

# The Alabama Baptist

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# Gracious care

## Alabama native finds comfort in ministry in New Orleans after husband's death

By Grace Thornton  
TAB Media

Leah Frazier jokes that she told God she wouldn't be afraid to share the gospel wherever He sent her — and then she saw the size of the ships docked at the port near her home in New Orleans.

Frazier volunteers with Global Maritime Ministries, an organization that reaches out to seafarers on the 6,000 ships that dock in the lower Mississippi River each year.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, they would pick people up from the ships and bring them to their ministry center where they could relax, use Wi-Fi, share a meal or play games. GMM personnel might also take them to local stores to do some shopping.

And always they would share the gospel and offer prayer and Bible studies.

But when the pandemic hit, seafarers were no longer allowed to leave their ships while they were in the port.

So that meant chaplains and volunteers from GMM had to go to them.

And that meant Frazier had to climb the gangway up the massive ships.

"It's super intimidating, I'm not going to lie," she said.

But it's an important moment when it comes to gospel ministry, Frazier said. "That first interaction

once you reach the ship can be such a gateway into how the whole ship responds."

On her last trip out to the ships, Frazier climbed the gangway with chaplain Stephen McKinney and said he was "really excited because



Photo courtesy of Leah Frazier  
Chaplain Stephen McKinney (right) and Leah Frazier (center) visit with a seaman.

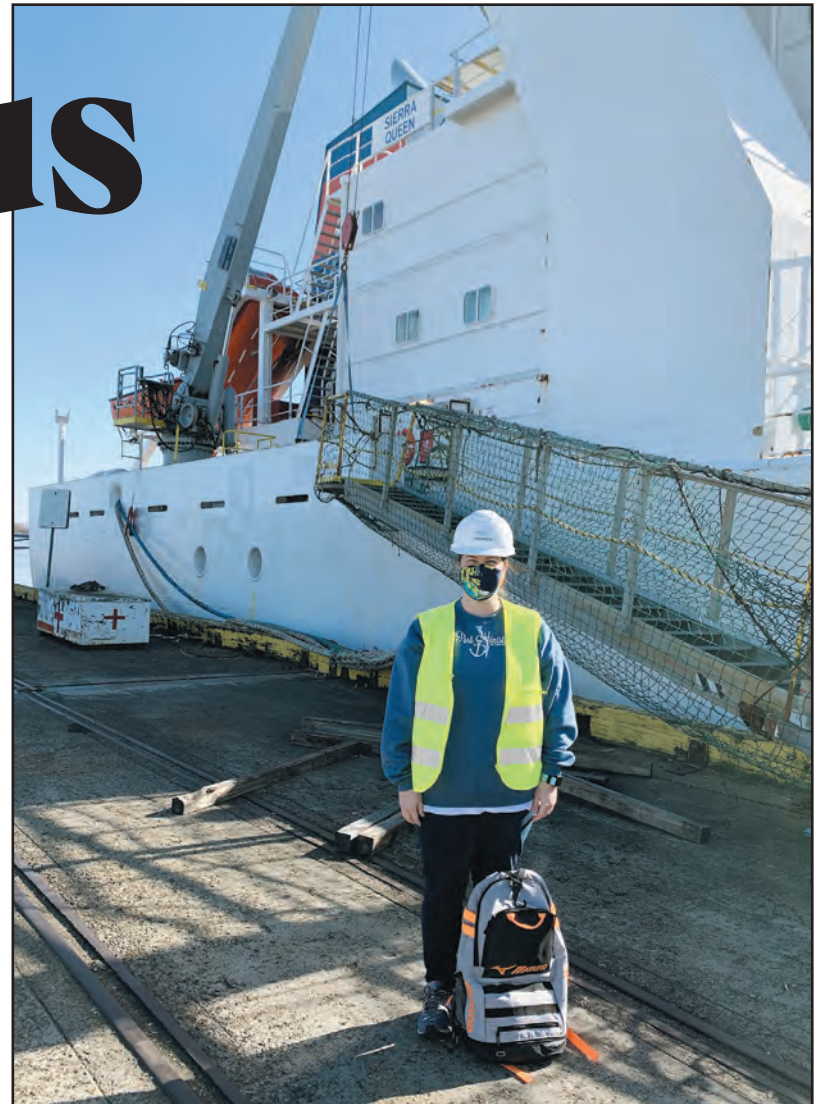


Photo courtesy of Leah Frazier

Leah Frazier, who grew up at FBC Tuscaloosa, volunteers with Global Maritime Ministries in New Orleans, a ministry that reaches out to seafarers on the 6,000 ships that come through the port every year.

this ship seemed familiar, but he couldn't remember exactly why."

### New believers

When they got to the top, a man named James greeted them, and McKinney instantly remembered that he had shared the gospel with James the last time he saw him and he had become a believer in Jesus.

"They were just rejoicing," Frazier said. "It was incred-

ible. It was such a sweet moment."

Another GMM chaplain, Adam McCarty, was able to lead three more seamen to faith in Christ recently after delivering pizza to the ship.

He baptized them on the deck of their ship, a testimony to other people aboard who were watching.

This year, GMM has made contact with more than 1,200 seafarers from 26 countries, (See 'Treasured,' page 17)



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**Southern Baptist Convention**

Nashville, Tennessee

annual meeting coverage

COMING  
NEXT WEEK

# Writers conference celebrates 30 years, honors Rash with encouragement award

By Jessica Ingram  
TAB Media

After the ups and downs of the last year and a half, everyone could use a little encouragement. And that's just what the 2021 Southern Christian Writers Conference — held June 4–5 in Hueytown — set out to provide.

“Let’s embrace the encouragement of your leaders and peers,” said SCWC director Cheryl Wray during the opening session of the conference. “We have wise counsel here.”

The conference also celebrated the encouragement of writers by recognizing Jennifer Davis Rash, president and editor-in-chief of TAB Media Group, as this year’s recipient of the Joanne Sloan National Award for the Encouragement of Writers, an annual award given by Vision Press. Previous recipients are Cec Murphey (inaugural recipient in 2016), Rick Bragg, Bruce Barbour and Ramona Richards.

## ‘Very thankful’

“There’s a thread that runs through the story of my life,” Rash said. “It’s the many mentors who have taught and encouraged me. God continually placed people in my life, at every point, who just showed up. I’m so very thankful.”

About 50 people gathered in person and 100 attended virtually for the 30th year of the SCWC, giving Wray and her team an extra boost for the special anniversary.

In addition to the presentation of the Joanne Sloan Award, the conference also featured keynote speakers Todd Gerelds, author of “Woodlawn,” and Ginger Rue, contributing



(L to r) Cheryl Wray, Ellen Maze and Mary Claire Branton lead a question and answer time to end the 2021 Southern Christian Writers Conference on June 5.

editor for Guideposts Magazine and author of the Aleca Zamm series; workshops on writing, research, magazines, books, social media and more; and the 2021 SCWC Writing Awards ceremony.

Gerelds shared about the importance of connecting with the body of Christ. “Everything we know as reality today He spoke into existence.”

Rue encouraged participants to “honor God with the gifts He has given you.”

The conference concluded with the presentation of the 2021 SCWC Writing Awards, several of which went to TAB Media contributors. In the newspaper article category, first place went to David Chan-ey for “When Hate is Appropriate,” published in the Newman Times-Herald; second place went to Jan White for “Faith Over Fear in the Face of COVID-19,” published in the Andalusia Star News; and third place went to Shirley Crowder for “Christians Should Scatter Sunshine,” published in The Gadsden Times.

In the magazine article category, first place went to Bill King for “In Over Your Head?,” published in Mature Living Magazine; second place went to Karen Allen for

“Unexpected Blessings,” published in Home Life Magazine; and third place went to Grace Booth for “Duplicity,” in Life Signs Magazine.

In the poetry category, first place went to LaKisha Cargill for “Betrayal,” published in Wildfire; second place went to April McCay for “The Golden Leaf,” published in The Cullman Tribune; and third place went to Tina Posey for “Life is Like a Fragrant Rose,” published in The Fentress Courier.

In the short story category, first place went to Becky Alexander for “Connected by Kindness,” published in Chicken Soup for the Soul: Miracles and Divine Intervention; second place went to Karen Allen for “The Lost Ring,” published in Abba’s Answered; and third place went to Nancy Cowart for “He Drew Us All,” published in Abba’s Answers. In the blog post category, first place went to Mel Tavares for “Post-Pandemic Grief;” second place went to Terri Miller for “Adjusting My Focus;” third place went to Miranda Herring for “The Blue Nights and the Heavy Things;” and honorable mentions went to Katie Dale for “Always Look for the Rainbow” and A. Ray Lee for “Out of the Darkness into Light.”

View a gallery of photos by Tracy Riggs at [tabonline.org/SCWC-2021](http://tabonline.org/SCWC-2021). To purchase access to the event’s virtual archive through the summer, email [scwritersconference@gmail.com](mailto:scwritersconference@gmail.com).



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

## The Alabama Baptist

“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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# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**By Jennifer Davis Rash**

President and Editor-in-Chief



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## Navigating the latest rocky waters of denominational life

**T**he glow on the little guy's face as the children's pastor surfaced him from the portable baptismal pool triggered a sprinkling of water down several cheeks in the sanctuary.

A handful of us sat at the perfect distance and angle to see the crinkle in his nose emerge above a beaming smile as he was "raised in newness of life."

We had the unusual opportunity to see these details because the church's official baptismal pool was covered with decorations for Vacation Bible School, much like what is happening at many churches across the state.

As my husband and I sat in the June 6 service at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville, we found opportunities to worship at every point and eagerly soaked up the sermon.

Preaching from Judges 6:1–16, Pastor Bill Wilks shared how "the Israelites thought they were brought low because of the Midianites, but God said to look again."

"We see the surface problem, but God sees the root problem," Wilks explained.

"Appearances can be deceiving, and we should never overlook the God factor.

"We can be too big for God to use us but never too small. God

sees all the potential in us and wants to draw it out.

"But we — the people of God — may need to look at our own hearts to see where we are rebelling against Him as individuals and as churches."

Church leaders made only one mention of the then upcoming SBC Annual Meeting — a vote to approve the messengers.

We chuckled as executive pastor Stephen Hall accidentally called those of us on the messenger list "missionaries" to the annual meeting before he realized what he said and got tickled as he corrected the reference.

It truly was a slip of the tongue, but my mind clung to what he said. Maybe all of us going as messengers should be missionaries of sorts to the SBC.

After all, the leaders of our convention entities, Executive Committee, seminaries and auxiliaries are in the roles they are in to serve the churches, not the other way around.

Several of them need our help to guide us back to calm waters of unity and cooperation and away from the divisive, difficult terrain they decided to explore.

Intimidation and bullying tactics among denominational leaders are not new. Neither are manipulative actions to gain or keep control of whatever area or funding — or maybe secret —

he or she is attempting to control. The reason it seems worse now is because we get to watch it play out in real time through social media.

A steady diet of the ugliness eats at our soul, and there's a point we sense a need to respond.

But instead of choosing sides and casting blame, what if the masses of us who don't like what we see stand together in prayer and a unified voice?

What if we refuse to take the bait, and instead of getting caught up in the drama swirling around us, we commit to purifying our denomination?

Churches are the leaders of the SBC, and as such we should start with our individual congregations. That means first assessing our own hearts. It means surrounding our pastors with prayer and support and helping them focus strictly on God to lead.

Healthy churches can then work together to sift issues at the associational level and state convention level. From there, the members of the boards of trustees of the national groups should be strong enough to guide those employed as directors of the groups.

We, as members of the churches across this denomination, fund the work taking place, and we trust the process put in place to manage the work, but if our hearts are not pure, then that will trickle down to those who are called and thus hired to do the work.

They need us. Without prayer, accountability and clear expectations, we all are susceptible to the ugliness and deception of life. We already have the strength and power needed to navigate these latest rocky waters of denominational life — His name is Jesus.

What if all of us — not just those we want to put on a list, but all of us — get over ourselves and look back to Him?



Photo by Margaret Smith

Josh Wilks of NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, baptizes 7-year-old Grant Stuman during the June 6 early service.

# Your Voice



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

## Fathers have God-given responsibility to lead family in worship

By James Hammack  
TAB Media

We hear the term “worship leader” and often think about someone on a platform or behind a pulpit singing and playing an instrument during a church service. But leading in worship was the responsibility given to Adam in Genesis when he was told to obey certain commands and lead his wife and future family in doing so as well.

### ‘Weight of fathering’

I want to reclaim that term and apply it to the home. Not just for your sake, but for mine. I’m a husband to Alicia and father of Jace, Ellie Bre and Abigail. And we would like to add to that number.

The older my children become, the more I’m aware of the weight of fathering. This isn’t a simple task of “make enough money to pay the bills and feed the family.” There is an entire spiritual component that is necessary for me to fulfill as a father. I am called to lead my precious gifts by living a life of worship in front of them.

When you are teaching a young child to carefully walk through the

woods the first time, you don’t just point out a path and let them have at it. What do we do? We walk in front of them, pausing to point out dangers and showing them where to place their feet carefully behind us. All the while, we are also walking in front of them making sure to spot anything dangerous before we even get close.

Life is exactly the same. And it’s not just for finances, relationships and hard work that we do this with them. It needs to be for the spiritual world in all of these areas of life as well. We don’t need to spend wisely just to have a nice retirement. We need to spend wisely for the glory of the Lord and the support of His kingdom from a cheerful heart.

We don’t just need to treat others well and find a good spouse. We need to love others as Christ has loved us and seek to honor the Lord in a godly marriage. And we don’t just work hard because it’s the best way to work. We do everything from the big to the small for the glory of the Lord as unto the Lord.

In the life lessons that the world seeks to teach our children through media, schools and culture at large,



Photo courtesy of James Hammack

James Hammack baptizes his 8-year-old son, Jace, on May 30 in Autauga Creekwalk in Prattville. When fathers take responsibility to lead their families in lives of worship, it “will change nations for generations,” Hammack said.

there are deeper realities centered on Christ that must be taught. I need help to teach those things.

Men are known for refusing to ask for help. We got this! But we really don’t. We need God and godly men of sound faith in our lives building us up and holding us accountable for obedience and the training of our children.

We need to pray for our children and ask God for wisdom, thanking Him that He will give it to those who ask for it in faith. We need to involve other faithful families in our lives to show our kids that community centered on Christ is necessary for faithful life.

And we need to be willing to be vulnerable, sharing the mistakes of our past or asking our own children for forgiveness when we sin against

them or their mothers to highlight the place of grace and redemption we have in Christ.

### God is present

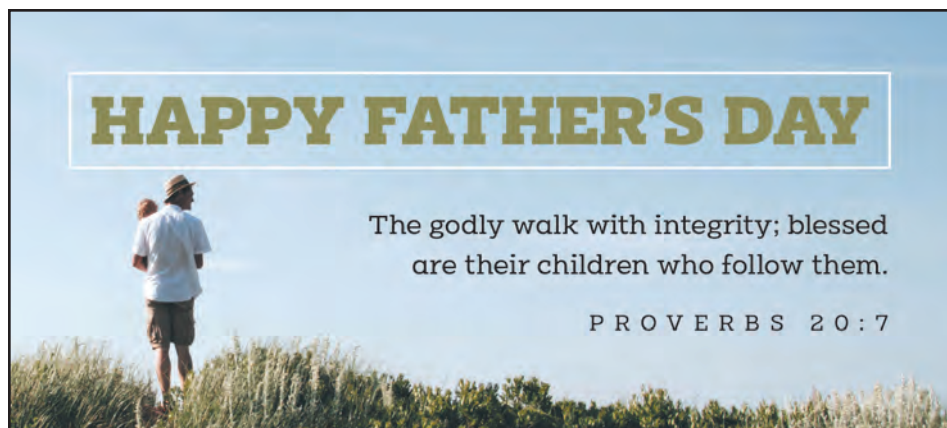
God will not forsake us. He has promised to be present through his Spirit and see us as abiding in Christ’s righteousness. And it’s from this place that we stand firm as fathers, leading the way to live lives of worship for our families. And this type of fatherly leading will change nations for generations.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — James Hammack is TAB Media’s digital services manager. He and his wife, Alicia, have a son, Jace, and daughters, Ellie Bre and Abigail. They live in Prattville and are members of Sovereign Grace Church, Millbrook.*

## HAPPY FATHER’S DAY

The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them.

PROVERBS 20:7



“Humility is an inner quality of listening to others, giving credit where credit is due, and seeking the well-being and respect of others.”

MORRIS MURRAY JR.  
*Jasper, Ala.*

At the end of [Man Church] events, there's a moment where we have children pray over their fathers, and if I think about it for too long, I'll get emotional. I've never experienced anything like it in my life, to be on a stage and watch hundreds of kids put their hands on their dad's heads or shoulders and pray over their dads.

**Andy Blanks**  
YM360, Iron Hill Press

On my first Father's Day as a dad, I preached a message titled, "A Father's Desire for a Godly Legacy." I envisioned my funeral and what I

would want my son to say about me:

1. I know my father loved me unconditionally.
2. I know my father loved my mother unconditionally.
3. I know my father loved God unconditionally.

**Pastor H.B. Charles Jr.**  
Jacksonville, Florida

This past year has been challenging. ... Some things have changed, yet keep in mind that some things have not and will not change. God is still sovereign, Jesus is still the Savior, the Holy Spirit is still speaking and the Bible is still the suffi-

cient word of God. [Millions have died due to COVID-19] yet man's greatest need is not a cure for the coronavirus. Man's greatest need is an answer for the virus of sin, for all have sinned and fallen short.

Jesus is still the answer, the only way of salvation. ... People need to hear the good news of the gospel. ... May God help the church to understand and to make the changes that are needed so the church can take that message to a lost and dying world around us!

**Chris Guinn**  
Associational missionary  
Sand Mountain Association

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @ShaiLinne

Let us love and sing and wonder. Let us praise the Savior's name. He has hushed the Law's loud thunder, He has quenched Mt. Sinai's flame. He has washed us with His blood He has brought us near to God ... from John Newton

### @brocraige

What would it look like if we worked harder and more creatively at loving our neighbors?

### @revandyfrazier

"An unchurched Christian is a grotesque anomaly. The New Testament knows nothing of such a person. For the church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought." —John Stott

### @macbrunson

"Your great love for us poor men can be seen in this: You have given

us, instead of a heavy cross, a light yoke; instead of your bitter sorrow, indestructible joy; instead of your awful death, eternal life." Balthasar Hubmaier

### @rayortlund

"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property" (Matt 25:14). My entire existence is His property, not my own. And I will soon report in and give Him an account of how I stewarded His property. Solemnizing. Dignifying.

### @ricklance

There are times when we make prayer requests but then we do not offer praise reports. We have much for which to be grateful.

### @PaulTripp

Don't fear admitting your weakness, because it's in these moments that true strength is found, but be

very concerned about the temptation to convince yourself that you're independently strong.

### @trillianebell

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..." Praying for us who know our Father to delight in Him and praise His glorious name. May we rest in His fatherly arms — safe, secure, in Him.

### @sPeytonHill

It will never be enough to say that you believe in the inerrancy & sufficiency of the Bible. Throwing those phrases around mean very little. We will know your stance by how you read, study, interpret, & teach the Book.

### @Chris\_Hanna\_

Jesus commands not just tolerance of those who are different from us, but deep, expensive, unrelenting love. — @RebeccaMcLaugh

## Developing a stewardship mindset

Sometimes the word "stewardship" has a negative connotation, but it shouldn't because it comes from God and is something God wants to be part of our life.

Christian financial adviser and author Ron Blue defines biblical stewardship as "the use of God-given resources such as time, talent, treasure, truth and relationships for the accomplishment of God-given goals and objectives."

God-given resources include every gift God gives me. It's not just about money.

Every minute of your day, every day of the year that you are on earth, every talent, every gift, every piece of knowledge, your relationships, your network, the people you know, the things you know — as a Christian, our goal should be to build a stewardship mindset.

The Bible says I need to grow a stewardship mindset so everything I'm thinking about, everything I do, is centered on what God would have me do. How can I give back in every area of my life and do so with gratitude?

God can use all the gifts He's given us and multiply them as we give back to Him. What I have may not be enough to do anything. What you have individually may not be enough to do anything. But what if you and I put our time, our money or our resources together? What if others come along and do the same?

God says, listen, let me take all of that to multiply and to do things you cannot even imagine.

We have the privilege of being able to be involved in His kingdom work. How cool is that?

**Marc Hall**  
Financial adviser  
Adapted from "Men and Money" webinar  
[alsbom.org/men-and-money](http://alsbom.org/men-and-money)

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

Blanket Fort Hope, a ministry that seeks to increase awareness of child sex trafficking, plans to build a restoration center in Columbiana to help traumatized children heal and recover from the abuse they have suffered.

# Offering restoration



Photo courtesy of Blanket Fort Hope

## Blanket Fort Hope ministry aims to help victims of child sex trafficking heal

By Tracy Riggs

TAB Media

It's a common misperception that human trafficking happens only internationally, but Pelham-based Blanket Fort Hope is working to bring attention to the problem in the U.S. and to its youngest victims.

Alexa James is CEO and founder of Blanket Fort Hope, a ministry focused on bringing the issue of child sex trafficking to light and helping survivors by providing a specialized safe space for them to be restored.

James believes child sex trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes in America next to arms and drug trafficking.

Most children do not understand they are being trafficked, she said. They might think they are in love with the person trafficking them, or the situation may be the safest place they have ever known because of previous abuse.

Even for those who are rescued or want out, there is nowhere to go, and often they do not self-identify.

### Untreated trauma

"Right now, when most of these children are rescued, they are put into a group home with a basic care license. What ends up happening is the child's trauma goes untreated,

so 87% of them return to the streets within 24 hours," James explained. "This trauma they have from being raped, drugged, beaten and burdened with STDs is so severe that it requires specialized services and programs. They need more than just basic care — they need therapeutic restoration."

These children also need specialized counseling to "rewire" their brains, James noted. They effectively quit growing because of systematic abuse, and on average, they live only seven years after being trafficked.

That's where Blanket Fort Hope comes in. A blanket fort is a place where children can play and feel safe, a key for child survivors of human trafficking to heal.

"We have a fortress of safety, and its name is hope," James said.

Blanket Fort Hope is actively working to provide for their specific needs through a "community" they plan in Columbiana.

A dedicated location, called a restoration home, will provide up to three months of health care and trauma-focused therapy to help stabilize survivors, increasing the likelihood that they will remain off the streets. After spending needed time there, the children will move

into houses called therapeutic cottages on the property. Each home will have foster parents who provide full-time care for up to five children. Many children will have the opportunity to be adopted, James said, but there also will be a transitional home available through their college years.

### Preventive education

During the six years Blanket Fort Hope has been in operation, they have been providing community-focused seminars and preventive foster care training, along with equipping professionals to identify and respond to survivors.

To date, they have trained more than 6,000 foster families, educators, church members and health care professionals, as well as legal and transportation leadership across Alabama, spanning more than nine counties.

"We believe that preventative education, compassionate care and a loving Christian witness are three key ways to help put a deterrent in child trafficking," James explained.

"We live in a fallen world, a sinful world, so I don't know that we will ever be able to stop this until Jesus comes back.

"But we can make a dent in it and spread the word of Jesus Christ throughout our communities and throughout Alabama."

Every time James goes to the group's newly acquired property, she said she cries with joy. The goal

has been a long time coming, and there have been many obstacles to get to the point of building. Many have said they would fail. However, God has been at work.

"We would have loved for this to happen a long time ago," James said, but admitted the timing would not have been right.

"I see God's hand. We might not have understood how important the restoration home was. We might have just started with putting homes on the property and working from there. We would've seen colossal failure," she said.

The waiting time has helped James and others with Blanket Fort Hope see the needs more clearly and trust God more, she said.

"I've learned to walk in faith," James said. "Every day I have to rededicate that back to God. It keeps me on my knees. I see miracle after miracle, only because of God's hand. I love that it's not because of what I'm doing but it's all because of what He's doing."

James invites individuals and churches to get involved and bring awareness to the issue of child sex trafficking. The main need is prayer, as there are many

hurdles to reach the children.

Financial supporters also are needed. But James said the pieces are coming together.

"To watch [God] build this and bring [together] the people that need to be here has simply been amazing."



Photo courtesy of Blanket Fort Hope

Participants in an April dedication event wrote Scripture on rocks that will be integrated into restoration homes.

**Find more information on the ministry and resources for church training and Bible study at [blanketforhope.org](http://blanketforhope.org).**

# Beware of the deep fake

## Christians should be careful not to fall victim to videos that misinterpret reality

By Selah Vetter  
TAB Media

In 2019, a video went viral on Instagram showing Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg bragging how the platform “owns” its users. The quote revealed the so-called truth of how Facebook misuses private information and caused Facebook users to panic.

However, the video of Zuckerberg was not the truth — it was a “deep fake.”

While numerous technological advancements have aided Christians in better spreading the gospel, others — such as deep fakes — can contradict the truth of the character of God.

Deep fakes are highly realistic videos created by artificial intelligence, or AI, that misinterpret reality. They have the power to dilute society’s trust in news and what is true through the manipulation of video and audio.

With the use of AI, creators can exploit audio and facial movements to create a deep fake. They can make a person’s mouth move to match an audio recording. They can edit audio by cutting and rearranging previously recorded clips to manipulate a person’s words.

Deep fakes often superimpose one person’s face on that of another person. Using AI algorithms, creators find similar facial expressions between the two people and superimpose a face over the original. This allows the transposed person’s face and body to move more realistically — and deceptively.

“The deep fake disillusion can not only harm how we view ourselves and those around us but can also cause us to question some of the most basic aspects of what is true

in our divided world,” said Jason Thacker, chair of technology for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. “The aim of a deep fake is to present an alternate reality and sow discord in our society.”

### Spotting deep fakes

Despite being artificially created, deep fakes are deceptive due to the advanced technology utilized to create them. Without knowledge of AI or how to spot it, it is easy to not recognize the ingenuity of the video, especially at first glance.

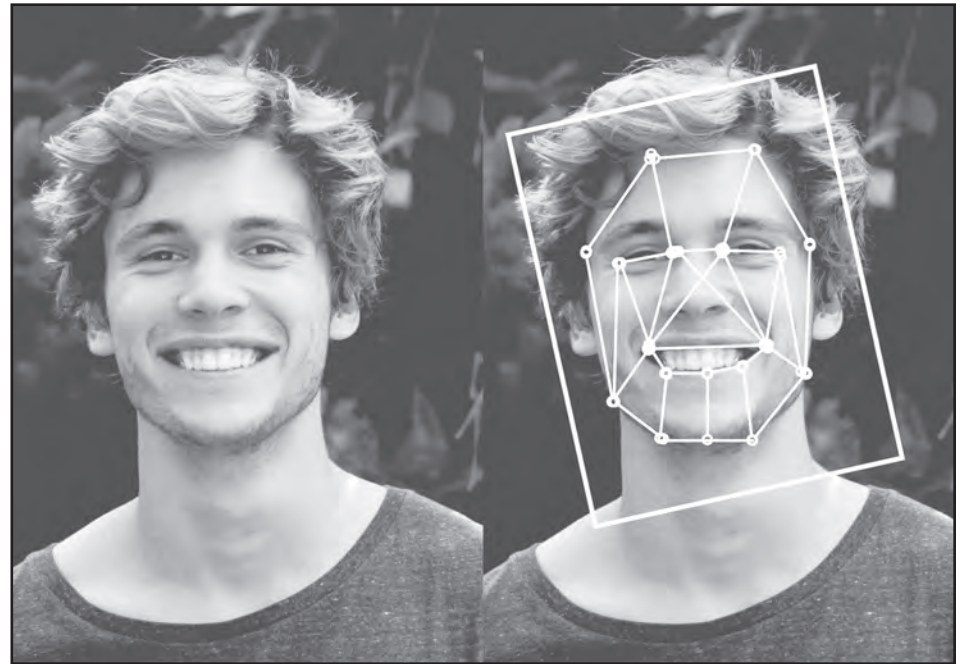
One way to spot a deep fake is by looking at the eyes of the person in the video. If the video is genuine, the person’s eyes will reflect the light and an image of the setting. Additionally, look at facial and body movements. If they appear unnatural or awkward, or if there is a lack of emotion on the face, the video is likely a fake.

Viewers also can utilize “detection technology.” Corporations and technology businesses, including Microsoft, have created deep fake detection to help identify whether a video has facial or voice manipulations.

Christians are not immune from being fooled by deep fake technology and should use discernment before sharing them, said Andrew Walker, associate professor of

**“The aim of a deep fake is to present an alternate reality and sow discord in our society.”**

**Jason Thacker**  
chair of technology,  
Ethics & Religious  
Liberty Commission



TAB graphic

Deep fakes are highly realistic videos that use technology to manipulate a person’s words and actions, deceiving viewers by misrepresenting truth. These videos have the power to dilute society’s trust in news and what is true.

Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

### People of truth

“Because of our commitment to Jesus, we are to be truthful people, which means the intentional spread of misinformation is not simply a violation of our integrity, but a violation against Jesus,” Walker said. “In Christ, there ought to be no shadow of conspiracy or falsehood. Because of this, we should be particularly attentive to the information we’re reading and have a heightened filter before passing it on.”

Before sharing content, research a video and look for signs to

determine if it is a deep fake, Walker advises. That due diligence can help decrease the spread of fake news and misinformation.

“Follow the pattern handed down in the book of James: Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,” Walker said. “As we come across a source, we need to ask ourselves whether the source is engaging in salacious gossip or slander and whether the publication has a history of misrepresenting facts. In turn, we should pause and question whether the sharing of a particular article will build up a culture of truth or tear it down.”

**“In Christ, there ought to be no shadow of conspiracy or falsehood. Because of this, we should be particularly attentive to the information we’re reading and have a heightened filter before passing it on.”**

**Andrew Walker**  
associate professor of Christian ethics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

# Sanibel Island: Restores & refreshes

## Tropical setting in Florida islands draws seafood, shell, wildlife enthusiasts

By **Connie Pearson**

TAB Media

For those who are weary of Zoom meetings and computer screens, Sanibel Island and her sister island Captiva offer displays of nature that can help restore our hearts and refresh our minds.

Located on Florida's Gulf Coast, Sanibel lures visitors outdoors with its palm trees, flowers, hypnotic waves, abundant wildlife and dizzying array of seashells. Twenty-five miles of paved bike trails indicate the commitment of the locals to good health and enjoyment of nature, while area restaurants and farmers' markets offer produce and dishes prepared with the freshest ingredients and seafood straight from the Gulf of Mexico.

Sanibel Island is connected to nearby Fort Myers by way of a three-mile-long causeway bridge. Captiva is accessed by a short bridge on the opposite end of Sanibel. There is a \$6 toll for island-bound travelers but no fee for those leaving to return to Fort Myers and points beyond.

Flying into Southwest Florida International Airport and then renting a car might be the quickest way to reach Sanibel, but there is also an easy-to-follow route for driving from Alabama by heading down U.S. 231 from Montgomery and Dothan to I-10 West, then south on I-75.

### Numerous shells

Beachcombing and perfecting your own version of the Sanibel Stoop as you retrieve countless shells might become your No. 1 reason for loving Sanibel Island, but the overall environment, climate, scenery and unique vibe of the location will compete for second place.

Sanibel and Captiva Islands are consistently listed among the top shelling beaches in the world. The quantity and variety of shells are astonishing, and visitors quickly get addicted to the search for perfect specimens. Blind Pass, Bowman's Beach, Lighthouse Beach and Turner Beach are noted hot spots, but I'd put Tarpon Bay Beach at the top of my list.



Photo by Connie Pearson

The J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge is home to many species of wildlife, including some that are endangered. COVID restrictions are still limiting inside access, but many of the outdoor features are available to visitors.

If you stay in a condo or a beach house on the Gulf, you can walk out to the edge of the waves at any time, but public beaches put the shells within reach for everyone.

There is a per-hour fee to park in the adjoining lots, so plan to arrive early to secure a spot. Most have restrooms available, but Bowman's Beach does not.

Shell bags and a long-handled scooper are great collecting tools, but remember that live shelling is not permitted. Water shoes are important too because of all the sharp shell pieces along the shoreline. Sanibel is home to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, the only one of its kind in the country and a fascinating place to learn about the world of mollusks.

### Birdwatchers paradise

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge makes up more than 6,400 acres of Sanibel Island. The mangrove forests, marshes and seagrass beds compose the perfect habitat for over 245 species of birds, as well as many other

mammals, amphibians and fish.

The Visitor's Center is free and very informative, but you also can take a narrated tram tour or drive the 4-mile-long wildlife trail at your own pace. Take two things: your camera and insect repellent.

This is a refuge rather than a park, so the emphasis is on the welfare of the wildlife rather than that of the visitors. The wildlife trail fee is per car.

### Walking and biking trails

There are plenty of places to pull to the side of the road for closer looks, plus you can fish, put in a kayak or walk one of the six trails on the refuge. This is a photographer's dream location.

Sanibel lures you outdoors and encourages good health by making exercise easy.

For example, Sanibel's biking and walking trails are almost completely separated from the automobile traffic.

When the trails cross the two-lane roads, the path is clearly marked, and pedestrians and bikers



Photo by Connie Pearson

Because Sanibel and Captiva are islands, seafood takes center stage on local restaurant menus. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also featured in many dishes served on the islands.

**“Seafood is the star on most restaurant menus.**

**Oysters, shrimp, grouper, crab and more are prepared in many ways and are accompanied by delicious sides.”**

are given courteous consideration.

Billy’s Bike Shop and Finna-more’s Cycle Shop are the most popular places where visitors can rent bikes. They offer a wide variety from multispeed bicycles to adult trikes, and from recumbent bikes to tandems and attachments for children. The bike shops will deliver your chosen bike to your condo or beach house and pick it up when you’re finished.

They also will provide a quick repair or substitution if you encounter a mechanical problem.

### Healthy eating

Seafood is the star on most restaurant menus. Oysters, shrimp, grouper, crab and more are prepared in many ways and are accompanied by delicious sides.

However, this is not the place for casseroles, cornbread and hush-puppies, as wonderful as those dishes are.

Instead, expect colorful steamed vegetables and delightful fresh fruits. Your meal might even arrive garnished with a tiny orchid.

Restaurants I have tried and eagerly recommend include George & Wendy’s Seafood Grille, RC Otter’s Island Eats (on Captiva), Gramma Dot’s, and Island Cow.

If you want your seafood prepared with Cajun seasoning, try Mudbugs, and if you’ve had your fill of seafood, head to Matzaluna for fabulous Italian cuisine. Go to Thistle Lodge for an upscale experience overlooking the Gulf, or try The Bubble Room on Captiva for fun, quirky decor and enormous desserts.

From October through May, the Sanibel Farmers Market on

Sundays and the Captiva Farmers Market on Tuesdays bring together vendors from the surrounding area with locally grown produce, fresh-caught seafood, home-baked breads, cheeses, desserts, guacamole and salsas, as well as plants, jewelry and clothing.

They also attract food trucks, which feature breakfast and lunch favorites prepared and ready. These markets are extremely popular. I guarantee you will find something you can’t resist.

### Long history

The history of Sanibel dates to the time when Ponce de Leon was searching for the Fountain of Youth and includes Calusa Indians, pirates and brave pioneers.

The Sanibel Historical Museum & Village is the place to learn all about it. Adjacent to the village is BIG Arts Center (Barrier Island

Group for the Arts) which is a modern entertainment complex and art gallery.

The gallery presents new exhibits regularly. The schedule for plays and concerts is rebounding from the pandemic and will be back in full operation very soon.

Those who enjoy shopping while on vacation will love exploring Periwinkle Place with its lovely setting and nice selection of stores, including the

very first Chico’s.

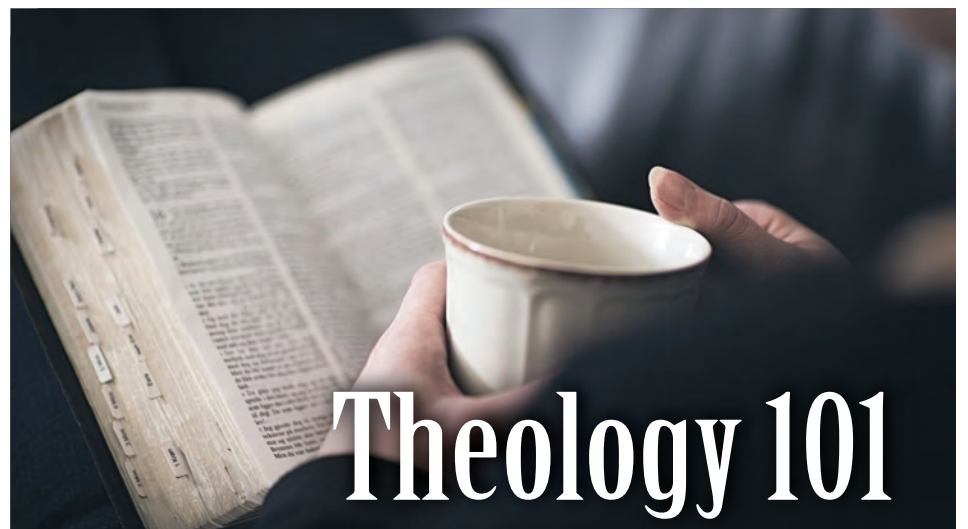
Tahitian Gardens, The Village Shops, and Olde Sanibel Shoppes are other good choices.

Judging from the car tags spotted, people from the Northeast and Midwest have discovered and embraced the charms of Sanibel and Captiva Islands. I believe people from Alabama will find it to be a valuable and beautiful vacation destination as well.



Photo by Connie Pearson

Beachcombers will delight at the number and variety of seashells available on both Sanibel and Captiva islands.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## God’s Word

### Enduring

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.

TAB Media

When we hold a Bible in our hands, we have in hand the inspired and effectual word of God. This week we go a step further by recognizing that Holy Scripture is also an enduring Word. In His major discourse to His disciples while on the Mount of Olives, Jesus declared, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

The work of God’s enduring Word was part of the Apostle Peter’s message in his first epistle, in which he referred to God’s word as that which lives and abides forever. He based that assertion on the witness of Isaiah the prophet, whom he quotes as having declared, “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Pet. 1:24–25).

### Multiple languages

The Bible is an amazing story of crossing language barriers, from its origin in the Hebrew and Greek languages to the availability in a multiplicity of languages and dialects that dot the world.

This Word has withstood multiple attempts of human rulers to ban or burn it. Its enemies of the past lie silent in their graves, but God’s enduring word continues to speak loudly and clearly to His people on every continent.

As Psalm 100:5 puts it, “For the

LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.”

This imperishable book has endured throughout the centuries as it has been laboriously copied by the hands of scribes. Since the emergence of the printing press, it has endured in countless copies scattered throughout the world. Now the electronic age has added yet another layer to the expanding availability of the Bible — the countless printed editions have been joined by electronic copies, making God’s word enduring in its availability.

### Availability

Isn’t it amazing that an instrument we can hold in the palm of one hand can almost instantly bring before us any portion of God’s word, even in multiple translations?

The breadth of its availability is remarkable, assuring once again that it will continue, leaving us without excuse for reading it and hiding it in our hearts. However, the significance of its enduring quality lies not just in its pervasive presence but even more in its eternal message.

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.





# COVID-19 quarantine leads to salvation experience for student

By **Grace Thornton**  
Special to the State Board of Missions

**Micah Parker**, left, baptizes Matt Bond on March 28 at Church at the Oaks, a collegiate church plant in Tuscaloosa.

**Matt Bond puts it simply like this—before he met Jesus, he was lost.**

He was also sick.

Matt, a freshman at the University of Alabama, was sent to live for two weeks in a quarantine dorm on campus after he learned he had COVID-19 in January. It was a lonely place to be.

But back in the fall, Micah Parker and other students at the university's Baptist Campus Ministries had put together bags to let students in quarantine know that they weren't alone. They had filled them with goodies and necessities purchased with donations from an area Woman's Missionary Union group and Tuscaloosa Association churches.

"We used the bags to let the students know, 'Hey, you're not isolated. There are people who love you and are praying for you,'" Micah said.

When Matt moved in, there was a bag waiting for him. It had a connection card in it directing him to a website, and he went to the website, filled out the form and checked the box that said, "I want to know more about what it means to live a life for Jesus."

Then when he got out of quarantine, one of the first things he did was meet up with Micah to talk.

"God had been laying the foundation to reach him," said Micah, who had gotten Matt's number from campus minister Kim Andrews.

Micah started a conversation with Matt, and the next thing he knew, Matt was sharing with him the tough journey his family had been on with life and faith.

Matt had grown up in church, but they had lost his dad's brother to a suicide because of alcoholism. "My dad has been sober for 26 years," Matt said,



**UA BCM students** pray over goodie bags being provided to students in COVID quarantine.

He gave Matt a Bible from the BCM, gave him a passage to read and told him to write down any questions he had. The two started meeting up regularly and walking through Romans together.

Then Matt accepted Micah's invitation to a service at a new collegiate church plant in Tuscaloosa, Church at the Oaks. He went for several weeks, and on Feb. 21, Pastor Britton Latham preached a sermon that flipped the switch for him — a sermon on Philippians 1:21, where Paul writes that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Matt told Britton that day that he was ready to follow Christ, and on March 28, he was baptized in the church's first ever baptismal service.

"Since then, I've really had a sense of clarity and purpose," Matt said. "I used to be fairly lonely, but now I have someone to turn to and learn from. I know how to set the example for other members of my family who have yet to follow Christ. And I know that the road ahead is

"and to lose his brother to the same disease that he'd been rid of and lost his dad to before I was born — it completely ruined his faith."

It was part of the "hardest five years" of Matt's life, and "we hated God," he said.

But it didn't change the fact that he had questions, and now sitting with Micah, he planned to ask them.

"He was super open, super vulnerable," Micah said.

long and it's going to be difficult but that it is now possible because I have Jesus with me."

And on the day he was baptized, he called his brother to tell him — and before he could, his brother told him he too had started attending a Bible study.

Micah said it's "been amazing" to walk with Matt through the discipleship process and "to see God work in his life and the life of his family members."

Britton said the whole story has been incredible to see.

"It's a story where multiple avenues of Baptist work overlap and coincide, which is really special," he said.

God wove together the combined efforts of BCM, a new church plant and Alabama WMU — ministries made possible by Alabama Baptist gifts through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. And ultimately, Britton said, it became a story of Matt coming to Christ.

Matt sums it up like this — it was "all because the BCM on campus made these little COVID bags for students in isolation."

"The rest is history," he said. "They introduced me to Micah, Micah brought me to church and church brought me back to Jesus."

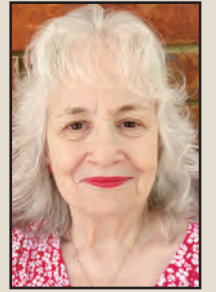
For more information about the Cooperative Program in Alabama, visit [AlabamaCP.org](http://AlabamaCP.org). To learn more about the ministries supported by the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, visit [Myers-Mallory.org](http://Myers-Mallory.org).

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 University-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



## English missionary Williams was born 225 years ago this month

**J**ohn Williams (1796–1839) was an English missionary who evangelized the Pacific South Sea Islands and died a martyr. This month is the 225th anniversary of his birth.

Williams was born June 27, 1796, at Tottenham High Cross in London to John and Hannah Williams. His father's ancestors had been Baptists for generations. The Calvinistic Methodist movement influenced his mother.

### Conversion experience

In 1814, he had a conversion experience and joined the Tabernacle Church (Calvinistic Methodist). In 1816, he volunteered as a missionary with the London Missionary Society and was ordained in September.

On Oct. 29, 1816, he married

Mary Chauner. The couple started their journey to the Society Islands. Their first missionary post was on the island of Raiatea. They had a friendly welcome by King Tamatoa, a monarch who had been waiting for someone to give them the message of salvation.

John and Mary served on Raiatea for 5 years. Their work resulted in a congregation of over 2,000 people. Hundreds were baptized.

Naked cannibals started wearing clothes. Idols were destroyed. Farms were cultivated, and animals from Australia helped the farmers.

The missionaries' next stop was Raratonga in the Cook Islands. Although they experienced success, they endured many difficulties.

Malaria and tropical diseases caused Mary to lose several babies. (The couple had 10 children. Only three lived to be adults.)

After Raratonga was evangelized, they went to the Samoan Islands.

Williams used Jesus as an example and sent out native disciples two by two to reach the villages.

A ship, *The Messenger of Peace*, was built, and Williams traveled to numerous islands. In 10 years, many people responded to the gospel.

In 1833, John and Mary traveled back to England for the first time. John had become a celebrity. Huge crowds came to hear him preach. Young men and women resolved to become missionaries.



WILLIAMS

In April 1838, the couple left for the islands. Due to a high mortality in the South Pacific, they left their 6-year-old son in England.

### Brutally beaten

Upon their return, Williams decided to evangelize the New Hebrides islands. The most savage cannibals in the Pacific lived there. Leaving Mary at the mission station, he landed on the island of Erromango on Nov. 20, 1839. He was brutally beaten with a war club until dead. The cannibals ate his body.

In his Bible, Williams had written on a piece of paper a text from Jesus: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 32:22). His prayer was answered. His faith never wavered.

## Alabama Pastors Conference seeks videos of sermons, new subscribers

**L**ooking for a video of Phil Hoskins preaching at the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference in 2009? Or Johnny Hunt preaching there in 2019?

Now there's a landing page for all those videos on YouTube. And Richard Richie — pastor of Blue Springs Baptist Church, Somerville, and secretary-treasurer of the Pastors Conference — says they want as many more videos as they can get.

They are looking for videos from conferences prior to 2009 and for the years 2012–2015 specifically, as they "only have a few of the videos for those years but not a complete

set," Richie said. "If you have any of these videos and would be willing to share so they can be duplicated and then posted to the YouTube site, we would appreciate it so much."

He said they promise to treat videos with care and return them after they have been duplicated.

If you have any of these and are willing to share, please send to either:

- ▶ Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference, P.O. Box 96, Hartselle, AL 35640, or
- ▶ Nathan Daniels c/o Bethany Baptist Church,

14632 Heath River Falls Rd., Andalusia, AL 36421.

To check out the YouTube page, visit [youtube.com/channel/UC1KQrUbw-z89eEPpHUEyrfpA](https://youtube.com/channel/UC1KQrUbw-z89eEPpHUEyrfpA).

And if you're wondering why such a long link, they could use your help with that too.

To get its own customized YouTube link, the Pastors

Conference page has to have 100 or more subscribers. You can help them out by subscribing to their page, Richie said. Do that at [tabonline.org/pc-subscribe](https://tabonline.org/pc-subscribe). (Grace Thornton)

**Subscribe to the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference YouTube page at [tabonline.org/pc-subscribe](https://tabonline.org/pc-subscribe).**



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# 3 stories you should know



IMB photo

In this file photo, an International Mission Board missionary works with a youth group at a church in Parina, Philippines. The IMB's journeyman program for young adults age 21 to 30 currently has 128 missionaries serving a 2-year term. Of those, 76% are female and 24% are male, according to a June 2 tweet by IMB President Paul Chitwood. More information on the journeyman program is available at [imb.org/go/options/journeyman](http://imb.org/go/options/journeyman). (TAB Media)

## Survey explores loyalty to denominations

A recent Lifeway Research study asked Protestant pastors their thoughts on the importance of denominations and how they believe denominations will fare in the next 10 years, and the news is not good.

In the face of denominational splits and disputes, the emergence of new local and national nondenominational networks and the presence of a large number of churches that do not belong to a denomination, convention or conference, more than 6 in 10 pastors (63%) currently at a church in a denomination say the importance of being identified with a denomination will diminish in the next 10 years. Around a third of pastors (32%) disagree, and 5% are not sure. A survey in 2010 garnered similar results, Lifeway reported. Read more at [tabonline.org/denominations](http://tabonline.org/denominations). (TAB Media)

## Rick Warren announces search for successor

Pastor Rick Warren announced June 6 that Saddleback Church, which he founded in 1980, will begin the search for his successor.

"We're going to start looking for the next generation pastor who will

replace me and lead our family into the future," Warren said.



WARREN

Warren is a well-known leader and author of the best-selling books "The Purpose-Driven Church" and "The Purpose-Driven

Life," which has sold more than 50 million copies worldwide. Saddleback is one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in the U.S., with an average attendance of 30,000 attendees each week. (TAB Media)

## Headline news from around the Southeast

### Arkansas

Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, has partnered with Pediatrics Plus, a children's therapy clinic that provides early intervention and care for children with developmental and special needs. With a Pediatrics Plus clinic on campus, OBU is now offering a new graduate program in applied behavior analysis, as well as health care to Ouachita employees. The partnership has created 90 jobs in the community, Arkansas Baptist News reported.

### Florida

Naples Family Church, launched Jan. 10 in Florida, is passionate about "keeping the feel of a small church ... through prioritizing relationships," said Dave Gipson, pastor and part of the core church planting team. "God is impressing on me simplicity, authenticity and relationships." Most of the people who have attended services

there have made salvation decisions, the Florida Baptist Witness reported. "We focus on being the church," Gipson said.

### Kentucky

Two hundred students, organized into 19 teams, are gearing up for Love Loud, a local ministry sponsored by Liberty Baptist Association in Kentucky. The ministry includes several construction projects, gospel projects such as Backyard Bible Clubs and more, Kentucky Today reported. "We can do more together than we can separately," said Jordan Woodie, associate pastor at Coral Hill Baptist Church, Glasgow, Kentucky.

### Mississippi

As 200 to 300 ships enter the Port of Pascagoula in Mississippi monthly, Mississippi Baptists are impacting the world for Christ. Through a seafarers ministry, volunteers, led by

director Vince Smith, befriend the crew members; invite them to a ministry center to relax and enjoy internet access, snacks, games and Bible studies; and often drive them to local stores to shop for food and necessities. Thousands of seafarers discover renewed or newfound faith in Christ.

### Tennessee

Tennessee's governor and legislature approved a grant enabling the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission to place seven ultrasound machines at pregnancy resource centers in the state, the Baptist and Reflector reported. The Tennessee Baptist Mission Board recently provided its first ultrasound machine to Birth Choice in Trenton, Tennessee, with funds from the state mission offering. TBMB's goal is to have an ultrasound machine "in every crisis pregnancy center" in Tennessee, said Randy Davis, TBMB president/executive director.

# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

► **Fred J. Cook** — former missionary and the first director of the Southeast Alabama Baptist Association Ministry Center — died May 30. He was 77.

Cook served in the U.S. Air Force and was awarded three Distinguished Flying Cross medals and numerous others. After retiring from the Air Force as a master sergeant in 1982, he continued his education and earned his bachelor's degree in theology at the Baptist College of Florida in Graceville and his master's degree in psychology and counseling from Troy University.



COOK

He worked with the State of Florida in various areas before serving six years with the International Mission Board as a missionary to Mexico alongside his wife, Melba.

In 2005, the Cooks were appointed by the North American Mission Board to serve in Dothan, where he was the first director of the Columbia Baptist Ministry Center (now SABA Ministry Center).

Over the years, he was also a chaplain for Florida Baptist Disaster Relief and chaplain for Alabama Raceway Ministries. He had the privilege to give the opening prayer for Talladega 500. At the time of his death, Cook was director of Chipola Family Ministry Center in Marianna, Florida.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years; daughter, Sheila; son, Darrell; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

► **Benton Goodman**, retired pastor and director of missions for Lamar Baptist Association, died June 7. He was 79.

A Mississippi native, Goodman served as a pastor and music minister at churches in Mississippi and Alabama for 50 years, including Millport Baptist Church. He became Lamar Association's DOM in 1997 and served in that role until he retired in 2010. He served several years as interim pastor of Fernbank Baptist Church, Millport, after that. At the time of his death, he was a member of Vernon First Baptist Church.



GOODMAN

Goodman is survived by his wife of 59 years, Pat; daughter, Paula; son, Scott; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► In May, **Fairfield Highlands Baptist Church, Midfield**, voted to dissolve and give all its assets to Birmingham Metro Baptist Association.

Then on June 10, BMBA voted to transfer the facilities of Fairfield Highlands Baptist to Faith Church, a congregation that has been meeting

in a rented facility on Highway 280 in Birmingham.

Chris Crain, BMBA executive director, said Aubrey Miller, pastor of Faith Church, has "been a partner in the Baptist work of our city for a long time" and said the church's "main motivation was to go somewhere where they could be a missional outpost in a community."

Crain noted that the congregation of Fairfield Highlands was to be commended for the work they have done in the community in recent years, specifically reaching out to area youth. He said he believes Faith Church will continue that ministry and "make a tremendous impact in Midfield."

Michael Ethridge, BMBA director of operations, said it's been a great story of two faithful congregations and an association that was able to make the connection and see ministry continue in Midfield for years to come.

"It's the beginning of a developing story," Ethridge said, noting that more partnerships with Faith Church were still to come. Watch future issues of TAB for updates.

## TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

► Ron Anders said 40 years ago when he was playing football at Auburn High School, **Cliff Knight** "pursued me, he loved me and he prayed for me."

Knight had just become youth director for Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, at that time, and "40 years later, he's still doing that for me," said Anders, now mayor of Auburn.

He presented Knight with



KNIGHT

a proclamation from the city naming April 25 "Cliff Knight Day" in Auburn during a special service honoring Knight's four decades at the church.

Pastor Al Jackson was emotional in his testimony about Knight, calling him "a man of integrity, ... a man after God's own heart."

Knight joined Lakeview as a college student from Slocumb, then moved through different staff positions in youth and college ministries before becoming family ministries pastor in 2008.

He and his wife, Toma, and five children — Becky, Ben (who died in 2017), Whit, Ansley and Clay — have opened their home to many over the years and have been involved in all sorts of ministry. Knight said he's "blessed, first and foremost," by the opportunity to serve the Lakeview family for so long.

"I think about the Lord's saving me and calling me to ministry, and I don't feel worthy," he said. "Christ changed my life so dramatically, and I just wanted to share that. I'm just humbled by it all."

► **John F. Meadows** recently retired after 45 years in the ministry. His ministry led him to churches in Georgia, Florida and North Carolina, then back to Georgia and finally Alabama, where he served at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Salem, for the past five years.

He and his wife, Norma, have two living children (one deceased), six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, and they have moved back to Georgia to be near them.



MEADOWS

## Persecuted church

### Attack in Myanmar leaves civilians dead, thousands displaced

MINDAT, Myanmar — Myanmar's army recently attacked two Christian-majority states, killing some people and displacing thousands of others.

Myanmar is predominately Buddhist. The army seized power in a military coup Feb. 1.

On May 15, the army bombarded Mindat in the Christian-majority state of Chin. A United Nations entity said reports indicate civilians were killed in the attack.

Thousands of residents fled to nearby forests. About 2,000 found refuge in churches and camps in other villages, according to sources.

In the Christian-majority Kachin state, at least two people were killed and an estimated

5,000 displaced in recent military airstrikes on as many as nine villages in the region.

An Indian official said more than 15,000 people from Myanmar have crossed into India seeking refuge since Feb. 1.



Barnabas Fund photo

Myanmar's army has for years targeted the Christian-majority Kachin, Chin and Karen ethnic groups, as well as the Muslim-majority Rohingya, according to Barnabas Fund.

Myanmar is No. 18 on Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB Media)

# Alabamians complete divinity, seminary degrees in 2020, 2021

A number of Alabama Baptists graduated in fall 2020 and spring 2021 with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and Beeson Divinity School at Samford University.

Each list of graduates was provided to The Alabama Baptist by the respective school.

## ► Beeson Divinity School:

*Master of Arts in Theological Studies* — Christson Adedoyin, Birmingham; Haden Bell, Birmingham; Treasure Clolinger, Birmingham; Sarah Howard, Birmingham; Jamaal Hunter, Birmingham; John Orr, Birmingham; Hana Thannickal, Birmingham

*Master of Divinity* — Connor Hopkins, Birmingham; Misty Hopkins, Birmingham; Reagan Keith, Birmingham; Alex Lowry, Birmingham; Russell Mann, Decatur; Ethan McVay, Birmingham; Wanda Parks, Montgomery; Buck Poole, Birmingham; Dennis Self, Birmingham; DeAnna Smith, Hueytown; Jake Thomas, Birmingham; Zach Wade, Birmingham; Rob Willis, Birmingham

*Doctor of Ministry* — Greg Tippins, Tuscaloosa (awarded posthumously)

## ► Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:

*Master of Divinity* — Tyler Armstrong; Stephen Randal Ellison Jr.; Elizabeth Grace Pike

*Master of Theological Studies* — Jordan Andrew Hoge; David Rogers Sullivan

*Master of Theology* — Joshua Michael Cook  
*Doctor of Philosophy* — Christopher Ray Hanna

## ► New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:

*Master of Arts in Christian Education* — Alicia Cook, Montgomery; Samantha Parker, Birmingham; Candace Shipp, Guin

*Master of Arts in Church and Community Ministries with graduate certificate in counseling in ministry* — Faith Vines, Jemison

*Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry* — Jarrod Helms, Town Creek; John Maddox, Pinson; Jake Walker, Wetumpka

*Master of Divinity* — Chuck Pike, Prattville; Donny Yarbrough, Glencoe

*Master of Divinity (specialization in apologetics)* — Devin Haun, Tuscaloosa

*Master of Divinity (specialization in biblical studies)* — Neal Embry, Gardendale; Jonathan McLain, Phenix City

*Master of Divinity (specialization in expository preaching)* — Caleb Lewis, Hartselle

*Master of Theological Studies* — Jacob Daniel, Henagar

*Master of Theology* — Brandon Phillips, Vernon

*Doctor of Educational Ministry* — Charlie Martin, Trussville

*Doctor of Ministry* — Kevin Garrett, Atmore; Richard Harvey, Bay Minette; Chris Townson, Mentone

*Doctor of Philosophy (specialization in biblical exposition)* — Keith Taylor, Mobile

## ► Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:

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*Master of Divinity in Christian Ministry* — Colby Nicholas Adams, Holly Pond; Joshua David Driscoll, Mobile; Robert Hugh Johnston, Birmingham; Hunter Brook Lee,

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*Master of Arts in Church Planting* — Benjamin Charles Johnson, Huntsville; Andrew Carl Moss, Mobile

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#### PASTOR

Searching for full-time pastor. First Baptist Church Lanett. Submit resumé to: P.O. Box 365, Lanett, AL 36863 or email [fbclanett@knology.net](mailto:fbclanett@knology.net).

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Verbena Baptist Church is currently seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: [verbenabaptist@att.net](mailto:verbenabaptist@att.net).

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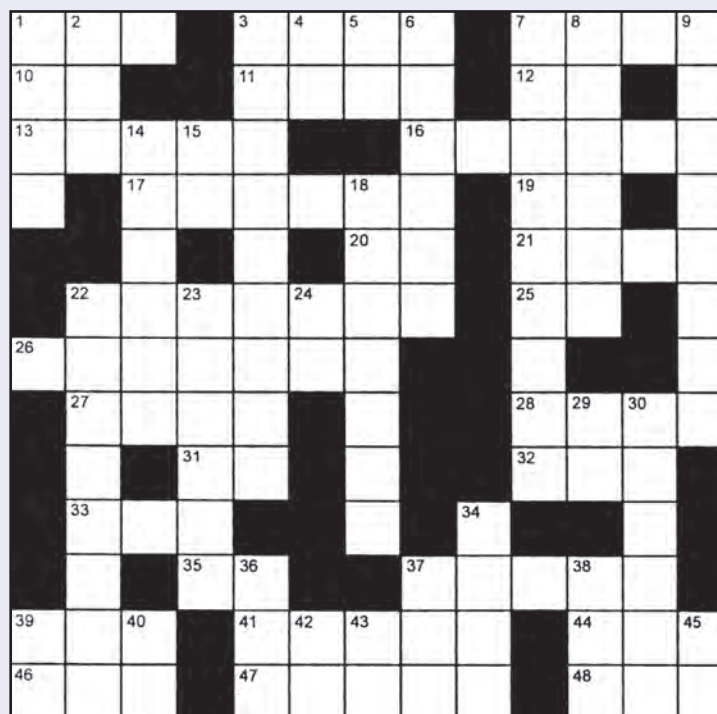
#### NEW: STORIES PODCAST

Have you checked out TAB Media's new Stories serial podcast? If not, then you'll want to catch Season 2, the Flatline story. The full first season is also available at [tabonline.org/stories](http://tabonline.org/stories) or anywhere you get your podcasts.

# CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

1. The \_\_\_ that covereth the inwards. (Lev. 3:3)
3. Went to sojourn in the country of \_\_\_. (Ruth 1:1)
7. Jehu destroyed \_\_\_ out of Israel. (2 Kings 10:28)
10. He placed \_\_\_ the east of the garden. (Gen. 3:24)
11. \_\_\_ also to save them to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:25)
12. Associated Press. (abbr.)
13. Nor height, nor \_\_\_, nor any other. (Rom. 8:39)
16. The Lord sent \_\_\_ unto David. (2 Sam. 12:1)
17. Unto \_\_\_ the prophet the son of Amoz. (Isa. 37:2)
19. Short for "hello."
20. Bureau. (abbr.)
21. Zimri, the son of \_\_\_, a prince. (Num. 25:14)
22. He shall send them a \_\_\_. (Isa. 19:20)
25. Her Highness. (abbr.)
26. In thee shall all \_\_\_ be blessed. (Gal. 3:8)
27. An eagle stirreth up her \_\_\_. (Deut. 32:11)
28. Ye shall find the \_\_\_. (Luke 2:12)
31. Hi in the mirror.
32. Of fowls also of the \_\_\_. (Gen. 7:3)
33. In addition, also.
35. New Jersey. (abbr.)
37. Nehemiah the son of \_\_\_. (Neh. 3:16)
39. Not on.
41. Being a wild \_\_\_



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

15. Tensile strength. (abbr.)
  18. Proud, \_\_\_, disobedient to their parents. (2 Tim. 3:2)
  22. \_\_\_ them through thy truth. (John 17:17)
  23. Seal up the \_\_\_ and prophecy. (Dan. 9:24)
  24. To be upon.
  29. Joshua had taken \_\_\_. (Josh. 10:1)
  30. Because of unbelief they were \_\_\_ off. (Rom. 11:20)
  34. \_\_\_ had six sons. (1 Chron. 9:44)
  36. These three men, Noah, Daniel, and \_\_\_ were in it. (Ezek. 14:14)
  37. Avenue. (abbr.)
  38. I have called by name Bezaleel the son of \_\_\_. (Ex. 31:2)
  39. Obstetrics. (abbr.)
  40. Chemical symbol for iron.
  42. The sixth tone of the diatonic scale.
  43. Ibidem.
  45. Daniel. (abbr.)
- tree. (Rom. 11:17)
  44. Though they be \_\_\_ like crimson. (Isa. 1:18)
  46. Short for "good-bye."
  47. The name of it called \_\_\_. (Gen. 11:9)
  48. There was no room for them in the \_\_\_. (Luke 2:7)

## DOWN

# Church Connections provides perks to all

By Drew Moss  
International Mission Board

My family's involvement in Church Connections has provided opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships to be formed between our family and Southern Baptist churches. Through these new relationships, we have been encouraged, prayed over and sent out as we walked through a difficult season of transition to a new field of service in northwest London.

Most of the churches we've contacted have had no previous connection to the International Mission Board.

One way we connected with a church in our area, Hill Spring Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama, was by joining them in a special project. We heard they were building a family life center and had planned a workday.

## Opportunity to share

That morning we shared with several church members about our previous role as church planting strategists in eastern Europe, and during the lunch break, we were asked to share about God's faithfulness.

I expressed gratitude to the church for their partnership and shared how their giving enabled us to go.

After lunch, I connected with Hill Spring's pastor, and in the following weeks, I periodically texted him to offer encouragement. One day, he called and told me he needed shoulder surgery. He asked if I would be willing to preach for him so he could have that surgery.

As I preached, I shared our story of God's faithfulness, how He is working across Europe and how the church's giving enables that work.

## Rewarding privilege

It is rewarding to have the privilege to express gratitude to churches for their giving through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The connections we made were not only beneficial for the IMB and our family but also for the churches that faithfully support our work through prayer, giving and going. These connections encourage their perseverance and commitment to partnership in the Great Commission.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — The IMB recently initiated Church Connections to facilitate connections between missionaries and churches who do not have direct contact with a missionary.*



IMB missionaries Drew and Sara Moss and their children participated in a building project with Hill Spring Baptist Church, Mobile, through the IMB's Church Connections.



The call to ministry can seem like the most complex decision to wade through. We want to help! The Called Conference is a one-day event designed to help students (*high school through college*) who are dealing with the life-changing call to ministry.

Jeff Iorg, president of Gateway Seminary, will speak in three large group sessions, plus two breakout sessions will be offered to cover a variety of specific ministry areas.

For more information, visit [alsbom.org/called](http://alsbom.org/called).  
Questions? Contact State Missionary Larry Hyche,  
[lhyche@alsbom.org](mailto:lhyche@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2268.

**JEFF  
IORG**  
PRESIDENT,  
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# Treasured ministry

## Global Maritime Ministries serves the nations through the Port of New Orleans

(continued from page 1) presented the gospel more than 120 times and given away more than 280 Bibles in different languages. They've seen 12 people profess new faith in Christ. Frazier said it's amazing

to see God work through GMM, a ministry that's dear to her heart. It was the last place she and her husband, Adrian, were able to volunteer together before he died in 2019 from brain cancer.

Originally from Alabama, Adrian grew up at Trinity Baptist Church, Scottsboro, and Leah grew up at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa. They met at the University of North Alabama and were serving in youth ministry at Leighton Baptist Church before moving to New Orleans to attend seminary.

### Season of grief

Not too long after he graduated, they found out he had an aggressive form of cancer. "Obviously that has been devastating," Frazier said. "We were going to spend our lives serving the Lord together."

She wasn't sure what she would do next, and the path ahead would have a few more bumps. But she says in that crushing season of grief, God gave her "an embarrassment of riches."

Her church — Edgewater Baptist, New Orleans — came alongside her and supported her. She got a new job at a running store, something she loved — she and Adrian were both marathoners. And when she started considering



Photo courtesy of Leah Frazier

Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, GMM chaplains and volunteers ministered to more than 17,000 seafarers in the Port of New Orleans. More than 6,500 of those visited one of GMM's ministry centers.

getting a dog for companionship, she won a golden doodle through an Instagram drawing.

"The Lord has been so gracious to care for me," Frazier said.

And GMM holds sweet memories. The ministry center "was the last place Adrian and I served outside of the church together," she said.

"We went and made Trader Joe's spaghetti, and someone else made cake. [The seafarers] were so grateful and kind. I'll always treasure Global Maritime Ministries."

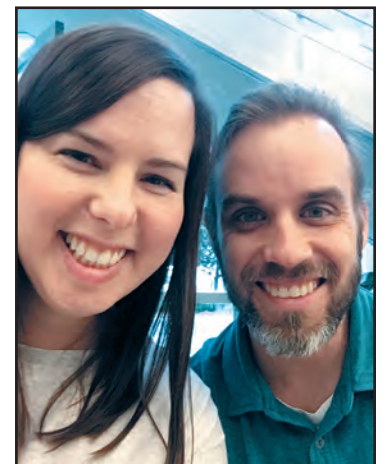


Photo courtesy of Leah Frazier

Adrian and Leah Frazier moved from Alabama to New Orleans for seminary. Adrian died of brain cancer in 2019.

The Port of New Orleans brings the nations right to her city, she said.

She asked for prayer for their continued ministry to seafarers and encouraged anyone who wants to be a part of their prayer ministry to set an alarm for 10:02 a.m. or p.m. with Luke 10:2 in mind — to pray for more laborers for the harvest.

She also asked for prayer for Global Fest, an online auction that will start July 30 at noon and end Aug. 9 at 1 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the port ministry.



Photo courtesy of Leah Frazier

A big part of GMM's ministry to seafarers is picking them up from the port, taking them shopping and bringing them back to the ministry center for meals and to use the free Wi-Fi, play games and have Bible study.

## Pastor Buddy Gray marks 35 years



Photo by Dianna L. Cagle

Buddy Gray, seen here with his granddaughter during the June 6 celebration of his 35th anniversary as senior pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover. When weighing what to preach for the special service, Gray listened to his wife Tricia's advice: Preach what you love! His sermon was "The Parable of the Gracious Father," based on Luke 15:11-24.

For more information about Global Maritime Ministries, visit [portministry.com](http://portministry.com) and click on "events" to find out more about Global Fest.

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 20

## Explore the Bible

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



### REDEMPTION FOUND Job 19:19–29

Job found himself at his breaking point. His faith appeared to be ready to collapse under the weight of his trials. His interaction with his three friends had reached fever pitch as their fiery condemnation wounded his heart. And even worse, he felt as if God was against him.

The biggest question Job faced was this: Is God for me or against me? If God is for me, then ultimately nothing and no one can do me lasting harm, and I shall come forth as more than a conqueror. But if God is against me, then my despair is warranted.

This question lies beneath the “Why?” question that echoes through the Book of Job and on through the history of believers. “Why must we struggle with infertility?” “Why did our child die?” “Why did my wife have to get Alzheimer’s?” Christians as well as unbelievers wrestle with these questions. “I read in the Bible that God loves me and is for me,” says the Christian. “Sometimes, however, it feels like God is against me.”

Job declared in verse 21 that God’s hand had struck him. As readers we have been allowed by the narrator to peek behind the curtain of divine providence.

We know what has happened, but Job does not, and his friends certainly do not.

We are allowed by the narrator to understand it was Satan who destroyed Job’s possessions, killed Job’s children and wrecked Job’s health (1:12; 2:6). It is clear Satan acted with the permission of God and within the constraints set by God.

### Failing Friends (19–22)

Job claimed his family and friends had turned against him. He was physically emaciated. His skin was clinging to his bones. He had just barely escaped with his life.

In this horrible condition, his best friends had come to despise him, and the people he loved had turned against him.

Job appealed to his friends, “Have mercy on me, my friends, have mercy.” He longed for their compassion and comfort, not their cutting remarks. It was bad enough that God was against him. He hoped his friends could at least be sympathetic.

“Why do you persecute me as God does?” Job hoped to elicit some support, discover a kinsman-redeemer or just find someone to take his side.

### Living Redeemer (23–27)

Job feared he would die before he was vindicated, so he wanted his testimony preserved for future generations. Job wanted this account of his faith preserved eternally on rock.

In all of his pain and uncertainty, Job was sure of one thing. His certainty was about his “Redeemer.” In the face of his own approaching death, Job believed his Redeemer would eventually vindicate him.

In the future, when death would take Job’s life and his body would decompose, he believed he would live again and see God. Job demonstrated a confident trust in God, Who would vindicate and reward him on the last day.

We know Job’s confidence is not wishful thinking. How? Because Christ was raised.

Though Satan attacked with vicious terrors, and Jesus died a terrible death He did not deserve, God publicly vindicated Him on the third day when He raised Him from the dead.

There is a sovereign Redeemer who lives and Who will one day vindicate every believer and declare each one justified from all sin.

### Warning Issued (28–29)

Job warned his friends that the judgment they believed was coming upon him would actually come to them. The Bible strongly warns about false accusations, and that was essentially what Job’s three friends were committing.

## Bible Studies for Life

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



### UNCOMPROMISING WITH TRUTH Revelation 2:12–17

Jesus’ words to Pergamum remind us that compromise with any of the idols of our time is an affront to the truth about Christ and His identity as Lord. No other loyalties or values can be allowed to compete for lordship over our lives and churches. Compromise with an immoral and idolatrous culture is not an option for any follower of Christ.

### Maintain a bold witness for the name of Christ. (12–13)

Jesus has authority to judge (implied by the reference to the double-edged sword). The Roman Empire was having the power of the sword (Rom. 13:4), but Jesus wants us to remember that He, not any earthly power, has ultimate authority to judge. Pergamum was known for several important pagan temples, but the presence of “Satan’s throne” (and Pergamum as the place where “Satan lives”) probably refers to the importance of the Roman imperial cult in the city (much of Revelation takes aim at the idolatrous nature of the Roman Empire and its imperial cult). All but Jews were expected to sacrifice to Rome and its emperors, and there were severe consequences for those who refused to do so.

### Don’t compromise by tolerating false teaching. (14–15)

Jesus refers to the narrative in Numbers 22–24 where Balak, the king of Moab, recruited the prophet Balaam to try to destroy the Israelites. In the case of the believers in Pergamum, there were some who were bringing political and religious pressure to compromise Christians’ loyalty to Christ by participating in the vices for which early Christians and Jews condemned pagan culture: idolatry (specifically, knowingly eating meat offered to idols) and sexual immorality. Christ calls us to resist the idols and vices of our age.

Some may think idolatry is not an issue today because they have

never been in a place where physical idols are worshipped.

But physical idols aren’t necessary to practice idolatry. For many people, our big architecturally impressive shopping malls or sports arenas are the equivalent to temples.

Many would be willing to walk away from their faith in Christ before sacrificing some other thing(s) in their life.

Faced with the choice between being obedient to Christ, knowing that obedience on our own part or the part of Christians in general would result in our own economic suffering or in a permanent loss to America’s economic or military power, would we choose Christ over nation or Christ over personal economic well-being?

There are a number of powerful idols in our culture, including the idols of family, power, materialism, consumerism, libertinism, individual expression and various kinds of political idolatry. It can be especially difficult for those who are socially and economically well-off to count the cost and stand up for the truth of Christ.

### God honors those with uncompromised faith. (16–17)

While many Christians tend to think of repentance as something they did when they first believed and that they don’t ever have to repeat, repentance is actually something we are called to whenever we become aware that we have been falling short in our obedience to God.

Christ will supply all who continue to live repentant lives the spiritual food they need to remain strong and to thrive.

The “white stone” probably suggests an entry ticket with God’s special name for the believer written on it, suggesting that even if believers are excluded from much of society due to our allegiance to Christ, our acceptance by Christ into His presence will be a reward that makes the cost seem insignificant by comparison.

# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs  
TAB Media

## Former missionary types memoir with one finger after stroke

**W**hat do you do when the life God seemingly prepared you for is lost in a moment?

That's the question former International Mission Board missionary and church planter Ronnie Fox found himself asking after a massive stroke ravaged the motor portion of his brain in August 2010.

Most who have this kind of stroke don't survive, but God wasn't finished with Fox. He writes about his recovery and the life experiences that helped him heal in a new book, "Beyond My Strength," which he typed himself using one finger.

"At the time, I felt like someone had backed up a dump truck and covered me with the full load of muddy dirt. It smothered me and I felt crushed," he writes in his book.

### Permanent paralysis

As a result of the stroke, Fox lost his dominant right side to paralysis. He deals with constant dizziness. Parts of his vocal cords, tongue and throat are paralyzed, which results in speech and swallowing issues.

"I admit I yelled at God, and He took it better than I did. He was not offended. ... When I was distraught and miserable, He was not insulted by my tantrum. His love for me did



RONNIE FOX

Photo courtesy of Ronnie Fox

not change because of my bad behavior," Fox said.

He thought if he worked and prayed hard enough, God would heal him. But instead, Fox found himself moving in the other direction.

After extensive rehabilitation, he finally got to the point that he could use a cane to walk but then due to the paralysis, his right leg started to atrophy. A walker was next.

Eventually he realized that even a walker was a fall risk and took too much energy. He surrendered to using a wheelchair. This gave him the freedom to do a lot more outside of his home, but it was a very difficult choice to make.

"My first goal after the stroke was to be the exception to the rule. I was going to work hard and regain the physical abilities the stroke had taken from me. I fell into the trap because I believed I

could beat the odds. It took time to finally admit I could not control the outcome."

That was a hard conclusion to reach, since Fox's life up to that point had revolved around family and ministry.

Early in life, Fox found he was very good at math. As a youth, he once built different types of dams to find the one that would create a small lake behind it, and he felt certain engineering was the career God had for him.

Instead, God called him to be an international missionary. He and his wife, Gwenn, struggled for months about accepting that call to ministry, especially concerned about uprooting their two young children.

But after spending time at a retreat, they felt led to read Genesis 22:1-2. Reading again about Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice, they knew they had their answer.

Both in tears, they decided to give their children back to God and follow His leading.

"Some well-intentioned Christians tried to assure us our children would be safe by saying, 'The safest place to be is in the center of God's will,'" Fox writes. "The statement is true, but it does not mean my children, my spouse, my friends, my colleagues and others I love will not have difficulties. It does not mean they will be protected from all harm. It does not promise protection from illness or even death."

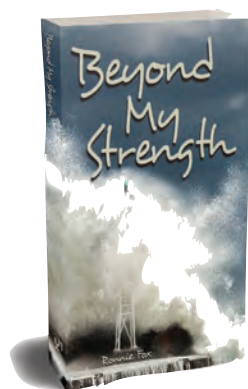
Fox learned those lessons in hard ways. In 1986, Fox and his family went to Peru with the IMB, where they served 18 years. During those years, he dealt with many hardships. He lost family, friends and colleagues and was once held at gun point. He has been robbed and vandalized and has felt the destructive power of car and truck bombs.

But in spite of it all, Fox reflected, "I need to learn that the hardships in my life are not a way of testing my faith to see if it is strong enough. My faith does not need to be tested for God to evaluate me. He already knows. I do not measure up to His perfect standard in faith or in actions. I never have and never will."

### 'God is enough'

In 2004, Fox started a new phase as a church planting consultant at the North American Mission Board. The stroke changed everything, but not one vital truth: "God is enough," Fox said. "God wanted me to trust Him in everything. Notice, I did not say He wanted me to understand everything. I did not. ... I trust God more than my ability to understand it all."

Visit [beyondmystrength.com](http://beyondmystrength.com).



### 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.

# Advancing medicine

## Mississippi doctor uses skills overseas, realizes continuing volunteer opportunities

By Catherine Finch  
International Mission Board

**D**r. Justin Lohmeier had no idea how valuable his skills as a physician could be when he was first presented the opportunity to volunteer overseas with the International Mission Board.

Growing up, Lohmeier said he loved reading and hearing stories about IMB missionaries in church, especially during the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering season.

While he admired IMB missionaries, he never thought of himself as someone who would serve in that capacity.

“What would they need from somebody like me?” he asked.

In 2009, Lohmeier was approached by a missions pastor who asked if he was interested in traveling to Kargi, Kenya, to serve on a medical missions team.

After much prayer, Lohmeier realized all God required of him was the obedience to go and serve as a doctor. It was on this trip to Kenya that God began to mold and shape his desires to volunteer overseas, said Lohmeier.

### Special skills

As a diagnostic and interventional radiologist, Lohmeier is specifically trained on machinery such as ultrasound machines.

In 2011, he attended the IMB’s MedAdvance conference in Dallas.

There he learned of specific needs for medical volunteers, one of them being someone trained to use an ultrasound machine.

“That was a very specific need that I could do,” said Lohmeier. “I stepped out in faith and answered the call to go and train doctors in Tanzania on how to use this ultrasound machine.”

### Serving missionaries

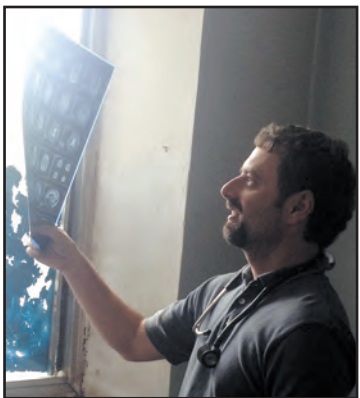
Lohmeier, a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church in New Albany, Mississippi, has since been on more than 20 trips.

He has traveled to countries in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Central America.

Not only does Lohmeier use his professional skills to minister to the medical needs of nationals in the countries he visits, but he also takes care of the medical needs of IMB missionaries on the field.

One of Lohmeier’s favorite stories from his trips takes place in the Middle East. While there in 2015, Lohmeier and the IMB team he served alongside worked with refugees. He was overwhelmed by the great need, but he said he felt honored to partner with the IMB to meet those needs.

The IMB team and Lohmeier attended to patients in schools, on soccer fields and in underground parking garages.



IMB photo  
Dr. Justin Lohmeier inspects a CT scan while serving on missions through the International Mission Board.



IMB photo  
Dr. Justin Lohmeier attends to a patient while on an International Mission Board medical missions trip. A Mississippi doctor, Lohmeier said he prayed and realized he needed to be obedient to God’s call to use his expertise on the field.

As they were handing out blankets so the refugees would have something to keep them warm in the upcoming winter, Lohmeier said the refugees told the team they knew the Baptists loved them because they always brought the highest quality blankets and coats.

“To this day, there is a thriving Baptist church in that area,” said Lohmeier.

### Ready to go

Lohmeier is eager to travel and serve overseas again when COVID-19 travel restrictions lift. He encourages anyone in the medical field to consider how they can use their specific skills to serve on mission.

“Do not wait. It is so rewarding to work with our co-laborers, especially when there is a current demand in specific medical strategies,” he said. “We just need to be obedient and act on faith using biblical principles and our God-given talents.”

The IMB website says, “Caring for the needs of people is integral to the missionary tasks of evangelism, discipling new believers, training leaders and forming healthy churches. Health care missions gives access to the

unreached, allows for intimate conversations, meets needs, makes disciples and empowers the church.”

Discover how you too can use your skills as a medical professional overseas. If you’re looking for direction

on how to meet specific medical needs, contact IMB’s health care volunteer coordinator Bob Thomas at [bthomas@imb.org](mailto:bthomas@imb.org). Trips are currently being planned for Bosnia (August), South Asia (August, October and November), Ghana (August), Ukraine (September and October) and India (November). Discover how you can be a part of providing help and hope to those who have never heard the gospel.

*Interested in serving through health care missions? MedAdvance 2021 will be held Aug. 5–7 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Visit [imb.org/healthcare](http://imb.org/healthcare).*

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Dr. Justin Lohmeier, volunteer