

The Alabama Baptist

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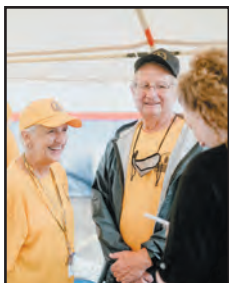
Vol. 186, No. 37
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Ukrainian congregation, other area ministries 'revolutionized' by Alabama couple

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Photo by Grace Thornton

'Anchored in TRUTH'

Keelan Adams, executive pastor of Flatline Church at Chisholm and founder of Montgomery Deep History, tells the story of the Court Square Fountain in Montgomery.

Montgomery pastor leads tours, seminars about Alabama's Civil Rights history

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

The soles of Keelan Adams' shoes are well worn from the streets of Montgomery.

On many mornings, you can find him walking around downtown, sharing passionately about the history of the area — where it's been,

where it is now and where it's headed. It's a story he can't help but share.

That's why Adams founded Montgomery Deep History, a company that offers walking tours and seminars about the history of Alabama's capital city and how it fits into the greater history of the state and the nation. He presents it in a way that provides "a roadmap for healing."

To him, it pairs well with his other role — executive pastor of Flatline Church at Chisholm. As a pastor, he's constantly trying to lead people to the healing power of the gospel, where people

can be made right with God and unified with each other in the family of God through the blood of Jesus.

And as a pastor, he's also a historian.

Historical background

"Every pastor is a historian to some degree because of their studies," Adams said. "Already having a historical background in Scripture helps me to tell the story of Montgomery in an informed way anchored in truth."

Montgomery is a city that sits "at the crossroads of history," according to writings on the Montgomery

Deep History website by pastor and author Alan Cross. The artistic fountain in Court Square is "arguably one of the most important pieces of historical real estate in America."

Or, as Adams puts it, every square inch of that area is "packed with history."

For the past two years, he's been walking school groups, church groups and individuals around downtown Montgomery, sharing the stories of the Muskogee (Creek) Indians, early European settlers, forced slave migrations, the lead-up to the Civil War and (See 'Tour,' page 15)

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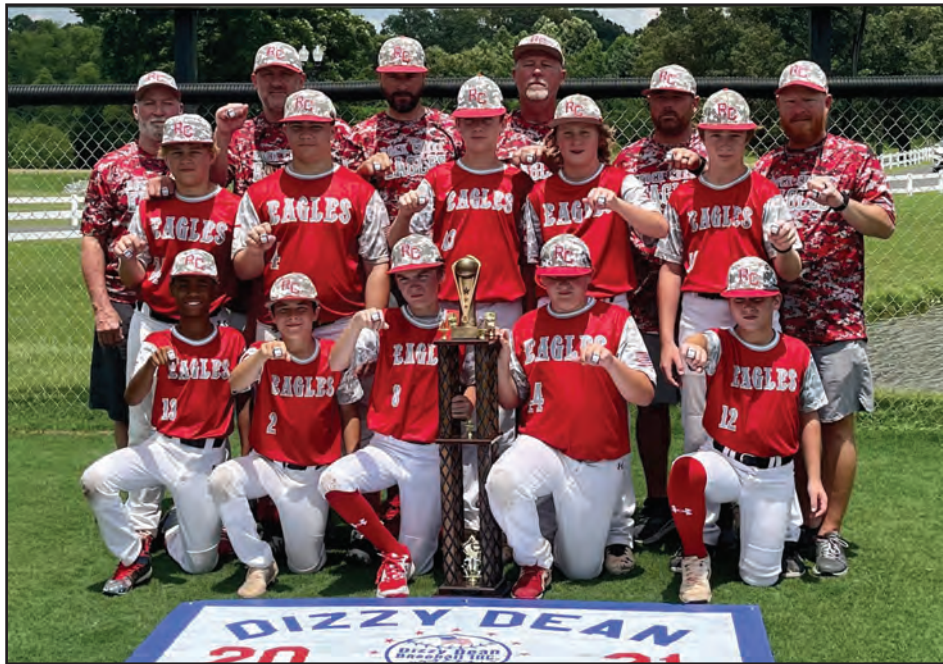


Photo courtesy of Jeremy Beck

The Eagles baseball team won this year's Dizzy Dean Freshman World Series. When nearly the entire team was baptized in April by their coach, Pastor Jeremy Beck, it started a domino effect in their families and the community.

Now available — Stories season three: The Eagles

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

A few weeks ago Jeremy Beck took a copy of the Aug. 12 issue of The Alabama Baptist to a local craft store to get it framed.

“As I was talking to the framer, they asked me what the significance of the paper was,” recalled Beck, pastor of Grant Street Baptist Church in Bessemer. “And I said, ‘Well, I could tell it to you, but I’d encourage you just to read the paper, because that’s the story.’”

If you read the front-page article you know at least part of the story. If you read the front-page article you know at least part of the story. Nearly an entire baseball team of 12-year-old boys got saved and baptized together after Beck decided to get intentional with discipling them earlier this year.

And it didn’t stop there — as the boys started changing, their families started noticing and said they wanted to have a relationship with

Jesus too. It’s an incredible story — but that article just scratches the surface. The personal hardship that got Beck to the point of discipling the team is a whole other story.

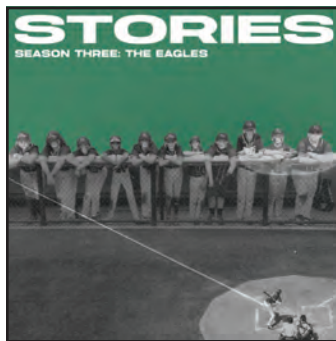
So is the story of a nonbelieving grandfather who saw a vision of Jesus reaching out to him from the baptistry the day the boys (and one sister) got baptized.

And so is the story of how it’s still spreading. That’s what Beck told the workers at the frame shop

that day — yet another opportunity God has given him to be intentional with the gospel.

“I could see the tears in their eyes,” he said. “And they were just like, ‘Wow.’ And I was like, ‘It’s real.’”

You can hear the whole account on season 3 of the “Stories” podcast: The Eagles. The first episode is already out, with the next one airing Sept. 24 and the third on Oct. 1. Listen to Stories at tabonline.org/stories or wherever you get podcasts.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

The Alabama Baptist

“If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31-32

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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief



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Need more mental capacity for life? Wrap up unfinished projects

Before I asked the staff to tackle something on each of their to-do lists they've been putting off, I wanted to make sure I had done that myself.

Now that I've checked off a few items, I'll be working with each team member to do the same and thought you might like to join us in the effort.

Most of us have at least one item that needs attention but will require a significant amount of time and energy or is beyond our current knowledge base so we'll have to do some research to understand the next steps needed.

Whatever the reason we are putting off a specific task likely comes down to a sense of being overwhelmed, that we aren't sure where to start or we dread the actions required.

In some cases, the next step requires an uncomfortable conversation, taking the first step toward an attempt at reconciliation or acknowledging our part (or lack of participation) in a situation made it worse.

It takes discipline, determination and courage to isolate the intimidating project and go after it. We may need help too, which could become another stumbling block if our pride gets in the way.

And then there's the assessment of what doesn't get done today, this week or this month in order to take care of those items lurking in the back of our minds.

If you're like me, then you know the freedom and relief that follows finally taking care of a dreaded experience.

And you're probably better than I am at using that knowledge to spur you to action more quickly each time you face another unwelcome or discouraging pursuit.

Sometimes the task at hand is merely redistributing our time to coach, mentor or train up those for which we are responsible.

Ignoring the opportunity to help others grow not only stalls their growth and development, but also prevents us from discovering the next steps of growth waiting for us.

If you have found a way to always face and accomplish the difficult tasks that surface,

then we would love to hear your stories and suggestions. Please call, email or write us at your convenience.

For the rest of us, we can share what we are learning from mentors and life experience.

Pacing our schedules

My focus requires split vision at the moment — looking ahead while also constantly tidying up my existing list. As soon as tomorrow arrives, today will be the past, so it never really stops.

Seeking God's guidance on the who, what, when and where always assures time, energy and resources will be provided.

A basic routine from day to day and week to week also seems to help keep us on track, but it's important to build in flexibility and margin to be available to pivot when an unexpected God moment surfaces.

And if we think about those lingering projects on the to-do

list as debt remaining on a past-due account, then it's a little easier to commit to clearing the debt by a certain date and selecting one older item per week to accomplish.

The temptation will always be to tackle a more current item sitting on the list and continue pushing the oldest items back down the list, but taking a deep breath and going after one of those aging members of the list might provide the motivation needed to catch them all up.

A note of caution, however. Creating a world where we are super organized and able to clear our to-do lists easily and quickly could actually lead to an obsession with structure and schedules — to a point where it is idolized.

As with the goal of restricting what we put on our lists to provide a reasonable pace of daily living — everything in moderation — the focus on that goal should also be fluid enough to adapt when necessary (Eccles. 3:1–8; 1 Cor. 6:12).

'A time for everything and a season for every activity'

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a

time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a

time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

—Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 (NIV)

Your Voice



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

Will unbelievers blame Christians for virus spread?

Christians, churches and Christian publications should be leading the charge against COVID-19, scripturally submitting ourselves to every authority by following the recommendations of our God-given leaders. This means being fully immunized, masking and distancing whenever around other people outside your home.

Other than our obligation to obedience, we should do this to protect our own God-lent temples (bodies) from destruction.

We also should do it to protect our family, friends, colleagues, coworkers, fellow church members, the elderly and infirm, babies and children, front line responders and

health care workers, as well as our enemies.

The world is watching

We also should do this because unbelievers are watching our every move. Do you not think they are seeking a grand opportunity to blame all the pandemic's spread, deaths, disabilities and world economic collapse on Christians' selfish reluctance to be vaccinated, wear masks, distance themselves and cease and desist from congregating and singing in groups?

Unbelievers will surely blame all this and more on us and could use the subsequent massive waves of anger to politically censure and lock

down churches, remove church tax exemptions, etc.

By now people should know how to wear their mask to always cover both their nose and mouth, just like they would want their surgeon to do if he was operating on them. If your mask keeps slipping down, get a new mask.

Considering options

It has been well documented that COVID carriers may be asymptomatic, and they can spread the virus beyond 12 feet distancing when speaking without constant masking.

It is unwise to promote congregating in church buildings simply to socialize and fill pews.

God has provided alternative safe and effective electronic means for us to assemble ourselves together in worship.

Just because at the moment governmental authorities do not require masking or prohibit congregating due to political fear of men, does not make it the right thing for us to do.

What if you did the right thing by obeying governmental authorities' requests as unto the Lord, for the right reasons, in love to protect your fellow man, and you somehow managed to die because of it?

You would become a great hero and martyr in God's eyes, and be richly rewarded on the last day.

What could provide a better altruistic epitaph to fulfill the mission of your earthly life?

Bob Cosby, M.D.
Birmingham, Ala.

Some may think that the Law is a straight jacket. But actually, the Law is better understood as a bullet-proof vest, given by God to protect His people, to ensure that He would be their God providing for them in a hostile environment.

Ken Mathews, professor
Beeson Divinity School
Chapel sermon excerpt

The Christian life is not a feat of strength, but a continual reliance on Christ, the true vine.

Hunter Hindsman
Assistant to the pastor
MeadowBrook Church
Gadsden, Ala.
Sermon excerpt

When fear grabs us — as it most assuredly will ... we can learn from David in Psalm 56:3-4. First, let's remove our trust from what has us afraid and put it back in the hands of God, who can be trusted.

Second, remember God's word. His promises are faithful. God can be trusted, so we can keep serving faithfully — confident in Him.

Pastor Chris Weide
Beechwood Baptist Church
Mount Olive, Ala.

Sharing words of appreciation to others is a mark of our creative best.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

Letters to the editor

I recently watched the video interview you did with SBC President Ed Litton (on the TAB Media YouTube channel). The initiative is an outstanding idea.

It is a wonderful interview and is very timely. You touched on the hot-button issues we needed to know about.

A video is often times so much more revealing about who a person is, especially if we have never met or heard the person.

Ed passed the test with flying colors in my opinion. I think he is a thinker outside the box and that is probably what a lot of Southern

Baptists need. His theology and heart seems to be very biblical from what I saw and heard.

I will pray for him, his family, his church and his tenure as SBC president.

Thank you for making the video interviews available to all of us.

Bob Henderson
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

You are continuing to "hit it out of the park" with the stories you select each week. Thank you.

Sharon Hill
Shelby County, Alabama

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“Self-denial is the beginning place in the walk we have with Jesus.”

RICK LANCE

Excerpt from his Sept. 16 chapel sermon at Southern Seminary

I always thought that when you get older and have more experience and knowledge and wisdom that things would get a bit easier in life. But it seems it gets more and more difficult.

Where do we turn, where do we start when we seem to be completely overwhelmed by the difficult days?

1. Put God First — Don't lose sight of Him in our search for answers. Lift Him up and put yourself in His hands completely.

2. It's A Team Effort — God never intended for us to fight our battles alone. We can look around and see others working, praying, supporting using the gifts God has given them. Thank God for them.

3. Don't Give Up — God works on His timetable and will always

give us the strength to keep on when we are serving Him and focused on Him.

4. Give God The Glory — We can all look back at many victories we have had in our lives; victories in difficult days over which we had no control and no power to fight on our own. Storms may keep coming but God will always give victory to His people whether in this life or when He calls us home to heaven.

Lord, help me follow the thoughts you have given me to deal with the difficult days.

Charlie Button, Huntsville via Facebook

Even in the midst of suffering, God is at work. He's doing something new and more than we could

ever imagine. I'm on the front row ready to be part of His work.

Daniel Atkins, Montgomery via Facebook

Our goal is to understand how the 'godlight' is working within ministries ... and share this with people who might never get to go to places like Liberia, Romania and West Africa.

**Nathan Troost
Lantern Vision
10th anniversary celebration**

Friends, champion your pastor. Love him. Honor him. Respect him. Pray for him. Bless him. Do this daily throughout the year.

**Ronnie Floyd
SBC Executive Committee**



JACK CHOW Photo courtesy of Lauren C. Grim

WWII veteran honored 76 years later

My grandfather, Jack Chow, died in 2005 at the age of 83. Recently, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his dedicated service during World War II — 76 years ago.

He was assigned to the 1157th Signal Company unit under the 14th Air Group, which was a military backup force made up of mostly Chinese Americans. It included the Flying Tiger squadron. He was taught to work with radios and teletype machines — his specialty being radio repair.

Despite facing immense discrimination at the time, as many as 20,000 Chinese Americans served in the Armed Forces during the war.

Approximately 40% of those who served were not even U.S. citizens due to laws (like the Chinese Exclusion Act) that denied citizenship to persons of Chinese descent.

What was so amazing about my grandfather and the other Chinese American veterans was the choice they made in the face of extreme prejudice to still fight for the U.S.

I wish he could have seen this medal. Our family is so very proud.

**Lauren Chow Grim
Creative Services Manager
TAB Media**

From the *Twitterverse*

@Blackwell_Kevin

God has placed a question in every heart and culture that only the Gospel answers. Our task is to listen to the question. —Harry Poe

@brocraigc

“May we sit at the foot of the cross; and there learn what sin has done, what justice has done, what love has done.” —John Newton

@AdamGreenway

Imagine if all the energy put into intramural outrage episodes among Baptists and other evangelicals was instead channelled into intentional outreach efforts by Baptists and other evangelicals? We might actually have a chance to win our world to Christ. #pointponder #evangelism

@haines_matt

We aren't to love God on the basis of some perceived reciprocal benefit we will get back from Him. We are

to love God because of who He is and what He has already done for us.

@richardblackaby

Darkness is the relentless foe of light. It blinds and enslaves many who embrace it. Light must not grow weary in shining. Too much is at stake.

@ricklance

“God can use anything, anywhere, at anytime, with anyone for His glory.” —@ronniefloyd

@macbrunson

Pastors in all honesty your people ... don't need a political pundit — they need a shepherd heart. Jeremiah 3:15 (NAS): Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.

@desiringGod

“For our sake he made him to be

sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” —2 Cor. 5:21

@JmeekJ

Ps. 45:17 — “I will bring honor to Your name in every generation. Therefore, the nations will praise You forever and ever.”

Parents with kids at home — you have been given your primary discipleship group. If we looked at your time, money, passions and affections — [is it] the world or Jesus?

@ethicist

Live as though Jesus died yesterday, arose this morning, and is coming again tomorrow.

@MBChurchAL

Struggling to completely leave the things of the world behind and live for Christ? Remember, the Christian life isn't about your strength, but His!

Workers make progress on the new ministry building at FBC Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, Ukraine.

Dream BIG



Photo courtesy of Jim Holloman

Ukrainian congregation, other area ministries ‘revolutionized’ by committed Alabama couple

By Shawn Hendricks

TAB Media

Slavic Rymyski has been known to call them “Pa” and “Nana.”

For the ministry leader of First Baptist Church Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, Ukraine, Rymyski sees Jim and Rosalind Holloman as family, as his “adopted parents.”

The retired couple, members of First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa, Alabama, met Rymyski on a volunteer missions trip to Ukraine in 1999 when he was 11 years old.

On that trip, they began working with his father, Pavel, who is pastor of the Belgorod church — and the couple has faithfully returned and supported ministry in that area for more than 20 years.

It’s that dedication, Rymyski said, that has impacted not only him and his church but also many other ministry partners in the Odesa region and beyond.

Memories

“They first came when we were teenagers, and Miss Rosalind taught Vacation Bible School,” recalled Rymyski, now 33, married with two children and a deacon and youth leader at FBC Belgorod. “Some of those [leaders] still remember the lessons that Miss Rosalind taught, and they still have the Bibles they received.”

Next spring the Hollomans plan to return to Ukraine for the dedication of the church’s new ministry facility, which they and their church helped fund. It’s the latest contribution on a long list of ministry projects and ways the Hollomans have

helped ministries in the area.

Through their faithful support, prayers and encouragement, Rymyski said, the Hollomans have “revolutionized our outlook on ministry” and helped spark outreach efforts involving everything from clothes for the needy, mentorship opportunities for young leaders and orphan care, to Jim helping start a 12-step program for locals struggling with alcoholism and providing facilities for that and other ministries.

As the church in Belgorod has expanded its reach and influence, Rymyski has traveled to the U.S. numerous times to visit the Hollomans, receive training and build more relationships with churches.

“They sacrificed their time and personal funds to come to Ukraine as many as two or three times a year,” he noted. “They focused a lot of their time and efforts to train young people like me.

‘Forever grateful’

“We all are the products of the dedication of one couple who were willing to go back and serve a place over and over and over again,” Rymyski continued. “I will be forever grateful because they

trained me, they taught me what youth ministry was about. They helped me go to school and receive a higher education.”

In 2017, the Hollomans helped provide travel and coordinate accommodations for 10 Ukrainian youth ministry leaders to visit Alabama and shadow church leaders for ministry training.

As a result of that commitment and connection, Rymyski and FBC Belgorod have been able to establish other key partnerships with churches in Alabama and North Carolina.

Some of the churches in Alabama are First Baptist Roberts-dale, which continues to send missions teams to Ukraine; and Coal-ing Baptist near Tuscaloosa, which has been a key partner in ministry efforts among orphans.

In 2020, the Hollomans’ church officially launched a new partnership with FBC Belgorod and helped provide funding for the new ministry center. Because of that partnership, Rymyski said, the church has been able to expedite the construction that initially wasn’t expected to be complete for about 10 years. But now it could be finished in the next few months, he noted.



Photo courtesy of Jim Holloman
Rosalind and Jim Holloman (center) are pictured with Slavic Rymyski (left) and his wife Sasha. The Hollomans met Rymyski on a volunteer missions trip to Ukraine in 1999 when he was 11 years old.

Meanwhile, a church member from FBC Tuscaloosa recently covered the cost to repair a damaged road that threatened access to the Belgorod church.

All of these partnerships and support have allowed Rymyski and fellow church leaders to dream big — and the church’s new ministry facility will be a big part of those dreams.

“We want it to be like a life community center, not just where people come to worship on Sunday,” he explained, “but a place where young people hang out, where they do sports, where they eat their lunch, where they have fun, do schoolwork and make friends and meet Jesus. So it’s like an everyday part of their life.”

Where God leads

For the Hollomans, now in their 80s, the commitment to Ukraine has been about one thing — going where God leads.

“You don’t have to be a full-time missionary to go,” Rosalind said. “You just have to get over your fears of getting out of your comfort zone.”

It’s a commitment “all about relationships” and communication.

“I really took to heart what [author and speaker Henry Blackaby] was saying: ‘See where God is working and join Him in His work and keep on doing that until He leads you somewhere else,’” Rosalind said. “We kept coming back.

“My philosophy is just let God lead. If He sees a way, He’ll find a way for you.”



Photo by Sam Evans

Frederick Edwards responded to his first callout from Southern Baptist Disaster Relief on 9/11. He had been trained to work in the feeding unit one block from Ground Zero.

DR chaplain remembers 9/11 'like it was yesterday'

By Maggie Evans
TAB Media

Twenty years ago, Frederick Edwards responded to his first callout from Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. Terrorists had flown planes into the World Trade Center, and teams from across the country went to New York City to do whatever they could.

Edwards had been trained to work in the feeding unit, making meals for whoever needed them.

"We were one block from Ground Zero," Edwards recalled.

"At night when we weren't cooking, we would walk over and talk to the first responders who had been digging through the rubble.

"That was a very emotional callout — a lot of death, a lot of hurt."

He said he can still recall the sights, sounds and smells of that first Disaster Relief trip like it was yesterday.

But after that callout, Edwards was all in. "Ever since, I've been anxious to go help whenever I can," he said.

He and his wife, Cathy, who are members of Airline Baptist Church in Mayo, Florida, serve with Florida Baptist Disaster Relief together.

The pair are currently helping the cleanup and recovery efforts at the Incident Command Center at Metairie Baptist Church outside of New Orleans. Hurricane Ida struck the state as a Category 4 storm Aug. 29 wreaking havoc as it traveled up the East Coast of the United States.

Edwards now serves as a chaplain and takes every opportunity he can to serve people.

"This ministry has done more to get people out of the pews and into the missions field than anything I've ever seen," he said.

"This ministry has done more to get people out of the pews and into the missions field than anything I've ever seen."

**Frederick Edwards
chaplain**

How 9/11 changed the role of faith in the workplace

By Carrie B. McWhorter
TAB Media

Of the many changes that resulted from the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, one often overlooked is an expanded freedom to talk about issues of faith in the workplace.

"Faith at Work on 9/11" was the topic of a Sept. 9 webinar hosted by the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation in remembrance of the 20th anniversary of 9/11 featuring Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, Father Greg McBrayer and professor David Miller.

Cook, the first female chaplain for the New York Police Department and U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom from April 2011 to October 2013, was on the job in New York City on 9/11 and said that as 911 calls began to come in, dispatchers were overwhelmed.

Power of prayer

"Some of those who were perishing in the towers asked 911 dispatchers to pray ... so they could go in peace and be assured that the Lord was with them," Cook said. "It was a moment none of us could have expected."

Prior to 9/11, faith expressions were very limited in public spaces in New York, Cook said. What started that

day at Ground Zero was a "new sensitivity" to faith issues in the NYPD, including "just the fact that you can say the word 'faith' and mention who you believe in," she said.

More acceptance of faith in the workplace also was one of the many changes that occurred in the airline industry after 9/11, according to Father Greg McBrayer, an Anglican priest serving as chief flight dispatcher at American Airlines.

"At that point in my industry, faith was on the other side of the wall," McBrayer recalled. "Once we found out there was an attack, we prayed that day together."

Sept. 12 was a significant day, McBrayer said.

"There was deafening silence when it's usually very busy," he said.

"I saw the fear and anxiety on the faces of my coworkers. I remember crying out to God, saying 'Lord, we need You here desperately.'"

McBrayer was later ordained and bringing faith into the workplace became part of his life's work.

The experience of 9/11 opened the door in the airline industry and many other businesses for faith-based employee resource groups, noted Brian Grim, president

of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation. ERGs are voluntary, employee-led groups centered around a specific characteristic. While ERGs have been around since the 1960s, faith-based ERGs were "brand new" at the time of 9/11, he said.

Greater presence

McBrayer said 9/11 was an impetus for Bible studies and faith-based ERGs in his workplace.

"Those programs have blossomed today, and numerous faith groups are represented," McBrayer said. "It was truly 9/11 that set that into motion."

David Miller, director of Princeton University's Faith & Work Initiative, said 9/11 also confirmed an important truth: God is at work.

Miller served nine months as a chaplain at Ground Zero. From his post at St. Paul's Chapel, Miller prayed with first responders and prayed over body parts found in the rubble.

In the pre-dawn hours of another exhausting day, too tired to pray, Miller saw a piece of what he thought was yellow barricade tape.

He kicked at the tape and the black words on the bright yellow tape caught his eye: GOD AT WORK.

Whether working in a "safe" office job or a high-pressure job like first responders, the military or flight controllers, Miller urged believers to be encouraged: "God is at work."

And remember that God is always at work through individual believers — we are all "spiritual first responders," McBrayer said.

"You don't have to be ordained to be used by God, you just have to be there," he said. "The ministry of presence is always needed."

To watch the full webinar, visit tabonline.org/faith-at-work.



Graphic by Carrie B. McWhorter

Cheryl Davis (right) sees Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief as a rich opportunity to serve those who are suffering.

Hands & feet of Christ

Retiree cancels vacation to serve those affected by Hurricane Ida in Louisiana

The week of Sept. 12, Cheryl Davis was all set to go on a vacation with a friend.

Then Hurricane Ida hit Aug. 29, and the call went out that volunteers were needed to serve in a variety of ways including feeding ministry — the area where Davis just received training.

“I thought to myself, ‘Why did I train if I’m not going to serve?’”

So she canceled her trip and headed down to Houma, Louisiana, south of New Orleans, to wake up at 3 a.m. every day and help prepare thousands of meals for the community.

“I can’t replace everything they lost, but I can feed them a hot meal

today,” said Davis, a member of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover. “Why would you not want to be a part of that?”

Davis considers her retirement an opportunity to serve people with her more flexible schedule. She heard about a Disaster Relief training session at The Baptist Church at McAdory in McCalla and decided to check it out since she didn’t know much about it.

“The woman who taught the class was just so passionate,” she said, and it made her want to invest in this ministry.

“[Disaster Relief] is a very good opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ like God has commanded us to be,” she said. (Maggie Evans)



Photo by Sam Evans



Photo by Sam Evans

God takes strangers and makes them friends through relief efforts

When Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers hear that they’re needed, individuals from across the

state put their lives on hold and descend on an area. And these strangers form teams, work long days and pour themselves out into

disaster-struck areas.

“It’s amazing how God works — how He puts teams together of people with different skill sets for this work we’re doing,” said Ferrell Hataway, a “blue hat,” or team leader for the feeding unit in Houma, Louisiana.

Take the team in Houma, for example.

“We’ve got a gentleman on a forklift who has had

a knee replacement and both shoulders are bad,” Hataway said. “But he’s the best forklift driver I’ve ever seen. He can land what we need on a dime target.”

Staying upbeat

Even through near constant rain Sept. 14, the team in Houma had big smiles behind their masks and jokes to keep the atmosphere upbeat, even when things didn’t go as planned.

Alabama Baptists were called out to Louisiana after Hurricane Ida struck the state Aug. 29 as a Category 4 storm. This team is hosted

by Mulberry Baptist Church in Houma. More volunteers arrived Sept. 15.

For Cheryl Davis, who’s a member of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover, this was her first time serving with Disaster Relief.

“My first day they had me cutting about 1,500 pounds of semi-frozen sausage — I thought I might die,” she said with a laugh. “But at the end of the day, you lay in your bed and think, ‘Man, that was a good day.’” (Maggie Evans)



Photo by Sam Evans

Ferrell and Connie Hataway serve with Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief’s feeding unit in Houma, Louisiana.

Disaster relief teams share Christ while providing meals

By Maggie Evans
TAB Media

Errell Hataway approached the car that pulled up by the tents where industrial cooking equipment and supplies were housed.

A man was behind the wheel, and an 8-year-old girl was in the passenger seat. As Hataway was talking to him, he learned that this family's trailer had been destroyed by Hurricane Ida, and the family of five had lost most of their earthly possessions.

'You haven't lost God'

Hataway invited the family to come under the tent and shared some snacks and drinks with them, and as he did, he knelt down in front of the three daughters, two of whom were twins.

"I said, 'Girls, I want you to know something. These are hard times. Y'all have lost a lot, and we know that. But I just want to mention to you a few things you haven't lost. You haven't lost God because He'll never forsake you. And you're so lucky because you've got your momma and daddy, and they love you. And you've got people like us ... who are here to help you and to represent Christ in your life and

help you get through these difficult times."

Hataway and his wife, Connie — members of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham — got to pray with the family. That's what Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief work is all about.

"In this work, you're meeting the physical needs so you have the opportunity to fill the spiritual needs," he said. "We're bringing Christ to them through a barbecue sandwich."

In the grocery store parking lot where his team of 14 volunteers is set up in Houma, Louisiana, they're making 5,000 meals a day as a feeding unit to meet those physical needs. Then they package those meals for the Salvation Army to pick up and distribute.

As Pierre, a Salvation Army representative working alongside Disaster Relief, put it, "Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and the Salvation Army are two wings of the same bird. They depend on each other, and they just get along well."

16 years after Katrina

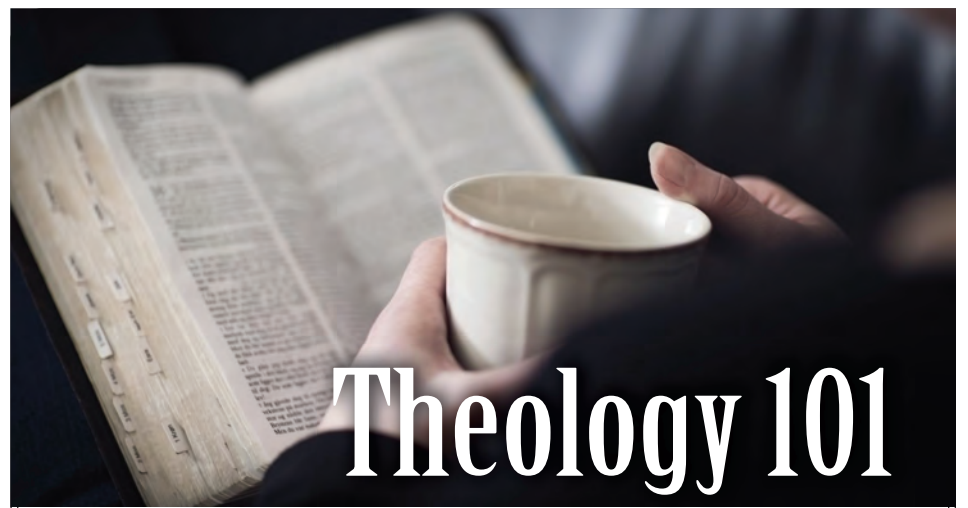
Hurricane Ida struck Louisiana on Aug. 29 as a Category 4 storm, exactly 16 years after Hurricane Katrina's devastating landfall.

To view a video update and hear from volunteers, visit youtube.com/tabmediagroup.



Photo by Sam Evans

First-time volunteer Frankie Nelson stirs barbecue at the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief feeding unit in Houma, Louisiana. Volunteers are preparing up to 5,000 meals each day for those in the community who need a hot meal.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Spirit's Ministry

Assuring and Sending

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

Being a Christian is a matter of being a child of God. Being God's child with unshakable assurance is a blessing beyond measure. As Romans 8:16 puts it, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." If that were not enough, the next verse adds, "And if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Being an assured Christian is necessary preparation for being a witnessing Christian. Serving as Christ's witness in the world is a matter of the Holy Spirit furnishing the power for that witness and granting the assurance of its effectiveness. Paul testified to this assuring work in 1 Thessalonians 1:5: "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance."

Jesus spoke of the assuring work of the Spirit in His promise to the disciples, saying, "When He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). Being effective witnesses for Christ is always a partnership between the divine Spirit and a human spokesperson.

Having assured us of our own salvation in Christ, the Spirit takes the matter a step further by sending believers into the world as witnesses to Christ and the gospel. As Jesus stood on the brink of His return to heaven, He said to the disciples, "As the

Father has sent Me, I also send you." In His next breath, Jesus said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21–22).

Our Christian witness is formed by the quality of our character and conduct, and by our words. As for character, the Spirit works to produce in us the qualities Galatians 5:22–23 labels as "fruit of the Spirit." That fruit has to do with the quality of a person's character.

Speak authentically

Out of a Christlike character, as well as words and actions that reflect Christ, believers can speak authentically about the power and purpose of God to make sinners new creations in Christ Jesus.

If a person is healthy, two of life's most needful and satisfying pleasures are eating and drinking. Effective witness is born by spiritually healthy Christians experiencing the truth of Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The Spirit seeks to make us witnesses whose lives exhibit upright living that exudes peace and joy.

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.



Groups at a recent discipleFIRST event at CrossPoint Church in Trussville participate in table activities.



Photo by Grace Thornton

Helping to ‘grow and multiply’

discipleFIRST forum points churches to Jesus’ model of disciple making

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Terminal. That’s how the consultant described the situation at a church in Oklahoma where Craig Etheredge and Glenn Underhill were serving on staff.

“The church was in this difficult transition,” Underhill said.

The neighborhood was changing, and the church was declining. The consultant recommended relocating or splitting into new congregations. But Etheredge, who was pastor, and Underhill didn’t want to do that. They began fasting and praying.

And God brought across their path some church leaders who suggested simply going back to Jesus’ model of disciple making. Etheredge and Underhill used that guidance to retool their youth ministry, and it began exploding with growth.

Over the years, the two men moved to other churches, helping them learn how

to make disciples who make disciples. Now they both serve at First Baptist Church Colleyville, Texas, and help other pastors learn to do the same thing in their congregations, through small group cohorts and forums put on by discipleFIRST, the organization they lead.

Their most recent forum

was Aug. 12 at CrossPoint Church in Trussville, sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Etheredge, lead pastor of FBC Colleyville, said he’s “convinced the problems we’re facing in the denomination and in our churches [are] because we’ve stopped doing the very thing Jesus called us to do.”

‘Gaping hole’

“We haven’t stopped preaching the gospel and calling people to be saved,” he said, “but this investment in people to help them grow and multiply, that is a gaping hole in most churches.”

When Etheredge asks church leaders what they do

to make disciples, he said there often is a blank stare, followed by, “Well, we offer courses on a Wednesday night.”

That’s not multiplication oriented, Etheredge asserted.

“We find the churches (using Jesus’ model of discipleship) are the churches that are innovating, growing and are evangelistic,” he said.

During the forum at CrossPoint, Etheredge walked a group of Alabama Baptist church leaders through how to make a “3D disciple” — a disciple who is devoted to Jesus, developing in the character and competencies of Jesus, and deployed to make dis-

ciples who make disciples.

This happens by walking through Jesus’ four-stage process, Etheredge said.

“Disciple making is the process of moving people through,” said Etheredge, author of the book, “Bold Moves.”

Evangelism is key

“It begins in evangelism and ends in evangelism.”

And in the middle — between when people hear the gospel and when they are sent out to share it — discipleship happens.

Daniel Edmonds, director of the SBOM office of Sunday School and discipleship, said Jesus didn’t just

leave a mission to make disciples of all nations — He also left a model.

“Churches should study the message, mission and model of Christ and implement them in the local context,” Edmonds said.

“In Craig Etheredge, I have found a kindred spirit in the study and application of the disciple-making model of Christ.

“I’m thankful we have numerous pastors in Alabama’s Disciple Making Ministries who are following Christ’s example in making disciples. These pastors stand ready to partner with others in Alabama.”

For more information visit disciplefirst.com or disciplemakingal.com.

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Jacksonville State BCM celebrates 90 years of ministry

By Lanell Downs Smith
TAB Media

Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) began serving Jacksonville State University students around 1930.

This year, BCM will celebrate more than 90 years of ministry at the east Alabama campus, with an open house and dinner after the school's Oct. 9 homecoming game against Stephen F.

Austin State University.

First Baptist Church Jacksonville has ministered to JSU students since just after the church was formed in 1871.

According to current campus minister Gary Brittain, FBC Jacksonville initially "parented" the BCM, known then as Baptist Student Union. The church hosted the ministry until the 1960s when it grew into its own space.

Now JSU's BCM is in a building constructed around 1972 and renovated in 2019.

Four campus ministers have served JSU students since 1957: Leonard Roten (1957-67), John Tadlock (1968-81), Bob Ford (1982-99) and Gary Brittain (1990-present.)

Impacting lives

During his 30 years of service, Brittain has witnessed the impact campus ministries have on the lives of students.



Photo courtesy of Scott Barkley
Tony Garrison and Scott Barkley (right) perform with the JSU BCM skit team called ACTS.

"I have seen students come to Christ and become active in the church," he reflected. "I have seen students who in their college years hang around our ministry — but [show] little interest in the spiritual side of our group — mature and become active

leaders in their churches. There are pastors and church staff members who were active in our ministry.

"We have seen students go from here into missions, both international and domestic."



Photo courtesy of Michelle Bush
(L to r) Michelle Boggan Bush, Hope Morrow Blankenship and Cari Prickett Wilson participate in a SPOTS (special projects other than summer) missions trip to Dayton, Ohio, in winter 1994.

In fact, two former students now are BCM's faculty adviser and treasurer. Current JSU president, Don Killingsworth Jr., was an active participant as a student during Brittain's tenure.

Michelle Bush attended JSU from 1992 to 1995 and met her future husband, David, in BCM. She said she found a sense of belonging in BCM and was encouraged to grow and serve — making friends, connecting with other students and becoming a summer missionary through the North American Mission Board.

"The first mission[s] trip I went to was Gano, Texas," Bush recalled. "And that mission[s] home was featured in the Mission Friends book several years later when I was teaching Mission Friends at our church. I [told the kids], 'I've been here. I have pictures. Let me show you.'"

For more information visit jsubcm.org/alumni-friends.

Scott Barkley, national correspondent for Baptist Press, began his freshman year at JSU in fall 1992. In 1994, while working during the summer at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina, a fellow staffer introduced him to JSU's BCM.

A desire for fellowship with others wanting to grow in their faith inspired Barkley to join BCM that fall and get involved in a family group that met after weekly worship gatherings. Over the next few years, Barkley went on three missions trips through BCM and served as a family group leader, director of community

ministries, worship director and BCM president. Barkley also met his wife, Amy, there.

"BCM was foundational as well as transformational for me," he recalled. "It gave me the chance to see classmates at various places in their spiritual walk and led to some great conversations on how God works in our lives."

Campus ministers Brittain and Ford poured themselves into BCM students in a way Barkley said he had never seen before — setting an example that remains today.

"BCM is absolutely one of the reasons I became involved in my local church and chose to remain involved, as through it I was introduced to how Southern Baptists work," Barkley explained. "Before, I wasn't aware at all of how the SBC affected worldwide missions, but that changed with the BCM."

Making memories

"I loved the spiritual discussions with my BCM friends, but also the competitive ping-pong and foosball games, late-night Krispy Kreme doughnut runs to Birmingham, laughing on the couches until we couldn't breathe and generally making those memories that are a part of BCM," Barkley said.

Alumni will celebrate the 90th anniversary with a 1990s-themed event.

The BCM will host an open house after the homecoming parade and kickoff of the football game. Then alumni will regather for dinner following the game.



Photo courtesy of Michelle Bush
JSU BCM members participate in a SPOTS (special projects other than summer) trip to Dallas in spring 1993.

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3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of Georgia Baptist Mission Board

The Georgia Baptist Mission Board is downsizing its staff for the third consecutive year in response to a years-long decrease in giving. The number of staff to be cut has not been disclosed publicly. Georgia's Cooperative Program receipts have declined nearly 25% overall since 2007. In early 2019, 20 state missionary positions were downsized, and in late 2020, 26 staffers took an early retirement. Read the full story at tabonline.org/ga-baptists. (TAB Media)

ERLC search committee accepting applications

The seven-member presidential search committee of the board of trustees for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission is ready to receive applications and recommendations for the entity's next president.

The full board of trustees approved the committee's recommendation for a presidential profile Sept. 14 during the first day of its two-day annual meeting in Nashville. ERLC has lost the confidence of some Southern Baptists in the past decade, but it also maintains a reportedly strong base and continues to receive annual funding through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program allocation budget.

Deadline for applications is Nov. 30. More information is available at erlc.com/presidentialsearch. (TAB Media)

Supreme Court to rule on pastors at executions

The Supreme Court will soon hear the case of a Texas death row inmate who wants his pastor present as he dies, one in a series of cases involving the role of spiritual advisers during executions.

The court halted the Sept. 8 execution of John Ramirez, who argued that refusing to allow his pastor to lay hands on him and pray during his execution by lethal injection violated his religious freedom. The court directed the case be fast-tracked when the fall term begins.

On Sept. 9, Alabama announced that Willie Smith's pastor will be allowed to hold his hand during Smith's lethal injection next month. Smith's execution was halted in February when an appeals court said his pastor must be allowed in the chamber, contrary to Alabama's policy at the time. (TAB Media)

Headline news from around the Southeast

Florida

Florida Baptist churches are collecting priority relief supplies for churches in Cuba. Food, medicine and personal hygiene items will be shipped to Baptist churches in Cuba during October. "It is opportune to show our love and compassion for our Cuban brothers and sisters," said Emanuel Roque, Hispanic church catalyst for the Florida Baptist Convention. The project, AMA Cuba, is being conducted in partnership with the Western Cuba Baptist Convention, the Florida Baptist Witness reported.

Georgia

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission awarded Griffin Gullledge, pastor of Madison Baptist Church, with the John Leland Religious Liberty Award on Sept. 15. An Alabama native, Gullledge was recommended for the recognition because of his work to fight against the geno-

cide of the Uyghur people in China, The Baptist Paper reported. Messengers passed a resolution "On the Uyghur Genocide" at the 2021 SBC annual meeting in Nashville. The resolution was submitted by Gullledge.

Kentucky

Hope Center, a pregnancy center in Mayfield, offers a For Men program, which provides counseling and education for expectant fathers, teaching men to fill a support role during pregnancy and an active role during parenting, Kentucky Today reported. As men participate in the program, "there's a huge realization that [parenting] is a team thing," said Jackson Greer, Hope Center executive director.

Louisiana

As Hurricane Ida roared through Louisiana in late August, two trees fell on the home of

Matt Middlecamp, Baptist Campus Ministries director at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. After the storm, Middlecamp welcomed BCM students who came to his aid. Through it all, he found opportunities to share the gospel with neighbors, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary reported.

North Carolina

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina broke ground Sept. 11 for River Hill Refuge, a site for three new children's homes near Shelby. The establishment of River Hill Refuge and an additional foster care office in Shelby gives BCH a presence in 32 communities throughout North Carolina, South Carolina and Guatemala, the Biblical Recorder reported. The nonprofit serves children from traumatic circumstances where often the state's Departments of Social Services have taken custody for their well-being.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

▶ **Troy L. Morrison** — executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions from 1990 to 1999 — died Sept. 12. He was 89.

Morrison took the helm of the SBOM after serving as its director of church-minister relations since February 1985.

During his time as executive director, he emphasized evangelism, missions and ministries; focused on supporting local churches; nurtured relationships with Baptist associations; balanced the convention's budgets; and gave more to missions.

Before serving with the SBOM, Morrison served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Kentucky, including 17 years as pastor of 12th Street Baptist Church, Rainbow City.

He graduated from Jacksonville State University and earned a doctoral degree from Southern Seminary. He was a Judson College trustee for 12 years. He also served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957, achieving the rank of first lieutenant.



MORRISON

After his retirement, he faced much personal adversity, which he wrote about in his memoir, "A Miracle of God," published in 2010.

Less than a year after he retired, Morrison suffered a stroke. In 2007, he and his wife, Frances, lost their only daughter, Marsha, to brain cancer. Two years later, he had a heart attack and underwent bypass surgery. Frances died in 2017.

The Morrises were longtime members of First Baptist Church Montgomery and 12th Street Baptist. Morrison had recently joined Meadowbrook Baptist Church, Gadsden.

He is survived by his son, Mark Morrison, his sister, Gerri Morriion Basic; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

▶ **Larry Thompson**, director of missions for Washington Baptist Association, died Sept. 12.

He was 71.



THOMPSON

A native of Fredericktown, Ohio, Thompson earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Over the years, he also worked in various other jobs from tow boat engineer to diesel mechanic.

He had led Washington Association since 2015. In the decades prior he served as pastor of three area churches — Three Forks Baptist Church, Millry; True Vine Baptist Church, Chatom; and Liberty Baptist Church, McIntosh. He also served in various roles with the association.

Thompson was instrumental in starting Chris-

tians on Missions, a group of men who have done construction projects for people with needs in the community for about 40 years.

He is survived by his wife, Wilene; son, Bobby; daughter, Crystal; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

▶ **Glenn Pender** — longtime pastor and leader of St. Clair Baptist Association Disaster Relief — died Sept. 7. He was 83.

For 53 years, Pender served churches across Alabama, serving many of them in the role of pastor. He also led the St. Clair Baptist Association Disaster Relief team for 15 years.

He was a graduate of the Baptist College of Florida in Graceville.

Pender is survived by his wife of 63 years, Frances; son, Greg; daughter, Pattie; and two grandchildren.

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Zach Van Gieson** is the new pastor of **Lakeview Baptist Church, Oxford**. Van Gieson previously served Chandler Springs Baptist Church, Talladega. He is also human resources manager at AOD Federal Credit Union and has previously served Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston, as pastor of youth and families, and The Church at Station Hill, Spring Hill, Tennessee, as children's minister. He went to Middle Tennessee State University and South-



PENDER



VAN GIESON

ern Seminary. He and his wife, Rachel, have four children.

ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

▶ **New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Brewton**, is hosting its 100th anniversary Sept. 26. Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama State Board of Missions, will speak and Danny Parker and June Gregg will lead music. Service begins at 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch.

JUDSON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Union Springs Baptist Church, Newville**, has changed the date of its homecoming and 125th anniversary to Oct. 24 at 10:30 a.m.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Tim Lovett**, pastor of **Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**, announced his retirement from full-time ministry Sept. 5. His last Sunday at the church was Sept. 19.

Lovett became pastor of Calvary Baptist in 2009. He came from Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, and had served other churches in Alabama and Kentucky in his 37 years of ministry.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University and a master of divinity and doctor of ministry from Southern Seminary.

Lovett told the congregation that while the announcement might seem sudden, he and his wife, Penny, had been praying and processing for months.

"Know that we love you, and we love this great place called Calvary," he told the church.



LOVETT

Persecuted church

Kidnapped girl released, raising hope for other captives

CHIBOK, Nigeria — A girl abducted by the terrorist group Boko Haram seven years ago was recently reunited with her parents, raising hope that other captives will be found and returned.

A Barnabas Fund report said Ruth Ngladar Pogu surrendered to the military in late July, accompanied by someone she allegedly married while in captivity. On April 14, 2014, Barnabas Fund reported, Islamic extremists kidnapped 276 girls, mostly Christians, from a Chibok area school. Some were whipped into forced marriage, and Christian girls experienced a mock execution for refusing to convert. Some 160 were rescued or released.

Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa Province and criminal gangs carried out the mass kidnappings, the report stated.

This year on July 5, gunmen abducted 120 students from Bethel Baptist High School in Kaduna State. Although some escaped or were released, 83 still are captive, the report said. Since



Barnabas Fund photo

December an estimated 1,000 pupils have been kidnapped from schools.

Nigeria is No. 9 on Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (Leigh Pritchett)

SPEAK conference challenges students to share now, consider call to ministry

The SPEAK conference has always had one thing at its core — the gospel. But this year, Scooter Kellum, youth ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, wanted to add a new layer to the teaching.

After students heard the gospel and then were challenged to share it with their friends, they were encouraged to consider a call to go and take the gospel to other places through full-time ministry.

More than 900 students and leaders attended the summer event at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville. The conference followed the theme SPEAK Now, and music was led by Iron City Worship throughout the weekend.

After a concert by Crowder kicked things off Friday night, Ed Newton — speaker, evangelist and lead pastor of Community Bible Church in San Antonio — presented the gospel. Newton narrowed in on the idea that people shouldn't come to Jesus because they're scared of hell or because it's what they "should" do, but because Jesus Himself is the prize.

The next morning, Shane Pruitt, national Next Gen evangelism director for the North American Mission Board, challenged students that the time to share the gospel is now.

'That name is Jesus'

He reminded students of the truth they heard the night before: "Hope has a name. Joy has a name. Peace has a name. Life has a name. And that name is Jesus!"

Pruitt then brought out a clock that had the word "now" where the numbers would typically be. He said as long as someone is alive,



Photo by Lauren Cumbie

Students at this year's SPEAK conference enjoy a concert by Crowder. More than 900 students and leaders attended the event at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville.

the time to believe is now. And equally as important, as long as others are alive, the time to share the gospel with them is now because when the clock stops it's too late.

He put an exclamation point on that topic later as he spoke to youth ministers and said that 95% of those who now claim to be Christians came to know the Lord before the age of 30. This adds urgency to ministry.

To end the conference, Larry Hyche, associate for men's spiritual development in the SBOM global missions office, spent time talking through what a call to ministry might look like in a student's life.

First, he told them to stand on the Scripture as they discern whether their call is the

universal call of a believer to "go" or the call to vocational ministry.

Second, he asked them if their heart was being pulled by the Holy Spirit toward ministry. Hyche reminded

students that the world needs more Christian professionals to use their jobs with gospel intentionality. That, he said, is equally as important to building the kingdom of God as vocational ministry.

But for those being called to full-time ministry, there is nothing else that feels right. Ministry is what makes that person's heart sing.

Third, he told students to discern if they have a deep peace from God when doing gospel work.

"When you're doing ministry, there's a joy and peace that is indescribable,"

Hyche said. "It charges you up. It excites you. It brings joy to your life and leaves you wanting more."

To end the weekend, 30 students came forward to profess new faith in Christ, and 19 students and one adult responded that they felt a call to

vocational ministry.

The SPEAK conference is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program. For more information, visit speak.ymlink.org. (SBOM)



Photo by Lauren Cumbie

Shane Pruitt challenges students that "now" is the time to share the gospel with others.

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West Side Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Ala., is seeking a full-time pastor. The pastor should possess a conviction to preach from the holy Bible. He must provide pastoral care for our congregation and provide visionary leadership for the future of our church. West Side Baptist is a Southern Baptist church located at 713 Mountain Street, Jacksonville, AL 36265. To submit your resumé or recommend a candidate for this position, please use wbsbcjax36265@gmail.com, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee or mail resumé to: West Side Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 713 Mountain Street, Jacksonville, AL 36265.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ala., is seeking a full-time or part-time candidate to lead our worship ministry. Please submit resumé to: office@fbcwoodstock.org.

WORSHIP AND/OR YOUTH PASTOR

New Hinson Baptist Church in Slocomb, Ala., is seeking a worship and/or youth pastor to lead a blended worship service as well as serve in our youth ministry. Positions could be divided into two part-time positions or one full-time position depending on qualifications. Please email resumé to: newhinson@yahoo.com.

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TAB DIGITAL

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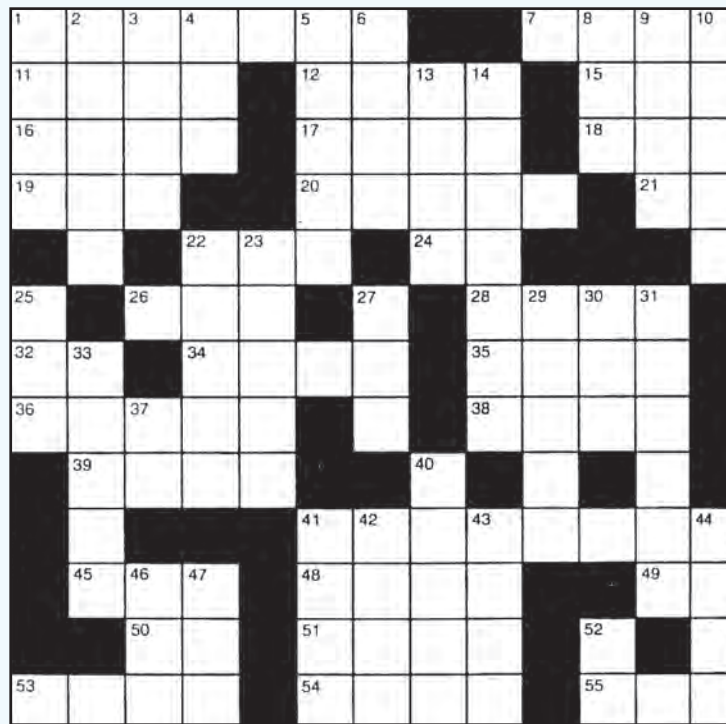
TAB HIGHLIGHTS

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

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. After threescore and two weeks shall ____ be cut off. (Dan. 9:26)
7. He sent him out of the ____ of Hebron. (Gen. 37:14)
11. ____ the Ahohite. (1 Chron. 11:29)
12. Sons of Shimei were Jahath, _____. (1 Chron. 23:10)
15. And pursued them unto _____. (Gen. 14:14)
16. Behold, O mount _____. (Ezek. 35:3)
17. The ____ of the Lord. (2 Kings 19:31)
18. Until it come ____ at your nostrils. (Num. 11:20)
19. Why is thy spirit so ____? (1 Kings 21:5)
20. When ye blow an _____. (Num. 10:5)
21. Mid-Atlantic State. (abbr.)
22. They that handle the ____ of the writer. (Judg. 5:14)
24. And fast ye for _____. (Esther 4:16)
26. Every ____, whereon he lieth is unclean. (Lev. 15:4)
28. The trees of lign ____ which the Lord hath planted. (Num. 24:6)
32. Full ____ compassion. (Ps. 112:4)
34. Consumption and the burning _____. (Lev. 26:16)
35. Now will we ____ worse with thee. (Gen. 19:9)
36. Noah found ____ in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:8)
38. With thy vine ____, and with thy oliveyard. (Ex. 23:11)
39. Send forth their little ____ like a flock. (Job 21:11)
41. The ____ shall plant, and shall eat. (Jer. 31:5)
45. ____ wagons and four oxen. (Num. 7:7)
48. Thou shalt ____ the Lord thy God. (Deut. 6:5)
49. Even ____ will I certainly do this. (1 Kings 1:30)



By Valerie Barrett Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

50. Fear was ____ every side. (Ps. 31:13)
 51. Good works for necessary _____. (Titus 3:14)
 53. O ____ of Sibmah, I will weep for thee. (Jer. 48:32)
 54. And she ____ them away. (Josh. 2:21)
 55. Vital juice in a tree.
- DOWN**
1. If thy father at all ____ me. (1 Sam. 20:6)
 2. Ezer and _____. (1 Chron. 7:21)
 3. The Lord ____ unto me. (Jer. 1:7)
 4. And said, I go, ____: and went not. (Matt. 21:30)
 5. Paltiel the son of _____. (Num. 34:26)
 6. ____ the Beth-elite build Jericho. (1 Kings 16:34)
 8. Why make ye this ____, and weep? (Mark 5:39)
 9. ____ him, all ye people. (Rom. 15:11)
 10. They which ____ in may see. (Luke 8:16)
 13. Sons of Caleb; Iru, Elah and _____. (1 Chron. 4:15)
 14. It hath been ____ of old time. (Eccles. 1:10)
 22. Jacob held his ____ until they were come. (Gen. 34:5)
 23. Joined at the two ____ thereof. (Ex. 28:7)
 25. One that taketh a ____ by the ears. (Prov. 26:17)
 27. So ____-hadad hearkened unto King Asa. (1 Kings 15:20)
 29. I am the ____ in my father's house. (Judg. 6:15)
 30. All that handle the ____, the mariners. (Ezek. 27:29)
 31. The ____ of the congregation. (Lev. 4:15)
 33. By the breath of God ____ is given. (Job 37:10)
 37. Their throat is ____ open sepulchre. (Ps. 5:9)
 40. Zebulun shall dwell at the ____ of the sea. (Gen. 49:13)
 41. And restore the over ____ unto the man. (Lev. 25:27)
 42. And thou ____ thy life. (Judg. 18:25)
 43. The swallow a ____ for herself. (Ps. 84:3)
 44. And take thee much _____. (Jer. 2:22)
 46. Out of the spoils ____ in battles. (1 Chron. 26:27)
 47. I took 12 men of you, ____ of a tribe. (Deut. 1:23)
 52. If I be a master, where ____ my fear? (Mal. 1:6)

Tour helps people find healing and forgiveness

(continued from page 1) how religion interacts with all of that, including a little-known Charles Spurgeon incident. He also shares his personal story of how his own family came to be in the area.

And that fountain — that's where it all comes together. It was the site of the largest slave market in America from 1850 to 1865.

Adams said humanity's story is one of brokenness, starting all the way back with the history of what happened in the Garden of Eden with original sin. That brokenness shows up in the history of the city he calls home.

But Adams is part of a growing group of Montgomery residents working toward healing and unity. It's becoming part of the fabric of the church's story in the city and beyond.

And his tour — it's aimed at being a piece of that puzzle, helping each other look at the past, where religion went wrong and how

it can go right, Adams said. It's aimed at helping people of different backgrounds find healing and forgiveness.

'Spark of hope'

"We're seeing a spark of hope," he said.

You can get a small sampling of what it's like to go on a walk with Adams on Season 2 of the Stories podcast — the Flatline story — available now at tabonline.org/stories.

TAB Media also explores

some of Montgomery's steps toward healing and work toward unity in Stories. The serial-style podcast tells the story of three Montgomery-area churches — an aging church, a sending church and a new church plant — that are locking arms to reach

their community across racial lines. Not only that — they're becoming family.

All three episodes are available now wherever you get your podcasts.

For more information, visit montgomerydeephistory.com.



Photo by Grace Thornton

The Equal Justice Initiative building is a stop along the Montgomery Deep History tour.



Photo by Grace Thornton

During his tour, Keelan Adams shares the history of slaves who were walked from the river down this street — Commerce Street — to Court Square to be sold.



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CHRIST + CENTERED

Colossians 1:17-18



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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

2021 marks 1500th birthday of Irish abbot, evangelist Columba

Columba (521–597), an abbot and missionary evangelist, studied under prominent monastic teachers in Ireland and founded several monasteries there. He is known for spreading Christianity in present-day Scotland. He founded the important abbey on Iona.

This year is the 1500th anniversary of his birth.

He was born Dec. 7, 521, to Fedlimid and Eithne in Gartan, Ireland. When baptized, he was given the name Crimthann. He was found praying so often in the town church that his friends called him Colmcille, Dove of the Church. The Latin word for Colm is Columba.

After an early education, he entered the monastic school of Finnian of Movilla. He was almost 20 years old when he completed his training.

He then traveled to Leinster, where he studied under Gemman, an aged bard.

In early Christian Ireland, the druidic tradition was replaced by the new Christian faith. Monasteries flourished, teaching Latin and Christian theology.

Columba studied under Finnian of Clonard Abbey in County Meath. He was one of 12 students of Finnian, who became known as the 12 Apostles of Ireland.

Columba founded several monasteries including Derry, Durrow and Kell and is one of the three patron saints of Ireland after Patrick and Brigid of Kildare.



COLUMBA

In 563, Columba and his 11 companions traveled to Scotland in a wicker boat covered with leather. They settled on the island of Iona in the Inner Hebrides off the western coast of Scotland.

He founded an abbey there, which became a place of pilgrimage and learning.

Many stories exist about miracles he performed, such as driving out evil spirits and healing people with

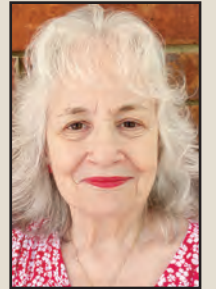
diseases. His most famous miracle may be his encounter with an unidentified animal, which some have claimed is the Loch Ness Monster. He saw a man swimming, being chased by a sea creature.

Columba made the sign of the cross and the man swam to safety. He then banished the “monster” to the bottom of the River Ness.

He founded several churches in the Hebrides, and his monastery became a school for missionaries. He wrote several hymns and transcribed 300 books. According to tradition, Columba died June 9, 597, and was buried in Iona Abbey. The abbey is now a tourist destination and a place for spiritual retreats.

By Joanne Sloan

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



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 26

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



JOY THROUGH HUMILITY Philippians 3:1–21

Righteousness Gained (8–11)

Philippians is filled with an expression of joy. Having been a Pharisee who tried to earn salvation by keeping the law, Paul encountered salvation when he was confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus. This event turned Paul's life around.

Instead of focusing on how to be righteous by doing good works, he realized he was made righteous by Christ's work on the cross. All the things Paul strove for were seen as meaningless in light of what Christ had done for him. This is the glory of the gospel of Christ!

Humans operate with a notion of doing something to earn something, but the gospel does not work this way. In fact, it is the opposite: Instead of doing something to earn our salvation, we cannot do anything;

Christ's work on the cross, dying to fulfill the law but raised to life to show His power over sin, is the work that saves.

All we have to do is believe in faith that Christ died in our place, and we receive His righteousness.

Sanctification Begun (12–14)

Having established that we are saved by grace and not works, Paul encourages readers to press on in service to the Lord.

Some believe that once they have accepted Christ, they can go on and live as they did in their former days. But a person who has been touched by the grace of God does not sit back and live selfishly. He/she lives for God. This is sanctification, the process of becoming more and more like Christ. Surely in gratitude for our salvation, we live not for ourselves but for God.

Also, God's salvation means our past actions have no sway over us. We do not need to live in guilt for what we have done. We walk in

victory, in the hope of our salvation even as we also extend grace and forgiveness to others. Christians should offer forgiveness to others because God has forgiven us in Christ.

Warning Issued (15–19)

Paul uses himself as an example for the Philippians, which applies to us as well. Many claim to be followers of Christ but have turned from the faith. We need to be wary of such people since they can lead us astray

“Instead of focusing on earthly things, Paul reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven.

He was content in all circumstances because he knew his time on earth was temporary.”

and turn us toward sin and away from Christ. Many so-called Christians focus on earthly things — especially true in the prosperity gospel teaching in which we are told that Christians, if they have enough faith, can get what they want from God — health, money, jobs, possessions.

This is an affront to the gospel and self-serving. We do not come to God to get “stuff” — we turn to God because He is worthy of our praise and devotion. He gives us all we need in saving us from sin and giving us an eternal home.

Citizenship Assured (20–21)

Instead of focusing on earthly things, Paul reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven. He was content in all circumstances because he knew his time on earth was temporary.

This is why Christians historically have been willing to give their time, money and even their lives for the sake of the gospel. They know serving God is focusing on eternal things. Jesus tells us not to store up treasures on earth but to store up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19–21).

We live in a world where people focus on possessions and wealth, and it can be a rat race trying to keep up. Christ gives us rest from this never-ending and never-satisfying drive, allowing us to be content with what He has provided.

Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament, Samford University



SURE OF VICTORY 1 John 3:19–4:4

Probably all of 1 John should be read in light of Jesus' love commandment (John 13:34).

Perhaps Alabama Baptists could make 1 John 3:18 our mission statement: “Let us love, not in word or speech, but in work and truth.”

We have victory over doubt. (3:19–22)

By speaking of “hearts,” John returns to what his readers “know” (2:3–6; 20–29).

In John's Bible (our Old Testament), “heart” often includes both intellect and emotions (1 Kings 8:48); it is where God writes His commands (Ps. 37:31; Ezek. 36:26), which are both known and loved.

This is probably how John uses the term, for the heart can “condemn” or “convict” us as in a law court. This self-conviction does not have final authority, however. God, who knows everything, is greater.

John has mentioned God's knowledge of the human capacity for repentance (1:9); our advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous (2:1); and Jesus' atoning sacrifice (2:2; 4:10). In God's presence, we in turn can have “confidence” (2:28; 4:17), a term that refers to frank speech.

John is talking about prayers of petition: We have confidence that God will grant what we ask.

This happens because if “we obey God's commandments and do what pleases Him,” we ask for what pleases God rather than for what pleases ourselves. We pray as Jesus did, “Thy will be done” (Matt. 6:10; 26:39–44).

We have victory because we remain in Jesus, and He remains in us. (3:23–24)

John ties the love commandment to faith in Jesus. In Greek, “believe” and “faith” have the same root, whereas English has one word for the verb and another for the noun. Therefore, most translations say, “believe in the name of His Son,” whereas John means not only assent to a truth (he talks about that in 2:21 and 4:2) but also faith-

ful obedience to God's Son, who commanded us to love one another.

Verse 24, which is almost identical to 4:13, again takes up the metaphor of living or abiding (2:6, 24, 28; 3:6, 17; 24; 4:12–17).

When John says the person who obeys Jesus' love commandment lives in Jesus Christ and He in turn lives in that person, he switches from the collective language of 2:24–26 (the congregation) to individual language (the believer).

Is there a more powerful way to talk about the immediacy of Christ? We are both immersed in and filled by “the Spirit that He has given us.” Why then does obedience evade us?

We have victory because Jesus has conquered the world. (4:1–4)

John's answer is to acknowledge the ease with which false prophets lure people. After all, if the Spirit of Christ lives in us now, why should we think that Christ came in the flesh once upon a time?

Those who claimed to see and touch Him were tricked by an illusion. Not so, says John. To deny Christ's body is to deny the reality of the problem of sin, which Christ came into the world to solve through His death (2:1–2).

Furthermore, it is to ignore Christ's love command, which we fulfill when we “with actions and in truth” meet the bodily needs of our brothers and sisters (3:16–18).

He who lives in us is “greater than our hearts,” which condemn from within, and “greater than the one who is the world,” who deceives from without.

Deceivers can be liars (2:22) or sincere. Either way, it is our job to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God.” For John, that test is to ask, “Do these teachings result in acts of love for the whole person, or do they treat the person as if the body doesn't matter?”

According to John, as God loves and provides for both soul and body, so should we.

Thanks be to God.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs
TAB Media

Artist Michael Feighan's new music inspired by prayer, patriotism

Patriotism. The power of prayer. The joy of adoption. Miraculous healing. All these topics are covered on the four-song EP by singer/songwriter Michael Feighan called "Someone Prayed."

Though Feighan has been a professional musician throughout his adult life, he never dreamed he would ever do more than become a top-10 drummer and singer in Christian music.

"If someone asked me last year, 'Do you think you'll be having an interview with Tracy for The Alabama Baptist about an album?' I would have been like, 'What? What are you talking about?'"

Time for solo album

However, while Feighan was playing with the Christian rock band Whitecross, a friend and mentor suggested the idea to his wife.

"He said, 'Michael needs to do a solo album.'"

Feighan's wife responded with, "'Oh, that's really nice.' And he goes, 'He needs to do a solo album, and I'm going to help him do it,'" Feighan related.

When he got home, his wife told him he needed to call this friend.

Feighan also thought it was "really nice" of him to suggest the

idea but knew there was no way he had time to take on the project. Plus, he had no idea where to start.

"And then COVID hit, and my plate was cleared. I was like, 'Oh, OK. If I'm ever going to do it, it's got to be now.'"

"I jumped in with both feet, and now I'm on this whole different path. It's so bizarre. I've got these songs and this EP coming out. It's awesome, but it's crazy."

The songs on the EP reflect Feighan's life, he said.

"I Still Believe" is a patriotic song written for his dad, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Mike Feighan. He and his wife hoped it would be out by Independence Day, but it wasn't released until Aug. 27.

"With all that the world's going through, it wasn't an easy song to write, but it came out so well," Feighan said.

"So, when we missed the 4th of July date, we were kind of discouraged.

"But now with everything that's happening with Afghanistan ... Wow!

It couldn't have been better timing for this to come out. ... The goal was to give hope back to our country and what it was built on — God."

Feighan's wife also noticed this year is the 20th anniversary of 9/11, to which Feighan said, "Oh, my goodness. God, You're pretty cool," speaking about God's perfect timing of the release.

The song "Joy of Life" speaks to a dark time when his wife's breast cancer progressed into bone cancer.

During one 10-week hospital stay, Feighan looked out the window, noticed it was a beautiful day and that many were outside enjoying it.

He realized he was in a "bubble of darkness" and started relying on Mark 11:22-25 in which Jesus says to "speak to your mountain."

Feighan's wife has since had a miraculous healing from the cancer, he shared.

Adoption and children are the focus of "Before

Time Began." The first verse is about adopting their then 8-year-old daughter, Tatiana, from Russia.

The second verse was written by Matt Bissonette, producer of the EP, about his son. The third verse ties them together, talking about how all are God's children.

'Standing in the gap'

"The last song, 'Someone Prayed' is a really special song," Feighan said.

"This song talks about in life, with everybody, there's ups and downs, there's highs and lows, sometimes they can get so low that you don't have the strength to pray. That's when there's family, friends or even people you don't even know standing in the gap, praying for you.

"Or you're one of the people standing in the gap for someone else," Feighan added.

"My wife always says, 'Everyone has a "someone prayed" story.' Even people who aren't believers, someone's praying for them.

"I've sent [the song] to friends and relatives who are not believers and it's always been the same response.

"They'll start telling me a story — 'My mom is always praying for me. My dad is constantly praying for me. My grandma, my grandpa' — that kind of stuff excites and blesses me to hear. It's really touching people."

The full EP "Someone Prayed" will be released Oct. 15 and the official video for "I Still Believe" already is on YouTube.



Photo courtesy of Michael Feighan

To share a "Someone Prayed" story or find out more, visit michaelfeighan.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.



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