

# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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Photo by Sam Evans

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, **FROM EVERY NATION, FROM ALL TRIBES AND PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.”

## REVELATION 7:9

### Global missionary partners vital to Revelation 7:9 vision

**G**lobal mobilization — seeking out partnerships beyond the borders of the U.S. — is crucial to the Revelation 7:9 vision and reaching the 154,937 people who die daily without Christ.

The International Mission Board defines a global missionary partner as a national church partner based overseas who is fully funded through a church, a network of churches or Baptist convention. He or she serves on and with an existing IMB team.

“There are 140 Baptist conventions and unions around the world that our researchers have been able to locate,”

said IMB President Paul Chitwood.

“They are the fruit that remains from 175 years of work. We want to work with those partners and help them send their own missionaries.”

#### Learning from partners

As the IMB continues to seek global partnerships, IMB teams also learn from their partners, said Amanda Dimperio, IMB director of globalization.

“We don’t know everything there is to know about how to plant churches in some of these places. So partnering with them will teach us how to be better multicultural team players.” (IMB)



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**FOR MORE REVELATION 7:9 STORIES, SEE PAGES 8–10.**

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Screen shot

Romeo Penn, a counselor at Wellspring Christian Clinic in Birmingham, believes everyone needs someone to listen. Christian counseling incorporates biblical principles to help people mentally, spiritually and emotionally, he says.

## Everyone needs someone to listen, counselor says

To share your heart with someone and have them encourage you and build you back up is a “win-win situation,” says Romeo Penn.

“Even myself as a called, chosen professional counselor, I need people to talk to,” said Penn, a licensed pastoral counselor and certified temperament counselor at Wellspring Christian Clinic in Birmingham. “I need someone to sit down and listen to me.”

That’s why Penn — who has served as a counseling resource for TAB Media since 2019 — went into counseling in the first place. He had a passion for meeting that need.

“The reason I chose Christian counseling ... was personal, to be honest,” he said.

“I dealt with depression. I dealt with anxiety issues. I dealt with low self-esteem.

“I dealt with lack of security. Growing in understanding the principles as I was going through my studies was beneficial for me.”

Penn’s experience with counseling spans about 15 years.

He started working as a mentor and life coach, then earned his

master’s degree and doctor of philosophy degree in Christian counseling from Colorado Theological Seminary.

Before he went into counseling, he grew up in inner-city Birmingham playing basketball.

He later played in college, at the pro level in Russia and Australia and did missions work with Athletes in Action.

Penn appreciates Christian counseling because it comes “from an angle that incorporates Jesus, it incorporates God the Father and it incorporates the Holy Spirit along with biblical principles that can help a person move forward from point A to point B and help them mentally, spiritually and emotionally as opposed to just mentally and emotionally.”

In a short video series produced by TAB Media, he shares why counseling is important and discusses how to live in the stresses of today’s world.

To watch the video series featuring Penn, visit [tabonline.org/romeo](http://tabonline.org/romeo).

For more counseling resources, visit [tabonline.org/counseling](http://tabonline.org/counseling). (Grace Thornton)

## 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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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

**Christian counseling “incorporates Jesus, ... God the Father and ... the Holy Spirit along with biblical principles.”**

Romeo Penn

# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**By Jennifer Davis Rash**

President and Editor-in-Chief



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@RashionalThts

## Our fight or flight responses struggle against influx of ‘urgent’ messages

**T**he message startled us when it popped up on the website for The Alabama Baptist, but it didn’t upset us — though it could have.

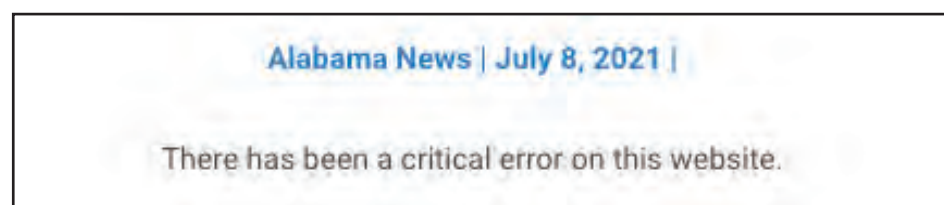
After all, the phrase “critical error on this website,” along with an adapted look to the homepage, can be a bit unsettling when the ones of us initially troubleshooting it have limited knowledge in building and maintaining websites.

Not to worry, however. Our digital services manager James Hammack knew exactly what to do, and his simple fix made the “critical error” message seem a bit exaggerated. We joked about how our website has a flair for the dramatic and must have been feeling ignored.

You may experience the same thing from time to time when a text or email message appears on your device with a frantic alert of some kind.

They come in all forms, even as computer-generated phone calls — “your account has been hacked,” “your service is about to be cut off,” “your package could not be delivered,” something about “your student loan” and the all-time favorite “your car warranty has expired.”

And like us, I’m sure you’ve adapted to realizing those messages are merely attempts to



Screenshot

bait you into clicking on a link or respond in some way that has nothing to do with what it says.

An urgent message striking fear that something bad is going to happen if we don’t respond immediately had its day, but we are on to them now.

Like what our staff did with the “critical error” message, the best way to respond is to think logically through the situation.

Many businesses and services

do communicate through automated phone messages, email and texting, but they let you know that plan in advance.

And if you aren’t sure, legitimate businesses and services always have an option for calling or accessing the information through their official website.

The key is to initiate the call or type in the web address yourself, however. Avoid clicking on a number or link in a message you receive if you have any

concern at all about why you are receiving the information.

If you have clicked on a questionable link and aren’t sure what to do, then contact a trusted friend or family member to help you check on your personal information.

Sometimes an implied sense of urgency pushes us to do things we regret. But when making decisions, it always helps to remember that legitimate business transactions won’t make us feel pressured.

In all aspects of life, slowing down to understand the full context of any situation typically protects us from unnecessary drama and missteps.

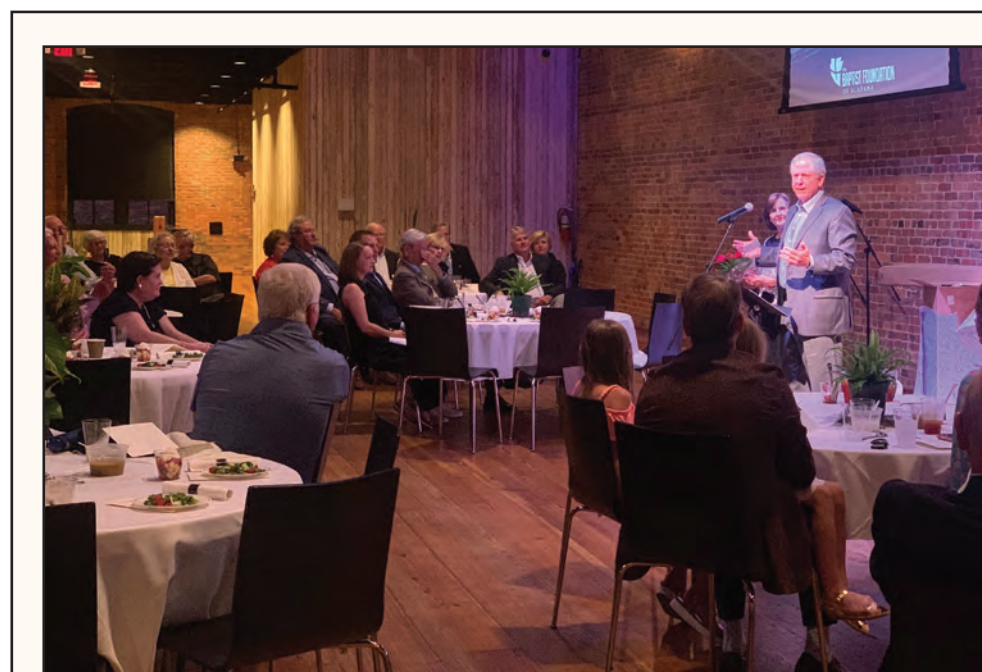


Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

## Celebrating Barry Bledsoe

**T**he Baptist Foundation of Alabama board of directors, staff, family and friends celebrate Barry and Judy Bledsoe for 20 years of service during a special dinner event in Montgomery in June.

Bledsoe served a varied career in law, trust banking and as a high school football coach prior to his service with Alabama Baptists through the ministry of TBFA. He retired from the president’s role in early July. (TAB Media)

# Your Voice



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

## ‘The Son of Man is coming’ – Are you ready to see Him?

By Charlene Miller  
leanintojesus.com

The Gulf Coast panhandle is famous for its beautiful white-sand beaches and delicious seafood.

Visitors also enjoy scouring the waterfronts, hoping to catch sight of the nice population of dolphins.

I love to watch the dolphins swimming just beyond the dunes. As they make their daily appearance, beachgoers invariably point in the direction of the cresting fins, exclaiming,

“Did you see it?”

“Look! Over there!”

“I see it; I see it!”

Sand dusts up as slumbering beach visitors jump from chairs. One hand covers the eyes, creating an instant visor, while the other points to the area of the dolphin sighting.

**“He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the Lord Almighty is His name.”**

Jeremiah 31:35

Although everyone isn’t wholly interested, the temptation to look is too much. Most cannot resist the urge to peer across the waves and catch a glimpse of the exquisite creatures.

Not everyone loves the beach, but I sure do. Blustery winds cool the air. The sun’s reflection on the white sand causes squinty eyes, despite sunglasses and visors. Continuous rhythmic lapping of waves against the beach beckons me to join nature’s song.

### Precious time

Brilliant sunshine warms my skin, coaching out an ever-growing scattering of freckles. By the way, I even enjoy the regular rain showers; the dance of raindrops provides a nice break from the sun-drenched beach. As emerald hues transition to deep sapphire, the beauty of the Gulf Coast waters draws me to sweet communion with God.

I know He is everywhere, but somehow the beach provides the opportunity to shut out distractions, making me feel so close to the Lord.

I spend precious time with my Creator, examine my relationship with Him, identify needed changes and rejoice in what Jesus is preparing for us.

While the beach is beautiful and dolphins are mesmerizing, a day is coming when all people will see the grandest sight since time began.

There is nothing to compare to what is coming. No need to shout, “Look!” The sound of the trumpet will have everyone’s attention before anyone can utter a word.

The eyes of all humanity will divert from every distraction, and



commons.wikimedia.org

everyone will see the return of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God” (1 Thess. 4:16a).

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him ...” (Rev. 1:7a).

The voice we hear will not be that of fellow vacationers; it will be the thundering cry of an angel.

The trumpet’s sounding will announce the long-awaited event as the eyes of all humanity gaze toward heaven.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52).

Are you ready?

“Therefore, you also must be

ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:44).

“... And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:30a–31).

### Get ready

Indeed, Jesus is coming soon. Slumbering humanity will wake to the reality of the arrival of the King and the beginning of His eternal reign.

Get ready to see Jesus and know He is Lord!

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Lean into Jesus Ministries is an interdenominational discipleship ministry for women based in Guntersville.*

“Saying thank you indicates that you notice and value people. You are never too busy to do so.”

RICHARD BLACKABY

*Author and speaker*

The gospel mission is not imperiled by the open statement of the truth. It's imperiled when the Church chooses some option besides the open statement of the truth.

**Pastor Matt Mason**  
The Church at Brook Hills  
Birmingham, Ala.

Making disciples really is our supreme purpose in life. It's not about us, any of us. It's all about Him, it's all about others. It's all about us having the greatest privilege to share the greatest love to others and take the time to disciple them. Love takes time. He is all about relationships. An eternal relationship with Him! To the ends of the earth. With all you have, live

life on purpose for His glory. Make disciples who make disciples.

**Rondie Wilks**  
Trussville, Ala.

When you are a leader you can rest assured wolves will come out growling and seeking to devour. I've experienced it many times. But I've also learned the Good Shepherd not only guards the door he IS the door. Fear not!

**Pastor James Merritt**  
Cross Pointe Church  
Duluth, Ga.

Our love of nation should stimulate our love of "the nations." It's proper to love and desire God's blessing on the national setting in which He has providentially placed

us, but our Commission is for "every nation, tribe, people and language."

My love for a fellow citizen should not be greater than my love for a Chinese brother or sister in Christ. My concern for the lost soul of my neighbor across the street should not overshadow my distress for my lost neighbor across the ocean.

**Scott Shepherd**  
Worship and music specialist  
Tennessee Baptist Mission Board

We should not politicize human need. Let's meet it as followers of Jesus.

**Pastor Deron Spoo**  
First Baptist Church  
Tulsa, Okla.

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @timkellernyc

If you only obey God's word when it seems reasonable or profitable to you, that isn't really obedience at all.

### @FBCStarkville

When we think of who God is and remember what He has done for us, we won't take His name lightly.

### @grcastleberry

Without corporate worship we miss the primary means Christ uses to transform us into His image. Worship is the jet fuel of the Christian life. It is at the very heart of our sanctification.

### @DianeLangberg

Though the fruit of deception can be quite apparent, deception is by its

nature often difficult to see. Deception starts with the self, not others. We find ways to tell ourselves things that are not true so we can believe them and act on them without internal conflict.

### @brocraige

For years we bemoaned the fact that young pastors were disconnected from the SBC. We accused them of not caring. Now the young pastors are participating, and they have a voice, a strong voice. We may not agree on everything, but I for one welcome their involvement and their voice.

### @AdamGreenway

I believe SBCers (w/few exceptions) affirm the full inerrancy, authority and sufficiency of Scrip-

ture — even as they disagree w/ one another over a particular interpretation(s) of Scripture. "You don't interpret the Bible like I do" is not the same as "You don't believe the Bible!"

### @ToddUnzicker

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." 1 Cor. 10:13

### @TGC

Too often, our blind spots lead to divisions and disagreements, preventing God's people from testifying to his grace with one voice.  
—@CollinHansen



TAB Media Photo by Van Payne  
Ed Litton is senior pastor of Redemption Church, Saraland, and president of the SBC.

## Unity of the Spirit

It is difficult to unify people who don't want to be unified, but I believe Baptists long for unity in the Spirit and the bond of peace.

They know that in their own churches, disunity not only hinders the advance of the gospel, it also makes people bitter and irreconcilable. ...

We inhabit a sinful, fallen world and we are sinful by nature and by choice. We need the reminder of God's call to bear with one another. Our love one for another makes God's love more evident to the world around us. ...

Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit of God in us. It won't be accomplished in our strength. We must be eager for it. I think at times we have forgotten how beautiful it is to be unified.

Our unity is not uniformity. How pleased the Father is when a vast array from every tongue and tribe demonstrates a beautiful unity and cooperation for the display of His glory! ...

Peace is a binding agent. It holds us together and refreshes our confidence that God has chosen us to live our lives with a Revelation 7:9 vision of every tribe and tongue around His throne.

(Read the full article at [tabonline.org/unity](http://tabonline.org/unity).)

—Ed Litton

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## TRAUMA IN AMERICA: SECOND IN A SERIES

# Leading causes of **trauma**

## Death, betrayal, abuse leading sources in the post-COVID church

By Denise George

TAB Media

**A** recent study from Barna Research highlights three leading sources of trauma among practicing Christians: the deaths of loved ones, betrayals and abuse.

It's no wonder. Since March 2020, the U.S. has dealt with more than 33 million COVID-19 cases, and more than 600,000 COVID-related deaths.

Some families are grieving the deaths of multiple loved ones within a brief period. Shutdowns meant many were unable to say a final goodbye as they were refused entrance into hospitals and nursing homes where their loved ones died.

"In an ironic twist, many of the strategies that are critical to ensuring our collective public health during this pandemic may put people at greater risk for ... mental health issues," according to Tulane University professors in a recent special issue of the journal *Psychological Trauma*.

The pandemic thrust pastors and churches into the business of death, forcing them to spend exhausting hours preaching funerals, counseling grieving church families, navigating conflicting opinions on health recommendations and often feeling helpless to minister to devoted members.

Abuse also increased during the pandemic as couples and families lived together in close quarters, isolated from friends, colleagues and fellow church members.

Parents struggled to help their children with school at home, often while trying to work at home themselves.

Many dealt with financial stresses caused by lost jobs, irregular wages or devastated personal businesses.

Others became full-time caregivers nursing sick family members, fearful they too might become ill.

Tension in the home during lockdown led to increased reports of personal and intimate violence among family members. Reports of domestic violence went up 27%; physical abuse, 22%; and sexual abuse, 21%.

### Increase in violence

For those already enduring abuse, lockdown intensified it. The stay-at-home order meant victims of spousal abuse had nowhere to escape and were forced to remain in frightening and dangerous situations.

Children were especially vulnerable to abuse during quarantine. The CDC reports 1 in 7 children suffered abuse and/or neglect.

Increased stress levels among par-

ents often proved a major predictor of increased child abuse/neglect.

Children in quarantine lacked their usual support groups, including extended family members, church leaders, child care workers and school teachers, who could see the physical and emotional signs of abuse in order to report it.

In many cases, the frustrations placed on marriages and families during the long lockdown led to argument, separation and divorce — just one example of betrayal as sacred vows were broken.

Betrayal was the second leading cause of trauma among practicing Christians, according to Barna. More than one-third of church members admit they have been traumatized by a trusted individual.

Betrayal is a violation of trust,

the breaking of a commitment or agreement that brings painful loss as well as shock, anger, sadness and disruption of relationship. Need a biblical example? Betrayal is the heart-wrenching kiss of Judas upon the face of Christ (Matt. 26:49).

"To be betrayed, the person must first experience trust in the betrayer. ... When they do hurt us, we then have the awareness that this other person has the capacity to hurt us. ... Betrayal is probably the most devastating loss a person can experience," according to Monica Frank, writer and clinical psychologist.

### Betrayal in the church

Pastors also felt the trauma of betrayal as usually loyal church members stopped attending even after quarantines were lifted and defaulted on promised tithes that helped pay the church's bills.

"Church-hopping," another form of betrayal, proved painful to church leaders as their members moved from one congregation to another and/or from one streaming worship service to another, with little loyalty to pre-COVID church memberships.

Pastors struggled to keep their congregations together and to minister to individual needs.

Pastors and church leaders are needed now more than ever to help share the hope of the gospel with victims of trauma.

"We've seen that with people who have a high level of trauma, nurturing their hope does help buffer the adversity and stress," said Chan Hellman, professor of social work at the University of Oklahoma and director of The Hope Research Center. "A deep robust faith in God and Jesus provides us the framework to endure at a different level because we know it will get better."

## How church leaders can help trauma victims

▶ **Talk** more about trauma and relate your own experiences with it from the pulpit.

▶ **Intentionally increase** your understanding of trauma. Research local and national organizations that provide counseling and education, and make these resources available to the congregation.

▶ **Recognize** that some groups, including women, young adults, minorities, the unemployed and those with less education, have higher rates of trauma.

▶ **Become** a community of healing. Increase your level of empathy and recognize that the

pain of trauma decreases over months and years, not days. Patience and support are key.

▶ **Reach out** to those in your community who have experienced trauma but don't attend church.

▶ **Encourage** Bible reading and study.

▶ **Preach** about how forgiveness impacts healing. Remember that reconciliation isn't necessary for healing.

▶ **Provide** safe spaces and train people how to listen with patience and empathy, not necessarily give practical advice. (Denise George)



Unsplash.com photo by Joice Kelly

# Church and trauma

## Bible reading, discussion, pastoral shepherding help victims find healing

By Tracy Riggs

TAB Media

**T**he effects of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder are far-reaching and affect some 20% of adult Americans. However, many don't recognize how much a traumatic event has impacted them.

"Trauma affects every part of a person: mind, body and spirit," according to a recent report from Barna and the American Bible Society, "Trauma in America: Understanding How People Face Hardships and How the Church Offers Hope."

The report features an in-depth look at the impact of trauma through data and observations from experts on faith and mental health.

### Hidden pain

"Many traumatized people ... keep their pain hidden. Others would seek help and relief — if they knew where to find it," said Nicole Martin, ABS vice president of church engagement and executive director of trauma healing.

"ABS believes that churches — who know firsthand the life-changing effects of an encounter with the message of the Bible — have a special opportunity and responsibility to help people heal from trauma."

Harriet Hill, who spearheaded the development of Bible-based trauma healing materials for ABS, emphasized the importance of the church community.

"Trauma isolates. Healing requires being in community and in

relationship with others," Hill said. "In the end, it is not what people do in a counseling session but what they do outside counseling sessions in ordinary life that matters most.

"We have found that churches, large and small, that have become competent in trauma healing have grown in their vibrancy, participation, harmony, love of the Bible and ministry to others."

Many pastors don't feel equipped to help, according to the report.

Those pastors who have experienced/witnessed trauma personally were found to be more approachable, with twice as many in their congregations asking for help. But pastors without that personal experience also should make a conscious effort to point people to available help.

Barna found that "when pastors talk about trauma and what their churches do, more people come forward for help. As pastors become more familiar with shepherding people with trauma, their churches can become places where more healing happens."

### Forgiveness

Both Bible reading and forgiveness should be included when preaching about this important subject, according to experts.

Chan Hellman, professor of social work at the University of Oklahoma and director of The Hope Research Center, said, "Interacting with the Bible ... improves coping levels, as does having familiarity with the Bible before the trauma."

The opposite also has been shown to be true: those who stopped reading the Bible after being involved in a traumatic event had much more difficulty healing, Hellman said.

What is preached about forgiveness also can impact healing. Forgiveness is about releasing pain and bitterness and giving up the desire for revenge, not ignoring what happened, said Brianna Leiendecker, U.S. trauma heal-

ing coordinator for ABS.

"Sometimes people believe that forgiveness and reconciliation are the same or occur at the same time. They then expect that trust must immediately be rebuilt between the offender and the victim," Leiendecker said. "But forgiveness of an offender does not deny the seriousness of the offense, and reconciliation is not a requirement in the healing journey."

Church leaders need to remember trauma's seriousness to protect both those ministering and healing, said

psychologist and author Diane Langberg. "[Churches] have to know what they're doing or they're going to hurt people. They need the humility to say they don't know everything and to ask for help.

Helping people cope with and heal from trauma can also be a lay ministry. The pastor doesn't have to do all this alone, though I think they should keep a hand in the process."

Healing is difficult, and those who have had negative experiences with a church might have an even more difficult time, said Heather Drew, a counselor and trauma healing training manager at ABS.

### Lingering impact

"Church hurt is real," Drew said. "It only takes one painful church experience for someone to be afraid it could happen again. If a traumatized person seeks help in a church community and does not receive safety, understanding, acknowledgement, patience and compassion (among other things), they may become more hurt, and this second wound can be more painful than the first. If a survivor has experienced church hurt, trust must be earned over time."

Churches also need to remember that healing takes time and safe spaces need to be provided so those affected can talk about their situation.

"If church communities can provide these things, they may be more readily considered resources and refuges for survivors," she said.

Read the full report at [traumain-america.bible](http://traumain-america.bible).

## Resources for churches

- ▶ [pathwaysprofessional.org](http://pathwaysprofessional.org)
- ▶ [caringwell.com](http://caringwell.com)
- ▶ [dianelangberg.com/resources](http://dianelangberg.com/resources)
- ▶ [childrensministry.com/trauma-informed-ministry](http://childrensministry.com/trauma-informed-ministry)
- ▶ [traumahealinginstitute.org](http://traumahealinginstitute.org)

# POSITIVE STEPS

## National African American Fellowship celebrates growth, looks for more in the future

By Grace Thornton  
TAB Media

**D**iversity is growing in the Southern Baptist Convention, and steps have been made in the direction of unity and representation, said leaders of the National African American Fellowship — but more growth is still needed.

And more African American church planters also are needed to effectively reach North America for Christ, NAAF leaders said at their meeting June 14 in Nashville.

### Number of churches

During his executive director's report, Dennis Mitchell said that in 1990, the SBC only had 1,007 African American congregations, but in 2018, it had 3,920, and now it has well over 4,000.

Mitchell said they want that number to keep growing. During the meeting, NAAF announced a new church planting initiative with the North American Mission Board.

Greg Perkins, lead pastor of The View Church, Menifee, California, said NAAF has entered into a strategic partnership with the Send Network. The goal, he said, is to "plant churches everywhere for everyone."

"The partnership will identify and support African American planters called to plant SBC churches in underserved African American communities throughout North America," Perkins said.

### Dedicated leadership

He — along with Kason Branch, lead pastor of Creekstone Church, Keller, Texas, and Steve Canter, regional director for the Northeast and staff liaison for Send Network — will provide leadership.

The goal is to plant churches geared toward African Americans in six strategic locations, each anchored by a partnering pastor



Photo by Van Payne

Marshal Ausberry addresses the "kerfuffle" surrounding Critical Race Theory and the SBC during NAAF's meeting June 14. The group met prior to the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Nashville.

who will serve as the sending pastor, Perkins said.

They are looking for church planters and anyone interested can contact Branch at [kbranch@creekstonechurch.org](mailto:kbranch@creekstonechurch.org).

"In underserved areas, there's a whole segment of our society that's going unreached," Branch said. "We want to not only reach them but also make sure these church planters have contextualized training."

During the NAAF meeting, President Marshal Ausberry also addressed a "kerfuffle" that caused several African American churches to leave the convention in late 2020 when Southern Baptist seminary presidents came out with a statement on Critical Race Theory. The statement said "affirmation of Critical

Race Theory, Intersectionality and any version of Critical Theory is incompatible with the Baptist Faith & Message."

Some African American pastors pulled out of the SBC after

this statement was issued. Ausberry said that "no one" he knows "fully embraces all of CRT."

NAAF's "issue was the inclusion of the words 'any version' thereof," he said, and he noted that NAAF talked with the seminary presidents about their viewpoint.

"To tell our stories of what it's like to be black in America, that's so important — that's the

aspect that we were pushing for, that we can't deny our stories of how we faced racism, effectively from birth," said Ausberry, who is senior pastor of Antioch Baptist

Church, Fairfax Station, Virginia.

"But some outgrowth of that has been that because it was made public in our conventions, the other entity heads and their people have really reached out to the National African American Fellowship," Ausberry explained. "Before they have issued statements, they consult with us, and before they publicize certain materials, they'll ask us for our review and critique."

Those leaders have taken the initiative to reach out to NAAF, which is "a blessing," Ausberry said. "So we see some good things have come out of this discussion as well."

During the meeting, diversity was celebrated in places such as the leadership of GuideStone Financial Resources, where Renée Trewick serves as chairman of the board, and in the creation of the new annual George Liele Church Planting, Evangelism and Missions Day. The day, set on the first Sunday of February, honors the African American missions hero.

### Available resources

The fellowship also heard about new Cooperative Program promotional videos and other resources being made available that feature ethnic minorities.

Members of NAAF elected Frank Williams, senior pastor of Bronx Baptist Church and Wake Eden Community Baptist Church, both in New York, as the new president.

Other officers elected to serve are: Bucas Sterling III, senior pastor of Kettering Baptist Church, Upper Marlboro, Maryland, as vice president; Kevin James, senior pastor of New Creation Bible Fellowship, Tracy, California, as secretary; and John Rollins Sr., senior pastor of Simeon Baptist Church, Antioch, Tennessee, as treasurer.



Photo by Van Payne

Gregory Perkins, lead pastor of The View Church, Menifee, California, shares about enhancing resources for church planters.



Photo by Issac Choi

Children show off their skills during a talent show, part of the Korean Council's annual youth program held in conjunction with the council's annual meeting.

# 'BIG EFFECT'

## Korean youth program helps bridge generations, cultures in America

By Sheila Morgan  
TAB Media

As much as Bokman and Dongeu Han and their children enjoyed the annual meeting of the Council of Korean Southern Baptist Churches in America, there just wasn't enough money in recent years to attend.

This year was different, in part because of the tax consulting business/ministry Han and his wife started two years ago, which helped with finances, and in part because, "I want my kids to enjoy time with other PKs," Han told TAB Media, referring to a well-known acronym for preachers' kids.

### Support for PKs

"There are things I can't teach them," said Han, pastor since 2000 of First Korean Baptist Church, Melbourne, Florida.

He wasn't a pastor's son, so he doesn't know what it is like to be one, Han said. He was an immigrant, so he doesn't know what it's like to be second-generation. His oldest son, now 21, benefited from attending the Korean Council conference as a child and teen. He wants the same for his four younger children, now in their tweens and early teens.

"What I am hoping for is for them to find some comfort as PKs," Han said. "They will teach each other how to survive as PKs and second generation. I want them to have some relationships with other kids and keep it going so when they

come again next year, they will have friends."

Psychologist and pastor Jey Kim of First Virginia Baptist Church, Springfield, Virginia, near Washington, has led the youth sessions for the past 30 years.

### Reaching young people

Some 130 students between the ages of 9 and 19, plus 21 volunteer helpers, most of whom had previously attended as students, participated this year.

While parents attended the Korean Council's general sessions, the youth worshipped in large groups, studied together in age-level group discussions, played games, ate and worked on the talent show that culminated the three-day event.

Heejoo Kim of Layton, Utah, 20, served this year as Jey Kim's assistant. (The two Kims are not related.)

"When I was younger, the leaders had a big effect on me," Heejoo Kim said. "They taught me I am not going through Christian hardship alone. Now I have an extended Christian family who have had similar experiences."

Joseph Kang, 30, son of James Kang, executive director of the Korean Council, is a six-year veteran volunteer with the youth program.

"I remember coming as a little kid," Joseph Kang said. "It was really fun being with other PKs."

"Pastor Jey tries to focus his sermons on the parents' perspectives," Kang continued.

"It touches your heartstrings. You're more thankful to your parents."

Jey Kim has a long history of investing in young people. In 1989, he started the church he still leads with a youth program that emphasized the creative arts.

The ministry "exploded" into a church as parents started coming to see what their teens were up to.

Today, about 250 attend what has become a church with a focus on youth, seniors and families.

Kim reflected on his reasons for giving so much energy to teenagers.

He accepted Jesus as a college student, in the hospital after a second suicide attempt.

"While I was in the hospital, I finally met Jesus truly," he said. "I didn't want young people to go through that unnecessary struggle, so I started a youth ministry."

### Creative arts ensemble

By 1991, those students had grown into a creative arts ensemble that toured the East Coast in the summer, which is how they were invited to the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta that started the Korean Council's youth program.

"My second goal was that I found pastors' kids have more pain, more

problems," Kim said. "PKs have to sacrifice a lot."

PKs face high expectations and academic pressures, combined with the physical, emotional and relational changes that come during the teen years, topped off by the clash of cultures, Kim said.

"They're torn," he said. "Some feel like unpaid ministers, and they watch everything their parents go through."

"There are financial problems. New beginner [immigrant] parents really depend on their children's help for language and for ministry, and [PKs] can't say no."

Kim wants the children to know what their parents are doing and to understand the Kingdom impact.

He also wants the PKs to embrace their faith, which is why during the final day of each conference he preaches about Jesus.

"And every year, this has worked," Kim said.

"Every year there are about one-third newcomers. Every year, 20 to 30 accept Jesus."

"Every year, about 20 want to be a missionary or a pastor. This [keeps] me going every year."

This year 17 people accepted Jesus as Savior and 14 pledged a future in ministry, Kim said. "It was a remarkable work of God!"



Photo by Issac Choi

Virginia pastor Jey Kim has been leading the annual Korean Council youth sessions for 30 years.



Photo by Sam Evans

The Asian American Collective gathered June 13 in Nashville for its first meeting. They worshipped and prayed together prior to the SBC Annual Meeting.

## Asian gathering gives picture of heaven

The room at Music City Center was packed as the Asian American Collective gathered for its first annual meeting June 13.

Jonathan Hayashi, pastor of Northern Hills Baptist Church, Holt, Missouri, opened the meeting after a time of worship and prayer.

Looking around the room at those gathered — mostly Asian, but also worshipping alongside Christians of several other ethnicities — he beamed.

### ‘Faint picture’

“The Scripture says every tongue, tribe, nation will be ablaze in the glory of God,” Hayashi said, quoting Revelation 7:9. “This is a faint picture of what we will one day see in heaven.”

Peter Yanes, executive director for Asian American relations and mobilization for the SBC Executive Committee, announced that 11.6% of new church plants in 2019 were Asian American.

“We are moving forward together,” he said.

Yanes also encouraged attendees to participate in the events and business at the SBC annual meeting.

“Every voice matters in the SBC,” he said. (TAB Media)

# NEXT STEP

## Filipino Baptist fellowship launches church planting era

By Art Toalston  
TAB Media

Filipino Southern Baptists have taken “the first step toward supporting our first church planter.”

Vic de la Cruz and his wife, Radha, are planting Biblical Community Church East, Mesquite, Texas. De la Cruz said the new congregation, with a core team of nine families, intends to be “intentional and authentic” in its evangelistic outreach, discipleship and “in our preaching and the way we live.”

### Growing population

The mother church for the new plant is Biblical Community Church, Richardson, Texas, where de la Cruz has served as associate pastor the past three years. The Baptist General Convention of Texas also is a partner in the plant.

Biblical Community Church East

launched in January after three years of prayer, including months of online worship. Home fellowship groups are slated to begin this fall.

An estimated 3,000 Filipino families are expected to settle in Mesquite in the next three years, de la Cruz told TAB Media.

The Filipino Southern Baptist Fellowship of North America affirmed the recommendation of de la Cruz and the church plant during a site visit by Santiago.

De la Cruz said he is grateful for the fellowship’s support as “an affirmation of my calling” in leaving a full-time secular job.

About 150 Filipino pastors, wives and guests attended the Filipino fellowship’s June 14 annual meeting in Nashville.

Among 200-plus Filipino churches affiliated with the SBC,

nearly 70 have been active in the Filipino fellowship, reported Dan Santiago, executive director of the fellowship. Several are providing \$100 per month support for church planting.

The fellowship’s president, Felix Sermon, pastor of the Washington-area Grace International Christian Church, Springfield, Virginia, spoke of people having become comfortable watching worship services in their living room.

Sermon, referencing the Israelites crossing the Jordan River, called on pastors to “cross that river of pandemic to go to the other side to continue fulfilling the great ministry God has given us.”

Pastors may be weary of meetings over Zoom and Facebook Live, Sermon said, but “there is no change in the ministry God has called you to.”



DE LA CRUZ

## Fellowship of Native American Christians celebrates ‘open doors’

It was a small gathering, but it was lively and passionate. As members of the Fellowship of Native American Christians watched videos and heard testimonies about all God has done among Native Americans, amens echoed around the meeting room.

“Even through the pandemic, God is opening doors for this fellowship to reach Native Americans with the gospel,” said FoNAC board president Jordan Kanuho. “The silver lining of the pandemic is virtual meetings held across states.”

Willie McLaurin, vice president for Great Commission relations and mobilization for the SBC Executive Committee, said the SBC Annual Meeting was a “foretaste of glory divine,” as he



Photo by Sam Evans

Warren “Jr.” Pratt and the Tribe of Judah Dance Ministry share their faith and heritage through dance.

thanked FoNAC for its faithful ministry. “As I’ve walked through the halls, I’ve seen every tongue, tribe and nation. This is just a rehearsal down here.”

Before Warren “Jr.” Pratt and the Tribe of Judah Dance Ministry

shared their faith and heritage through dance, FoNAC executive director Gary Hawkins recounted the long history of Native Americans in the United States — and the long history of Native American Christians in the U.S.

“People don’t always understand where we are, but to that I’ll say, ‘We’re still here,’” he said.

Tribe of Judah drew a crowd as they sang, danced and drummed about the glory of the gospel.

“We don’t need to look back and wish for the past,” Pratt said. “We need to be excited about what’s ahead.”

And what’s ahead for FoNAC? A future filled with more ministry, more love and more gospel witness, he said. (Jessica Ingram)



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# 3 stories you should know



AP Photo/Eric Gay, File

In this Nov. 12, 2017, file photo, a memorial for the victims of the shooting at First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas, includes 26 white chairs, each painted with a cross and a rose and placed in the sanctuary. A federal judge ruled July 7 the U.S. Air Force was “60% responsible” for the attack because it failed to submit gunman Devin Kelley’s criminal history into a database, which should have prevented him from purchasing a weapon. (AP)

## *Gunmen attack Baptist school, kidnap students*

Dozens of students at Bethel Baptist High School in Nigeria’s northern Kaduna state were kidnapped after armed attackers stormed the school in the early hours of July 5.

Ishaya Jangado, head of the Kaduna Baptist Conference, later said he had spoken with some of the students who said they were fine and counted their number at 121.

In Nigeria, attacks and kidnappings of students, usually for ransom, have grown more common. About 1,000 students have been abducted in Nigeria since December, though most have been released.

Amnesty International reports about 600 schools in northern Nigeria have closed as a result of persistent attacks.

Read more at [tabonline.org/nigeria-kidnapping](http://tabonline.org/nigeria-kidnapping). (TAB Media)

## *Litton names sex abuse task force to review EC*

Southern Baptist Convention President Ed Litton announced on June 9 the formation of a task force to conduct a third-party review of the SBC Executive Committee’s handling of sexual abuse allegations and treatment of survivors of abuse.

Messengers to the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting in Nashville passed a resolution calling for the review. Litton said forming the task force has been his “first priority.”

The task force includes seven members, four of whom are pastors “who are independent of the Executive Committee and who do not have a conflict of interest related to the review,” Litton said. The other three members are professionals in law, counseling and abuse advocacy.

A full list of task force members is available at [tabonline.org/task-force](http://tabonline.org/task-force).

## Headline news from around the Southeast

### **Arkansas**

In February 2018, Crossroads New Baptist Church near Little Rock, Arkansas, was close to shutting its doors. Attendance had dwindled; the church building was in disrepair; the pastor had resigned, Arkansas Baptist News reported. After four months of dedicated prayer, church members began to see new life for the church. Today, at 50 years old, the congregation is reaching people with the gospel, has repaired its building, has called a pastor and is looking forward expectantly to its next 50 years.

### **Florida**

When stores in northeast Florida receive a delivery of “Yulee BBQ Sauce” they’re getting more than a collection of sauces. “They’re getting a chaplain and pastor,” said Jimmy Flanagan, creator of Yulee BBQ Sauce and pastor of Duval Station Baptist Church, Jacksonville,

Florida. Flanagan, who personally makes the deliveries to his customers, uses the sauce as a platform to share the gospel, the Florida Baptist Witness reported. “I pray before I make every delivery,” Flanagan said.

### **Georgia**

On June 30 Shorter University sold the Georgia Baptist Conference Center at Norman Park, Georgia, for \$1.2 million, the Christian Index reported. Sold in an auction, the property had been appraised for considerably more than the sale price. The Norman Park property had been gifted to Shorter University by the Georgia Baptist Mission Board in March 2016.

### **South Carolina**

Columbia Metro Baptist Association recently made the transition to a virtual office. In a June 27 social media post, George Bullard, executive

director for the association, said, “We discovered during the pandemic we do not need an office.” In addition to virtual meetings, associational leaders will gather primarily at local churches to meet in person as needed. The move to a virtual office is intended to help the association deepen its connection with and service to congregations.

### **Tennessee**

Professions of faith and baptisms have increased significantly over the past year at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Covington, Tennessee, with 13 new members and nine baptisms. “I believe that God is moving in His church because God’s people are praying and asking God to move,” said pastor Gary Stafford. He said the church is rejoicing about the new believers and has been awed by how God has enabled Oak Grove to regain momentum after COVID-19 challenges, the Baptist and Reflector reported.

NEWS

# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

▶ Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor **James F. Purnell** died May 3. He was 86.

Purnell graduated from Red Level High School in 1952, then served four years in the U.S. Navy. He studied at Howard College (now Samford University) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.



PURNELL

During his 60 years of ministry, he served at several churches in northwest Alabama and Pickens County and two tenures at Stansel Baptist Church, Reform. He retired from Central Baptist Church, Tarrant, in 2018.

Purnell is survived by his wife of 60 years, Gloria; son, Patrick; daughter, Sally; and four grandchildren.

▶ **Narvell Grace McGhee** — wife of Ron McGhee, pastor emeritus of Calvary Baptist Church, Bay Minette — died June 8. She was 87.



MCGHEE

McGhee lived in the Atmore area most of her life. She was an educator in Escambia County and a member of Booneville Baptist Church, Atmore.

She served alongside her husband during his decades of ministry as a pastor at many Alabama Baptist churches.

When he was director of missions at Bethlehem Baptist Association, she served as secretary.

McGhee is survived by her husband of 69 years; sons, Ron and Jim; daughters, Jackie, Rhonda and Kimberly; and a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will begin its revival July 18 at 5 p.m. with a singing. During the week of July 19–23, morning services will be at 10:30 and evening services at 7. Jack Thomason will preach. Earl Harper is pastor.

## FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Oneonta**, recently honored **Doug and Rachel Williams** for their faith and dedicated service. The couple has served in ministry since 1965, with Doug Williams spending the first 34 years of that time serving in church staff roles.

He served as minister of education at Fairfield Highlands Baptist Church, Midfield, from 1965 to 1970, and as minister of education/evange-



FBC Oneonta photo

lism at First Baptist Church, Center Point, from 1970 to 1978. At First, Center Point, he developed a massive bus ministry and served as a bus ministry consultant for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' Sunday School department.

After serving in Georgia and Florida, he joined First, Oneonta, in 1999 and has led FAITH evangelism teams and taught Sunday School ever since.

He served as a national FAITH consultant from 1997 to 2008.

Members from several of the Williamses' former congregations attended Doug and Rachel Williams Day on May 23. Larry Gipson is pastor.

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

▶ **Lookout Mountain Baptist Association** will be conducting its annual Water of Life Outreach along the Lookout Mountain Parkway Aug. 5–7 in conjunction with the World's Longest Yard Sale. The goal is to hand out 2,000 bottles of cold water and several hundred gospel tracts to the visitors who will come by two sites. Lloyd Borden is director of missions.

## TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Curtis Kelley** was named pastor emeritus of **Taylorville Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**, during the May 23 morning service.

Pastor Randy Pate said the church grew exponentially under Kelley's leadership during his 15 years of service from 2003 until 2018 when he retired.

"If there's anyone in my estimation who deserves this title, it's Dr. Kelley for his wonderful and faithful service," Pate said.

Pate also read a statement from Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State

Board of Missions, who wrote that he had "known and admired" Kelley for four decades and that Kelley "is one of the best expository preachers" he had ever heard.



Screenshot

Lance also wrote that Kelley had "served with distinction" in the churches where he had ministered.

Kelley said the title was a "great

and "unexpected" honor.

"I love you with all my heart, and I hope you know that," he told the Taylorville congregation.

## WALKER ASSOCIATION

▶ For 100 years, **Gorgas Baptist Church, Parrish**, "has been a shining light in the community," said pastor John Clutter.

The church gathered to celebrate that milestone June 6 with a special service. Clutter preached, and David Hicks, the church's music minister, led the congregation in singing hymns. Debbie Campbell of TAB Media presented a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and David Miller, director of missions for Walker Baptist Association, also presented a plaque.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Campbell

Donnie and Brenda Fox of Joyful Hearts provided special music after lunch, and everyone present received a booklet of church history.

# Persecuted church

## Algerian Christians receive lighter sentences on media-related charges

TIZI-OUZOU, Algeria — A pastor and employee sentenced in absentia for offering Christian materials in a church bookstore saw their punishment reduced June 6 on appeal.

The penalty for pastor Rachid Seighir and bookstore salesman Nouh Hamimi is now a one-year suspended sentence and fine of 200,000 dinars (approximately \$1,500), down from two years in prison and 500,000 dinars.

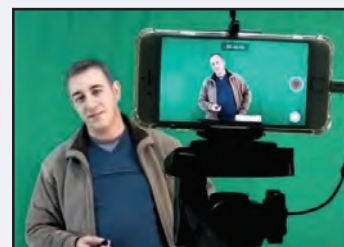
In 2008, Seighir was convicted of the same charges and acquitted on appeal.

The governor of Oran, where Seighir's

Oratoire Church is located, ordered the bookstore closed in 2017, a move ruled invalid in 2018. Nonetheless, authorities kept it closed. Algeria's Law 03/06 criminalizes publication and distribution of materials "which aim to undermine the faith of a Muslim." Islam is the state religion of Algeria.

On July 15, 2020, three churches, Seighir's church, Ain Turk House of Hope and El Ayaida church, were issued court-ordered closures but remain open. It is currently unknown when the implementation order will be executed.

Algeria is No. 24 on Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)



Facebook photo



Unsplash.com

## Annual deacons retreat set for Aug. 13-14

**B**arney Self said there's something unspeakably encouraging about hearing a room full of men sing together in worship. That's one of the reasons why the Alabama Baptist Deacons Retreat has kept going for as long as it has — it's the longest-running group meeting at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

This year's conference — set for Aug. 13-14 — will be the

group's 64th. Last year during COVID-19, even though they weren't able to hold the conference as usual, the group's committee members met together with their wives and two special speakers to keep the tradition going. This year, they're hoping for a full house again, said Self, who serves as chairman of the planning committee.

And despite the name, the event is not just for deacons — it's for all men and boys.

The speakers are:  
 ▶ **Alex Cowan**, associate pastor of Skyland Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa  
 ▶ **David Shepherd**, pastor of County Line Baptist Church, Walnut, Mississippi, and longtime missionary to South Asia

▶ **Glenn Sandifer**, pastor of Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville

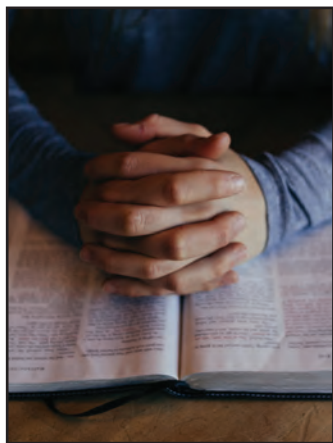
▶ **Robby Boyd**, pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church, Huntsville

▶ **Daniel**

**Wilson**, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

▶ **Peyton Hill**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville.

There is also a surprise speaker, Self said. Anthony Lindsey, minister of music for New Center Baptist Church, Hartselle, and Will Yates, pianist for Creek Path Baptist Church, Guntersville, will lead worship. (Grace Thornton)



Unsplash.com

*For more information, visit*

*[alabamadeaconsretreat.org](http://alabamadeaconsretreat.org) or [facebook.com/AlabamaBaptistDeaconsRetreat](https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaBaptistDeaconsRetreat)*

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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 resumés 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 resumés to: Jemison First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 760, Jemison, AL 35085 or [resumes@jemisonfirstbaptist.com](mailto:resumes@jemisonfirstbaptist.com).

### PASTOR

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

### 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](mailto:ChurchOffice@LBCOxford.com). Address: Lakeview Baptist Church Search Committee, 132 Central Ave, Oxford, AL 36203.

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, Ala., has position available for bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: [jbshaw@mound.net](mailto:jbshaw@mound.net) or mail to: PHBC, P.O. Box 339, Moundville, AL 35474-0339.

### 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 resumés to: [info@fbc-ac.org](mailto: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 resumés to: [search@fbcdillon.com](mailto: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 resumés to: [Ladonia Baptist, Phenix City, by Sept. 1 to: PastorGreg@ladoniabaptist.org](mailto: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 resumés to ATTN: Pastor Robbie Weems at [weems1969@aol.com](mailto: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 resumés for the position of director of missions. Please send resumés to: [perry@perryknightattorney.com](mailto:perry@perryknightattorney.com). Resumés will be accepted until July 31.

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER DIRECTOR

A thriving child development center in metro Birmingham is looking for a qualified director. Over 100 children enrolled! This is a 40-hour/week job (Monday-Friday.) Job description includes administrative tasks as well as being a personable leader with the parents and for the staff. Hope Community Church, 4445 Montevallo Road,

Birmingham. Please send your resumé to: [jbaker@hopebhm.org](mailto:jbaker@hopebhm.org).

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## DISCIPLE-MAKING

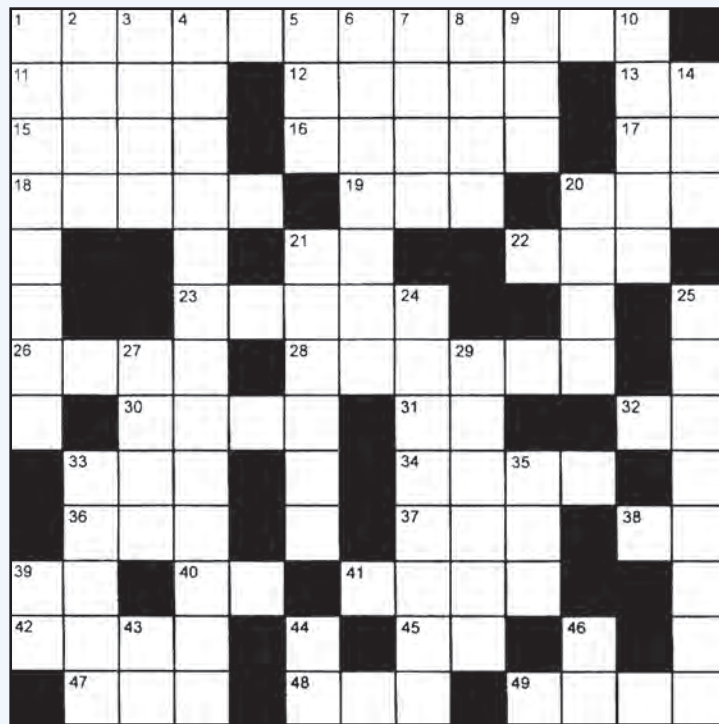
### BOOT CAMP TO FOCUS ON STUDENTS

The first D-Life boot camp for students will be Aug. 1 at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville, Alabama, from 5 to 11 p.m. Along with the training and onsite practice led by Bill Wilks, senior pastor of NorthPark, and a team of skilled student pastors, the students will enjoy a pizza dinner and ice cream social. The six-hour event will equip students with a simple, disciple-making process modeled after Jesus. The event is \$10 per person and is for student leaders who are upcoming juniors or seniors in high school, recent graduates and college students. To register, visit [livethedlife.com/students](http://livethedlife.com/students).

# CHRISTIAN crossword

## ACROSS

1. I am the \_\_\_ and the life.  
(John 11:25)
11. First garden.
12. Shiphai, the son of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 4:37)
13. I stand \_\_\_ the door. (Rev. 3:20)
15. Ye do well that ye take \_\_\_\_\_.  
(2 Pet. 1:19)
16. Abstain from \_\_\_ offered to idols.  
(Acts 15:29)
17. \_\_\_ not steal.  
(Mark 10:19)
18. Set in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Titus 1:5)
19. Positive votes.
20. What you do at meals.
21. Short for Ezra.
22. Taxi \_\_\_\_.
23. A Hebrew refrain found often in Psalms. (Ps. 4:2)
26. Uncle's mate.
28. The captain's name.  
(Jer. 37:13)
30. His \_\_\_ are open unto their prayers.  
(1 Pet. 3:12)
31. Rosemary's nickname.
32. I am not come \_\_\_ destroy.  
(Matt. 5:17)
33. Benjamin's nickname.
34. Joseph's uncle.  
(Gen. 33:1, 2)
36. \_\_\_ thou not unto his words.  
(Prov. 30:6)
37. Allow.
38. They shall \_\_\_ comforted.  
(Matt. 5:4)



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39. Pronoun.
  40. A fool hath no delight \_\_\_ understanding.  
(Prov. 18:2)
  41. The harvest is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Joel 3:13)
  42. Not fat.
  45. New Hampshire.  
(abbr.)
  47. England. (abbr.)
  48. A man shall \_\_\_ a pit.  
(Ex. 21:33)
  49. Have no other \_\_\_ before me. (Ex. 20:3)
- ## DOWN
1. Solomon's son.  
(1 Kings 11:43)
  2. Mushi, Mahli, and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 23:23)
  3. The \_\_\_ is the Word of God. (Luke 8:11)
  4. Be not children in \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Cor. 14:20)
  5. Abraham's sacrifice.  
(Gen. 22:13)
  6. Aaron's son.  
(Num. 3:32)
  7. Bodies of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Job 13:12)
  8. Small children.
  9. \_\_\_ and outs.
  10. And she bare him \_\_\_\_\_. (Ex. 6:23)
  14. Total. (abbr.)
  20. In lowliness of mind let \_\_\_ esteem others.  
(Phil. 2:3)
  21. Elijah's companion.  
(2 Kings 2:11)
  24. He that is an \_\_\_\_\_.  
(John 10:12)
  25. Book of wisdom written by Solomon.
  27. Help in time of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Heb. 4:16)
  29. Israel's favorite son. (Gen. 37:3)
  33. \_\_\_ himself in water. (Num. 19:19)
  35. \_\_\_ it up.  
(Rev. 10:10)
  39. I will raise \_\_\_ up.  
(John 2:19)
  43. Opposite of "out."
  44. Edwin's nickname.
  46. \_\_\_ forth into Galilee.  
(John 1:43)

# WORD search

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| ANTELOPE    | HORSE     |
| BARN OWL    | HYENA     |
| BEAR        | LAMB      |
| BEE         | LEECH     |
| BUZZARD     | LEOPARD   |
| CAMEL       | LION      |
| CRICKET     | LIZARD    |
| DEER        | LOCUST    |
| DONKEY      | MOLE RAT  |
| EAGLE       | MOTH      |
| FALCON      | MULE      |
| FLEA        | SCORPION  |
| FROG        | SERPENT   |
| GAZELLE     | SHEEP     |
| GECKO       | SNAIL     |
| GNAT        | SNAKE     |
| GOAT        | SPIDER    |
| GRASSHOPPER | WILD OXEN |
| HARE        | WOLF      |
| HAWK        | WORM      |



# YMLink



COOPERATIVE  
PROGRAM

AT WORK

## Opens Students' Eyes to Missions

BY GRACE THORNTON, Special to the State Board of Missions

**C**ody Hensley said working alongside students to build a deck for a homeowner in Birmingham was a meaningful experience.

But even more meaningful was hammering alongside those teenagers while talking about Jesus.

“One of my students came to know the Lord last night,” said Hensley, who serves as pastor to students and families at Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville.

It was toward the end of the YMLink on Mission event held in Birmingham June 7–11, and God had been at work in the student’s heart all week through conversations during the day while they worked on projects and during worship times at night.

“That was a cool thing for us to have an opportunity to sweat next to each other and talk about Jesus at the same time,” Hensley said. “His exact comment was, ‘I’ve been thinking about this for a while, but I realized tonight if I’m going to do this Jesus thing, it requires a lot more commitment than what a lot of people say.’ He said he wanted to follow Jesus. It was a cool moment.”

Around 100 students and leaders representing nine churches from all over the state participated in the event. Partnering with Birmingham Metro Baptist Association’s Metro Changers, they served three Birmingham homeowners and one church with building and repair projects during the day.

At night, students gathered at Westwood Baptist Church, Forestdale, for worship led by the Ryan John Band from First Baptist Church of

Opelika and Ismael Pruitt from Highland Park Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals.

A number of students professed new faith in Christ or new missions callings.

State Missionary Scooter Kellum, youth ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said that’s the vision for YMLink on Mission.

“We want to call out the called and create a pipeline for missionaries,” he said. “We’re trying to start them earlier and get them used to serving on the mission field. And we want to serve Alabama while we do it.”



Photo by Curry Evans  
Ethan Alexander (center) and Gage Allday, members of Dayspring Baptist Church, Mobile, help replace a Birmingham homeowner’s roof.

Justin Caton, student pastor at Thorsby First Baptist Church and project coordinator for the week, said he was called into ministry during a week very similar to this one.

“This week is very different than any other week students are going to do,” he said. “Missions is different from going to a camp, conference or retreat. It takes everything — it takes a toll physically and mentally. You’re just truly dependent on the Spirit to help get you through the week and working doing what God has called you to do.”

Seeing students ripping roofs off houses is “an unbelievable scene,” Caton said. “These students see something bigger than what’s going on in our town and community, a world out there that needs Jesus. It sets that fire so it will blaze back home, and they start realizing they can love their neighbor at home.”

Kellum said this year is serving as launch year for YMLink on Mission. The SBOM piloted it a couple of years ago, but then last year’s event got canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. So this year represented the official start.



Photo by Curry Evans  
Student volunteer Kara Lockhart (left) and students Jackson Rowland and Brooklyn Rowell, members of Dayspring Baptist Church, Mobile, work on a house in Birmingham as part of YMLink on Mission.

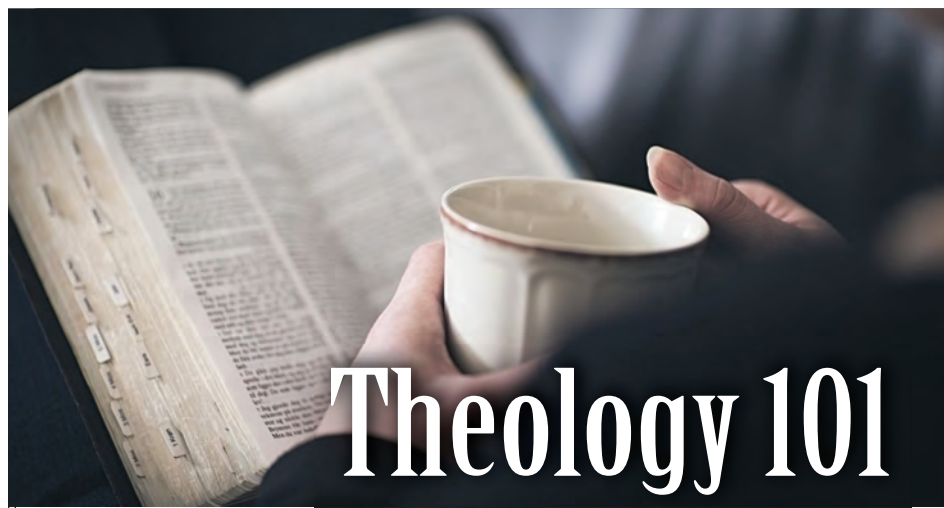
YMLink on Mission is a low-cost option for youth groups — it’s \$100 per student, thanks to funding through the Cooperative Program and the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

Next year, YMLink on Mission will be in two cities during two separate weeks:

- **Huntsville** — May 31–June 4 (in partnership with Rocket City Missions)
- **Birmingham** — June 13–18 (in partnership with Birmingham Metro Baptist Association)

“Students from across our state can go out and penetrate a city and an area,” Kellum said. “It’s doing the work of the gospel.”

**For more information, visit [ymlink.org/serving](http://ymlink.org/serving). 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).**



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## God's Word

# Incorruptible

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
TAB Media

In recent weeks, we have noted God's word is inspired, effectual, enduring, desirable and nourishing. This week we look at another aspect of God's word: It is incorruptible.

Christians have "been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Corruption is often the forerunner to perishing. God's word is both incorruptible and imperishable.

Christians have used a variety of expressions by which to communicate this truth about God's word, such as "truth without any mixture of error" or "a perfect treasure of divine instruction" ("The Baptist Faith & Message," Article I).

Many use the single term "inerrancy" to speak of the Bible's incorruptible nature. It has not been infiltrated and diluted by human error — God's word is eternally valid and trustworthy. The passing of centuries has not rendered it outdated or inapplicable. Jesus declared, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Such was a reverberating echo of the psalmist's declaration, "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). Isaiah states, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa. 40:8).

God's word is incorruptible, imperishable and eternal. The practical result of these truths is

that believers can utterly trust the truthfulness of Scripture. We find in our Bibles "exceedingly great and precious promises" on which a life can be built and by which an eternity is assured.

## Christian meditation

In the meantime, God's pure word is the rewarding subject of Christian meditation, not just a subject to be described as incorruptible truth. Philippians 4:8 sets this forth in unmistakable terms: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things."

For centuries, faithful followers of Christ have devoted themselves to reading, studying and memorizing the Bible; generations have taught it to subsequent generations. People of various languages and ethnicities have lived and died in devotion to Scripture and the Savior revealed therein.

What greater confession can pilgrims in this life utter than that of the psalmist: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (119:105)?

*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.*



# Shocco Springs holds day camp for children

For the first time, Shocco Springs Conference Center held a weeklong day camp June 7–11 for local children ages 5 to 12 years old.

Long known as a perfect location for groups to hold retreats and conferences, Shocco typically relies on visiting group leaders to implement their own programming.

However, this year, Shocco staff members decided to try something new, said Laurie Mullinax, public relations coordinator for Shocco.

## Gospel opportunity

Day camp director Blaire Butler and assistant director Jessica Pearson along with program coordinators Luke Foster and Lydia Lewis wanted to provide a camp experience to children who may have never had that opportunity before and at the same time present the gospel, Mullinax said.

So they started making plans. When reservations opened, camp spots filled very quickly and left a long waiting list of students.

The cost of the camp was affordable, and several scholarships were awarded to campers thanks in part to a generous financial donation from First Bank of Alabama.

Mullinax said the 59 energetic students enjoyed all Shocco has to offer — Bazooka Ball, Pavilion Climb, Wet Willie Water Slide, Ropes Course, Pool/Aqua Park, painting, tie-dyeing T-shirts and

games, as well as other fun activities during their time on campus.

The students also shared great feedback, Mullinax said.

Some of the responses included:

► "It was so much fun! When I arrived on Monday morning, I didn't know anybody. But by lunch time that day, I had already made so many friends."

► "I like how the Trek leaders are so full of energy. They are super nice and help you if you need anything."

► "I want to come back next year because this has been really fun!"

More than 20 volunteer helpers ranging in age from 13 to 70 years old facilitated the campers' full daily schedule.

One adult volunteer said, "I was very emotional watching the children sing praise songs in their worship time each day. Knowing that the children were learning about the love of God was worth all the time and effort."

## Bigger next year

Mullinax said the children's reactions to each activity from archery and swimming to art and worship confirmed Shocco staff members' vision of reaching out to local children. They are already planning for two weeks of day camp next summer, she said.

"It will be even bigger and better," Mullinax said.

Visit [shocco.org](http://shocco.org). (TAB Media)



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs

Fifty-nine children participated in Shocco's inaugural day camp June 7–11. More than 20 volunteers and several Shocco staff members supervised the students in various activities, including times of worship each day.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 18

## Explore the Bible

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



### DEPENDENCE DECLARED Job 42:1-11

At last Job was humbled before the Lord with nowhere to look but up. Here is a life-changing truth: Either we humble ourselves or God will humble us. This had been a painful lesson for Job to learn. With a new awareness beyond his previous understanding, he realized that God was greater than all of his trials.

#### Admit (1-6)

God's revelation of Himself to Job required a response from Job. Having been shown the divine power and majesty in creation, Job replied to the Lord. He confessed that the Lord can do anything and that no plan of God can be thwarted. Job realized that all of God's sovereign plans will be accomplished. Even Satan cannot go one inch beyond the leash on which the Lord keeps him.

God's revelation did not answer all of Job's questions, and neither will it answer all of ours. It does not give us a philosophically filled-in and tidied-up schema that can explain the problem of evil and suffering. But it does something deeper: It opens our eyes to who God is.

He is the only God, and He has no rival. Even the mystery of evil is His mystery. When we suffer, we can bow down to the sovereign God, knowing that the evil that comes may be terrible, but it will not and cannot ever go one tiny fraction beyond what God has allowed.

Job admitted he had spoken wrongly about God. He agreed with God that he was guilty as charged. He had spoken out of ignorance of things that were beyond his ability to understand. Surely this is a charge that would indict us all.

Job quoted a statement God made when He first responded to him (38:3). By citing these words, Job admitted these divine words had been heard and heeded. He came to understand that the Lord had the right to demand answers from him.

Job now had a greater understanding of God's character than before his suffering began. And Job was

deeply grieved over his blatant sin. Having seen God in His holiness, Job finally saw himself in his unholiness.

#### Repent (7-9)

The Lord turned His attention to Job's three friends who also needed correction. The Lord was angry because they had spoken inaccurately about Him.

They taught that all suffering was the direct result of sin. They believed if good things happened to people, they must be right with God, and if bad things happened to people, then they were not right with God. This is not biblical theology. These men had misrepresented God.

Only Job had spoken the truth by insisting that his suffering was not a punishment from God.

God made a provision so the three friends could have their "folly" forgiven. They were to take seven bulls and seven rams and go to Job, and there offer burnt offerings to the Lord. Job was to be their mediator and pray for them, and the Lord would forgive them.

Job's friends obeyed the Lord, and God reconciled these men to Himself and to Job.

In this act of obedience, we see the two elements of conversion: repentance and faith. These men turned from their sin, illustrated by the death of the animals. They also trusted God, illustrated by Job's mediatory prayer.

#### Restored (10-11)

After Job prayed for his friends, the Lord restored Job's fortune and family to him. It does not always happen this way in real life.

Job 42 points us to the Lord's return at the end of the age. The normal Christian life in a Genesis 3 world is one of spiritual warfare, waiting, humbling and remembering that there will be blessing in the end.

The blessings God will pour out on the believer at the end will be every bit as real as the blessings of Job. In Christ, we too will know real prosperity, joy, celebration, fruitfulness and beauty.

## Bible Studies for Life

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



### SUFFICIENT IN CHRIST ALONE Revelation 3:14-22

Christ's words to believers in Laodicea remind us of C.S. Lewis' comments in "The Weight of Glory": "If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

#### Turn from self-sufficiency. (14-17)

Laodicea was such a prosperous and self-sufficient city that after a devastating earthquake in A.D. 60, it paid for its own repairs rather than seeking help from Rome. The believers also thought of themselves as self-sufficient. They were prospering economically, due in part to their willingness to participate in idolatrous activities. They thought they were doing great, but they were actually in great need of repentance.

The church in the city was too similar to the city's water, supplied by an extended aqueduct. By the time the water arrived, it was lukewarm and not the cool refreshing drink a visitor might have hoped for.

The works of the believers in that city were like that unpleasant water. Just as the water might make someone want to vomit, the Laodiceans' works made Christ threaten to vomit them out. Their perceived self-sufficiency actually reflected their spiritual state of being "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

#### Rely on Christ, accept God's loving discipline and repent. (18-19)

Jesus is the only one who can provide true wealth, which isn't measured in material or economic terms but in spiritual terms. By repenting in response to Christ's rebuke and seeking the true pros-

perity that only Christ can provide (metaphorically described as riches, clothing and healing ointment for the eyes), Christ's loving rebuke and discipline will result in their restoration to full fellowship with the Lord.

#### Seek intimate fellowship with Christ. (20-22)

Earlier Christ had told the believers in Philadelphia that He had opened a door for them that only He could open and no one could possibly close. He and He alone can open the door to eternal fellowship with God and the blessings of His presence.

But there is a door that we can open or close, and God respects our freedom to open it or not. That is the door that Christ mentions in verse 20. To sit and eat together was a mark of or invitation to close fellowship and friendship, and Jesus suggests the believers in Laodicea have closed that door to Him. He seeks to restore that fellowship by "knocking at the door." If only they will simply respond to His overture and choose fellowship with Him over the material advantages they have been seeking instead, they can know the joy of the fullness of His presence again.

As he has done previously, Christ refers to His intention to share His kingdom privileges with His disciples. In Revelation 2:10, He promised them a crown (which He also wears). In 2:26-28, He promised they would share in His authority over the nations. In 3:9, He promised that their enemies would bow at their feet. And now in 3:21, He promises that those who conquer (by being faithful to the very end, despite all opposition) would be given "the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne."

Christ is the faithful witness to God's truth and the source of creation (v. 14). He has all authority.

Let us hear what the Spirit is saying and not choose mud pies over such glory!

# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust

TAB Media

## Kendricks to release new films on 'core fundamental issue' of fatherhood

The filmmaking team known for such faith-based hits as “War Room” and “Fireproof” will release two movies this fall they hope will inspire fathers to become the men God has called them to be.

Alex and Stephen Kendrick, whose movies always highlight a major theme from Scripture, will release a pair of movies in theaters focusing on fatherhood — first on Sept. 10 with their inaugural documentary, “Show Me the Father,” and second on Oct. 15 with “Courageous Legacy.”

“Show Me the Father” weaves inspirational stories about earthly fathers with a biblical message on the fatherhood of God. It includes interviews with Texas pastor Tony Evans, Focus on the Family’s Jim Daly and former NFL coach and player Sherman Smith, among others.

“Courageous Legacy” is a re-release of the 2011 hit film “Courageous” with new footage and an updated ending.

Stephen Kendrick calls fatherhood a “core fundamental issue” that impacts the church and society at large — for good and bad.

“Earthly fatherhood is actually



Stephen, Alex and Shannon Kendrick

Photo courtesy of Affirm Films

an introduction to the fatherhood of God,” he told TAB Media. “And usually, we get it wrong, and earthly fathers don’t understand their roles and responsibilities so much.”

### Inspirational stories

“Show Me the Father” includes inspirational stories of fathers, as well as stories of how God rescued children out of dangerous situations.

A fan of documentaries, Kendrick said a good documentary can communicate a massive amount of information in a short amount of time. He labeled a documentary on fatherhood a “dream project.”

“People don’t need to think this is just some boring documentary of talking heads,” he said. “We tried to make it cinematic in the way that we unfold the stories. And there’s multiple twists and turns that happen as the movie unfolds.”

It has received rave reviews from those who have screened it, he said. Some viewers, he said, cry after the credits roll. He calls it an “emotional roller coaster.” It’s a documentary for the whole family — including moms and daughters, he said.

“One of my daughters made a decision for Christ right after watching a rough cut of this film,” he said. “We didn’t realize how much it was going to affect [her].”

The Kendricks got the idea for re-releasing “Courageous” while working on “Show Me the Father” during the heart of the pandemic.

“It occurred to us that the principles that we share in the movie ‘Courageous’ have not changed,” Alex Kendrick told TAB Media. “And there is a new generation of fathers that did not have children a decade ago, that this movie would certainly apply to.”

“Courageous Legacy,” Alex Kendrick said, is a “re-edited” version of the 2011 film.

“It moves a little faster now,” he said.

It includes drone shots — something that wasn’t readily available a decade ago. It also includes an enhanced score and two deleted scenes added back into the film.

### Updated scenes

Perhaps most significantly, it also includes an updated ending.

“Stephen and I began talking about, ‘Well, if it’s been 10 years, what would have happened to the fathers and their families 10 years later in the movie?’” Alex said.

The Kendricks gathered the primary actors in the first film — including Ken Bevel, Kevin Downes, Ben Davies and Robert Amaya — for updated scenes shot last year in Albany, Georgia, under COVID-19 safety protocols.

“The sheriff’s department worked with us,” Alex Kendrick said. “They were fantastic. ... I think when people see this, they’re going to see a familiar movie that seems very fresh. That’s not only production-wise and visual-wise, but also the strong biblical principles that are in the film.”

The Kendricks hope the two movies impact men for Christ.

“We’re grateful and excited to see what the Lord does with these,” Alex Kendrick said.

### 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.

Visit [ShowMeTheFatherMovie.com](http://ShowMeTheFatherMovie.com) and [CourageousTheMovie.com](http://CourageousTheMovie.com).

### MEET THE REVIEWER

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

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