

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Outdoor ministry helps fathers and children deepen relationships

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Missionary roles vary in length, funding; common thread is willingness to serve

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Evangelism initiative offers opportunity to take 'gospel to everyone'

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“I’m thankful for the opportunities that God has allowed me to be a part of through the years ... I’ve seen God do the unimaginable in my life, and I am thankful.”

— ROGER BRELAND

Photo courtesy of Roger Breland and Truth
Roger Breland, who founded the vocal and musical group Truth, served as director for all of its 31 years. Truth included more than 400 members, completed 61 recordings, toured in 27 countries and performed at least 10,000 concerts.

Changed lives

Truth to celebrate 50 years of ministry June 17 at reunion concert in Mobile

By Tracy Riggs
The Alabama Baptist

Roger Breland has several roles at the University of Mobile: executive director of the Roger Breland Center for Performing Arts, dean emeritus of the Alabama School of the Arts, executive director of the Voices of Mobile and special assistant to

the president. But when asked about his work, he replies only that he was the “founder and director of Truth for 31 years.”

Well-known group

Young people today might not immediately recognize what that means, but Christians growing up in the 1970s and '80s knew the word “Truth” didn’t just mean

something factual. It was the name of a vocal and musical group. That group performed 31 years, had more than 400 members, completed 61 recordings, toured in 27 countries and presented at least 10,000 concerts for well over 1 million people. Its history and Breland’s are almost one and the same.

“In my young twenties,

I was a music minister at Spring Hill Baptist Church [in Mobile] when the Jesus Movement moved east and contemporary Christian music was introduced to the deep South,” Breland recalled. “I was a young guy, and that music really, really excited me. And I saw what it did for

(See ‘A result,’ page 13)



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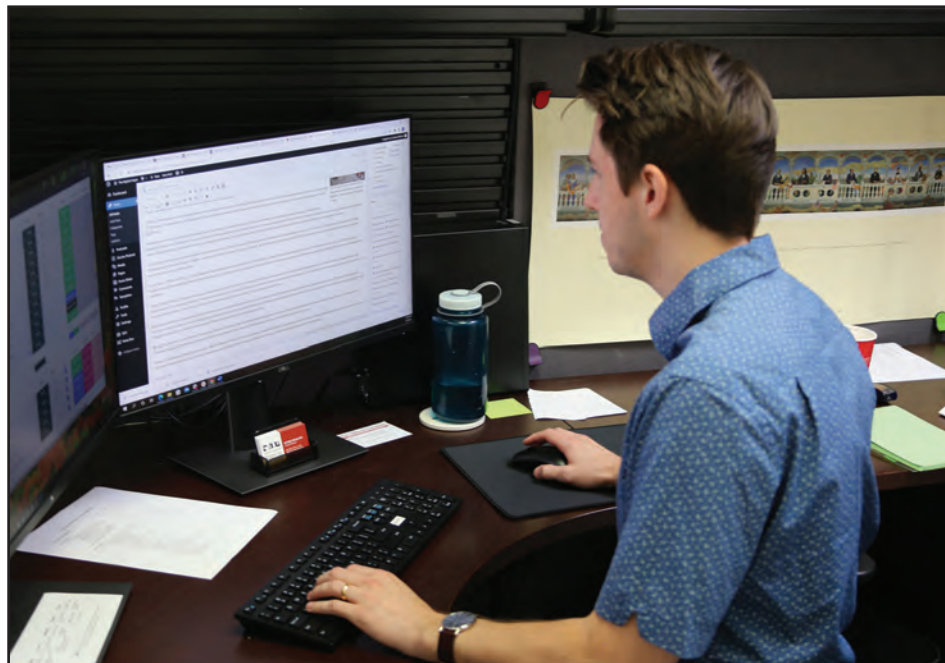


Photo by Taylor Mitchell/The Alabama Baptist

Daniel Gilliland will assist the editors in making story assignments and serve as the official handler of the assignments as they flow to the writers and photographers and then to the copy editors, editors and production manager.

TAB Media Group welcomes new content manager

Daniel Gilliland has been a member of Baptist churches his whole life. So in his new role as content manager for The Alabama Baptist and The Baptist Paper, he's "looking forward to diving into this Baptist world in a more informed and intentional way."

"I am also excited to meet people and learn about their stories and experiences as churchgoers, not only in Alabama but also nationwide with The Baptist Paper," Gilliland said.

He said he also believes "the news" matters.

"Stories shape societies, and I hope to be of service to our readers and subscribers here," he said.

Gilliland earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama, then graduated with a master of divinity from Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in 2019. While studying he served in a ministry residency at Iron City Church in Birmingham, something he continued for a little while after graduation.

He then worked in other capacities, including two years as a pharmacy technician.

Now he gets to put his communication and theology studies to work as he serves as a sort of air traffic

controller for all content flowing in and out of TAB Media Group.

"Daniel will assist the editors in making story assignments and then serve as the official handler of the assignments as they flow to the writers and photographers and then to the copy editors, editors and production manager," said Jennifer Davis Rash, president and editor-in-chief of TAB Media Group.

Quality control

Gilliland also will oversee and organize the publications' network of correspondents, monitor deadlines and expectations and make

sure content is accurate and ready for publication. He's meticulous and well suited for that role, Rash said.

Along with the content, he will keep up with the publications' coverage maps.

"We work hard to cover a wide variety of topics, areas and locations," Rash said.

"We cover every association in Alabama consistently in The Alabama Baptist, and now we are moving toward the same goal with each state in The Baptist Paper.

"Daniel brings a unique blend of craftsmanship, efficiency, discipline, focus and quality control needed for this position," she said.

"We are excited to welcome him to the team." (Grace Thornton)



GILLILAND



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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

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Working to bring you the clear, credible coverage you deserve

My friend asked if he had been too hard on me, if I was OK after receiving pushback on recent stories.

I laughed and then paused, deciding to take a few minutes to think about it before answering.

It's not often we are checked on in this manner, so I didn't have an immediate response without being disingenuous.

We are blessed by such an encouraging and uplifting readership that most of the harsh responses coming our way are balanced out really well.

Your support keeps us moving forward. Every call, letter, email, text message, social media message and personal visit is not only appreciated but savored.

Our team knows we are better and only able to keep up with our ministry assignment and the amazing opportunities God opens in the midst of that assignment because you are surrounding us with love, care and prayers.

As you know, our work sometimes requires us to report on uncomfortable topics, and it can be discouraging to receive a heavy dose of scolding merely because a news story was reported.

At the same time, I'm truly grateful for so many who lovingly and graciously seek to make sure we understand all sides and work to sharpen us as individuals and as a team.

We all know how a lack of accountability and/or avoiding genuine feedback from trusted sources can lead to missteps and poor judgment. We are watching some of that play out now in Southern Baptist life.

Reporting on areas of brokenness requires a delicate balance of sharing important facts without sensationalizing information or instilling fear.

As you can imagine, the latest discussions and debates com-

ing out of the SBC requires research, focus and discernment.

It's more than merely detailing the foundational facts. It also requires sifting through the various interpretations being promoted while also attempting to understand nuances and thinking critically about what is shared and what details might be missing.

Our team takes our responsibility seriously and needs your prayers as we work through all the news and information to provide the clear and credible coverage you deserve.

We seek to share calmly and without labeling or attacking anyone in the process.

Your desire for transparency and authentic reporting, no matter how difficult the news may be, is a blessing and allows us to do our jobs with confidence.

We've always worked under the premise of "tell the truth and trust the people," and we are encouraged by the renewed emphasis among grassroots Southern Baptists to settle for nothing less going forward.

As you work to process all that's going on in the SBC and the world in general, know we are a safe space to talk it out.

The opportunity to have a conversation with you always helps us, too.

" BUT THE

Fruit of the Spirit
is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

AGAINST SUCH THINGS THERE IS NO LAW."

GALATIANS 5:22-23

Your Voice



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

Are you addicted to doomscrolling?

By **Brian Hobbs**

Editor, Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

According to a recent study, on average we spend five and a half hours on digital media and glance at our phones 221 times every day.

What are we doing during those hours? One phenomenon that has emerged is called doomscrolling (or doomsurfing), which has been defined as “the act of spending an excessive amount of screen time devoted to the absorption of negative news.”

Feeding our desires

Just what is it about social media and life in general that makes people drawn to such news?

For starters, there is something innate in humans that draws our eyes toward the sordid. Think of how traffic always slows down around a car wreck. Think of how local television news stations always lead with bad news. Think

of how fast tragic news travels.

Christians can and should be aware of suffering and bad news around us. When disaster strikes, Christians cannot bury our heads in the sand or be blind to needs.

At the same time, much of what passes for staying informed or getting the real news is really just an expression of our daily appetite for outrage and intrigue.

A little bit of gossip or a feeling of outrage is what we desire, but feeding that desire often leaves us only wanting more.

This partially explains why social media and the internet are filled with millions of websites and popular social posts that gain attention based on outrage and intrigue.

Christians should not be the people feeding on such things.

The Apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives timeless and timely lessons to us in the Book of Romans.

Hear these words: “Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I

want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” (Rom. 16:19–20).

Did you hear that? We are to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. Christians would do well to be more aloof from outrage and intrigue. Why? Because we rest in knowing God is in control, and we want to be a people marked by calm confidence in Jesus.

C.S. Lewis said, “A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

Use it as your cue

Are you constantly ogling your phone to look down on others or partake in the daily outrage? If so, the next time you are tempted to spend part of your day doomscrolling, use that as your cue to pray and get into the Word, “making the best use of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16).

In the end, that’s the kind of time investment that will make an eternal impact.



HOBBS

Letters to the Editor

The lead article for the June 2 issue — “Overwhelmed,” “amazed” while ministering to Ukrainian refugees — was touching and factual.

I am sure the national news must have given the statistics quoted in this article, but with all the death and gunfire coverage, I missed it.

Your article gave reasons for Poland’s tremendous support of the Ukrainian people — not to let WWII happen again.

I appreciate the author’s missions work and coverage of the situation and his ability to show the brotherly love and compassion of others as well as one’s love of his country in the piece.

It is hard to believe the world’s situation of school killings and countries invading other countries.

Thanks again for your leadership and direction.

Sharon Hill
Birmingham, Ala.

Let me be very clear. The purpose of this post is not to gain sympathy or seek affirmation. So as much as I appreciate that, please don’t respond accordingly.

The purpose of this post is singularly to state that I identify with so many of you, my fellow pastors, in a season of deep sorrow, struggle, discouragement and, yes, depression.

Cultural headwinds that feel like a hurricane, sickness, death, loss of trust in individuals and organizations. All of that and more.

You are not alone in your feelings. You are not less of a pastor or a Christian because of these emotions. You are a tenderhearted shepherd who hurts with his flock.

All saints through the ages have endured such dark seasons, many far worse than ours. And all made it safely to the safe harbor — albeit with torn sails and a battered hull. But safely nonetheless.

And so shall we. When all hope seems to fade, set your sights on that harbor and your Strong Captain who is more than capable of securing your safe passage.

Mark Clifton
Senior director
of replanting
North American
Mission Board

“We have a solemn responsibility to speak the truth, teach the truth and live by the truth.”

CLAYTON CLOER

Pastor, Church at the Cross in Orlando, Florida

Our network of Southern Baptist Churches continues to send missionaries across the world, share the good news of Jesus, raise up the next generation of leaders, speak biblical truth, plant thriving churches and cooperate for the good of the gospel in our world. We pray the Lord brings a spirit of revival as we walk in truth.

Pastor Mark Bethea
FBC Montgomery

“People are willing to write a check if asked. They’re willing to help, but I just felt a calling to go over, to actually do something in person,” said **Susan Kirkland, who traveled with a team of Alabama Baptists to Romania to help serve Ukrainian refugees.**

“We want to become a church that looks more like our neighborhood, and we want to become a church that looks more like heaven,” said **Teman Knight, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery.**

“The Bible never says every negative thing that happens to us is the result of sin. But it does teach every sin carries negative consequences,” said **James Jackson, pastor of Glynwood Baptist Church in Prattville.**

One of the greatest examples of cooperative missions is Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and countless selfless SBDR volunteers who serve faithfully. ...

The sacrificial ministry of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers has been a beacon of light amid darkness and despair. Repeatedly, I have heard those to whom they minister ask them, “Why would you do this?” and heard them respond, “Because Jesus loves and cares about you.” ...

Every mobile kitchen, shower trailer, chain saw unit and roofing nail is available because Southern Baptists choose to give cooperatively to support missions and ministry like Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. SBDR is one of our greatest examples that we are better together.

Coy Webb
Crisis response director
Send Relief

Don't play 'The Blame Game'

I've never seen a board game called “The Blame Game,” but I know something like it exists.

People play different versions of it in real life all the time.

Since Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed Eve, the blame game has been played in various forms.

The Bible is full of examples.

The Israelites blamed Moses for desert life. Ahab blamed Elijah for the king's troubles.

Even Martha blamed Jesus for Lazarus' death.

And the blame game beat goes on today. Teams blame coaches for losses. Teenagers blame parents for restrictive lifestyles.

Churches blame pastors when sin erodes the fellowship. Parents blame teachers when kids fail. Politicians blame other politicians for inflation.

Paul noted a universal rule of the blame game — finger pointing.

“Therefore you are without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judges, for when you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things” (Rom. 2:1).

Jesus didn't look favorably on judging others. A judgmental attitude serves as a smokescreen to hide your own foibles.

Paul saw such judges as guilty of the same issues for which they condemned others — hypocrisy, another rule of the blame game.

Never forget that God, the ultimate Judge, knows the truth about you. Let that serve as motivation to can the blame.

Darryl Wood

“A Personal Word from a Retread Pastor” blog
via Facebook

From the *Twitterverse*

@johnthweatt

“Father, What we know not, teach us; What we have not, give us; What we are not, make us; For the sake of your Son our Savior. Amen.”

@scarby76

One of the mistakes Jonah makes as he looks upon Nineveh is that he doesn't recognize that the same mercy they are getting is the mercy he has received. Great sinners need great mercy, and we are all great sinners. Point people to Jesus and His mercy and watch what happens.

@edstetzer

Most people in the church are friendly. Most people treat pastors with respect. But it can be hard to find true friends among those you're charged to shepherd.

@shadesmtn

If you put your attention on what has been done TO you, it will be impossible to forgive.

If you put your attention on what has been done FOR you, forgiveness will be normal.

@MichaelCatt

The danger of the hour is everyone wants the platform but nobody wants the prayer closet.

@DustinBenge

There's no greater hope that we have in a life wrecked by sin, shame and despair than to be in the arms of a devoted, loving heavenly Father.

@bobrobertsjr

Pastor, your church isn't a platform upon which to perform or a

place of self-actualization & fulfillment, but an altar where you lay your life down for the sheep God has placed in your care — Just like Jesus — never forget that.

@Bezner

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (Ps. 56:3).

Life can sometimes be overwhelming. God is still powerful. God is still good.

@orenmartin

All of God's external works — from creation to consummation — are works of the three Divine Persons enacting one divine power, ordered by one divine wisdom, expressing one divine goodness, and manifesting one divine glory.

—@scottswain

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3 stories you should know



IMB photo

Travis Burkhalter (above), an International Mission Board missionary in Colombia, recently baptized Sarah, the first believer among the Embera, a previously unreached people group. Other tribe members watched from the bank as Sarah was baptized. Burkhalter and his wife, Beth, had shared the Bible with Sarah for three years prior to her decision to follow Christ. Read more and find ways to pray for the Burkhalters at tabonline.org/sarah. (IMB)

Rays players choose not to wear 'pride' logos

Several players for the Tampa Bay Rays chose not to participate in the organization's "Pride Night" on June 4, citing faith-based reasons.

The players declined to wear special caps with a multicolored Tampa Bay logo, opting instead for their everyday ones.

Several players also chose to remove a rainbow sunburst decal from the sleeves of their jerseys.

"A lot of it comes down to faith," pitcher Jason Adam said, according to the Tampa Bay Times. "It's just that maybe we don't want to encourage it if we believe in Jesus, who's encouraged us to live a lifestyle that would abstain from that behavior, just like (Jesus) encourages me as a heterosexual male to abstain from sex outside of the confines of marriage. It's no different." (TAB)

'The Chosen' tops 400 million views globally

The Bible-based series "The Chosen," which portrays the life of Jesus and the disciples, passed 400 million worldwide views in May.

Distributed by Angel Studios, "The Chosen" has become popular in many countries. In Brazil, the series app entered Apple's Top 10 among the most popular free apps. In the U.S., the series was No. 8 on Roku's list of searches in April, according to Variety.

Director Dallas Jenkins said many fans have told him the show has reignited their faith and brought them closer to Jesus. Many have said their children, "who never watch anything faith-related," are enjoying the show too, Jenkins said.

Angel Studios has a goal of reaching 1 billion people with the series. Season 3 of "The Chosen" is currently being filmed. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Three arrested in Iran for Christian activities; one gets 10-year sentence

TEHRAN, Iran — An Iranian-Armenian pastor has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, followed by 10 years of "deprivation of social rights," for running a Christian house church in Tehran, Iran.

The judgment against Anooshavan Avedian is for "establishing and leading an illegal group," the relief organization Barnabas Fund reported.

Abbas Soori and Maryam Mohammadi, two members of the house church, were sentenced to 10 years of deprivation of social rights for being part of the "illegal group." Their penalty includes a two-year exile from Tehran, a fine of 50 million tomans (\$1,700) and a two-year ban on joining social groups and traveling abroad.

The three were arrested in a house church raid

in August 2020. Because Avedian has Armenian heritage, it is illegal for him to conduct services in Farsi, the national language of Iran.

Iran is No. 9 on Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

Gunmen kill dozens in church attack, adding to death toll in Nigeria

OWO, Nigeria — Gunmen attacked a Catholic church in Nigeria's Ondo State during Sunday Mass June 5.

Local officials said as many as 50 people may have died in what the region's governor called a "vile and satanic attack."

The attackers rode in on motorcycles and stormed St. Francis Catholic Church in the town of Owo as the service was coming to a close.

The attackers detonated explosives and

opened fire on frightened congregants. Attacks in southwest Nigeria are rare, but violence against Christians, primarily by terrorists with ties to Islamist groups, are common in the country's north.

The following are attacks recently reported by Morning Star News:

► Eight Christians were killed May 5 in the Kwall District of Plateau State. In Miango District in April at least 21 Christians were killed.

► Eight Christians were killed May 3 in Kautikari town in Borno State.

► April 19 six Christians were killed in Isware. Another attack in Isware occurred April 22 in which 11 were wounded.

Last year Nigeria led the world in the number of Christians killed or kidnapped for their faith, according to Open Doors, a ministry that supports the global persecuted church.

NEWS

Alabama news

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Hueytown Baptist Church** celebrated its 50th anniversary May 22 with Jerry Watts, former pastor, as guest speaker. Ken Eddings read the history of the church, and former worship leader, Johnny Wyche, led congregational music. Former pianist Dana Waldrop accompanied. Jamie Price, current member, sang a solo. Joyce Peters (left) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a plaque.



Facebook photo

“The 50th anniversary was a big celebration for our church as it brought the body together for a common goal,” said Pastor Chris Burns (right).

Charter members were recognized along with oldest living male and female as well as oldest living couple. Rick Lance, State Board of Missions executive director, and Terry DeFoor, former associate pastor, sent video greetings. Following the service, a group photo was taken in front of the church. A potluck lunch followed.

FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

► **Jesus Navarro** has been called as the Hispanic church planter for **Friendship Association** in partnership with the State Board of Missions. Oneonta First Baptist will host the new church plant. His Bible education took place at Bible Institute of Houston and University Vision — Houston, Texas, campus. Most recently, he has been taking classes through Union Baptist Association, Houston.



NAVARRO

Since 2008, Navarro has led three Hispanic churches and missions trips across the United States, Honduras, San Salvador and Mexico. He and his wife, Leticia, have seven children and four grandchildren.

► **Phillip Bremmerman** is the new pastor of **Blount Springs Baptist Church, Hayden**. He and his wife, Bethany, have three children.



BREMMERMAN

PLEASANT GROVE ASSOCIATION

► **Hepzibah Baptist Church, McCalla**, celebrated its 175th anniversary May 1.

Former pastor Buddy Price, who is now pastor at Birminghamport Baptist, Mulga, preached.

Special music was provided by former member Joey Maharrey and current member Howard

Grammer, who also shared some of the church’s history. Sarah Walters (center) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate.



Photo courtesy of Sarah Walters

“After the past couple years confronting all the chaos created by the pandemic and our lead pastor passing away last fall, this was a unique moment in time to stop and reflect on the faithfulness of God who has sustained HBC now for 175 years,” said Pastor Terry Lolly (left). “Yet greater things are still to come.”

MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► **Justin LaJesse** is the new youth minister of **Semmes First Baptist Church**. He recently served as an interim youth minister at a church in Bay Minette and serves with Baptist Campus Ministries at the University of South Alabama, where he is currently a student.



LaJESSE

► **Woodridge Baptist Church, Mobile**, is hosting a come-and-go reception June 26 from 3 to 5 p.m. in honor of **Garry and Jeanne Harred**. Harred, who is senior associate pastor, is retiring after 45 years in ministry.



HARRED

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Cody Seals** is the new student pastor of **Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster**. A Dadeville native, he attended Southern Union Community College and the University of Phoenix and served 13 months in Afghanistan with the Alabama Army National Guard. He and his wife, Brianna, have two children.



SEALS

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **David Ivester** is the new student pastor of **First Baptist Church Moody**. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Birmingham-Southern College. He previously served as recreational director at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.



IVESTER

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Richie Davis** is the new associational missionary of **Washington Association**. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of West Alabama and master’s degrees from New Orleans Seminary (divinity) and Andersonville Seminary, Camilla, Georgia (theology). He has led churches in Mississippi: First Baptist Church Lauderdale; Westwood Baptist Church, Meridian; Pine Grove Baptist Church, Union; and Vardaman Baptist Church, Philadelphia. He also was an international church planter with e3 partners of Dallas, Texas. Davis has led missions trips to 25 countries on five continents and worked with the North American Mission Board with church revitalization efforts in Indiana.



DAVIS

He and his wife, Mitzi, have two children and one grandchild.

WINSTON ASSOCIATION

► **Eddie Everett** is the new associational missionary for **Winston Association**. The last 10 years, he served as pastor of Sunny Home Baptist Church, Haleyville. He also served seven years at Rock Creek Baptist Church, Double Springs. He was a deacon from 1980 until 2005 and served as moderator for the association. He has been on 10 missions trips to South Africa. Everett and his wife, Cozy, have three children and four grandchildren.



EVERETT

OTHER

► **Greg Crane** recently retired from full-time ministry as minister of music of First Baptist Church Hendersonville, Tennessee, where he served the past eight years.



CRANE

In his more than 47 years of ministry, Crane served churches in four states, including Alabama. The first church he served was Moundville Baptist Church. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Samford University. He and his wife, Melani, have two sons and two grandchildren and plan to live in Tuscaloosa. He can be reached at 205-454-8116 for fill-in or interim positions.

Submit event announcements at least three weeks in advance. Email events, staff changes, retirements, etc., to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Stewart eager to share the CP story in his new role at SBOM

Jay Stewart has been named director of the office of Cooperative Program and church financial resources at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"I was raised here in Alabama, and my whole life has been blessed by the work of Alabama Baptists and the Cooperative Program," he said, noting that he studied at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and has served as a disaster relief volunteer over the years. The church he served as pastor for the past eight years, First Baptist Church Ashville, has been a strong supporter of giving through the CP for nearly a century.

"In terms of missions there's almost nothing that rivals it, and I'm excited to play a part in that and see it increase in Alabama," he said. "Alabama has always been the pacesetter in the Southern Baptist Convention for Cooperative Program giving, and I want to see that expand and grow."

Responsibilities

In his new role, which began this month, Stewart will be responsible for planning, organizing, supervising, managing, budgeting and evaluating the ministries and staff of the office. He will also lead the office in participating as a member

of the SBOM's missions mobilization ministry team.

Jim Swedenburg was responsible for CP promotion previously and now serves as a consultant as he transitions toward retirement.

Well-connected

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said Stewart was mentored by Mike Jackson, SBOM associate executive director, and is a "front-chair kind of leader" who is well connected with pastors.



STEWART

Before Stewart served at FBC Ashville, he served as pastor of Dwight Baptist Church in Gadsden; as student/music minister at Center Hill Baptist Church in Loganville, Georgia;

as minister of music and youth at White Springs Baptist Church in Rainbow City; and as minister of music at Calvary Baptist Church in Gadsden.

In addition to his master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary, he also earned a doctor of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia.

Stewart said he's excited about sharing the CP story.

"No one church can do all that needs to be done for the gospel, but when we pool our resources, God can do that," he said. (TAB)

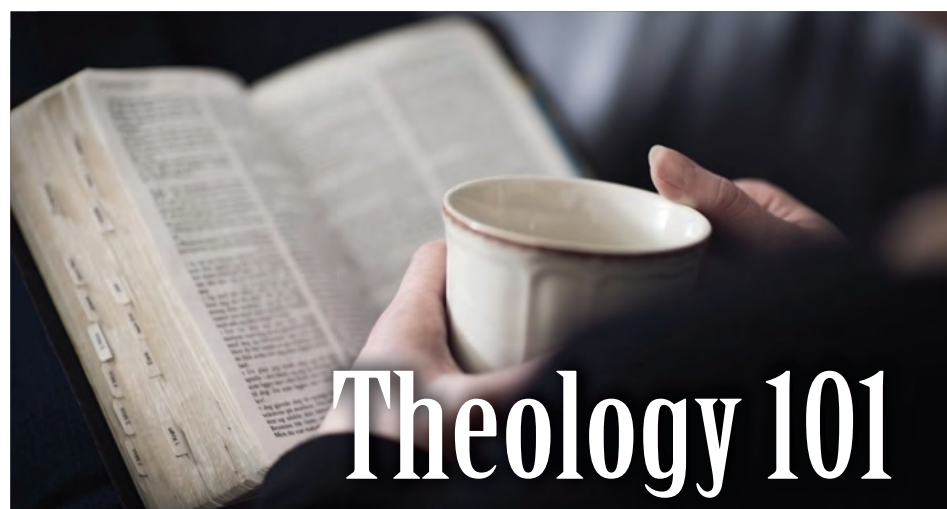
Lifeway releases 2023 VBS theme: 'Twists & Turns'

Next summer children will pass go and collect truth about Jesus in "Twists & Turns." Lifeway Christian Resources' 2023 Vacation Bible School theme celebrates games of all kinds, from classic tabletop favorites to video games and more.

Kids will play their way through VBS while learning Jesus guides them through the ups, downs and zigzags of lives. Children will encounter the gospel and learn how sin's message of "game over" is overcome through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

"Games are the universal love language of kids, and God made children to learn best through play," said Melita Thomas, VBS and kids ministry specialist for Lifeway.

"Parents and church leaders get to capitalize on that with this theme. New games, old games, elaborate games, simple games, board games, cooperative games and video games — they're all part of 'Twists & Turns.' I'm excited to use something so accessible to help kids understand profound biblical truths." (Lifeway)



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Spiritual Blessings

The Outworking of Christ

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

Previously, Theology 101 considered the topics of the Christ's incoming and His indwelling. This week takes the idea a step further with the consideration of what we may term the outworking of Christ.

Christian experience is more than one's personal and internal relationship with Christ. It also involves what others may perceive of us. This might be thought of as the external evidence of the outworking of Christ by which others observe the difference He makes in our lives.

The thought expressed in Philipians 2:12 furnishes us with the terminology for this week's theme:

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Since the presence of Christ in us is experienced through the Holy Spirit's indwelling, what the Bible describes as the fruit of the Spirit might be perceived as a manifestation of the outworking of Christ. This fruit cluster includes love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, according to Galatians 5:22-23.

The outworking of Christ not only includes Christlike graces and attitudes, but also actions and ambitions. Is our goal that of praising of others or building our reputation? If so, we need to

revisit the truth that the goal of a Christian is the glory of God, not the praise of people.

A word of caution concerning this truth about the indwelling and outworking of Christ:

These are a result, not a means. Our reflection of Christ is not the means by which we gain or maintain our Christian experience. It is the result or reflection of saving faith.

In my high school, a poster often carried a weekly thought for all who passed by.

One of them spoke an unforgettable truism that read, "What you are speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying." Or as it is sometimes abbreviated, "Actions speak louder than words."

What others see

What others observe in our conduct may be a message that overshadows what we think we communicate by our speech.

The sentiment expressed in a hymn is a fitting prayer for every believer:

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me / All His wonderful passion and purity. / O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine / Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

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.



FATHER'S DAY IS JUNE 19.

BEING PRESENT

Outdoor ministry uses the power of testimony to help fathers and children deepen relationships

By Hamilton Richardson
The Alabama Baptist

Helping fathers connect with their children can be challenging, especially in an age of fractured families, omnipresent digital devices and year-round organized sports. But fostering those connections and nurturing deeper relationships between father and child is the goal of Family Lines, a ministry that organizes expeditions, hands-on workshops, field instruction and filmmaking for fathers and their children.

Begun in 2010 and based in Anacortes, Washington, Family Lines wants to fight absence in fatherhood, however that looks.

Founder and guide Jon Hagedorn, who has a degree in outdoor recreation and leadership from Western Washington University in Bellingham and has logged thousands of miles on rivers throughout the Northwest as both a whitewater and fishing guide and instructor, spoke about the ministry on a recent episode of "The Storied Outdoors" podcast.

Hagedorn shared about his experience as a father trying to faithfully raise teenage sons with podcast hosts Bryan Gill, director of university assessment and accreditation at Samford University in Birmingham, and Brad Hill, worship and missions pastor for Mars Hill Church in Mobile.

Hagedorn said while he spent time with boys on the river, he focused on asking about their "defining moments."

"In the early 2000s I started working with a wilderness ministry," he recalled. "We were primarily focused on the river, but would do backpacking and climbing. I had a



Unsplash.com

In God's creation, where there are fewer distractions, fathers and children can have relationship-building conversations and connect in new ways, says Jon Hagedorn, founder of Family Lines, an outdoor ministry in Washington.

lot of time beside the river with a lot of kids and heard a lot of stories.

"So many of those revolved around family, especially Dad," he said. "And dads aren't perfect. My dad didn't do it perfect, but he was there and loved me unconditionally. I just grew up knowing there was never anything I would do or not do that would change my dad's love for me."



Photo courtesy of Family Lines

Family Lines founder Jon Hagedorn seeks to help families bond through nature.

Hagedorn said he believes the role of fathers is to represent the Heavenly Father's love to their children.

He joked that one of his greatest privileges is to be an awkward question asker on behalf of fathers, to bring them together with their children and promote healing in their family.

When asked by the podcast hosts how Family Lines came into existence, Hagedorn said fishing played a large part.

"Fishing is a great way to bring together multigenerational interactions. Grandpa can go with dad and grandchild. It's quiet enough to invite conversations, but you're also doing something. It's shoulder-to-shoulder interaction."

Intentional presence

Family Lines focuses on helping fathers choose presence, and the ministry estimates it helped facilitate more than 23,000 hours of intentional presence between fathers and children in 2021.

"The biggest reach comes through our documentary work," Hagedorn explained. "That's one of the largest ways we involve people right now. ... It's the power of testimony."

He noted how the ministry helped him make it through the death of his first wife, Erin.

"I was asking, 'How are You going to walk me through this season?' I was talking to my Heav-

enly Father and I wanted to know," Hagedorn said.

God led him through that trying time of suddenly raising two boys as a single father.

'Dramatic shift'

"I assumed we were doing it a certain way, then it flips upside down," Hagedorn explained. "The other side of the camera was a dramatic shift. I would hear that story from others, and all of a sudden the camera's turned around to me and I don't know what to say."

One thing he didn't want was Satan to steal what he still had, he said. He remembered thinking, "I don't know much of anything right now other than I know I don't want the enemy to steal what was a source of joy and ministry and life, and disconnect me from taking fathers out."

Family Lines helped Hagedorn stay connected and focused.

"When you start something and you have no idea and you say, 'All right, Lord. Let's go for it,' then you see Him take it places you couldn't have imagined," he said. "The grace of God becomes very real."

"We need relationship-building conversations, and we encourage dads to share their experiences and help their kids learn and feel loved,"

Hagedorn added.

Each generation can impact the next, he said, like a child standing on a father's shoulders to see farther.

Hagedorn concluded by stressing the importance of getting out into God's creation where there is no distraction and being in-

tentional in creating relationships.

"Taking people out of their routines can bring unpredictability, but [it also] can build memories and stories," he said.

For more information on Family Lines and Jon Hagedorn visit familylines.org.

For more information about "The Storied Outdoors" podcast visit thestoriedoutdoors.com.



MINISTERING TO

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

By Grace Thornton

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief team shares Living Water in Romania

When the pastor told David Hendon that the church's well had run dry, he didn't understand what they meant at first.

"My dad was a well driller, but the pastor called it a 'fountain' instead of a well, so it took me a minute to figure out what he was talking about," Hendon said.

But he soon would see for himself — the small church near Romania's border with Ukraine had a well that was bone dry. That's a problem in normal times, but when you're housing Ukrainian refugee families it's a big problem.

"They didn't have any water for the refugees there, didn't have any way to flush the toilets or get drinking water," Hendon said.

Their "well" was dry in other ways,

too — the young pastor and his wife had been running themselves ragged feeding the refugee families. They only had enough food for another two days, and the families were planning to stay at least another month.

"They were relying on God to bless, and He had sustained them so far," said Hendon, who was in Romania on an Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief trip in April.

Thanks to the generosity of Alabama Baptists, he was able to hire an excavator to come in and dig the ditches so the church could be connected to local water and sewer services.

"It's up and running now," said Hendon, a member of Northside Baptist Church in Jasper.

He was also able to buy the church enough food to last another week.

"It was pretty exciting to see a direct connect with the generous gifts of Alabama Baptists and where it was going," he said.

Hendon — along with Mark Wakefield, state disaster relief strategist, and four other teammates — saw this kind of story repeated over and over as they came alongside Romanian churches that were stretching themselves thin to care for Ukrainians fleeing the war in their country.

Wakefield said they were able to help a church camp where the local church members had been cooking meals daily for the refugees staying there. Over three days, disaster relief volunteers prepared between 200 and 300 meals to help give the local cooks a break.

In other churches, Wakefield and his teammates met needs as they came up. At one church, they bought an oven. At another, they bought a wood splitter to enable them to heat the building where refugees were staying.

"Long after we're gone, the churches are still going to be there," he said. "The best thing we did while we were there was help the churches help the refugees."

They were also able to video chat with a group of refugees staying about 30 miles inside the

Ukrainian border who had some specific immediate needs. The team collected the needed items and filled a local Romanian church leader's van with gas, enabling him to carry the load into Ukraine.

And throughout their time there, the team came face to face with the hurting people of Ukraine over and over. They handed out water, juice, snacks and New Testaments at the border to Ukrainian families who were in transit and shared the gospel with them.

Hendon said he met one older woman from the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol who had gone to the market and come home to find her

house had been destroyed by a bomb.

"She had escaped, but she had nothing," he said.

And as she finds her way, the team prays for her as they did for the churches they helped and the other refugees they met — that God will continue to meet their needs and open their hearts to know that He is the One who keeps their wells full.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. For more information, visit AlabamaCP.org and Myers-Mallory.org.



Photo provided by SBOM
Volunteers use a wood splitter provided by Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief.



Photo provided by SBOM

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers (from left) Brian Allen, Margaret Wiggins, Mark Wakefield, Bob Cooper, David Hendon and John Gallups ministered to Ukrainian refugees in Romania in April.



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Nearly 5 million people from more than 150 unreached people groups live in metropolitan New York City.

‘Heart for the nations’

Alabama woman serving internationals in NYC helps others see unreached in their own backyards

By **Hamilton Richardson**
The Alabama Baptist

When followers of Christ think about ministering to unreached people groups, they may not consider people within the United States who also need to hear the gospel. But one Alabama woman is serving unreached people in an area only a two-hour plane trip from home.

Alabama native and missionary Haley McCoy works among an unreached people group in Queens, New York.

“There are approximately 80,000 [of this unreached group] in the New York City metro area, with around 40,000 living in our neighborhood in Queens,” McCoy said. The team’s vision is to share the gospel, make disciples and plant a reproducing church.

‘Willing to go’

“We desire for this movement to not only stay here in Queens, but to spread across the United States and back to their networks [overseas].”

McCoy grew up in Huntsville. From a young age her parents instilled in her the desire to love and care for both their neighbors in Alabama and people across the globe.

“I spent many summers abroad with my mom doing various ‘hands and feet’ missions trips,” McCoy recalled.

“During my senior year of high school, my mom began to do outreach among unreached people groups in our community after her worldview was opened through [a] class.”

McCoy said she began to spend

every Friday after school with friends as they intentionally loved their neighbors in Huntsville.

“At that time, God really began to burden my heart for the nations,” she said.

“During college, I quickly plugged in with and became a member of my sending church, Iron City in Birmingham. The Lord put others in my life who also had hearts for seeing the nations reached ... and I began to ask God what was next for me. I was willing to go anywhere and wanted to be sent to a different country.”

McCoy began feeling a great love for South Asians and enjoyed spending time among them.

“I was growing to love the culture, food, dance and music,” she recalled. “As I began to look for different organizations working among South Asians, the Lord made it very clear that I was supposed to move to New York.”

“I heard of Global Gates through friends who recently moved there, and they were praying for laborers to join them. After much time praying, [preparing], finishing my degree and support raising, the Lord provided all that I needed to move and join [the team] in Queens this past September.”

The evangelical missions organization Global Gates began in 2012 after two families serving in New York City saw the need to make disciples among and through unreached people groups in Metro New York. The vision expanded to mobilize prayer and missionar-

ies to reach the most unreached people group communities in North America through global gateway cities like San Francisco, Houston and Detroit.

UPG North America is a ministry started last year with the specific intent of alerting and equipping Christians throughout the U.S. to minister to unreached people groups in their own backyards.

Jesse Hoyer is the priority matrix manager with Global Gates/UPG North America. She explained the group specifically works to identify, highlight and prioritize the most significant unreached communities in North America. UPG North America grew out of the desire to mobilize prayer

warriors and laborers, Hoyer said.

“For the longest time, work among unreached people groups was equated with foreign missionaries in foreign lands,” she said.

“Now members of some of the least-reached people groups, from some of the least-reached areas of the world, are paying their own expenses and immigrating to gateway cities in North America.

While these unreached people group communities are geographically near to existing churches, they remain culturally distant.”

‘Incredible opportunity’

Working with multiple ministry partners, including the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, “Global Gates has helped the North American Church see these people groups and recognize the incredible opportunity for reaching them here,

and through them, back to their homelands,” Hoyer said.

Sharing the need is already making a positive impact.

“We’ve trained tens of thousands of Christians in sharing the gospel with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews or Sikhs,” Hoyer said. “By God’s grace, He is raising up His church to welcome unreached people groups in Christ’s love, and calling out missionaries to share Jesus and start new churches.”

Sparking a movement

Hoyer noted that as a result of UPG North America’s work, the first Muslim-background Christian church has been started in New York City.

The first churches in an unreached people group in Africa were birthed through connections made in the United States, she added, and many have come to faith in Bangladesh as a result of a Rohingya man who came to faith in Texas.

“Through these unreached people group communities in North America, we can help spark a movement of the gospel across the ocean to some of the least-reached areas of the world,” she said.

The ministry’s website includes resources to help individuals and churches get involved, including a map identifying the most significant unreached people group communities in North America for whom prayer and laborers are needed.

The website also offers profiles of each group, allowing believers to explore their history and beliefs, along with virtual prayer walks through major places of worship and gathering spots.

For more information, visit upgnorthamerica.com.



Photo courtesy of Samford University

A rendering of upcoming renovations at F. Page Seibert Stadium at Samford University shows how the project will enlarge and renovate existing buildings to create a new recreation and athletic complex.

Samford announces its largest capital project

Samford University will enlarge and renovate existing buildings to create a new state-of-the-art recreation and athletic complex, university officials announced June 1.

The project will provide students and employees with expanded opportunities to improve physical fitness and mental wellness and will create new spaces for campus events and student gatherings. Additional facilities will provide new practice and training spaces for the university's 17 Division I athletic teams.

The new complex is part of a comprehensive plan for expanded student recreation, health and wellness. The \$65 million venture is the largest capital project in the university's history.

Construction timeline

Construction, which is scheduled to begin in early 2023, includes investments in four buildings:

- ▶ Seibert Hall will be completely redesigned to include two basketball courts, a new multiuse court, studios for fitness classes, dance and esports, a multipurpose workout area, common areas for students to gather and a convenience store.

- ▶ Bashinsky Field House will be a fully refur-

bished, dedicated facility for Samford student-athletes, including new training spaces for teams and dedicated practice spaces for the men's and women's basketball and volleyball programs.

New event space

- ▶ A third building will be constructed adjacent to Seibert Hall and encompass 20,000 square feet of recreation and event space.

- ▶ The first floor of the Dwight and Lucille Beeson Center, located directly across the street from the complex, also will be renovated to serve as the new home for the university's health center and counseling services.

"This project represents a substantial investment in the health and wellness of our students," said President Beck A. Taylor. "We are committed to supporting our students in their educational and spiritual journeys, and we also want to support them in their physical and mental well-being."

The university is funding \$45 million of the project with current resources and is working to secure \$20 million in philanthropic gifts.

The complex is expected to be completed prior to the start of the fall 2024 semester. (Samford University)

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Clayton Baptist Church, P.O. Box 4, Clayton, AL 36016 (Barbour County) is accepting resumés for pastor. Please email resumés to: claytonbaptist@bellsouth.net by June 30.

PASTOR

Bluff Springs Baptist Church is searching for a full-time pastor. Search questions and resumés to: 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.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Northside Baptist Church, Selma, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumés to: Northsidebaptist2021@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Paden Baptist Church, Gadsden, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumés to: padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com or to: Paden Baptist Church, 900 Padenreich Ave., Gadsden, AL 35903.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is seeking a part-time office administrator. Work hours are Monday-Friday with 25-30 hours per week. Applicants should have a minimum of 5 years experience supervising at least 8 people, 5 years office management experience, advanced computer skills. A bachelor degree in business, accounting or related field is preferred. Inquiries or resumé should be submitted to: Southside Baptist Church, 1213 Western Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, ATTN: Personnel Committee.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR — WORSHIP & EDUCATION

Linden Baptist Church is now accepting resumés for the position of associate pastor. This is a full-time position. The primary focuses of this position will be worship leadership and education, though there will be other responsibilities. For a complete job description and to apply online, visit lindenbaptist.org and click the "Assoc. Pastor Application" button. To apply by mail, send resumé and cover letter to: P.O. Box 480776 Linden, AL 36748. Applications will be received until July 15.

First Baptist Church of Atmore, Alabama, is seeking a full-time family pastor. He will serve as "second-chair" to the pastor with oversight of volunteers within age-group and small-group ministries, having direct responsibility over student ministry. Resumés may be submitted to: keving@fbcatmore.org.

FAMILY PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Hokes Bluff is seeking a godly, dynamic part-time youth pastor. Interested applicants should send resumés to: secretary@fbchb.org.

YOUTH PASTOR

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, accepting resumés for position of bivocational youth director. Send resumés to: Southside Baptist Church, 1213 Western Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420. ATTN: Youth Search Committee.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR

IL BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME AND FAMILY SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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.

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PODCAST

STORIES SEASON 6: MUD BOGGER STORY

Terry Billings used to spend his life mud racing in his old drinking truck, until one day everything turned on a dime — in Walmart. Now he and his truck have both had a transformation — and have found a very different purpose. This season, the "Stories" podcast shares his story. TAB's Grace Thornton writes and produces the shows. Listen at tabonline.org/stories or wherever you listen to podcasts.

MINISTRIES

VISUALLY IMPAIRED READERS

Know someone who's visually impaired and finds it difficult to read? The Alabama Baptist is now offering a way for that person to listen to stories and news in a format that comes in the mail for free. For more information call 205-870-4720 or email ahacker@thealabamabaptist.org.

‘A result of God’s blessing’

Truth’s lasting legacy, impact show ‘how big God is,’ founder says

(continued from page 1)
young people in my church.”

During the late ‘60s and ‘70s, Breland led a group from Spring Hill Baptist called The Varsity which eventually became a full-time ministry.

In the summer of 1971, Breland went on the road with The Varsity, which soon became Truth, an acronym for “Trust, Receive Unchangeable True Happiness.”

In the early 1970s, Truth introduced new songs by Bill Gaither and Andraé Crouch. The group was invited to sing at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas. The response to their music, especially the song “Church Triumphant,” led to more bookings and lots of travel.

Those early days weren’t easy. With only three station wagons and a truck, the group staged as many as 350 concerts a year, some in places that didn’t have indoor plumbing and had never seen drums and guitars in church.

Truth was supported by love offerings, selling \$5 records and the generosity of church friends who allowed the group to stay in their homes.

Breland doesn’t credit being on the road for decades to his leadership or even talented musicians. Instead he credits his wife, Linda.

“My wife is an intercessory prayer warrior, and she prayed us through,” Breland said. “Linda’s responsible, I believe, as much as anybody for any success.”

Those prayers led to some amazing moments, one of which started with a phone call.

“He said, ‘My name is David. I haven’t seen Truth in 12 years, but my dad sends me the tapes.’ Mind you, ‘the tapes,’” Breland recalled.



Photo courtesy of Roger Breland and Truth

During their first tour in the summer of 1971, members of Truth traveled in three station wagons and a truck. They performed in small churches, colleges, outdoor shopping centers and youth gatherings throughout the southern U.S.

“I was saved in a Truth concert when I was in the 12th grade. I was a juvenile delinquent. When I got saved, God changed my life, and I went to Bible College. I’m a pastor now, and I would like Truth to come and sing in my church.”

“I was moved by that story, and I said to him, ‘Tell me about your church.’ He said, ‘Well, we’re finishing up our building and it seats 10,000.’”

Back then few churches were so large, and David wasn’t the pastor of any that Breland knew. When asked where he was located, David replied, “Manila, Philippines.”

“When God opened

the door for us to travel to the Philippines, we presented three or four concerts a day for 10 days sponsored by The Cathedral of Praise,” Breland said.

Some 20,000 people filled out cards professing a first-time deci-

sion for Christ during that tour. Members of The Cathedral of Praise followed up with them.

“Some might say this sounds like an exaggeration, but it is the actual account according to Pastor David Sumrall and his staff. [The congregation] presently has a church membership of 40,000,” Breland said.

As a child growing up in South Alabama, Breland’s dream was to go to college, marry the “most beautiful girl in the world” and lead music in a big church.

“It’s shown me how small I am and how big God is — how He’s in the stretching business,” Breland said. “David was a shepherd boy. He killed Goliath, and God made him a king. Nobody would have picked David.”

‘God stretches us’

“To be honest with you, I don’t think anybody would have ever picked me. I don’t think I would have picked me to be able to do what I’ve been able to do.”

His list of accomplishments includes interviewing the minister of religion in Russia at the Kremlin and sitting in the Egyptian Embassy in Washington with a group of men from the Middle East talking about how to get Bibles into their restricted countries. Breland looks back in amazement at the things he saw and did.

“But God stretches all of us and makes us go further when we place our lives in His hands,” Breland said. “I’m a result of God’s blessings — certainly not a result of being that talented.”

“I’m thankful for the opportunities that God has allowed me to be a part of through the years. ... I’ve seen God do the unimaginable in my life, and I am thankful.”

Breland and his wife will be honored at Truth’s 50th Reunion in Mobile June 17.

For tickets, visit [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). To read more about the reunion, visit [tabonline.org/Truth](https://www.tabonline.org/Truth).



Photo courtesy of Roger Breland and Truth

In 1981, Truth had its first No. 1 song with “Jesus Never Fails,” which led to more airplay on Christian radio.



Photo courtesy of Roger Breland and Truth

Truth’s contemporary sound caused many churches to turn them away. But more doors were opened to the group following their performance of “The Church Triumphant” at the 1974 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas, which received a standing ovation.

KINGDOM PURPOSES

Missionary roles vary in length, funding; common thread is willingness to serve

By Karen O. Allen
The Alabama Baptist

For most, the term missionary implies someone who has devoted their life full time to follow God's calling to share the gospel where it has not been heard. Missionaries are displaced from their homes, culture and jobs to establish a presence in a new place, often in a different culture, doing a job with gospel intention.

Career missionaries, or "team members," all over the globe are vital to fulfilling the Great Commission. However, nontraditional missionaries not fully funded by the International Mission Board are taking on crucial roles to serve Kingdom purposes.

Many opportunities are available in a variety of short-term, mid-term and long-term capacities. There are missionary teams, missionary associates, team associates and field support missionaries. Professionals, students and stay-at-home parents can serve for any length of time.

The global need for missionaries is more urgent than ever. The harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few. There are more than 7,000 unreached people groups incorporating 4.5 billion unreached people, according to the International Mission Board 2021 Global Impact Guide.

Reaching the multitude is a massive effort. The unreached world needs anyone with a missional heart.

Becoming a team associate

David and Shannon Brown recently joined the league of nontraditional missionaries, discovering an opportunity while browsing the IMB website.

The Browns felt called to serve for a longer period after having been on multiple short-term mission trips. But they were not interested in being team members, nor did they want to be funded by a ministry organization, a church or the IMB. They wanted greater flexibility to enjoy their role as grandparents and retirees.



Photo courtesy of David and Shannon Brown
David and Shannon Brown plan to spend a year as team associates with the International Mission Board in Eastern Europe. The assignment is self-funded, so the couple built the cost into their retirement planning.

The IMB had an opportunity that met all their conditions. Being team associates would allow them to work alongside team members in their desired location in Eastern Europe. Since the minimum requirement is one year, they could choose whether to attend language school and how long they would stay.

They also could make trips back to the United States.

"We chose the self-funded route and included this in our financial planning for our retirement," the couple said.

"Our interest in this role developed as a result of the numerous previous short-term trips made and the relationships we developed."

The cost is out-of-pocket, including the responsibility of finding transportation and housing, but the Browns have additional support. The IMB provides consulting services to assist with health care, housing and

visa support, among other things.

Contacts within their destination country will also provide assistance with immediate concerns. The Browns plan to attend an abbreviated language course.

To learn more about the Timothy Initiative, visit tabonline.org/Timothy-Initiative.

To learn more about 2022 summer missions through One Mission Students, visit tabonline.org/One-Mission-Students.

"The team associate role began several years ago as a way for people who aren't appointed full-time missionaries to participate on existing church planting teams," said Mike Lazenby, IMB church mobilization strategist for the Gulf Region.

"They participate in the missionary task on either a full-time or a part-time basis, depending on what their circumstances allow."

Former IMB field support missionary Tom Boston, said "business opens doors." He used his financial background to coordinate activities across the globe.

Team associates currently serve in every IMB global affinity. The Browns are the first to serve in that

capacity in their Eastern Europe location.

They join 400 other Alabamians currently on the missions field, according to Scotty Goldman, director of the office of global missions at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Goldman likens the role of team associate to a temporary associate pastor.

Another nonfunded position is an associate missionary.

These full-time workers receive on-the-job training and work under the supervision of a missionary or other ministry leader.

They serve as a teacher for missionary kids, a refugee ministry worker, an ESL teacher or a community outreach worker with a local church.

Through SBOM's One Mission Students, young adults are sent to serve in a variety of areas during the summer or during spring or Christmas breaks.

A new discipleship program for Alabama college students, the Timothy Initiative, requires students to participate in discipleship and mentoring during their junior and senior years of college.

Students who complete the program may receive up to \$5,000 for two years of missions engagement after college—either through the IMB or the North American Mission Board.

Hands-On program

The IMB Hands-On program is an international missions opportunity for students and young adults interested in working alongside a missionary mentor to share the gospel of Jesus with unreached peoples. Projects range from 4 months to 1 year in duration, and members of Southern Baptist churches can receive funding to cover half the cost.

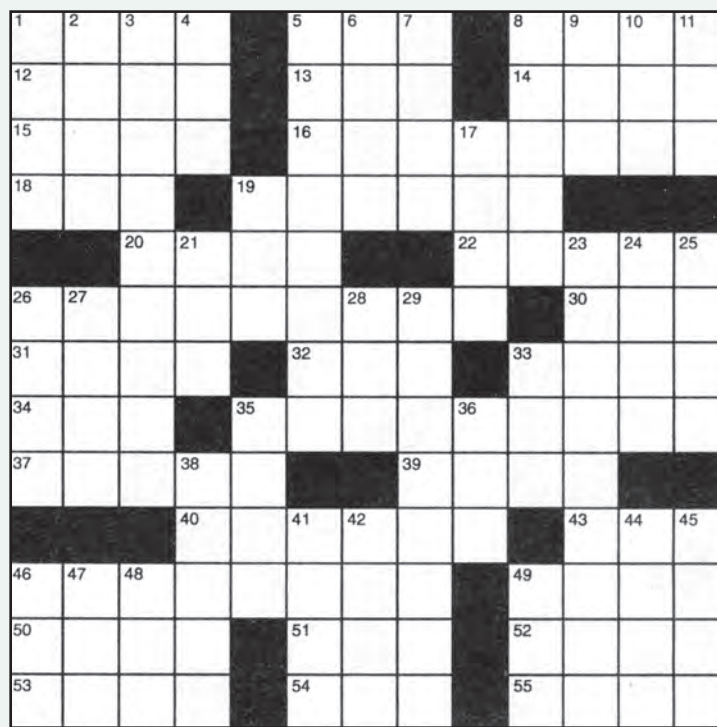
When it comes to missions, everyone is called to pray, give, go or send, Boston said.

"If God is calling you, He will provide the resources."

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. There is no fear in _____. (1 John 4:18)
5. 1/60 of a minute. (abbr.)
8. Ripe harvest.
12. ... the number of whom _____ the sand of the sea. (Rev. 20:8; two words)
13. No man can serve _____ masters. (Matt. 6:24)
14. Top-notch.
15. Somersault.
16. Lord, _____ me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. (Luke 23:42)
18. Eternity.
19. Degrade.
20. But what things were _____ to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (Phil. 3:7)
22. Silly fellow.
26. Salvation _____ unto the Lord. (Ps. 3:8)
30. Digit.
31. In a frenzy. (var.)
32. Three. (prefix)
33. Study to _____ thyself approved unto God. (2 Tim. 2:15)
34. Title of address.
35. My flesh also _____ in hope. (Ps. 16:9; two words)
37. Fashion.
39. Let God be true, but every man a _____. (Rom. 3:4)
40. Arch.
43. Land of _____. (Cain's home)
46. One who plays the market.
49. John _____ witness of Him. (John 1:15)
50. For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me _____. (Matt. 25:35)
51. In time past.
52. Will _____ rob God? (Mal. 3:8;



By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

19. two words)
 24. (Acts 4:12; two words)
 25. Troubles.
 26. Salamander.
 27. Singing part.
 28. Send forth.
 29. Time period.
 29. ... but Cain was a _____ the ground. (Gen. 4:2; two words)
 33. Spanish Mrs. (for short)
 35. Congressmen. (abbr.)
 36. The _____ of truth shall be established forever. (Prov. 12:19)
 38. He _____ in wait secretly as a lion in his den. (Ps. 10:9)
 41. ... for we have seen His _____ in the east, and are come to worship Him. (Matt. 2:2)
 42. Ancient Roman garment.
 44. Spoken.
 45. Lairs.
 46. Demon.
 47. Teacher's organization. (for short)
 48. Tub.
 49. He hath taken a _____ of money with him. (Prov. 7:20)
- DOWN**
1. For whosoever will save his _____ shall lose it. (Matt. 16:25)
 2. Norwegian city.
 3. Let nothing be done through strife or _____. (Phil. 2:3)
 4. Sixth sense. (for short)
 5. ... the _____ of sin is the law. (1 Cor. 15:56)
 6. Pitcher.
 7. Unconscious state.
 8. It is easier for a _____ to go through the eye of a needle ... (Matt. 19:24)
 9. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither _____ him. (Lev. 19:13)
 10. The Lord our God is _____ Lord. (Deut. 6:4)
 11. For each.
 17. Engrave.
 19. Container.
 21. First rate.
 23. ... for there is none _____ ... whereby we must be saved.

5 tips for compelling church videos

By Mark MacDonald
Church Branding Strategist and Consultant

Often social media popularity helps us see what attracts and holds people's attention.

A 2021 Pew Survey revealed the social media channel that dominates: YouTube has captured 81% of Americans (95% of 18 to 29 year olds) who regularly visit the site.

Want to be heard more? Most users prefer short-form video — another reason to try it. Use relevant church video content on social media, in your services and even on your website.

Here are some tips for making church videos your congregation and community will want to watch.

Key essentials

First, make sure they're relevant. Make the content about something viewers are Googling. Then post it on your YouTube channel in addition to wherever you're originally using it.

If people are indeed searching for what your video is about, Google will direct them to your church content. Remember, Google owns YouTube.com.

Want your church video watched even more? Here are five simple tips:

1. Make it about your church's thread.

We tend to pursue social influencers known for a nar-

row path of needed content. Be a social influencer for Christ.

2. Get to the point fast.

Capture your audience within the first three or four seconds. Get to the point quickly or do something unexpected so they want to watch more. Then reward them for paying attention.

3. Say their name or speak their pain.

Start videos by saying who it's for or what need, concern or goal it'll solve. This engages them, and they'll remember to come back when they need information on the topic.

4. Provide captions.

We consume digital content in places that don't allow our volume to be up. Rev.com is a great online service to create captions. Captions allow more people to enjoy content in a bathroom stall or coffee shop (where a lot of content is consumed).

5. Keep it short.

One of the best tips for church videos? Edit a script and resist rambling. For the first few it's best to have a teleprompter to keep you on point. There also are apps (e.g., PromptSmart) that allow the script to scroll with your voice as you do a selfie video. Oh, and never waste anyone's time. That'll help them trust your videos.

Be known for great video content.



children's music summit

July 8-9 » Shocco Springs

The saying goes, if you want to have a worshipper as an adult, you start by training them as a child.

The reality is that if we don't teach it we will have worshippers ill-equipped to worship!

Children's Music Summit is an excellent and fun way to teach adults how to train preschool and elementary age students. Skilled clinicians will teach in an interactive way so that you can invest in the future! Whether you have few music skills or a lot, this is the event to come and learn how you can invest in the now generation.



For more information and to register, visit alabamaworship.org/events.

re((mix))6

July 11-15, Shocco Springs

At Mix Music Camp we work to identify and help train worship leaders for the next generation. This awesome camp is really three camps in one, for grades 2-5, 6, and 7-12 (just completed). The week focuses on discipleship and worship with plenty of opportunities for recreation and fun.

For more information and to register, visit alabamaworship.org/events.



Worship Resources

These events are made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program. Questions? Contact Karen Gosselin, kgosselin@alsbom.org, (334) 613-2318.

Hope, life and salvation

Door-to-door evangelism initiative offers opportunity to take ‘the gospel to everyone’

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Terry Long said it seems some people believe door-to-door evangelism only worked in the past. And he can see why they might think that. In a lot of ways, times are different.

But one thing is still the same.

“When they know you’re sincere and you’re there because you love them, by and large people will receive that,” said Long, director of missions for Choctaw Baptist Association.

“I’ve gone door to door here, and people welcome me with open arms. The gospel is powerful and offers hope and life and salvation. This idea still works.”

Statewide initiative

That’s the heart behind a new statewide focus called The Gospel to Everyone, said Daniel Wilson, director of the evangelism office for the Alabama Baptist

State Board of Missions.

“Every so often, there’s an effort made to make sure every person receives a gospel witness,” he explained.

“We’ve got to do all we can to make sure everyone receives a gospel witness in a way they can understand it.”

Donated resources

To help do that, SBOM is partnering with Saturate USA, an organization that aims to provide the gospel message to 120 million homes by 2027. They offer free plastic door-hanger bags with copies of the Jesus Film DVD and the Four Spiritual Laws tract.

“These resources are provided through them with no cost to us because of the donors they have,” Wilson said.

Here’s how The Gospel to Everyone works:

Churches or individuals contact their local Baptist association to see if leaders are planning to organize the effort in their area.



Canva photo by Jupiterimages

This is to make sure all zip codes are adopted without overlap. If an association isn’t participating, local churches can band together to saturate their area.

Organizers then contact SBOM to request the materials for their zip codes through thegospeltoeveryone.org.

Once an associational missionary or pastor makes a request for his zip code or zip codes, the process moves forward and generates an order that will ship to the office or church.

The number of housing

units in the zip code is automatically calculated, so churches and associations don’t have to determine how many they need.

The shipment also comes with a map of the area so leaders can strategize how to divide it up and adapt the effort to match church and community needs, Wilson noted.

It’s a simple process that people of all ages can do, he added.

“Anybody can be involved who wants to be involved,” Wilson said. “If you want to place the door-hanger and keep going, or

if you want to knock on the door and engage in conversation — anybody in a church ought to find a way to fit into this plan.”

Along with customizing the process, churches also are encouraged to customize the bags with church information and any events that may be coming up.

Some may want to use the resources this summer to promote Vacation Bible School, Wilson noted, while others may want to wait until later in the year.

‘A good product’

Long is one of the latter — he’s planning to use it in his association to promote a judgment house production this fall.

Some pastors have gotten so excited about the possibilities, they’ve already started the effort in their area.

Long sees that as a good thing.

“It’s such a good product and a simple way to reach people,” he said.

For more information visit thegospeltoeveryone.org.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 19

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Theology, University of Mobile



COMPROMISED 1 Kings 11:1-13

Warning Ignored (1-3)

Our greatest enemy is most often ourselves, and our most painful wounds are often self-inflicted. No one illustrates this truth better than King Solomon. He rose faster and flew higher than anyone in his generation.

His contemporaries must have believed his kingdom would endure for a thousand years. Although Solomon never faced a significant enemy on the battlefield, he lost his biggest battle — the one with himself. He is living proof a gifted mind is no substitute for an obedient heart.

When we compromise our relationship with God, we set in motion a course of events that destroys what we value and results in the judgment of God. Solomon disobeyed God's commandment when he "loved many foreign women." Earlier the writer stated Solomon "loved the Lord" (1 Kings 3:3).

These are clearly incompatible loves. God commanded the people of Israel not to intermarry with foreigners because they would turn the people's hearts away from the One True God (Deut. 7:1-4).

Solomon chose wives from the very nations God had prohibited. Most of these marriages would promote peace and strengthen trade between the nations.

He rationalized the marriages as a means of national security when they were actually an act of rebellion. Good relations with the surrounding nations became more important.

Although the Scripture declares Solomon loved many foreign women, it is impossible for any man to love 700 wives and 300 concubines.

These women were trophies for the purpose of enhancing his status and power. They revealed the sin sickness of his soul.

A Divided Heart (4-8)

It is difficult to recognize in these verses the man who prayed

the great dedicatory prayer at the beginning of his reign. Solomon's descent down the slippery slope of religious compromise began when he allowed the presence of false gods in Jerusalem. He imported his wives, and they imported their gods.

One compromise led to another. He built places of worship for Chemosh and for Milcom on the hill across from Jerusalem. The place where the pagan altars were built eventually came to be known as the Mount of Destruction.

This abomination would continue for more than 300 years until it was destroyed by King Josiah (2 Kings 23:13).

Solomon's sin progressed from toleration to sponsorship to bowing down before and offering sacrifices to the false gods in worship. In the ancient world, polytheists would worship the most powerful gods in their region. They often worshipped the gods of nations who had conquered their armies or the gods of more powerful nations. Solomon, however, worshipped the gods of people he defeated. Why bow at the shrine of a less powerful god? The worship of most of these gods was associated with sensuality and immorality. They appealed to something in Solomon's sinful heart.

Discipline Promised (9-13)

God's third appearance to Solomon was different. God would not allow Solomon to trifle with Him. Solomon was aware of God's commandments through the written Word, his father's instruction and God's direct intervention.

In this appearance, God charged Solomon with being unfaithful to His covenant. The Lord had repeatedly reminded Solomon that while the Davidic covenant was unconditional, covenant blessing was contingent on obedience.

God would tear away the kingdom from Solomon and give it to His servant. But the Davidic covenant would be fulfilled in God's timing.

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D.

Armstrong Chair of Religion, Samford University



INDWELT BY THE SPIRIT Romans 8:9-17

To be a child of God is to have the Spirit of God. To have the Spirit of God is to be a child of God. God's presence and power, God's Spirit, lives within everyone who trusts in Christ.

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. (9-11)

Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Then he refers to Christ being in you.

Paul can refer to the Spirit in these different ways because when we trust in Christ, He comes and dwells in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

When Paul says we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, he refers to what theologians call an eschatological dualism: a contrast between this present evil age in which the flesh (our fallen nature) tends to prevail in our lives, and the age to come which we are introduced to by the Spirit so we can live godly lives through God's promised presence and power.

To be in the Spirit is a blessing known only by those who have come to faith in Christ.

In fact, the presence of the Spirit is confirmation we belong to Christ.

Once the Spirit indwells us, we continue to struggle with our various temptations which Paul has in mind when he says, "The body is dead because of sin."

But the Spirit empowers us to prevail over our temptations. The Spirit gives life because of righteousness. God gives us the Spirit and new life thanks to Christ's righteousness. He does that so we will also live righteous lives. That is what Ezekiel 36:27 indicated God would do one day.

He who raised Jesus from the dead raises us from our spiritual death and one day will raise our bodies from the dead. Jesus' story of going from death to life and of

passing through suffering on the way to glory is also destined to be our story.

The Holy Spirit leads every believer. (12-14)

The flesh and the Spirit struggle within each Christian. If we resist the Spirit's work in our lives, then the flesh, our sinful nature, will govern our behavior.

A life marked by the flesh leads to death. But our obligation as

"... our obligation as Christians is to yield ourselves to the Spirit."

Christians is to yield ourselves to the Spirit who has given us new life so we will reject the flesh ("put to death the deeds of the body") and reflect Christ's life in us. Living the life of the Spirit in the present leads to the resurrection life of the Spirit in the end. As God's children we should be recognized by the leading of God's Spirit in our lives.

The Holy Spirit affirms every believer is a child of God. (15-17)

Paul explains the nature of the Spirit we have received. He is not a spirit of slavery but the Spirit of Adoption. That is, the true nature of the Spirit we have received is the opposite of slavery. He brings about our spiritual liberation from the oppressive power of sin and death. We can know we are God's children because the Spirit who lives inside of us cries out to the Father the same way Jesus did (Mark 14:36). The Father recognizes the voice of His Son within us and thus recognizes each one of us as His children as well.

And since we are God's children, and Christ is God's Son, we are promised all the riches of God's kingdom and its blessings, beginning with His only Son. If you are a Christian, you are never alone, and you are not without spiritual resources. The Spirit provides God's empowering presence in each moment of your life.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust
The Alabama Baptist

Looking for more family-friendly options? Check out Frndly TV

For decades satellite and cable companies maintained a large customer base by offering channels families couldn't get anywhere else.

Then came the streaming era which provided more alternatives and more content at a significantly lower price.

But those same services began promoting objectionable content, and countless families fled.

Don't fret. There are now plenty of family-friendly alternatives. This month we look at one of the best: Frndly TV.

It bills itself as "the most affordable live TV streaming service," a tagline that holds true with a basic non-HD plan and various HD plans which include DVR service.

All plans come with more than 35 channels, and most are family-friendly.

No sports or news

The service comes at a reasonable price so there must be a catch, right? Well, sort of.

There are no sports or news channels, meaning you can't watch Sunday Night Baseball, Monday Night Football or the latest in politics.

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.

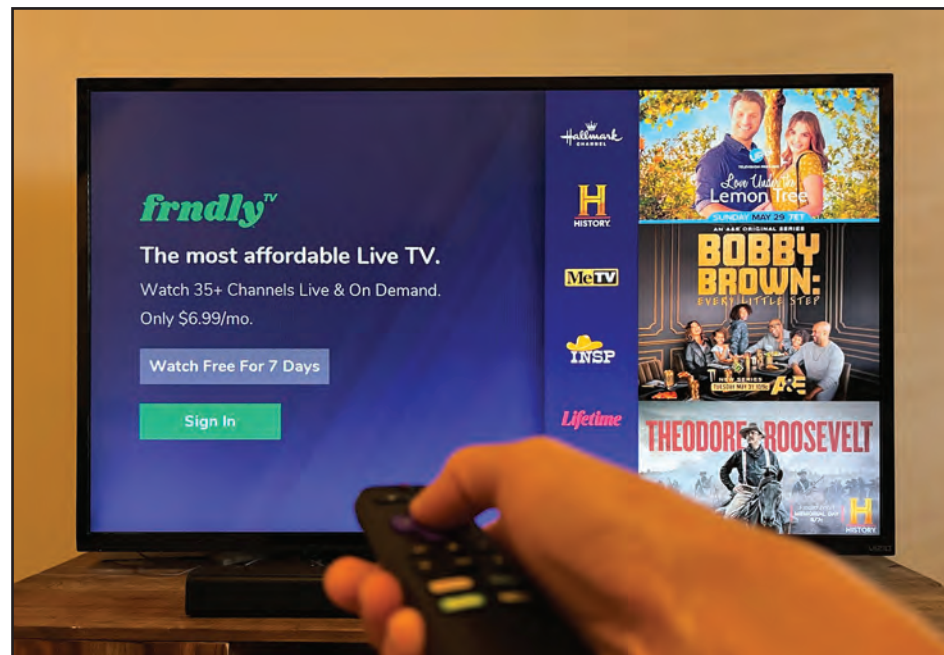


Photo by Lauren C. Grim/The Baptist Paper

Then again, your blood pressure might benefit from skipping some of that!

My family gave Frndly TV a try in recent weeks and has watched it every day.

For fans of family-friendly movies, there's Hallmark and Hallmark's competitors, GAC Family and UPTV.

The latter two, if you're curious, produce content every bit as good as Hallmark.

For fans of classic television there are MeTV, the Dove Channel and Hallmark Drama.

For lovers of mysteries there's Hallmark Movies and Mysteries.

If you enjoy history, try History or Military History.

If weather documentaries are your thing, give the Weather Channel a try.

There are also channels for outdoorsmen, game show fans and lovers of westerns.

Frndly was launched in 2019 by a former Dish Network executive who wanted to offer a limited

bundle directed at families.

Mind you some titles on Frndly aren't necessarily family friendly.

But with multiple kid-friendly channels, a cloud-based DVR with unlimited storage and an impressive price tag, Frndly TV is one of the best options for today's families. Visit FrndlyTV.com.

Worth watching

► **Prehistoric Planet (Apple TV)** — What if a nature documentary had been recorded during the age of the dinosaurs, and Sir David Attenborough was around to narrate it? That's the idea behind Apple TV Plus' new five-part series "Prehistoric Planet," produced by the BBC Studios Natural History Unit and voiced by Attenborough.

► **The Story Behind The Story**

(TBN) — Mike Rowe of "Dirty Jobs" fame examines unique moments from world history while searching for spiritual lessons. In Episode 1, he tells the story of Hedy Lamarr, an Austrian-born American actress who helped win World War II thanks to her knowledge of radio frequencies. This new series is well done and inspiring.

► **The Repair Shop, Season 5 (Discovery Plus)** — Furniture restorer Jay Blades and a crew of experts use their talents to repair nearly everything under the sun — a wind-up panda bear toy, an old ship's wheel, an antique clock, an antique stool and more.

It's as entertaining as it is educational.

► **Benjamin Franklin (PBS)** — This four-hour, two-part documentary examines the life of one of the most significant figures in the founding of the United States.

It is directed by Ken Burns, the filmmaker behind "Civil War" and countless other landmark projects.

The documentary is available on all PBS streaming platforms, including PBS.org.



MEET THE REVIEWER

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

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