

# The Alabama Baptist

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

May 26, 2022

Vol. 187, No. 21  
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



**Celebrating The Baptist Paper's first birthday**

◆ Page 2



**Nuss to retire after leading Alabama Baptist collegiate ministries for two decades**

◆ Page 7



**FBC Tuscaloosa hosts video filming for new women's Bible study**

◆ Page 15

*In America's history, more than 1.3 million U.S. military personnel have died to protect our freedom.*

# We Remember

## Memorial Day, May 30

Chattanooga National Cemetery photo from Unsplash.com/  
graphic by Taylor Mitchell/The Alabama Baptist



Find us on  
**Instagram**  
TAB Media  
[instagram.com/tabmediagroup](https://www.instagram.com/tabmediagroup)

Read about the  
**ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES FOR SBC PRESIDENT  
AND THE UPCOMING ANNUAL MEETING**

on pages 8-12





## Fast facts

- » **First issue printed:**  
May 13, 2021
- » **Website:**  
[www.thebaptistpaper.org](http://www.thebaptistpaper.org)
- » **Social media platforms:**  
Facebook  
Twitter  
LinkedIn  
YouTube (TAB Media Group)
- » **Official partnerships:**  
Alabama and Mississippi  
(with more to come)
- » **Advertising partners:**  
New Orleans Seminary  
Southeastern Seminary  
University of Mobile  
Thomas Nelson  
Phil Waldrep Ministries  
Samford University  
Beeson Divinity School  
Southwestern Seminary  
Luther Rice Seminary  
James One 27 Initiative  
Bogard Press  
Mission:Dignity  
shades.org  
Author Alan Johnston  
Baptist Children's Village  
Children's Hospital  
Maranatha Tours Inc.  
Gatlinburg Visitors Bureau  
Friendship Tours  
Bellingrath Gardens/Home  
Louisiana Christian Univ.  
Author Bob Terry  
[ministryformen.com](http://ministryformen.com)



Photo by Amy Hacker/The Alabama Baptist

The Baptist Paper celebrates its first birthday May 13 at TAB Media's Homewood office with a come-and-go party with refreshments and cake.



Photo by Carrie McWhorter/TAB

The crossword puzzle and word search are popular among readers like Stella McWhorter.



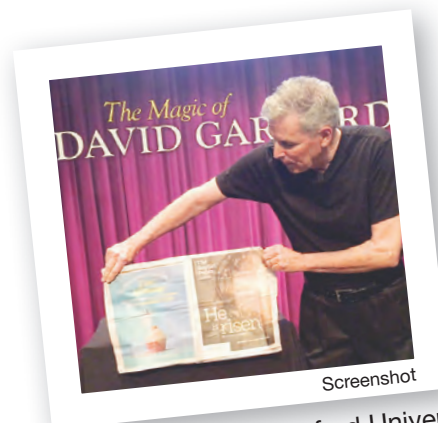
Photo courtesy of MacKenzie Deal

Siblings Buck and Remi Deal of Marietta, Georgia, love to look at the pictures in The Baptist Paper.



Screenshot

Alana Grim celebrates an award-winning year for The Baptist Paper which launched May 2021.



Screenshot

David Garrard, a Samford University graduate, performs a magic trick for The Baptist Paper's first birthday.

## 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

Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Content Editor

### NEWS SERVICES

Baptist Press (BP)  
Religion News Service (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 13.

# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash, President and Editor-in-Chief



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



@RashionalThts



## McLaurin calls for ‘Scripture fed,’ ‘spirit led’ response to abuse investigation

**A**s I’m writing, we are right at 48 hours from knowing the results of the Guidepost Solutions independent investigation into the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee’s handling of sexual abuse cases for the past 21 years.

You will know the details of the report as well as our initial coverage of the findings by the time you receive this week’s issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

At press time, we were preparing for team coverage in anticipation of the Sexual Abuse Task Force’s May 22 release of the report, which was scheduled for 3 p.m. Central time.

On May 20, trustees of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions had an opportunity to talk through what to expect with the release of the report. During

the regularly scheduled meeting, trustees had an opportunity to hear from Willie McLaurin, interim president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee.

McLaurin shared with the group how he and EC chairman Rolland Slade were in a season of prayer about what would come next. He also asked Alabama Baptists to “pray mightily that we would have the opportunity to ... listen to what God is saying through it, to learn from it and to rise up and lead like never before.”

Pray for those in leadership to “lead us through this season to be the churches God has called us to be,” McLaurin said, noting the initial response May 22 will be a basic statement acknowledging receipt of the report and “a desire to move toward the future.”

Then the full EC board will



Photo by Doug Rogers/SBOM

During the May 20 State Board meeting in Prattville, Willie McLaurin, interim president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, shares how the EC trustees will spend time May 24 processing the Guidepost Solutions report, which was anticipated to be released May 22.

meet via Zoom on May 24 “to review and begin to process.”

“My understanding is that the report is going to be pretty extensive,” McLaurin said, so the trustees will need time to read through it, which is one reason the meeting is two days later than the release of the report.

“Even though the report is going to be made public, we need to process and think how to respond appropriately as far as the Executive Committee is concerned,” he explained.

“Then when we go to Anaheim (for the annual meeting), the task force will most likely

be bringing recommendations and motions to be considered by those gathering in Anaheim.

“I’ve asked churches to have a special time of praying that as Baptists read the report they read [it as] who they are in Christ and that their actions be Scripture fed and spirit led,” McLaurin shared.

As far as what to expect, McLaurin said the recommendations must fall within the framework of Southern Baptist polity and will be specific only to the EC and possibly the SBC Credentials Committee (no churches, associations or state conventions).

Alabama Baptist State Convention president Buddy Champion (left) and State Board of Missions chairman Greg Corbin (right) pray over SBC’s Willie McLaurin during his time in Prattville on May 20.



Photo by Doug Rogers/SBOM

# Award-winning

## FOR WORK DONE IN 2021

from Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association and Religion Communicators Council

### ASSOCIATED CHURCH PRESS

► **Convention or meeting coverage (newspaper, newsletter, news service, website or blog) — Award of Merit:** Annual Convention 2021 (November 25 issue) — The Alabama Baptist, TAB staff



► **Newspaper front page — Award of Merit:** The Baptist Paper (June 10 cover) — Lauren Grim

► **Newspaper front page — Award of Excellence:** The Alabama Baptist (November 4 cover) — Lauren Grim

► **Newspaper/newsletter design, spread or story — Honorable Mention:** Applying the gospel — The Baptist Paper, Lauren Grim

► **Newspaper/newsletter design, spread or story — Award of Merit:** Meaningful experience — The Baptist Paper, Lauren Grim

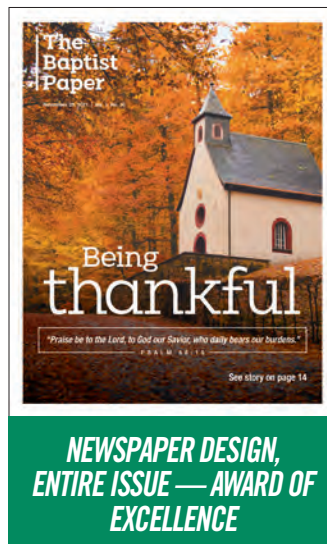


► **Newspaper/newsletter design, spread or story — Award of Excellence:** Set free in Christ — Lauren Grim, Trennis and Pam Henderson

► **Newspaper/newsletter design,**

**entire issue — Award of Merit:** The Alabama Baptist (November 11 issue) — Lauren Grim and TAB staff

► **Newspaper/newsletter design, entire issue — Award of Excellence:** The Baptist Paper (November 25 issue) — Lauren Grim and The Baptist Paper staff



► **Audio — podcast or audio series — Award of Merit:** Stories: The Eagles — TAB Media Group — Grace Thornton and Hannah Muñoz

► **Best in class newspaper — Honorable Mention:** The Baptist Paper — TBP staff



► **Best in class newspaper — Award of Merit:** The Alabama Baptist — TAB staff

### BAPTIST COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION

#### GRAND PRIZE

► **Frank Burkhalter Award for Significant**

**Achievement in Religious News Writing —** Tracy Riggs (with a side article by Denise George) for Trauma in America

► **Publication design, newspaper — 1st place:** The Baptist Paper, Lauren Grim and TBP staff

► **Front page design — 1st place:** Focused dad time — The Baptist Paper, Lauren Grim

► **Overall newspaper publication — 2nd place:** The Baptist Paper

► **Overall newspaper publication — 3rd place:** The Alabama Baptist

► **News series or package — 1st place:** Trauma in America — Tracy Riggs (with a side article by Denise George)

► **News series or package — 3rd place:** Executive Committee and Sexual Abuse — Jennifer Davis Rash

► **News article, more than 1,500 words — 1st place:** Teamwork — The Baptist Paper staff



▶ **News article, more than 1,500 words — 2nd place:** On the clock — Jennifer Davis Rash

▶ **News article, more than 1,500 words — 3rd place:** At odds — Jennifer Davis Rash

▶ **Feature article, less than 750 — 2nd place:** Set free in Christ — Trennis Henderson

▶ **Feature article, less than 750 — 3rd place:** From Cuba to the U.S. — Trennis Henderson

▶ **Feature article, more than 1,500 words — 2nd place:** Called to serve — Grace Thornton

▶ **Feature package — 2nd place:** Leaving a mark — Art Toalston

▶ **Podcast, overall show — 1st place:** Stories — Grace Thornton

▶ **Website, 25 pages or more — 3rd place:** thealabamabaptist.org — James Hammack and TAB staff

▶ **News photo, single — 1st place:** Seeking clarity — Van Payne

▶ **Event photo coverage, single — 1st place:** Worshipful moment — Tracy Riggs

▶ **Feature photo, single — 3rd place:** Reflections — Sam Evans

**WITH WMU**

▶ **Feature photo, single — 1st place:** Pam Henderson — BNF still life

▶ **Portrait photo, field — 2nd place:** Charter Member reflects on BNF history — Pam Henderson

▶ **Portrait photo, field — 1st place:** Kimberly Poore & Love World — Pam Henderson

▶ **Scripts — 2nd place:** WMU National Correspondent Partnership, Trennis and Pam Henderson

**PARTNER AWARDS**

▶ **Website, organization or company site, 24 pages or fewer — 1st place:**

AlabamaWorship.org — Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and Dogwood Media Solutions

▶ **Website, organization or company site, 24 pages or fewer) — 2nd place:** AlabamaCP.org — SBOM and Dogwood Media Solutions

▶ **Video, storytelling (less than 1 minute) — 1st place:** A UM Night Before Christmas — University of Mobile Marketing/Public Relations

▶ **Video, promotion (1–3 minutes) — 2nd place:** Know Your Calling — University of Mobile Marketing/Public Relations

▶ **Video, instructional (more than 3 minutes) — 3rd place:** Great Commission Focus: BCM — Doug Rogers, SBOM

▶ **Video, other — 3rd place:** 2021 Memorial Service — Doug Rogers and Bethany Franklin, SBOM

▶ **Feature photo, single — 2nd place:** Beeson Magazine cover image — Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School at Samford University

▶ **Feature writing, scripts — 1st place:** Great Commission Focus: BCM — Doug Rogers, SBOM

▶ **Design, print collateral, brochure — 1st place:** Masters Brochure — Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School at Samford University

▶ **Design, publications, magazine cover — 1st place:** Beeson Magazine cover page — Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School at Samford University

▶ **Overall publication, print publication, magazine — 2nd place:** Beeson Magazine — Kristen Padilla, Beeson Divinity School at Samford University

**EVANGELICAL PRESS ASSOCIATION**

▶ **Article series — 2nd place:** The Alabama Baptist, SBC Executive Committee and the Sexual Abuse Task Force — Jennifer Davis Rash

▶ **Podcast — 3rd place:** TAB Media Group,

Peach and Pit — Grace Thornton and Hannah Muñoz

▶ **Single theme section or issue — 4th place:** The Alabama Baptist, Back to Campus — Carrie Brown McWhorter, Lauren Grim and Dianna Cagle

▶ **Website design — 3rd place:** The Baptist Paper — James Hammack

**RELIGION COMMUNICATORS COUNCIL**

▶ **Periodicals, newspapers, single work — Category Winner:** Jennifer Davis Rash and Carrie Brown McWhorter, The Alabama Baptist

▶ **Webcasts, single work — Category Winner:** Special Report: Crisis in Afghanistan — Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB Media Group

▶ **Newspaper, article or story, single work — Award of Excellence:** “Bob Terry shares personal journey, practical help in new book on grief” — Carrie Brown McWhorter, The Alabama Baptist

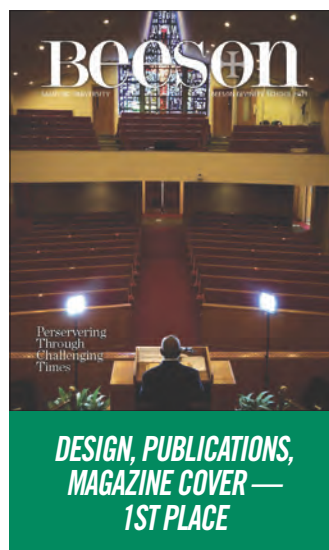
**PARTNER AWARDS**

▶ **Shorts and feature presentations — Best in Class:** Beeson Divinity School’s Community, In-Person Education a ‘Gift’ — Kristen Padilla and Nathan Troost, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University

▶ **Photography, article or story, single work — Category Winner:** “Persevering in Ministry During Challenging Times” — Kristen Padilla, Stephanie Patterson, and Scott Camp, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University

▶ **Photography, cover or feature, single work — Category Winner:** “Persevering Through Challenging Times.” Beeson Magazine Cover — Kristen Padilla, Stephanie Douglas, and Scott Camp, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University

▶ **Video, promotional/informational, single work — Category Winner:** Beeson Divinity School’s Community, In-Person Education a ‘Gift’ — Kristen Padilla and Nathan Troost, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University



# ‘Nothing but blessings’

## World War II veteran sees upcoming trip to Normandy as gospel opportunity

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

George Hamilton says he gets “fussed at” a lot at church because they tell him he’s a hero. He just doesn’t feel that way.

Hamilton, who turned 100 in April, is a World War II veteran. But he said what he knows about himself is this — he’s blessed. He’s blessed to be alive, blessed to know the Lord, blessed to be at Bethel Baptist Church in Pleasant Grove and blessed to spend every day doing everything he can to bring God glory.

He first met Jesus in 1950, five years after the war ended. He’d enlisted in the Navy in 1942 when he was 19.

“I served in the North Pacific,” Hamilton, who served aboard the USS King, said. “Our ultimate deal was we were the protection for the West Coast.”

It turns out their biggest enemy was the weather, he said. “It was cold. The wind was 100 miles an hour sometimes, and if the waves were 8 to 10 feet tall, it was a calm sea. But we were young. It didn’t bother us.”

### Wherever, whatever

Hamilton stayed until the war was over, and when he came back, he met someone who changed his life, a young woman named Lynda who was working in the office building where he went to apply for a job.

He didn’t speak, but he told someone he was going to marry her. He found out later she had seen him and said the same thing.

“We had a long engagement — we got married on the 12th date,” he joked. “Best move I ever made.”

Hamilton loved her, but she also led him to Jesus.

“She was a Christian and a mem-

ber of Wylam Baptist Church, and she would ask me to go. She didn’t push me, but she would pray for me,” he said.

“That lasted about three years, and then I accepted the Lord as my Savior in 1950.”

He served for decades as a deacon and Royal Ambassadors director and in other roles.

Lynda died in 2000, and in 2004 when George was in his early 80s, he heard a sermon that changed his life. The sermon talked about relinquishing control to God, the truth that Jesus can’t be one’s Savior and not also be Lord of his or her whole life.

Upon hearing that, he knew his whole life needed to be about Jesus, wherever he went, whatever he did.

“The last 18 years have been the most productive years of my life,” Hamilton said. “I have been so blessed, double blessed since then.”

It hasn’t been without hardship. In 2011, just after he turned 89, a tornado blew his house away.

But he wasn’t too worried about it. He was just thankful he was away visiting his son when it happened. He got busy helping his church minister to the community.

“The Lord has done nothing but bless me,” Hamilton said. “I just want to keep serving.”

His pastor, Eric Taylor, said there aren’t enough pages to contain all



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

WWII veteran George Hamilton holds photos of his wife and him on their wedding day and his U.S. Navy enlistment photo.

the ways Hamilton has served God and blessed his church family.

“He just rotated off our active deacon list at 99,” Taylor said. “He is one of the most faithful church members, one of the most faithful servants.”

### Living on mission

He helps teach Vacation Bible School and assists the church’s golf tournament to raise money for missions. For years, Hamilton traveled to Nicaragua on missions trips, up until he was 95.

And when he traveled to Hawaii in December on a Pearl Harbor memorial trip, he saw it as a missions trip, Taylor said.

“He said, ‘I don’t know if they’ll

let me or not, but I’m going to ask them if I can pray in a couple of places over there,’” Taylor said. “And he did — he led prayer for the group a couple of times.”

Taylor said Hamilton is a humble person, but he recognizes that he has a “little bit of celebrity in him” as a 100 year old and as a WWII veteran.

He leverages that for God’s glory, Taylor said. “He turns every conversation into a gospel conversation. He is a living, breathing example of what a disciple of Jesus Christ is supposed to be and do.”

### ‘Heart for people’

At the end of May, Hamilton will travel again on a memorial trip, this time to Normandy for the D-Day anniversary. His main goal while he’s there is to talk with people and find out if they know Jesus.

“He has a heart for people to know the Lord. That is who he is, that is not something he puts on,” Taylor said. “The older he gets, the more he realizes the desire of his heart is to help people know Jesus and to point them to Him.”

Hamilton also is a “great man of prayer” and studies the Bible constantly, Taylor said. Last year at 99, he attended evangelism training with Taylor so he could learn how to share his faith even better.

Taylor said he just radiates joy.

“I’ve never seen anyone get so excited about when the Lord shows him something in his quiet time and Bible reading, it’s almost childlike giddiness to get to share that with people. It’s so much fun to watch,” Taylor said.

“It’s as fresh today in this season of his faith as it was when he was a new believer. He told us recently, ‘If I knew 100 would be this much fun, I would’ve done it 25 years ago.’”



Photo courtesy of SBOM

Mike Nuss (center) leads a panel discussion at Pursue, an annual event for college students, young adults and their leaders. To watch a TAB Media Special Report video interview with Nuss, visit [tabonline.org/mike-nuss](http://tabonline.org/mike-nuss).

# ‘Sacrificial service’

## Nuss to retire after leading Alabama Baptist collegiate ministries for two decades

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**M**ike Nuss doesn’t remember the name of the school where he did his six weeks of student teaching. But he does remember the very real feeling that it wasn’t for him.

And he remembers being surprised by that.

“I really wanted to be a high school guidance counselor,” Nuss explained. “I wanted to do personal counseling, work with students and help them make life choices.”

So that’s what he studied at the University of Montevallo — kind of.

“I was [Baptist Student Union] president, and I jokingly tell people I majored in BSU in college and minored in school,” he says. “Probably my grades reflected that, too.”

### Finding his direction

Nuss realized collegiate ministry probably was in his future. He did an internship in collegiate ministry in south Alabama and became an itinerant campus minister serving three colleges: Jefferson Davis Junior College in Brewton, Patrick Henry State Junior College in Monroeville (both of which are now campuses of Coastal Alabama Community College) and Lurleen B. Wallace Community College in Andalusia.

“I had a Ford Pinto that I wore out driving between those three schools,” Nuss recalled.

And he loved it.

“Immediately in my time with students, I really sensed that God had been preparing me for this all along, I just hadn’t been smart enough to see it.”

That started him on a career in collegiate ministry he said has been a “wild ride” he wouldn’t trade.

Nuss and his wife, Judy, went next to Louisville, Kentucky, so he could study at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Then they moved to Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he became campus minister for four colleges.

“My desire, even going back to high school, to be involved with students at such a critical time in their lives, it all kind of came together at that point,” Nuss recalled.

They served there six years, then in 1985 moved to Mobile, where he became campus minister at the University of South Alabama.

Fifteen years later he got a call from Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, asking him to join the staff as the director of collegiate and student ministries.

“Reflecting on where I am now 22 years later, it’s been an honor of a lifetime,” Nuss said.

“I never imagined myself being able to do what I’m doing. I love being on campus. Still my most favorite place to be is on a college campus.”

And in his mind it’s the most purposeful place he could be.

“It’s a critical mission field,” he said, noting statistics that claim

95% of college students don’t follow Jesus.

“We have 300,000 plus college students in Alabama. If the statistics are true and even 90–95% of those students don’t have a relationship with Jesus, that’s a pretty overwhelming task.”

### Long-term investment

It’s the mission he’s invested in over the past 22 years and the 22 he served as a campus minister before that. He’s seen campus ministry grow all over the state and has encouraged and equipped churches to reach the campuses near them. He’s also sent students on mission.

“I’ve traveled with students all over the world, and I’ve loved seeing them understand their role in God’s world, that God can use them in ways they didn’t think they

could ever be used,” Nuss said. “I love seeing them understand how their faith integrates with the rest of their life, that it’s not just about some fun times in college. It’s, ‘This is really foundational to who I am.’”

Now as Nuss plans to retire at the end of June, he said his career has been a “dream come true.”

Chris Mills, SBOM student missions mobilizer, said during Nuss’ tenure at SBOM nearly 7,000 have come to faith through the work of students and Baptist campus ministers as they share Jesus at their schools and on missions trips around the world.

“That number represents something much more than just a number — it represents lives changed, lives impacted for the gospel,” he said.



NUSS

## Edfeldt named new director of collegiate and student ministries

**G**eorgia native Ben Edfeldt is the new director of collegiate and student ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He was elected by trustees of the State Board during a May 20 meeting in Prattville and will begin his new role, which includes serving as a state missionary, June 1.

Edfeldt has served nearly 16 years as a Baptist Stu-

dent Ministry director at two Texas universities and assisted with work on three other campuses. From 2005 to 2006, Edfeldt served in Alabama as interim youth minister for Dogwood Grove Baptist Church in Adger.

He is a graduate of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. He and his wife, Beth (a children’s/preschool minister), have three children. (TAB)



EDFELDT

# SBC annual meeting

## related news

### ***Southern Baptists to gather for 2022 Annual Meeting, related events***

The 2022 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will convene at the Anaheim Convention Center Tuesday, June 14, at 8 a.m. and adjourn at 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 15, according to the official schedule for the meeting. The theme for this year's meeting is "Jesus: The Center of It All."

The program includes a full hour for a presentation by the Sexual Abuse Task Force, whose report is expected to be released May 22.

See the full program for the 2022 Annual Meeting at [tabonline.org/sbc-2022](http://tabonline.org/sbc-2022).

### ***Several candidates for SBC leadership roles announced ahead of meeting***

In addition to those who have announced plans to be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (see stories, pages 9–12), several candidates plan to be nominated for other leadership roles for the upcoming year.

The SBC Constitution calls for an annual election of a president, a first and a second vice president, a recording secretary, a registration secretary and a treasurer. Any registered messenger can also make a nomination from the floor for each office when the nominations process opens for each position.

Announced candidates are:

- ▶ First vice president: Victor Chayasirisobhon
- ▶ Second vice president: Alex Sands
- ▶ Recording secretary: Javier Chavez, Nathan Finn and David Roach

▶ Registration secretary: Don Currence

▶ Treasurer: The president of the Executive Committee serves as treasurer of the convention. This is not a position that is elected each year.

Read more about each of these roles and the announced candidates at [tabonline.org/2022-sbc-nominees](http://tabonline.org/2022-sbc-nominees).

### ***2022 Pastors Conference speakers will preach through Book of Colossians***

The 2022 SBC Pastors Conference will be held June 12–13 at the Anaheim Convention Center.

This year's theme is "We Proclaim Him." Twelve speakers will preach verse by verse through Colossians, said Matt Henslee, 2022 Pastors Conference president.

Several seminary and entity leaders are also scheduled to speak.

Leading music for the conference will be Southern Seminary's Matt Boswell and Southwestern Seminary's Cowden Hall Band.

Speakers will stand behind the "Bellevue Pulpit," on loan to this year's Pastors Conference

from Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee.

See the full lineup of speakers at [tabonline.org/2022-sbc-pc](http://tabonline.org/2022-sbc-pc).

### ***Two candidates announced for 2023 SBC Pastors Conference president***

Two candidates have announced plans to be nominated for president of the 2023 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference.

Voddie Baucham, dean of theology at African Christian University in Lusaka, Zambia, and Daniel Dickard, pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, have announced they will be nominated for the leadership role during the 2022 SBC Pastors Conference in Anaheim, California, June 12–13.

To read more about the two candidates, go to [tabonline.org/23-pc-candidates](http://tabonline.org/23-pc-candidates).

### ***National WMU to host 2-day 'missions adventure' bus tour June 12–13***

National Woman's Missionary Union will host Embark: WMU's Rolling Missions Adventure, a two-day excursion by coach buses on June 12–13, providing the opportunity to engage with 20-plus ministry leaders prior to the 2022 SBC Annual Meeting.

On Sunday the first stop will be for prayer walking and a Missions Celebration on the campus of Gateway Seminary. From there each bus will travel to a different ministry point or church plant.

On Monday the first stop will be Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier with the opportunity to prayer walk, visit with ministry leaders and enjoy the beach. From there buses will travel together to Chinese Baptist Church of Orange County and then will go separately to different missions venues.

Men, women and families of all ages are welcome. Learn more and register by May 27 at [wmu.com/anaheim](http://wmu.com/anaheim).

### ***Auxiliary meetings focus on women, seminaries, entities, ethnic fellowships***

In addition to the official SBC meetings scheduled June 14–15 at the Anaheim Convention Center, several related groups will hold meetings.

The SBC Women's Session will be Monday, June 13. The theme for the meeting is "Emotional Health, Spiritual Rhythms and Rest." The Ministers' Wives Luncheon will be Tuesday, June 14, at noon in the Anaheim Marriott Platinum Ballroom.

Gatherings for Asian and Hispanic Baptists are scheduled beginning June 12 and running throughout the week.

SBC entities will hold special events as well. GuideStone Financial Resources will sponsor wellness checks and a wellness center June 13–15 in the Exhibit Hall of the Anaheim Convention Center. Sign up for an appointment at [GuideStone.org/wellnessbooth](http://GuideStone.org/wellnessbooth).

Three events are June 13: the North American Mission Board Send luncheon, the International Mission Board dinner and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission Monday Night event. The Lifeway Christian Resources breakfast is June 14.

All six SBC seminaries will hold luncheons June 15 at noon.

The Southern Baptist Evangelists will host the Southwest Supper Sing-A-Long, a free special event, June 13.

To see a full list of events with times, locations and registration links, plus a printable map of the Anaheim Convention Center Campus, go to [tabonline.org/2022-meetings](http://tabonline.org/2022-meetings).

### ***Crossover Serve Tour seeks gospel impact through outreach in Anaheim***

Through a Crossover Serve Tour event, the North American Mission Board, in cooperation with California Baptists, will provide avenues for Southern Baptists to share the gospel in Anaheim ahead of the 2022 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in June.

Send Relief and NAMB are working with California Baptist leaders and local churches to host one-day, outreach-oriented sports camps for their communities.

To learn more, visit [namb.net/crossover](http://namb.net/crossover). Registration for all events is currently full.

### ***Associational leaders to hold annual gathering, ministry fair June 12–13***

The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders will meet June 12–13 at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Anaheim for a gathering centered around "Pursuing Love and Good Works," based on Hebrews 10:24.

The annual event starts at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, June 12.

Speakers on Sunday are Ben Mandrell, president of Lifeway Christian Resources; Rick Curtis, assistant to the president for convention and associational relations at the North American Mission Board; and Hance Dilbeck, president of GuideStone Financial Resources.

Speakers on Monday are: Trevin Wax, vice president of resources and research at NAMB, and Steve Viars, pastor of Faith Church in Lafayette, Indiana.

A ministry fair and breakout sessions for leaders and their wives will be held both days.

See the full schedule at [sbc.org](http://sbc.org).



Photo courtesy of Anaheim Convention Center/Theme logo courtesy of SBC EC

# SBC nominees address issues facing Southern Baptists

By **Carrie B. McWhorter**  
The Alabama Baptist

**T**he three announced candidates for president of the Southern Baptist Convention shared their views on current issues facing the denomination in a May 4 forum held in Texas.

Tom Ascol, Bart Barber and Robin Hadaway have declared their intention to be nominated to lead the SBC after current SBC President Ed Litton announced in early March he would not seek a second term.

During the nearly two-hour forum held at First Baptist Church Keller, Texas, the candidates responded to questions on topics ranging from the roles and responsibilities of committees, boards of trustees and local associations in SBC life to hearing and responding to messenger concerns.

Moderators Tony Richmond and Joe Wooddell, both of FBC Keller, moderated the debate-style event.

Each candidate offered a brief personal testimony, and each spoke to their “why” for pursuing the role of SBC president.

During the introductory time,

Barber noted none of the candidates for SBC president is the pastor of a “really, really large” church, in contrast to those who have recently been in the position.

## Explaining their ‘why’

Hadaway pointed out all also are graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Barber is pastor of FBC Farmersville, Texas. Ascol is pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, and president of Founders Ministries. Hadaway is a former International Mission Board missionary and a senior missions professor for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Each candidate spoke to his reasons for running.

Barber said he “came to the end of [his] stubbornness.” He emphasized what he called a “simple view” of the president’s responsibilities to “protect the rights of the messenger body, to answer the questions of the messenger body and to execute the decisions of the messenger body.”

Hadaway said his vision is to help Southern Baptists “remember the

mission ... to cooperate together to send missionaries.”

Ascol said his decision was motivated by concerns he has about the direction of the SBC and the influence of what he called “acidic cultural mindset” that is creeping into institutions and agencies.

“It’s my firm conviction ... the churches of the convention own the institutions and agencies, and the institutions and agencies need to be responsive to the churches,” Ascol said. “My great desire is to see local churches become more involved in the convention process.”

Ascol said he believes trust among Southern Baptists is fractured and called for greater financial accountability and transparency.

While Barber described himself as a “fan of transparency and accountability,” he disagreed with Ascol’s assessment of the denomination.

“The fact of the matter is that by all the metrics you can look at, Southern Baptists seem to have actually quite a great deal of trust in our entities and our institutions and the Cooperative Program.” That doesn’t mean everything’s perfect, he said.

Hadaway, whose experience includes eight months as interim president of Midwestern and a year as the seminary’s chief financial officer, noted many of the entities’ board members are lay people or pastors of small- to medium-sized churches.

Financial issues can be complex, Hadaway said, but the trustees are responsible to “decide how much transparency they can have.”

## Their priorities

As the forum concluded, each candidate spoke to their priorities.

Ascol said he would focus on “spiritual reformation,” addressing “spiritual apathy and complacency” and “structural renovation” of the trustee, committee and associational systems.

Hadaway said he would remind Southern Baptists of the mission and seek to help “return the joy” of the mission to those in the local church.

Barber said he would serve in a way that “emphasizes and respects the voice of the messengers” and helps the convention “move forward together.” (Read more from the nominees on pages 10–12.)



## SBC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

## TOM ASCOL

**AGE**  
65

**CURRENT POSITION  
AND TITLE**

*Pastor, Grace Baptist Church,  
Cape Coral, Florida*

**YEARS OF MINISTRY  
SERVICE OVERALL**

*44 years*

***How do you define the role  
of the SBC president?***

The president of the SBC is the officer elected by the convention to serve as moderator of its next annual meeting and to appoint the members of three committees: Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee and Tellers Committee. The president also serves as an ex-officio member of the various boards of trustees of our SBC entities and agencies.

Unofficially, the president speaks from within the context of our convention of churches and is able to call attention to matters of concern and help encourage conversations about vital biblical emphases.

Given those responsibilities, the president has an opportunity to help the convention think about matters that are vital to our cooperative efforts of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

***What do you hope to bring  
to Southern Baptists if you  
are elected president?***

I would hope to carry out my responsibilities with integrity and honesty — moderating fairly and

appointing to committees men and women who will serve Southern Baptists well.

In addition, I would hope to promote convention-wide conversations about the fear of God and our need to humble ourselves before Him as we think seriously about His law (the 10 Commandments) and His gospel.

I would also hope to encourage new training processes for our boards of trustees, to provide them careful instruction about their fiduciary responsibilities to hold our entities and agencies accountable to the churches of the SBC.

The convention will no doubt need to respond wisely and lovingly to the Sex Abuse Task Force report, which will provide us with the opportunity to think carefully from Scripture and our Baptist polity about [processes] and systems we can implement to help churches deal not only with sex abuse but also other problems that may from time to time arise within their memberships.

Second Timothy 3:16–17 assures us all Scripture has not only been “breathed out by God” but is also “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness so the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” So, I am confident the

Lord will guide us by His word and Spirit in ways that will honor Him

and enable us to do what we ought to do.

Fortunately, our Baptist history also provides us some helpful examples of ways those who have gone before us have handled difficult, important issues under the authority of Scripture.

I would hope to rally godly, wise, faithful Southern Baptists to help chart a course forward that will strengthen our witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ and His great love for people.

***What was the determining  
factor in your decision  
to allow your name to be  
nominated for president?***

Many people whom I deeply respect prevailed on me to do so. I have had conversations about this

prospect for years with well-intentioned people, but over the last six months those conversations became more frequent and more serious, involving more people.

Once my wife and the leaders of Grace Baptist Church became convinced I should allow my name to be put forward, after much prayer, thinking and counsel, I agreed I could honor the Lord by doing so.

Obviously, I do not know if He would have

Southern Baptist messengers elect me to that role, but regardless of

what happens in Anaheim, my goal will be to continue to seek His honor in the aftermath.

***What is the biggest  
challenge facing  
Southern Baptists, and  
how would you respond  
to that challenge as SBC  
president?***

Southern Baptists, along with all evangelicals in America, are facing many challenges so it is hard to say what is the biggest.

Certainly, near the top of the list is the onslaught of acidic ideologies that are rapidly spreading throughout our culture.

Over the last few years it has become undeniable that neo-Marxist and postmodern ways of thinking about relationships, ethics and institutions have gained ascendancy throughout society such that it is no longer shocking to hear someone say things like, “I am a woman trapped in a man’s body.” This is an assault not only on creation and nature, but on God Himself.

Southern Baptists must come to terms with the realities of this brave new world and recommit ourselves to the mission our Lord Jesus has given us.

Our marching orders have not changed, but if we are going to make disciples today we must return to a humble fear of the true and living God and recommit ourselves to live confidently under the complete authority of His written Word. We must commit ourselves to its inerrancy, infallibility and sufficiency for carrying out our mission.

We must be willing to believe that Word, obey that Word and follow that Word wherever it leads us regardless of cost or consequence.

**“SOUTHERN BAPTISTS  
MUST COME TO TERMS  
WITH THE REALITIES OF  
THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD  
AND RECOMMIT OUR-  
SELVES TO THE MISSION  
OUR LORD JESUS HAS  
GIVEN US. OUR MARCH-  
ING ORDERS HAVE NOT  
CHANGED ... ”**

— TOM ASCOL —



## SBC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

## BART BARBER

**AGE**  
52

**CURRENT POSITION  
AND TITLE**

*Pastor, First Baptist Church  
Farmersville, Texas*

**YEARS OF MINISTRY  
SERVICE OVERALL**

*35 years*

***How do you define the role  
of the SBC president?***

The president of the Southern Baptist Convention moderates the business meeting, appoints several committees and serves as a member of the general boards of the convention.

His duty as he serves in those roles is to protect the messengers' rights, answer the messengers' questions and execute the messengers' instructions.

Ours is a convention that jealously guards the primacy of the local churches and the authority of the messengers from those churches.

We deliberately created a convention structure with decentralized power.

The role of the president of the SBC should respect and embrace that structure.

***What do you hope to bring  
to Southern Baptists if you  
are elected president?***

I love our convention. I love the people in our convention. I love the people who disagree with me. Even the people whose beliefs carry them outside our statement of faith, and who wind up needing

to find another family of churches that fits them better, are people I love. I love our distinctive beliefs as Southern Baptists.

I love our polity. I love those who have suffered and survived at the hands of abusers, and I want us to do the right thing for them.

I want to bring to Southern Baptists not only love, but also joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. I want to demonstrate it from the podium, from the keyboard, on the phone and face-to-face.

I have already had the privilege of serving Southern Baptists through easy times (as first vice president under Fred Luter) and through trying times (as a trustee at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary).

In those positions of service, I tried to demonstrate those loves and those convictions courageously and winsomely. If elected as president, I would hope to do the same.

***What was the determining  
factor in your decision  
to allow your name to be  
nominated for president?***

Some time ago I accepted what I thought was a secondary calling of the Lord upon my life (subservient to my call to be a pastor) to take whatever opportunities He sent my

way to help improve the health of our convention.

It's no secret that the coarseness of our discourse and the polarization of our membership has increased of late.

For a long time it was my firm belief I was in a better position to do that as a simple pastor with a social media account.

I rebuffed the encouragement of others to accept this nomination through the course of several years of nominations and elections of others.

When more disruption occurred in the months leading up to this year's convention, I came to the end of my stubbornness and relented, accepting the possibility that God might want me to help improve the health of the convention while holding an official position for a while.

***What is the biggest  
challenge facing  
Southern Baptists, and  
how would you respond  
to that challenge as SBC  
president?***

We are the spiritual descendants of martyrs.

Our challenges pale in comparison to those faced by our forefathers who were drowned in the

Limmat River, put to the rack or burned at the stake for remaining true to their biblical convictions.

Nevertheless, our challenges do exist. We have an upcoming Sexual Abuse Task Force report.

I do not yet know what it will include, but I believe my previously demonstrated commitment to doing the right thing for survivors and to preserving our polity and our ecclesiology can equip me to lead the convention through this time period.

I think we also face, in what is somewhat a post-denominational world, some attenuation of our commitment to many of our distinctive beliefs.

I want to lead us to lean into our historical doctrinal commitments.

External challenges mostly involve a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christian doctrine and ethics — especially the Christian sexual ethic.

But since Jesus emerged from the tomb, it has never been a good wager to bet against His churches. I believe that when all of these challenges have passed, we will still be standing.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — These are the three announced candidates for SBC president at press time. Others can be nominated until time for the election at the annual meeting June 14–15 in Anaheim, California.*

**“EXTERNAL CHALLENGES MOSTLY INVOLVE A CULTURE THAT IS INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND ETHICS ... BUT SINCE JESUS EMERGED FROM THE TOMB, IT HAS NEVER BEEN A GOOD WAGER TO BET AGAINST HIS CHURCHES. I BELIEVE THAT WHEN ALL OF THESE CHALLENGES HAVE PASSED, WE WILL STILL BE STANDING.”**

— BART BARBER —



## SBC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

## ROBIN HADAWAY

**AGE**

73

**CURRENT POSITION AND TITLE**

Senior professor of missions, *Midwestern Seminary* (retired IMB missionary)

**YEARS OF MINISTRY SERVICE OVERALL**

42 years

**How do you define the role of the SBC president?**

The SBC president has no pay, no power and the vast majority of “in the pew” Southern Baptists do not even know who he is.

Many Southern Baptists do not even know there is a such a thing as an SBC president.

Having said that, the SBC president does have some influence:

1. He selects the Committee on Committees, which in turn appoint the Committee on Nominations, which fills the boards of trustees of the SBC’s entities.

2. He sets the theme, emphasis and order of business for the one or two conventions over which he presides.

3. The SBC president is a member of all the boards of the SBC entities and can influence them by his participation in their trustee meetings. This includes speaking in the plenary sessions of the Executive Committee meetings and participating in their deliberations.

4. The SBC president informally represents the denomination before both the secular and Christian worlds, comforting in times of sorrow and challenging when appropriate.

5. The primary role of the president, however, is to shepherd the

convention. He sets the tenor, tone and conversations within the SBC.

I would like to bring the joy back to our denomination and focus on missions.

**What was the determining factor in your decision to allow your name to be nominated for president?**

When Ed Litton decided not to seek a second term, my wife and I began seeking the Lord about serving Southern Baptists in this way. I grew up in the deep South, graduating from high school in Tallahassee, Florida. I went to college in the mid-South at the University of Memphis. I graduated from Southwestern Baptist Seminary [in Fort Worth, Texas].

I am a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. I was stationed in Las Vegas, Nevada, and King Salmon, Alaska, where I was called to preach. I was ordained at Bellevue Baptist Church by Adrian Rogers. My wife, Kathy, and I were married in a service officiated by W.A. Criswell.

After our pastorates in California and Arizona, we served as IMB missionaries for 18 years. During my last six years with the IMB, I supervised over 300 missionaries in Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. After moving to the Midwest to teach missions at MBTS in Kansas City, I

served in the president’s cabinet for five years, including the positions of interim president, interim CFO, administrative vice president and dean of students.

I attended every SBC Executive Committee meeting as a representative of MBTS for five years. I served on the 2000 SBC Credentials Committee and the 2006 and 2007 Resolutions Committees. Kathy served on the 1989 SBC Committee on Committees.

I am a part of no group. After much prayer, consulting with a few friends and the encouragement of my wife, I decided to offer my experience and wisdom to the SBC and allow my name to be placed in nomination for president.

**What do you hope to bring to Southern Baptists if you are elected president?**

I would like to say to Southern Baptists, “Remember the mission.” The SBC was originally founded for the sole purpose of sending home and foreign missionaries. All the other important work of the convention was added later.

Southern Baptists cooperate to support our missionaries. I want to see 500 net new North American church plants and 2,000 net new churches started overseas. I want to see 1,000 new WMU chapters started to refocus our denomination on

cooperative missions. Furthermore, I want to “call out the called.” There are singles and couples of all ages across our convention who need to surrender to God’s call on their lives and see if God is leading them into home or international missions. As a senior pastor, missionary and missions professor, I possess a unique perspective to help Southern Baptists “remember the mission.”

**What is the biggest challenge facing Southern Baptists, and how would you respond to that challenge as SBC president?**

The biggest challenge to Southern Baptists is to focus on missions, evangelism and church planting when there is so much wrong in the society around us.

Previous generations of Southern Baptists were able to do so. Will we? Southern Baptist missions survived the Civil War, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the civil unrest of the ’60s and the Cold War. During the Great Depression, many of our missionaries in Brazil took secular jobs because the Foreign Mission Board could not pay them.

Our biggest challenge is to realize we cannot solve every cultural issue. Our job is to “remember the mission” as expressed by Jesus in answer to a question asked in Acts 1:6–8, “Lord, at this time are you restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

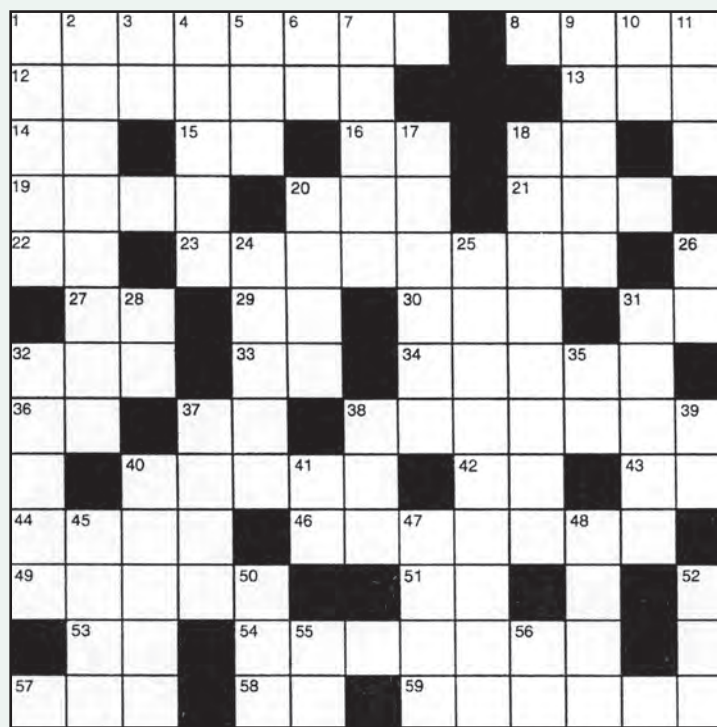
**“I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, ‘REMEMBER THE MISSION.’ THE SBC WAS ORIGINALLY FOUNDED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF SENDING HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARIES.”**

— ROBIN HADAWAY —

# CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

1. Your \_\_\_ Father will also forgive. (Matt. 6:14)
8. Multitude of the heavenly \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 2:13)
12. Descended to \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 18:16)
13. \_\_\_ to your faith. (2 Pet. 1:5)
14. Symbol for silver.
15. Wire gauge. (abbr.)
16. Here I \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen 22:1)
18. \_\_\_ his feet. (Ex. 4:25)
19. The \_\_\_ that is set before us. (Heb. 12:1)
20. American Medical Association. (abbr.)
21. Airport code for Birmingham, England.
22. Tennessee. (abbr.)
23. Elisha came to \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Kings 8:7)
27. \_\_\_ greater joy. (3 John 4)
29. Fast ye for \_\_\_\_\_. (Esther 4:16)
30. Woman having \_\_\_ pieces of silver. (Luke 15:8)
31. Let there \_\_\_ light. (Gen. 1:3)
32. He saw a \_\_\_ tree. (Matt. 21:19)
33. I will make him \_\_\_ help meet. (Gen 2:18)
34. The \_\_\_ shall serve the younger. (Rom. 9:12)
36. \_\_\_ I my brother's keeper? (Gen. 4:9)
37. Battalion. (abbr.)
38. Every man that asketh you \_\_\_ of the hope. (1 Pet. 3:15; 2 words)
40. \_\_\_ to do well. (Isa. 1:17)
42. Symbol for tin.
43. Wyoming. (abbr.)
44. The \_\_\_ Light. (John 1:9)
46. It is \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 4:7)
49. Indicates 100.



By Pamela Jensen Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

51. Symbol for nickel. \_\_\_\_\_ (Song of Sol. 4:8)
  53. South America. (abbr.)
  54. Armies together for \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 28:1)
  57. Army Transport Service. (abbr.)
  58. Symbol for sodium.
  59. Russian river that flows into the Arctic Ocean.
- ## DOWN
1. I the Lord search the \_\_\_\_\_. (Jer. 17:10)
  2. Zanoah, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 15:34)
  3. Symbol for argon.
  4. \_\_\_ unto the mighty God. (Ps. 132:2)
  5. The white of an \_\_\_\_\_. (Job 6:6)
  6. Symbol for neon.
  7. South American mammal known for its soft, fleecy wool.
  9. Have sworn \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 21:23)
  10. Special delivery. (abbr.)
  11. Total digestible nutrients. (abbr.)
  17. A \_\_\_ in heaven. (Col. 4:1)
  18. \_\_\_ in goodness and truth. (Ex. 34:6)
  20. Peace be with you all. \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom. 15:33)
  24. Look from the top of \_\_\_\_\_. (Song of Sol. 4:8)
  25. Also \_\_\_ bodies. (1 Cor. 15:40)
  26. So \_\_\_ numbered them. (Num. 1:19)
  28. \_\_\_ the king of Bashan. (Deut. 3:1)
  31. The \_\_\_ cattle. (Gen. 30:32)
  32. \_\_\_ cometh by hearing. (Rom. 10:17)
  35. Symbol for einsteinium.
  37. Dark red bulbous root.
  38. Administration for National Recovery. (abbr.)
  39. New York. (abbr.)
  40. Demas, \_\_\_, my fellow-laborers. (Philemon 24)
  41. Right Worth. (abbr.)
  45. Sabbath of \_\_\_\_\_. (Lev. 23:3)
  47. Information. (short for)
  48. \_\_\_ a child is known. (Prov. 20:11)
  50. In thine \_\_\_ eyes. (Prov. 3:7)
  52. Paper and \_\_\_\_\_. (2 John 12)
  55. Associate in Arts. (abbr.)
  56. Symbol for rhenium.

## Sylvania Baptist Church reaches offering goal

By Carolyn Tomlin  
The Alabama Baptist

When Sylvania Baptist Church committed to increase its Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering last September, the members decided to do it with a pack of crayons and a poster.

Dale Starling, the pastor's wife and a member of the church's Women on Mission, was looking for something different to promote the offering.

They had tried multiple approaches in the past but received little enthusiasm.

Sylvania is a small rural church in the corner of northeast Alabama with an average worship attendance of 130. David Starling has served as bivocational pastor for the last 22 years.

The church is a family and participates in many missions opportunities in the community and state.

"In the past, Sylvania took up an offering for the Myers-Mallory ministry offering and took in less than \$1,000," the pastor said. "This is the first year we've used a visual aid to promote the offering."

### 'Light bulb' moment

Dale Starling was asked to come up with an informative and attractive idea for all ages.

"That's when a light bulb came on," she recalled. "Why not make a large poster of an Alabama map including all 67 counties left blank? Each of the 67 counties represent \$25 of giving.

"We left the poster up for about four weeks and soon

all 67 counties were colored in. Sylvania Baptist was able to reach our goal of \$1,675 for missions."

### All ages involved

The project brought all ages in the church together. Children were especially involved, reminding their parents to give so they could color a county.

As the counties were colored in, excitement grew throughout the congregation.

A young mother, new in her faith, approached Starling one Sunday and said, "The Lord has told me I need to finish the poster today."

A young boy said, "My mom gave some money. Now can I color in a blank county?"

In 2021, Alabama Baptists contributed \$1,525,380.65 to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

The state missions of-

fering complements Cooperative Program giving and helps support Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief and state efforts in church planting, partnership missions and church revitalization.

Learn more about the offering and find promotional resources at [myers-mallory.org](http://myers-mallory.org).

Download the full 2021 giving report of Alabama Baptist churches at [tabonline.org/2021ACP](http://tabonline.org/2021ACP).

Numbers in the report were provided by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. To contact them, call 800-264-1225.



Photo courtesy of Sylvania Baptist  
An Alabama map shows all the counties colored-in to represent reaching the goal of \$1,675.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



## COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



FUELING THE GREAT COMMISSION



Visit [AlabamaCP.org](http://AlabamaCP.org) for stories, resources and information.



### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

#### JUNE

- 5/31-4 **Ymlink on Mission: Huntsville**, Jackson Way, Huntsville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 7 **Church Tax Conference for Small Churches**, SBOM, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 13-18 **Ymlink on Missions: Birmingham**, Westwood, Birmingham, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 14-15 **Southern Baptist Convention**, Anaheim, Calif., Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 21 **Church Administrative Guidelines**, SBOM, Prattville, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 2263

#### JULY

- 3 **Citizenship and Religious Liberty Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 8-9 **Children's Music Summit**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 11-15 **MIX Music Camp**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Cindy Parrish, ext. 2230
- 11-15 **Super Summer Alabama**, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 15-16 **SPEAK**, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 21-23 **'YOU' All Nations Youth Camp 2022**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Kimberly Sandoval, ext. 2244
- 22-23 **Connect (formerly Equip)**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 25-8/3 **Ymlink on Mission: New York**, Metro New York Baptist Association, New York, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 26 **Intentional Leader Conference**, SBOM, Prattville, Kim Britton, ext. 2218

#### AUGUST

- 5-6 **Pinnacle Alabama @ Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Steve Layton, ext. 2221
- 6 **Called Conference**, Samford University, Birmingham, Mary Kelley, ext. 2227
- 7 **Social Issues Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 9 **Ministers' Wives Connection**, ONLINE, Trish Jackson, ext. 2224
- 11 **Uplink on the Road**, Bethany, Andalusia, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 15 **North Region Disciple-Making Roundtable**, Westmeade, Decatur, Mark Gainey, ext. 2240
- 16 **Great Commission Conversations**, ONLINE, Cindy Wilson, ext. 2225
- 19 **SALT Conference**, Canaan, Bessemer, Ramona Noah, ext. 2312
- 25 **Uplink on the Road**, First, Trussville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 25 **2022 SPARK Conference**, ONLINE, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 27 **Fortify Conference**, First, Trussville, Larry Hyche, ext. 2268

#### SEPTEMBER

- 8 **Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM, Prattville, Amy Nelson, ext. 2231
- 8-9 **Alabama Singing Women Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Cindy Parrish, ext. 2230
- 8-9 **Alabama Singing Men Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Karen Gosselin, ext. 2318
- 9-11 **Ymlink Youth Ministers' Wives Retreat**, Pursell Farms, Sylacauga, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 11 **Single Adult Sunday**, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 11-18 **Week of Prayer for State Missions & Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 13 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Hillcrest, Enterprise, Frank Jones, [fjm1117@gmail.com](mailto:fjm1117@gmail.com)
- 13 **Ministers' Wives Connection**, ONLINE, Trish Jackson, ext. 2224
- 17 **Children's Mission Day**, Trish Jackson, ext. 2224
- 18 **Anti-Gambling Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 20 **Personnel Management Conference**, SBOM, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 20 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Mount Zion, Huntsville, Frank Jones, [fjm1117@gmail.com](mailto:fjm1117@gmail.com)
- 20 **Great Commission Conversations**, ONLINE, Cindy Wilson, ext. 2225
- 23-24 **Pastor/Deacon/Spouse Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Ken Allen, ext. 2210
- 25 **Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Bethel, Snead, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
- 25 **Student Choir Kick-Off**, First, Montgomery, Karen Gosselin, ext. 2318
- 27 **Central Region Disciple-Making Roundtable**, Crossroads, Elmore, Mark Gainey, ext. 2240
- 30-10/1 **International Friends Retreat**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Chris Mills, ext. 2379

# 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).

## CHURCH POSITIONS

### PASTOR

Bluff Springs Baptist Church is searching for a full-time pastor. Search questions and resumés to: [bsbc@graceba.net](mailto:bsbc@graceba.net) or mail to: Bluff Springs Baptist Church, 1990 Bluff Springs Road, Ashford, AL 36312.

### PASTOR

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is now accepting resumés for the position of pastor. Anyone interested in this position please send resumé to: Southside Baptist Church, 1213 Western Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee.

### PASTOR

Clayton Baptist Church, P.O. Box 4, Clayton, AL 36016 (Barbour County), is accepting resumés for pastor. Please email resumés to: [claytonbaptist@bell-south.net](mailto:claytonbaptist@bell-south.net) by May 31.

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mineral Springs Baptist Church, Pell City, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumés or questions to: [mbsbc2295@gmail.com](mailto:mbsbc2295@gmail.com).

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Paden Baptist Church, Gadsden, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumés to: [padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com) or to: Paden Baptist Church, 900 Padenreich Ave., Gadsden, AL 35905.

**SEEKING:** Fern Creek Baptist Church is seeking part-time and/or full-time ministerial staff in the following areas: music, youth, children or education. According to the applicant's gifts and skills, two of these areas could be combined for a full-time position. Applicants must exemplify a growing relationship with God, spiritual maturity, responsible authority, fervent evangelism, sound theology and effective communication skills with all age groups. Applicants should have experience and education in ministry. Anyone seeking the music position must be an excellent musician, worship leader and educator. Send resumes to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attention: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291, or email to [linda@ferncreekbaptist.org](mailto:linda@ferncreekbaptist.org). Resumes will be received through June 15, 2022. Questions? Call 239-0316, ext. 103 (Linda Barnes Popham).

### WORSHIP LEADER:

Mount Hebron East Baptist Church, Eclectic, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a worship leader. Responsibilities include planning/leading congregational music weekly with PowerPoint presentation. Performing special music and directing choir on special occasions. Also participating in church functions. Please send resumé to [jwspeake@gmail.com](mailto:jwspeake@gmail.com).

### CHILDCARE CENTER & PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

FBC Flomaton is seeking a full-time childcare center and preschool director. Interested candidates should send questions and resumés via email to: [contact@fbcflomaton.com](mailto:contact@fbcflomaton.com).

## OTHER POSITIONS

### IL BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME AND FAMILY SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IL Baptist Children's Home and Family Services (BCHFS) is looking for an executive director. See qualifications and standards at <http://www.bchfs.com/employment>. BCHFS is a Licensed Child Welfare Agency whose mission is to "Provide Christ-centered services that protect, heal and restore." The agency has a rich history of providing care for children and families in crisis for over 100 years. BCHFS has an annual budget of \$3.9 million and provides care for children and adults through various programs including residential care, maternity care, adoption services, counseling services and a pregnancy resource clinic. To apply, send a letter of interest and resumé to: Eric Bramlet, Search Committee Chair, [ericbramlet@kogerbramletlaw.com](mailto:ericbramlet@kogerbramletlaw.com).

### PART-TIME CHILDCARE PROVIDER

North Shelby Baptist is seeking a part-time childcare provider. Must be at least 18 years of age and pass background screening. For more information and to apply, visit <https://northshelbybaptist.org/job-posting-part-time-childcare-provider>.

### RECEPTIONIST/MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Receptionist/ministry assistant needed at First Baptist Church of Birmingham, 29 hours a week. Experience with Shelby helpful but not required. Must have good computer and people skills. Please email resumé to: [cjames@fbcbbm.org](mailto:cjames@fbcbbm.org).

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

North Shelby Baptist is currently seeking a full-time administrative assistant, to provide general administrative and office support. Two to three years administrative experience is required as well as proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite products. In-depth data base entry and membership management experience preferred. The ability to be accurate, detailed and multi-task are necessary. Website maintenance, social media knowledge and understanding of the Baptist church a plus. Please email resumé to: [office@northshelbybaptist.org](mailto:office@northshelbybaptist.org).

## 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).

## BUSINESS

### BEAUTIFUL ALABAMA GULF COAST LIVING

Living here in Gulf Shores and ready to help you find your dream home along our beautiful Gulf Coast! Ministry partner of The Alabama Baptist. Bill Gilmore, 205-919-3216. [Bill@cottagepropertiesllc.com](mailto:Bill@cottagepropertiesllc.com). P.O. Box 2789, Daphne, AL 36526. [www.cottagepropertiesllc.com/billgilmore.html](http://www.cottagepropertiesllc.com/billgilmore.html).

### FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

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

## TRAVEL/VACATION

### AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach for over 30 years! Call Don, 251-752-2366, call Donna, 251-656-4935 or [www.gulfshorescondos.com](http://www.gulfshorescondos.com).

### 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.



Photo courtesy of FBC Tuscaloosa

O'Shea Lowery leads "Entrusted Lessons for the Journey," a ministry aimed at helping single mothers. The sessions were recorded at First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa.

# FBC Tuscaloosa hosts video filming for new Bible study

By Karen O. Allen  
The Alabama Baptist

Seven video sessions filmed at First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa earlier this year are set to be part of a new curriculum for ministry to single mothers.

The seven-week Bible study called "Entrusted Lessons for the Journey" deals with different concerns a single mother may face and how to handle them biblically, according to writer O'Shea Lowery. It is scheduled to be published this summer.

Lowery suddenly became a single mother when her husband, Jeff, left for work one morning and didn't return. He was killed

in a work accident, and she went from being a stay-at-home mom with two children, aged 2 and 3, to being a 24-year-old single mother with no college education.

## Single moms

God used Lowery's difficult transition to lead her to a doctoral degree in family ministries, later using her doctoral project as a model for single mothers.

The purpose of her Strong and Courageous Ministries, based on Joshua 1:9, is to

equip, encourage and empower churches to embrace single mothers and their children, Lowery said.

She described Strong and Courageous as "not another program, not another idea, but an actual discipleship ministry for single moms."

## Local church ministry

To achieve the greatest impact, the intention is that the ministry will be orchestrated through the local church, Lowery said. Single mothers need to be surrounded by a healthy church family, she added.

"People need to pour into their lives and their children's lives."

Strong and Courageous Ministries

fall under the umbrella of Entrusted Hope Ministries.

"I want to spend the rest of my life entrusting to others what God has entrusted to me," Lowery said.

"One of those things is that He allowed me to live out the life of a single moms' ministry.

"I want them to know that their journey is not on their own shoulders to try and figure out. God sees them, is over their journey, will help them, lead them, provide for them and protect them."

To learn more, visit [entrustedhopeministries.org](http://entrustedhopeministries.org).

# IMB trustees approve 56 new missionaries, host retirees

By Leslie Peacock Caldwell  
International Mission Board

International Mission Board trustees approved 56 new fully funded missionaries for appointment and recognized several others for their service during a May 18–19 meeting in Orlando, Florida.

Cecil Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church Headland, was recognized as one of nine trustees ending their term of service.

The trustee meeting was conducted in conjunction with the Celebration of Emeriti event held every five years to recognize retiring missionaries who have completed their service with the IMB.

Trustee chairman Chuck Pourciau from Louisiana introduced Tom Elliff, who attended the emeriti event with his wife, Diana. Elliff, who served as IMB president from 2011 to 2014, greeted trustees and commended IMB's leadership.

## Eternal significance

"There's not a meeting of minds and hearts more important than this one," Elliff said.

He thanked trustees and IMB staff for their hard, but eternally significant, work. "My heart safely trusts in you," he said.

Elliff, who served as a missionary in Zimbabwe, is now a lecturer, facilitator and mentor at the Tom Elliff Center for Missions at Oklahoma Baptist University.

IMB President Paul Chitwood spoke of his enjoyment of recent meetings with new missionaries, field leadership and trustees.

He also celebrated the 800 gathered emeriti, whom he called "heroes of the faith," and reported that IMB has fully funded its commitment to emeriti benefits with the necessary \$128 million.

## Sending Celebration

The new missionaries approved for appointment will be recognized during a Sending Celebration on June 14 during the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California.

Viewers also can watch the Sending Celebration via livestream at [sbcannualmeeting.net](http://sbcannualmeeting.net) and in the SBC Annual Meeting app.

Chitwood also reported that gifts to the IMB's two primary revenue streams, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program, currently are running more than 14% ahead of last year's giving, year-to-date.

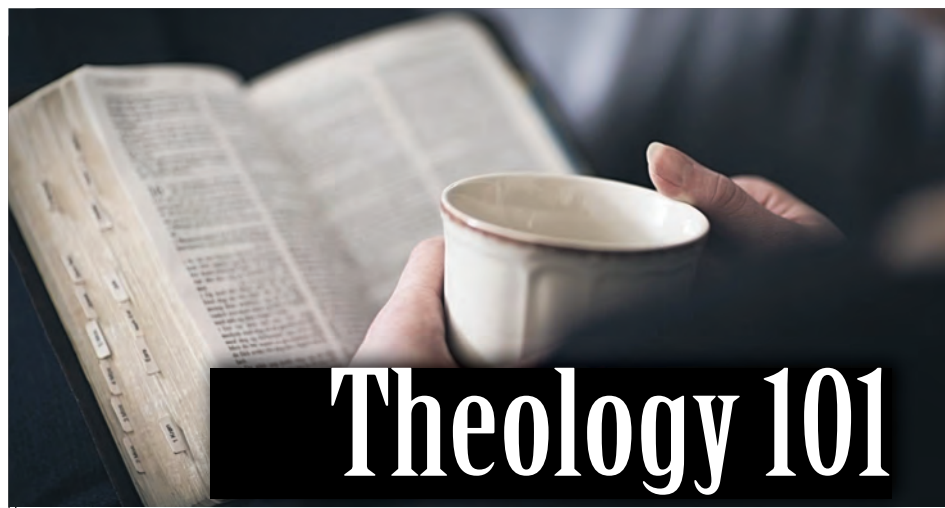
The missionary candidate pipeline has quadrupled in the past three years, he added.

As reported in the newly released 2021 Annual Statistical Report, the number of people who responded to the gospel, the number of new believers baptized and the number of new churches planted overseas increased over the previous year.



IMB photo

Nate Bishop, second vice chair for IMB trustees, opened the May 19 meeting with a welcome message and prayer. Bishop is pastor of Forest Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Bishop and other trustee board officers were elected to a second consecutive one-year term.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## The People of God

# God's Temple

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
The Alabama Baptist

We discover in reading the Old Testament that the temple in Jerusalem became the central place where God regularly manifested His presence. The prophet Habakkuk contrasted the lifeless idols of pagans with the living God of Israel saying, "The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him" (2:20).

The New Testament picks up the imagery of a temple as a place where God's Spirit dwells.

The plural form of "you" in its four occurrences in 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 reminds us the collective or congregational sense of a gathered group of believers constitutes a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

## Indwelling

When we gather for worship, where is the Holy Spirit? He is not invisibly floating around among seats or hovering just beneath the ceiling.

God's Spirit dwells in the hearts of the redeemed, as indicated in Romans 8:9: "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." The conclusion from this truth is the Holy Spirit is present in the gathered body of true believers, thus turning the congregation into His temple.

One practical outcome of recognizing our hearts as the Spirit's dwelling place is the awareness that to the extent any of us is grieving, quenching or disobeying the Holy Spirit, our place of worship is limited as the dwelling

place of the Spirit. Furthermore, when the Spirit is not freely filling us and flowing through us individually, His convicting presence is curtailed. As a result, unbelievers in our midst do not come under conviction about their needs and the Savior's supply.

## 'Cluttered hearts'

First Corinthians 6:19–20, through the singular use of "you," also tells us our individual bodies are temples.

When we notice that some worship times seem to be moving and powerful but others feel dull and lifeless, maybe we as individuals need to engage in a do-it-yourself heart checkup: Have we brought into church a backlog of unconfessed and thus uncleansed sin? Do we harbor unreleased forgiveness toward others?

Members with cluttered hearts can hamper the church from being a temple of God's Spirit, which being preeminently holy always has an affinity for clean hands and pure hearts.

Such should be our attitudes and actions that God's Spirit can be present in fullness, unquenched by our confession of sins and God's forgiveness.

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.



# Headline news

## from around the Southeast

### ARKANSAS

After a two-year hiatus, 180 Arkansas Baptist students from 16 churches and their adult leaders came together April 29–May 1 in Beebe for CONNECT, a weekend of ministry and missions.

CONNECT began with Friday night worship. Five students responded to the gospel and made professions of faith.

The following day participants were trained in how to share the gospel and start spiritual conversations as they served others by meeting needs. By the end of Saturday, three adults professed faith in Christ.

This is what CONNECT is all about, said Travis McCormick, missions team member and leader of the CONNECT planning team.

“We are called to make

disciples who make disciples,” McCormick said. “CONNECT is designed to help students and adults learn how to meet needs to help spark spiritual conversations and begin the process of making disciples where they live.” (Arkansas Baptist News)



Photo by Arkansas Baptist News

### MISSISSIPPI

The Baptist Children’s Village is celebrating 125 years of ministry to at-risk children and families throughout Mississippi.

Ministry staff, alumni, board members and others joined Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves, who announced that

May 12 will officially be known as “The Baptist Children’s Village Day.”

The Baptist Children’s

Village welcomed its first child on May 12, 1897, according to the organization’s website. Since then, they have grown to a staff of 50 who serve more than 200 children annually among their seven residential

campuses and other in-home efforts. The Baptist Children’s Village is the official child care agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. (The Baptist Paper)

### TENNESSEE

Dave Shelley is a firm believer that God can use recreation and games to share the gospel of Christ. And he should know. Shelley, director of missions for Wilson County Baptist Association in Lebanon, is beginning his 51st

year of leading day camps for children.

Shelley has been camp pastor and director of All Nations Camp, a ministry of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, since 1997. His first experience with day camp happened 50 years ago in Atlanta.

He was involved in a summer training for college students as they attempted to share the gospel with children through fun games and Bible studies, he recalled.

He noted the children listened as they played. Relationships with the children would later open doors into homes, Shelley said. “Some 450-plus day camps/neighborhood clubs later,

God is still using games to impact lives for eternity.” (Tennessee Baptist and Reflector)

### FLORIDA

A May 6 explosion that killed 46 in Old

Havana, Cuba, rained destruction on Calvary Baptist Church, a historic congrega-

tion key to Baptist work in Western Cuba.

The church is the headquarters of the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba, which is composed of 565 churches, 570 missions and 1,907 house churches.

The Western Cuba Baptist seminary was founded in the building, and Annie Armstrong was the key fundraiser for its purchase.

It remains uncertain if the building can be salvaged, although Western Cuba Baptists and their Florida Baptist partners are hopeful.

For more information and ways to help, go to [tabonline.org/cuba-explosion](http://tabonline.org/cuba-explosion). (Florida Baptist Witness)



Fla. Baptist Witness photo



Facebook photo



Tennessee Baptist and Reflector photo

**EDITOR’S NOTE** — News items are compiled by The Alabama Baptist staff.



**Reliable SIGN SERVICES**

“Celebrating Over 25 Years”

**CHURCH SIGNS**

“Our church was looking for several months at purchasing a sign. We had talked with several companies, but I am so thankful I met Danny at Reliable Signs at the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference. They provided a better sign at the price we had budgeted. The best aspect about Reliable Signs is the customer service! They will work with you from design to install and everything in between. They are an excellent company that cares about their customers.”

**Jeremy Jones, pastor**  
Bethsalem Baptist Church  
Billingsley, Ala.

[www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com) • 1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955



Pastor Charles Lewis recommends Jimmy Dixon

**The Benefits of a Reverse Mortgage**

- Get cash
- Erase mortgage payments
- Start a growing line of credit
- Purchase a home

**Contact Jimmy Dixon**

205-567-4800

[jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com)



Like The Alabama Baptist, Jimmy covers our state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

NMLS #207518

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 29

## Explore the Bible

By Ben Stubblefield

Visiting assistant professor of Christian studies, University of Mobile



### WAITING 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15

When I was a child, I never really understood why we called the preacher “Brother Darrell,” but that was his name so that’s what we called him. As it turns out, the moniker was more meaningful than I knew.

Baptists historically have referred not just to their preachers, but also to all their fellow church members, with the familial prefixes “Brother” and “Sister” in order to demarcate those in the world with whom they’re going to heaven.

And ... I like it. In fact, I use these terms so much my kids have had to ask me a number of times why I refer to my wife, their mother, as “Sister Carrie.”

The practice was so common in Baptist life that, according to church historian Greg Wills, a sign of disciplinary measures taken against a church member involved changing his or her title from “Brother/Sister” to “Mr./Mrs.”

That may seem benign to us today, but roughly 1 million Baptists were so disciplined between 1760 and 1900, roughly 3%–4% of Baptist church membership per year!

In our present church context the concept of church discipline is almost a relic. But as we’ll see in today’s passage, correction, even as uncomfortable and difficult as it is to give, is essential for the repentance of the sinner and the integrity of the church’s witness.

### Establish standards (6–9)

As an apostle and spiritual father to the church, it would have been normal and even expected for Paul to receive remuneration from the Thessalonian congregation.

Paul wanted to distinguish his ministry from swindlers. He deeply inconvenienced himself by working a side job, making less money and working longer hours to prevent any kind of comparison.

The curse of sin upon the earth was not work but the noncooperation of the earth in our labor (Gen. 3:18–19). In a world where it’s easy to refuse, avoid and neglect hard

work, the church must recognize the Lord gifted us to cultivate this world through our labor, and we ought to do that to the glory of God (Col. 3:17).

### Provide (10–12)

Instead of living with idle hands, Paul reminds them they should “work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.”

Paul says if these folks can’t find time to work for themselves, then you shouldn’t make it possible for them to sponge off of you. If you’re able to work and choose instead to pilfer, you’re going to have to miss some meals. The church is not going to subsidize your sin.

We do have an obligation to care for those in need (Gal. 6:10), but the church must also recognize the difference between Christian generosity and encouraging transgression.

### Discipline (13–15)

“Well, Paul, what if they don’t change their ways?” You can sense Paul’s heart in his response. Be kind, be brotherly, do good, admonish but “put them to shame.”

In 1817, a Brother Lancaster of Powelton Baptist Church in Georgia was accused of permitting fiddling and dancing at his daughter’s wedding. He was summarily brought before a church conference for discipline.

Pastor Jesse Mercer, future president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, presided over the meeting. Lancaster half-heartedly admitted his guilt at the trial, then shockingly turned to accuse the church of gossip, breaking the Sabbath and prejudice against poor and rural members.

Miraculously what happened next was revival. Lancaster repented. The church repented. The pastor wept. And the church grew in number and in holiness.

Perhaps we can imagine that for our church growth strategies and round table discussions — to heed Paul’s words and the example of our forebears that repentance might bring revival.

## Bible Studies for Life

By Will Kynes

Associate professor of biblical studies, Samford University



### STAY PREPARED AND READY Matthew 25:1–13

Jesus spends most of Matthew 24 instructing His disciples about what to expect as His return approaches.

They will encounter suffering, but His return is sure, and it will not be missed.

Matthew 25 continues with the theme that ends the previous chapter: How should we live now as we await Jesus’ return?

In this passage, Jesus tells a parable of virgins preparing to meet a bridegroom. The parable teaches that being ready for Jesus to return involves intentional action.

### Prepare for Christ’s return. (1–5)

The virgins in Jesus’ parable are like bridesmaids in contemporary weddings. Just as in modern-day weddings, they have important scripted roles to carry out.

They represent those awaiting the return of Jesus, the “bridegroom” (Matt. 9:15; John 3:29).

Jesus distinguishes between two groups of virgins, the wise and the foolish, just as He contrasts the wise man who builds his house on the rock with the foolish man who builds on sand (Matt. 7:24, 26).

The wise virgins have brought extra oil for their lamps, so they are prepared when the bridegroom is delayed in coming.

In the ancient context, this delay was likely due to negotiations with the father of the bride.

All the virgins, wise and foolish, fall asleep. Sleep is not bad here, as it might have appeared in Jesus’ earlier comparison of His coming to a thief in the night (Matt. 24:43–44).

### Preparing for Christ’s return is every person’s responsibility. (6–9)

When the bridegroom finally arrives, all the virgins wake and trim their lamps by cleaning and oiling them so they will burn brightly.

But the foolish virgins who were unprepared for the bridegroom’s delay are now unprepared for his appearance.

Their lamps are going out, a fate

associated with the wicked (Prov. 13:9; Job 18:5).

They request oil from their wise companions, but there is not enough oil to go around so they must go buy their own.

Jesus is not teaching ethics here, but He is telling us the importance of preparing for His return. While we can, and should, encourage others to prepare for Christ’s return, we cannot prepare for them.

### The time for our preparation is limited. (10–13)

While the unprepared virgins are gone, those who were ready (Matt. 24:44) meet the bridegroom and enter with him into the wedding banquet.

When the others return the door is shut, and they cannot enter. It is too late, for when Christ shuts the door none shall open it (Rev. 3:7; Isa. 22:22).

During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21–22).

Echoing His earlier words, Jesus says the bridegroom responds to the virgins’ entreaty, “Lord, Lord ... open the door for us!” with “Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.”

Jesus then drives home the point of the parable: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

The parable makes clear that “keep watch” does not mean being constantly alert, but it does mean being prepared. The parallel in the Sermon on the Mount associates preparation with doing the will of the Father.

Practically this will mean something different for each of us, depending on where the Lord has placed us.

In our joyful anticipation of the Bridegroom’s arrival, all of us must keep the oil of our obedience well stocked and not rely on others to provide it for us.

# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs  
The Alabama Baptist

## We The Kingdom enjoys 'living life together,' joins Casting Crowns tour

**W**e The Kingdom is primarily made up of relatives: a dad, uncle, daughter, son — and then there's Andrew Bergthold.

"I'm the one member who's not related to the family, but we've known each other for almost 10 years," Bergthold noted. "We've lived a lot of life together."

As a teen, Bergthold, a singer and songwriter, started several bands, but the one he named We The Kingdom never took off.

Some 12 years before the current version began, he moved to Nashville to do production and songwriting. While there, he met the family that would one day become his own.

Brothers Ed and Scott Cash started We The Kingdom along with Bergthold, Ed's daughter Franni and his son Martin. The band began a tour with Casting Crowns this year.

### Hard experiences

"Ed and Scott were full-time in songwriting and production ... too. None of us had even thought about starting a band but all of us had tried to do solo projects in the past," Bergthold recalled. "We were playing for worship at



WE THE KINGDOM

Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Baptist Paper

a Young Life camp outside of Atlanta, Georgia.

"We had just walked through some really hard experiences with the Church, just feeling a little bit let down by the people.

"I think the Church is definitely created by the Lord, but anything that man touches is fallible and will fall," he added.

"We went through our own pretty tough experience and had to spend a bit of time discerning what's just the constructs of man and what is the truth of God."

Part of their time together at the camp led to writing the song, "Dancing on the Waves."

### God-given gifts

"[While] looking at the stars, we realized that the Lord had specifically designed and created each one of us for this journey, to make a difference, to use the gifts and abilities He had given us," Bergthold remembered.

"At the time we were writing it for the students because we want-

ed them to know how much they were loved by God.

"At the most honest we can be ... we needed to hear that, too."

Realizing the power of the song they wrote together, they decided to form a band, and Bergthold had a name ready.

We The Kingdom already had social media and a website, "So it's really cool to see the Lord use our history to create our future," Bergthold said

Along with Casting Crowns, We The Kingdom was slated to perform with Hillsong Worship in the USA 2022 Tour.

On March 22, Brian Houston, founder of Australia's Hillsong Church, resigned, and Hillsong Worship withdrew from the tour.

The tour went ahead, however, and included Alabama. The groups were in Birmingham April

23. We the Kingdom will be in Albertville on June 17.

"A lot of what we believe is interpreted through man — you go to church or you learn from your parents — then you have to interpret that for yourself," Bergthold said.

### 'Man is flawed'

"Inevitably man is flawed and fallible. When man falls, you have to separate what was just their words and what is actually the word of God.

"I just encourage people that have been affected by this to chase after the word of God more than ever before.

"That's what I had to do when I walked through something similar, and we did as a band years and years ago. I sat down with my Bible day after day and said, 'OK, Lord, what is Your word. What are You saying here?'"

In spite of the change in the lineup, We The Kingdom is excited about the tour, as they have been working on a new record and look forward to sharing the songs with others.

"Speaking of processing through life and pain and hurt and all of that, we want to touch on the gamut of emotions and bring healing into those," Bergthold explained.

"The songs and the way we design our set is designed to lead people through an experience that hopefully brings them closer to the Lord."

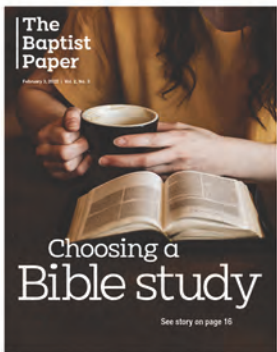
The tour continues through September.



### 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.

HAVE YOU  
SEEN **THE**  
**LATEST**  
**ADDITION**  
TO OUR  
TAB MEDIA  
GROUP  
FAMILY?



Subscribers to The Alabama Baptist can add this supplemental content for a special family rate of **only \$10 a year.**

CALL US AT **1-800-803-5201**  
TO FIND OUT MORE.

**The  
Baptist  
Paper**