

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Animal, human or both? Frightening future of chimera research

◆ Pages 6–7



Students of Coal-ing Baptist build outdoor worship, recreation area

◆ Page 11



Human trafficking victims lured by force, fraud

◆ Page 17



Kinsley, 10, can't wait to answer the question Chanee Otwell (left) posed during a game to review the story of the Bible from creation to the Book of Judges.

Photo by Grace Thornton

One big narrative

Young woman's path sets her up to share Bible's big story

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Chanee Otwell remembers when God started impressing on her heart that He was all she needed. She was 11, and she'd just overheard her mother say they were going to lose their house. "I was kind of upset at first, but I remember thinking to

myself and praying, 'You know what, it's OK if we do, because that's not what's important, and I'm going to worship Jesus even then.'

"Even if it's in a homeless shelter on the street, I can still worship the Lord."

Now 21, Otwell noted those thoughts weren't her own — she has felt God's grace in her life from a young age.

She was adopted from an orphanage in China when she was a baby, by a couple in the Leeds area. Her adoptive dad died when she was 5, and over the years she's walked through some difficult times that could have made her turn away from

God, even though her family didn't end up homeless.

Instead, she has grown over the years in the realization that God is the prize of her life and eternal things are all that matter. And she's been finding ways to intentionally pass that on to the children around her who also need to be drawn toward God.

Like a sponge

In the church she attended as a child, the pastor's family poured into her and taught her how the stories of the Bible fit into one big narrative. Otwell soaked that up like a sponge and modeled her life after the

way she saw the pastor's children living.

And as she leaned into God and trusted Him for what she needed, He continued to bring her things that would bring her closer to Him.

She started reading her Bible more at home during those years when another less-than-ideal situation became the unexpected ground in which God continued to grow her faith.

She found herself with a large section of time each day with nothing to do.

"I spent those four or five hours a day just sitting down (See 'Greatest,' page 9)

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

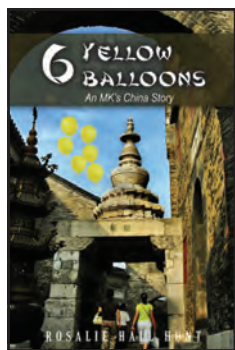
Recent book releases from the TAB Media family



TAB Media staff spouse Bryan Gill
"The Devils in Alabama"

The plot of Bryan Gill's first crime thriller/suspense novel involves a tangled web of illegal gaming, drug trafficking, corrupt politicians, football and religion.

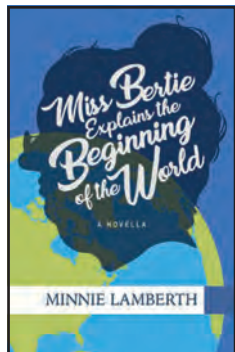
Bryan is also the co-host of The Storied Outdoors podcast and has co-authored two books in the How to be a Man devotional line through Iron Hill Press. Learn more at bryangill.com.



**TAB Media board member
Rosalie Hunt**
"6 Yellow Balloons: An MK's China Story"

In this first of two books, Rosalie shares her family's missions story in China from 1897 to 1962, sharing letters, journals, historical documents and her own precious memories.

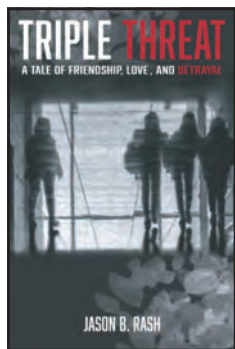
Hunt also is the author of several biographies of missions heroines. Learn more at rosaliehallhunt.com.



**TAB Media book reviewer
Minnie Lamberth**
"Miss Bertie Explains the Beginning of the World"

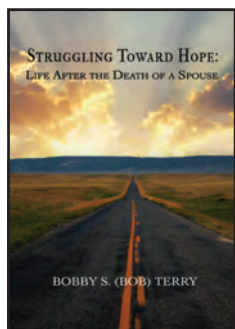
Sunday School teacher Bertie Dupree faces some unexpected and humorous challenges in this follow-up to Lamberth's first novel, "Life With Strings Attached."

Learn more at minnielamberth.com.



TAB Media staff spouse Jason Rash
"Triple Threat: A Tale of Friendship, Love, and Betrayal"

Alex and Laura Maddox seem to have a perfect life, but a childhood trauma and years of guilt have tragic consequences for the couple. As their world unravels, new temptations and betrayal tear open old wounds. This Christian fiction romantic/suspense thriller is Rash's debut novel.



**TAB Media editor emeritus
Bob Terry**
"Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse"

What if you were suddenly widowed? How would you cope? Terry was faced with those questions after his wife, Eleanor, died in a tragic car accident. In his first book, Terry shares his journey, along with lessons he learned along the way.

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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May the content we share always showcase truth with compassion

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

Those closing words of Psalm 19 always help center me when I’m tempted to react rather than respond or if I catch myself harboring bitterness about a situation or a person.

I’m also drawn to others who are drawn to this biblical model.

In fact, I shared with the trustees of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and others who serve in Alabama Baptist life a few hours before finalizing this issue of The Alabama Baptist that I appreciate how they engage with our team.

The partnership is real, kindness and grace are always present, and we feel a sense of security as we not only strive for excellence in the content we produce but also work to learn and grow in our efforts.

The same is true for all of you — our readers, our ministry partners, our family.

It means so much to us to know you are with us, cheering us on and supporting us through subscriptions, advertising, donations and personal messages.

We also appreciate the fact

that you care enough to call us up or reach out electronically to share concerns you find in our coverage.

We are all on this journey together, and we need your help to accomplish the mission we’ve been assigned by God and Alabama Baptists.

We work hard to scour all that is happening among God’s people and pull those stories together to help inspire you and keep hope alive.

Our team also keeps an eye on all that is happening in the denomination (at all levels), in culture and throughout the world — this part of our responsibility definitely takes all of us.

From there we attempt to balance getting the news out quickly with sharing responsible and helpful details that sometimes require several steps for fact checking or assessing if we indeed have the full story.

And then there are the various resources to assist you with practical aspects of life as well as helps for spiritual formation and overall growth as a believer.

What a tremendous blessing it is to serve you in the role we have at TAB Media.

May the content we share and purpose for sharing showcase truth with compassion.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD,
and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

DAY TO DAY POURS OUT SPEECH,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

THERE IS NO SPEECH, NOR ARE THERE WORDS,
whose voice is not heard.

THEIR VOICE GOES OUT THROUGH ALL THE EARTH,
and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving His chamber; and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

ITS RISING IS FROM THE END OF THE HEAVENS,
and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT,
reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

MORE TO BE DESIRED ARE THEY THAN GOLD,
even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

MOREOVER, BY THEM IS YOUR SERVANT WARNED;
in keeping them there is great reward.

WHO CAN DISCERN HIS ERRORS?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

KEEP BACK YOUR SERVANT ALSO FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS;
let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH
AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

— P S A L M 19 —

Your Voice



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

Remembering the faith legacy of Coach Bobby Bowden

By **Doug Rogers**

Director of Communications & Technology Services
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Our family moved to Tallahassee in January 1977, mid-way through my 9th grade year. Bobby Bowden had just completed his first season at Florida State University, his only losing season there.

Having grown up in Central Florida, I really didn't know much about Florida State or its coach.

I certainly had no idea how fortunate I was to suddenly have a front row seat (actually it was usually a back row end zone seat) as Coach Bowden built one of the most successful college football programs in the nation.

Our family joined First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, where Coach Bowden and his family were members. If he was in town, Bobby always made a point to be in church, often with many of his players, the morning following a game. As a teenager, it made such an impression on me to look up and see him and his players in the

balcony, knowing that he didn't just talk about his faith, he lived it out.

He was also a familiar sight in the church hallways, always returning anyone's greetings when they shouted, "Hey, Coach!"

Through his many decades of coaching, he was folksy, inspirational, certainly successful, but through it all he was authentic and genuine and consistent. He was the same person on the field, in the locker room, at church, at home and in front of the cameras.

Faith in Christ

His faith in Christ was a part of who he was, so it naturally came out wherever he went. I didn't know Coach Bowden personally, but I had the wonderful opportunity to interview him back in 1994 for a work project. It was summer, and Bobby was in the midst of one of his famous Bowden family football camps for high school students when I arrived for the interview.

Coach Bowden graciously provided us with all the time we needed, making us feel like we

were the most important thing on his schedule. Of course, I left with an autographed photo, but even more, with a renewed respect for the man.

When our family moved to Montgomery in 1999 for me to serve with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, the first question I was asked whenever I met someone new was "Alabama or Auburn?"

When I responded, "Neither — I'm a Seminole," almost universally they would say, "That's cool. I really like Bobby Bowden."

His universal appeal was amazing, and I always felt fortunate to have a coach at "my school" that I was proud of — not just for being successful, but for having integrity and for living out his Christian faith.

In 2014, Montgomery's Camellia Bowl was launched, and they selected Birmingham native and Howard College (now Samford University) graduate Bobby Bowden as their first Legends recipient. I grabbed some media credentials to get into a bowl week luncheon to hear him speak.

Then, just a month or two ago, what an amazing privilege to be in the audience when he surprised Mark Richt at the North American Mission Board Send Luncheon preceding the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

That was June 14. Five weeks

later, he announced his terminal illness with the words, "I am at peace." Then 18 days later, he was gone.

Like so many, I was saddened when Bobby announced his terminal condition and saddened more to learn of his passing Aug. 8.

But any sadness is tempered by the reality that Bobby Bowden is with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ — in the very presence of the One he directed so many people toward.

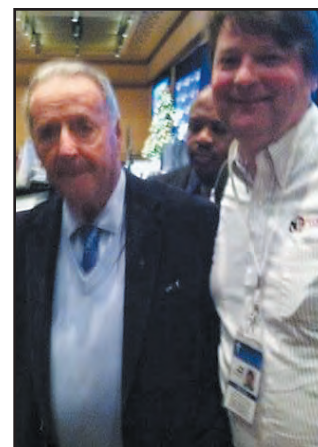
His faith in Christ is the reason he could say, "I am at peace," when faced with his death. He died like he lived, wholly leaning on Christ.

There's no telling how many high school and college students he impacted not just to be better players or better people, but to consider the claims of Christ.

I have no doubt he received a well-earned, "Well done, good and faithful servant," upon his arrival in heaven, maybe even accented with a hearty "Dadgum!"

We'll miss you, Coach, but your legacy lives on not only in the record books and in the FSU field named for you, but mostly in the lives of countless people you impacted for the kingdom of God. And when it's all said and done, that's what really matters.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Bobby Bowden died Aug. 8 at age 91.



Facebook photo
In 2014, Doug Rogers (right) had the chance to thank Bobby Bowden for the influence he had on his life.

Praise for Stories podcast

I want to commend you on the excellent job you are doing with the Stories podcast.

When I listened to Season 2, episode 3, titled "Walking in Reconciliation," I found the episode deeply moving and so encouraging to hear of what God is doing through these two congregations in Montgomery.

I've shared the podcast with

others and am so proud that you are telling these types of stories full of pain, hurt, sin, forgiveness and progress.

Know that I'm grateful for the fine work that you are doing. You are telling important stories of God at work in a most excellent way.

Pastor David Eldridge
Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.

“Cooperation will die in a culture where public shaming thrives.”

AMY WHITFIELD

executive director of communications, The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina

The ancient Greeks thought helping others further developed one's own soul.

The Romans thought helping others made for a good conscience.

The Egyptians thought helping others should be geared toward their physical condition.

The Jews thought helping others contributed to justice and responsibility.

The Christian faith states that helping others is an ethic of love for someone and is a response to God's love for us.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

When the pandemic started, I prayed for a better day tomorrow.

Now I realize all days are good. They are “His” days. They are filled with opportunities, challenges and blessings; each one is a gift in its own way.

Pastor Michael Garman
Eastridge Baptist Church,
Amarillo, Texas

If Scripture doesn't support your beliefs about God, then you need to change your beliefs.

Shane Pruitt
Director of next gen evangelism
North American Mission Board

Orthodoxy entails right thinking about the gospel. Orthopraxy involves right living in response to the gospel. The former is always first and foundational. You must believe rightly before you live rightly.

Danny Akin, president,
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

You will shame exactly zero people into better behavior. But you can turn them away.

Dan Darling
Senior vice president
of communications
National Religious Broadcasters

From the *Twitterverse*

@MikeOintheCreek

Just had the opportunity to share the Gospel with someone I have known for a long time. I am both ashamed for waiting so long and thankful God gave me another chance to be obedient.

@MattSmethurst

If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me. —Robert Murray M'Cheyne

@JoWiKi

Building a following. Building a platform. Building a name. It's all pointless and like grasping at vapor. It seems to matter but it really doesn't. Says the preacher, to preachers.

@haines_matt

The problem of the human heart

is usually not that it doesn't know what's right in God's eyes. The problem of the human heart is that it usually cares more about something else than what is right in God's eyes.

@CSLewisDaily

“Jesus Christ did not say, ‘Go into all the world and tell the world that it is quite right.’” —C.S. Lewis

@TimothyLynch23

We need to get back to truth in love. A lot of people on Twitter battling for truth but have no love, and others seeking love but not based on truth. It is not either/or it must be a both/and.

@reglaurie

If you're a true Christian, then you're truly countercultural. Today the cultural norm is upside down. The things that we once saw as virtues are now vices. The things we

once celebrated are now mocked. And the things that we once said were bad are now declared good.

@ronniep

Pray for pastors as they re-enter the mask or no mask arena. Many suffered through round 1, while others didn't make it. Now, as many are trying to navigate through the vax debate, here we are w/more mask guidelines that will be highly politicized. Pray for your pastor.

@david_bumg

You know what the Bible “whispers” about? Policing other people's theology. Do you know what the Bible shouts about? What God has done for sinners in Jesus Christ! Some of y'all need new hobbies.

@brocraigc

“The true purpose of prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer.” —R.A. Torrey

5 daily questions

Five questions to ask yourself daily as suggested by Valleydale Church in Birmingham:

1. Am I spending time with God daily? “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

2. Am I living what I'm learning? “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” (James 1:22)

3. Am I sharing Jesus regularly? “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16)

4. Am I sacrificing for the Kingdom? “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21)

5. Am I spiritually investing in others? “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

If Christians would spend less time harassing each other and more time helping other people, more people would want to become Christians.

Pastor Steve Gaines
Bellevue Baptist Church
Cordova, Tenn.

If cable news is keeping you from unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ, turn it off, unplug it, unsubscribe from it and prioritize your church over cable.

Ed Stetzer
Executive director
Billy Graham Center
at Wheaton College

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

The Chimera of Arezzo, cast in bronze, artistically depicts the Chimera, which according to Greek mythology is a monster created by the binding of multiple animal parts to create a singular unnatural creature.

Animal, human or both?



flickr photo by Eric Parker

Frightening future of chimera research tests moral, ethical boundaries of science

By Denise George
TAB Media

Earlier this year, Congress failed to pass a U.S. ban on chimera research, a form of experimentation few Americans know about but one that could test the moral and ethical boundaries of science.

On May 26, the Senate failed to pass an amendment introduced by Republican Sens. James Lankford of Oklahoma, Steve Daines of Montana and Mike Braun of Indiana. That amendment would have banned chimera research in the U.S. — experiments to create certain types of human-animal hybrids (chimera), thus allowing the nation’s scientists to compete with Chinese innovation, according to a Fox News report.

In his argument against allowing the research, Braun said, “Human life is distinct and sacred, and research that creates an animal-human hybrid or transfers a human embryo into an animal womb or vice versa should be completely prohibited and engaging in such unethical experiments should be a crime.”

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) countered Braun, saying the ban “undermines scientifically significant research that could actually help develop new treatments and ultimately lead to lifesaving organ transplants.”

Defining chimera

In Greek mythology, Chimera is the frightening, fire-breathing, hybrid creature of Lycia in Asia

Minor — a female monster with a lion’s head, a goat and dragon’s body, and a serpent’s tail. She is considered an evil, genetic puzzle.

Biologists have chosen the word “chimera” to describe an organism containing mixtures of genetically different tissues formed by scientific processes that include early embryo fusion, grafting or mutation.

Chimeras sometimes occur in nature. National Geographic reports that most male tortoiseshell cats are chimeras, their distinctive mottled orange and black coat a sign that the cat has an extra X chromosome. Walter Reeves, aka The Georgia Gardener, notes on his website that “many common variegated plants originally came from leaf chimeras: variegated dogwood, variegated vinca vine, ‘Burgundy Glow’ ajuga, variegated hosta [and] variegated hydrangea.”

In laboratories today, chimera means the bioengineering and experimentation of human-animal hybrid species, a medical research procedure that splices animal cells with those of aborted human babies, according to The Federalist.

“To make a chimera, you take some developing cells from one animal and stick in some developing cells from another animal,” stated

Dr. F. Perry Wilson on Medscape. “The trick is figuring out what cells you want to inject.”

While it sounds like the stuff of science fiction, chimera research is not new. Scientists first grew human embryonic stem cells in laboratories in 1998. According to FactCheck.

org, two years later in August 2000 under President Bill Clinton, the National Institutes of Health prohibited funding research “in which human pluripotent stem cells are combined with an animal embryo.”

In 2003, Chinese scientists fused human cells with rabbit eggs to produce the first human-animal hybrid. Several years later, Mayo Clinic researchers created pigs with human

blood running through their veins, and University of Nevada scientists created sheep whose livers and hearts were largely human, thegospelcoalition.org reported.

In his 2006 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush, called the “creation of human-

animal hybrids” one of the “most egregious abuses of medical research.”

President Barack Obama halted and outlawed federal funding for chimera research in the U.S. in the fall of 2014.

According to the NIH, animal-human hybrids hold “tremendous potential for disease modeling, drug testing and perhaps eventual organ transplant,” The Gospel Coalition reported.

It allows researchers to experiment on human cells inside a living (animal) organism ... human cells that will develop into specific tissues or organs for potential transplants, according to TGC.

Medical possibilities

Other researchers see potential insight into human biology and disease development. For instance, animal models with human cells in the brain can allow scientists to study brain diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease and schizophrenia.

“Imagine pigs with human hearts or mice whose brains have a spark of human intelligence,” The Wall Street Journal said, reporting that “scientists are cultivating a flock of such experimental creations ... by injecting potent human cells into

“... you take some developing cells from one animal and stick in some developing cells from another animal.”

F. Perry Wilson
Medscape



Photo courtesy of walterreeves.com
A blackberry plant displays the chimera trait, in which mutated cells result in the leaves failing to produce chlorophyll.

mice, rats, pigs and cows. They hope the new combinations might one day be used to grow human organs for transplants.”

China already has done extensive and successful chimera experimentation that could potentially humanize the biology of laboratory animals.

Recently, they created human-monkey embryos that lived for 20 days in a laboratory. Not everyone, however, agrees that the benefits of chimera research and practice will outweigh the moral, ethical and theological dimensions of such experimentation.

They ask: When human and animal materials are mixed for scientific research, is there still a boundary between human and animal?

And if so, is the crossing of the boundary morally wrong?

Some scientists, like Stanford University bioethicist Henry Greeley, think science may be pushing the ethical envelope and trespassing ethical boundaries yet uncrossed. He believes that as long as the embryo chimera stays in a laboratory dish, there shouldn't be concern, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, but “if you actually try to gestate such a thing, particularly if you can bring it successfully to term, then the issues get more significant.”

The potential of chimera research and experimentation opens a Pandora's box of questions, including:

- ▶ What exactly does it mean to be human?
- ▶ If a small percentage of human embryonic stem cells are injected early into a monkey, for instance, and the gestation is brought to term and delivered, is the chimera human or monkey?

Status in question

▶ Would such research confer upon an animal the moral status of a normal human adult, but then impermissibly fail to accord it the protections it merits in virtue of its enhanced moral status?

▶ Should certain human-animal hybrids be brought into existence, and if so, how should they be treated?

▶ What is the moral status of human-animal chimeras with brains that are partly or wholly composed of human cells?

▶ Might the placing of human cells into a mouse brain lead to human-like cognitive functions?

If so, where is the line between us and them? Would theologians ask whether a humanized mouse or gorilla could grow a soul?

▶ Does chimera creation violate the species barrier instituted by the Creator, Who drew a sharp line between “kinds” (Gen. 1:11)? Do the biblical “kinds” mean “species”?

▶ Do animals with human cells have a soul for whom Christ died and offered salvation?

▶ Does producing these human-animal creatures threaten to undermine human dignity? Is the chimera a human or a beast?

▶ Should adult human and non-human hybrids be allowed to breed, to reproduce?

▶ With the introduction of



Commons.wikimedia.org

There are many forms of chimera in the plant world. Some are more distinct, with clearly separating colors.

human DNA, could experimental animals be “too human” to dispose of after the research process ends?

▶ As Ted Peters, professor of systematic theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley mused: “If we place human embryonic stem cells into the brain tissue of a chimpanzee, might the chimp look us in the eye and say, ‘Thanks for the genetic enhancement. Now, where do I register to vote?’”

According to the Christian Medical and Dental Association, there are “compelling moral reasons to refrain from applying biotechnology to create chimeras or hybrid organisms that are partly human and partly nonhuman ... we should not be creating intermediate or indeterminate species sharing human and animal genetic material [that] fundamentally alters human nature as designed by God.”

‘Ethical concerns’

Some believe the May 26 ruling shows utter disregard for the value and dignity of human life and allows unborn humans at any stage of development to be experimented on, manipulated and destroyed.

“This is a place where we need to make a solid stand that enough is enough,” Braun said, “and we don't go any further with it.”



Facebook photo

Male tortoiseshell cats are the most likely to display chimera, mixing more than one breed in a cat, like these chimera found on the Cat Crazy Facebook page.

ISSCR changes human embryo research rule

The International Society for Stem Cell Research announced in May it no longer endorses a longstanding ethical limitation on human embryo research.

For decades the scientific community has observed the so-called 14-day rule. This ethical guideline — first formulated in the United Kingdom under the Warnock Commission in the mid-1980s — requires that embryos may only be gestated for 14 days after conception in the lab.

Lifting the 14-day rule means human embryos in the laboratory can be developed to a more mature stage.

For those who are pro-life, the 14-day rule is already a bridge too far, said Ben Mitchell, a research fellow with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. This rule permits the generation of human embryos in the lab and requires researchers to destroy them by the 14th day.

Seeking permission

They want a policy that will allow them to perform research on living members of the species *Homo sapiens* from conception onward, Mitchell said. They want permission to research using living human embryos, not mouse embryos, dog embryos or other species.

Research using human subjects, whether at the embryonic stage or at the end of life, requires utmost respect for the nature and sanctity of human life, Mitchell said. Until researchers can be sure they are not crossing the line by trampling on the sanctity of human embryos, they should resist those experiments, he said.

To complicate matters, two teams have “embryo-like entities” called human blastoids.

Currently human embryo research may not be done with tax payer dollars. (ERLC, TAB Media)

Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

American missionary saved lives during Armenian genocide

Mary Louise Graffam (1871–1921) was an American missionary who witnessed the Armenian genocide and was responsible for saving the lives of thousands of Armenians.

This month is the 100th anniversary of her death.

Graffam was born in Monson, Maine, on May 11, 1871. When she was young, the family moved to Andover, Massachusetts.

Raised in the Christian faith, she had a religious experience when she was a teen and joined the local church.

She attended Oberlin College in Ohio and studied to become a missionary. After graduation in 1894, she taught school in two states and Washington, D.C.

In 1901, she arrived in Sivas, then part of the Ottoman Empire, as a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Educating youth

At 31, Graffam became the principal of a high school for girls and taught algebra and geometry. For years she taught Bible stud-

ies and high school courses in four nearby towns. She became fluent in French, Armenian and Turkish.

During World War I, she was in Sivas when the Armenian Genocide (1915–16) started. The Ottoman Turks set out to eliminate the



GRAFFAM

Armenian people. On July 7, 1915, Graffam was deported along with 50 of her students as part of the third convoy, which included 3,000 Armenians. In her book "Own Story," published in 1919, she wrote: "We began to see the dead from yesterday's company, and the weak

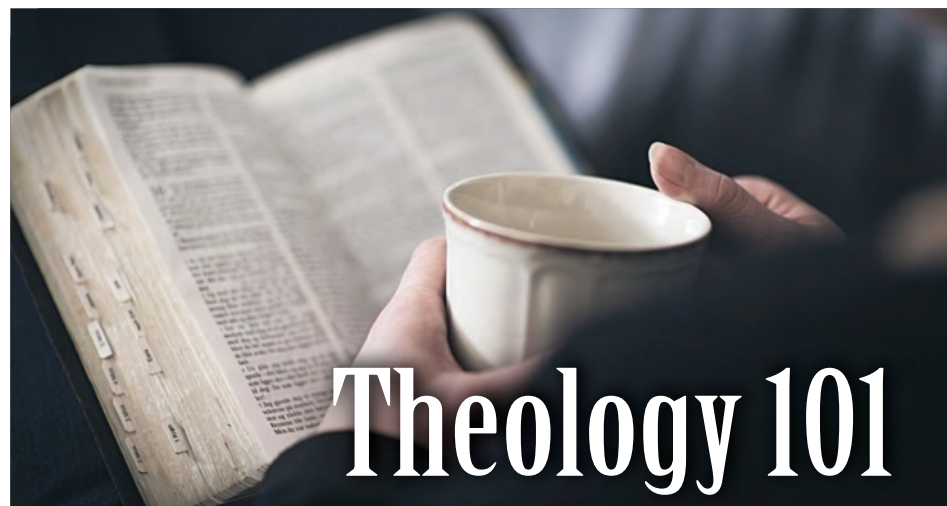
began to fall by the way. ... I piled as many as I could on our wagons."

Thousands of Armenians died in extreme heat because no water or food existed. Graffam saw deportees shot dead while trying to drink water from a river.

Graffam returned to Sivas in August 1915. In her book, she stated: "I was like a skeleton and looked like a refugee. I was half crazed, ... yet I could not give in." She cared for hundreds of orphans and hid numerous girls who would have been abducted into Muslim households.

She wrote the ABCFM treasurer William Pitt about the atrocities against the Armenian people. Her letter finally reached the U.S. State Department. Before the 1918 armistice, she protected around 1,000 Armenian survivors. Graffam died in Sivas (now part of Turkey) on Aug. 17, 1921. Armenians mourned her loss. Her bravery and sacrificial love for them made her a legend.

Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day is commemorated on April 24. Congress officially recognized the genocide in 2019.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Spirit's Ministry

Convicting and Birthing

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

A number of weeks ago Theology 101 began looking at aspects of ministry carried out by members of the Trinity. We began with God's word and continued with Christ's power. For the next several weeks the focus will be on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We begin with His convicting ministry. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "When He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8–11).

In human courts prosecuting attorneys make it their business to convince the jury that the accused is guilty beyond reasonable question. In keeping with that analogy, the Holy Spirit works so "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

In both these passages the target of the Spirit's convicting work is the world, in the sense of all humanity. Until people realize their guilt before a holy God, they will not be inclined to come to Christ, who came as the world's Savior from sin. That convicting work is the necessary prelude to or preparation for a sinner turning to the Savior for forgiveness. Until sinners realize their guilt before God, they will not be

inclined to embrace the Savior, who comes from God.

Upon becoming aware of guilt before God, ideally a sinner turns in faith to trust the Savior. In trusting Christ, repentant sinners experience a spiritual birth. In His famous interview with Nicodemus, Jesus pointed out the absolutely essential human experience of being born again (John 3).

When Nicodemus halted at the idea of a second birth, he apparently was thinking of a second physical birth. Jesus explained that He spoke of being born of the Spirit or experiencing a spiritual birth. According to Jesus' explanation, this experience is so essential that without it one cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Complete renewal

One of the most serious errors of human thinking is that those who are sinners can fit themselves for inclusion in God's kingdom. The biblical truth as explained by Christ is that membership in God's kingdom requires complete renewal by the Holy Spirit, such as spiritual rebirth conveys. What human merit cannot achieve, God's Spirit provides — namely, needed spiritual rebirth.

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.



By Joanne Sloan

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

‘Greatest treasure & greatest goal’

Otwell realized early in life that Jesus was worth ‘going all in’ for

(continued from page 1)
reading my Bible,” Otwell remembered. “That’s where I think I got a lot of the context of the big picture of the Bible, just sitting down and reading it myself, because that love for God had already been cultivated in my life. It was the Lord working even in the small, insignificant things.”

When she was a teenager, she and her mother started going to Cool Springs Baptist Church in Ashville. Otwell’s love for God only deepened there, and she began to filter life-decisions through this question: “Does what I’m doing have eternal value?”

“I feel like so many people my age get caught up in material things, get caught up in things that aren’t necessarily bad but aren’t going to have an eternal impact, and I don’t want to waste my life like that,” Otwell said.

Three summers in a row, she went on a missions trip to Guatemala, which changed her life and solidified a call to missions.

She also developed a close relationship with her pastor, Curry Harris, and his wife, Susan. They became like second parents, and when she was 20, she moved in with them. They continued to pour into her.

“It’s been a really sweet gift from the Lord,” Otwell said.

At the beginning of the year, God began to do a new work at Cool Springs through Otwell.

Curry Harris asked her one Saturday night if she could teach the

children’s Sunday School class the next day. The class was one child — a fourth grader named Lucy.

‘Greater meaning’

Otwell agreed, and everybody liked the arrangement, so she became the permanent teacher. And she began to see that Lucy needed what Otwell herself had needed — someone to teach her how the Bible fits together not as isolated stories but as one big narrative.

“It just seemed like she didn’t know how to connect stories. She didn’t know there was greater meaning behind them,” Otwell recalled.

The curriculum the church was using was good, but it was fairly basic and didn’t thread together the overarching story like Otwell hoped it would. She found curriculum that did, but they went in-depth and took several years to walk through. Otwell loved that concept, but she only had a few months before her Aug. 14 departure

to serve in Mexico with the International Mission Board’s Hands On program for a semester. And from there, she heads to college.

So she began to piece together her own curriculum using other materials and what she’s learned in her own studies, developing something she could get through with Lucy before she left.

“I felt like the Lord put it on my heart that she needed to see the Bible as one story, the story of Christ,” Otwell explained.

And she knew she didn’t have enough time from January to



Photo courtesy of Chanee Otwell
Chanee Otwell (center) with Curry Harris (right), pastor of Cool Springs Baptist Church in Ashville, and his wife, Susan.



Photo courtesy of Chanee Otwell
Chanee Otwell (left) prays with a woman while on a missions trip to Guatemala. Three summers in a row, she traveled to the Central American country, an experience that solidified her call to missions.

August to get through the whole story on Sunday mornings, so she started meeting with Lucy on Thursday nights too.

Lucy kept coming and then invited a friend. The number grew and grew, and now there are 10–12 elementary-age girls regularly attending a Thursday night Bible study, led by Otwell, at the church.

Every week, she, Susan Harris and other volunteers prepare a quick meal for the girls, give them some time to play on the playground, then go in-depth on a Bible story.

They started with creation and have worked their way to the Book of Judges.

Making connections

And the girls are remembering the material and making the connections on their own, Otwell noted. The Thursday night Bible study has turned into a vibrant ministry.

And, she added, God has been using it to train her for what she’s

doing next — teaching missionary kids serving with their parents in a remote Mexican village.

Big plans

“It’s the same age group I’ve been working with since January,” Otwell noted.

Curry Harris — who said he and his wife were never able to have children — believes God has big plans for his “daughter.”

“She’s blessed my wife and me very much, and she’s blessed the church — she blesses everyone she comes around,” he said. “I think she’s going to do great things for the Lord.”

Otwell insists it’s not about her — it’s all what God has graciously done.

“I know that Jesus is my greatest treasure and my greatest goal,” she said. “It’s going all in for Him in everything because He is the greatest treasure. You can’t possess anything greater than knowing Christ.”

To hear Chanee Otwell share her story in her words, visit tabonline.org/chanee.



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Coaling students build outdoor worship area

By Erin Roach

TAB Media

When a global pandemic changed the plans at Coaling Baptist Church last year, students at the Tuscaloosa-area church devised a plan for an outdoor worship and recreation space where they could gather.

Prompted by COVID-19 concerns, the students initially met under a carport. They enjoyed outdoor Bible study and found that they could invite friends without the usual connotations associated with asking them to enter a church building.

“We did that for several months, and then we moved back into the facilities as things got better,” said Travis Seagle, student pastor at Coaling Baptist.

“But a lot of them still wanted to do some stuff outside ... and there are some folks who are still uncomfortable meeting inside.

“So we began with an idea of doing an outdoor area.”

The church had a patch of land that wasn't included in future building plans, so Seagle asked if the students could utilize it.

“We began pulling together resources from a variety of different places to make that an outdoor space,” Seagle told *The Alabama Baptist*.

“The students began giving ideas of some things they would like to have, such as volleyball and 9-Square-in-the-Air and a GaGa Ball pit.”

All-purpose space

The group — with a weekly worship average of some 35 high schoolers and 25 middle schoolers — dedicated several Saturdays and other days to the manual labor of constructing components of the space. Adult volunteers pitched in too.

“Men from the church saw what we were doing and said, ‘Hey, you guys need lights.’ I agreed with that, but I wasn't planning on spending that kind of



Photo submitted

Middle school and high school students at Coaling Baptist Church give some of their summer days to construct an outdoor worship and recreation area.

money,” Seagle recalled. “They said, ‘You need them,’ so they put some lights up for us and really made it an all-purpose event space where we can use it at night or any time we need it.”

This year, as his birthday approached, Seagle asked people to give toward the outdoor worship area instead of giving him a birthday gift.

“We got about \$2,500 that way,” he noted.

The space includes “a well-built stage,” Seagle said, as well as bleachers, which came from a church that was no longer using them for baseball. The students helped refurbish them.

“We bought new wood, and the students painted the bleachers and made them sturdy,” Seagle said, adding that the seating can accommodate about 100.

The student ministry had outgrown its indoor space, he noted, so now they have room to spread out.

“We have more bleachers on the way that we bought from the county from an abandoned ball field. When we get those, we'll refurbish

[them] also to make even more space,” he said.

And if COVID-19 numbers threaten to prohibit indoor church gatherings in the future, Seagle said Coaling Baptist “would still have an alternative space to meet there on campus that would require little to no setup.”

A highlight of the process was when a 7th grade girl whose father is a contractor was onsite to help.

“She was showing some of the older guys who are juniors and seniors how to use the power tools and how to do things correctly,” Seagle said.

“It was great seeing her use skills she'd seen her dad use to help with this.”

The church already has used the outdoor space for a missionary commissioning service — one of their college students served at Mission Arlington this summer.

Community service

“We've had some great student services out there, and we hope that we'll have many more,” said Seagle, who has been at Coaling Baptist for 16 years.

The church held a community worship service for students in the area the Sunday before school started.

Before the service, students from Coaling Baptist prayer walked the campuses of local schools.

‘Be flexible’

“I think in the days that have come to pass lately that it's important for us to be flexible, and I think our students have grasped the importance of flexibility as we do ministry and as we serve the community and serve the people of God,” Seagle said.

“Flexibility is so important, and it's so awesome that the Lord has allowed us to have this space, the church has allowed us to have this space, so that we can be flexible in the days to come.”

Students at Coaling Baptist are eager to “show the world as we live for Christ that we're not set in our usual boxes and set in our usual Christian caves, but are willing to go outside of the norms to do whatever it takes to tell people about Christ,” Seagle said.

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IMB photo

Zach Jones (center) and Hiromi Price (left) share the gospel in Tokyo using an Olympics trading pin designed by International Mission Board missionaries. The pin uses the colors of the Olympic rings as a bridge to the gospel. IMB missionaries engaged with 1,000 people during the delayed 2020 Olympics. See a video from missionary Scott Bradford highlighting the IMB team's outreach during the Games at tabonline.org/2020-olympics. (TAB Media)

Facebook introduces prayer request feature

Facebook has rolled out a new prayer request feature. The new tool is being embraced by some religious leaders as a cutting-edge way to engage the faithful online but viewed warily by others as they weigh its usefulness against the privacy and security concerns they have with Facebook.

In Facebook Groups employing the feature, members can use it to rally prayer power for upcoming job interviews, illnesses and other personal challenges big and small.

After a prayer request is posted, other users can tap an “I prayed” button, respond with a “like” or other reaction, leave a comment or send a direct message. A Facebook spokesperson described the feature, which debuted in December, as part of the platform's ongoing effort to support faith communities. (AP)

Texas court blocks ‘Transgender Mandate’

A federal judge Aug. 9 in Texas blocked a federal order requiring medical facilities and health insurers to cover or provide gender transition procedures and abortion.

U.S. District Court Judge Reed O'Connor of the Northern District of Texas granted a permanent injunction in the case brought by Catholic health care system Franciscan Alliance, an association of more than 20,000 health care professionals and nine states.

A federal court in North Dakota issued a similar ruling on the requirement, known as the Transgender Mandate, in January after the Obama-era order was reinstated by the Biden administration.

The Biden administration will have 60 days to decide whether to appeal the court's ruling. (TAB Media)

Headline news

from around the Southeast

Arkansas

The annual Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering helps Arkansas Baptist churches offer free medical and dental services. According to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, there are 12–14 clinics held across the state each year. All but one clinic was canceled in 2020 because of COVID-19. The first three this year were canceled but the next five clinics cared for 161 patients, and 15 people trusted Jesus.

Florida

COVID-19 made the young CrossLife East Church in Oviedo realize hosting services on school properties wasn't realistic. “The dream I had for the east campus when we started over seven years ago was to purchase property, build a building and continue to grow into a thriving, gospel-centered, evangelistic church. I see that dream being fulfilled,” Dwayne E.

Mercer, senior pastor, said. The Catholic Diocese of Orlando worked with the church to sell 40 acres of land across from where it is currently meeting.

Mississippi

Northcrest Baptist Church in Meridian decided to Love Out Loud nine years ago. This year's outreach to its community involved more than 800 people and 30 churches. “Northcrest's role is to equip people for this,” said Wade Phillips, executive pastor. Numerous acts of service included a sports camp, car washes, prayer, helping schools and random acts of kindness. “This is about the Kingdom,” said Dan Lanier, pastor of Northcrest.

South Carolina

South Carolina Baptist Convention Disaster Relief responded to Tropical Storm Elsa, which

struck in Camden on July 8. The disaster relief team responded to a house July 9 with an assessment, and a team from Kershaw Baptist Association arrived July 10. “We were able to remove the tree and tarp the roof that day. It was done just in time, as there was a downpour from a thunderstorm that very night,” said Alvin Tans, unit leader for the chainsaw team.

Tennessee

Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center in Newport and Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center opened again this summer but were finding filling seasonal staff roles to be problematic. An article in the Baptist and Reflector indicated that volunteers stepped up to fill many roles, including food service, cutting grass and maintenance. “I was amazed and pleased with the response we have had,” said Kevin Perrigan, manager at Carson Springs.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **James McLain** — former pastor of churches in Clarke and Washington Baptist associations — died July 28. He was 77.

McLain served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War and retired from the Army National Guard after 23 years of service.



MCCLAIN

He earned degrees at the University of Mobile and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. During his 40 years of ministry, McLain served a number of churches in Clarke and Washington associations. He also served in Mississippi.

McLain was preceded in death by a granddaughter. He is survived by his wife, Diane; daughter, Rhonda; son, Jim; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

► Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor **Robert “Bob” Ledlow** died July 28. He was 87.

Ledlow accepted his first pastorate — Rock Hill Baptist Church, Honoraville — at age 18. During his 62 years of ministry, he also served as pastor of Berea Baptist Church, Moulton; First Baptist Church, Mount Olive; and West End Baptist Church, Clanton; as well as serving churches in Florida, Louisiana, Georgia and Tennessee. He served 22 years as associate pastor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church, Dothan, before his retirement in 2016.



LEDLOW

Ledlow was part of the last graduating class of Howard College before it became Samford University. He also graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Over the years, he led a number of missions trips to Honduras.

Ledlow is survived by his wife of 66 years, Nan; daughter, Liz; sons, Bobby and David; 10 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren.

ALABAMA CRENSHAW ASSOCIATION

► **Reid Ward** is the new pastor of **Joquin Baptist Church, Goshen**. He has served on staff



WARD

at churches in Kentucky and Alabama for the past 25 years. He has a bachelor of science from the University of West Alabama in Livingston and a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife of 21 years, Rayanne, have four children.

BARBOUR ASSOCIATION

► **Anderson Baptist Church, Clio**, is a small church, but “people came from everywhere” for its 100th anniversary celebration July 25, said

Ruby Nell Olds, who serves as church clerk.

“God was with us through all the preparation for the celebration,” she said.

Jeff Parmer, pastor of Crossview Baptist Church, Fitzgerald, Georgia, preached from the pulpit his grandfather built for the church. Church members shared some of their memories, including Edward and Cathryn Wise, who got married in the church 73 years ago.

Also during the service, Ellen Dewberry (pictured right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the church with a certificate, and Alabama Sen. Billy Beasley gave them a proclamation from the Legislature and a congratulations from Gov. Kay Ivey.

Everyone present for the event received wooden crosses made by 15-year-old Matthew Higler and book-marks made by 9-year-old Tanner Wood. Amber Higler designed display boards with photos and an anniversary program with an original poem.

Gary Fleming (left) is pastor of Anderson Baptist.



Photo courtesy of Ellen Dewberry

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► Coffee County Baptist Women on Missions is inviting everyone to join a prayer walk Aug. 22 at 4 p.m. at all Enterprise city schools and Coffee County schools to pray for leaders, teachers and students.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Cole Jackson** is the new pastor of **Lockhart Baptist Church**. He did his seminary studies at the Baptist College of Florida in Graceville.

Jackson has served as an interim pastor, worked in private Christian education and hosted a radio show. He and his wife, Tina, also run a mobile coffee cart, Rambler Coffee Co.

► **First Baptist Church, Andalusia**, honored **Dwight Crigger** for more than 40 years of music ministry as he retired July 25.

The special service gathered together people from across his years of ministry, all the way back to his first full-time church.

For most of Crigger’s career, he and his wife, Sonia, have served in Alabama.

Kevin Wilburn, pastor of First, Andalusia, said Crigger has led “humbly” and thanked him for his perseverance in leading, pointing out the room full of people who love him.

As for what’s next, Crigger said, “There has been an unseen hand that has guided me every step of the way, and that unseen hand is not going to vanish today. That unseen hand is going to continue to lead us to what’s next.”



CRIGGER

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **North Shelby Baptist Church, Birmingham**, will host Lee Brand, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, on Aug. 22. He will preach during the 8 and 10:30 a.m. services. During the 9:15 Sunday School hour, he will speak about the Conservative Baptist Network and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tennessee. Mike Meadows is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **Taylorville Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host a Homecoming service Aug. 22 at 10:15 a.m. Former pastor Danny Courson will speak. Randy Pate is pastor.

Persecuted church

CCP authorities illegally lock Chinese minister, family in condo

CHENGDU, China — Chinese Communist Party officials illegally locked a Chinese minister and his family in a condo and are constantly monitoring the only passageway out, according to China Aid.

Wu Wuqing, minister of Early Rain Covenant Church; his wife, Xiong Meifang; and their children have been locked in their condo in Chengdu since June 4, the report said. Christians living nearby have left water and food items at the condo door.

The CCP’s tactics to get the couple to surrender their faith have in the past includ-

ed shutting off utilities, puncturing car tires and summoning them for interrogations.

On June 12, Hao Guiro from ERCC opened the lock with a nutcracker and entered the condo to eat breakfast, pray and sing hymns with the couple.

When he wanted to leave, the guard on duty refused to let him.

Officers arrived and took Hao Guiro to a police station.

China is No. 17 on Open Doors’ 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB Media)



China Aid photo



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CHURCH POSITIONS

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.

SENIOR PASTOR

Concord Highland Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: CHBC2672@bellsouth.net or mail to: 105 Concord Highland Drive, Hueytown, AL 35023.

SENIOR PASTOR

FBC Dawes in Mobile, Ala., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Email resumés to: fbcdpastorsearch2021@gmail.com or mail to: FBC Dawes, 3941 Dawes Rd., Mobile, AL 36695. ATTN: Pastor Search Committee. Please include links to online sermons or other reference materials.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC & MEDIA

York Bluff Baptist Church in Sheffield, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music and media interested in growing a multigenerational, blended music ministry and overseeing a plan to maximize the church's web presence. Resumés may be mailed to: Search Committee, York Bluff Baptist Church, 301 N. Atlanta Ave., Sheffield, AL 35660 or emailed to: kim@yorkbluffbaptist.com.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

Montevallo First Baptist Church is searching for a part-time minister of music. Please send resumés to: ATTN: Audrey Crawford or Pastor Terry Sutton at mfbcbellsouth.net.

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.

PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Thorington Road Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., is seeking a full-time preschool/children's minister. If interested please send resumé to: Michael Trull at michael@trbaptist.org.

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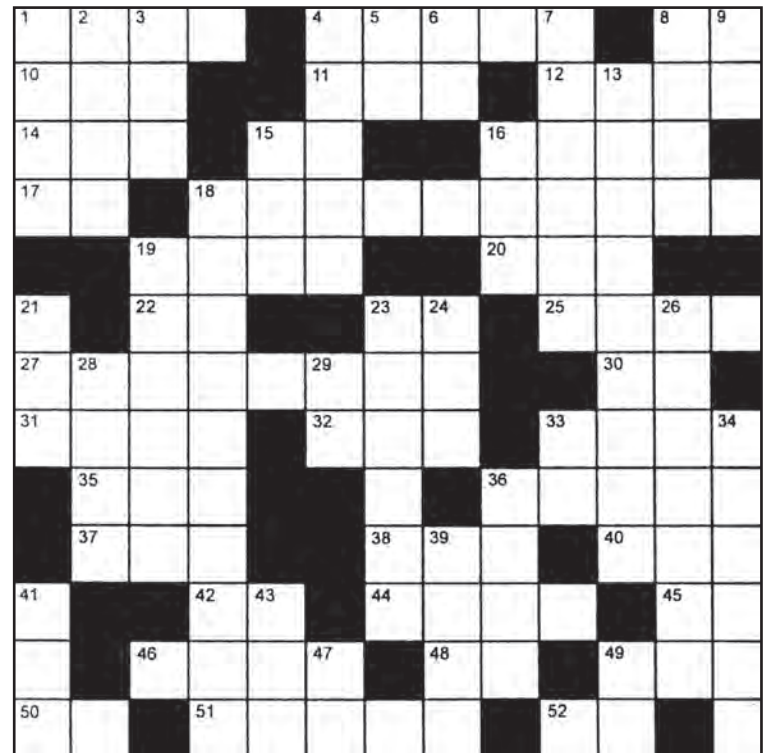
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CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. For God cannot be tempted with _____. (James 1:13)
4. The voice of doves _____ing upon their breasts. (Nah. 2:7)
8. From. (French)
10. Feather scarf.
11. Grow old.
12. Highest point.
14. He shall pour _____ upon it. (Lev. 2:1)
15. Prayer book. (abbr.)
16. Father, forgive _____. (Luke 23:34)
17. North Dakota. (abbr.)
18. He that goeth about as a _____ revealeth secrets. (Prov. 20:19)
19. Let God be _____, but every man a liar. (Rom. 3:4)
20. Absence. (abbr.)
22. Egyptian sun god.
23. He had sent messengers to _____ king of Egypt. (2 Kings 17:4)
25. Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib ... the fourth to _____im. (1 Chron. 24:7, 8)
27. So can no _____ both yield salt water and fresh. (James 3:12)
30. Citizens band radio.
31. Spanish aunts.
32. Prefix meaning "before."
33. Ye shall not fulfil the _____ of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)
35. Liquefied natural gas.
36. Then _____ and the other apostles answered, we ought to obey God. (Acts 5:29)
37. Steamer. (abbr.)
38. Hubbub.
40. Before. (poetic)



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42. Each. (abbr.)
44. It is a _____ thing that the king requireth. (Dan. 2:11)
45. Part of speech. (abbr.)
46. Naum, which was the son of _____. (Luke 3:25)
48. Return unto _____. (Mal. 3:7)
49. _____ boweth down. (Isa. 46:1)
50. What shall we _____? (Acts 2:37)
51. _____ women shall take hold of one man. (Isa. 4:1)
52. 3.14159.
13. And I will _____ them with the sword. (Jer. 29:18)
15. The name of his city was _____. (Gen. 36:39)
16. Beverage.
18. I am purposed that my mouth shall not _____. (Ps. 17:3)
19. Absent without permission.
21. Ship's stern.
23. Indian nobleman.
24. They were afraid both _____ and other. (Jer. 36:16)
26. Ye _____ days, and months. (Gal. 4:10)
28. Greases.
29. News service.
33. French article.
34. _____ clef.
36. Skin opening.
39. Condemn to everlasting punishment.
41. Receive him not, neither _____ him God speed. (2 John 10)
43. Tavern brew.
47. Roman numeral 4.
49. At intervals of two.

DOWN

1. Black wood. (poetic)
2. Faith is made _____. (Rom. 4:14)
3. Adjective suffix.
4. Thou preparest a _____ before me. (Ps. 23:5)
5. Symbol for the element silver.
6. Exist.
7. Belonging to a notable harlot.
8. Greek community.
9. Former.

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Human trafficking

Victims lured by force, fraud usually by someone they know, trust

By Lanell Downs Smith
TAB Media

When people think about the dangers of human trafficking, potential kidnapping situations like those in movies often come to mind: a woman is followed in a store, a man is hiding under a car, a teen is approached by a stranger at the beach.

But according to trafficking survivor Hannah Blair, the typical scenario usually looks quite different. People often miss exploited individuals by looking for the sensational. Trafficking victims can be found throughout communities — in schools, suburban neighborhoods and even churches — and living seemingly normal lives, Blair said.

No one noticed

During a recent TAB Amplify podcast, Blair shared her story of being trafficked by her boyfriend. Unlike the normal perception of trafficking, she attended a Christian college, worked at a local church and went to the doctor regularly during most of the year of her exploitation.

When Blair dropped out of college, quit her job and began to abuse alcohol and drugs, the signs were there but no one noticed.

“I fell through the cracks; just like the 9-year-old being trafficked by her foster family; just like the 13-year-old being exploited by her youth pastor; just like the 24-year-old being forced by her boyfriend to sell her body.

This is the reality of trafficking, and we have to know what it looks like so we can report it.”

By definition, sex trafficking happens when “a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age,” Blair said.

“There are so many myths about human trafficking that are constantly circulating, specifically on social media,” she noted. “I’m not saying traffickers don’t ever utilize physical force while targeting or exploiting their victims, but it is much more likely for them to use psychological coercion.”

Blair added there is a common

misperception that victims choose to engage in prostitution. While many are lured by the appeal of making large sums of cash quickly, most find themselves losing autonomy over their bodies and being coerced to continue having

sex beyond their point of comfort, Blair said.

More often than not, victims are trafficked by someone they know and trust, she noted. A report issued by the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019 indicates the two most common trafficking recruitment scenarios happen through intimate partners and family members.

But how does someone fall victim to a trafficker, even someone they know?

Anyone can be targeted and coerced into trafficking, Blair asserted. Traffickers are strategic, luring individuals into a life of commercial sex work by discovering a need and trying to fill it.

“Exploitation and trafficking happen at the intersection of vulnerabilities,” she said.

Young people are particularly susceptible to the advances of a trafficker, Blair noted, because they are seen as inexperienced and easily manipulated.

Homeless teens and runaways become prime targets, and statistics show that within 48 hours of leaving home approximately one in seven runaways will be recruited by a trafficker.

Easy target

With a background of childhood abuse, Blair was an easy target. Individuals with a history of trauma or a broken home also are highly vulnerable. Poverty, homeless-

ness, addiction and mental health concerns also place individuals at a higher risk for being manipulated into exploitation. People who choose to work in the commercial sex industry often feel they have no other options, Blair said.

At Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans, executive director and Send Relief missionary Kay Bennett meets trafficking victims like Star, who was lured by fraud into the sex industry.

Threats, coercion

As a young single mother, looking for a job and with no transportation, Star posted her troubles on social media and was attracted by the promise of a high-paying position within a legitimate business. Once away from her family, Star was trafficked from one state to another as part of an online escort service.

Most might think Star should have run at that point, Bennett reflected. She probably would have, but the trafficker used coercion, telling Star she would never see her daughter alive again unless she did what she was told.

Fraud, force and coercion are common tactics to lure victims and keep them in trafficking situations, Bennett said.

“Star was trafficked through five different states before she met someone she trusted enough to tell part of her

story,” Bennett recalled. “She realized without help she was never going to see her family again. Star called [the human trafficking hotline] and we were able to intervene ... to get her safe, get her needs met, and get her back home to her family.”

To report suspected human trafficking, contact local law enforcement, the U.S. Homeland Security Investigations Tip Line at 866-347-2423, the Department of Defense Inspector General Hotline at 800-424-9098 or the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888.



Photo provided by Hannah Blair
Human trafficking survivor Hannah Blair was exploited by someone she knew and trusted. Now she works to educate people about the issue.

Hear more of Hannah Blair's story at tabonline.org/hannah-blair.

Know the warning signs

To help victims of human trafficking, consider these tips:

- ▶ Learn the facts and educate others.
- ▶ Watch for physical indicators like bruises, scars, burns, starvation or “brand” tattoos.
- ▶ Be aware of fearful or nervous behavior such as avoiding eye contact, an inability or hesitancy to answer questions, retreating, hyper-sexualization, submissive behavior or isolation.
- ▶ Note changes in appearance — new clothes, expensive jewelry or purses, manicured nails,

and dressing inappropriately for age or the climate

- ▶ Observe absenteeism from school, church or work, or when someone is not turning in homework or has gaps in attendance.
- ▶ Do not try to intervene — to do so can result in harm to you or to the victim. Document as much as possible and contact law enforcement or call the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
- ▶ Partner and volunteer with or donate to organizations combating human trafficking.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 22

Explore the Bible

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



FACING DEATH? Ecclesiastes 9:1–10

Woody Allen said: “I’m not afraid to die. I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” He will be there when it happens, as will every human being. There is no escape from death when your time has come. In our lesson today Solomon helps us think through this reality and how people should live in light of their mortality.

Sober Truth (1–3)

Solomon acknowledged that the righteous and wise are in God’s hands. God and God alone is in control. Righteous and wise people understand that God is sovereign and active in every part of their lives.

In this Genesis 3 world we all, Christian and non-Christian alike, experience the ups and downs of life. In fact, life consists of one experience after another. Some experiences are good and some are bad, while others are happy or sad. Some experiences are planned and others completely unexpected. We cannot determine whether we are children of God simply by our present experiences in life. Everyone suffers in this sinful world.

Not only do we all experience life, we also will all encounter death. Death is an inescapable fact of human life. It makes no difference whether we are righteous or wicked, religious or pagan. Death awaits each of us. There is one fate for the righteous and the wicked.

Solomon called death “evil.” Paul called death an “enemy” (1 Cor. 15:26). No one can escape the curse of death. Coming to grips with this reality can enable us to straighten out our priorities and live more wisely.

Seek Life (4–6)

With all the uncertainty and hardship in this life, it is still better to be alive than dead. Solomon made his point by using an analogy comparing the most despised animal of that day, a dog, with the most admired animal of that day, a lion.

Solomon was saying that it is better to be dishonored and alive

than honored and dead.

Why? Because the living have hope. They have things they can look forward to enjoying while alive on earth. But the dead have no such hope. People who have died can no longer share in the joys of earthly pleasures. The living can still prepare for their death. The dead have no opportunity to prepare for anything.

Solomon was not saying there is no life after death. Rather, he was saying the opportunities God gives people while they are alive will be forever lost to them when they die.

Even their passions — love, hate, envy — are stilled by death. Our realization of this fact can cause us to appreciate life in the present rather than postpone our enjoyment to a future time that may never come. We need to take advantage of every moment of time we are blessed to have. We are to live every moment of every day for the glory of God.

Enjoy (7–10)

Solomon described how we can experience a wonderful life while living under the sun.

We are to live happily wherever we are. God intends for us to enjoy the blessings of life He has given us in acknowledgment of Him. God is pleased when we find pleasure in His good gifts. Our lives should be characterized by joy and thankfulness, and these virtues should be evident to others.

We are to enjoy our spouses. The delights, passions and blessings of a marital union are to be expressed and relished by each spouse. Marriage has been sanctioned by God as an honorable relationship, and the marriage bed is undefiled. So, if you are married, live it up with your spouse for the glory of God.

We are to throw ourselves fully into whatever God calls us to do. Christians should treat life as a precious gift, making the most of their lives for the glory of God.

We will not always be able to find pleasure in life, for one day we will die. Do not wait until retirement to enjoy life. Begin today!

Bible Studies for Life

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



SERVE EVEN WHEN DISCOURAGED 1 Kings 19:1–5a, 11–18

Never give up in the face of opposition. (1–5a)

Ahab was a terrible king, but his wife, Jezebel, was the one most fiercely committed to promoting the worship of Baal. She committed herself to avenging the deaths of the prophets of Baal by having Elijah killed. And she swore to “the gods” she would have him killed by the next day.

Elijah “became afraid and immediately ran for his life.” It may seem strange that Elijah would be afraid of such a threat, after having seen God miraculously show up to defend His honor and Elijah’s authority. But Jezebel had killed prophets before (see 1 Kings 18:4, 13) and history is filled with stories of prophets and martyrs who lost their lives due to faithful service.

Ministry is often a roller-coaster experience of highs and lows that can be emotionally and spiritually draining. Elijah may have hoped his triumph over the prophets of Baal would have been a final and decisive victory that would lead his opposition to stand down. He was clearly unprepared for Jezebel’s response.

We should never just give up in the face of opposition, but there are times when we need to retreat and find help before we will be ready to move forward again.

In a bout of depression, Elijah, one of God’s great prophets, asked God to take his life. Depression and suicidal thoughts can have all kinds of causes, and severe spiritual warfare is just one possible trigger.

Pastors and other Christians should take full advantage of the services of pastoral and professional mental health counselors, and we need to eliminate any stigma associated with seeking such help.

Some of us hear all too often about beloved pastors who have died by suicide. Self-care is necessary if we’re to be effective in caring for those around us.

Fortunately, Elijah left his life in God’s hands, rather than taking it with his own. Wisely, he turned to

God in prayer, even if one of despair and resignation, rather than turning away from the Lord in pain, as some are tempted to do.

God is with you; you can take your concerns to Him. (11–14)

God provided Elijah with the rest and physical nourishment that he needed (vv. 5–7) and led the prophet to mount Horeb (where God had met with Moses and given him the Law) and the Lord met him there (v. 8).

There was a windstorm, an earthquake and fire (compare Moses’ experience in Ex. 19:18–19). But the Lord wasn’t in those, and rather than speak in thunder, as He had with Moses (Ex. 19:19), He spoke to His exhausted prophet in a gentle whisper.

When asked what he was doing there, Elijah contrasted himself with the rest of Israel: He has been zealous for the Lord, he says, but the Israelites have attacked God’s covenant, altars and prophets and were seeking to kill Elijah as well.

Elijah feared that the battle for the soul of the nation had been lost. But, crucially, he took his concerns to the Lord, knowing He was the only One who could show the way forward.

Press on with what God has called you to do. (15–18)

God provides Elijah with a new set of orders that indicate that the Lord has not lost nor given up. Relief is on its way, and Elijah has an important role in establishing new leadership for the years to come. And he’s reminded that there are still thousands who remain faithful to the Lord and to the work to which they are called.

We often don’t know God’s future plans for our work or ministry. We plan as best we can and leave the future to the Lord. We are to press on with what God has called us to do, seeking to be faithful and praying that God will raise up more workers for the harvest as well.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs
TAB Media

NAMB produces personal-account redemption stories

This is the definition of awkward. I mean, what do you say to a guy who the last time you saw him tried to kill you?" asks Chris Carrier, the subject of a seven-episode podcast produced by the North American Mission Board as part of the "Who's Your One?" evangelism initiative.

Who's Your One asks believers to choose one person who doesn't know Jesus and commit to pray and share the gospel with that "one." As of July, some 39,000 people have taken the challenge.

Carrier's podcast is part of "Stories of Redemption," three accounts of how God used different people in different circumstances to show the love of Christ to others. The podcast is available at whosyourone.com.

Examples of hope

"The stories are produced as examples of people who are praying and reaching people with the hope of the gospel," said Catherine Renfro, NAMB's evangelism strategist.

The podcast, titled "Kidnapped, a God Story," tells Carrier's story of being kidnapped while walking home from school as a 10-year-old.

While he was being repeatedly stabbed with an ice pick, Carrier prayed, "Father, forgive him because



CHRIS CARRIER

Photo by Alexandra Toy

he doesn't know, or at least I don't know, what he's doing."

Though left for dead, Carrier survived, but not without repercussions.

"There were those moments in which I would wake up in sheer terror ... and could picture that man walking through the house and cornering me in that room and coming to finish what he started," he remembered. His attacker eventually confessed and, while he was never convicted, became Carrier's "one."

The multi-episode, personal-account podcast was the first of its kind for NAMB.

Since 2019, the agency has produced podcasts and blogs for their "Resources" page, covering a variety of topics including adoption support, church planting and equipping pastors.

NAMB also has produced short videos, but Carrier's full story didn't

fit into the format of what they had previously done.

"As we heard the details of Chris' story, we realized there were so

many fascinating details, we couldn't pack it all into a video," Renfro explained.

"His story is a unique story that happened over 30 years ago, and it's difficult to tell a story like this one in a two-minute video ... in a

scenario where we have photos but very little video footage.

"This is why we chose to use a podcast to tell his story. The podcast series allows us to unfold the story

with nothing left out. The format takes full advantage of Chris' incredible way of telling his story."

NAMB also produced a shorter version of Carrier's story in video format, but the best way to experience the whole thing is through the podcast, Renfro noted.

The other two stories are primarily in video format, but each is unique in its total presentation.

"Malachi," which is about a young cancer patient who made his short life all about others, is shared in two parts, including a written story. "Eden," which is about a teen's passion to share the message of Christ, is told through a short video, written summary and podcast.

"Malachi's story was the first one we shared in a longer format," Renfro said. "His story is an incredible testimony of someone who sought God's purpose even in the middle of great suffering and used it as a bridge to the gospel.

"Eden's story came next," she noted. "We loved her courage and passion to proclaim Christ to her fellow students and friends."

NAMB officials said they plan to share more stories like these.

"When we find a good story, we work with our creative team to determine the format that might work best," Renfro said. "Primarily, we are looking for stories about people sharing Jesus with their 'one,' the kinds of stories that will inspire people to say, 'If they can do it, I can do it.'"

"His story is an incredible testimony of someone who sought God's purpose even in the middle of great suffering."

Catherine Renfro, NAMB evangelism strategist

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.

To hear the full account of Carrier's story or find out about the next Who's Your One tour, visit whosyourone.com. To share Who's Your One stories email info@namb.net.

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