

# The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 800-803-5201  
www.thealabamabaptist.org

October 14, 2021

Vol. 186, No. 40  
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



**Pastors' wives:  
Balancing ministry  
and motherhood**

◆ Page 9



**Cultural research  
shows worldviews  
formed in childhood,  
refined in young adult years**

◆ Pages 10–11



Unsplash.com

Alabama's Rick Lance (center), executive director of the State Board of Missions, joins Randy Covington (left), executive director of Alaska Baptist Resource Network, and John Montgomery, dean of spiritual life at California Baptist University, in an address to Alaska Baptists on Sept. 29 — day three of its annual meeting.



Photo by Sylvia Rylande

## Partnership between Alabama and Alaska Baptists off to a good start

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
TAB Media

**I**n May, Alabama Baptists entered into a five-year partnership with Alaska Baptists, and the fruits of that partnership are already growing, leaders say.

The ministry partnership was highlighted during the Alaska

Baptist Resource Network's annual meeting Sept. 27–29 at First Baptist Church North Pole.

During the Sept. 27 Impact Alaska missions celebration, Alabama Baptist Jamie Baldwin joined Cody Schwegel, pastor of Liberty Church in Craig, Alaska, for a conversation about Liberty's relaunch.

Baldwin, who retired from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions after working in Sunday School and discipleship ministries, has been serving in Craig since

April 8 on a six-month assignment to help Schwegel and his church. The work has included construction work, as well as outreach.

### Interior work

During the summer, Baldwin and volunteers from Alabama finished the interior of the church's fellowship area, installed new flooring and put in a new HVAC system.

As work has progressed, the congregation has grown, from six members at the beginning of the year to nearly 50 attending each Sunday. The church's

Sunday School has 16–18 children and teenagers, Schwegel said — mostly teenagers.

"They're unchurched, and they want to come. They want to be there," he said.

Throughout the summer, God met needs in unusual and surprising ways, Schwegel added.

One Sunday, there were 56 people at church — and the church had only 60 chairs.

Schwegel thought, "Praise the Lord, we need more chairs."

(See 'God,' page 13)

  
**COOPERATIVE  
PROGRAM**

**CP surpasses \$20  
billion in cumulative  
giving**

◆ Page 17



Find us on  
**YouTube**

**TAB Media**

[youtube.com/tabmediagroup](https://youtube.com/tabmediagroup)

## OUR EXTENDED ALABAMA BAPTIST FAMILY

### ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

1-800-264-1225 | www.alsbom.org  
Offices: Prattville

Leadership: Rick Lance, executive director

### ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

205-982-1112 | www.alabamachild.org  
Main office: Birmingham

Leadership: Rod Marshall, president and CEO

### ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

205-726-2363 | www.abhconline.com  
Office: Birmingham

Leadership: Lonette Berg, executive director

### ALABAMA BAPTIST RETIREMENT CENTERS

800-264-1225, ext. 329 | www.abrc.org  
Main office: Prattville

Leadership: Dwain Kinard, interim acting president

### THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

334-394-2000 | www.tbfa.org  
Offices: Montgomery

Leadership: John Ashworth, president

### SHOCCO SPRINGS BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER

256-761-1100 | www.shocco.org  
Location: Talladega

Leadership: Russell Kliner, executive director

### ALABAMA CITIZENS ACTION PROGRAM

205-985-9062 | www.alcap.com  
Offices: Birmingham

Leadership: Joe Godfrey, executive director

### ALABAMA WMU

334-288-2460 | www.alabamawmu.org  
Offices: Prattville

Leadership: Candace McIntosh, executive director

### JUDSON COLLEGE

800-447-9472 | www.judson.edu  
Location: Marion

Leadership: Daphne Robinson, president

### SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

205-726-2011 | www.samford.edu  
Location: Birmingham

Leadership: Beck A. Taylor, president

### UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

251-675-5990 | www.umobile.edu  
Location: Mobile

Leadership: Lonnie Burnett, president



Photo by Dianna L. Cagle

TAB Media digital editor Hannah Muñoz (in headphones) works with Amy Hacker, TAB Media's creative services associate, to record The Weekly, a digest of news curated from TAB Media's print and digital resources.

# TAB's digital editor finds niche with podcasts

When Hannah Muñoz was a student intern at TAB Media, she loved working here — but she wasn't interested at all in print journalism.

"I studied broadcast and electronic journalism at school, but I was mostly focused on video because I thought that's what I wanted to do," she said.

But as Muñoz studied at Samford University and learned at TAB too, her role developed into something altogether different — she now serves as digital editor, producing TAB Media Group's three podcasts.

"Even though I didn't want to be a writer, I loved the storytelling aspect of my work at TAB from the beginning," Muñoz said.

And now as digital editor, she can help with that storytelling while utilizing her editing skills. It started with TAB's first podcast, which was aimed at providing an audio version of the print publication for visually impaired Alabama Baptists.

Over time, the journey took her to where TAB podcasts are now — two weekly podcasts and one seasonal podcast. One of the former, The Weekly, is crafted and produced by Muñoz with that original visually impaired audience in mind, though the podcast has now become more of a digest of top news stories for a broad listening audience.

The other weekly podcast — Amplify: Conversations about life + faith — is hosted by Maggie Evans in a talk show format. The seasonal one — Stories — is a serial-style storytelling podcast hosted by Grace Thornton.

"The whole range of podcasts I listen to would fit into one of those categories, so we've got it covered," Muñoz said.

And she's enjoyed learning more about production every step of the way.

"With each new podcast we've added, I've had to learn more about how to make it better," Muñoz said. (TAB Media)

To listen or subscribe to TAB's podcasts, visit [tabonline.org/podcasts](http://tabonline.org/podcasts).

*"Even though I didn't want to be a writer, I loved the storytelling aspect of my work at TAB from the beginning."*

Hannah Muñoz  
digital editor, TAB Media

## 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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)  
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.

Website: [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org)  
Email: [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)  
or [subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org)  
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

**ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
Includes print, digital, app and full web access

Group Rate per subscriber per year — \$16.25  
(Check with your church or group to find out if it has a TAB group account)

Individual — \$34.95 per year (50 issues)

### JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Maggie Evans Special Assistant	Carrie B. McWhorter Content Editor
Debbie Campbell Director of Communications	Holly Smith Copy Editor
Shawn Hendricks Director of Product Management	Grace Thornton Special Assignments Editor
Hannah Muñoz Digital Editor	Margaret Colson Special Assignments Editor
James Hammack Digital Services Manager	Dianna L. Cagle Production Manager
Sarah Gill Digital Services Assoc.	Lauren C. Grim Creative Services Manager
Annette Brown Guest Services	Amy Hacker Creative Services Assoc.
Jessica Ingram Event Coordinator	Melanie McKinney Advertising Manager
Dave Walsh Marketing Consultant	Pam Holt Outside Sales Rep
Deb Lowery Financial Assistant	Susan Stevens Outside Sales Rep
Richard Maddox Computer Services	Addie Lee Frierson Student intern

**NEWS SERVICES**  
Baptist Press (BP), Associated Press/Religion News Service (AP/RNS), Morning Star News (MS).

**POSTMASTER**  
Send address changes to:  
The Alabama Baptist  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209

**ADDRESS CHANGE**  
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:  
Subscription Department  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



### 'Nation's Top Regional Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 14.

# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**By Jennifer Davis Rash**

President and Editor-in-Chief



[jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)  
@RashionalThts

## Judson College updates from president Daphne Robinson

While the campus of Judson College in Marion is no longer buzzing with students, classes or extracurricular activities, it remains a vital location for the business operations focused on dissolving the corporation.

Judson President Daphne Robinson continues the quest of ensuring the historic institution closes with dignity.

Robinson, who became president July 19, confirmed in late September that Judson ceased to exist as a school on July 31 — the date announced following a difficult decision made by the board of trustees in May.

All but three or four of the then-registered students (around 80) found a new home, she said, noting the ones not in school this fall chose to take a break rather than enroll elsewhere.

The University of Mobile agreed to take responsibility for student transcripts and has already been processing requests, Robinson shared. “I personally delivered the information ... microfilm, pdfs and all former

catalogs,” she said, expressing a sense of gratitude to the sister Alabama Baptist school.

Most faculty have found new positions and some are reporting better hours and better pay in their new roles, Robinson said.

As far as staff, about 10 people remain employed by Judson in the areas of administration, maintenance, janitorial services and security.

Robinson’s focus now is on wrapping up paperwork required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools along with negotiations with creditors to find an agreeable solution for the \$15.9 million debt.

“They are all being very cooperative and understanding,” she

said. “We are still trying to work out a situation where we do not have to file bankruptcy.”

Along with recruiting a national group skilled in marketing the sale of large campuses that have closed, Robinson has been contacting donors to see if they might consider removing the restrictions on their endowments. By unrestricted the funds, Judson can use the money toward closing costs.

And while it may seem like an odd way to allow the money to be used, Robinson noted that it all really comes full circle because the banks played a part in Judson’s story the past 20 years.

“These banks loaned us money when we didn’t have enough income coming in that allowed students to go to school on the scholarships,” she said. “It was because of the banks that Judson continued running.”

Robinson also noted that while Judson officials are optimistic in the sale of the property, they are anticipating a careful vetting of any potential buyers.

“We want to make sure whoever buys the campus is good for the community,” she said. “We have such a strong relationship with the community.”

Once everything is settled, the remaining restricted endowments will be rerouted to another school or other entity based on an assessment by the state Attorney General’s office, according to Judson officials earlier in the year and confirmed by Robinson. Officials in the AG’s office will make the decision based on the intent of the donor, she explained.

Also, still pending is the future home of all the archives stored at Judson, Robinson noted.

“There’s a lot of history there and you don’t want that lost,” she said. “Judson is continuing to pursue the best location of the archives.”

Robinson will attend the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting in November to give Judson’s final report to messengers.

Cooperative Program funds from Alabama Baptists will continue through the end of December to complete the 2021 year of funding, but Judson is not in the proposed 2022 CP budget for Alabama Baptists.

Still, Robinson shares the same sentiment as a long history of Judson presidents have — gratitude to Alabama Baptists.

“Alabama Baptists are very generous and supportive and have been really appreciative of what all Judson did through the years,” she said. “They ... like the majority of the alumni ... are very sad and disappointed Judson had to close but understand the reality of how things are.”



Photo courtesy of Kelly Mott Durrett (Top left, clockwise) Judson alumnae Kelly Mott Durrett, Terri Smith Roca, Donna Cink Steele, Andrea Chenault Payne and Judson President Daphne Robinson attend Rose Sunday at Siloam Baptist.



Photo courtesy of Claire Kinnaird Keel Judson alumna Claire Keel greets Norman McCrummen III, son of the late Judson president, who was guest speaker for Rose Sunday on Sept. 12.

# Your Voice



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

## Open letter to Alabama Baptists from state reps serving on the SBC Executive Committee

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Alabama had five representatives serving on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee prior to the Sept. 20–21 meeting in Nashville.*

*Between the September meeting and the Oct. 5 meeting, two members from Alabama resigned — Paul Hicks and Melissa Golden. Following the EC's vote during the Oct. 5 meeting to waive attorney-client privilege, one additional member resigned — Phyllis Ingram.*

*The two remaining members — Neal Hughes and Tim Cox —*

*shared the following response to Alabama Baptists.*

We want to thank our beloved Alabama Baptist family for praying for the SBC Executive Committee over the past several weeks. We who make our home the Yellowhammer State have done our best to hear the messengers' hearts.

In the end, the decision did not come easily, but the SBC churches and the messengers from the June 15 meeting would say that the EC fulfilled their duty ad interim for the SBC annual meeting in making an informed decision.

Many of you honored the Lord and us with your prayers and encouragement. Even though some may have disagreed with our decisions, you expressed your thoughts with kindness, transparency and respect. You gave us the benefit of the doubt of collective years of service and faithfully trusted us to do the right thing in the right way. You understood the underlying biblical principle and Baptist heritage that “we don't have to be twins to be brothers and sisters.”

In truth, all 86 of us wanted to do right by the survivors of sexual abuse. Sadly, the vote did not come without several casualties. We ask for your continued prayers as we move forward with the decision made today. In the days to come, all Southern Baptists should look forward to learning more about how to make our churches safer places for gospel advancement.

As we now prepare to move forward, may our “God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5–6, NIV).

Sincerely,  
Your Alabama Baptist  
Representatives to the SBC  
Executive Committee —  
Neal Hughes and Tim Cox

It's time to know for sure where we have fallen short on the question of sexual abuse within the Southern Baptist Convention, so that we can correct any errors and move into the future as a convention, that's the most safe for our most vulnerable members.

**Chairman Rolland Slade**  
SBC Executive Committee

Sexual abuse is antithetical to the gospel of Christ. It has no place in the Southern Baptist Convention. And it is my prayer that all Southern Baptists will remain resolute in our commitment to preventing abuse, caring for survivors, and taking whatever steps are necessary to implement reforms.

**SBC President Ed Litton**

We thank all of the trustees for their diligence in addressing complex questions brought to bear by this process.

**Ronnie Floyd**  
President and CEO  
SBC Executive Committee

The task force is pleased with the strong vote today (Oct. 5) by the Executive Committee to abide by the moral imperative directed by the messengers, seminary presidents, state leaders and many, many more.

**Pastor Bruce Frank**  
Chair, SBC Sexual Abuse  
Task Force

## Motion adopted by the EC

Following a 3 1/2-hour meeting Oct 5, its second special-called meeting, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee voted 44 to 31 to waive attorney-client privilege in the coming investigation by Guidepost Solutions.

The motion by Jared Wellman of Texas reads:

“I would like to make a motion that represents the will of the messengers of a selective waiver that includes an investigation into any allegations of abuse, mishandling of abuse, mistreatment of victims, a pattern of

intimidation of victims or advocates, and resistance to sexual abuse reform initiatives of the actions and decisions of staff and members of the Executive Committee from January 1, 2000, to June 14, 2021.

“I move that the Executive Committee authorize our Chairman to execute the contract with Guidepost that we received on October 1, 2021, which includes waiver of attorney-client privilege in accordance with the action of the messengers to the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention.”

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

“We will never stop protecting life and working towards a day when abortion is unthinkable and unnecessary.”

ELIZABETH GRAHAM

*Vice president of operations and life initiatives, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission*

If I believe that Jesus saved a wretched sinner such as myself, then I believe He can save a church arsonist from their sins as well. Would you join me in praying for this person by name? Pray the Lord would open their heart to the transformative power of the gospel.

**Pastor Mark Bethea**  
**FBC Montgomery**

Bad evangelism says: I'm right, you're wrong, and I would love to tell you about it.

Good evangelism says: Tell me the God you don't believe in, I probably don't believe in that God either.

**Tim Keller**  
**Pastor and author**

There are a lot of things Southern Baptists have in common. A steadfast love for Christ, a commitment to the Great Commission and Southern Baptists love their missionaries.

**Kevin Ezell, president**  
**North American Mission Board**

We cannot slow down. We cannot be distracted. We cannot be divided. We must not be deterred. The vision of heaven is not yet fulfilled. The nations are waiting. We still have work to do.

**Paul Chitwood, president**  
**International Mission Board**

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Southern Baptists for ad-

vancing His kingdom through their intercession and sacrificial gifts to His Great Commission.

**Sandy Wisdom-Martin**  
**Executive director-treasurer**  
**National WMU**

The local and global reach of every gift [through the SBC Cooperative Program] is a testimony to the strong cooperative spirit of every church. The churches of the SBC have demonstrated obedient resolve and have trusted God with their resources.

**Willie McLaurin**  
**Vice president for Great**  
**Commission relations**  
**and mobilization**  
**SBC Executive Committee**

## Find refuge in the 'Rock of Escape'

Yellowstone National Park is an active volcano. Witness the 10,000 thermal features — geysers, mud pots, hot springs and steam vents.

Never step on the crusty surface in those areas unless you want to be boiled alive in the hot tub below.

Scientists assure visitors that a future eruption lies years in the distance. Tourists trek on boardwalks just above the fire-breathing ground. Hint: Hold your nose.

The sulfur smell may sicken you. A slip and fall may land you on the burning, fragile ground. Not good. The underworld can bubble up at any time since the landscape changes constantly.

David found himself on dangerous ground.

Saul pursued the shepherd general because the king thought, mistakenly, that David meant harm. David hid in the desolate wilderness of Ziph. Some ne'er-do-wells reported David's whereabouts to Saul.

The king set out to track David down. The pesky Philistines went on a rampage before Saul captured his prey. He abandoned the pursuit and hurried to engage the Philistines.

David breathed a sigh or relief. The place received the name "Rock of Escape" (1 Sam. 23:28).

Have you found yourself on the unsteady terrain of grief, marriage troubles, retirement, looming deadlines?

Humans tend to seek escape with medication, alcohol, denial or even suicide. No escape there. All create more problems than solutions.

Reach out for the Lord's hand and be lifted to the Rock of Escape. Find stability there.

**Darryl Wood**  
**"A Personal Word from a**  
**Retread Pastor" blog**  
**via Facebook**

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @bigvox

I recall growing up in the "Bible Belt" and just about everyone attended church but not many of them if any were devout. Today fewer people attend church but more of them seem to be devout. Matt 7:13-14

### @ethicist

The secret to deep peace and lasting joy is to humble yourself under the authority of the Bible.

### @SEBTS

"When it comes to the gospel, there's no element of the gospel that's not infused with God's grace." —@rscott\_pace #SEchapel

### @JaredcWellman

When it comes to decision-making in Christian organizations (and in everything, for that matter): biblical principles > legalese

### @DrLoritts

In my younger days when I encountered racial injustice among white evangelicals I had to fight against unrighteous anger. The older I get now the fight is against apathy. Something in you says, "Of course they'd say/do that." #PrayForMe

### @Clayton\_king

Don't follow leaders who need to be constantly applauded and adored.

Don't follow leaders who use people to build their brand and platform.

Don't follow leaders with charisma but no character.

Don't follow leaders who don't practice what they preach.

### @PastorJFC

Without a strategy for saying no, you default to yes, and your life vaporizes with other people's pri-

orities being realized rather than yours. —@cnieuwhof

### @DianeLangberg

Jesus' strongest words were for those religious leaders who used the words of God to crush and destroy humanity.

### @Johnbmann

Three core values to remember about others:

Created — every person is created in the image of God and should be treated with respect.

Broken — every person is broken by sin and needs to be loved.

Gifted — every believer is gifted by the Spirit and needs to serve.

### @PaulTripp

Grace is not first a religious thing, it is a fundamental human need. Irreligion does not negate your need for grace.

# 3 stories you should know



Erin Schaff/The New York Times via AP, Pool, File

The U.S. Supreme Court began its new term Oct. 4. One of the major cases the court will hear is *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, decisions that legalized abortion in the U.S. If justices were to overrule these earlier decisions, abortions would be banned in a dozen states and severely restricted in about a dozen others. Arguments in *Dobbs* are scheduled for Dec. 1. (TAB Media)

## Arrest made in arson at FBC Montgomery

An Auburn woman has been charged with setting fire to First Baptist Church Montgomery.

Xiaoqin Yan, 27, was arrested Oct. 4 and charged with second-degree arson.

Pastor Mark Bethea asked for prayer for the international community at the church, which has a long-running Conversational English school that serves English as a Second Language students in the region, as well as other ministries.

"To my knowledge, this person was not part of our international fellowship at FBC (International Bible Fellowship and Worship, Conversational English, English as a Second Language, citizenship classes, etc.)," Bethea said, adding, "We deeply love and value our international brothers and sisters." (TAB Media)

## Giving to SBC causes strong in 2020–2021

Giving to Southern Baptist Convention causes was strong this year, according to recent reports.

Cumulative giving through the Cooperative Program since its inception in 1925 surpassed the \$20 billion mark in September and overall giving surpassed budget projections (see full story, page 17).

The International Mission Board recorded its best financial year in history. Its CP funds totaled \$96.8 million, and gifts to the 2020–2021 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering are expected to reach \$177.6, exceeding the \$175 million goal set in partnership with national Woman's Missionary Union. And Southern Baptists gave \$66.5 million to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in 2021, the highest amount ever given to the offering that supports work in North America. (TAB Media)

## Persecuted church

### Two killed, four kidnapped in attacks on Nigerian pastor, other Christians

TAWARI, Nigeria — In ongoing targeting of Christians, Muslim Fulani herdsmen killed a pastor July 24 whom they had kidnapped two weeks earlier.

Morning Star News reported Danlami Yakwoi, two sons and a nephew were kidnapped July 12 in Tawari. Yakwoi apparently died after being tortured. One son was released July 25 after ransom was paid. The other son and the nephew remain captive, the report stated.

Also in Nigeria, herdsmen abducted Solomon Nidiamaka, a Christian, on July 19 from a hospital in Ugwolawo. And on Aug. 5, local authorities demolished a church building in Maiduguri, Barnabas Fund reported. An operative with the Civilian Joint Taskforce, which accompanied the demolition team, allegedly fired on protesters, killing Ezekiel Bitrus (son of a pastor) and injuring five others.

The operative accused of shooting Bitrus was arrested, according to the report, which noted church members worshipped Aug. 8 in the demolished building.

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

### Bible shipment 'held hostage' by Sudanese officials

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Christian leaders in Sudan said government officials detained a shipment of Bibles, demanding custom fees even though Bibles are exempt.

In August, customs refused to release the Bibles after rejecting an application for tax-exempt status for the shipment. Enacted in July 2020, Sudan's Fundamental Rights and Freedoms Act should eliminate customs duties for religious literature, and church leaders say the country's estimated 2 million Christians have

a dire need for Arabic-language Bibles. The government, under former president Omar al-Bashir, adopted a strict version of Shariah law, recognizing only Islamic culture and the Arabic language.



Creative Commons

His government demolished or confiscated church buildings, lands and properties and limited Christian literature. Bashir was deposed in April 2019 and a transitional government took power the following month. In the new administration, Christians were expected to have a greater voice. In March 2020, the government ordered church properties returned to rightful owners, action that still has not occurred.

Sudan is No. 13 on Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB Media)

# Alabama news

## OBITUARY

▶ Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor **William O'Neal Billingsley** died Oct. 1. He was 84.

A Thorsby native, Billingsley was a pastor for more than 47 years, serving at New Home Baptist Church, Titus; Goshen Baptist Church; Refuge Baptist Church, Tallassee; and two stints at Marbury Baptist Church.



**BILLINGSLEY**

He also served in the Alabama Army National Guard and retired as a lieutenant colonel after 44 years of service.

Billingsley is survived by his wife, Carolyn; daughter, Karen; son, Randy; five grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

## BARBER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Ken Bush** has served as pastor of **First Baptist Church Eufaula** for the past 41 years. And as he retires, he says if he had it to do all over again, he would do the exact same thing.

“It’s been a real blessing,” he said of his long tenure there. “I’ve never wanted to move very much; I just wanted to plant and take care of folks. It’s been a privilege to be a part of people’s lives from the beginning to the end and walk with them through the different stages.”



**BUSH**

Before Bush came to FBC Eufaula, he served for 11 years at First Baptist Church Montezuma, Georgia. He graduated from Samford University in 1964 and went to seminary, eventually earning a doctorate from Southern Seminary in 1978. In June 1980, he became pastor of FBC Eufaula. The church will hold a celebration for Bush and his wife, Joyce, Oct. 23 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the James S. Clark Center in Eufaula. Everyone is invited.

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

▶ **Brad Barnett** has been called as children’s minister of **Eastern Valley Baptist Church, Bessemer**. He previously served Grace Life Baptist Church, Bessemer, for 13 years and at Eastern Valley for about five years. Barnett works at Regions Bank and is married to Lianne. They have a son and a daughter.

▶ On Sept. 26, Buddy Champion, pastor of **First Baptist Church Trussville**, told the congregation that if they wanted to see what it looked like to serve faithfully for decades with an “impeccable lifestyle,” they should look to **Joe Estes**. The church honored Estes that day as he retired after 20 years as their worship pastor and 50 years total in ministry.

A graduate of Samford University, Estes and his wife, Marty, were founding members of the

musical group TRUTH, touring the country with them in the early 1970s. He also played the stand-up bass as a member of Three on a String.

The church presented **Estes** with a number of gifts and announced a new scholarship in his name for children attending choir camp. When it comes to the church’s support, “all we need to say is thank you,” Estes said. “This is a very special place.”



Facebook photo

## CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

▶ Pastor Todd Stewart says if he could only choose one word to describe **Randall Reeves**, it would be this — excellence.

Reeves, who is retiring after 27 years as minister of music at **First Baptist Church of Saks** in Anniston, “has been a dedicated servant to the Lord, a man of unquestionable character and a co-laborer in the ministry,” Stewart said. “Everything Randall did for the Lord was done with excellence.”

Reeves and his wife, Elaine, have “certainly made a great team in ministry,” Stewart said.

The church will host a recognition service for them Nov. 7 at 10 a.m. and a reception from 2 to 4 p.m. All present and former choir members are invited to sing in the choir. Rehearsal will be held the two previous Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Over his 46 total years in ministry, Reeves also has served in staff roles at churches including Rosedale Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa; Cottdale Baptist Church; and Whites Chapel Baptist Church (now The Church at Wills Creek), Gadsden. He also played piano on three albums for soloists, recorded a solo piano project and led choir, orchestra and worship for many special services.

## CLARKE ASSOCIATION

▶ At 11 a.m. Sept. 26, **West Bend Baptist Church, Coffeetown**, rang its old church bell to call everyone to worship and to celebrate the church’s 150th anniversary.

Butch Sparks — a pastor who grew up at West Bend Baptist — was the guest speaker for the special service. Jerral Hare (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to Pastor Irby Weaver (left) and



Photo courtesy of Jerral Hare

Balance Starks (center), the church’s oldest living member. Mark Presswood, director of missions for Clarke Baptist Association, attended, and Al Dykeman, the church’s former pastor, was recognized and led in prayer.

A history of the church called “The Rest of the Story” was written by Alisa Moss and presented prior to the service by her, Bill Taylor, Vic Stringer, Beth James, Ross Thomas and Blanche Starks.

Mac Moss, music director, led the congregation in singing hymns from the late 1800s. Church artifacts including the constitution, original deed, minutes from the 1800s, the original pulpit and original lighting were displayed in the fellowship hall.

## ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

▶ The century-long legacy of **New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Brewton**, was obvious in a lot of ways Sept. 26, the day the church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Tony Richburg shared his testimony of how he met Jesus, grew spiritually and responded to a call to ministry at New Bethlehem Baptist. He now serves as pastor of nearby Liberty Baptist Church.

During the special service, Rick Lance (second from right), executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, preached and presented the church with a certificate. Dalton Campbell (left) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate, and Larry Patterson, director of missions for Escambia Baptist Association, was also present.

The church — led by Pastor Casey Jones (second from left) — displayed photographs of members through the years. During the service, June Greg, the church’s former pianist and music leader, played the piano and sang, and Danny Parker (right), who now serves as music director, led the singing and sang a solo.



Photo courtesy of Dalton Campbell

## TAB shares in fall meetings

Your TAB Media Group representatives are busy across the state attending fall associational meetings. Find a TAB representative near you. Listed by association:

- ▶ **Oct. 19** — Bigbee, Cahaba, Friendship, Tuskegee-Lee, Walker and West Cullman
- ▶ **Oct. 21** — Alabama Crenshaw
- ▶ **Oct. 24** — Bethel, Shelby, Southeast Alabama and St. Clair
- ▶ **Oct. 25** — Fayette
- ▶ **Nov. 1** — Montgomery
- ▶ **Nov. 2** — Tuscaloosa

# Headline news

## from around the Southeast

### ARKANSAS

Since 2010, Arkansas Baptists have spent the first Saturday of October participating in One Day Acts 1:8 Missions Experience, reported the Arkansas Baptist News. Based on Acts 1:8, One Day embodies being witnesses in “Jerusalem” by giving believers the opportunity to minister in a specific city within their state. Teams spend five hours serving different ministries and building relationships. More than 21,000 Arkansas Baptists have participated in the past decade, leading more than 700 people to trust and follow Jesus. This year, believers gathered Oct. 2 in Russellville to serve with churches in the Arkansas River Valley Baptist Association, meeting needs and proclaiming the gospel, with more than 100 people making professions of faith. The ministry asks for prayer for churches in the ARVBA following up with those who made faith decisions during the event.



Arkansas Baptist News photo

### FLORIDA

Just outside of New Orleans, Metairie Baptist Church has become a site where volunteers store supplies, such as trailers, tarps and equipment they brought to help with Disaster Relief following the landfall of Hurricane Ida in late August. Allowing volunteers to rest and leave their belongings without worrying, Florida Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers “stand guard.” Volunteers include several former military and

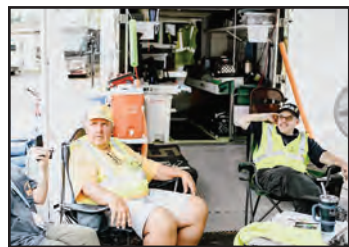


Photo by Sam Evans

law enforcement members from Florida who have formed a security team to keep the materials safe, reported the Florida Baptist Witness. Albert Melvin, a helicopter pilot during Vietnam, described DR as “the best example of friendship evangelism. ... Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep,’ and we intend to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the community.” A retired detective, Luther Willis, said, “I see it as I’ve trained 31 years for this right here.” By acting as security, this team is able to minister not only to volunteers from different states but also to locals who see them.

### LOUISIANA

Louisiana College hosted revival services Sept. 28–30, where pastor Don Wilton, from South Carolina, challenged students to make salvation decisions, reported the Baptist Message. Several students made the decision to follow Christ. Before the revival services, 30 students already professed faith in Jesus through the “Awakening” worship services Aug. 14–16 and Baptist Collegiate Ministry’s weekly worship services. Some students decided to follow their salvation decision with baptism Oct. 3 at Philadelphia Baptist Church in Deville. Faculty and staff plan to follow up with each student to encourage and disciple them. Louisiana College President Rick Brewer explained, “Seeing the students make decisions at the revival and other times this semester is what Christian higher education is about. We can see what God can do in an environment where Jesus is proclaimed.”



Photo by Brian Blackwell

### MISSISSIPPI

Ten members of the Baptist Student Union at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi, assisted with cleanup work at Bethel Church in Bourg, Louisiana, after Hurricane Ida caused significant damage to the church’s facilities in late August, The Baptist Record reported. Dave Turner of Arizona Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and Rob Bline of California Southern Baptist Disaster Relief prepped the students from Hinds on their tasks. “Losing something like this church can be like losing a family member, and you’re sharing the love of Jesus with your actions,” Turner told the students. Bline reminded the student volunteers



Photo by Sam Evans

to “treat this [the church] like it’s your home. ... It’s somebody’s home [of worship] and we need to treat it as such. He then prayed over the group prior to starting the cleanup process, asking the Lord to “restore and renew” the church so it can continue to be “used for His glory.”

### SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina’s Baptist Collegiate Ministry recently sponsored prayer walks on 15 college campuses across the state. Chad Stillwell, collegiate ministries director for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, emphasized the importance of praying for the state’s 275,000 college students, the Baptist Courier reported. “Churches from across the state have stepped up and sent teams to prayer walk,” said Stillwell, including a group of students from a high school youth group. Because of COVID-19, BCM and many church college ministries struggled to meet and reach freshmen last fall, “so this fall will be our first opportunity to meet them and engage them with the gospel,” Stillwell explained. University of South Carolina’s BCM director, Jamie Rogers, said, “We believe we will only see a dramatic move of the Spirit on our campus as believers from across our state pray. That is why we are rallying local churches to join us to saturate every corner of our campus with prayer.”



The Courier photo

### TENNESSEE

Electrician Gary Cate has always considered chopping wood a hobby. While chopping wood might not be considered a “normal” hobby, for



Photo by Sam Evans

Cate, the reward of having a wood fire when the weather turns cool is worth the effort, reported the Baptist and Reflector. Joining the chainsaw crew for Tennessee Baptist

Mission Board Disaster Relief allowed Cate to do what he loves and minister to people at the same time. Cate, a member of Sharon Baptist Church in Knoxville, joined the ministry in 2000, traveling to 25 states during different natural disasters. Cate recently has been working with a team in Louisiana to help those affected by Hurricane Ida, which made landfall in late August. “This whole chainsaw thing is just a scam,” Cate joked. “We came to share about Jesus Christ, and the chainsaw work is just to get us in the door.”

# Pastors' wives: Balancing ministry and motherhood

By Lanell Downs Smith  
TAB Media

Tracy Walsh often felt terrified as a young mother and minister's wife. Not growing up in the church, she worried constantly about committing a sin that might be a stumbling block for someone.

During a recent episode of the TAB Media podcast Amplify, Walsh — whose husband currently serves as pastor of Ariton Baptist Church in Alabama — said she first ran from her husband's call to ministry and from her own calling to serve alongside him.

"[We started out] very uncertain and very rocky," she admitted. "Once I understood that God called Dave, I understood that God called both of us. It took a lot of time for me to say, 'OK, I accept that calling with you. I accept whatever that means, with you.'"

## Surrender to God

As Walsh began studying the Bible, she learned to trust God and surrender to His will for her family.

"It's super important to be able to focus on what God called you to do, not what you think," Walsh said. "When I realized that God [was] speaking to me through [His] word ... that was a turning point for me. I had to learn to trust God's word. And you know, it sounds easy, but it's not."

## Isolation

Kathy Litton, director of planting spouse development for the North American Mission Board, has seen some of the demands ministry can place on church planting couples and their families.

Many of them sacrifice proximity to family and incur financial risk while perpetually opening their homes and engaging their communities.

Ministers' wives can feel isolated, Litton noted, and some struggle with finding friends within the local church community. Some don't see the value of supporting relationships.

"Pastors' wives often recount their loneliness. Some experience it profoundly," Litton lamented.



Photo courtesy of Shawna Hall  
(L to r) Shawna, Ora, Spirit and Brad Hall take a vacation to the Grand Canyon. Brad is associate pastor to students/missions at Southside Baptist Church in Andalusia.

"She may have been hurt in the past; she may have experienced deep wounds. She may have mishandled a friendship and brought some pain on herself," Litton explained. "Pastors' wives are prone to think these types of friendships are just not available to [them]. They are available, yet they require intentionality, character, emotional maturity and grace."

Page Hughes, who serves with her husband, Les, at First Baptist Church Pleas-

ant Grove, near Birmingham, mentioned the pain of leaving behind friends to follow God's calling.

## 'Pray for me'

"I knew God called us," Hughes reflected, "and I knew He was going to be everything I needed. I tell those precious people that I love so dearly: 'pray for me; pray for me to have friends; pray for the boys to have friends.'"

"[Leaving loved ones] has been hard. But when you walk with the Father, and you know He is calling you somewhere, though it breaks your heart, you know you've got to go."

For some wives, the spiritual battle is felt most acutely through motherhood.

As a young mother, Tina\* allowed her own expectations and those of church members to influence how

she parented her children.

"I neglected to make their hearts tender toward the Lord's leadership because I didn't have that balance in my life," Tina recalled.

To help pastors' wives, Alabama Woman's Missionary Union provides ways for women to connect and be encouraged through ministries like Ministers' Wives Connections Zoom gatherings and luncheons.

"Ministry wives deal with many expectations," said Candace McIntosh, Alabama WMU executive director. "They face balancing family life and ministry as well as supporting their ministry spouse as he leads and serves."

Shawna Hall serves with her husband, Brad, associate pastor to students/missions at Southside Baptist Church in Andalusia.

Balancing marriage and motherhood with ministry can be challenging, she admitted, and keeping the proper biblical order can be helpful: time with God, then husband, family, church and work.

"It is important to allow your husband to lead your family and the ministry, to be there as a helpmate and to be there to listen to him," Hall said.

"You have to remember that attacks are spiritual in nature and not to take to heart when people aren't always nice."

\*Name changed

**For more information or assistance in beginning or strengthening a ministers' wives fellowship, visit [alabamawmu.org/ministerswives](http://alabamawmu.org/ministerswives).**



SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY

## Fall Preview Day

OCTOBER 22 | FORT WORTH, TX

If you're called to serve the church, then we're committed to equipping you to live your calling. So this fall, don't miss this opportunity to see first-hand all that Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has to offer.

Learn more and get registered at [SWBTS.EDU/PREVIEW](http://SWBTS.EDU/PREVIEW)



## LEEDS STAINED GLASS & CHURCH FURNITURE

SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679

AL local: 205.699.9679

Call for **FREE** on-site consultation

Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner

[information@LeedsStainedGlass.com](mailto:information@LeedsStainedGlass.com)

Visit [www.LeedsStainedGlass.com](http://www.LeedsStainedGlass.com)

for an online gallery of windows and church furniture!



# How do you view the world?

## Cultural research shows worldviews formed in childhood, refined in young adult years

By Selah Vetter  
TAB Media

In a culture where one's worldview is increasingly influenced by multiple sources, only 6% of Americans are influenced primarily by the Bible, according to data from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University.

A worldview is the particular lens a person uses to view the world and influences their decisions. One's worldview typically is formed in childhood and shaped during the teen years. That outlook then becomes a primary lens through which decisions are considered.

Researchers have identified seven prominent worldviews, but most Americans today are syncretists — that is, they don't hold a single worldview but instead pull different elements from contrasting worldviews to form a personal philosophy of life.

At the same time, contemporary culture emphasizes deconstructing worldview and beliefs. This has created a culture that is constantly shifting due to changing and contrasting beliefs, according to George Barna, director of research for the Cultural Research Center at ACU.

### How it is formed

A worldview is formed and influenced during childhood and redefined during the young adult years,

### BIBLICAL THEISM

Often biblical theism is the worldview of evangelical Christians and conservatives. It is centered around the idea of a divine God, central to the outlook of knowledge, salvation, humanity and ethics. In biblical theism, all conclusions to decisions and opinions should reflect what God has spoken about them.

making it the decision-making outlook through adulthood.

Worldviews are influenced by childhood upbringing, including family, religion, friends and location. They are also influenced and confirmed by the "outlets" one consumes.

Barna found "people generally adopt worldview beliefs and behaviors they encounter in arts and entertainment vehicles, news reports, political statements made by public leaders and through conversations and experiences with people they trust."

The seven worldviews identified in the American Worldview Inventory 2021 are biblical theism, secular humanism, postmodernism, moralistic therapeutic deism, nihilism, marxism and eastern mysticism. See the colored graphics below for an explanation of each one.

### How to nurture a worldview

In a society where cultural norms are constantly shifting and biases can be either undefined or over-

### SECULAR HUMANISM

Secular humanism is the belief that humans can determine what is morally correct without God or another divine being. Often people skeptical of religion, residents of the western U.S. and people with more liberal political views hold this perspective.

### POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism questions modern Western beliefs and assumptions, and is common in the northeastern and western U.S., and among those who hold college degrees and are politically liberal.



Graphic by Carrie B. McWhorter

whelming, it is important for Christians to take a look at their beliefs and decide which are theologically rooted in the gospel and which are not.

"The recent concern within the educational and pastoral communities about worldview as the foundation of people's decision-making process, driven by the heightened ideological battles dividing the nation, is a hopeful sign that Americans (and

especially conservative Christians) may be waking up to the importance of worldview development, especially among young people," Barna said.

He added that a biblical worldview must be nurtured from an early age since a worldview is formed during childhood.

To get a good start on nurturing a biblical worldview in children, Jeffrey Riley, professor of ethics at

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, encourages parents to create an environment for children to feel comfortable asking questions about Christianity.

"Because worldviews have a rational component, preach and teach with theological and moral depth, rightly handling the Scriptures," Riley said. "Read sound books on Christian theology and morality."

Along with reading the Bible and other Christian resources, Riley encouraged people to be active students of Christianity by seeking out mentors.

Allow pastors, disciples and other older and more knowledgeable people within the community to help answer questions. Take advantage of gathering with fellow believers to discuss matters of faith.

### Study other worldviews

Riley also encouraged believers to study and try to understand other worldviews.

And while displaying grace and Christlike love to those who see the world differently, believers must be ready to defend a biblical worldview.

"Be courageous in the face of

### NIHILISM

Founded by Friedrich Nietzsche, nihilism is to reject all moral and religious ideas. It often is based in meaninglessness, pessimism and skepticism.

### MARXISM

Marxism was founded by Karl Marx and often is associated with communism and atheism. It is the idea that whatever advances the working class is good, and whatever stops that advance is bad.

opposition to biblical truth," Riley encouraged. "A worldview that you are not willing to die for is not worth living for."

### Get involved

David Nichols, a longtime Alabama educator who is now retired, also encourages parents to be active in their children's education, looking at curriculum and considering the spiritual influences at work.

"As God's children, we are loved, nurtured and protected by Him. As godly parents, we also love and guide our children in all truth and godliness," Nichols said.

"If Christians sit by and do nothing, we face a lost generation of children."

Not only is it important to nurture children's worldviews, but also to evaluate one's worldview as an adult, Barna said.

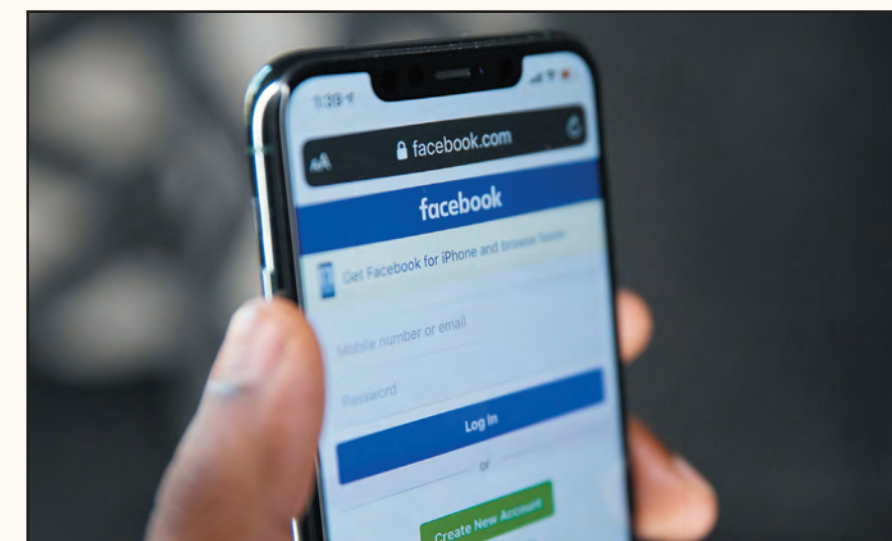
"Our studies show that Americans are neither deep nor sophisticated thinkers," he asserted.

"We've become selfish and emotion-driven, leaving logic behind. To promote a way of life that pushes us to think more clearly, consistently and purposefully will take time and considerable effort and will be uncomfortable. Most people seem more interested in living a life of comfort and convenience.

"The progress will be slow, but people who are willing to fight for a more reasonable way of thinking and acting can make a difference."

### EASTERN MYSTICISM

Coming from the Middle East and India, eastern mysticism is the idea of achieving understanding of and oneness with a divine being. It is focused more on divine understanding rather than logical understanding. Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims often associate with eastern mysticism.



Unsplash.com

## Is technology today's primary discipler?

By Jason Thacker  
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

The Church has long promoted the idea that technology is a tool that can be used for good by God's people to connect with others, build communities, shape the worldview of our churches and influence the wider culture as we harness it to proclaim the gospel.

Amid the good, Christians need to recognize the ways technology expands our moral horizons by opening up options we never thought possible and allowing our sinful hearts to use these technologies to exploit others, manipulate truth and stoke division.

If you survey much of today's literature on ethics, a main critique of the Christian ethic is that it is simply unable to deal with new challenges we face today, especially in the digital age.

But it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus didn't speak to these issues directly, or that Paul and the other apostles didn't write about how to navigate artificial intelligence, smartphones, social media or other technologies.

Christ summed up the foundation and goal of Christian ethics in Matthew 22:37-39: we are to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. This means prioritizing our neighbors over profit and recognizing how the tools we use — even if designed with the best intentions — can and will be exploited in sinful and dehumanizing ways.

One of the ways we can do this in the digital age is by learning about how technology is shaping our lives and society. This should drive us to an active engagement rather than a passive use of these powerful tools. We should also seek to understand that tools like Facebook are being used to influence and shape the worldviews of the church and wider society, often in perverse ways.

### Primary discipler

Pastors and ministry leaders need to understand that technology is one of the primary disciplers of those in our churches. This is due to the fact that our technological devices are at our side nearly every minute of the day, ready to envelope us in the personally curated online worlds that are designed to shape our view of society.

Given the ubiquity of technology today, we have to ask ourselves how we are being formed by these creations, and to what end. Most importantly, Christians must ask if we are being transformed to be more like Christ through our use of technology, or if we are ultimately being conformed to the likeness of this world instead (Rom. 12:2).

*(Adapted with permission from the article "Is Facebook discipling your church members?" Read the full article at [tabonline.org/facebook](http://tabonline.org/facebook).)*



ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

# CHRIST CENTERED

Colossians 1:17-18



## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

### NOVEMBER 16-17, 2021

WHITESBURG BAPTIST CHURCH • HUNTSVILLE

### Events Surrounding the Annual Meeting

**CHURCH  
PLANTER  
NETWORK  
DINNER**

**November 14, 4 p.m.**

House of Hope and Restoration Church, Huntsville  
*Register at [PlantAlabama.org/events](http://PlantAlabama.org/events)*

**ALABAMA  
BAPTIST PASTORS  
CONFERENCE**

**November 15, 10 a.m.**

First Baptist Church, Decatur  
*More info at [albaptistpc.com](http://albaptistpc.com)*

**UNITE, A GATHERING OF  
ALABAMA BAPTIST COLLEGE  
MINISTRY LEADERS**

**November 15, 4 p.m.**

The Well Church, Huntsville  
*Register at [BCMlink.org/events](http://BCMlink.org/events)*

**CONVERSATIONS  
WITH IMB**

**November 16 and 17 during the convention**

Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville  
*Learn more and sign up for your 30-minute slot at [alsbom.org/events](http://alsbom.org/events)*

Visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention) for complete schedule and hotel information or contact Amy Nelson, [anelson@alsbom.org](mailto:anelson@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2231.

# ‘God has the resources’

## Alaska church experiences growth as building improvements, outreach continue

(continued from page 1)

The next day, a city employee drove up and asked if the church could use some pew chairs because he had some he needed to get rid of. In a moment, the church doubled its seating capacity with the gift of more than 60 chairs.

“The fact of the matter is we have seen amazing things,” Schwegel said, noting the crowd gathered for the missions celebration was the largest he had addressed.

“One point I could drill home to small churches is that God provides. ... We’ve read about God providing in the Bible, but when He teaches you He provides, it is a completely different thing.”

Baldwin said God had provided abundantly in Craig and will provide when believers seek and follow Him.

“I don’t know your situation. I don’t know your church, your environment, your struggles,” Baldwin said. “But I saw God work in a miraculous way. I believe the reason God did what He did was because of what He says in His word; you have not because you ask not.

“Whatever God has laid on your heart as pastor and leaders of your church, go back to your church, talk about it, pray about it. Seek God. ... Act on what God is saying. Let’s not limit God.

“God has the resources. He’s got everything that’s

**To see a video and hear more from Rick Lance’s discussion of the Alabama-Alaska partnership, visit [tabonline.org/Alabama-Alaska](http://tabonline.org/Alabama-Alaska).**



Photo by Sylvia Rylande

Cody Schwegel (left) and Jamie Baldwin discuss the revitalization of Liberty Baptist Church in Craig, Alaska, during Impact Alaska, the ABRN’s missions celebration held Sept. 27.

needed. He’s just waiting on you to act.”

On Sept. 28, SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance joined ABRN Executive Director Randy Covington to talk more about the states’ partnership and how Alabama Baptists hope to help in Alaska.

He mentioned specific

areas, including collegiate ministries, church revitalization and church planting. Prayer support and encouragement also will be important, Lance said.

“In all my years, I have never seen a time when pastors and laypersons are more discouraged than they are now,” he said.

“We can encourage each other.”

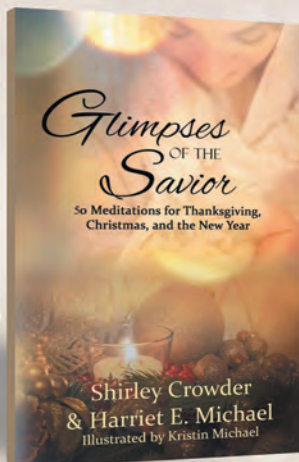
Lance presented a check for \$25,000 from SBOM to be used by Alaska Baptists however the gift was needed.

“Alabama Baptists are not the richest people in the world, and we don’t have the largest churches,” Lance said. “But we are among the most generous and sacrificial people in Southern Baptist Convention life. And we want to share with you what God has shared with us.”

Covington, along with Alabama native Jae McKee, who serves Alaska Baptists as director of missions and church planting, will travel to Huntsville in November for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Covington said he looks forward to joining Alabama Baptists to “dream about ways God can bless this partnership in the future.”

### FINDING JESUS among the celebrations and decorations



50 Meditations for Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year

Authors Shirley Crowder and Harriet E. Michael are lifelong friends whose parents served as missionaries in Nigeria, West Africa. Their friendship has spanned across two continents, numerous states, and many, many years.

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



When you need to  
choose a Medicare plan,  
Humana can help

#### Get the plan that fits your goals and your life

It’s time to choose a new Medicare plan, and I can help you understand your options. A Humana Medicare Advantage plan includes all you get with Original Medicare, plus additional benefits and services to meet your needs. Let’s work together to find the right Humana plan for you and your budget.



#### Call a licensed Humana sales agent



**Doug Sands**  
205-515-0200 (TTY: 711)  
Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
[csands7@humana.com](mailto:csands7@humana.com)

**Humana.**

A more human way  
to healthcare™

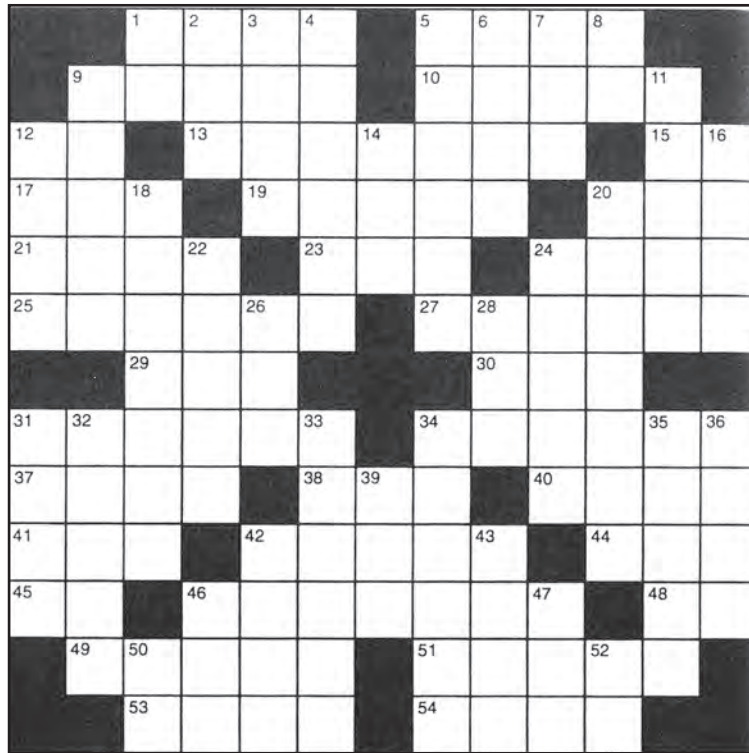
# CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad for \$1 per word.  
For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 102,  
or email [ads@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org).

### ACROSS

1. We have \_\_\_ His star in the east. (Matt. 2:2)
5. Upon the \_\_\_ of the rock. (Job 39:28)
9. Which have \_\_\_ the burden. (Matt. 20:12)
10. Pitched beside the well of \_\_\_. (Judg. 7:1)
12. Elmodam, which was the son of \_\_\_. (Luke 3:28)
13. Whose \_\_\_ was the sea. (Nah. 3:8)
15. The sons of Judah; \_\_\_, and Onan. (1 Chron. 2:3)
17. Large.
19. Even as a \_\_\_ cherisheth her children. (1 Thess. 2:7)
20. Federal Aviation Administration. (abbr.)
21. From the blood of righteous \_\_\_.



By Diana Rowland Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

23. But if thine \_\_\_ be evil. (Matt. 6:23)
24. Sickens.
25. The words of king \_\_\_. (Prov. 31:1)
27. Now there came a \_\_\_ over all the land. (Acts 7:11)
29. In the very \_\_\_. (John 8:4)
30. Of a truth thou \_\_\_ the Son of God. (Matt. 14:33)
31. And \_\_\_ the host \_\_\_. (Judg. 7:21)
34. Laying up in \_\_\_ for themselves \_\_\_ good foundation. (1 Tim. 6:19)
37. Cometh of the \_\_\_ of his patrimony. (Deut. 18:8)
38. She was of the \_\_\_ of 12 years. (Mark 5:42)
40. And they straightway left their \_\_\_. (Matt 4:20)
41. A son of Bela. (1 Chron. 7:7)
42. And \_\_\_ even ... they brought unto Him \_\_\_ that were diseased. (Mark 1:32)
44. Naaman, \_\_\_, and Rosh. (Gen. 46:21)
45. Attorney General. (abbr.)
46. He shall come unto \_\_\_ the glory of Israel. (Mic. 1:15)
48. Thou shalt love thy neighbor \_\_\_ thyself. (Matt. 19:19)
49. Into the mouth of the \_\_\_. (Nah. 3:12)

51. \_\_\_ the son of Kishi. (1 Chron. 6:44)
  53. A greater than Jonas is \_\_\_. (Matt. 12:41)
  54. Have ye not \_\_\_ what David did? (Matt. 12:3)
- DOWN**
1. Let your light \_\_\_ shine before men. (Matt. 5:16)
  2. Ye do \_\_\_, not knowing the Scriptures. (Matt. 22:29)
  3. Ahira the son of \_\_\_. (Num. 10:27)
  4. Son of Simeon. (1 Chron. 4:24)
  5. Mine enemies \_\_\_ me sore. (Lam. 3:52)
  6. And it is a \_\_\_ thing. (Dan. 2:11)
  7. Blessed \_\_\_ thou, Simon Bar-jona. (Matt. 16:17)
  8. \_\_\_ into the land of Israel. (Matt. 2:20)
  9. They take a \_\_\_. (Amos 5:12)
  11. Thus hath the Lord \_\_\_ with me. (Luke 1:25)
  12. The curse upon mount \_\_\_. (Deut. 11:29)
  14. Snoop into.
  16. Be not \_\_\_ with thy mouth. (Eccles. 5:2)
  18. Ammiel the son of \_\_\_. (Num. 13:12)
  20. And the two doors were \_\_\_ of \_\_\_. (1 Kings 6:34)
  22. Not given to filthy \_\_\_. (Titus 1:7)
  24. His wife was of the daughters of \_\_\_. (Luke 1:5)
  26. Estimated time of arrival. (abbr.)
  28. And did \_\_\_ the shewbread. (Matt. 12:4)
  31. The churches of \_\_\_ salute you. (1 Cor. 16:19)
  32. They gave \_\_\_ money unto the soldiers. (Matt. 28:12)
  33. Doth not even \_\_\_ itself teach you. (1 Cor. 11:14)
  34. Lydia, a \_\_\_ of purple. (Acts 16:14)
  35. \_\_\_ the son of Kushaiah. (1 Chron. 15:17)
  36. Thy will be done in earth, \_\_\_ it \_\_\_ in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)
  39. Western slang for "girl."
  42. Arad, and \_\_\_.
  43. The Jews of \_\_\_ sought to stone thee. (John 11:8)
  46. I \_\_\_ no pleasant bread. (Dan. 10:3)
  47. Master of Health Administration. (abbr.)
  50. Saying, \_\_\_, thou that destroyest the temple. (Mark 15:29)
  52. Before Christ is B.C.; Anno Domini is \_\_\_.

### 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 & Message 2000. Must provide pastoral care and counseling; be engaged to all age groups; mentor and supervise church staff; and provide visionary leadership for the future of our church. He will shepherd our congregation in worship, Christian spiritual growth and community outreach as we strive to carry out The Great Commission. Mail resumés to: Jemison First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 760, Jemison, AL 35085 or [resumes@jemison-firstbaptist.com](mailto:resumes@jemison-firstbaptist.com).

#### PASTOR

Brindlee Mountain Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Brindlee Mountain Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 3422 Hwy 231, Lacey's Spring, AL 35754.

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mount Philadelphia Baptist Church, Cordova, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumés to: Mount Philadelphia Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 13, Cordova, AL 35550.

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

County Line Baptist in Trafford, Ala., is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, County Line Baptist, 74 Smith Mill Road, Trafford, AL 35172 or email: [countylinebaptist1@gmail.com](mailto:countylinebaptist1@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Verbena Baptist Church is currently seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: [verbenabaptist@att.net](mailto:verbenabaptist@att.net).

#### WORSHIP LEADER

West Side Baptist Church is seeking a part-time worship leader. To submit your resumé please use [wscbjax36265@gmail.com](mailto:wscbjax36265@gmail.com), or mail resumé to: West Side Baptist Church,

ATTN: Worship Leader Committee, 713 Mountain Street, Jacksonville, AL 36265.

#### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Union Springs Baptist Church in Newville, Ala., is looking for a bivocational music minister. Choir experience is preferred. Please email Jim Cordes at [cordes0238@gmail.com](mailto:cordes0238@gmail.com) to submit your resumé or get further information.

#### STUDENT MINISTER/MUSIC

FBC Abbeville, Ala., is currently searching for a full-time student minister or a combination of student minister/music. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact the church at 334-585-2367 or email: [todd@fbcabbeville.net](mailto:todd@fbcabbeville.net).

#### ASSOCIATE PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Slocomb is currently seeking a full-time associate pastor, with primary responsibilities of leading youth. Applicants can call FBCS at 334-886-2200 for information or send resumés by email to: [FBCS206@aol.com](mailto:FBCS206@aol.com). All applications should be received by Oct. 31.

### BUSINESS

#### FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

### SIGNS

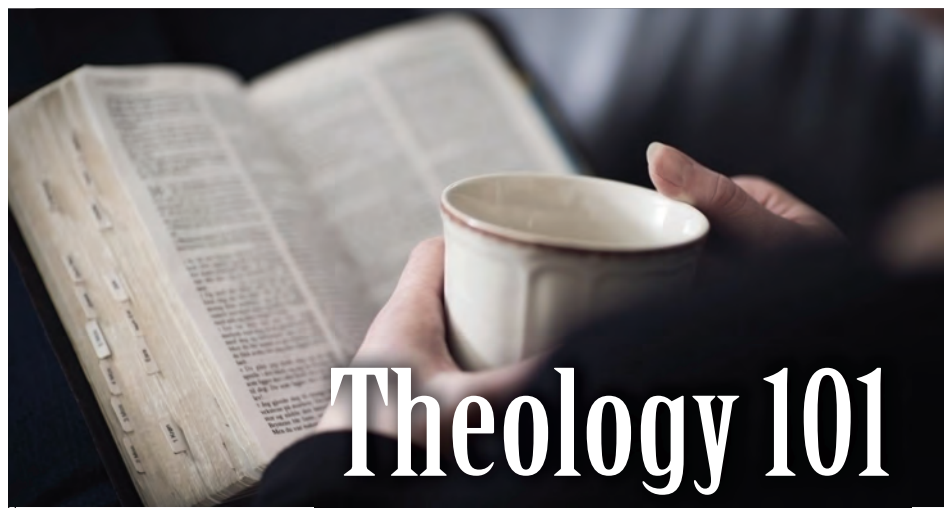
#### CHURCH SIGNS

Signs are your first impression. What kind of impression is your church sign making? Call us to replace/update yours with either digital or traditional. Statewide since 1994. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955. [www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com).

### TRAVEL/VACATION

#### LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to [www.paradisevista.net](http://www.paradisevista.net) to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## What is Man?

# Marred Image and Imperfect Likeness

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
TAB Media

We have not fully pondered the fact that we humans were made in the image and likeness of God until we also give thought to what disobedience and sin have done to this image and likeness.

While rebellion against God resulted in the loss of paradise for Adam and Eve, it did not obliterate their likeness to God. It distorted the image and resulted in broken fellowship with God.

Having forfeited their fellowship with God, they also possessed a nature bent toward sin and disobedience. Bible students across the centuries have referred to this spiritual condition as “fallen.”

Thereafter, all humans have been born with a fallen nature or an inclination toward sin. Our sinful nature puts us at risk to the influence of the world around us, as well as to that of Satan. Temptation makes its appeal to that fallen nature. We come into the world with an inborn tendency toward iniquity and sin.

An expression widely used to describe this marred image and imperfect likeness is total depravity. This phrase is not to be understood as saying humans are as totally depraved as it is possible for us to be. We all know nonbelievers who possess admirable qualities, even sometimes outshining professing Christians in kindness, gentleness, patience and so forth. What total depravity expresses is that every area of our humanness

has been in some way affected by iniquity and sin. Our total makeup has been victimized by our fallen nature — thoughts (our minds), affections (our hearts) and choices (our wills).

All of this is the bad news, but the good news is God had a plan for humans to regain likeness to Him. The beginning point in that plan is a new birth or regeneration launching through repentance of sin and faith in Christ Jesus. We term it Christian conversion.

## Spiritual growth

The ongoing stage in God’s plan calls for progressive or gradual growth and development in spiritual matters — increasing commitment to God’s ways, continual transformation by the renewing of our minds; gradual embodiment of revealed truth; persistence in the practice of prayer; and, all the while, experiencing a growing conformity to the likeness of Christ.

Though becoming fully human, Christ, in His incarnation, did not inherit a fallen nature. Rather, He was in His earthly life in every way “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15).

*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.*



# Sav-A-Life’s Family Hope Center dedicates ultrasound machine

By Jan White  
TAB Media

Sav-A-Life’s Family Hope Center in Andalusia held a dedication ceremony Oct. 3 for a new ultrasound machine given to the center by the Psalm 139 Project, a pro-life ministry of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

The dedication ceremony included ERLC team members, staff from Covington Baptist Association, local pastors and Sav-A-Life staff and client advocates.

Research suggests most women in a crisis pregnancy who are given a glimpse of the life within them choose life. That’s why the Psalm 139 Project exists — to make people aware of life-saving technology and help pregnancy centers minister to abortion-vulnerable women.

“Early in a client’s pregnancy when the movement of the fetus can’t be felt, the client may not feel like a mother — but as the monitor shows life in the womb and that tiny heartbeat is revealed, it’s at that very instance the spirit in the mother is stirred up and the bonding begins,” said Christy Watts, executive director of Andalusia’s Sav-A-Life.

“We know several abortion-vulnerable clients have changed their minds,” she said. “One client said she thought it was just a bunch of cells until she saw the ultrasound of her baby.”

The center’s previous ultrasound machine was 12 years old and had technical problems, according to the center’s nurse, Jan Gager, who read about the Psalm 139 Project in The Alabama Baptist.

In addition to the machine, several days of training were provided for Gager and another nurse who volunteers as a client advocate.

## ‘Every heartbeat matters’

The Psalm 139 Project believes every “mother, every child, every heartbeat matters to God,” according to its website.

“It is a privilege to partner with Sav-A-Life’s Family Hope Center in Andalusia as they meet women where they are, provide life-saving care and share the hope found in the gospel,” said Elizabeth Graham, ERLC vice president of operations and life initiatives. “The generosity of individuals committed to the serving of vulnerable mothers and preborn babies, as well as the support of local churches, helps us bless centers like Sav-A-Life with these life-saving machines, at no cost to them.”

The Family Hope Center opened in 1992 and serves some 600 clients annually in a five-county area in south central Alabama, offering free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, maternity clothes and baby items.

Read more and find helpful links at [tabonline.org/family-hope-center](http://tabonline.org/family-hope-center).



Photo by Tina Boles

Leroy Cole (right), board chairman of Sav-A-Life’s Family Hope Center in Andalusia, leads a prayer of dedication for the center’s new ultrasound machine provided by the Psalm 139 Project of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

# ★ Faith-Focused Safe Travel Training ★

# B+ TRAINING



GLOBAL MISSIONS

**October 21, Noon – October 23, Noon**

ALABAMA BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF CENTER ★ 118 JESSE SAMUEL HUNT BLVD. ★ PRATTVILLE

If you are traveling to elevated risk areas, let us help prepare you. Join us for this training opportunity for classroom instruction with role-plays, designed for pastors, ministers of missions, church staff, mission team leaders and other mission leaders who travel or lead mission teams to elevated risk locations. Sessions will cover security, code of conduct, crime survival, dealing with unfriendly governments, detention and questioning.

Cost is only \$200, which includes training, materials, dinner on Thursday, lunch and dinner on Friday and a box lunch to go on Saturday. Church ministers of missions, contact Scotty Goldman, [sgoldman@alsbom.org](mailto:sgoldman@alsbom.org), for information about a special rate.

To register, visit [alsbom.org/ffstbplus](http://alsbom.org/ffstbplus) or contact Angie Williams, [awilliams@alsbom.org](mailto:awilliams@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2373.

# Cooperative Program giving total reaches milestone

On the eve of Cooperative Program Month — October — the financial books confirmed Southern Baptists have now given more than \$20 billion through the CP since its formation in 1925.

Jeff Pearson, chief financial officer for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, shared the number with Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the EC, on Sept. 29.

“The principle of our churches cooperating together truly demonstrates how we can do more together than we can ever do alone,” Floyd said.

“From the smallest church to the largest church, through the good times and the challenging times, the faithfulness of our churches continues to prove again and again the commitment to advancing the good news of Jesus Christ to every person

regionally, statewide, nationally and internationally.”

Rick Lance, a lifelong CP supporter and executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, shared in the excitement of the news.

“Alabama Baptists rejoice with our larger Southern Baptist family in reaching the \$20 billion milestone in giving through the Cooperative Program,” he said.

“Alabama Baptists, through their generous and sacrificial giving within our own state convention, should reach the \$1.5 billion mark in contributing through the Cooperative Program during the next several months,” he added. “These are momentous milestones in our efforts

to support Great Commission ministries in Alabama, North America and around the world.

“We thank God for the opportunity to be a part of His missional plan of reaching people for Christ and discipling them as followers of Christ.”

Willie McLaurin, vice president for Great Commission relations and mobilization at the EC,

called the \$20 billion moment “a win for associations, state conventions, local and national entities and local churches.”

“[C]hurches have modeled following Jesus by entrusting their treasure for Kingdom work,” he said, pointing to Matthew 6:21.

“The heartbeat of SBC

churches is evangelism and missions,” he said. “This historic moment is a testament to the faithfulness of local churches trusting God weekly, monthly and annually to advance the gospel at home and around the world.

“I am incredibly thankful for every church — past and present — that prioritizes, elevates and accelerates the Cooperative Program.”

The motivation for a cooperative giving model began to take shape in 1912, said Charles Jones, a Georgia-based Southern Baptist historical researcher and writer who also serves as a transitional pastor.

## Early days of giving

“Southern Baptists launched the Judson Centennial Campaign in 1912 to celebrate the anniversary of Adoniram Judson’s work in Burma,” he said. “But while it was successful raising

funds for foreign missions work, some of it came at the expense of decreased giving to other ministries.

“Southern Baptists realized the potential impact that could be made through a national cooperative giving campaign,” Jones explained.

“This led to the development of the 75 Million Campaign from 1919 to 1924, which became the blueprint for the Cooperative Program, which started the following year.”

Floyd added, “Thank God for churches and their spiritual leaders who have a heart to work together to fund their cooperative work of the Great Commission.

“Most of all, we give God alone all the praise and the glory for this wonderful testimony of His people working together to give good news to the whole world.”

(Baptist Press, TAB Media contributed)



## NEW CONFERENCE FORMAT



# 2021 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

**DATE:** Nov. 15

**TIME:** 11:30 AM

**LOCATION:** FBC Decatur

**COST:** \$10 (includes lunch and dinner)

**MUST REGISTER AT [ALBAPTISTPC.COM](http://ALBAPTISTPC.COM)**

## GUEST SPEAKERS



**DR. KEVIN EZELL**

President  
North American Mission Board  
Alpharetta, Ga.



**DR. JUNIOR HILL**

Pastor, evangelist  
Hartselle, Ala.



**DR. ROBERT SMITH**

Charles T. Carter Baptist  
Chair of Divinity,  
Beeson Divinity School  
Birmingham, Ala.



**JAY WATSON**

Pastor  
Life Community  
Nashville, Tenn.

### SPONSORED BY:



**NEW ORLEANS**  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 17

## Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### THE GOSPEL'S POWER Colossians 1:9–23

#### Set Free (9–14)

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he shows his concern for these fellow Christians by praying for them. His prayer demonstrates to us how we should pray for our fellow Christians by emphasizing a desire for spiritual growth.

We often pray for our immediate needs, and Jesus Himself models this to a degree in the Lord's prayer, but we need to remember that our spiritual needs outweigh our physical ones.

Paul also wants them to know God's will is not something hidden from us.

Many people believe God's will is hidden from them. This explains why so many people are enticed by superstitions and spiritual mediums like tarot cards and fortune tellers.

Not only is this anti-biblical but it is also dangerous. Christians should never go anywhere to find God's will but the Bible itself, which is filled with statements about how God wants us to live, act and believe (for examples, see 1 Thess. 5:16–18; 1 Pet. 2:15; Eph. 5:15–20). God's will is no secret. It is found by reading His word.

#### By Christ (15–20)

Paul now turns to a clear declaration of who Christ is, showing He is able to reconcile us to God because Christ Himself is God. This passage is one of the clearest expressions of the divinity of Christ as it says Christ created all things.

This means Christ Himself has no beginning because He is not created.

This may seem standard to most Christians, but many cults deny the divinity of Christ, and Christians need to be on their guard against them as they try to lead us astray and blaspheme Christ, believing Him to be a creature and not truly God.

The only way for us to be reconciled to God is if God Himself does the reconciling.

In verse 20, Paul writes it is through Christ we are reconciled

to God. If Christ is not God, how then can we be reconciled? We would still be lost in our sins.

#### Through His Death (21–23)

However, no matter what our past is, Christ's atoning death washes away our sins. When we accept Christ, our sins are forgiven.

One of the hallmarks of Christianity that separates it from other religions is the idea of grace. God saves us not for who we are, but because of who He is.

If our salvation were dependent upon us, we could never be good enough to earn it. But since Christ, who is God, died on our behalf, taking our guilt and shame, the payment is perfect and we are reconciled — made right with God.

This transaction does not cost us anything — we accept it, and we are saved.

Other religions have ideas of earning or deserving salvation. In those religions, people are supposedly made right with God by doing something — going door to door to tell people about Jehovah, being baptized, paying the right amount of money. All these ways are from Satan who seeks to lead us astray.

Grace is a difficult idea for humans to grasp since we live in a world where we are used to earning our wages.

Paul encourages the Colossians to remain steadfast in the faith. Just because we are saved by grace does not mean Christians are now free to do whatever they want (see Gal. 5:13). We have been freed from sin; we are free to serve God and seek to please Him out of love for what God has done for us.

Instead of serving God out of obligation, which would be a works salvation, we serve God because we love Him.

Christians should be known by their love for God demonstrated through love of their neighbor, honoring God before a lost and dying world that badly needs to experience the grace that only comes through Christ.

## Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament, Samford University



### THE BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE Genesis 12:1–8

Today we begin a six-week study of Abraham and Sarah, our ancestors in the faith. This does not mean their every action was good and just. Both had dramatic moral failings, and both strained to trust God, but both also managed to obey in their imperfect ways.

This makes them fit models of fidelity for us, who in our own time and in our own ways also struggle with obedience.

We first read the names Abram and Sarai in Genesis 11:26–29. Here we also learn they are Mesopotamians from “Ur of the Chaldeans,” a city on the lower Euphrates River. Before the famous call, they already had endured a long journey with Abram's father, Terah, who took his extended family to Haran in northwestern Mesopotamia, the place where they lived when Terah died. Read Genesis 11:24–12:20 for context. In the Old Testament, “the LORD” spelled in capital letters translates the Hebrew word “Yahweh.”

#### God calls us to follow Him. (1–3)

As with most biblical figures, including Jesus, we know little of Abram and Sarai when they were young. Later Jewish texts will remember them before their calling as those who simply said “Yes” to God.

As Mesopotamians, Abram and Sarai may have been raised as polytheists. Sarai/Sarah (“princess” or “lady”) implies Sarai was named for Sharratu, the wife of the Mesopotamian moon god. If this is the case, then the first patriarch and matriarch model the abandonment of other gods that Israel's prophets will constantly demand.

God makes no introduction. Rather, the command is abrupt: God wants Abram and Sarai to leave behind country, tribe and house — that is, everything familiar and safe.

The language, “Go ... to the land that I will show you,” reveals they know neither their destination nor

in which direction to go. It also foreshadows God's later command to sacrifice Isaac, the promised child (22:2).

God's promise of descendants in verse 2 is in tension with 11:30, which introduces the theme of barrenness among the matriarchs. Now we know the couple must expect a miracle.

#### We respond to God's call with obedience. (4–6)

We are not told why Abram does as God says. Perhaps it is because God promises “a great nation” of descendants and blessing.

In context, “blessing” usually means wealth and prosperity (see Deut. 28:1–14), but Abram and Sarai will not see the promise's first part fulfilled, and on the way to the second part they will suffer instability and heartache.

The last sentence of verse 6 shows the story was written centuries after the events it talks about, when Canaanites no longer lived in the land.

#### A relationship of trust leads us to worship. (7–8)

Notice God does not promise land to Abram, but to his “offspring” (literally “seed”).

Indeed, at the end of their lives, Abram and Sarai remain landless nomads. Now, in response to a promise to be fulfilled long after his death, Abram builds altars outside of cities in which he and Sarai will not live.

Next week we will see that despite these acts of worship, Abram does not always trust God's promise and will endanger Sarai as a result. Here, however, we note that Abram worships God before seeing any realization of the promise he has heard.

Already we see the obedience of these two heroes of the faith will vary from inconsistent and inadequate to dependable and robust.

They are like us. We can be assured of both the heights we can reach and God's forgiveness when we stoop too low.

# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Minnie Lamberth

TAB Media

## New releases tackle blindness, Revelation, call to ministry

### Unseen Steps: God's Guidance Through Unexpected Blindness

Sara Claudia

*Independently published, 2021*

Sara Claudia approaches personal tragedy with a lightness and openness that allows readers to see her heart and faith, while processing the magnitude of how her life changed at age 20 when she lost her sight and part of her hearing following a surgical procedure. Even without medical detail, readers will understand the heartbreak she and her family experienced at this detour from the life she expected to live.

A 21st birthday party held shortly after she left the hospital showed the socially active student how much had changed.

"In a room full of people who were there to celebrate me, I felt completely and utterly alone," Sara Claudia writes.

Fortunately, she had strong family support, yet there were many



physical and spiritual issues to work through.

"In the beginning, I only prayed for healing," she writes. As her disabilities remained despite that prayer, she became grief-stricken and angry. Yet her prayers eventually became longer, more personal.

"Deep down, I knew God had a purpose for my life despite my circumstances. With this new growing relationship with Christ giving me the strength to keep pushing forward, I was now motivated to find out just what that purpose would be."

Finding the courage to return to college despite her parents' misgivings was one step in that direction.

Readers will be inspired by Sara Claudia's deepened faith and strengthened resilience as she adjusted to her new reality.

### The Book of Revelation Unlocked: An Easy to Understand Walk Through the Bible's Final Message

Judy Woodward Bates

*Bargainomics Publications, 2021*

Many a Bible reader has surely arrived at the Book of Revelation with an earnest desire to understand this puzzling portion of Scripture but fallen short of the goal.

"So many people make one attempt to read it and decide that the symbolism and chronology are impossible to grasp. But that's just not so," writes Judy Woodward Bates in her introduction to the recently released, "The Book of Revelation Unlocked."

Bates takes the approach of breaking the book down into understandable elements and segments.

As she provides a roadmap to understanding, Bates covers a lot of territory. Yet her work is ef-

ficiently organized in bite-sized chapters letting readers find clarity in small morsels. Each of the book's 22 chapters is divided into several days of study. Each day is brief and easy to read, so there's no need to feel overwhelmed — unless you peek ahead and realize the author has extended the study over 141 days!

However, whether you read one day at a time or get through several at once, you'll have Bates along as a trusty guide through this difficult-to-understand conclusion to the Bible. The Alabama author, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's women's ministry certificate program, is an experienced writer and handles the topic skillfully.

### A Quiet Roar

Randall Arthur

*Life Image Publishers, 2018*

Randall Arthur, a writer of several novels and nonfiction books, has envisioned a complex tale taking the reader from a small Baptist church in a small Georgia town to a ministry in Mali that is in the eye of a group of terrorists. They're not happy about the work to end a cruel practice directed at Muslim women.

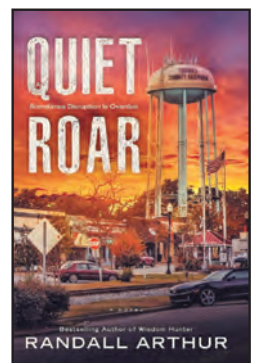
Back in Georgia, a controversial denominational subject — women serving as pastor — unleashes division in the church. In addition, efforts to integrate the congregation are met with some resistance, and long-hidden secrets are about to turn things upside down for a couple of characters.

Although people are responding to the pastor's messages and growing in their walk with the Lord, danger and disruption lurk. In fact, the buzz about new pastor Kathleen Rose is generating such interest that terrorists may make a visit themselves.

"A Quiet Roar" is mixed with both light moments and almost unbearable brutality. At times, the character development seems to be missing depth that would create more realism in the cast of townsfolk.

One of the key individuals, for example, has suffered unimaginable trauma readers might think would have greater impact on how she handles herself.

But the author gets the job done overall in providing the reader with Christian fiction that delves into ministerial callings, scriptural teachings, spiritual growth and evil opposition.



### EDITOR'S NOTE

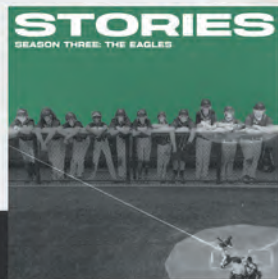
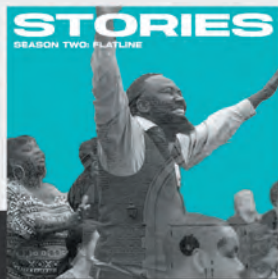
Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.

WANT  
YOUR BOOK  
CONSIDERED  
FOR A REVIEW?

Mail a copy to:

3310 Independence Dr.  
Birmingham, AL 35209

# STORIES



Seasons 1, 2 & 3 now available

LISTEN TO THE STORIES PODCAST AT

[tabonline.org/stories](https://tabonline.org/stories)

or wherever you listen to your podcasts.



@stories.pod