaw County, is looking for an experienced full-time pastor who will become part of our community and help our church grow. Send resumés to: [dwgiles58@gmail.com](mailto:dwgiles58@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

South Side Baptist Church, Russellville, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send letter of interest and resumés to: [sb.church.russellville@gmail.com](mailto:sb.church.russellville@gmail.com).

#### FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP LEADER

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is seeking an individual to provide worship and music leadership. Send resumés to: [southside@sbcandalusia.com](mailto:southside@sbcandalusia.com) or Southside Baptist Church, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420.

#### WORSHIP LEADER

Farmstead Baptist Church in Jasper, Alabama, is seeking a part-time worship leader. Please send resumés to: [belindaksmith@bellsouth.net](mailto:belindaksmith@bellsouth.net) or mail to: Farmstead Baptist

Church, 265 Curry Hwy, Jasper, AL 35503.

### BUSINESS

#### FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in-tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

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No job too big or too small. Call for free on-site consultation. Toll-free 1-888-699-9679 or Alabama local 205-699-9679. Ask for the owner Terry Barnes. Visit gallery at [leedsstainedglass.com](http://leedsstainedglass.com).

### SIGNS

#### NEED A NEW CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Signs Services, a full-service sign company located in Alabama for 26 years, is ready to help you grow your church sign ministry. From digital message signs to traditional signs, Reliable Signs handles the design, fabrication and installation statewide. [www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com). Give Danny, Stephanie and the rest of the team a call: 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955.

### TRAVEL/VACATION

#### LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to [www.paradisevista.net](http://www.paradisevista.net) to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs

#### Adrenaline Jump



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs

#### Build-a-Boat

# 3 stories

## you should know



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

The U.S. Supreme Court opened its new term Oct. 5, hearing arguments by phone because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The court declined to hear an appeal from a former county clerk in Kentucky who objected to issuing same-sex 'marriage' licenses, drawing new criticism from justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito of the 2015 case that legalized the unions. Read more about the court's new term and Thomas' statement at [tabonline.org/court-2020](http://tabonline.org/court-2020). (AP)

### Rainer, LifeWay reach agreement in dispute

LifeWay Christian Resources reached an out-of-court agreement on Oct. 6 with former president and CEO Thom Rainer concerning his future publishing endeavors.

The agreement requires Rainer to keep the terms of a noncompete contract he had signed after leaving his position at LifeWay in 2018. The two parties haggled over the lawsuit for a week before meeting Oct. 5 to resolve the matter.

Rainer, a prolific writer and founder of Church Answers, a ministry resource website, signed a deal with Tyndale, a publisher of Christian books and Bibles, in April. His first book was scheduled to be published in June. It will now publish in November 2021.

Read more about the story at [tabonline.org/rainer-suit](http://tabonline.org/rainer-suit). (RNS)

### NAMB trustees pass 2021 operating budget

Trustees of the North American Mission Board meeting Oct. 5–6 approved a \$99.8 million operating budget for fiscal year 2021, almost 20% below last year's budget.

NAMB President Kevin Ezell reported a total of \$49.3 million given this year to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions. The emphasis for the offering coincided with the beginning of coronavirus-related shutdowns in the U.S., but giving continued as churches found creative ways to promote and collect the offering.

In his president's report, Ezell outlined three areas of priority focus for NAMB in 2021: collegiate evangelism, Hispanic church planting and Send Relief national missions trips.

Read more at [tabonline.org/NAMB-2021](http://tabonline.org/NAMB-2021). (BP)

## Headline news

### from around the Southeast

#### Georgia

In response to the estimated 200 girls who are sold into prostitution each night in Georgia, churches and parachurch ministries — such as 4Sarah, Rahab's Haven and iCare — are partnering to rescue these girls who often see no way of escape, *The Christian Index* reported. "We're grateful for ministries like these who respond to the human trafficking crisis in their own community," said Lorna Bius, Mission Georgia mobilizer for the Georgia Baptist Mission Board. "The gospel transforms and redeems lives — even those caught in trafficking."

#### Florida

With close to 3 million Floridians under the age of 65 with no health insurance, Crossroads Center Medical and Dental Clinic is delivering free, quality medical and dental care to low-income, uninsured adults in Florida's Okaloosa and Wal-

ton counties. The clinic treats 900–1,500 patients annually, providing more than \$17 million in free health care, the *Florida Baptist Witness* reported. Through the health care ministry, volunteers often verbally share the gospel message.

#### Louisiana

After seeing heartbreaking images of devastation following Hurricane Laura's assault on southwest Louisiana in late August, deacons at First Baptist Church, Rayville, Louisiana, adopted a goal of raising \$50,000 in disaster relief funds and gathering a trailer full of supplies. After meeting the goal, Pastor Eddie Wren and two church members delivered both the financial donation and supplies on Sept. 24, the *Baptist Message* reported.

#### Mississippi

A group of 22 students and staff from the Baptist Student Union at the University of Southern

Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, provided disaster relief Sept. 25–26 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura's landfall on Aug. 27. Many other Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief teams have also ministered after Hurricanes Laura and Sally made landfall on the Gulf Coast of Alabama and Louisiana in recent weeks, *The Baptist Record* reported.

#### Tennessee

About 20 members of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, Tennessee, wished a happy 100th birthday to church member Annette Cothron on Sept. 6. "Miss Annette" taught Sunday School from the age of 15 to 95 years, stopping only when doctors suggested she stop following a heart attack at age 95, the *Baptist and Reflector* reported. With a special needs daughter, Miss Annette is considered a pioneer in the field of special education in Tennessee. "Every day is a blessing," she said.

# Alabama news

## OBITUARY

► **Bobby Eugene Parker**, longtime pastor and director for St. Clair Baptist Association's Camp Sonshine, died Sept. 27. He was 80.



PARKER

Parker served as pastor of White's Chapel Baptist Church, Trussville (now New Beginnings Fellowship); Cook Springs Baptist Church, Pell City; and Riverside Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Nell; sons, Bryant Eugene and Tony Lee; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

## COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **John Granger** hadn't really given much thought to becoming an associational director of missions (DOM). He was serving as pastor of Goodman Baptist Church, Enterprise, and teaching classes at the Baptist College of Florida and a New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary extension center. He imagined he'd always stay in a teaching role.

But then one day, one of the other professors mentioned that he thought Granger would make a good DOM.

"God seemed to be saying to me, don't slam those doors, see what I've got in store," he said.

And when the DOM in his home area — **Coffee Baptist Association** — retired, Granger submitted a resumé. He was officially voted in during the association's annual meeting in October 2000, and it seems like his professor was right about it being a good fit — this year marks his 20th anniversary.

In the past 20 years, the "association has grown in about every way you can think," Granger said. They've been part of starting the state's Hispanic Baptist coalition, planted churches among different ethnic and language groups and had an active Disaster Relief ministry — which responded when a devastating tornado hit their own area in 2007.

They've had large evangelistic events, a thriving Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist Men ministry and a radio show with a broad reach.

"The association has been blessed in lots and lots of ways," Granger said. "It's been a good place to be."

► **Eanon Baptist Church, New Brockton**, has canceled its homecoming on Oct. 18.

## WALKER ASSOCIATION

► On the morning of Sept. 27, the old church bell rang at **Saragossa First Baptist Church, Nauvoo**, as they celebrated their 125th anniversary.

"Everything was meaningful and tied together so well," said church member Ann Trimm.



GRANGER

"There was a sense of comfort, peace and excitement. It was amazing."

As part of the special service, Pastor Shawn Morgan preached on the homecoming of the prodigal son, and minister of music Curt Cagle led the congregation in singing hymns from every 25-year period during the history of the church.

Those present also enjoyed displays of historical photos created by Joyce Shumate, as well as a book compiled by the homecoming committee. David Nelson, a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a certificate.



Photo by David Nelson

## COLBERT-LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

► **Zach Richards** is the first pastor of **York Bluff Baptist Church, Sheffield**. York Bluff was formed earlier this year when Sheffield's York Terrace Baptist Church and First Baptist Church merged. Richards formerly served as pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church, Crossville. He and his wife, Whitney, have three daughters.



RICHARDS

(News compiled by TAB Media staff)

## Lions Den event set to judge 3 companies

Samford University will partner with Cedarworks Inc. to present the 7th annual Lion's Den event aimed toward advancing the Kingdom through Business as Mission. The 2020 event will take place at Christ Fellowship Church, Birmingham, on Oct. 21–23 and include opportunities to participate virtually.

The Shark Tank-style event will feature three companies presenting their business plans to a live audience and a judging panel of "lions." The companies will be evaluated on their ability to produce financial, social, conservation and spiritual results, known as the quadruple bottom-line.

This year's companies are:

► **Steeped Coffee Inc.**, a California-based coffee company that offers a fully compostable brewing method similar to tea and coordinates programs ranging from Steeped in Prayer to partnerships with churches and nonprofits.

► **Winsome Truth Inc.**, a Nashville-based media and technology company that focuses on serving Christian kids and families through a streaming video app, e-commerce platform and children's book publishing unit.

► **Saladbox**, a healthy casual food concept started in Romania that operates 10 locations and 63 franchised locations in 15 countries. They started as a Christian-owned business with Christian values and focus on supporting employees through Bible studies and prayer sessions.

Learn more about the participating companies and the event at [thelionsden.us](http://thelionsden.us). (Samford)

## Persecuted church

### *Pakistani court decisions may increase vulnerability for Christian girls*

LAHORE, Pakistan — A recent Pakistani court decision may make Christian girls more vulnerable to abduction, forced conversion to Islam and forced marriage, according to a rights activist.

In August, Lahore High Court ordered 14-year-old Christian girl Maira Shahbaz to return to Nakash Tariq, the man who kidnapped and raped her. He had threatened to kill her and her family unless she testified that she willingly married him and converted to Islam.

The court dismissed documents showing Shahbaz is a minor and evidence that the marriage certificate is fake.

Shahbaz and her family are in hiding.

In February, the High Court in Sindh Province validated the forced marriage and con-

version of 14-year-old Christian girl Huma Younus.

Pakistan is 96% Muslim and ranks No. 5 on Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List of places where it is most difficult to be a Christian. Pakistan also is on the U.S. blacklist of religious freedom violators.

A Pakistani Senate committee on Sept. 24 rejected a bill calling for the protection of religious minorities. The bill would have made forced conversions, especially for marriage, punishable with prison and fines. In rejecting the bill, a member of the committee claimed that a bill for the protection of the rights of Muslims should be presented instead, according to Persecution.org.

A study by the Movement for Solidarity and Peace Pakistan estimates 1,000 Christian and Hindu women are abducted, forcefully married and forcefully converted to Islam every year. (TAB)



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

October is Cooperative Program Month!

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Visit [alsbom.org/cp](http://alsbom.org/cp) for ideas and resources to help your church learn more about the Cooperative Program. For more information, contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg, [jswedenburg@alsbom.org](mailto:jswedenburg@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2283.



STATEWIDE DAY OF PRAYER FOR OUR NATION SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

YOUR CHURCH IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS VERY IMPORTANT TIME OF PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY. VISIT [alsbom.org/prayer](http://alsbom.org/prayer) FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HELPFUL RESOURCES.

## Online State Missions Celebration

Tuesday, November 17

Although the 2020 Annual Meeting of the State Convention will not be held this year, please join us for an hour of inspiration and information at [live.alsbom.org](http://live.alsbom.org) and the **SBOM Facebook** page, Tuesday, November 17, 2-3 p.m. Then, at 6:30 p.m. that same day, tune in for the International Mission Board Sending Celebration, also at [live.alsbom.org](http://live.alsbom.org) or the **IMB Facebook** page.

The Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference has also moved completely online, all day **Monday, November 16**. Visit [albaptistpc.com](http://albaptistpc.com) for details.



# Hollis devotes life to sharing his faith, bringing revival

Sam Hollis knows what it's like to need Jesus. He can vividly remember what his life and his heart felt like the day a pastor told him he thought God might call him to be a preacher one day. The teen-aged Hollis discreetly gave the pastor the middle finger when he wasn't looking. "I thought, 'Man you're crazy. A preacher is the last thing in the world I'll ever want to be,'" Hollis said.

## New passion

But over time, through the preaching of the gospel, God got hold of Hollis' heart and changed him. And when He did, He gave him a new passion — to help propel evangelism forward so that as many people as possible could hear the message that had changed him.

"I thought, 'I'm not worthy to preach His message,' but His message shot me straight through the heart," said Hollis, now pastor of outreach at East Side Baptist Church, Cullman. "The greatest thing in all the world is to pass that on — to win souls for Jesus Christ."

Over the years, he's shared his faith personally and organized outreach events, but he's also invested a lot of his life in writing books and discipleship materials to be used by individuals and groups in their own areas.

In recent years, he's worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association on online outreach tools. And leading up to the 2004

election, he developed a 10-week guide called "Elect Jesus" to help churches start a revival in their communities.

Those materials are still available for associations that might be interested in printing and distributing them to their churches.



HOLLIS

Sammy Gilbreath, longtime state evangelism director who now leads special event evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Mis-

sions, said Hollis models what an evangelistic heart looks like.

"I have seen him give lead to associational evangelism events and get totally involved on statewide evangelism opportunities," Gilbreath noted.

"He loves to tell people about Christ, and he gets excited about teaching others to share the gospel. I wish I could clone him and put one in every church and association." (Grace Thornton)

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**BAPTIST**  
**2020**

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

The 2020 Pastors Conference will be completely virtual. Sermons will premiere online Nov. 16 at [albaptistpc.com](http://albaptistpc.com).

Subscribe to the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on YouTube to receive notifications when the sermons premiere.

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## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Massachusetts cape.
- A servant of Jesus. (Rom. 1:1)
- Not only for wrath, but also for conscience \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom. 13:5)
- Born.
- My people. (Hos. 2:1)
- Ye shall see heaven \_\_\_\_\_. (John 1:51)
- And \_\_\_\_ also the Jairite was chief ruler about David. (2 Sam. 20:26)
- Rich soil.
- Neither \_\_\_\_ your clothes. (Lev. 10:6)
- He shall take other \_\_\_\_ and plaster the house. (Lev. 14:42)
- Money earned on account.
- Play division.
- I have made known \_\_\_\_ thee this day. (Prov. 22:19)
- Their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 15:18)
- We will come unto him and make our \_\_\_\_ with him. (John 14:23)
- For as many as are \_\_\_\_ by the Spirit of

- God. (Rom. 8:14)
- A son of Gad. (Gen. 46:16)
- Horse mothers.
- Man's nickname.
- "Sing," past tense.
- Anger.
- The name of the wicked shall \_\_\_\_\_. (Prov. 10:7)
- One was Bozez and the name of the other \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 14:4)
- The captain of his host was Abner, the son of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 14:50)
- And. (Latin)
- Snake-like fish.
- The king of Assyria brought men from \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Kings 17:24)
- God is our \_\_\_\_ and strength. (Ps. 46:1)
- None is \_\_\_\_, save one. (Luke 18:19)
- Englishman.
- Roman numeral 54.
- River in Yorkshire, England.
- Narrow strip of wood.
- Thoroughfare. (abbr.)
- Be ye therefore followers of God as \_\_\_\_ children. (Eph. 5:1)

### Down

- And Anab and Eshtemoh and \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 15:50)
- Fiddled while Rome burned.
- Thou art \_\_\_\_, O Lord. (Ps. 119:151)
- As Peter was beneath in the \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 14:66)
- \_\_\_\_ize: arrange installment payments.
- Hindu goddess of splendor.
- Yea, they tempted God, and \_\_\_\_ the Holy One of Israel. (Ps. 78:41)
- Took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 17:5)
- Simian.
- Knowledge.
- Whose \_\_\_\_ is destruction. (Phil. 3:19)
- Urchins.
- And Cain went out ... and dwelt in the land of \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 4:16)
- Vegetable.
- Sea eagle.
- Draw \_\_\_\_ to God.

- (James 4:8)
- The children of \_\_\_\_, four hundred and fifty-four. (Ezra 2:15)
- Thou wast naked and \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 16:7)
- Now an \_\_\_\_ is the 10th part of an ephah. (Ex. 16:36)
- Wherefore, do ye ... \_\_\_\_ the people from their work? (Ex. 5:4)
- Of great reputation.
- Individual character.
- Last book of the Bible. (abbr.)
- Thou shalt not \_\_\_\_ a kid in his mother's milk. (Ex. 23:19)
- Descendant of Eri.
- And Zebadiah, and Arad, and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 8:15)
- And the sons of \_\_\_\_; Bedan. (1 Chron. 7:17)
- The Lord God shall \_\_\_\_ unto him the throne of his father David. (Luke 1:32)
- To seduce, if it were possible, \_\_\_\_ the elect. (Mark 13:22)
- Jacob's seventh son.
- Not "a" or "u."
- Mouth.
- Modern music.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 18

## Explore the Bible

By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### GOD LISTENS Isaiah 37:14–20, 30–35

Chapters 34–39 begin a transition in the Book of Isaiah from Assyria as the main threat to Babylon. The Assyrians had already taken the Northern Kingdom into captivity and they were on the doorstep of Jerusalem, preparing to capture the Southern Kingdom as well. The leader of the Assyrian army had just given King Hezekiah an ultimatum to surrender and be taken captive but live, or be under siege by the Assyrian army and suffer greatly. The army leader even pointed out that God had told him to march out against Jerusalem; it was true that God planned on using the Assyrians for His purposes (see Isa. 10:5–6).

#### The Request (14–20)

Hezekiah was shaken by the events. The Assyrians had defeated many other nations and destroyed their gods made of wood and stone. But Hezekiah trusted in a God who was not like those other gods; he trusted in the living God of Israel. Therefore, Hezekiah prayed to God, asking for deliverance because it was an insult to God that these pagans thought the God of Israel was no different than the gods of the other nations. Hezekiah was primarily concerned for God's glory, not his own preservation.

This is a good lesson for Christians today. We often think of our own preservation and our own benefit, which is not innately wrong, but our main concern should always be praying God would be glorified.

If we pray that God would be glorified, it helps us keep in mind how we are to act and behave no matter the circumstance we find ourselves in. God is always glorified when we act in accordance with His will — loving our neighbor, treating others with dignity and respect, etc.

This does not mean it is wrong to pray for better circumstances or blessings, but our main desire should be for God to be glorified.

#### The Sign (30–32)

God answered Hezekiah's prayer and promised to rescue the Israelites.

To confirm this, God gave a sign to Hezekiah saying that in three years, the people of Israel would eat the produce from their own fields and vineyards, demonstrating how they would be free to work their farms and live in peace.

God gives promises to us today as well. For example, God promises to provide for us an eternal home and provide justice. This helps us go through life with a confidence that no matter our circumstances, God cares for us and loves us, as shown in Christ's death on our behalf.

Many Christians think God will provide for them physically or financially, but this is not a promise God gives to us. God promises to take care of us spiritually. Many times Christians make some sort of claim of how God will provide money or cars for them. When it doesn't come true, they make God out to be a liar, which is blasphemous. We need to disavow that type of preaching as it is no gospel at all but a false gospel that turns God into a wish machine who gives us what we want.

#### The Answer (33–35)

God answered His prayer to Hezekiah by saying that the Assyrian army would not even attack Jerusalem but would leave without an arrow being fired by either side. What a strange response — an army that has devastated all nations before it and was ready to lay siege to Jerusalem would be dismissed without any military attack? But true to His word, the Assyrian army was defeated by the angel of the Lord, who struck down 185,000 in a single night.

Throughout the Bible, we see examples of God fulfilling His promises — there has never been a promise God has not answered. Since we have seen God be true to His word throughout the Bible, we can be assured that He will fulfill His promises to us — promises to care for us even in death, preparing a place for us (see John 14).

Therefore we can be confident as we face trials in this life that God has provided salvation for us in Christ, which allows us to live in victory. ✠

## Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



### CHRIST'S COMMITMENT TO US Romans 5:6–12, 18–21

One has to admire the courage of a woman like Esther. We actually know very little about Esther's faith. We know her name is a Hebrew form of the name for the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. We know she and her family apparently chose not to return to the land of Israel after the exile.

And we know that when she faces her most difficult moment, there is no record of her offering sacrifice or even praying.

We just don't know how faithful Esther was religiously. What we do know though is how courageous she was. At the moment when it was needed, Esther entered the presence of the great king Ahasuerus, without permission and with the knowledge that doing so was supposed to be a capital offense. Why did she do it? She did it to save her people.

Moses had the boldness to stand up not just to a human king like Ahasuerus but to God Himself. When the Israelites refused to enter the promised land as God had commanded, God had finally had enough. He told Moses He would strike the Israelites with plagues and pestilence, wipe them out and create a new people to serve Him.

It was Moses though who said to God, "You can't kill Your people; You must pardon them."

Why did Moses do this? Why, especially, did Moses do this given the fact that only moments before the Israelites had threatened to stone him? He did it because the Israelites were his people.

Why did He pardon the people rather than destroying them? God did so because the Israelites were His people. The pages of Scripture are filled with examples of God's chasing after the Israelites, rescuing the Israelites, forgiving the Israelites. Why does God do this? Because the Israelites are His people.

#### Christ proved He was fully committed by dying for us. (6–8)

What God did for His people in the Old Testament, He did again

through His Son, Jesus, in the New Testament. The cross is the pinnacle moment of God's pursuit of His people. Like Moses' intervention on behalf of the Israelites, Jesus' death on the cross was not a death on behalf of worthy people. Paul tells us in Romans 5:8 that "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." It was at the moment that we were most unworthy, the moment when we were neck-deep in our rebellion against God that Christ went to the cross on our behalf.

#### Christ was fully committed to reconciling us to God. (9–11)

The death of Jesus that Paul describes is not one that removes God's wrath but still leaves us alone and separated from Him. On the contrary, Paul argues that if Christ was willing to die for us while we were in active rebellion against Him, He will certainly finish the job by reconciling us to God completely.

Christ's death has not created a mere cessation of hostilities, a move from a hot war to a cold one. The cross has paved the way for true peace and full reconciliation with God.

#### Christ was fully committed to giving us eternal life. (12, 18–21)

Adam's sin opened a doorway to death, and all his descendants have followed his lead in walking through that door. Through His death on the cross though, Christ has opened up another door, a door that leads to life not death.

We know in our hearts that our steps run most quickly to Adam's deathly door. The same commands of God that can be a "light unto our path" serve as a searing spotlight on us when we violate those commands.

We know our need to find a different path. That is why our hearts also feel the tug toward that other door, that door of life and welcome that Christ has opened for us. ✠



# Media reviews

**MOVIES**

## 'The Social Dilemma' has a dire warning for users of social media

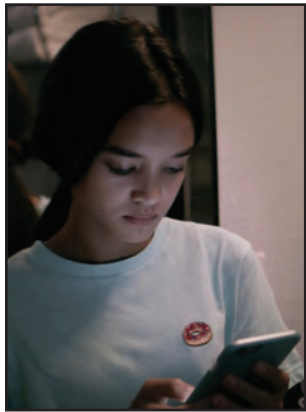
By **Michael Foust**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**Y**ou may not smash your smartphone after watching Netflix's newest hit documentary, but if you do, I won't blame you.

Through interviews with former Silicon Valley insiders, "The Social Dilemma" (PG-13) reveals how Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other Internet giants have spoiled nearly every aspect of society with a series of tempting products we — too often — don't resist.

The daily time once dedicated to family and friends is now wasted by chasing fake happiness in a virtual world. The time once used to read a book or take a hike is now traded for tweeting and posting and scrolling. We no longer live life. We only watch other people pretend to live their lives.

As one expert in the documentary says, social media has become the "digital pacifier" we run to when we're anxious or sad or need a quick pick-me-up.



### Designed to be addictive

Social media, another expert says, "operates just like the slot machines in Vegas" — you don't know what you're going to get when you slide your thumb down the screen to refresh, but you know you might find

something new and exciting.

It's addictive because it's designed to be addictive, insiders say. The various platforms learn what you like, then give you more of it. They send notifications when you're tagged or mentioned. They even suggest things you might like.

### Tragic consequences

"We've moved away from having a tools-based technology environment to an addiction- and manipulation-based technology environment," one expert says.

Sadly, there are tragic consequences. Since the social media age began booming, hospitalizations for non-fatal selfharm have increased

62% for older teen girls and 189% for younger teens girls. Even worse: the suicide rate has risen 54% for older teen girls and 151% for younger teen girls.

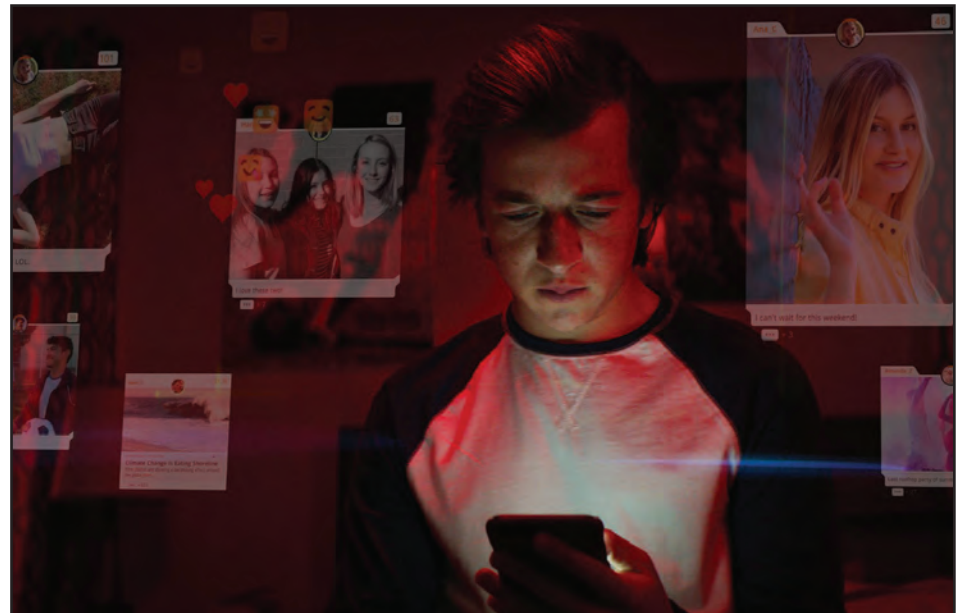
"Those kids are the first generation in history that got on social media in middle school," says social psychologist Jonathan Haidt.

The film includes an impressive list of experts: a former senior vice president at Twitter; a former president of Pinterest; the co-inventor of Google Drive and Gmail Chat; and the co-inventor of the Facebook "like" button among them.

"I think we were naïve" about the negative consequences of the technology, one of them says.

The PG-13 documentary isn't for small children. It includes mild language and is rated PG-13 for some thematic elements, disturbing/violent images and suggestive material.

Despite the content caveats, it's a must-watch for parents of tweens and teenagers. It's also worth watching for adults who have fallen into the social media trap and need an incentive to climb out.



'The Social Dilemma'

Photos courtesy of 'The Social Dilemma'

Also available this month:

► **"Switched" (Digital and VOD)** — A bullied high school girl prays that her tormentor will learn "what it's like to walk a day in my shoes." Her prayer is answered when the two girls wake up one morning having "switched" bodies. This is a "Freaky Friday"-style movie that's one of the funniest comedies you'll ever watch. It's also faith-based and has positive lessons about bullying, kindness and beauty. Unrated, it includes no coarse language.

► **"Small Group: The Movie" (DVD and VOD)** — A director moves from California to the South to film a critical documentary about evangelicals — a film his producer says will reveal them to be hateful hypocrites. The director, though, only finds kindness, love and a body of believers trying to live out Christ's commands. This faith-based comedy/drama includes mild language (misuse of "God" by the producer) and is rated PG-13 for thematic material including brief violence and drug references. It's a funny film with a great message for the church.

► **"Never Again" (Theaters: Oct. 13 and 15)** — A radicalized Muslim, Kasim Hafeez, travels to Israel

to confirm his hatred for the Jewish people but is surprised to discover a multiethnic nation that welcomes him. "Never Again" is a documentary about anti-Semitism that follows one man's journey from being an anti-Semite to a supporter of Israel. He also meets Holocaust survivor Irving Roth. It's unrated but includes images of the Holocaust.

► **"Christopher Robin" (Disney Plus)** — An overworked British man rediscovers the joys of life when his boyhood friends — Pooh, Piglet, Tigger and Roo — visit. Christopher Robin is a live-action film with great lessons about family, encouragement, kindness and the balance of work and leisure. Rated PG for some action. 🇺🇸

— **EDITOR'S NOTE** —  
Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.

## Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

# Growing SPIRITUALLY

## Cincinnati Reds' Michael Lorenzen seeks to live the crucified life daily

By **Bill Sorrell**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**D**uring his junior year at Fullerton Union High School in Fullerton, California, Michael Lorenzen sat on a pier, high on drugs and living a lifestyle he describes as “very caught up in the world.”

That lifestyle had been all in the family. His parents, Clif and Cheryl Lorenzen, had struggled with drugs and alcohol, and police would show up “almost every single weekend” because of his parents’ frequent fights.

The youngest of four boys, Lorenzen began experimenting with drugs and alcohol in the eighth grade. But on that pier, the 17-year-old lost boy heard about Jesus.

“The guy was sharing the gospel with me,” said Lorenzen, a right-handed pitcher for the Cincinnati Reds, and the message he heard “completely changed my life, transformed my life. It’s been awesome.”

A devout Christian, Lorenzen, now 28, is growing spiritually in his faith and in his game.

“Sanctification each and every day, growing each day more and more like Christ. Reading the Word and applying it, being in prayer, being in constant communion with God. I get in the Word daily. I am the light within this clubhouse and taking on that responsibility. It’s a big responsibility,” Lorenzen said.

Lorenzen has had a meteoric climb to the major leagues. Drafted by Tampa Bay in the seventh round of the 2010 Major League Baseball draft, he chose not to take a swing at

pro baseball then and opted for college at California State University, Fullerton, instead.

### Collegiate honors

During his collegiate career, he racked up many honors.

He was named first team All-American by several organizations and was also first team All-Big West Conference in 2013. With 35 total saves in 2012 and 2013, he set a school record in just two seasons. In 2013, he had a 1.99 ERA. Not only that, he led the Big West in RBIs with 54 and batted .335 with 76 hits and a team-leading seven home runs.

Baseball America ranked him No. 52 after his collegiate career. Considered among the top prospects, he was drafted 38th in the 2013 Major League Baseball First-Year Player

Draft by the Reds. After pitching for minor league teams in Dayton, Bakersfield and Louisville, the Reds’ Triple A team in the International League, and Pensacola, Lorenzen (6–3, 220) made his major league debut with the Reds in April 2015.

Overcoming a sprained ulnar collateral ligament in

his right elbow he sustained during spring training in 2016, he pitched later that season from the Reds’ bullpen and finished 2–1 with a .288 ERA. In 2017, he went 8–4 with a 4.45 ERA with the Reds. In 2018, he pinch-hit a grand slam home run, his third of the year. He had become a two-way player working as an outfielder in 2018 and into 2019.

Lorenzen put himself in fabled company on Sept. 4, 2019. He became only the second player to hit a



Photos courtesy of the Cincinnati Reds

### MICHAEL LORENZEN

home run, earn the win as a pitcher and play in the outfield in an 8–5 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies. The other player to do all three was Babe Ruth on June 13, 1921.

During Lorenzen’s 6-year big-league career, he has a 19–21 record, including a 3–1 record in the 2020 season. His career ERA is 3.97 with 385 strikeouts.

### Being different

But Lorenzen is more than his play and statistics. Teammates see that he’s different.

“They see the joy I have in my life,” he said. “Some people come up and ask me [about my faith], and they see me in the Word all the time. They know.”

A member of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, Lorenzen is aware of “a lot of temptations” in

and around professional baseball.

“I’ve learned that the flesh is weak,” he said. “We are at the center of attention, especially with the influence of teammates. Everyone wants to be liked, to be accepted. I was able to overcome trying to fit in and trying to be liked. I didn’t have to go out and party to be liked by the team. They respect my faith and what I stand for,” he said.

Lorenzen’s favorite Bible verse is Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.”

And Lorenzen seeks to live that crucified life daily.

“That is an everyday thing,” he said. “It’s not just a Sunday thing. I am a Christian every single day.”

**“It’s not just a Sunday thing.  
I am a Christian every single day.”**

**Michael Lorenzen**



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