

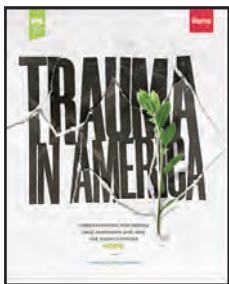
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Above: Women & Work
Bottom left: SBC Women's Network
Bottom right: Jen Wilkin speaks to minister's wives.

HIGHEST CALLING

Women's events focus on leadership, training, community support

The highest calling of every believer, regardless of gender, is to make Christ known and bring Him glory.

That was the message Jamie Ivey, author, speaker and host of the Happy Hour Podcast and The Jamie Ivey Talk Show emphasized at the

Women & Work forum held June 15 in Nashville. The forum was one of several women's events held in conjunction with the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

Ivey encouraged her mostly female audience to look for their "sweet spot" in ministry. To those unsure of what that might be, she had this advice: "Go serve and figure it out. ... If you get some place and it's not working, try something else."

Ivey said she didn't find her own sweet spot in ministry

until she was in her mid-30s. She said other women's sweet spots might depend on their life season too — balancing work and life is different with the ages and stages of your children, for example.

Where God has you

"You've been given a voice to make a difference where you are, where He's planted you with the people who are around you," Ivey said.

Courtney Moore, founder and president of Women & Work, and Missie Branch, assistant dean of students to

women and the director of graduate life at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, led the discussion. Moore and Branch are co-hosts of the Women & Work podcast.

Branch also was part of a panel of women leaders who spoke June 14 at the SBC Women's Leadership Network event, "Steadfast: Persevering Through Every Season of Leadership."

Jacki King, a speaker and author from Arkansas, moderated the discussion.

(See 'Keep,' page 17)

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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 15.



Photo by Sam Evans

Walter Jones gets a ride in a vehicle similar to one he drove while serving in the U.S. Marines. Members of First Baptist Church, Mount Olive, celebrated Jones' 105th birthday with a car parade at his retirement home.

Church honors WWII veteran for 105th birthday

For most of Walter Jones' life, the number 105 has been meaningful.

When he was 28 years old, he went overseas to fight in World War II with the 105th outfit of the U.S. Marines. He lost a lot of his hearing when a shell exploded close to him on Guadalcanal, an island in the South Pacific where fighting in 1942 marked a turning point in World War II in favor of the Allied forces.

On June 22 of this year, the number 105 took on a new meaning. Friends and members of his church — First Baptist Church, Mount Olive — celebrated his 105th birthday with a parade at the retirement home where he lives.

Jones grew up in Cordova, and his mother took him to church regularly, but her faith didn't become his until his 20s before he went to war. He's been an active member of First, Mount Olive, for decades now, serving as an usher and in other roles.

'A good one'

The church "is a good one. It's hard to beat," he said. "There's some nice people there."

After serving overseas, Jones had a long career at the post office, and he and his wife, Eva, had a daughter, Charlotte. These

days, he and his friend Billy Stewart — a fellow member of First, Mount Olive — go for drives to nearby cities, including Cordova.

Long life

When asked how he made it to 105, Jones jokes, "I got lucky, I guess."

Around 100,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II are still alive.

Hear Jones reflect on his birthday at tabonline.org/walter-jones. (Grace Thornton)



Photo by Sam Evans

Walter Jones sits at the corner of his retirement home to observe a vehicle parade in honor of his 105th birthday.

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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We mean well with ‘you should do this’ but it may hurt more than help

She described the pressure she was under with such intensity, but I struggled at first to understand why she called the suggestions from friends pressure.

“They really are just trying to help,” she added. “They mean well.”

But what the friends didn’t realize was that rather than helping, they were actually discouraging her even more.

“You should do this,” “You need to do that” and “We can get you all set up right away” swirled around her constantly.

“Here’s what you need to do” and other similar opening statements soon prevented her from even hearing what followed in the sentence much less considering it as a possibility. Instead, she found herself automatically rejecting the suggestions because they felt like demands.

I’ve been there too — on both sides of the equation. And other friends have expressed similar sentiments through the years. The times I’ve been the one making the suggestions — and quite possibly adding a bit of pressure — came from good intentions.

I determined I could see more clearly than my friend or family member in the fog and sincerely

wanted to help him or her find stable footing again.

In some cases, it might have been accurate, but in most cases I’m sure I was assessing the situation from my point of view rather than his or hers. I’m also confident I didn’t have all the facts nor understand all the emotions involved.

And I do wonder if sometimes I turned my care for a friend into a project with a checklist, focused more on completing the list and achieving the goal rather than being whatever she or he actually needed during that particular season.

Rather than a matter-of-fact outline of what needs to happen,

we always do better to take the time to listen and help the other person find his or her own way through the difficult situation while also gently sharing truth with grace and love.

Encouragement and support for the areas going well, reminders of what isn’t fair to take on as guilt or self-punishment, and a safe space for the person to share fears and frustrations all make a tremendous difference in helping our friends through the difficult seasons of life.

Along with helping others process their situation, we can spend time helping them brainstorm, make lists, think through various ideas and even dream about what ifs — all of those can

be done without forcing a decision or pushing for a path to be chosen in the moment.

And taking a few minutes to assess all that is weighing on our friend at the moment can truly change how the information we want to share is received. Piling on rarely results in the best response, but waiting — if waiting is an option — until our friend has the capacity to take on more provides the best opportunity for him or her to receive what we want to share.

We all work through the happenings of life differently and sometimes we collide along the way, but even those moments can jolt us awake and sharpen our minds to prepare for the next steps.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Warm welcome for Beck Taylor

Beck A. Taylor (behind lecturer), Samford University’s new president, started his first day July 1 with a prayer service held at Beeson Divinity School’s Andrew Gerow Hodges Chapel. Along with corporate worship in song and prayer, a panel of school and community representatives shared scriptural challenges as Taylor begins his new role. Beck and Julie Taylor greeted those in attendance at a reception following the service.

Your Voice



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

Student pastor shares tips for maintaining summer sanity

By Cody Hensley

ymlink.org

Everyone speaks of summer with hope of rest, excitement of travel and time to enjoy their favorite hobbies or pastime. But as a student pastor, I have to take a deep breath when I hear the word “summer.”

Summer provides some of the most fun and fruitful times in ministry. We often see our student ministries grow in community and unity. We’re able to build stronger relationships with our students. Camps, retreats and missions trips provide accelerated spiritual growth and some of the greatest memories we and our students will have.

But as great as summer is, it also

can be one of the most exhausting seasons in our ministry.

If we’re not careful, summer may overwhelm us.

Here are a few tips to help avoid the summer burnout.

1. *Get ahead of the chaos.*

Spend time mapping out your summer. Include every event, trip or meeting that will fill your summer schedule.

Then take some time to observe the busy and relaxed parts of your summer. Analyzing your calendar will help you know how you need to prepare mentally, emotionally and physically.

If there is a long week ahead, then maybe you need to plan for a break before and after. If you real-

ize you only have one day in any particular week that is unaffected by church work, be sure to protect it.

The busiest or longest stretches will catch us off guard, and we won’t be emotionally or spiritually prepared. Our opportunities for rest will arrive, and we’ll waste them because we weren’t ready for the opening in our schedule.

If we don’t plan breaks, then they often don’t happen. And during the summer, they need to happen.

2. *Keep boundaries in place.*

Our students often have fewer restrictions on them during the summer months. They don’t have to get up or go to sleep at any particular time, and many of them will have the freedom to do whatever they want, whenever they want.

You do not. You likely have church responsibilities that go beyond the student ministry. More importantly, you likely have a family for which you bear great responsibility.

During the summer, it can be easy to go along with the spirit of your students and allow events to go late or spur-of-the-moment hangouts to occur at random times throughout the week. Some of these should happen. Innumerable moments of great ministry have been done whenever things are unplanned.

But keep boundaries in place that protect your time with the Lord and with your family.

3. *Get your mind right.*

Your perspective will often be

one of the greatest determinants of how your summer is going.

We also tend to see what we want to see. If we are pessimistic or fearful of the summer months, we’ll likely wind up drained by all of the hardest parts of summer.

But if we see the summer as an opportunity for Kingdom work, where students are drawing closer to Jesus and being mobilized for the Great Commission, then we’ll be more likely to endure the grind of summer because we know it’s worth it.

This might be the most challenging task to accomplish on this list, especially after the coronavirus. It’s hard to predict how summer will go, and we may not have the same results as previous summers.

We may have fewer students at our events, and many of them are likely struggling spiritually.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it’s that we have to measure our ministry based upon our faithfulness to God’s call upon the church to make disciples of all nations.

When you’re in the weeds of summer, it can be hard to see any way out or make good decisions in it. Plan now so that the rest of your summer can be healthy. Summer can be a great time of ministry if you prepare in a way that helps you avoid the summer burnout.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Cody Hensley is pastor to students and families at Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville. This article is adapted from a post at ymlink.org. Read the full post at ymlink.org/avoiding-the-summer-burnout/.

Letters to the Editor

One of the essential components of meaningful output in endeavors involving multiple people is that of teamwork. This is true in sports, churches, governments, families and media.

In a consistently productive manner, the team which comprises TAB’s efforts to serve God and readers is second to none.

With passion and compassion, with facts and purpose, with grace and gusto, the various team members add unique flavors and hold forth torches of

light to mitigate the troublesome times we all endure.

In each issue, the drive for information and inspiration to aid us in our journey always yields constructive results.

So, to Jennifer and all the rest of the TAB team, thank you so much!

Your various collaborations and cooperative efforts are deeply appreciated. Just think of it: Your work is never in vain! (1 Cor. 15:58).

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“As we individually are obedient to be cheerful givers, God’s message of salvation goes to Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.”

MARK PRESSWOOD

Associational missionary for Clarke Baptist Association

Where is there a need you can fill? Where is there a hurt you can heal? Where is there a wall you can tear down — or build up, depending on the situation?

Our standard for how to love each other is how Jesus loved, and our efforts aren’t wasted. According to Him, the world will know we are His disciples by our love (John 13:35). We’re to see the need, then answer the question: What are you going to do about it?

Pastor David Jeremiah
Shadow Mountain
Community Church
El Cajon, Calif.

Food for thought:

1. If you want a different result,

do something different.

2. If you want to see something done, stop sitting on the sideline waiting on someone to ask you to do it. Actually get up off the bench and get in the game.

3. If you want your life to get better, get off your pity party and start actually doing something to change your outcome.

But in all things always, keep God first.

Pastor Jeff Fuller
Rockford Baptist Church
Rockford, Ala.

How can we preach from Ephesians 4:1–16 and 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 and continue to use our platforms and voices to cause divi-

sion? Do we believe Galatians 3:28?

“There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

We serve the Jesus who tore down the wall of hostility to bring us to Himself — all of us — in order for believers to be unified, to be of one mind and of one accord.

I believe our convention should be a place of refuge and rest from the fighting. It is my heart’s desire for the Holy Spirit to convict each and every one of us about our conduct and our speech. I pray that repentance becomes the cry of our hearts.

Pastor Belafae Johnson
Purposed Church
Mascoutah, Ill.

From the *Twitterverse*

@MichaelCatt

We find ourselves divided over race, politics and so many other issues because we’ve exalted politics over prayer, ego over humility. The self life is ruling the day, but Jesus said die to self. At the Cross, agendas must die.

@richardblackaby

God cares about the smallest details of your life. They matter. Over time they can make a huge difference.

@claysmith79

Success in ministry is not about how many people are following you, but in how many people are following Jesus.

@PaulSPurvis

... Start with grace. Assume the best. Determine to be kind. Ask God to grant you a short memory of offense. Of course, stand for

truth, but remember, Christ followers never have the liberty to be unkind.

@GaryFenton07

Loving God who is fully revealed in Jesus inevitably leads to extending grace and helping others. Loving self inevitably leads to extending judgment and correcting others.

@brocraige

“Be little in your own esteem, that the Lord may make much of you.” —Spurgeon

@griffingulledge

One of the dangerous things about being a pastor is this: because pastors weekly teach the most important subject matter in the universe, we may trick ourselves into thinking we are experts of all subject matters.

@JToddL

“Do not fear, for I am with you;

Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10 NASB1995

@scottdawson

There are two emotions that are controlling most decisions being made: fear and hate. Neither will get you to the place you really desire. By the way, these two emotions are exact opposites of the ones that should control us: love and courage.

@BillyGraham

“Jesus made everything so simple, and we have made it so complicated.”

@EdLitton

Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Prayer and trust go hand in hand

Trust is defined as the firm belief in the ability, reliability or strength of someone or something. Trust inside our churches has been waning for several years. Perhaps this stems from the lack of trust from outside the church toward churches.

Yet the failings inside the church have certainly contributed as well.

Moral failure of church leaders, infighting amongst church members and congregation against congregation have taken their toll on trust in and of the church.

How do we regain trust within the church? Regaining trust is not something that is granted overnight and is more difficult than originally gaining someone’s trust.

Once you break the trust of any relationship, it may take years before that trust is completely restored. Regaining trust is a very slow process.

In the church, we must go out of our way, sacrificially give of ourselves to restore and rebuild trust. The keyword in that statement is “sacrificially.”

If we are not willingly giving up more of ourselves for the relationship, we are relaying a message that is not building trust.

Prayer is the beginning point and must remain a daily interface with God for our personal trust factor and that of the church as well.

Trust is more than a physical battle. All our congregants live in the flesh. Therefore, we all are prone to the wiles of the adversary.

Trust is a spiritual battle and regaining trust will require extra time on our knees before God and His throne.

Our ministry must become trust oriented.

George Yates
Church health strategist
Alabama Baptist State
Board of Missions

TRAUMA IN AMERICA: FIRST IN A SERIES

Understanding trauma and its causes

Death, abuse, other difficult situations may lead to physical, mental symptoms

By Tracy Riggs
TAB Media

Post-traumatic stress disorder is often associated with military veterans, but no one is immune from the effects of trauma.

“One in 5 American adults has been a victim or witness to events that traumatized them in just the past 10 years,” according to a recent Barna study. “Trauma in America: Understanding How People Face Hardships and How the Church Offers Hope” was conducted in partnership with the American Bible Society.

Death and abuse are leading causes of trauma among Christians and nonbelievers alike, according to Barna, though individuals may not immediately recognize their long-term impact.

As a result, those affected by

trauma often don’t seek help until later in life if at all, said Nicole Martin, ABS vice president of church engagement and executive director of trauma healing.

“Research into adverse childhood events shows that many lives are actually shortened due to trauma’s lasting effects on health and vitality,” the report said.

Additionally, there isn’t much difference inside and outside the church in the rates of those who experience trauma. The death of a loved one is an event churches see often and recognize as trauma. As a result, they usually are prepared to help with grief and loss. But there are many other common traumas people of faith may not recognize, said Lisa Keane, clinical director of Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries.

Source of trauma

“Childhood traumas include such events as adoption, foster care, sexual abuse, physical abuse, car accidents and natural disasters,” Keane said. “Other causes include domestic violence, assault and other events where the individual is in real or perceived danger.”

Through the past year, COVID-19 has been a source of trauma on many fronts. Barna

found that PTSD symptoms have been seen in survivors, friends and family of sick loved ones, those affected economically and front-line workers who are regularly

exposed to the virus. Many people also have been affected by the bombardment of information.

Keane concurs.

“Trauma is defined as our emotional reaction to an actual or threatened terrible event,” she explained. “Traumatic stress can absolutely be caused by what we have experienced in this pandemic. All aspects

of the pandemic, including quarantine, fear for self or loved ones and isolation can cause trauma.

“We have also seen trauma responses after the racial unrest in our nation as well as the recent elections. When people do not feel safe, are constantly

on alert and are being flooded with stress hormones, there is always a potential to develop a trauma response,” Keane said.

She listed common symptoms, which include changes in sleep, diet and physical activity, recurring nightmares and intrusive thoughts about the trauma and physical symptoms such as aches and pains not explained by a medical condition.

“If any of these symptoms are

present and do not resolve on their own once the threat is over, I would consider that to be ongoing trauma,” Keane said.

Though some can heal on their own, outside help often is needed.

Diane Langberg, practicing psychologist, author and contributor to the Barna Report, said, “Many people try to push it out of their minds and not deal with it, so it continues to be harmful to them.”

Mike McGrew, founder of 911 At Ease International, a support organization for first responders, notes the importance of utilizing licensed counselors to treat first responders with PTSD.

Use help when needed

“If a person saw [his/her] partner with a broken arm, you wouldn’t just say ‘You have a broken arm.’

You would say, ‘Let’s go to the emergency room and get that fixed,’” McGrew said. “Making people feel comfortable using that help when they need it, that’s important.”

McGrew, who wrote about his own healing from trauma in his book “A Higher Call to Duty,” said it’s common for traumatized individuals to misinterpret their emotions and symptoms as something they are doing wrong rather than a treatable condition.

“Trauma is a brain injury and something that can be treated, healed — something that you can use for good,” McGrew explained. The situation may feel hopeless, he said, but “there’s always hope ... and an opportunity to heal.”



KEANE



To learn more about the American Bible Society’s Trauma Healing Ministry, go to ministry.americanbible.org/mission-trauma-healing.

10 most common causes of trauma

1. Death of a loved one
2. Betrayal by someone you trust
3. Domestic violence
4. Physical abuse
5. Sexual abuse
6. Watching someone die or being abused
7. Near death experience or significant injury
8. Major financial setback
9. Job loss
10. Divorce

Source: Barna Research



Unsplash Photo by Zoe Vandewater

Healing from trauma

Patience, compassion, empathy helpful in recovery process, counselors say

By Tracy Riggs
TAB Media

Approximately 20% of American adults suffer from the effects of trauma, which can produce an emotional response that debilitates a person's quality of life, even in small ways. Recognizing PTSD/trauma and becoming familiar with available help can be lifesaving.

"As prevalent as it is, trauma can still be hard to talk about, and it can be difficult to know how to help," said Nicole Martin, vice president of church engagement and executive director of trauma healing for the American Bible Society. "Many traumatized people also keep their pain hidden."

Safe space

ABS recently partnered with Barna Research to produce "Trauma in America: Understanding How People Face Hardships and How the Church Offers Hope."

Heather Drew, a counselor and trauma healing training manager at ABS, noted, "When people have experienced a traumatic event, their primary need is safety and stabilization. The second thing a person in trauma recovery needs is a safe space to process their emotions and painful experiences. ... Most of all, they need to know that whatever they share will not cause them to be judged or condemned by the listener. This stage of healing requires patience, compassion and empathic listening from the helper."

Lisa Keane, clinical director of Pathways Professional Counseling,

a sister ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, recognizes the importance of safety and community.

Sharing their story

"Those dealing with trauma need empathetic listening and individuals to validate their experience, not people who want to 'fix' them. Many trauma survivors need safety and control in relationships too," Keane said. "Ask them what helps them feel safe and in control. It is also important to allow trauma survivors to retell their story."

Survivors who have a "good, healthy community of people they are connected to tend to do better as they work through their trauma," Keane said.

Empathy is key, said Brianna Leiendecker, trauma healing training manager for ABS.

"Empathy is a primary requirement for those assisting people in

overcoming the impact of trauma," she said. "Much of trauma care is about coming alongside. Practical advice — even great advice — is not what is needed."

Though safe relationships and supportive communities are important in trauma healing, professional treatment is often necessary. Pathways counselors will often blend multiple approaches to help the client achieve "felt safety" again and decrease their trauma responses, Keane said. These include:

► **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** — helping clients challenge unhealthy cognitions and change unhealthy behaviors

► **Coping Skills Resourcing** — helping clients identify ways to take care of themselves until their symptoms subside

► **EMDR Therapy** — utilizing eye movements to help clients process unresolved traumatic events

by allowing the brain to use its natural healing powers to alleviate distress

► **Narrative Therapy** — helps clients learn to retell their trauma story without distress, allowing them to have power over the event.

Christian counselors also recognize the spiritual components of healing.

Point to Jesus

"Personally, working with trauma has taught me even more about how we need Jesus," Keane noted. "There are many awful things that happen in this sinful, fallen world. We have many wonderful tools that the Lord has graciously allowed us to create to help those individuals heal from trauma."

"The Lord has also given us His Spirit to comfort us when there seems to be no worldly comfort available."

Keane noted trauma "is very real and affects everyone differently. It is so important we do not judge those struggling with traumatic after-effects, but rather, surround them with love and support as they journey towards healing."

Diane Langberg, practicing psychologist and author, applauds those who seek help in coping with the lingering effects of trauma.

"It takes a very courageous soul to seek help because ... they're acknowledging the trauma that they most want to forget, and often they're quite sure that people will react in a negative way to that acknowledgement," she said. "That courage needs to be honored."

Trauma survivor tells her story of recovery in 2-part podcast

Kathy Woods knows from experience how trauma can cloud one's thinking. Her life took a devastating turn when she learned her beloved father was having an affair.

She began experimenting with drugs and made one bad choice after another. While serving jail time, Woods sought the Lord and committed her life to Him. Now

Woods, who serves as administrative assistant for city ministries at the Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, shares her story of healing from trauma with others.

"Sometimes bad things happen even in good families," Woods said. "But God is willing to restore." Hear Woods' story at tabonline.org/kathy-woods. (TAB Media)

Most say sexually abusive ministers should step down

Messengers to the recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting passed a resolution that “any person who has committed sexual abuse is permanently disqualified from holding the office of pastor,” and a Lifeway Research study found a significant majority of U.S. Protestant pastors share that opinion.

“Most current pastors believe the office of pastor is incompatible with having sexually abused or assaulted another,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. “This does not convey that they believe these behaviors are beyond God’s forgiveness, but a large majority believe sexual abuse is a permanent disqualification.”

Child sexual abuse

More than 4 in 5 Protestant pastors (83%) say if a pastor commits child sexual abuse, that person should permanently withdraw from public ministry. A sizable majority of Protestant pastors (74%) also supports a permanent withdrawal from public ministry for any pastors who commit sexual assault and abuse of any adult member of the congregation or staff.

“When someone sexually assaults an adult, it is both a violent sin and a crime. It is the opposite of the love, care and respect toward another the Bible teaches,” said McConnell. “The role of pastor has incredibly high

standards in the Bible, including that the overseer of those in the church be above reproach or beyond criticism. [Yet] 17% of pastors think someone could move beyond reproach in this matter given enough time.”

Adultery and pastors

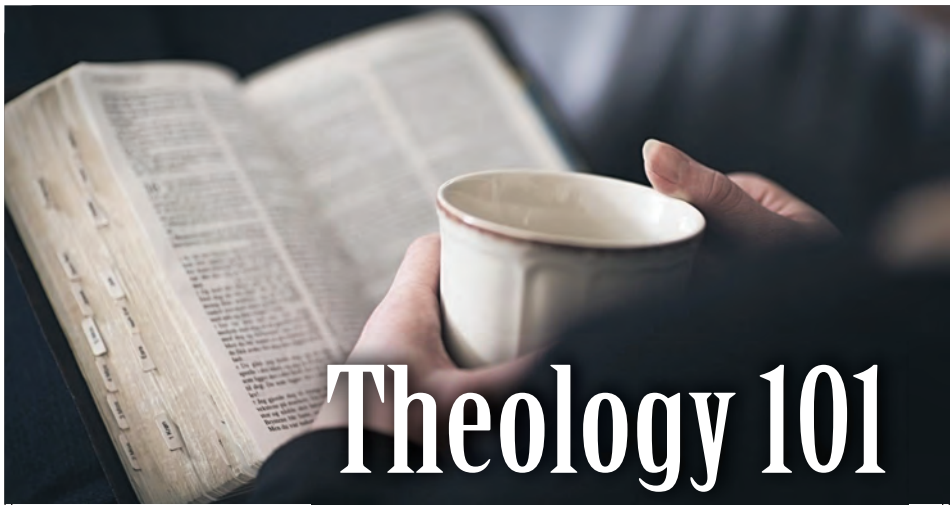
Though clear majorities say pastors who commit child sexual abuse or sexual assault should withdraw permanently from ministry, only 27% believe that should be the result of a pastor committing adultery.

Compared to their perspective on abuse, pastors are much more divided over the proper response to adultery, according to an additional 2019 Lifeway Research study.

While clear majorities say pastors who commit child sexual abuse or sexual assault should withdraw permanently from ministry, only 27% believe that should be the result of a pastor committing adultery. A plurality (31%) is not sure.

“While adultery implies a consensual affair, it is not such a simple distinction for those serving in the role of pastor,” said McConnell. “For a pastor who holds a position of trust and spiritual authority ..., an adulterous relationship with one of them, where an imbalance of power exists, would still constitute sexual assault.”

Visit lifewayresearch.com. (Lifeway Research)



BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

God's word

Nourishing

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

We have noted that the Word of our Eternal God has endured across centuries and cultures and that it carries divine authority as a guide for a God-pleasing life; therefore, it is desirable for its capacity to instruct, reprove and correct our behavior and thinking. We turn this week to how God’s Word functions as spiritual nourishment.

Conversion is not the ultimate end God has in mind for sinners. While essential as the beginning point, the life God purposes for His spiritual children is one that grows from that starting point through the total pilgrimage of a Christian’s life.

Desired

For physical food to be nourishment for the body, it must be desired, just as hunger and thirst are precursors to eating and drinking. The analogy in 1 Peter 2:2 admonishes, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow.”

Healthy babies do not need to be taught or cajoled into wanting milk. The desire for it is part-and-parcel of being born. Simply put, physical growth requires proper nourishment.

Like milk that nourishes a newborn, God’s word is desirable, even essential, nourishment for all who are born again.

In thinking about spiritual nourishment, the Apostle Paul’s admonition to Timothy is, “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minis-

ter of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (1 Tim. 4:6).

In His fourth beatitude, Christ declared, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

God’s word is like pure water for the spiritually thirsty and substantial food for the spiritually hungry.

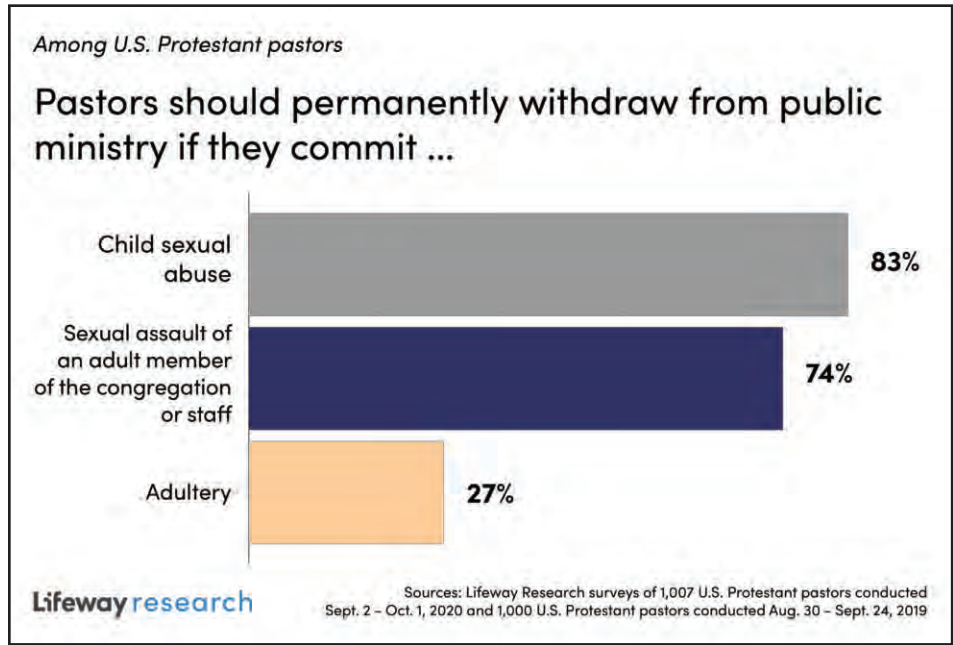
Digested

For physical food to be nourishment for the body, it must not only be desired and received but also digested. For biblical truth to be nourishing, it must be spiritually digested or, as we often say, it must be the subject of careful and regular meditation so it becomes absorbed into our thinking and a strong influence on our behavior.

As babies grow into children, teenagers and adults, their diet requires more than milk. Solid food is an essential for growth.

Christians who become strong in the Lord are those who have invested time and effort in regularly delving into God’s truth, taking it into the heart and expressing it through life.

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.



God has been gracious

Nazareth Baptist School leaders anticipate expansion opportunity

By Hamilton Richardson
TAB Media

Nazareth Baptist School, an 86-year-old institution in the community once home to Jesus Himself, continues its growth, reach and impact despite sometimes difficult circumstances.

The school, started by Southern Baptists in 1935, is recognized for “stellar academics,” noted Roger Mardis, president of Friends of Nazareth, a nonprofit that supports the school through financial and volunteer mobilization.

NBS serves approximately 1,000 students in its K–12 program, though it’s licensed for 1,800. Hundreds are on a waiting list, Mardis said.

As president of FON, Mardis helps get the word out about Nazareth Baptist School in the U.S. He said the school is out of space, and his organization has been working diligently to raise funds for expansion in order to make a larger impact on the community.

“It is the only K–12 evangelical school in Israel,” Mardis said, adding that the reason the school needs to expand is because of what happens there: “We share the gospel every day,” he explained. “Our purpose is to build the rising generations, glorifying Jesus Christ through distinctive Christian education.”

In early 2018, Mardis began his tenure as FON president and has been focused on raising funds for that future expansion.

“I work daily to bring interest and awareness to our school in Nazareth and seek to create partnerships with churches, individuals, schools and other donors,” he said. “I work with our team to raise funds for our ministry needs in Nazareth.”



Photo courtesy of Roger Mardis
Nazareth Baptist School, which was started by Southern Baptists in 1935, serves about 1,000 students in K–12. It is the only evangelical school in Israel, and the dream is to expand to reach more students.

Mardis, who was a pastor for 36 years prior to joining the nonprofit, also organizes the “ambassador program” FON uses to reach out in the U.S.

Through this networking effort, he explained, “We have created new partners, worked with new schools and begun an ambassador program. We said, what if we involved lay people that can help us network and grow the

ministry?”

That was exactly what FON did, and although the program started with a few people who had been touched by visits to Nazareth, the effort quickly grew. Currently there are 15 ambassadors reaching out to churches, pastors and faith-based groups about the school.

With dreams for expansion growing, NBS hit a surprising snag in 2018, though not a manmade one.

Some four years ago, plans for growth were diverted when NBS

was put on an “earthquake-prone” list for Israeli schools, hospitals and public buildings.

Mardis explained that a fault line runs through the area, and after a minor quake near the Sea of Galilee, the school had to prioritize earthquake remediation plans over any

kind of immediate progress.

“The government began looking at schools and other buildings, and we ended up on that list. It’s an aged building, and it needs constant upkeep. The safety of our kids is priority,” he said.

God has been gracious to the school, and funds needed to complete the remediation were provided, Mardis said.

But the dream of expansion to meet the needs of more children in Nazareth is as strong as ever.

“To date, no additional land has been secured, though the school is always praying, looking and dreaming,” Mardis said. “In God’s timing, He’s going to provide us with the space.”

Friends of Nazareth has continued to be active, even during the tumultuous past year, raising much-needed funds to support NBS. But Mardis also used his time in a very specific way — he published his third book, “Peaks and Pits — How the Land of the Bible Reflects the Life of a Believer” (see sidebar, this page). All proceeds from the sale of the book support FON’s work at Nazareth Baptist School.

Mardis’ new book explores ‘peaks and pits’ of life

The COVID-19 lockdowns were difficult, but the quarantine gave Roger Mardis time and opportunity to write another book.

The book — “Peaks and Pits: How the Land of the Bible Reflects the Life of a Believer” — encourages believers in the U.S. but also will help bring much-needed funds to Nazareth Baptist School in Israel. Mardis is president of Friends of Nazareth, a nonprofit that helps support and fund the school. All book proceeds go straight to NBS.

“In Deuteronomy, God told Moses and the Israelites, ‘The land I’m leading you to is one of mountains and valleys,’ ” he said.

In writing the 30-day devotional book, Mardis incorporated a past sermon series called “hills and valleys” and drew on his many experiences visiting Israel.

Mardis currently is involved in local church “Peaks and Pits Days.” He preaches on a peak and a pit, encourages the church and shares about the ministry. (Hamilton Richardson)

For more information about Friends of Nazareth, visit friendsofnazareth.org. To contact Mardis directly, email roger@friendsofnazareth.org or call 256-599-6344.

Churches respond after June 19 storms

By Carrie B. McWhorter
TAB Media

Several Alabama communities were deeply impacted as Tropical Storm Claudette moved through the state June 19. At least 14 deaths were attributed to the storm statewide.

Ten people, nine of them children, were killed in a multi-car wreck on a rain-slicked stretch of Interstate 65 in Butler County near Greenville. The victims included a Tennessee man and his 9-month-old daughter and eight children with connections to the Tallapoosa County Girls Ranch, a Christian group home in Camp Hill affiliated with the Alabama Sheriffs Youth Ranches organization.

Authorities believe water on the road may have caused one or more vehicles to hydroplane.

First Baptist Church, Greenville, provided food and shelter to survivors after a church member serving with the local volunteer fire department realized the need to get people out of the rain. Interim pastor Tom Daniel said church members came together to help transport survivors to the church and provide minor medical care.

Place to pray

They also helped shuttle members between the church and hospital where victims were being treated. "One lady said she just needed to go to the sanctuary to pray," Daniel said. "Our folks were very loving and attentive to the people. Whatever they needed, we tried to do."



Photo courtesy of Northport Baptist Church
Disaster relief volunteers from several Alabama Baptist associations helped staff the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief shower and laundry trailers set up at Northport Baptist Church.

Daniel said the church had leftover food from VBS that members warmed while survivors spoke with law enforcement officials.

"The Lord had allowed us to have the food and also everything that was needed

and necessary to minister to the needs of the people," Daniel said. "So we just want to praise the Lord and thank Him for preparing us even though we didn't know we were being prepared for a tragedy like that."

Danny Dean, director of missions

for Butler County Baptist Association — along with Herbert Brown, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Greenville, and Southside associate pastor Aaron Miller — responded by helping families at the hospital. Dean commended local emergency responders who recognized the needs of the survivors.

"They were sorting out the accident but also stopped to make sure the families were cared for," Dean said.

He added that everyone

he spoke with that day "seemed comforted by the presence of the Lord."

Claudette also spawned several tornadoes in south Alabama.

An EF-0 tornado struck in Covington County. An EF-2 tornado did extensive damage in Escambia and Conecuh counties, hitting the town of East Brewton especially hard. At least 20 people were injured, two of them seriously.

Pastor's home hit

The home of Alco Baptist Church pastor Lee Jernigan and his wife, Felicia, was in the path of the tornado, and the family was in their

home when the tornado struck.

Back in the pulpit on June 27, Jernigan preached on the topic of battles in life and spoke briefly about his family's experience during the storm.

"When that tornado came through my house, I said, 'Lord spare us.' That's about how much time I had," he said. "When junk's flying around your house, you don't say, 'let us pray.'"

God protected his family, Jernigan said, "not just a little bit. He completely protected us. I want to be careful to give Him praise for that."

Both W.S. Neal High School in East Brewton and a mobile home park near the school also received extensive damage.

Floodwaters forced residents of Willowbrook Trailer Park in Northport from their homes.

Some 30–40 people took shelter at Northport Baptist Church, where Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief set up shower and laundry facilities to help displaced residents and others in need of assistance.

The Red Cross provided meals for those sheltering at the church.

How to help Disaster Relief

Addressing messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting on June 16, Send Relief President Bryant Wright misspoke regarding how individuals can support state disaster relief efforts.

Wright later apologized for the confusion and clarified that Send Relief plays a support role to SBC Disaster Relief.

"The best way Southern Baptists can support their state's disaster relief efforts is to give and volunteer through their state conventions," a Send Relief Facebook post confirmed.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief is supported by gifts through the Cooperative Program, to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and generous donations given year-round.

Donate to ABDR any time at sbdr.org. (TAB Media)



Facebook photo
An EF-2 tornado caused extensive damage in East Brewton in Escambia County on June 19.

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Martin Lowe
Church member, Lifepointe Church of God



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Photo courtesy of Hunter Street Baptist Church

David and Carla Long, pictured with their son, Bryant, sheltered in their home as a tornado roared through their neighborhood in Shelby County on March 25.

Surviving the storm

Couple shares spiritual insights gained after spring tornado, cleanup

By Heather Jones Skaggs
Special to TAB Media

Carla Long said she and her husband, David, heard debris hitting the house and the sound of trees cracking as a tornado ripped through their neighborhood March 25.

"The power was out, so our son was keeping us informed of the tornado's path by phone, and then the line dropped," she said.

Only a few moments later, the chaos was over, and everything was still and quiet. The Longs hesitantly emerged from a bathtub in an interior bathroom where they had taken shelter.

"We had blankets over us and our cat and our safety helmets on. We were praying and speaking the name of Jesus, as we thought the roof was about to go," she said.

Multiple tornadoes

The long-track storms of March 25 left a path of damage across the state as a total of 10 tornadoes were confirmed on the ground resulting in 4 EF-3 tornadoes, 3 EF-2 tornadoes and 3 EF-1 tornadoes.

Assessing their damage, the Longs say the fact their house is still standing is unimaginable.

"What we saw shocked us," Long said. "The tornado had blown in the deadbolted French doors to our screened porch, debris was in the house, and our porch had damage."

But the biggest shock was when they looked outside. Gutters were hanging off the house, the roof was severely damaged, and their backyard was covered in trees — trees down in every direction.

"There were around 100 trees on our 2-acre lot that were lying down like toothpicks," she said.

The sheer power of severe weather reminds us how quickly things can change, but it is no surprise to God.

"How trees that took 50 years to grow can be destroyed in less than a minute is overwhelming and life-changing to see right in front of you," Long said. "In our prayers since the storm, we have thanked the Lord for His grace and mercy."

After the rain and wind subsided, the Longs began cleanup and repair.

Soon after, members of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, stepped up to help. On April 3, about 18 church members arrived with chainsaws, trimmers, a bobcat and a lot of love.

"They worked so tirelessly and got most of the front and side property cleared and rubbish taken to the road," Long said. "For every limb they cut and drug, for all the hours on the bobcat, and every step that was taken, we are truly thankful."

Meeting needs

Emotional needs were also met with encouragement and acts of kindness.

"A sweet neighbor offered to provide lunch and support for the Hunter Street team, and they were also encour-

aged and blessed by the serving heart of our church," Long said.

Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help, but Long said one thing she learned from this storm is to let people help in specific ways and let them take action.

"We have had precious neighbors reach out to us and offer help," she said. "One gave us a place to stay the night after the storm, and another kind friend brought a ham for Easter weekend."

"In the future, when reaching out to someone who has just gone through a dramatic experience, we plan to do the same — take action in serving in specific ways. It was so helpful for friends just to jump in and

tell us what they wanted to do to help us because it was so hard to ask for help."

For those who have never been through a tornado that is devastating to life and property, the Longs offer this advice, "take all warnings seriously, and plan as if it will happen to you."

"A tornado is just a sign of the groaning of the earth, the fall of man, the sin of the world," Long said. "Look around at your life and see the groaning. Reach out to the One who can save you from your sins and offer true peace amid the storms [of life.] Know there is purpose to this life."

"We are living our lives with renewed purpose and thinking on eternity so much more after this storm."



Photo courtesy of Hunter Street Baptist Church

A volunteer from Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, helps clear a fallen tree on the property of David and Carla Long following the March 25 storms that left a path of damage in the state.

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3 stories you should know



AP Photo/Gerald Herbert

Rescue workers sift through the rubble at the Champlain Towers South Condo near Miami on June 25. Dozens died when the 12-story building collapsed June 24. Pines Baptist Church Pastor Luis Acosta led a small group of Florida Baptist Convention Disaster Relief personnel to the site to help determine the best response. They issued a call for 50 chaplains and the dispatch of a combination laundry-shower unit. Read more at tabonline.org/collapse. (BP)

SCOTUS sends NAMB lawsuit to lower court

The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected the North American Mission Board's request to dismiss a case brought against it by Will McRaney, former executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware.

The case now is remanded back to the U.S. District Court Northern District of Mississippi, which dismissed the lawsuit in April 2019, Baptist Press reported.

McRaney alleges he was fired in 2015 because he resisted changes required by NAMB regarding funding between state Baptist conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. NAMB denies those claims and says the dispute falls under the "religious exemption" given to faith-based entities.

Read more at tabonline.org/namb-lawsuit. (TAB Media)

Transgender rights ruling upheld by court

The U.S. Supreme Court on June 28 said it would not rule in a case many said would provide clarity on transgender rights in schools.

The court declined to review a decision that required a Virginia school district to enable a female student who identifies as male to use the boys' restroom.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and other organizations urged justices to reverse the ruling or "unleash conflicts over religious liberty resembling the conflicts over same-sex marriage" and potentially marginalize people of faith.

The ERLC and the other signers of the brief said their faiths and other religious traditions believe "a person's identity as male or female is created by God and immutable."

Read more at tabonline.org/transgender-rights-schools. (BP)

Headline news from around the Southeast

Arkansas

The Families First Ministry Center at First Baptist Church, Maumelle, Arkansas, serves foster and adoptive families and also assists those involved in protective service cases. The center provides necessary items to help families in need, such as clothes, furniture and diapers, and it also provides a room for supervised visits between foster children and their biological parents. Through it all, families find love, hope and support, along with many opportunities for gospel conversations, Arkansas Baptist News reported.

Florida

When the pandemic forced a closure of English as a Second Language classes, Florida Baptist leaders discovered that various virtual platforms could multiply their efforts and outreach. As ESL classes went online, students from across the globe began registering, the

Florida Baptist Witness reported. "The churches realized very quickly that God had given them a worldwide ministry," said Marc Johnston, Florida Baptists' community ministries catalyst.

Georgia

Children in Vacation Bible School at Ivy Creek Baptist Church, Buford, Georgia, donated 2,500 books through Read Georgia, an initiative aimed at helping disadvantaged children learn to read while introducing them and their families to Christ, The Christian Index reported. Lorna Bius, a mobilizer for Mission Georgia, said the generosity of the 180 children at Ivy Creek will pay educational and spiritual dividends.

Kentucky

Children attending Vacation Bible School at Hazel Baptist, a small southwestern Kentucky church, received an offering of \$6,300 for Sunrise

Children's Services, Kentucky Today reported. Donations came from throughout the community, including from churches of other denominations. Dale Suttles, president of Sunrise, said, "I've never seen a time where Baptists are more united and galvanized. This is something they are passionate about — helping hurting children."

Tennessee

Three researchers who have played various roles in the research and development of COVID-19 vaccines have a common thread — the Baptist Student Union (now Baptist Collegiate Ministry) at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, the Baptist and Reflector reported. The three alumni — Buddy Creech, Josh Denny and Sheri Wilcox — all affirm the positive role the ministry played. "I am forever thankful for such a biblical, encouraging anchor in the middle of my college campus," Denny said.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Reuben “Lucky” Teague**, retired director of missions for Walker Baptist Association and longtime Alabama Baptist pastor, died June 21. He was 71.

Teague retired in 2015 after leading Walker Association for 15 years. In his 27 years as a pastor, he served several Alabama Baptist churches, including: First Baptist Church, Greenhill; Flint Baptist Church, Decatur; Flatwoods Baptist Church, Northport; Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Moulton; and Oak Forest Baptist Church, Somerville.



TEAGUE

Teague held a bachelor's degree from Athens State University and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. From 1993 to 1998, he served NOBTS as director of church/minister relations and alumni affairs.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Angie. He is survived by his wife, Connie, and his daughter, Lori.

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Nicolas “Nic” Seaborn** is the new pastor of **Shades Crest Baptist Church, Bluff Park**.

Seaborn comes to Shades Crest from Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church, Homewood. He holds a bachelor's degree from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and a master of divinity from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham. He is currently a candidate for a Ph.D. in preaching from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Seaborn also has served as a LeaderCare advocate with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and serves or has served on various boards and committees in Alabama Baptist life as well as for Beeson Divinity School.

Seaborn and his wife, Rachel, have two children.

► **George Wright** is the new senior pastor of **Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills**, effective Aug. 16.



WRIGHT

Wright grew up in Marietta, Georgia, where his father, Bryant, was pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina in Columbia and a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He has served in a variety of student ministry roles and as teaching pastor at Johnson Ferry.

From 2006 to 2017, he was planter and pastor of Cedarcrest Church in Acworth, Georgia. He was called back to Columbia as pastor of Shandon Baptist Church in 2017.

Wright said he desires “to equip and inspire the people of God to live the mission.”

“I love that Shades is so focused on sending people, even if just on short-term missions. ... We believe that with its foundation and history, Shades has only scratched the surface of its impact in Birmingham and beyond.”

Wright and his wife, Megan, have four children.

► **First Baptist Church, Chalkville**, will host a rebook singing July 17, 6–7:30 pm. Ken Daniels is pastor.

BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

► **Pan Creek Missionary Baptist Church, Baileyton**, celebrated its 75th anniversary May 30, and Larry Snow, church clerk and deacon, said it “was a wonderful service.”

Hunter Hall, a young preacher from a sister church, was the guest speaker for the morning, and members gave testimonies of their memories.

Kris Collins, music director, planned and led the music for the morning, and Jennifer Nayman, Sylinthia Lowery, Paulina Dingler and Reanna Walker sang solos.

Gerald Glenn with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the church with a certificate, and plaques were on display commemorating former pastors and deacons, along with photos of the first pastor, Finis Shedd, and Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Pitts, who donated the land for the church.

The congregation gathered for lunch after the special service. Derreck Lowery is pastor.

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Dylan Rigg** is the new pastor of **Alpine Baptist Church**. A native of Trussville, he previously served as associate pastor of Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church, San Francisco, California. He has a bachelor's degree from Samford University and a master of divinity degree from Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas. He and his wife, Hannah, have one daughter.



RIGG

► **Bud Jacks** is the new pastor of **Plainview Baptist Church, Talladega**. He previously served other churches including

Redeemed Christian Fellowship Center in Sylacauga.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church, Albertville**, recently honored Pastor **Chris Johnson** and his wife, Lillie, for 10 years of service at the church.

Johnson said on Facebook that they were “blown away” by the church's kind words and generosity and said he would “love nothing more than to serve as pastor of these amazing people for another 10 years.”

“For the last 10 years, they have loved us well and treated us better than we could ever deserve,” he wrote.

► **Sand Mountain Cowboy Church, Boaz**, dedicated its new building May 16.

At the dedication, Aaron Johnson spoke about how God gave him the vision and how the church was first developed.

Edwin Waldrop, who served as pastor after Johnson, shared his role in carrying on the vision. And Michael Marsh, current pastor, shared his vision for the church to partner with other churches to reach the lost in the area and serve those in need in the community.



Photo courtesy of Marshall Association

PICKENS ASSOCIATION

► **Carrollton Baptist Church** celebrated its 175th anniversary with a special worship service on May 23.

“It was meaningful to see how the people looked to the past for inspiration and how they are looking to the future for what God is going to do,” Pastor Robert Heard (pictured below, left) said.



Facebook photo

“We are honored to be part of the Alabama Baptist family.”

David Nelson (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to the church, as did Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Lyle Dease, director of missions for Pickens Baptist Association, presented a letter, and Mickey

Walker, mayor of Carrollton, gave a word of welcome. Sen. Gerald Allen offered congratulations, and Gov. Kay Ivey sent a letter of recognition.

Gary Hollingsworth — executive director-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention who was ordained at Carrollton Baptist — was the guest speaker for the morning. Church members provided special music, and many families of former pastors and staff members were in attendance.

Persecuted **church**
will be back next week.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Hull Baptist Church in Hull, Ga., seeks a senior pastor to lead and grow the church body in its goals to worship and glorify God, disciple believers, provide pastoral care for the church body and evangelize the lost in our community and the world. A complete job description and church profile is available on the church website: <http://www.hullbaptist.org/PastorSearch/>. Contact Jimps Cole at 706-614-2624 or mail resumé to: HBC, P.O. Box 580, Hull, GA 30646.

SENIOR PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Jemison is seeking a full-time senior pastor. He should possess a conviction to preach from the Holy Bible, teaching biblical truths and doctrine of Christianity, as stated in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Must provide pastoral care and counseling; be engaged to all age groups; mentor and supervise church staff; and provide visionary leadership for the future of our church. He will shepherd our congregation in worship, Christian spiritual growth and community outreach as we strive to carry out The Great Commission. Mail resumé to: Jemison First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 760, Jemison, AL 35085 or resumes@jemisonfirstbaptist.com.

SENIOR PASTOR

We are prayerfully seeking God's man to be the under shepherd and spiritual leader of His church here at Farmstead Baptist Church in Jasper. We are seeking a man who loves the Lord unconditionally, is led by the Holy Spirit and has a heart for the people. Farmsteadpastorsearch@gmail.com. 265 Curry Hwy, Jasper, AL 35503. <https://farmsteadbaptist.church>.

PASTOR

FBC Loxley, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor to lead and shepherd our congregation. Under the Lord's leading, please send resumé to: fbcloxleypastorsearch@gmail.com.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL SENIOR PASTOR

Lakeview Baptist Church of

Oxford, Ala., is seeking a bivocational senior pastor. Send resumé with a link to sermons to: ChurchOffice@LBCOxford.com. Address: Lakeview Baptist Church Search Committee, 132 Central Ave, Oxford, AL 36203.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Verbena Baptist Church is currently seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: verbenabaptist@att.net.

FULL-TIME MUSIC & MEDIA PASTOR

FBC Alexander City, Ala. Full-time music/media pastor. Praise team, band and ensemble approach. Choir capabilities needed. Blended service. Oversee and develop audio/tech/video ministry. Send resumé to: info@fbc-ac.org.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP

First Baptist Church of Dillon, S.C., is seeking a full-time associate pastor of worship. Applicants should have at least 2 years experience leading worship and a minimum of a 4-year bachelor's degree. For further information and job description, please visit <https://www.fbcdillon.com/associatepastor>. Please send resumé to: search@fbcdillon.com.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

First Baptist Madison, Ala., is seeking a part-time contemporary worship leader. For more information please go to: <https://bit.ly/3eQpu0p>.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP OR YOUTH PASTOR:

Seeking a bivocational worship and/or youth pastor to lead a blended worship service as well as serve in our youth ministry. Position could be divided into two positions or one depending on qualifications. Please email resumé to: LadoniaBaptist,PhenixCity,bySept.1to:PastorGreg@ladoniabaptist.org

PART-TIME YOUTH PASTOR

Vincent First Baptist Church is searching and praying for a part-time youth pastor. Please send resumé to ATTN: Pastor Robbie Weems at weems1969@aol.com. Praying for someone within a 15-minute drive from church. Great opportunity.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

West Cullman Baptist Association is currently taking resumé

for the position of director of missions. Please send resumé to: perry@perryknightattorney.com. Resumé will be accepted until July 31.

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MINISTRIES

TAB HIGHLIGHTS

TAB Highlights is an email newsletter delivered straight to your inbox every Monday-Wednesday-Friday with the day's top stories from the world of faith-based news. The complimentary service is managed by the TAB Media team. Headlines come from international, national and Southern Baptist coverage, as well as one story that has been trending during the week. TAB Highlights also provides a link to the latest podcast released from the TAB Media team. To sign up for TAB Highlights, email news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Resolution on abortion draws emotional plea

Dana Hall McCain's introduction to Southern Baptists has a direct tie to the ones she has encountered in her years as a volunteer for a pregnancy resource center in Dothan.

As a member of the SBC's Resolutions Committee,

McCain spoke with passion to a proposed amendment for a resolution on abortion. The amendment, in effect, would have regarded women who obtain abortions as "murderers."

"I share your passion for ending the scourge of abortion. Pardon me if I get emotional about this," said McCain, her voice wavering as she explained how conversations with women at Wiregrass Hope Group had impacted her.

Before volunteering with

the center, McCain admitted, she would have been in line with adopting the proposed amendment.

"However, what the Lord has shown me sitting in those rooms across from broken women is so many of them have been victimized by the sin of others," she

said.

Such actions included not only generational sin but having parents "who never took them to church and preached the gospel to them the way mine did to me."

"Yes," she continued, "abortion is

sin, and one of the things we impart to those women when we love them, care for them and minister to them is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth about the sin of abortion, and we do call them to repentance. But

"So many [broken women] have been victimized by the sin of others."

**Dana Hall McCain
SBC Resolutions
Committee member**



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I'm also telling you that when we take a punitive and hard-hearted position toward women who are at a crossroads — that usually a whole lot of people's sin brought them to — we're not having the mind of Christ toward those women."

Loud applause met McCain's testimony. The amendment failed, and the resolution passed. The next day, a resolution calling abortion the "murder [of] a preborn image-bearer" passed after being presented from the floor. That resolution, however, did not call women who seek abortions murderers.

McCain, a member of First Baptist Church in Dothan, later explained how volunteering in the center was "life-altering."

"I had always been a person of deep convictions and deep passions," she said. "For me, the abortion issue had always been extraordinarily black-and-white."

"But once I started interacting with the average woman who seeks an abortion, the Lord humbled me in a lot of my assumptions about their lives and the amount of agency they possess to make a good decision."

A list of characteristics took shape among her clients. The woman lived in poverty. She didn't have access to quality education or health care. She had not grown up in a nuclear family and was often raised by a grandmother.

Another common factor appeared, one for which McCain admitted she wasn't prepared.

"It emerged as a theme over and over again that many of these vulnerable

women were also victims of sexual abuse and molestation," she said.

"In these unstable family structures and within the poverty community, children are so vulnerable. Time and time again stories [of abuse] included mom's boyfriend, a shady uncle or this guy living with grandma."

The picture of a healthy, biblically orthodox understanding of sex and God's design for family was essentially destroyed for these girls at a young age, she added.

"It became very difficult for me to look at the woman in front of me with a story like that and have anything other than deep compassion for her."

"That pregnancy was often the result of abuse and the guy would be waiting outside in the car. These girls would practically sneak in to talk to us while he was trying to get her in the car and go to Tallahassee 'to take care of it.'"

Having conversations

McCain stressed that the sin of abortion must be addressed but so must seeing these women for who God created them to be.

"We need to help them learn to be good Christian parents but also to know about the salvation offered in Christ," she said.

"So many are starving for that. Those conversations radically changed my perception on how to view women who stand at the crossroads. Their unborn child is loved and created in the image of God, and so is she."

(Reprinted from Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention)



MCCAIN

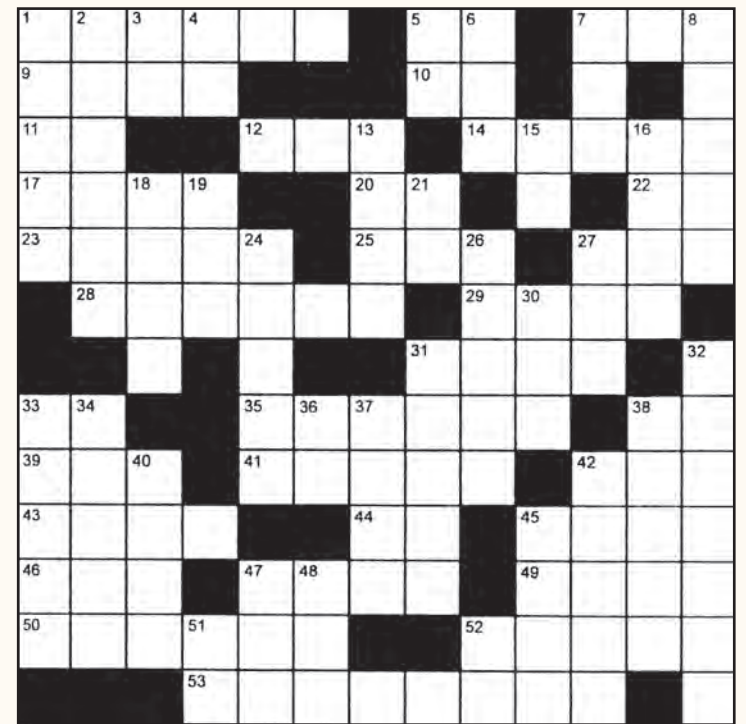
"For me, the abortion issue had always been extraordinarily black-and-white."

Dana Hall McCain
SBC Resolutions Committee member

CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. By their ____ ye shall know them. (Matt. 7:20)
5. Jesus loves ____.
7. Lean ____ unto thine own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)
9. Bad grammar.
10. ____ are of God, little children. (1 John 4:4)
11. Intensive Care. (abbr.)
12. The beginning and the _____. (Rev. 21:6)
14. A little ____ than the angels. (Heb. 2:7)
17. I will never leave _____. (Heb. 13:5)
20. Each. (abbr.)
22. Delaware. (abbr.)
23. I am meek and lowly in _____. (Matt. 11:29)
25. American Medical Association. (abbr.)
27. Let thy words be _____. (Eccles. 5:2)
28. Opposite of "brave."
29. Unto us a child is _____. (Isa. 9:6)
31. The head of the _____, the Church. (Col. 1:18)
33. Postscript.
35. Opposite of "depart."
38. ____ be it.
39. A hot cereal, ____ meal.
41. ____ him, and let him go. (John 11:44)
42. A bicycle's handle_____.
43. A little bird.
44. Missouri. (ZIP code abbr.)
45. Leave these out of your diet.
46. Cause thine ____ to hear. (Ps. 10:17)
47. A has_____.
49. A continent.
50. One who works in a belfry.



By Beverly Barnes Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

52. Jesus saith unto her, give me to _____. (John 4:7)
53. ____ evil with good. (Rom. 12:21)

DOWN

1. The just shall live by _____. (Gal. 3:11)
2. I will give thee hidden _____. (Isa. 45:3)
3. United Nations. (abbr.)
4. ____ is finished. (John 19:30)
5. The Lord is ____ shepherd. (Ps. 23:1)
6. Moray ____.
7. If any man be in Christ, he is a ____ creature. (2 Cor. 5:17)
8. ____ stones at him. (2 Sam. 16:13)
13. Was _____, and is alive again. (Luke 15:24)
15. Ohio. (ZIP code abbr.)
16. God sent him forth from the garden of _____. (Gen. 3:23)
18. Charity ... toward ____ other. (2 Thess. 1:3)
19. Period of time in history.
21. I ____ the way. (John 14:6)
24. The ____ of your faith. (1 Pet. 1:7)
26. Every perfect gift is from _____. (James 1:17)
27. To cook in a skillet.
30. Musical poem.
31. Buffalo.
32. He will not fail thee, neither ____ thee. (Deut. 31:8)
33. All ____ is given unto me. (Matt. 28:18)
34. Abram took ____ his wife. (Gen. 12:5)
36. Rule out. (abbr.)
37. All Jews to depart from _____. (Acts 18:2)
38. Silk and ____.
40. Sea bird.
42. Famous musician, Count ____.
45. Old MacDonald had one.
47. Nickname for Beverly.
48. Before. (poetic)
51. ____ ye and teach all nations. (Matt. 28:19)
52. ____ all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)



ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



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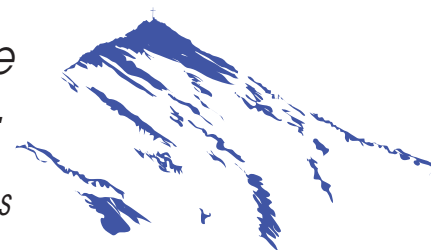
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*For more information, a complete schedule and to register, visit **alsbom.org/pinnacle**.*

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



Keep growing to look like Christ, Wilkin urges

(continued from page 1)

Branch said when she started her job at Southeastern, she felt she had something to prove.

"I was just really trying to do it all myself," she said.

"I've had to do a lot of growth in what it means to lead, and of course, Jesus is an incredible model, but there are also brilliant women who I have gotten to learn from and books to read.

"I think that has been the challenge of wanting to own the position I've been given and to really feel like I don't have to shrink back."

Branch said she believes "every woman is a leader," but women must also give themselves permission to fail and use those experiences to learn.

Kathy Litton, director of planter spouse development at the North American Mission Board, echoed that thought, noting many women, including herself,

battle a tendency toward perfectionism. "I was stuck with fear, wanting [each event] to be 100% perfect, and you can't do that," Litton said.

Recognize your weaknesses and address them, she advised.

'Strong ... leaders'

Author Susie Hawkins reminded the 200 or so women in attendance that "women have been involved in SBC life for many years."

"They were messengers, they were active in convention work, active in missions, active in their local churches. We do stand on their

shoulders," Hawkins said, "There have been really strong women leaders that have gone before us and paved the way for us."

The women encouraged pursuing education, either through a certificate program or theological education.

"Women, please see your-

For more information, visit womenwork.net and sbcwomen.net.



Photo by Dianna L. Cagle

Annie Locke (from left), Missie Branch, Lynette Ezell and Kandi Gallaty share Great Commission stories during the Southeastern Seminary Women's Breakfast on June 16.

self as theologians," Branch said. "See this season as preparation for the next one."

Branch also moderated a panel discussion focused on sharing Great Commission stories held during Southeastern's women's breakfast on June 16.

During the Ministers' Wives Luncheon held June 15, speaker and author Jen Wilkin emphasized community.

Wilkin, a staff member at

The Village Church, Flower Mound, Texas, noted that the past year has been "exhausting," with everyone feeling the effects. She commended those gathered for caring for their communities.

'Look out for needs'

"If the Church is the family of God, ... and I believe deeply that it is, ... then in this room, sitting here, we have a room full of church mothers. Women who look out for the needs

of the church," Wilkin said.

Wilkin encouraged her listeners to guard their hearts against discouragement and pursue spiritual maturity.

"When you think about being a person who is spiritually mature, someone who understands exactly what to do with discouragement — what do you think of?" she asked.

"We don't really have to wonder because the Bible gives us a good picture of what maturity looks like."

Reading from James 1, Wilkin noted the "perfection" and "completeness" referenced in verse 4 could also be interpreted as maturity.

"Perfection, not in the sense that we cease sinning, but that we are growing to look like Christ."

Trials like the ones Christians have faced through the past year and a half will produce steadfastness in the believer, she said.

"Patience will serve you for a moment or a day. Steadfastness will serve you for a decade and a lifetime." (TAB Media staff)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 11

Explore the Bible

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



POWER DISPLAYED Job 40:1-14

Correct Me? (1-5)

Job had wished he could summon the Lord into the courtroom, but the Lord summoned Job instead. Although the Lord answered Job, it turned out to be an answer that consisted mostly of questions. Through the use of questions, the Lord had Job consider the stars, the clouds, the waters, the land, the wild creatures, the funny ostrich, the warhorse and the eagle.

It's as if God is asking Job: Are you God? Did you create these? Because if you are God, then I'll resign and hand over the running of the universe to you. But you're not, are you? So what makes you think you could run it better than Me?

The core question in the Book of Job has been whether or not the cosmos is properly run, whether or not the God in charge deserves to be in charge or whether perhaps He ought to be impeached for running it badly.

With devastating directness, God concluded His first speech to Job with a direct challenge. "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?" The Lord accused Job of charging Him with wrongdoing. He had slandered God's holy character, and he must be held accountable for his sin. "Let him who argues with God give an answer." God had presented His case and now called on Job to present his case. Would Job actually correct God? Would he charge God with injustice?

Job undoubtedly regretted his day in court before the Lord. He recognized he was unworthy compared to God's glory manifested in His rule over creation. He admitted that he, a creature, was unable to correct the Creator. Job realized he was inferior to God in knowledge and power. He confessed his sin and withdrew his complaint. He covered his mouth and acknowledged that he had nothing else to say.

Question My Justice? (6-9)

The Lord answered Job from the whirlwind and challenged him to "answer me like a man." Job found himself on the defensive while God

was acting as the prosecuting attorney. Soon after Satan had struck Job, he demanded answers from God. Now God turned the tables on Job and demanded answers from him.

Speaking with the power of a destructive whirlwind, God interrogated Job. "Would you really challenge my justice? Would you declare me guilty to justify yourself?" Would Job continue to accuse God of injustice? Would he continue to put God in the wrong in order to put himself in the right? Surely not.

"Do you have an arm like God's?" The Lord asked Job if he had the strength to do what God could do. Considering his helpless estate, Job's only answer could be a resounding no. Job had to learn that only God's strong arm can rule, rescue and restore. "Can you thunder with a voice like his?" Could Job speak with the sovereign authority of God and direct the universe? He could not.

Save Yourself? (10-14)

Job has questioned God's justice; therefore, God spoke to Job with biting sarcasm and challenged Job to assume his role as God. God challenged him to do the job of the judge of all the earth, to bring low the proud and to tread down the wicked.

In verse 10, God told Job to adorn himself with majesty, splendor, honor and glory. These are attributes of infinite superiority that belong to God alone. If Job was going to talk as if he could rule better than God, then he should look the part.

In verses 11-13, we see one key question exemplified: Was Job qualified for the task of executing justice in the universe? Job had been looking for proof of God's justice, so God challenged Job to show Him what justice looked like in the universe.

If Job could execute perfect justice, if he could do everything that God was supposedly neglecting, then He would confess to Job that he could save himself with no need for God. If Job could not do these things, then he needed to humble himself and trust in God for his salvation.

Bible Studies for Life

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



FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS Revelation 3:7-13

Any church would be honored and should strive to have Christ describe it the way He described the church in Philadelphia and to hear the promises He made to those believers.

Entrance into God's kingdom is secure for those who have trusted in Christ. (7-8)

Jesus highlights His deity as "the Holy One, the true One." Holding "the key of David" indicates that Jesus is the true Messiah, who has begun His reign (see Isa. 22:22, where similar words were addressed to a predecessor of the Messiah).

As the One who holds the key of David, Christ alone can open the door to the temple and kingdom of God. An individual cannot open it for himself or herself, and because Christ has opened the door, no one could possibly close it.

He has infinite power while the believers in Philadelphia (like us) had little power. Christ knew their works (as He knows ours) and that they had refused to deny His name, remaining steadfast in their commitment to Him, to His teaching and to carrying out works of service in His name, despite serious opposition.

Trust God's protection. (9-10)

With the exception of practicing Jews, people in the Roman empire were required to offer sacrifices to Rome and its emperors, with severe consequences for those who refused.

Before Christianity came to be recognized as a separate religion, believers were considered part of a Jewish movement that recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, and they often participated in the local Jewish synagogue. Thus, they initially benefited from the Jewish exception.

The members of a synagogue "who claim to be Jews and are not, but are lying" are probably Jews who had made a similar claim about the Christians in their midst: Some of the local Jews had begun to insist that followers of Jesus were claiming to be Jews but were not, and they should not be exempt from the

requirement to offer sacrifices to Rome. That endangered the lives of the Christians.

Christ takes that situation and turns it on its head: It isn't the Christians who are guilty of falsely claiming to be God's people but those Jews who have sought to disown them and put their lives at risk. Jesus describes those seeking to harm His followers as "the synagogue of Satan."

The believers will be vindicated in the end when their enemies will "come and bow down" not only at His feet but also at theirs, and their enemies will see how Christ loves them when they are standing with Him at the end.

Having remained faithful to the Lord while enduring terrible opposition, they will be protected from the even greater testing to be unleashed on all who disbelieve and rebel against God.

Hold on to the truth and provision of God. (11-13)

In verse 3, Christ warned the church in Sardis that He would come to them in judgment like a thief in the night. In verse 11, He promises to come quickly to the church in Philadelphia as well but to bring relief rather than judgment.

This is not a promise to experience Christ's Second Coming but to know His presence in a powerful way that would preserve them in the midst of the trials they were called to endure. Christ has a crown in store for His faithful disciples, and believers must hold on to Christ and His truth to make sure "that no one takes your crown."

Those who conquer, overcoming the pressures to give up the faith in the face of severe opposition, will experience God's presence forever. Just like a pillar in God's temple, they will always be in His presence.

And just as Woody in "Toy Story," who has Andy's name written on his shoe, faithful believers like those in Philadelphia will have God's name, the name of God's city and Christ's own name written on them as signs that they are God's permanent possessions.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs
TAB Media

Documentary explores therapy options for those with PTSD

During a time when racial and political unrest and the repercussions of COVID-19 have prompted stress in so many, a new documentary shines a spotlight on the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder and its treatment.

California filmmaker Michael Gier, director/producer of “Wounded Heroes,” had originally planned a theatrical film about the topic of PTSD. During his research, he interviewed a man named Carl who was taking 16 prescription drugs for symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

Despite ongoing treatment, Carl had attempted suicide multiple times. “He was just a mess and wasn’t doing well,” Gier said. “He said [his] medication was just a Band-Aid and didn’t actually solve the problem. I walked out of that interview shocked.

“How was it possible that this guy, who was in his 20s, had that many prescriptions and they are not actually helping solve the problem?”

Exploring treatments

Gier decided to put the feature film on hold and do a documentary instead. The goal for the film was to explore treatments that show promise in the treatment of PTSD, Gier said.



“Wounded Heroes”

Screenshot

Over the three years of working on the project, he and his team explored several alternative treatments that showed promise in helping those with PTSD, military veterans and others alike.

“When I first started this, I thought that post-traumatic stress was something that only [those in the] military dealt with. Then as we progressed, I learned that this is a very normal reaction to an abnormal [traumatic] event.”

The high number of suicides among veterans concerns Gier. “People are dying — 20 veterans a day,” Gier lamented.

“That’s crazy, and that’s just in the veteran community. Then you’ve got active-duty military, police officers, firefighters — all first responders.

“Their suicide rate is ridiculously high. With that many people taking their lives by suicide, something has to be done. Clearly the prescription drugs, especially the antipsychotics, are not working.”

Gier believes if the film saves one life, it was worth doing.

“Anytime you have lives being lost, it’s time for something to be done, and that’s why this film was made.”

Gier is part of a movement to drop the D and “disorder” from the PTSD diagnosis.

The thought is that PTS is not a disorder but rather a normal reaction to a traumatic event.

Removing the word “disorder” also lessens the stigma of dealing with post-traumatic stress, many mental health experts argue.

“It’s important to know that [PTS] is normal because people think that ‘something’s wrong with me.’

“But no, it’s not. This is a natural reaction; it’s very normal,” Gier explained.



GIER

“It’s just recognizing it and realizing that it is OK — there’s nothing wrong with you, but there is help.”

Gier was moved during interviews of those with PTS.

One of the most memorable was a veteran who said after treatment, “I feel like a soldier again.”

“To be a soldier and to have that confidence and that strength and then to feel like a loser, weak, suicidal. ... Then to now have it all back and to say that, ‘I feel like a soldier again’ — that’s an amazing journey,” Gier said. “That’s exciting and life-changing and was an important moment to me.”

Other veterans expressed gratitude for finding healing.

‘There is hope’

A veteran named Sherry featured in the film didn’t believe alternative treatments would work.

But after seeing military friends find success with therapy and feeling as if her own treatment wasn’t working well, she tried therapy herself.

In tears, she told Gier how therapy had saved her life.

Another declared, “Life is worth living again.”

“The goal of the film is to let people know that there is hope — that they do not have to live a miserable life because of post-traumatic stress,” Giers said. “If you find a treatment or program that helps you ... you will get your life back like these others did.”

For more about the documentary and to learn more about alternative treatments featured in “Wounded Heroes,” go to woundedheroesdocumentary.com.

The film is available on DVD and on most video on demand platforms.

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.



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