

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Coach Bobby Bowden returns home to Birmingham for final stop

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Fairhope pastor helps churches prepare for recovery, outreach after natural disasters

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Southern Baptist evangelists plan focus on mentoring, outreach in 2022

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Church planters in Boston pray over Jacob Novak's student missions team as they prepare to leave.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Novak

Intentional

Students experience life-changing summer on mission

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Jacob Novak only has one semester left before he graduates from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The whole time he's been there, he's been a commuter student.

But this semester is different — he moved on campus for the first time.

It's because he spent his summer doing missions in Boston with the North American Mission Board's GenSend program.

Serving there “really influenced how I think of sharing the gospel,” Novak said.

Because people in Boston are often closed off to the gospel message, NAMB church planters in the city focus on friendship evangelism, he noted.

Relationship building

“To be most effective with the time and resources that we have, we focused on building friendships with people, actually getting to know them and then speaking the gospel into their specific context,” Novak explained.

“I think that just really changed my view of how to reach college students.”

And he decided he needed to spend his last semester in the dorm.

“It helped me see, if I really want to reach my campus effectively, I need to be present on campus day in and day out, having normal conversations with people so
(See ‘Effective,’ page 6)



Photo courtesy of Joshua Madigan
Joshua Madigan and his teammates in Alaska collect firewood for people in the community.

WorldSong celebrates 30 years

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

In January, it seemed like it might be an unusual year for WorldSong Missions Place in Cook Springs, to celebrate turning 30.

Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, said she and other camp leadership wondered if Missions Adventure Camp would return to normal in 2021 following pandemic-related closures in 2020.

They decided to not risk ending up with an empty camp two summers in a row, and “the dream that came out of those conversations was that we would take WorldSong to the churches,” McIntosh said.

‘Be the voice’

She didn't mean WorldSong the place but the mission — the gospel and “helping to train up hearts who understand that we as believers have to be the voice that shares the gospel, whether it's in Alabama, the U.S. or the world,” McIntosh said.

With that in mind, the first WorldSong Travel Team was created.

McIntosh and Kaley Stephens, team leader for the summer, sketched out a plan for six summer staffers to hold a day camp in churches around the state.

The response was so positive they booked up
(See ‘Camp,’ page 15)



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Denver church plant sees partnerships grow

In April, TAB Media shared the story of Justin McKay and his wife, Lacy — Alabama natives who went to Denver on their honeymoon and felt God calling them to plant a church there.

“On our first day, we were driving around and were in awe of the Rocky Mountains,” McKay recalled.

Not too long after, they asked themselves, “Where are all the churches?”

Long story short, in 2020, they started a church planting residency, and earlier this year started assembling a core team with a goal of planting The Local Church in the Arvada area of Denver.

In the April article, they asked for prayer and also mentioned they needed partners.

Since then, they’ve seen more than one team of Alabama Baptist pastors arrive in Denver on a vision trip, then decide to partner with The Local Church.

They’ve also had an Alabama congregation — Bethlehem West Baptist in Vinemont — decide to come alongside with extra missions funds from their budget.

Pastor Shane Wheeler said when they realized their giving had actually gone up during the pandemic, they began praying as a church about where they should “invest what God has blessed us with.”

Meanwhile, church member Diane Tucker read about McKay’s work, connected with him on her own and began



Photo courtesy of Justin McKay

Justin McKay (back, center) — who moved from Alabama with his wife, Lacy, to plant The Local Church in Denver, Colorado — visits with Alabama ministers Lee Dymond (front), Aaron Barnes (left) and Nate Young, who went to Denver earlier this year on a vision trip.

praying daily for the ministry.

“When our pastor reached out to (McKay about potentially partnering), I sent him a message and said I’m so thrilled to see what God’s going to do,” Tucker remembered.

‘Prayer for wisdom’

Bethlehem West committed to support McKay and two other Alabama Baptist church planters in the West for at least 14 months. McKay noted the support means the world.

He, his wife and the core team of The Local Church are grateful for their partners and seek prayers for God to open hearts as they work to build relationships and take the gospel to people right where they are.

In Colorado, “the gospel is still the same, but the hurdles are different,” McKay said, noting many people subscribe to a religion of their own making that they’ve sculpted from their experiences and travels.

“We would love prayer for wisdom on how to reach our culture.”

Read the full story from April at thealabamabaptist.org/alabama-couple-prepares-to-plant-church-in-denver. (Grace Thornton)

For more information, visit thelocalchurchco.org or email justin@thelocalchurchco.org.



Photo courtesy of Justin McKay

The core team of The Local Church meets for worship at a local park.

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.

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief



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Document those special stories from loved ones before it's too late

Do you ever experience those moments where you wish you had recorded a family member sharing about some of his or her life experiences? How about that faithful friend or fellow church member who is a wealth of historical information on so many levels?

Finding the time, organizing the effort and maneuvering the daily routines of life always seem to get in the way, and so many times, only after it's too late do we realize what we missed.

It happened to me recently with an unexpected story about the late Coach Bobby Bowden.

While we've covered various parts of his life through the years as a dedicated follower of Christ and one of the most notable church members to bloom out of Alabama Baptist influences (see story, page 7), I would have loved to help develop a single piece tying all the threads together.

The idea surfaced July 9 when my friend Jack Green, 95, who is retired from full-time vocational ministry and served part of his career on the missions field as well as in the mili-

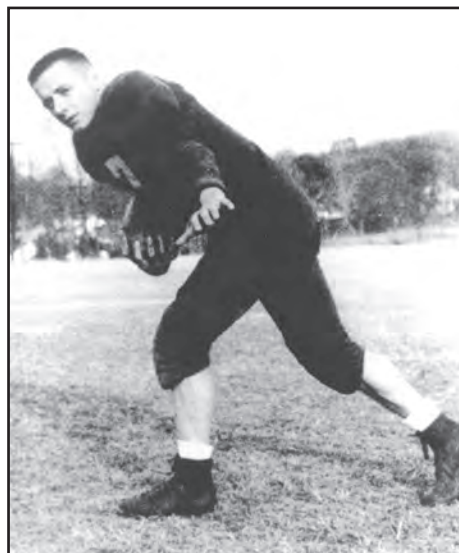


Photo courtesy of Samford University
Howard College quarterback Bobby Bowden earned Little All-America honors as a senior in 1952. His lifelong friendship with Jack Green began with football.

tary, told me the story about his connection to Bowden.

They met at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham back in the late 1940s and remained friends throughout their lives.



Photo courtesy of Samford
Jack Green during his college days at Howard College in Birmingham.

"When I was a senior at Howard, I organized a group of former military students called the Sportsman Club," Jack told me. His goal — to bring football back to Howard.

Howard's president at the time, Major Harwell G. Davis, agreed to allow the club to operate and use the gym and athletic field. The

Student Government Association helped make sure students could attend free of charge and organized the effort to build new bleachers for the games.

Jack and the club's officers scheduled eight games and raised money from Birmingham merchants for uniforms. The season was just what was needed to bring football back to the surface after it had been suspended during World War II.

At the end of the season, the club sold the uniforms to the school's board of trustees and football officially returned.

Enter Bobby Bowden, the first quarterback of Howard's new, official football team.

"We were very close," Jack said. "After he left Birmingham, he would still visit my Bible study class at Huffman Baptist Church when he was in town."

Jack also enjoyed experiencing various football games from the sidelines and even prayed over the 2009 Florida State University team and coaches in the dressing room after

Coach Bowden's final game — a Gator Bowl win against West Virginia, where Bowden had coached 35 years earlier.

"He was the most complete witness for the Lord I have known in 70 plus years of ministry," Jack said about Coach Bowden. "It was not a game-time religion. He practiced his faith, without making anyone uncomfortable. That is the reason he could say, 'I am ready,' at the end."

Bowden announced he had a terminal medical condition July 21, less than two weeks after Jack's story had me thinking about how to get the two of them back together in the same room to record some of their shared stories. Then less than three weeks later on Aug. 8 we heard the news that the 91-year-old legendary coach had died.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Jennifer Rash (left) grabs a selfie with her friend Jack Green in July following a lunch celebrating his then upcoming 95th birthday. Green has taught a Bible class at Huffman Baptist Church for decades.

Your Voice



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

The value of being a Southern Baptist amid debate, conflict

By Jeff Iorg

President, Gateway Seminary

More than 25 years as a Southern Baptist denominational executive has shaped my perspective on working among and with the large network known as the Southern Baptist denomination. It can be a daunting and at times disappointing task.

Here are eight perspectives which have helped sustain my spiritual, emotional and strategic equilibrium — and helped me maintain a positive perspective on denominational involvement and leadership.

1. Recognize there will always be imperfection.

We have always been, and always will be, an imperfect denomination. While we must strive to solve pressing problems and build a healthier organization, we must also admit perfection will never be achieved. So while improving denominational function is desirable, demanding it be perfected as a condition of future usefulness (or to assure our loyalty) is an unreasonable expectation.

2. Remember Who the denomination serves.

The Southern Baptist denomination, in all its forms, exists to serve others. It was founded to combine and coordinate the efforts of churches doing together what they cannot do as well by themselves.

3. Remember the denomination's purpose: missions.

The denomination was created for missions, in the most limited

use of the word, which means sharing the gospel, making disciples, starting churches, facilitating networks of churches and then repeating the process. The denomination focuses its mission primarily on people and places — domestic and international — where there is limited or no access to the gospel.

4. Distinguish the convention and the denomination.

The Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist denomination are not the same thing.

The Convention has 12 national entities and one auxiliary. The denomination has one national convention, 42 state conventions, almost 1,200 local associations, about 48,000 churches, about 60 colleges and countless hospitals, pregnancy centers, camps, retirement centers, children's homes and other ministry organizations. The largest amount, by far, of Southern Baptist ministry resources are controlled by Southern Baptist churches, denominational bodies and local organizations — not the convention.

5. Refuse to idolize or demonize our leaders.

God has given Southern Baptists remarkable leaders — including thousands of pastors and hundreds of specialized leaders who work for denominational bodies and entities.

They are remarkable leaders, but

they also are all flawed people. We must have the spiritual maturity to draw on the strengths while managing the shortcomings of our leaders.

6. Accept mixed outcomes in denominational decisions.

Being part of a huge denomination means some aspects of what we do are thrilling, while other aspects are infuriating. Adjusting my expectations (not always expecting things to go my way) and accepting mixed outcomes enables me to celebrate progress without being overly critical of people, choices and programs which seem flawed from my perspective.

7. Trust governance processes.

Most Southern Baptist denominational bodies and entities are governed by a board of trustees. Baptists elect these boards and trust them — hence, the name “trustees” — to lead with doctrinal, financial and missional integrity. Occasionally, they make mistakes.

For the most part, however, trustees do a credible job leading our denomination. Trustees bringing their collective wisdom to bear on governance issues is the best way for us to guide our collective work.

8. Accept some losses.

Southern Baptists, despite our size, are a minority in American culture. We stand for minority positions on issues like morality, marriage, gender definition and

abortion. The Bible promises believers will face opposition for living out gospel mandates. In our generation, this expresses itself in almost constant media attacks on and negative public portrayals of Southern Baptists.

While talking back is temporarily satisfying, staying on message about the gospel and our mission is more eternally significant.

A final story

Several years ago, I vented my frustrations about the ineptness and dysfunction among Southern Baptists to a veteran, loyal denominational leader. I told him I was ready to leave Southern Baptists.

He replied, “I agree with you.” I was shocked. Then he asked, “So, where are we going?”

He paused for a few seconds and then continued, “Where are we going that has thousands of missionaries, hundreds of church plants, dozens of colleges and seminaries, a publishing house and financial services provider, hospitals, camps and conference centers, crisis pregnancy centers and more than 40,000 mostly Bible-believing churches? Where can we find all this without any of the negative that has upset you? So, where are we going?”

We looked at each other for a few seconds and I said, “I guess I’m staying.” He smiled and said, “Me too.” I hope you will do the same.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This post is reprinted with permission and has been edited for space. Read the full post at gs.edu/presidents-blog/value-of-being-a-southern-baptist.



IORG

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“If God so loved the world, who decided we shouldn’t?”

CAREY NIEUWHOF

Speaker, podcaster, author and founding pastor of Connexus Church in Ontario, Canada

Afghanistan is already a brutal place for the Church. Followers of Jesus are under constant risk, and the danger they face is very real.

Afghanistan is No. 2 on the 2021 World Watch List, and God’s people live under intense pressure and the threat of imminent violence. The most important thing we can do right now is pray.

Open Doors USA

As Christians, we believe each person is made with intrinsic value in the image of God, and we cannot treat any person’s life as expendable. ... Our government has a particular obligation to those who are now facing threats upon their lives due to their service to the United States, and to go back

on our commitment to them would be a moral failing with reverberating consequences for decades to come.

Excerpt from letter to the White House from leaders of the Evangelical Immigration Table

Regarding the situation in Haiti, please pray for:

- ▶ Safe transportation of humanitarian relief and equitable distribution of help to all the victims.

- ▶ Powerful witness of Christian compassion during the crisis.

- ▶ Generous contributions to arrive in a timely fashion for rebuilding, including for damaged churches.

- ▶ Limited greed and misuse of funds and relief materials.

- ▶ Vision and political will for local authorities so they seek primarily the welfare of the people.

- ▶ Political breakthrough and stability through meaningful negotiations among political groups and civil society so the nation can go forward after the assassination of the president.

- ▶ That credible and experienced citizens in-country and in the diaspora are raised and find visibility as potential political leaders for the nation.

Edner Jeanty
Executive director
Barnabas Christian
Leadership Center
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
via Christianity Today

From the *Twitterverse*

@jdgrear

What’s happening in Afghanistan goes far beyond political maneuvering. These are the lives of actual people. And there are small pockets of followers of Jesus about to face persecution most of us could never dream of. Pray for peace for the country’s sake. This is devastating.

@nathanafinn

I’m no foreign policy expert, so I won’t say too much about what might have been because there is too much I just don’t know. This much I do know: What has transpired in Afghanistan is a tragedy for religious freedom, the safety of women and girls and basic human flourishing.

@EdLitton

Following news of hundreds of deaths in Haiti and the Taliban seizing control of Afghanistan, please continue to pray for the people of both nations. Though different

circumstances, precious people made in God’s image are facing great difficulties and unimaginable suffering.

@EtowahBaptist

In times like these, may our hearts be burdened and our prayers echo that of Colossians 1:9–14: “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you ...”

@ethicist

Reading God’s word in the morning fortifies your soul for the day; reading God’s word in the evening calms your soul for rest.

@shane_pruitt78

Believe it or not ... both vaccinated & unvaccinated people need Jesus. Both pro-mask & anti-mask people need Jesus. Both red state & blue state people need Jesus.

As Christians, when we scream our opinions about lesser things,

we’re losing our voice to share the main thing: JESUS!

@johnmarkclifton

The greatest need & the most impacting opportunity in North America today is the revitalization of the tens of thousands of normative size churches. These churches are in every hamlet and neighborhood. Often led by hardworking pastors of great character. What untapped potential!

@ronniep

Jesus told us we wouldn’t fit. Don’t be surprised when you don’t. Count it joy. Remember, we are exiles.

@LysaTerKeurst

Hold on to this truth tonight, friend ... God loves you too much to answer your prayers at any other time than the right time and in any other way than the right way.

A pastor’s perspective

Dear friends,

I know we are all deeply concerned about the rise of COVID cases and hospitalizations in our city.

As a pastor and church leader, I see the massive need for the Church to be able to gather to worship, fellowship, encourage and equip one another for these difficult days. I need it.

This past Sunday, my heart was filled with joy to baptize a dear brother and new believer in the faith, to see kids run into their new classes and meet their new Sunday School teachers, to worship, to hear truth and to listen to each other’s stories and prayer needs.

Despite these joyous times, our hospitals are crowded; our frontline health care workers are stretched thin; and we are all weary from COVID concerns.

Many of you have asked about my thoughts on the vaccine.

I am not a medical expert and don’t claim to be, but I’m so grateful to see statistics that seem to demonstrate that vaccines are drastically aiding those who contract COVID from going into the hospital and significantly reducing symptoms if a breakthrough case occurs.

I encourage you to talk to your doctor or health care provider about what is best for you, your family and your specific situations.

Every health care professional I know has been incredibly receptive and open to talk and navigate through fears, concerns or questions.

Whatever your decision, my desire is for us all to be safe, wise and gracious as we draw near to the Lord daily. His grace is sufficient!

Pastor Mark Bethea
First Baptist Church
Montgomery, Ala.
via Facebook

Maggie Beard (second from left) said her team's time in Provo, Utah, in July was "eye opening" as she talked with people who had never heard the clear gospel message before.

Effective ministry



Photo courtesy of Maggie Beard

Alabama students learn how to harness daily life to share the gospel

(continued from page 1)

I can build friendships with them and then have a chance to share the gospel," he said.

Novak was one of 64 students from Alabama who spread out to 25 locations this summer — five international and 20 in North America.

Serving across the globe

They served anywhere from one to 10 weeks, said Chris Mills, student missions mobilizer for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

After last year — in which most missions opportunities that involved travel were canceled — it was "encouraging to see many students take a step of faith and serve across the globe this summer," Mills said.

"A summer missions experience is one that changes lives," he added.

"It changes the lives of those that the student missionary serves. It changes the life of a student missionary."

And God blessed their efforts — 34 professed faith in Christ as students shared this summer, and many students felt a call to vocational ministry or spending their life in missions service.

"I'm grateful to get to play a small role in His work in the lives of these students," Mills said.

"I'm praying that He continue His work using these students to not only impact those cities they served in but the campuses across our state that they are back on this fall."

Laurel Carter is one of those who plans to bring a new gospel intentionality to her campus this semester. She spent her summer serving in

Rochester, New York, doing ministry in the community and helping a new church plant build relationships.

One day she and her team prayed God would give them someone to talk to, and a little later they started a conversation with a man named Donald who was crossing the street at the same time they were.

He invited them to have coffee with him, which led to a nearly four-hour conversation about life and faith.

"We ended up meeting up with him every week," Carter said.

But God didn't stop with Donald. He introduced them to some friends, and one day he insisted on giving Carter's team a monetary gift.

After refusing the money at first, they accepted it reluctantly, and almost immediately met up with someone on the street who had come to a local church for food distribution and found it closed.

"We gave him the money Donald had given us and found out the man had been to church one time when he was younger and hadn't been in 52 years," Carter said. "We got to talk to him and pray over him right there, and he ended up coming to church with us on Sunday. Now he's joined the church."

When Carter's team arrived at the beginning of the summer, there were 10 to 15 people attending the church plant each week; when they left there were 30 to 35.

Carter, who also is a student at UAH, said she feels a burden to

pursue friendships back at home the same way she did in Rochester.

"It showed me how unintentional I was being back home in Alabama," she explained. "I feel like a lot of people — they struggle with those awkward moments (of approaching

someone to start a new friendship), but it only takes a few awkward seconds to change someone's eternity."

Joshua Madigan, a student at Auburn University in Montgomery, served in Alaska this summer with a team from all over the U.S. that flew

from location to location helping churches with Vacation Bible School and community ministry.

"It was just a wonderful experience to spend the summer with like-minded Christians just wanting to serve," he said. "It taught me a lot about what ministry looks like in Alaska and what ministry feels like in general."

'Really eye opening'

Maggie Beard, a student at Auburn University, said her one-week trip to Provo, Utah in July through One Mission Students also was "really eye opening."

As she shared with someone she met there, the young woman told her she'd never before met someone with beliefs like Beard's.

"Speaking with her made me realize even in places where we think, 'Oh, they know the gospel,' that's not necessarily the case," Beard said. "It gives you a sense of urgency."

"A summer missions experience is one that changes lives."

Chris Mills
student missions mobilizer
SBOM



Photo courtesy of Laurel Carter

Laurel Carter (left) said she and her teammates in Rochester, New York, prayed for divine appointments, and God answered with people like Donald (second from left).

FAITH first, then FOOTBALL

Coach Bobby Bowden laid to rest in Trussville, honored at Samford

By Jennifer Davis Rash
TAB Media

Family members of legendary football coach Bobby Bowden laid their beloved husband, father and grandfather to rest Aug. 16 next to his mother and father at Jefferson Memorial Gardens in Trussville.

Officiating the private family service and burial was the family's former pastor at First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida, Doug Dortch, current pastor of Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

Also on the agenda to share with the family was NFL standout Deion Sanders, who played under Bowden at Florida State University and currently serves as head football coach at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

Sanders is one of many players who is a man of faith because of his relationship

with Bobby Bowden, said Bowden's son, Terry, during a media interview prior to the Aug. 15 visitation service at Samford University in Birmingham.

Samford connection

Terry Bowden, who currently serves as the head football coach at University of Louisiana at Monroe, is a former Samford football coach like his father.

Bobby Bowden served as head coach of the Bulldogs from 1959 to 1962 with a record of 31-6 and was quarterback for the team during his college days. As a quarterback, Bowden earned Little All-America honors as a senior in 1952.

Ties to Birmingham

And "while the name Bobby Bowden is synonymous with Florida State University," his and Ann's most intimate connections are with their hometown of Birmingham and with



Samford University photo

Coach Bobby Bowden lies in repose at Samford University's Reid Chapel the afternoon of Aug. 15. State troopers from Alabama and Florida took turns standing guard.

Howard College/Samford University, Terry Bowden shared.

That endearing connection was reciprocated Aug. 15 as an estimated 1,500 people gathered at Reid Chapel to speak to Ann, Terry and the entire Bowden family.

"We express our thanks to Samford University for allowing us to have my father lie in wait before being buried next to his mother and father tomorrow in Trussville," Terry Bowden said prior to the visitation. "We are thankful he could rest here until then."

'Deeply impacted'

Samford President Beck Taylor noted, "The Samford community was honored to host the Bowden family and hundreds of others whose lives were deeply impacted by knowing Coach Bowden.

"Bobby Bowden ... is known as a faithful friend of Birmingham and Samford

University. The family expressed their deepest gratitude to Samford and all those who attended the service. It was a meaningful time for all."

Terry Bowden added that his mother was excited to be back in Birmingham.

"This has been our family school ... our home," he said. "It's where we grew up ... and where we saw our first football games."

Sharing during the Aug. 14 Celebration of Life service in Tallahassee and again with the media in Birmingham Aug. 15, Terry Bowden focused on his father's faith-first philosophy.

"He will always be known

as a football coach but more importantly he was a strong Christian and he felt the responsibility to share his faith and his testimony. ... He taught us that we all have the opportunity to make ourselves available (to the Lord). Football can be a priority but it cannot be the priority. He served the Lord through football and began with his college days here at Samford."

As part of being raised in a Christian home, the Bowden children were taught the importance of an active church life, Terry Bowden explained, noting they were raised in Southern Baptist churches.

They even helped plant a Southern Baptist church in West Virginia (Calvary Baptist Church in Morgantown) while serving the university there, he added.

"And as a football coach, we learned there is a right way and a wrong way to win football games. ... The way in which you coach football, how to play with class

... we learned that by great example. Faith, family, education and football, that's the way we've been taught.

"Being Southern Baptist was so much a part of our faith and our coaching."



Samford University photo

Samford University president Beck Taylor (right) greets alum Wayne Acheson (left), library historian for Billy Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, during the Aug. 15 visitation.



Samford University photo

Ann Bowden (seated) visits with one of the estimated 1,500 guests who went through the receiving line at Samford.

Is your church ready?



The city of Tuscaloosa was devastated by the tornadoes of April 27, 2011.

Photo by Joni B. Hannigan

Fairhope pastor helps churches prepare for recovery, outreach after natural disasters

By Grace Thornton

TAB Media

Some 100 people huddled on top of broken glass inside the education building of Rosedale Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, on April 27, 2011.

“We had no electricity, and the windows had been blown out. But it was shelter, and it was the only shelter around,” said Louis Johnson, pastor at the time.

Just a couple of hours before, a tornado had flattened housing units across the street and twisted the church’s sanctuary on its foundation.

And now another line of storms was coming, and all the neighbors were gathered in the only building still intact.

‘I just prayed’

“I tried to go around and talk to the folks and console them,” said Johnson, who had only been Rosedale’s pastor for two months. “I had person after person ask things like, ‘Do you know what happened to my husband? He was in apartment 6B,’ or ‘Have you seen a 13-year-old boy?’ I would just say, ‘I don’t know where your son is or where your father is, but you’re welcome to stay here, and we’ll pray for them.’ And I just prayed.”

Johnson said the situation has been a recurring theme in his life — God keeps putting him in places to minister after disasters.

In 1994, when he was a freshman in high school, Hurricane Gordon stalled out over Georgia at tropical storm status and dumped so much rain, it caused substantial flooding. His home church — Lakeside

Baptist near Albany — had eight feet of water in the sanctuary.

“That had a pretty big impact on me, working with the church to do that restorative work,” Johnson remembered. “Suddenly people I’d seen dressed to the ‘nines,’ singing ‘Amazing Grace’ beside me in church were in shorts and t-shirts ripping out drywall beside me.”

Reaching the community

They also worked hard to help neighbors with their flooded homes, and Johnson never forgot it.

Four years later when he was a freshman in college, the church flooded again, this time with three feet of water. And the church repeated its ministry.

Then in 2011, Johnson found himself praying for his neighbors one by one inside his storm-damaged church in Tuscaloosa.

In the days that followed, something special happened — church members began to develop a new kind of ministry in the community. They started by grilling burgers for people sifting through the rubble. One thing led to another, and the church ended up becoming a resource center for the community, helping with spiritual and physical needs.

And because they had stumbled upon a safe plan for ministry — namely, they had kept people away from their sanctuary, which was structurally unsound — they were allowed to keep going when other churches were shut down for safety reasons.

That stuck with Johnson.

Fast-forward to July 2020, when he was called as pastor of Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church in Fairhope. Two months later, Hurricane Sally hit and destroyed two of the church’s buildings, ruining a lot of classrooms and office space.

“We had to make decisions on the fly — we didn’t have a disaster team in place,” Johnson said.

They shuffled classes around, putting the youth and college students in the choir loft and men’s classes in the fellowship hall. They turned the “cry room” into a makeshift office for the secretary and

turned a storage room into a temporary pastor’s office.

“We’re still operating that way today,” Johnson said.

“As the pandemic has settled down, we’ve seen substantial growth in our attendance, and we’re on the edge of being out of space.”

But as they’ve been working through issues, it’s underscored something for Johnson — how important it is to have a plan in place. It mattered in Tuscaloosa, and it would’ve been helpful in Fairhope.

Disaster readiness

So now he is working on his doctor of ministry degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, specializing in strategic leadership. His doctoral project will involve making a disaster readiness plan for the church, with three ministry components:

► Take care of the congregation, establishing a method of communication to find out the status of congregants following a disaster and

understanding how to assess and meet needs.

► Look at buildings on campus and have a plan if they are destroyed — what space to utilize, how the church will worship, etc. Also, if facilities are still intact, how will the church use them for ministry?

► Prepare for community ministry. If the buildings and congregants are fine, how does the church utilize what God has given to meet needs in the community? How can the church partner with other organizations to share the love of Jesus in a tangible way in the aftermath of a disaster?

Have a plan in place

“I hope after I’ve gone through this process with my church to be able to help other churches develop a plan too,” Johnson said. “I know it broke the heart of churches in Tuscaloosa when they were told, ‘You cannot do (compassion) ministry here for the community anymore; it’s not safe and we can’t allow it.’”

The reality is that disaster can happen anywhere at any time with no notice, Johnson said. Every church should have a plan in place.

“I’m 42, and I’ve seen it happen four times already,” he noted. “It does happen.”

In April, AL.com published a story about Johnson, calling him the “pastor of disaster.” He said when he read that, “my wife and I just died laughing — yeah, that kind of sums it up. God has definitely placed me in places where I would have the opportunity to minister. It has been difficult but also a tremendous blessing.”



JOHNSON

Butler County churches part of area's emergency response

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Back in 2004 when Hurricane Ivan was barreling down on the Gulf Coast, Allen Stephenson was caught off guard by an unexpected force.

And it wasn't the storm.

It was the way a group of people in his rural area came together across denominational and racial lines to take care of people who showed up at their highway exit off I-65.

They "became a force in the county," said Stephenson, pastor of First Baptist Church Georgiana.

And the group got its footing when people who were fleeing Ivan filled up all eight hotels in the Greenville area.

"Many of them came with no money in their pockets and all their possessions in their car," Stephenson remembered.

"We realized there was a need there, so we began to help by taking food to the hotels and feeding the people."

Somehow CNN heard about the effort, and after they ran a story, enough donations came in to give the newly formed ministerial association some seed money to keep helping people. And as generous donations have continued to come in, that ministry has extended.

"Sometimes a mother fleeing a bad situation will turn up at our exit or a family who has come to town and their car breaks down and they don't have any money until the next day when they can get it wired," Stephenson explained.

The group works with police and a local hotel to identify and screen needs, then helps people get a meal, a room for the night or anything else they might require.

And First Baptist Church Greenville — part of the ministerial association — serves as an Emergency Management Agency shelter when called upon. That can include hosting the Red Cross or setting up cots with blankets for anyone who needs them.

God-given opportunities

Sometimes that's during a storm or natural disaster, or in unusual cases like the multi-car accident on I-65 near their exit in June, said Kelly Trawick, secretary at FBC Greenville.

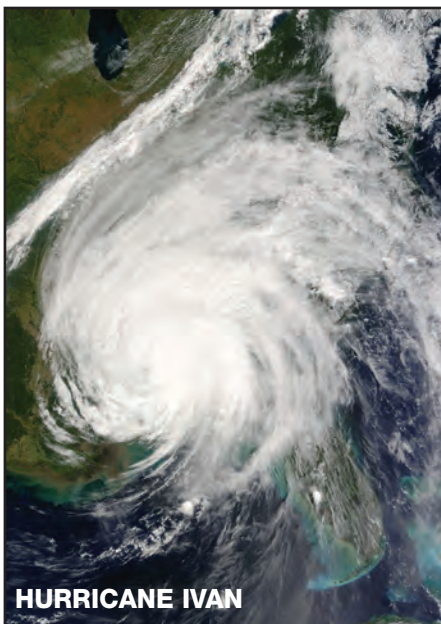
"There were several families displaced for the day because of that, and we had just finished VBS and had them come to the church," she said. "Some were waiting for family members, or for transportation or hotel rooms to become available."

State troopers also used the church as a place to interview victims about the accident, Trawick said.

Danny Dean, director of missions for Butler Baptist Association, said the association tries to always be alert to needs and

find ways to meet them. Being right on the interstate on a stretch of road with no other major exits for miles provides "a big opportunity," he said.

Stephenson put it this way: "God is good, and He is giving us opportunities, and we are trying to take those into account."

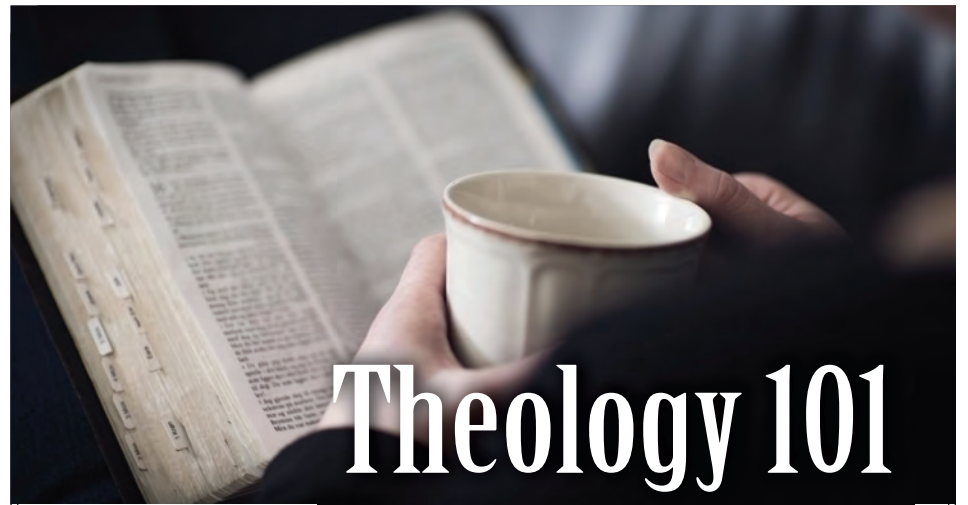


HURRICANE IVAN

Commons.wikimedia.org

"God is good, and He is giving us opportunities, and we are trying to take those into account."

Pastor Allen Stephenson
First Baptist Church Georgiana



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Spirit's Ministry

Teaching and gifting

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

The ministry of the Holy Spirit includes convicting of sin, enabling a new birth, teaching new believers and gifting them for service in God's kingdom.

By His teaching, the Spirit informs believers so they know spiritual truth. In addition, the Spirit also works to enable informed believers to do the truth, so understanding (what we know) and practice (what we do) grow together as divinely supplied twin enablements.

In His last lengthy discourse with His disciples, Christ promised, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13–14). Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth inasmuch as an important ministry of the Spirit is to guide believers into all truth.

The Apostle Paul referred to the Spirit's teaching ministry: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (2 Cor. 1:12–13).

The ministry of the Spirit is

not limited to enabling the understanding of revealed truth, but also makes it possible for believers to be servants of the truth by bestowing a variety of ministering gifts for the benefit of the church and the cause of the gospel.

The Bible points out that there are "diversities of gifts" bestowed upon believers, which gifts enable "differences of ministries" (1 Cor. 12:4–5). It is clearly declared that such gifts are given for the benefit of the whole church, not the enjoyment of the gifted individuals or the promotion of their importance.

'Grace gifts'

A sampling of spiritual gifts is given in several passages such as 1 Corinthians 12:7–11 and Romans 12:6–8. Appropriately, spiritual gifts also are termed "grace gifts," hence, they are not earned by human merit and thus should not be employed for the enhancement of a person's reputation.

The Spirit teaches us all and gives a variety of gifts that the body of Christ might be served and built up, both knowing the truth and ministering it in the world.

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.





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FOR COST INFO AND TO REGISTER:
alsbom.org/tpt

For more information, contact State Missionary *Ken Allen*, 1.800.264.1225, ext. 2210, kallen@alsbom.org, or Ministry Assistant *Debbie Dickey*, ddickey@alsbom.org, at (334) 613.2218.

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



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Event and location are followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613 plus the listed extension, or visit alsbom.org/events. To register for virtual events, visit PinnacleAlabama.org.

SEPTEMBER

- 2 **Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM, Prattville, Amy Nelson, ext. 2231
- 2 **Tips for Teaching, Reaching and Ministry for Student Leaders**, Online, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 9 **Men's Swap Shop: discussing effective tools for discipling men in Alabama**, Ridgecrest, Dothan, Larry Hyche, ext. 2268
- 9-10 **Alabama Singing Men Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 9-10 **Alabama Singing Women Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, April Brewer, ext. 2279

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For resources contact *Kathryn Helms*, ext. 2325

- 12 **A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Lusk, Gilbertown, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
 - 12 **Baptism Sunday**, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
 - 12 **Single Adult Sunday**, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
 - 13-14 **Transitional Pastor Training**, Central, Decatur, Ken Allen, ext. 2210
 - 14 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Southside, Greenville, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
 - 17-18 **Pursue**, First, Opelika, Mike Nuss, ext. 2276
 - 19 **Anti-Gambling Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
 - 21 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Northside, Jasper, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
 - 21 **Preparing for Retirement**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
 - 30 **Personnel Management**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- OCTOBER**
- 1-31 **Cooperative Program month**, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 2283
 - 5 **MinistrySafe: Sexual Abuse Risk-Changes in the Landscape**, Online, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
 - 7-9 **Interlink Marriage Retreat**, Camp Baldwin, Elberta, Jessica Palmer, ext. 2262
 - 8-9 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong ext. 2223
 - 10-11 **Who's Your One? Tour**, Shades Mountain, Birmingham, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
 - 12 **Abundant Living**, Westmeade, Decatur, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
 - 14 **Sharing the Fire: A Conference on Revival & Spiritual Awakening**, Redemption Church, Saraland, Daniel Wilson, ext. 2320
 - 15-16 **Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong ext. 2223
 - 17 **Cooperative Program Sunday**, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 2283
 - 19 **Fall Missions Festival for Adults**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
 - 21-23 **Faith Focused Security Training B+Level**, SBOM, Prattville, Angie Williams, ext. 2373

'We must not neglect the gift'

Southern Baptist evangelists plan focus on mentoring, outreach in 2022

By Hamilton Richardson
TAB Media

With a 62-year history of dedication to supporting the Body of Christ, the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists is looking to make a deep impact in the next year through events, outreach and, especially, through mentoring up-and-coming evangelists.

"The purpose of COSBE is to encourage our fellow (Southern Baptist Convention) vocational evangelists, and to provide a covering for accountability, as well as to provide opportunities for fellowship and training," explained Terry Veazey, newly elected COSBE president.

Veazey, a longtime evangelist himself, having been in ministry since 1970, noted the organization assists in promoting the gifts of the evangelist to

pastors and churches.

"According to Ephesians 4, the evangelist is a gift from God given to His church to win the lost, and to equip the church to do likewise," Veazey said. "We must not neglect the gift. If we do, it will lead to a serious decline in the church fulfilling its role in God's kingdom."

Providing support

COSBE strives to support the work of pastors, Veazey said. But he noted that one of the group's biggest impact is on the churches, assisting them in conducting evangelistic outreach events in their congregations and communities. Those

include revival meetings, crusades, concerts, Bible conferences or training seminars.

Veazey has big plans to support next year's SBC Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California, sched-

For more information on the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, visit sbcevangelist.org



The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists elected officers for 2021-2022 at its annual business meeting June 15 in Nashville. Alabama's Terry Veazey (right) was elected president. Photo courtesy of Terry Veazey

uled to start June 14. He laid out some of the plans for the weekend prior to the meeting, including a possible open-air evangelistic event and scheduling COSBE members to minister in local churches.

Another of Veazey's plans is a Christmas special, to be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube.

"We've done it two or three times so far. We plan to have music evangelists, one or two testimonies from evangelists and a brief evangelistic message and appeal," he said.

Another important plan in the works is a new push for mentoring.

"What do top leaders have in common?" Veazey asked. "Each had a mentor."

Decline in numbers

According to Veazey, COSBE has suffered over the years with a decline in membership, going from approximately 700 in 1972 to fewer than 100 today. He believes taking young preachers under their wings will help train up future evangelists.

"In the last several years, it's been a background pur-

pose," he said. "I've decided to make it a major priority."

Churches have stopped using evangelists, Veazey noted, and stopped doing evangelistic events, which in turn puts a financial strain on the evangelists and results in fewer available to assist the churches.

He said the lack of evangelists equates to the lack of tools necessary to be soul winners.

"The numbers have dwindled. There's been a steady decline in baptisms and (church) membership. We've neglected the gift God gave to the church," Veazey asserted.

His focus on mentoring also has a personal angle, he said, recalling his experience some 50 years ago.

"I was mentored," he remembered. "An evangelist took me under his wing and took me on the road with him. That's why I am still an evangelist."



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3 stories

you should know



AP photo

A man holds the flag of Afghanistan during a protest in Jalalabad on Aug. 18. Taliban militants have attacked protesters since the Taliban took control of the nation's capital, Kabul, Aug. 15, fueling fears about how the insurgents will govern the beleaguered nation. Meanwhile, Christians around the world are urging prayer for all Afghans and specifically for believers in the predominantly Muslim nation. Find prayer prompts at tabonline.org/dark-days. (TAB Media)

Send Relief developing response plan for Haiti

Send Relief is developing a strategic plan to respond in Haiti following a devastating 7.2 earthquake that struck the island nation Aug. 14.

Send Relief, the compassion ministry arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, is working with partners and local church leaders in Haiti to assess the damage and determine critical needs, a spokesperson said.

In the meantime, officials urge prayer for the people of Haiti as they recover from the earthquake; for resources to meet survivors' medical, water, sanitation and hunger needs; and for those planning a strategic crisis response plan to meet both immediate and long-term needs in Haiti.

For more ways to help, visit sendrelief.org. (TAB Media)

Pro-life measures in two states challenged

New pro-life laws in at least two states are headed to court after abortion advocates filed lawsuits to stop them from going into effect.

In Arizona, a lawsuit filed Aug. 17 seeks to overturn a law banning abortions performed solely because of genetic abnormalities such as Down syndrome. The law also bans mail delivery of abortion-inducing medication and requires fetal remains to be buried or cremated.

In Montana, Planned Parenthood is attempting to stop four new pro-life laws from going into effect Oct. 1. Among other things, the laws ban abortion after 20 weeks, restrict access to abortion pills and require abortion providers to offer pregnant women ultrasounds.

For more recent news on pro-life efforts, go to thealabamabaptist.org/abortion. (TAB Media)

Headline news

from around the Southeast

Arkansas

For Pranay and Allison Borde, planting a church — Hillcrest Community Church — among internationals in Little Rock means faithfully walking alongside people who are not only discovering who Jesus is, but also counting a real cost to follow Him, Arkansas Baptists News reported. "True friendship, without any feeling of an agenda, opens up internationals to honest conversations about family, faith and the gospel," Pranay Borde said.

Florida

Eight students serving with the North American Mission Board's GenSend program spent six weeks in North Miami conducting compassion ministry after the collapse of the Champlain Towers at Surfside and serving alongside church planters, the Florida Baptist Witness reported. The group included students from

Puerto Rico and several states including Georgia, Mississippi, Texas and Tennessee.

Georgia

About 50 teens who grew up in missionary families serving around the world recently spent a week at Pinnacle Retreat Center in Clayton, the Christian Index reported. The teens, who are preparing for college or careers, became reacquainted with American culture and customs. The group tackled weighty issues, such as staying true to Christian values, and everyday skills, such as doing laundry. The International Mission Board partners with Woman's Missionary Union to provide reentry training for 50 to 90 missionary kids annually.

North Carolina

About 50 volunteers gathered to serve senior adults for five days in June during the inaugural

Camp BAM (Baptist Aging Ministry). The volunteers, hailing from the Impact Community Youth Group and First Baptist Church Concord, completed 19 projects across three counties for 45 senior adults. The projects were designed to create safer homes for senior adults and included building wheelchair ramps, painting and installing handrails and smoke alarms. The camp was based at Mills Home in Thomasville where NCBAM is located.

South Carolina

In 2019 a team from First Baptist Church in Columbia traveled to Greece to serve in a missions partnership. After the in-person missions trip was canceled in 2020 and 2021, a virtual trip was proposed. A team gathered at the church for a week, putting in about 250 hours of media production for the partnership, the South Carolina Baptist Convention reported.

Alabama news

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **Coffee Baptist Association** is hosting Represent, an event for Coffee County junior high and high school students, on Aug. 28, 3–5 p.m. at Coffee County Farm Center. There will be multiple competitions to earn a championship belt, plus live music, free food and door prizes. For more information, call Kit Johnson at 334-449-3204 or search “Represent Event” on Facebook.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

► **Troy Fisher** is the new pastor of **Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Tusculum**.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► Diane Boothe said she hoped people would connect with the history of **Sweet Home Baptist Church, Opp**, when they celebrated its 100th anniversary Aug. 8.



Photo courtesy of Dalton Campbell

She was delighted when they did.

“One lady said, ‘When they talked about the history, it brought back memories of my parents and grandparents,’” Boothe said.

During the special service, Pastor James Kilpatrick brought a message of rededication. Earl Stinson — grandson of W.L. Stinson, who gave the property for the church — presented the church history, and Harlon Burton of Dadeville sang several solos. Dalton Campbell of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission also presented a plaque during the service.

DALE ASSOCIATION

► **Holmes Baptist Church, Ariton**, will host a Fifth Sunday Sing on Aug. 29, 10:30 a.m., featuring the Smith Family Singers from Pensacola, Florida. Lunch will be served in the fellowship hall after the service. Everyone is invited.

ELMORE ASSOCIATION

► **Gus Malcom** is the new associate pastor of students at **Crossroads Community Church, Elmore**. He is married to Emily.



MALCOM



SNYDER

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

► **Michael Snyder** is the new pastor of **Dwight Baptist Church, Gadsden**. He previously served as pastor of Eastaboga Baptist Church. He and his wife, Amanda, have three children.

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Chase McLain** is the new pastor of **Riverchase Baptist Church, Hoover**. He has a bachelor’s degree in Bible and theology from



MCLAIN

Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham and a master of divinity from Beeson Divinity School. McLain served as Riverchase Baptist’s associate pastor for seven years before becoming senior pastor. He and his wife, Alyxis, have two children.

► **David Watson** is the new executive pastor at **Double Oak Community Church, Birmingham**. He previously served as the church planter/pastor of Foundry Church, Smyrna, Georgia; as young families pastor at The Church of the Apostles, Atlanta; and minister of discipleship at First Baptist Church, Smyrna, Georgia. He also taught theology and church history at Whitefield Academy, Mableton, Georgia. Watson has a bachelor’s degree

in religion from Samford University in Birmingham and a master of divinity and doctor of ministry from Beeson Divinity School. He and his wife, Holly, have two children.



BRISTER

► **Cody Brister** is the new pastor of **Crossbridge Community Church, Helena**.



BRASHER

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **Paul Brasher** is the new pastor of **Central Baptist Church, Trussville**. He previously served as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Pell City, for 21 years. Brasher has a bachelor’s degree from Birmingham-Southern College and a master of divinity from New Orleans



GAMBRELL

Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife is Laurie.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

► A lot has changed in the 40 years since **Barbara Smith** became the pianist and main office receptionist for **First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**.

The church has had three pastors, four ministers of music and one interim minister of music.

“In 1981, we had organ and piano. Now we have a rhythm section and orchestra,” Smith said. The style of music has changed too — praise songs have been woven in with the hymns that have always been a part of the church.

But one thing that hasn’t changed, Smith said, is her love for the people of First Baptist.

“They are my family, and even though many are no longer with us, many of their children and grandchildren are here,” she said. “And new families have come into First Baptist Church that have become my family, so I cherish and treasure the people here who have been in my life for a few months or 40 years.”

The church honored Smith on July 25 for her years of service. Smith played a mini “Jubilee” concert in the evening service accompanied by the church choir. The service was followed by a reception in her honor.

Jody Gambrell, student pastor at FBC Tuscaloosa, called Smith a “Tuscaloosa treasure.”

“Her love for God and for others is evident by the way she faithfully serves and loves her church,” he said. “She has a joy that is infectious, and she truly cares for and loves the people of First Baptist Tuscaloosa. This church would not run the same without her, and I’m blessed to call her my friend.”



Photo by Jody Gambrell

Persecuted church

New Uzbek religion law maintains restrictions on religious freedom

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Uzbekistan’s new religion law went into effect July 6 and maintains almost all the previous law’s restrictions on religious freedom.

The government drafted and adopted the law almost entirely in secret and in defiance of human rights obligations to several agencies, including the United Nations. (Uzbekistan sits on the U.N. Human Rights Council.)

The new law requires state permission to exercise freedom of religion, to share beliefs or teach religion. Publication, distribution and

importation of printed or electronic materials are banned without prior state censorship.

The process for mandatory registration with the state remains burdensome for religious entities.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom said the new law does lift a ban on the public wearing of religious attire by non-registered clergy, and reduces to 50 the number of adult founders required for a religious entity to exist. Previously, the requirement was 100 founders.

Uzbekistan is No. 21 on Open Doors’ 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB Media)



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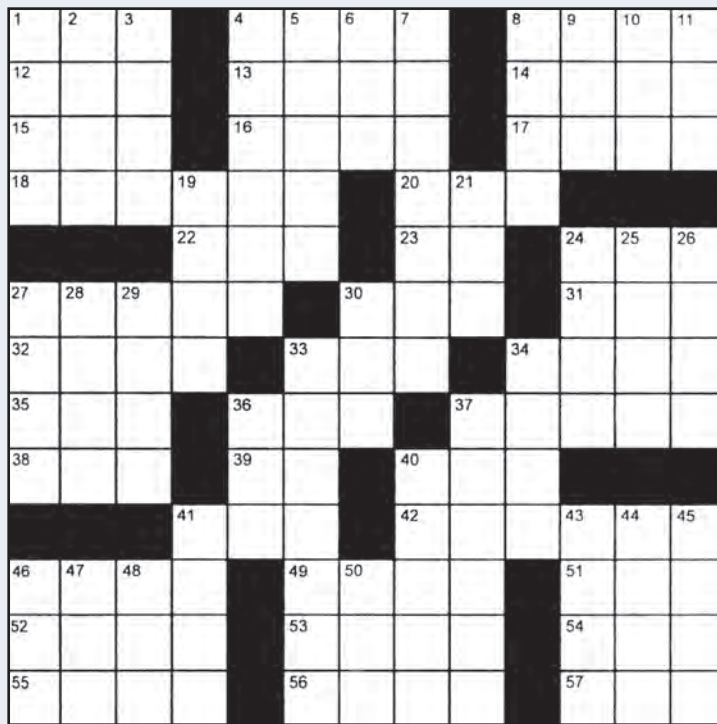
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ACROSS

1. Massachusetts cape.
4. ____, a servant of Jesus. (Rom. 1:1)
8. Not only for wrath, but also for conscience _____. (Rom. 13:5)
12. Born.
13. "My people." (Hos. 2:1)
14. Ye shall see heaven _____. (John 1:51)
15. And ____ also the Jairite was chief ruler about David. (2 Sam. 20:26)
16. Rich soil.
17. Neither ____ your clothes. (Lev. 10:6)
18. He shall take other ____ and plaster the house. (Lev. 14:42; modern sp.)
20. Money earned on account. (abbr.)
22. Play division.
23. I have made known ____ thee this day. (Prov. 22:19)
24. Their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, _____. (1 Chron. 15:18)
27. We will come unto him and make our ____ with him. (John 14:23)
30. For as many as are ____ by the Spirit of God. (Rom. 8:14)
31. A son of Gad. (Gen. 46:16)
32. Horse mothers.
33. Man's nickname.
34. "Sing," past tense.
35. Anger.
36. The name of the wicked shall _____. (Prov. 10:7)
37. One was Bozez, and the name of the other _____. (1 Sam. 14:4)
38. The captain of his host was Abner, the son of _____. (1 Sam. 14:50)
39. And. (Latin)
40. Snake-like fish.
41. The king of Assyria brought men from _____. (2 Kings 17:24)
42. God is our ____ and strength. (Ps. 46:1)
46. None is ____, save one. (Luke 18:19)



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49. Englishman. (Gen. 4:16)
 51. Roman numeral 54.
 52. River in Yorkshire, England.
 53. Narrow strip of wood.
 54. Thoroughfare. (abbr.)
 55. Be ye therefore followers of God as ____ children. (Eph. 5:1)
 56. Fencing sword.
 57. Who will have all ____ to be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4)
- DOWN**
1. And Anab and Eshtemoh and _____. (Josh. 15:50)
 2. Fiddled while Rome burned.
 3. Thou art ____, O Lord. (Ps. 119:151)
 4. As Peter was beneath in the _____. (Mark 14:66)
 5. ____ize: arrange installment payments.
 6. Hindu goddess of splendor.
 7. Yea, they tempted God, and ____ the Holy One of Israel. (Ps. 78:41)
 8. Took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser _____. (Acts 17:5)
 9. Simian.
 10. Knowledge.
 11. Whose ____ is destruction. (Phil. 3:19)
 19. Urchins.
 21. And Cain went out and dwelt in the land of ____.
 24. Vegetable.
 25. Sea eagle.
 26. Draw ____ to God. (James 4:8)
 27. The children of ____, four hundred fifty and four. (Ezra 2:15)
 28. Thou wast naked and _____. (Ezek. 16:7)
 29. Now an ____ is the tenth part of an ephah. (Ex. 16:36)
 30. Wherefore, do ye ... ____ the people from their work? (Ex. 5:4)
 33. Of great reputation.
 34. Individual character.
 36. Last book of the Bible. (abbr.)
 37. Thou shalt not ____ a kid in his mother's milk. (Ex. 23:19)
 40. Descendant of Eri.
 41. And Zebadiah, and Arad, and _____. (1 Chron. 8:15)
 43. And the sons of ____; Bedan. (1 Chron. 7:17)
 44. The Lord God shall ____ unto him the throne of his father David. (Luke 1:32)
 45. To seduce, if it were possible, ____ the elect. (Mark 13:22)
 46. Jacob's seventh son.
 47. Not "a" or "u."
 48. Mouth.
 50. Modern music.

Camp travel team visits 14 locations

(continued from page 1) completely. Over the course of the summer, from Florence to Mobile, 603 children participated in day camps at 14 locations — 12 churches and two Baptist associations.

The team was able to share the gospel all over Alabama through the day camps.

The experience also made an impact on team members. As someone who has been part of WorldSong since she was a young girl, Stella McWhorter, a member of the Travel Team, said the camp has been "instrumental in the development of my faith and my leadership capabilities."

Though the setup took the camps away from physically being at WorldSong, McIntosh noted the summer accomplished a range of good things.

"It helped us tell people who we are and what we do with missions adventure camping," she said.

"The camps offered children opportunities to hear from missionaries and learn about other cultures and peoples. It broadens their biblical worldview. With the Travel Team, we were able to take this to children who have never had this kind of experience."

It also was a springboard for Missions Adventure Camp 2022, which will be back on-site at WorldSong, McIntosh said. And with the

absence of normal camps this summer, WorldSong rented space to church groups. Some were there for retreats, and others used it as housing while they did missions work in the Birmingham area.

"That happened throughout the summer and is continuing," said McIntosh, noting they already have some bookings for the fall.

"We opened up this option, and God has just kept bringing people to us."

Summer highlight

Charles Taylor, who became camp administrator June 1, said a highlight of the summer for him was seeing five students baptized in July in the pool at WorldSong. He said camp leadership's hope is that God would continue to use WorldSong in a variety of ways to further His mission.

"We want everything there to be excellent," Taylor said. "We want to prayerfully always be looking for ways to be in ministry."

This summer WorldSong also gained Kyle Winningham as operations manager and Cliff Parker as property manager.

"God brought us a team of gentlemen who have been awesome and just jumped in and been wonderful," McIntosh said.



Photo by Stella McWhorter

The WorldSong Travel Team visited 14 locations across Alabama and served 603 children this summer.

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

BY ROB JACKSON, State Board of Missions

In a nation and world filled with division and strife, I am more than ever thankful for the unity we have in Christ Jesus and the joy of cooperation as the Kingdom is furthered.

I am also grateful for my Alabama Baptist family. Since 1823, we have been joining hands not only to attempt great things for God but to expect great things from God.

Furthermore, in 1925 God led Southern Baptists to enhance our missions abilities by our giving through the Cooperative Program (CP). We can do much more together than any of us can accomplish on our own.

On a personal level, I have witnessed the power of Baptists working synergistically together through the CP. My dad and mom were blessed to graduate from one of our Baptist schools, partly because of those who gave through the CP.

As a boy, I was amazed at how my dad and his friends could afford theological training. Most of the churches they served were small. Again, education in one of our Baptist seminaries is affordable because of churches and individuals who give through the CP.

The first significant hurricane I remember as a child was Hurricane Camille. It was devastating.

As our church scrambled to do what we could, we were proud that Southern Baptists took the lead in the relief effort.

Since then, there has been disaster after disaster that the churches I served have looked to help. Each one is met with yellow-shirted men and women serving God through the beauty of the Cooperative Program.

Furthermore, I must thank you for my education. Because of your giving through the CP, I received help attending Samford University and then Southern Seminary.

After seminary, I was thrilled to serve Alabama Baptists in the Office of Evangelism. I was called by Alabama Baptists and supported financially as you gave through the CP.

Later, as a pastor in North Alabama, CP giving afforded our church help from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions in areas such as writing bylaws, conflict resolution, fundraising, restructuring the church, missions trips, evangelism strategies, relocation, starting a new Spanish-speaking work, church planting, and on and on.

All these services were supplied to our church because of the genius of giving through the CP. What we as Baptists are doing around Alabama is impressive. Thank you.

I also had the privilege of serving as a trustee of the IMB. In this position, I was able to see the joy of a church

planting movement among unreached peoples. People from every tongue, tribe and nation are repenting and believing the Good News.

We have unprecedented opportunities for our missionaries to reach the uttermost parts of the earth. How is this possible? Again, your giving through the CP.

Recently, I accepted the call as director of the Office of Church Health for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

My prayer is to come alongside associations, churches, pastors and members to help healthy churches become healthier — and unhealthy churches to become healthy.



Photo by Doug Rogers

Rob Jackson regularly meets with pastors and churches to provide insight and resources for better church health.

Furthermore, I look forward to working with you as we long for and pray for spiritual renewal in our churches and our land.

Please contact me. I would love to pray with you and walk alongside you as we strive to turn our community, state, nation and the world upside down with the Gospel.

What does this coaching/consultation cost your church? Nothing. The State Board of Missions is a ministry provided by your giving through the Cooperative Program.

As you can see, my life has been touched by many of you as you have participated through the CP.

I am convinced that as Alabama Baptists remain united in the Gospel and continue to give towards a greater cause the possibilities are limitless. May God alone receive all the glory!

State Missionary Rob Jackson may be contacted at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 2343, or (334) 613-2343, rjackson@alsbom.org. For more information about the Cooperative Program in Alabama, visit AlabamaCP.org.

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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. Send 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

First Baptist Church, Uriah, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please mail resumé to: First Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 337, Uriah, AL 36480.

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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From 'last hope' to health: Hope Center serves low-income patients

By Martha Simmons
TAB Media

You are my last hope." That's what many new patients tell staff at the Hope Center, a medical mission established by 3 Circle Church in Fairhope.

"That's why God gave us the name Hope," said Hope Center Director Dana Smith.

She was working as a nurse at Newton Elementary School when she was approached by church leadership about their vision to establish a center — modeled after a similar one in Florida — to serve low-income community members. "They asked me to pray about it with them," Smith said.

After a year or so of praying and imagining what the center would look like, 3 Circle Church leaders asked her to serve as director; she began in July 2009.

"It just flowed from there," Smith said. "I felt that was what God had been preparing my heart for."

Smith had led medical



Photo by Martha Simmons

Dana Smith serves as director of the Hope Center, a medical mission established by 3 Circle Church in Fairhope.

missions out of the country, but even though she served as a school nurse, she had never worked in a doctor's office. She had much to learn before plans were finalized.

Drawing inspiration from similar, but not identical, faith-based medical providers such as Victory Health Partners in Mobile, plans finally came together for the Hope Center.

Counseling services were offered a few months after opening, and dental services

a month later. Medical services began in February 2010.

Eleven years later, the center now provides virtually all health services for more than 7,000 patients hailing from throughout southwest Alabama and east to Pensacola. More than 100 physicians, dentists and counselors donate a minimum of four hours per month at the Hope Center.

The Hope Center is funded by 3 Circle Church and is located directly behind the church building. Patients are asked to pay \$15 per exam but if the patient can't pay, they still receive care.

To volunteer or donate contact Dana Smith at dana@3CircleHope.com or 251-445-2273, ext. 1.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 29

Explore the Bible

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



WHAT IS LIFE ABOUT? Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

The Twilight (1-8)

Ecclesiastes 12 is a beacon of light in a book that illustrates the darkness of life apart from God. To enjoy life to the fullest, we need to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. “To remember” our Creator is to drop our pretense of self-sufficiency and to commit ourselves to God. We are exhorted to do this while we are young. But why not wait until we are older to submit ourselves to the Lord and His ways? Because our investment in evil rather than good will pay dreadful dividends.

Investing in evil will lead to scars, heartaches and regrets that we will carry into our old age. This sorrow and guilt will steal our peace and joy not only in the present but also in the years to come.

Growing older involves enough difficult changes without adding the detrimental consequences of an ungodly lifestyle. It is a difficult season of life when we lose the capacity to enjoy the blessings of our youth.

Solomon employed several metaphors to describe the weakening of the body as old age approaches. He wrote this passage to encourage young people to act on their opportunities to live for God and enjoy His blessings before it is too late. He mentioned mental dullness and depression in verse 2. We will begin to think less and less clearly and remember less accurately.

In verses 3-5, Solomon described physical ailments and limitations. Not only will our minds begin to fail but so will our bodies. Solomon graphically portrayed the effects of aging. He referred to the involuntary shaking of an older person’s head, voice and hands. He also described how our legs become bent and feeble and our teeth become fewer in number and make it harder for us to chew our food. It is harder to see and hear as we grow older. We no longer sleep as well as we did when we were younger. We recognize our frailty and become more fearful of getting hurt. Our

hair turns white or gray, we move more slowly and we lose the ability to procreate.

Solomon exhorted us to live for God in light of our approaching death. In verse 8, Solomon stated one last time the theme of his book. Everything done under the sun is temporary and therefore meaningless. God created humanity in His own image, and apart from a personal relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ, everything is futile. If Jesus is our Lord and Savior, then our life beyond the grave will be more than we could ever imagine. If we do not bow the knee to Jesus as Lord and Savior, then our earthly life will have been lived in vain and our life beyond will be one of torment in hell.

The Truth (9-11)

Solomon studied and explored many subjects, and he wrote many of his conclusions in Proverbs.

After studying a matter, he weighed his conclusions carefully, and then arranged them in an orderly fashion. He employed modes of communication that would best convey truth and enable students to remember his teaching.

Solomon compared his words to “prods” and “nails.” He referred to large rods or staffs used by shepherds to prod their herds to go in the desired direction. The meaning of verse 11 is clear. Learning wisdom and heeding wise instruction can often be difficult and painful, but acquiring wisdom is worth the effort.

The Conclusion (12-14)

Without God at its center, life is empty. God is the answer to our despair, and obedience to Him is the cure for our dissatisfaction in life. Since each of us will give an account of himself to God, we need to repent and believe the gospel of Christ. Jesus is our only hope for life in this world and in eternity. No one will escape His judgment. Call on the name of the Lord and be saved. Worshiping Jesus is what life is about.

Bible Studies for Life

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



LEAD OTHERS TO SERVE 1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:6-14

Like Elijah, we need to encourage others to follow so they might eventually lead.

Lead others to follow and serve God. (19:19-21)

A frequently neglected area of Christian ministry is the preparation of successors. Whole generations may struggle with weak leadership because people liked their leader and never identified and prepared gifted leadership for the following generation. Gifted people who could be effective leaders get neglected and never fulfill their ministry potential. We need God to help us discern and prepare those He is calling to lead the coming generation.

God had already told Elijah that Elisha would be his successor (1 Kings 19:15-16). But Elijah still had to go and inform him of that calling, just as many young people today need help to recognize their ministry gifts and calling.

Elisha was going about life as normal, plowing a field with a team of oxen, when Elijah came and threw his mantle over him, to symbolize the transfer of his prophetic authority to his successor. He said his goodbyes, destroyed his equipment and turned his oxen into a community meal as a parting gift. These steps made it clear that there would be no turning back, like an expeditionary force that burns its boats once it arrives.

In verses 20-21, “following” is stressed (note the repeated references) because Elisha, though gifted and called, had no experience, and needed to spend time learning from his older and more experienced mentor. Even gifted people should not be thrown immediately into leadership positions without being mentored and prepared for the role by shadowing and learning from those who have greater maturity and experience in God’s work. Too many leaders have failed due to pride and arrogance when they were released prematurely to do God’s work without being properly prepared and

mentored for positions of leadership and authority. Young leaders need time to grow into positions of responsibility.

Serve with the end in mind. (2:6-11)

Elisha’s commitment to spending every moment he could learning from Elijah shines in these verses. Three different times Elijah encouraged Elisha to wait for him somewhere else, and each time Elisha adamantly insists on staying with his mentor. And each time he ends up spending time not only with Elijah, but with other prophets as well.

The third time, Elisha watches Elijah part the Jordan River by striking it with his mantle. It is during this journey that Elijah asks what one request Elisha would like to make. Imagine if Elisha hadn’t been there to have that conversation! He asks to inherit a double share of Elijah’s spirit. Elijah’s response reinforces how important it will be for Elisha to remain close to Elijah to the end: It is the prerequisite for Elisha’s request to be granted (v. 10). Elisha stayed with Elijah until God took him into heaven in a fiery chariot of a whirlwind (v. 11). Elisha’s one request showed he understood the absolute necessity of God’s power and strength to carry out faithful ministry for God’s glory.

Serve so that the ministry is ongoing. (2:12-14)

When Elijah is taken away, Elisha cries out to him as his “father” and also “the chariots and horsemen of Israel,” reflecting his importance to Elisha and to the whole nation. Given the importance of chariots and horsemen for military superiority, Elisha is thinking of the spiritual warfare between the followers of the Lord and those promoting idolatry and is saying that the most powerful human weapon in Israel’s spiritual warfare was now gone. All that time spent learning from his mentor paid off as he took his first steps in carrying on Elijah’s legacy. It is an example worth following.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust

TAB Media

Animated musical ‘Vivo’ is family friendly with positive messages

His name is Vivo, and he’s the most talented kinkajou this side of South America.

He can dance. He can play musical instruments. Most of all, he can perform on cue when his owner — a talented elderly man named Andres — takes him to the lively streets of Havana, Cuba, their home, where they sing for coins.

Who wouldn’t pay money to watch a kinkajou tap dance? Fortunately for Andres, plenty of Havana’s citizens do just that.

As Vivo sees it, he and Andres have a “perfect life” — they eat mangoes together, they relax along the beach together.

And then everything changes.

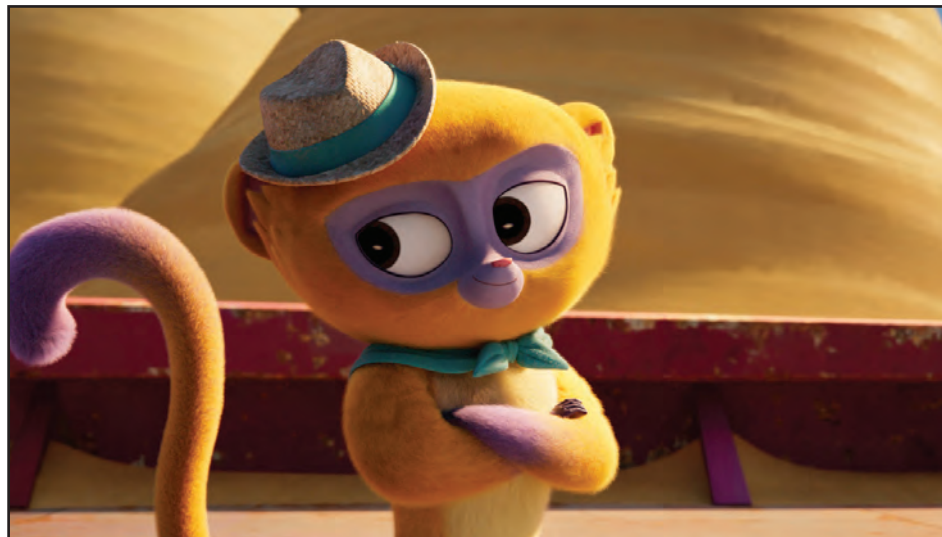
Andres receives a letter from a former love interest, Marta, asking him to attend her final concert in Miami. Andres is thrilled — not only because he wants to see Marta again but also because he wants to deliver a love song he wrote for her.

Determination

But then Andres dies. Vivo is grieved, yes, but he is determined to fulfill Andres’ wishes. Vivo decides he will find a way to get to Miami — and that Marta will hear the romantic song Andres penned.

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.



“Vivo”

Netflix photos

It’s all part of the new Netflix movie “Vivo” (PG), a family-friendly, animated musical that features one of the top names in film — Lin-Manuel Miranda — in the lead role. Miranda, who wrote songs for “Moana” and starred in “Mary Poppins Returns,” co-wrote the music and served as executive director. The story follows Vivo as he befriends a quirky girl named Gabi, who also is grieving a loss (her father) and agrees to help Vivo find Marta. Together, Vivo and Gabi fill a void in each other’s lives at the exact moment they need a companion.

It’s one of the best family movies of the year, thanks to positive messages — about friendship, fatherhood and parenting — and a handful of toe-tapping songs that will stick in your head. Thankfully, it includes no language or sexuality and only a bit of Looney Tunes-type violence. It has one hiccup — Gabi disobeys her mom — but if you can deal with that, it’s a fun ride.

Also worth watching this month:

► **“Expedition Unknown” (Discovery+)** — Host Josh Gates takes viewers on a worldwide journey to explore some of history’s most

interesting subjects, such as the disappearance of Amelia Earhart’s plane and the D-Day battle on Normandy’s shores. The first nine seasons are now on Discovery+. Rated TV-PG for minor language.

Sparking reflection

► **“Serengeti II” (Discovery+)** — The Emmy-nominated series returns for a second season with jaw-dropping drone footage of animals on the plains of Tanzania. Imagine walking alongside a lion or jogging within a herd of elephants — only a few feet away from

danger. That’s what “Serengeti II” delivers. Job 12:10 says of the animals, “In [God’s] hand is the life of every living thing.” No doubt, “Serengeti II” can spark reflection and even worship among viewers. TV-PG.

► **“Chip ‘n’ Dale: Park Life” (Disney+)** — America’s favorite chipmunks spark mayhem and solve problems in this hilarious new Disney+ series. Each episode is comprised of three seven-minute segments. TV-Y7.

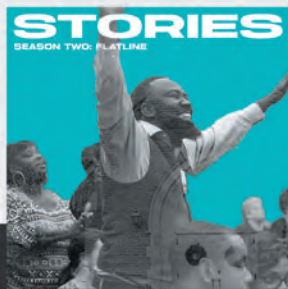
► **“Ruth” (Sight & Sound TV)** — If you’ve never had an opportunity to watch one of Sight & Sound’s Broadway-like productions in person, this is the next-best thing (it was filmed in front of a live audience). The uplifting story of Ruth is the latest musical to enter the Sight & Sound TV platform (sight-sound.tv).

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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