

The Alabama Baptist

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September 15, 2022

Vol. 187, No. 36
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Global Missions Project combines music and missions

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Photos by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Bill Sears shares a message with students during daily chapel.
Left: Young Life holds a board meeting to discuss the new year.

Connecting pieces

Huffman Baptist Church makes varied use of church campus

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Rob Paul first got to Huffman Baptist Church in Birmingham in July 2019, he spent several months talking with church members and “getting the lay of the land.”

One question kept coming up: “I was looking at this

huge building and thinking, ‘What are we going to do with this?’ ”

In its heyday, the church had about 1,500 in weekly worship, but when Paul came on as lead pastor, around 125 came through the doors on Sundays.

Shuttered space

“At this point we had shut down over half of our usable space,” he said.

“Our three-story education building and two-story children’s building were completely shuttered.”

So he began to lead the church to look at the commu-

nity around them and think about what they could do to reach the next generation of neighbors.

“We started to ask, ‘How can we use the space that we have in a way that advances the gospel and benefits the community?’ ” Paul recalled. “We started looking at how [can] we as a diverse congregation, but still mostly white, impact a community that is [the reverse of] what our church is? We have as many as 75,000 people within a 10-minute drive, and 70% of them don’t look like me.”

In January 2020, he presented a plan called Vision

2025 — a plan to become a revitalized church that helped revitalize other churches. He wanted to consider ministry partnerships that would help the church meet the needs of its neighborhood.

Contact point

He started praying for God to send the church one young family with children — a contact point to begin reaching others in the community.

These days, Paul says in retrospect that his prayer was too small. Earlier this year they began preparing the third floor of the adult
(See ‘Together,’ page 9)



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Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

Chris Harper practices medicine in Warrior, where he and his wife, Lynn, raised their four children. Chris had originally hoped to be a missionary doctor himself, just like his father, but that was out of reach with his health issues.

Stories podcast shares story of transplant from wife to husband

In 1984, The Alabama Baptist ran a front-page photo of a 17-year-old missionary kid who had just undergone a kidney transplant — his mother had donated one of her kidneys. The article's headline read, "Send a pizza to my room," a quote from a poster hanging on his hospital room door.

And for some reason, as Lynn Harper's Acteens group at Northport Baptist Church read the article and prayed for him, her brain filed the image of that front page away. She had no idea that not too long after that they would both attend Samford University and start dating.

One day while visiting his parents' house, she saw the poster hanging on his brother's door and realized who he was.

"It was just like a flashback memory — 'I have seen this before. I have prayed for him. I remember us praying for him,'" Lynn recalled.

And she still didn't know that years later, after she and Chris got married, his kidney would fail again, and this time she would be the answer to everyone's prayers. In 2010, she gave him one of her kidneys.

Chris said for his mother and wife

to each give him a kidney, and for others to offer, is "such a heavy gift that it gets me in the heart every time."

He says he's lived a "charmed life," even while dealing with kidney issues. He loved growing up on the missions field in Indonesia, and he now practices medicine in

Warrior, where he and Lynn raised their four children.

Chris had originally hoped to be a missionary doctor himself, just like his father, but that was out of reach with his health issues. Instead, he's been able to put that "missions spirit" into practice right where he is and through short-term trips to other coun-

tries, including Indonesia.

"I would just encourage folks to let the Lord guide and direct them," Chris said. "God just directed my path. Somehow He always knows best and gets us where we need to be."

The Harpers' story is the third featured in the newest season of the Stories podcast, Season 7: The Living Donor Story. You can hear more about how God wove their stories and how that has encouraged them to trust Him even when times are difficult. (Grace Thornton)



Listen at tabonline.org/stories or wherever you get podcasts.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

The Alabama Baptist

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

(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

Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org

or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org

Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

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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)

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OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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

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 @RashionalThts

GUEST EDITORIAL

First person: Reflections on the life, testimony of Queen Elizabeth II

I think it was at my very first meal after moving to England that a new friend taught me this about Queen Elizabeth — she owns all the swans.

Yes, all the swans. In the country.

At least that’s what I was told as we had a picnic in a park on the banks of a pond filled with the large white birds. I wondered if they knew they belonged to royalty. What a crazy concept. It would be as if every goose in the U.S. belonged to the president, or every golden retriever in Alabama belonged to the governor — but even better for the swans because Elizabeth is the queen.

That was my introduction to the idiosyncrasies that come

along with living in a country with a monarch.

There were plenty.

But the thing about it — as far as I could tell as an American living there — they were all endearing.

Rallying around the queen

One of my favorite memories of my two years in England was in the summer of 2012 as the whole country celebrated Queen Elizabeth’s Diamond Jubilee, the 60th anniversary of her ascension to the throne. Queen Victoria was the only other monarch who had ever done it — she celebrated hers in 1897 and made it to 63 years, a mark Queen Elizabeth more than passed with her Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

That Diamond Jubilee summer, as my whole town gathered in the park (the same park where I learned about the swans) for a fair and fireworks, it was a foreign feeling — basically the entire country gathering in their respective swan parks to celebrate the same leader, the only monarch most had known in their lifetime.

As Americans, if we’re honest, that’s not a feeling we understand. It was happy. Light. Peaceful. Not that England doesn’t have its problems, but they could all rally around Queen Elizabeth, the woman who had stood steadily at the helm of the country for 60 (and now 70) years.

It showed that night in the park, and it showed every year at 3 p.m. on Christmas Day, when people all over the British Commonwealth gathered around their TVs to watch the Queen’s Christmas message. Queen Elizabeth used that message to share her Christian faith with a large part of the world, as she did often on other occasions too.

Over the years in different places, she talked about how her faith in God affected how she spent her days, how she

planned for the future and how she got through hard times. She called the Bible a “treasure house” of truth.

In her message delivered on Christmas Day 2021, she called the teachings of Jesus the bedrock of her faith.

And when she died Sept. 8, her faith became sight. I’m

sure that’s what she would tell us this year in her Christmas message if she could — that the “treasure house” of truth she leaned on day after day, year after year has led her to the moment when she stood in the presence of Jesus. I’m sure she would want the same thing for each of us.

And she would want us to know that belonging to real Royalty — to the Father through Jesus Christ our King — is the only way to live.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Grace Thornton, TAB Media’s special assignments editor, served two years in England as part of a missions media team. Queen Elizabeth II, Britain’s longest-reigning monarch, died Sept. 8 at the age of 96 at Balmoral Castle, her summer residence in Scotland.



By Grace Thornton

Special Assignments Editor



Queen Elizabeth greets employees on her walk from NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center mission control to a reception in the center’s main auditorium in Greenbelt, Maryland, in 2007.

Your Voice



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

Pastor offers tips for discipling new believers

By Pastor Jerome Whaley
Freedom Baptist Church, Ranburne

I'm so excited for those teens who gave their lives to Jesus [at Freedom Baptist Church's Heart of A Champion event Aug. 11].

Parents, I'm excited for you too. Now you may be asking, "Where do we go from here?"

Here are a few things I believe will help you encourage your teen's newfound faith.

1. Model it.

Show them the example they need to follow. You get in the Word. You make the effort to be in church and serve.

2. Give them a resource that makes sense to them.

Find them a good devotional and a Bible. It's important for them to immediately get in the word of God.

3. Encourage honesty.

If your teen is still struggling in their faith, let them know it's OK to be honest about it.

4. Don't push too hard.

Your teen will respond better to your encouragement than your pressure. Remember they are still human. They will still make mistakes. They will still say things that make you go, "Hmmm!"

5. Partner with a student ministry.

Get them involved in a church youth group and under a youth pastor who is in the Word.

6. Pray, then pray again, then pray some more.

This is our lifeline to the throne of God. This is how we communicate and listen to Him.

7. Be ready when they're ready to talk.

Be ready for these moments. They are rare but precious. Prepare yourself by being in the Word and making changes in your life.

8. Seek a church and a pastor.

If you do not have a church family, FIND ONE. This is so important for new believers. They need to surround themselves with this support system. The pastor is there to help disciple and answer questions you may have.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Pastor Jerome Whaley provided these tips for parents following a student event at Freedom Baptist Church in Ranburne where 11 students made decisions to follow Christ. The list is reprinted with permission. Read more about the event and other efforts to reach high school student athletes with the gospel at tabonline.org/student-sports-outreach.

[Social media] is an unbiblical way to handle potential conflict. Ephesians 4:29 tells us not to let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, "but only what is good for building up someone in need."

Many times, conflict seems easier to handle behind a screen through harmful words that we might not be bold enough to say in person. You must be careful with your written comments and responses and consider how what you're typing might be received.

Remember that you're a representative of the church and an ambassador of Christ. Kindness always wins!

John Murphy
Managing director
of insurance sales
GuideStone Financial
Resources

Show kindness and care about others! This world is broken. We as Christians need to step it up. We are to be Jesus to those we come in contact with. Let's do a better job being His ambassador!

Lisa C. Martin
Trussville, Ala.

The greatest kindness one can render to any man consists in leading him from error to truth.

Thomas Aquinas
13th century theologian
and philosopher

Letters to the Editor

In response to Andy Frazier's opinion piece in the Aug. 18 issue of The Alabama Baptist — "Help kids find healthy balance" — I totally agree that organized sports practices and competitions should not be scheduled or participated in on Sundays.

They are too much like work and have nothing to do with the commanded Sabbath day of rest. It is especially poor training for children.

Sabbath days are to be special: for church, family meals, gentle rest from harsh and mundane physical and mental labors, jour-

nalizing the Lord's blessings of the past week, prayerfully considering the week ahead, talking with and counseling friends and family by phone and catching up on reading TAB.

Bob Cosby
Birmingham, Ala.

I really enjoy doing the Christian crossword. Some clues I know, but I still look up the Scriptures and read them. Sometimes a particular Scripture speaks to me for that day.

Patricia Nance
Gadsden, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“We are called to live out the Great Commission as a living sacrifice.”

BILL MORRISON

Author of “Offered” and “Offered As Worship: Attributes of a Disciple”

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

The Great Commission commands the Church (us) to go into all the world. It does not tell us to ask the world to come to us, rather we are to go to them. I have seen many people get out of the pew and into the field through disaster relief.

The beauty of all of this is it requires people of all skill sets. This ministry requires good leaders, those who can manage people, assign work projects and oversee a specific area. It requires those with good

organizational skills; those who can cook (we love our cooks!); those who have good mechanical skills for set up of equipment, repairs and resources; those who do not mind getting dirty and working hard; those who have the gift of evangelism; those who just want to serve; and the list goes on. God has a place for anyone He calls.

Ron Crow
Disaster Relief director
Kentucky Baptist Convention

“When you compete in a sport at my level, [your faith is] going to get challenged a lot more. I’m keeping a positive mentality because I know I’m chasing something greater than myself,” said **U.S. sumo wrestler Andrew “Stonewall” Roden**, who

competed this summer in the World Games in Birmingham.

Prayer is not something we do because we can’t do anything else. Our Lord says to “pray constantly.” Prayer is the before, during and after of daily life. It is a gift that honors God.

Lisa Farrell
Director, IMB prayer office

As Christians, we are called to love one another and present ourselves as humble servants, which is the greatest message to those who are far from Christ.

Joe Souza
Ethnic ministry coordinator
Baptist Churches of New England

Growing a healthier church

Biotic refers to actions caused by living organisms. ... Let me share six biotic principles identified by author Christian Schwarz in relation to your spiritual growth and the health of your church. ...

1. Interdependence: God created us to be interdependent with other believers to grow individually and corporately as a church.

2. Multiplication: God created us not for endless growth, but to reproduce. A tree does not endlessly grow but drops seeds year after year to produce more trees.

3. Energy transformation: Rather than force or coercion, God’s ecological system uses the transformation of energy to bring about growth, even from unlike beings. While feeding on the nectar of flowers and plants, bees and butterflies transfer pollen from one plant to another.

4. Multi-usage: Trees gather nutrients through their roots and produce leaves each year to provide shade, nesting and other necessities for bugs, animals and people around the trees. The leaves die in season, fall to the ground and decay, producing more nutrients to be absorbed by the roots.

5. Symbiosis (the interconnected coexisting of two dissimilar beings for the shared benefits): We are not created to live alone in a silo but to live in symbiosis with one another for the mutual benefit of being used by God in His kingdom work.

6. Functionality: Every living thing God has created has two great attributes — to bear fruit and to reproduce.

What can you garner from understanding these biotic principles of healthy growth?

George Yates
Church health strategist
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

From the *Twitterverse*

@JohnAShepherd

Some things I believe about work:

1. Work is a blessing. God gave humanity something to do as a part of their created design. (Gen. 1:28)

2. Work is some part of bearing the image of God. (He works, we work.)

3. Work should be done well and with excellence. (Col. 3:23)

4. Worship and work are closely related. (Col. 3:17)

5. Work is NOT our identity. Our identity is in Christ (grace) not in what we accomplish (work). (Eph. 2:8–10)

@CatherineRenfro

If you know Jesus, then you know the Giver of all the hope, grace, mercy and encouragement that you need today.

@brocraige

No matter how long you’ve

served the Lord, there are those special days when ministry is so special and so sweet that it is a reminder of your calling and a confirmation that you are doing exactly what God has called you to do. Today was one of those days for me.

@EdLitton

White supremacy is evil.

Pastors must work to reverse a long-standing silence, apathy & indifference to the pain & suffering of people of color.

We must engage one another & look to Christ as our only hope & solution. Now is the time for gospel-centered racial reconciliation.

@macbrunson

Love is how you respond to people who irritate you.

@mhenslee

I’m in a town I’ve never been to

preach to a people I’ve never met. Many pastors will enter the pulpit to stand before a people they’ve cried with, prayed for and done life with for years ... decades even.

Big, small, city, rural — all of us have the same aim: #preach-theWord.

@BillyGraham

“To be a Christian is not a pious pose. It is not a long list of restrictions. Christianity flings open the windows to the real joy of living.”

@shane_pruitt78

A baby in the womb (what some call a fetus):

- ▶ has a heartbeat at 3 weeks
- ▶ forms a brain & spinal cord at 6 weeks
- ▶ reacts to touch at 8 weeks
- ▶ sucks their thumb at 14 weeks
- ▶ is valued by God ALWAYS!

That’s called LIFE!

3 stories you should know



SBOM photo

On Sept. 25, Southern Baptist churches are invited to celebrate Hispanic Missions Sunday, a day to pray for and recognize the contributions of Hispanic International Mission Board missionaries and Hispanic churches. Hispanic missionaries are active partners with IMB in bringing the gospel to the nations. Many serve among people groups who are hard to reach with the gospel. Resources are available at imb.org/hispanic-church-missions. (IMB)

Health share companies come under scrutiny

After allegations of fraud by companies that have failed to pay member claims, U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman in July introduced the Health Share Transparency Act, which if passed would require health care sharing ministries to disclose a range of financial information to the IRS and other federal agencies.

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, enrollment in health care sharing ministries has grown from about 100,000 members to an estimated 1.5 million members.

The plans have marketed themselves as affordable options to insurance that also adhere to faith-based principles regarding contraception and abortion, but bad actors in the marketplace have led to calls for reform, including an accreditation process. Read more at tabonline.org/health-share-reform. (RNS)

VA to provide abortion services to veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs will provide abortion counseling and services to pregnant veterans and VA beneficiaries.

An interim final rule submitted Sept. 1 said VA will provide access to abortions when the life or health of the pregnant veteran or VA beneficiary would be endangered if the pregnancy is carried to term, or when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough said the rule is a “patient safety decision.”

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America President Marjorie Dannenfelser questioned that claim, asserting “abortion is not health care.”

The Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 prohibits the VA from providing abortion services. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Report shows Christian persecution, forced conversions rising in Pakistan

NEW YORK — A report on religious freedom in Pakistan reveals that persecution of minority groups, particularly young girls, and the use of the justice system to target Christians have escalated.

The European Center for Law and Justice, a nongovernmental group, compiled the report showing that minority girls in Pakistan face an increasing threat of abduction, forced conversion to Islam and forced marriage to Muslim men. The report says government entities in Pakistan are not taking appropriate steps to stop the trend.

According to the human rights group International Christian Concern, the ECLJ report also states that law enforcement, the justice system, “blasphemy” laws and bonded labor are being

used to accuse, entrap or incarcerate religious minorities, especially Christians.

The ECLJ submitted its report to the United Nations Human Rights Council. Every three or four years, the U.N. — through its Universal Periodic Review program — is supposed to examine the level of human rights experienced in every country in the world, ICC stated.

Pakistan is No. 8 on Open Doors’ 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

Ugandan Christian slain for sharing testimony, faith with Muslims

KAMPALA, Uganda — A Ugandan Christian who went from church to church telling about how he came to leave Islam was killed for converting Muslims to Christianity.

Morning Star News reported Simolya Latifu of

Uganda’s Kibuku District died of wounds from a sword after three assailants attacked him near Molu village. Only minutes prior, Latifu had left a worship service at Christ Discipleship Worship Center in Molu.



Photo courtesy of CIA World Factbook

Pastor Emmanuel Muzei said Latifu, through his testimony, “led many to Christ.”

Latifu became a Christian in 2019.

Uganda’s constitution and laws allow

for freedom of religion, including converting from one faith to another, but Christians there increasingly have been threatened, attacked, killed or excommunicated by Muslim family members, World Atlas reported.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Ronnie Lamar Champion**, age 75, died Aug. 31 in Atmore, Alabama.



CHAMPION

A Florida native, Champion served in the U.S. Army. He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his service.

He was a Baptist minister serving many local churches in the Escambia, Alabama, area (including Bethel Baptist Church, Flomaton); and in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in Florida.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Carolyn; two children; eight grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

► **James Orville Collins**, a pastor who served in Decatur, died Aug. 30. He was 70.

He was in the optical business for 10 years. He went on to be minister of education at Central Park Baptist Church, Decatur; pastor of Autumnwood Baptist Church, Decatur; and pastor of GraceLife Church, Decatur.

He is survived by his wife, Debbie, one child and two grandchildren.

► Former pastor and director of missions, **Gordon Harold Chandler Sr.**, died Aug. 29. He was 89.

He was a graduate of Auburn University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

He served as pastor of Pine Bower Baptist Church, Cedartown, Georgia (1955–57), and of Paden Baptist Church in East Gadsden (1957–1981). He became director of missions of Calhoun Baptist Association in 1981 and DOM of Madison Baptist Association in 1989.

As chairman of the history committee for MBA, Chandler wrote “A Brief History of Early Settlers and the Liberty Baptist Association (1838–1924)” and “Historical Highlights” for MBA’s 175th anniversary.

Following retirement, he served for several years as the English pastor to children and adults at Huntsville (Korean) Baptist Church. He was a member of First Baptist Church Huntsville, where he served as chairman of the missions committee, on the leadership council and as Sunday School teacher. He was an active member of the Huntsville Rotary Club.

He served as director and teacher for 20 years in the extension division of Samford University.

He traveled to 29 countries on five continents, many of which were missions trips where he preached and visited with missionaries.

He is survived by his wife, Hazel; two children; four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

► Longtime minister of education **Bill J. Reed** died Aug. 27 after a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer and lymphoma. He was 86.

Alabama Baptists knew Reed from his time on the church staffs of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham and Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, where he retired after 45 years in full-time ministry. Along with the Birmingham-area churches, he served First Baptist Church West Monroe, Louisiana, and River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston.

“Bill’s philosophy of ministry was: Make sure the basics are covered, be innovative and empower your leadership,” said Danny Wood, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist.

Reed also was well known across the denomination and served a stint as president of the Metro Ministers of Education Association of the Southern Baptist Convention. He led conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest.

A Texas native, Reed surrendered to the ministry as a teenager at First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas, and attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. During his time at Baylor, he served First Baptist Church Clifton, Texas.

In 2005 following his retirement, Reed and his wife, Marlene, returned to Texas, where he served at the Gospel Café for 15 years. In 2012, he became pastor of the Protestant Church at Providence Ascension Retirement Center and remained there until his death. He was an active member of First Woodway Baptist Church where he served on the personnel committee for several years.

Reed is survived by his wife, two children and five grandchildren.

► **John Hershel Faulkner**, retired missionary and pastor, died July 13. He was 87.



FAULKNER

Faulkner was a native of Bear Creek, Alabama, where he learned to farm, a skill he would later use serving in the missions field in Africa.

He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Alabama and bachelor’s and master’s of divinity degrees from Southwestern Seminary. He also was

a veteran of the Alabama Army National Guard. He was a pastor of three churches — Pilot Grove Baptist Church, Grayson County, Texas; First Baptist Church Reform, Alabama; and Trinity Baptist Church, Sherman, Texas — before he and his wife, Anne, who had been called to missions as a young girl in Girls in Action (GA), answered the call to missions in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in Africa.

The Faulkners retired after 25 years on the missions field, and he became pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, Springville, where he served until 2003.

In 2015, John and Anne moved to Georgia to be near their children, and for a few months before they moved, they were members of First Baptist Church Springville.

He is survived by his wife, Anne; two children; and five grandchildren.

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

► **Tim Shumaker** is the new children’s minister of **First Baptist Church Weaver**.

He is a Navy veteran and has been in ministry for more than 20 years. He has served as a pastor, but primarily as a children’s and family minister. He is also a writer, balloon artist and illusionist.

He and his wife, Penny, have two children.



SHUMAKER

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION



ALEXANDER

► **Mat Alexander** celebrated 10 years at **First Baptist Church Gadsden** in July. He holds a bachelor’s degree in theology and humanities from the University of Mobile and a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary.

He and his wife, Whitney, have three children.

MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► **Connie Downey** has retired as director of **Moffett Road Baptist Church’s Child Development Center** after 37 years of ministry. The Mobile church celebrated Downey’s service July 29.



DOWNEY

OTHER

► **Cook Ministries** will host Superhero Fire, a suicide awareness network event, Sept. 17, 4–6 p.m., at Hanceville Civic Center. There will be vendors representing suicide prevention, domestic violence issues, addiction recovery and human trafficking awareness. Free admission and food. For more information, visit cook-ministries.com.

Claude King challenges leaders to pray in harmony

By Michael J. Brooks
The Alabama Baptist

Believers have a wonderful promise from Christ in Matthew 18:19–20.

“When we pray alone, the Lord is with us ... but there’s an additional encouragement when we pray with others. As Paul said in Ephesians 3, we have ‘power with all the saints,’” said Claude King, former discipleship and church specialist at Lifeway, who has been helping people and churches make disciples for more than 30 years. King, from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was a featured speaker at Pinnacle Alabama, an annual conference for Sunday School and small group leaders hosted by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. The event was held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in August.

King spoke on “Praying in Agreement — Praying Together and for One Another.”

Noting “praying in agreement” has two components, King said the first step is being in harmony with God.

“Sin can disrupt our agreement with Him,” he said.

Referring to Psalm 66:18, King said Scripture teaches that “if we regard iniquity in our hearts” the Lord will not hear us.

“We cannot be in agreement with God if we harbor rebellion in our lives,” King declared.

Along with sin, unbelief can hinder effective prayer, King noted.

“James chided his readers about unbelief and said it hindered their prayer. How often did Jesus likewise chide His disciples about their unbelief?”

“Furthermore, James said we can be guilty of wrong motives in prayer, so agreeing with God begins with our abandoning sin in confession to Him and seeking His will.”

A second component of agreeing with God focuses on agreeing with one another, King continued.

“I remember the story of Achan in the book of Joshua. Joshua was distraught that after the rout of Jericho his army was defeated by the smaller and unwalled city of Ai. Then it was discovered that Achan had disobeyed the Lord, and it affected the whole tribe.”

‘Remove the dross’

“[King] Solomon said, ‘Remove the dross from the silver, and a

silversmith can produce a vessel.’ The ‘dross’ can be sin in the camp,” King asserted.

King recalled a time a group asked him to write study materials to help them slay the giants of racial and denominational division. He struggled two months and wrote very little, later learning the group’s leadership realized a problem and called for a gathering of confession and repentance.

“After this solemn assembly, when the group humbled themselves before God, the Lord inspired me to complete the book they requested,” King recounted.

“When we gather, we need to care that others are walking with God.”

God has a plan for His people and all the resources they need to accomplish it, King asserted.

“I think sometimes it’s like a jigsaw puzzle and the pieces, or the vision, is shared by many,” he noted.

“We pray together, we seek the Lord and He reveals to us the big picture.”

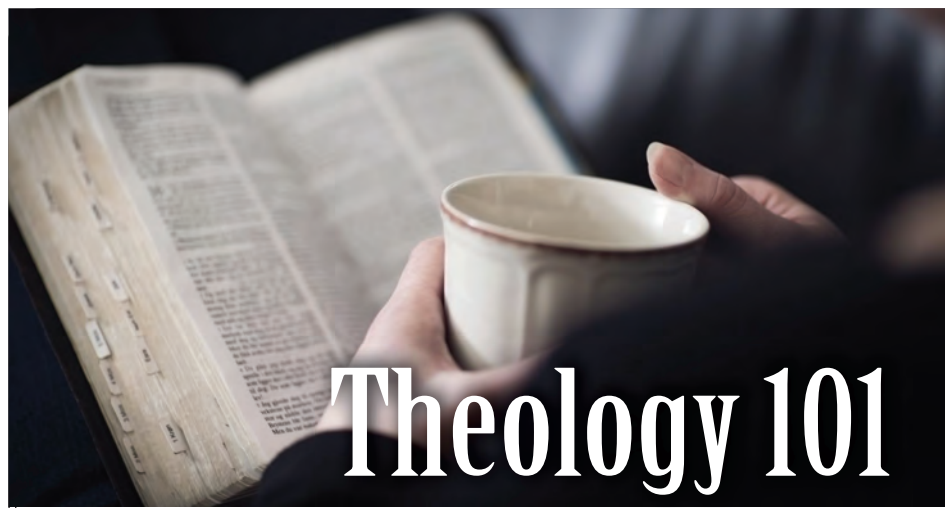
King said a praying church needs constant attention since it can easily fall into prayerlessness.

“Is prayerlessness a sin?” he asked. “Yes, it is. And what is the fruit of repentance for this sin? Of course, it’s prayer.”



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist
Claude King speaks at Pinnacle Alabama in August. “We pray together ... and He reveals to us the big picture.”

For free downloadable study guides and videos, visit growingdisciples.net. King may be contacted at cvkministries@gmail.com.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Spiritual Blessings

The Christian Race

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

From prior images of the Christian life as walking and warfare, we now turn to the imagery of a race.

As an organized race has a common starting point, so the Christian life has a distinctive point of beginning. We use various terms to speak of it, such as conversion, new birth, regeneration or profession of faith.

When it comes to the Christian life, the beginning point is crucial. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (John 3:7). He had underscored the essentiality of this to Nicodemus by declaring, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

The new birth is the beginning of the Christian race. Without this spiritual experience, the race does not begin for anyone.

Once the race is underway, living the Christian life victoriously requires discipline and training. Runners who win races have trained diligently and keep themselves in top physical condition. Among the fruitful disciplines of the Christian life are Bible study, prayer, worship, meditation, stewardship, serving others and cultivating Christlikeness.

We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 9:25 that everyone who competes for a prize exercises self-control. The Apostle Paul testified to this truth in his letter to the Corinthian church, saying, “I discipline my body and bring

it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27).

An important aspect of serious training is the putting off of weights that can become a detriment to winning a race. Hindering weights can be unconfessed sin, worldly involvements, neglected worship, uncontrolled anger or the love of money.

Hebrews 12:1–2 admonishes, “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Eyes on the goal

Winners do not glance at the spectators or any other distraction along the track. They keep their eyes on the goal — the finish line and the prize that awaits them.

Our goals include becoming like a Person, namely Christ Jesus, and being in a place, namely the Father’s house. As 1 Corinthians 9:24 says, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”

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.



Alabama hunger ministry sees increase in needs

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses and organizations have closed their doors.

This is not good news for Alabama families, but there is an upside, according to Jim Jones, who with his wife, Linda, founded Alabama Childhood Food Solutions.

“Food is a tool to reach people and tell them about Christ,” Jones said. “We have more people who need food [which] means we have more opportunities to tell people about Jesus and what He can do for them.”

Step of faith

ACFS serves seven counties in Central Alabama with the help of individuals, corporations, stores and 38 area churches. Anyone who wants to help is always welcome.

ACFS recently stepped out on faith to purchase 12 acres of land in Childersburg with plans to build a 25,000-square-foot distribution center that will double the size of its current 8,000-square-foot warehouse.

“Since we started in 2012, no one has been turned away,” Jones said. “We tell kids this food is from God.”

For more information, contact Jones at childhoodfood@gmail.com or 256-207-8048.

Read more about ACFS at tabonline.org/acfs. (Carolyn Tomlin)



Photo courtesy of Jim Jones

Linda Jones, co-founder of ACFS, stands at the site of the proposed distribution center.

Together

Birmingham church engages community through partnerships

(continued from page 1)
education building to become a community ministry hub. That space now is home to Elevate Birmingham, an organization that teaches character-based education at Huffman High School and tutors students off campus after school; Birmingham Urban East Young Life, which runs Christian-based clubs aimed at helping students know Christ and prepare for their futures; and Kingdom Family Christian Fellowship, an African American church plant.

The church has partnered with Kingdom Family and Christian Service Mission to provide food boxes to neighbors once a month.

And on Aug. 1, Banks Academy, a predominantly African American Christian high school, began holding classes in the two buildings that previously were shuttered.

It's all left Paul, the church's pastoral staff and the rest of the leadership team and congregation amazed.

Putting it together

The way God put the pieces together has amazed them even more, Paul noted.

It all started with the food boxes, a pandemic-inspired project, and a conversation with Tracy Hipps, executive director of Christian Service Mission.

“He's such a connector,” Paul said. “He knew we were looking for partners and started sending people our way.”

The first was Danny Brister Jr., executive director of Elevate Birmingham, which moved onto Huffman's campus last summer.

In February, Brister was praying over potential space in one of Huffman's shuttered buildings to expand Elevate's ministry, and while he was doing so he mentioned to Bill Sears, the church's executive pastor, that the building could hold a school. He also mentioned that Banks Academy was looking for space.

Sears asked if he could set up a meeting. Brister did, and Paul and Sears met with the school's admin-



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

Huffman Baptist Church in Birmingham shares its space with Elevate Birmingham, Birmingham Urban East Young Life, Kingdom Family Christian Fellowship and Banks Academy, a predominantly African American Christian high school.

istrator, Cathy Trimble, and several Banks board members.

“Thirteen days later, we had signed a memorandum of understanding,” Sears recalled. “When [Paul] announced that from the pulpit to the church, they broke out in spontaneous applause. They're so excited that the building is going to be used again to reach the community.”

Around the same time, Paul began talking with Brister about hiring him as Huffman staff, but Brister told him he was “already on your team.”

“What I see God doing is building His kingdom and bringing organizations of people together who are like-minded and have that same heart of really engaging and reaching the people of this community, and He's uniting them together,” Brister said during Huffman's homecoming celebration May 22. “They may have different missions, but their heartbeat is the same.”

Orchestrated by God

Around the same time Brister connected Huffman with Banks Academy, he also introduced Sedrick Moore, executive director of Birmingham Urban East Young Life. All of them began meeting on

Friday mornings to see how God might want them to work together.

Young Life's offices are now at Huffman too.

Moore remembered that when offered the space, he said, “You mean I can bring my teenagers here, and they can learn about the Lord, and it's safe? Sign me up!”

Pointing to the cross

He told the Huffman congregation at the homecoming celebration that his aim for student ministry is “to say that you matter when other people say you are so far gone” and to disciple students to grow in their walk with the Lord.

Trimble said she sees the whole partnership as something that will bring students to the cross.

“I thank God that He put this together,” she told the Huffman congregation. “And second, I thank you guys for seeing this not as an invasion but as an invitation so that we all can expand.”

Paul said he's looking forward to that.

“To me the biggest part is we're not just bringing in a school and saying, ‘Y'all go do your thing,’” he said. “Huffman, Banks, Elevate and Young Life are going to work together to reach the next generation.”

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

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Still need resources to promote the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering in your church? Visit Myers-Mallory.org for downloadable print items, videos, social media art and more!

4 common church website mistakes and simple fixes

By Mark MacDonald
BeKnownForSomething.com

Sadly, common mistakes abound on church websites. If we correct these online errors, our audience will find solutions and discover the information they need.

Today, many people prefer getting church information online. They don't want to carry around a printed bulletin, or they forgot where they put it. They want to find information and details when they're ready, and they want a trusted source to conveniently find everything.

Your church website should be that place.

Let's fix these common website mistakes:

1. No location or service times on your homepage.

People visiting your website need to quickly know where you're located.

Google also wants to associate your website with searches for churches in your city. When your community decides to visit, they will need main service times.

SIMPLE FIX: Add this information as high up on your homepage as possible. Make the location a link to get directions. The service time also can be a link to get the details a visitor needs to know.

2. No email address or pictures on a team page.

Members wonder who's in charge of ministries when they need to contact them with a concern or request. They look to see people similar to them (gender, diversity, age, etc.).

SIMPLE FIX: Add a team (or staff) page under the "About" menu. Ensure



Unsplash.com

each person has a picture. Ideally, these should be cropped headshots featuring friendly expressions. Clearly describe what everyone is in charge of and have an easy way to contact them (phone or email).

3. Improper headline tags on each page.

Google wants to deliver

search results to your internal pages but may not be able to determine the focus of these pages.

SIMPLE FIX: Write page headlines appropriate to the page content, and ensure it's what would be searched to find the information. For example: use "Kid's Activities" instead of a branded name like "Awana."

PRO TIP: Place your key-

word-rich headline at the top of your page (with keystroke characters/type and not just a graphic). Highlight those words and format them as an H1 headline (usually the largest headline styling) in your content management area.

Ensure it's the only H1 tag on the page, and then use those exact headline words in the first sentence of the first paragraph too. Continue to use those same words 2 or 3 times on the page. Google will love your content!

4. Not enough links.

When someone gets to your page for information, they subconsciously ask "now what?" but often have to figure next steps for themselves. It's frustrating.

SIMPLE FIX: Provide 2 or 3 links throughout each page that connect to other information on your website.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Huntsville Park Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor with an emphasis on a missions-minded ministry to the members of HPBC and the surrounding community. Candidates must have the qualifications given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and a college or seminary degree in a field of ministerial or theological studies. Interested candidates should send resumés and correspondence to: hpbsearchteam@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Sweet Home Baptist Church in Guntersville, Alabama, is in search of a pastor. Interested candidates may send a resumé to: sweethomesearchcommittee@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Union Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Resumés will be received through Sept. 30 by mail at: Pastor Search Committee, Union Baptist Church, 5251 Grand Bay Wilmer Road S, Grand Bay, AL 36541 or by email at: admin@ubcgrandbay.org.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Concord Highland Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: CHBC2672@bellsouth.net.

MUSIC MINISTER

Pine Grove Baptist Church, Heflin, Alabama, is a small congregation prayerfully seeking a part-time music minister. Please email resumé to: pinegroveheflinal@gmail.com.

YOUTH AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz, Alabama, is now accepting resumés for a full-time youth and recreation minister. Please send resumés to: Sardis Baptist Church, 1501 Church Street, Boaz, AL 35956 or to Mike Goforth at megoforth@yahoo.com. We are a growing, missions-minded church who is very active in sharing the gospel at home and abroad. Contact Mike Goforth at 256-506-2875 with any questions.

OTHER POSITIONS

PIANIST

First Baptist Church Union Grove is seeking to fill the staff position of pianist. Interested parties may send resumés to:

First Baptist Church Union Grove, P.O. Box 125, Union Grove, AL 35175.

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TAB DIGITAL

In addition to the print edition, The Alabama Baptist also releases a weekly digital edition of the newspaper to every subscriber's email. The digital edition comes in PDF form as well as part of an app and is included with all subscriptions. It has exclusive content for the digital edition only, and can be accessed anytime as long as you have internet. To update your email address, contact subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org.



Photo by Karen O. Allen/The Alabama Baptist

Worshippers gather in a German church for a Sunday morning Celebration Orchestra concert.

Music and missions find common ground in Global Missions Project

By Karen O. Allen
The Alabama Baptist

In the past two decades, more than 8,000 Christian musicians have traveled with Global Missions Project to some 40 countries, blending their musical talent with their love for missions.

GMP is a nonprofit Christian music ministry that provides opportunities for church instrumentalists and vocalists to share the good news of Christ using their skills and talents alongside fellow musicians in other countries.

Composer, arranger and orchestrator Camp Kirkland, music director for GMP, said the ministry started as a spinoff from conferences designed for church instrumentalists.

"Up until that time, nothing had ever been offered for church instrumentalists," he said.

Using their talents

Kirkland and a fellow musician began to discuss whether or not church instrumentalists would be interested in using their talents through a missions endeavor.

They distributed survey cards and received more than 800 positive responses. GMP was born soon after.

The first project was in June 2003 in Poland with an orchestra; the second came a month later with a jazz band in Finland.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic halted travel for a while, GMP is planning trips once again, and there are lots of options.

Some U.S. musicians travel as part of Celebration Orchestra, joining with musicians from the host country to form a unique ensemble of strings, brass, woodwinds and percussion that performs traditional sacred and anthem-style music.

Others go as part of Metro Big Band, a smaller group of jazz instrumentalists and a vocalist.

"Jazz standards from the '40s, as well as swing versions of 'Amazing Grace' and 'Joshua's Battling Bones' have audiences dancing in the streets from

Volgograd to Bethlehem," said Kathy Milburn, a 10-time GMP participant.

"Even though the teams are very different in instrumentation and experience, it is exciting to see how united in mission every team is and

how relationships develop so fast during the week we're together,"

said Richard Kingsmore, a

GMP board member and arranger/orchestrator.

Participation is easy and cost-effective, and no audition is required. Musicians and accompanying nonmusicians are welcome. Registrants receive music about a month before departure and rehearsals begin the first day in the host country.

Each project includes excursions to learn about the host country's culture, but the main focus is missions. Participants return changed and challenged.

"It's a wonderful experience for any musician!" said participant Roselyn Nicewarner.

Email info@globalmissionsproject.com for more information.

Breaking barriers

Birmingham musicians share gospel, experience German culture during recent trip

By Karen O. Allen
The Alabama Baptist

Global Missions Project, a nonprofit ministry designed to take Christian musicians on missions trips, does little to advertise, relying instead upon word-of-mouth to do the job — and it does. For nearly 20 years, musicians have been traveling the world with GMP to present the gospel through music.

Recently, 52 musicians from 30 churches convened in Fulda, Germany, from as far north as New Hampshire, as far west as Texas and as far south as Florida.

Though GMP is an interdenominational ministry, many on the trip were Baptists, including nine musicians from Alabama — eight from Dawson Memorial Baptist Church and one from Meadow Brook Baptist Church, both in Birmingham.

Thirty-two Americans, 17 Germans and three Ukrainians made up the Germany Celebration Orchestra, all with the same purpose.

“The people who travel with Global Missions Project have two things in common: musical talent and a passion for serving God,” said Kathy Milburn, a drummer from Georgia.

Jumpstarting missions

When Dan Mullis, associate music and worship minister at Dawson, was looking to jumpstart missions activities following the COVID-19 pandemic, GMP came to mind. He went on his first trip in 2004 and has since been numerous times — six to Cuba, and one each to Ireland, Greece and an Asian refugee camp in North Carolina.

Mullis, his wife, Carrie, and six others from Dawson took advantage of a church funding incentive to go to Germany. Laura Brasseale joined her husband, Sammy, as the only nonorchestra participant, but found her niche as the “merch girl,” selling GMP CDs.

Camp Kirkland, director of GMP and a prolific composer and



The Dawson team poses with a German brother and sister (far left, front and back rows) who joined the orchestra. From Dawson are, front row: Hannah Creel, Laura Brasseale, Mary Elizabeth Curl, Robin Harrison. Back row (l to r): Katherine Williams, Dan Mullis, Carrie Mullis, Alyssa Thomas, Sammy Brasseale.

orchestrator, joined the Celebration Orchestra in Germany as a trombone player, while friend Richard Kingsmore, another arranger and orchestrator, served as music director.

“The Germany projects have been very special to me because of the relationships that have developed ... with our dear friends from Germany,” Kingsmore said.

Eugen Sidelnikow, Johannes Schröder and Kingsmore planned the trip for three years. It was supposed to happen in 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic.

The orchestra performed seven concerts throughout Germany, with attendance reaching more than 500 for a single concert. Orchestral arrangements, many written by Kingsmore and Kirkland, presented the gospel musically and scripturally using a theme of “peace.”

Having an influence

Mullis was surprised to learn of his influence on the theme development following a conversation he and Kingsmore had years

earlier when he said his church had successfully used the gospel outline modeled from “The Story” (theStoryfilm.com) for a major presentation.

God at work

“God lines the dominoes up and makes them fall perfectly,” Mullis said.

One attendee raved about the harmonies. Another said he saw “a few persons who cried the whole concert.” One woman recently diagnosed with cancer hoped to hear a repeat of one of the songs she had heard in 2019 when GMP performed.

“I’ve been weak all week, but on Saturday I got strength,” she said. “It was an answered prayer.”

She heard “You Are My Hiding Place” sung by Kingsmore’s wife, Gina, and left the concert comforted.

GMP participants also were impacted.

Flutist Susan Kohari from Tennessee said, “What I remember most is the worship experience. I felt God’s presence everywhere.

One of my favorite parts of this trip was hearing the worship songs being sung in German.”

While in the country, GMP participants got a glimpse into Germany’s culture.

A blessing

“I always enjoy seeing and learning about other areas of the world, so the sightseeing was an added blessing,” noted Alyssa Thomas from Alabama.

A tour of J.S. Bach’s birthplace, plus a demonstration of authentic keyboards Bach played, a walking tour where Martin Luther spent his youth, Beethoven’s home, a museum detailing Russian-German history and a stroll through a historic village were among the stops.

GMP connects with people worldwide through music to help build personal and lasting relationships. (See story, page 12.)

Dale and Isanie Surratt took that a step further. They met and got married after Dale visited Cuba with GMP. Now they both travel with the group.

Trumpet player Bob Pawling said GMP was a “source of redemption” for him after a difficult divorce, as he enjoys using his time and talent to minister to others.

Fletch Wiley, who also plays trumpet, and Dale Biser, a bass player, were first-timers. Wiley was impressed by the servant hearts of the musicians and the expressions of faith he witnessed. Biser was nervous about the trip but his mother, an oboist, convinced him to join her.

Group effort

“The grace of our conductor and help of fellow orchestra members helped me get through it,” Biser said.

Both hope to participate in another GMP trip.

Thomas summed it up for many participants: “I didn’t really know what to expect on my first GMP trip ... but now that I am back from Germany, I can’t count the ways I was blessed!”

For more information, visit globalmissionsproject.com or find Global Missions Project on Facebook.

TEAM EFFORT

Jake Rufe of Birmingham Legion FC strengthens faith alongside Christian teammates

By Tracy Riggs
The Alabama Baptist

Jake Rufe is a defender on the soccer field. Off the field, he's a defender of another kind, encouraging other team members to keep their faith strong.

Rufe plays for the Birmingham Legion Football Club, part of the United Soccer League. The team doesn't have a chaplain, but Rufe sometimes plays a similar role, meeting as often as possible with other Christian team members during the season.

"There's a group on our team, and I know other guys who have faith as well," said Rufe, who calls Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville home. "We try to meet on a weekly basis. We get in the Word and talk about how we can encourage each other and any struggles. We pray together.

"It's been really cool to see guys from all different walks of life and all different countries coming together like that."

Walking together

Phanuel Kavita, a fellow defender and Birmingham Legion's team captain, is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and came to the U.S. in 2000. As a child he played soccer with his siblings to "decompress and not worry about life situations," he said.

He made the decision to play

professional soccer when he was a teenager and agreed with Rufe about the value of the Bible study group.

"[It] means a lot to me because it's a group of young men trying to strengthen their faith and walk in their faith with fellow followers of Jesus who want to do the same," Kavita explained. "We get together and start off with highs and lows of the week. Then we discuss and dive into a Scripture that we've set out to read that week and talk about it and get each other's perspective on it."

Encouraging each other

Rufe and Kavita are two of the five who make it a point to meet together to fellowship and encourage each other in their faith. The others are Jeff Johnson, Matthew Corcoran and Jonathan "Johnny" Dean.

Like Kavita, Rufe decided soccer was the sport for him when he was a teenager, having been influenced by his father. The sport, called football in other countries, is popular worldwide and is gaining in popularity in the U.S.

"I have been playing soccer since I was [4 years old] at the park in the rec leagues," Rufe said. "I grew up playing every year. I would play baseball as well. My dad played soccer back in his playing career in his younger days so I was always partial to soccer."

Rufe played in high school and, while in college, faced a choice:



Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

Huntsville native Jake Rufe takes a photo with his family after a Birmingham Legion Football Club game. Rufe is grateful to be playing professionally in Alabama. The team plays home games at Protective Stadium through mid-October.

complete his studies in exercise science or to try to turn professional. He decided to finish his degree, and the summer after he graduated, he signed his first professional contract.

"You could definitely see the Lord's hand and how it worked, especially for me coming to Birmingham," Rufe said.

After about six months things weren't going well with his team, and he talked to an old high school coach in Birmingham who knew the president of Birmingham Legion.

"So that's how I got my foot in the door," Rufe said. "Because of one decision in high school to put my best foot forward and play the best I could and keep striving, an opportunity came five years later to put me where I am now."

He added that prayer helped him fulfill this dream, but it wasn't always a smooth journey. When he doubted he was good enough to play at the next level, his parents, coaches and friends encouraged him to work hard and see what happened.

In 2021, Rufe's hard work and drive to succeed paid off. He scored his first professional goal from more than 55 yards, and it was named the 2021 Legion FC Goal of the Year.

"That was a really special moment," Rufe remembered. "That season had been very hard for me — that season in life, I mean. My father passed away in March 2021 very suddenly. It was right before the season started. It was tough."

Rufe has learned a lot about his faith while preparing for and playing soccer.

Loving others

"It has taught me just to appreciate my teammates and love my teammates no matter what," he said. "You know, I just feel like it's a blessing to be surrounded by good guys. We get to do what we love as a job. I try to show that love we feel from the Lord, and that we're called to love others. I think that's something that is special and that I want to do better and better."

For more information about the Birmingham Legion Football Club, visit bhmligion.com.

Jake Rufe (center) shares his thoughts on Romans 4 during a Bible study at a local coffee shop. Rufe is joined by teammates and friends (clockwise from left) Phanuel Kavita, Johnny Dean, Jeff Johnson and Matthew Corcoran.

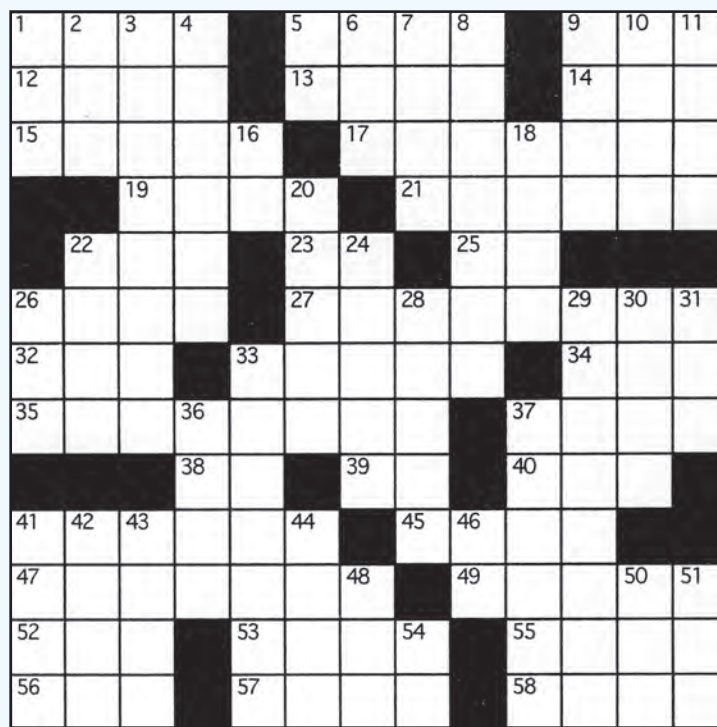


Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. "Thy Word is a ___ unto my feet."
(Ps. 119:105)
5. Actor Alan.
9. "___ iniquity unto their iniquity."
(Ps. 69:27)
12. Egg shaped.
13. Oust.
14. Feminine name.
15. Rectangular sections.
17. "The heavens ___ the glory of God."
(Ps. 19:1)
19. Object of adoration.
21. Believed.
22. Asian country. (abbr.)
23. In the same place. (Lat.)
25. Initials for audio-visual.
26. "Perfumed my bed with myrrh, ___s and cinnamon."
(Prov. 7:17)
27. Pioneer in steel.
32. Kin. (abbr.)
33. "From the tower of ___ shall they fall."
(Ezek. 30:6)
34. Inhabitant of. (suffix)
35. "In His law doth he ___ day and night."
(Ps. 1:2)
37. "They love to ___ standing."
(Matt. 6:5)
38. Either ___.
39. Continent. (abbr.)
40. Munch.
41. Of a Damascus river. (2 Kings 5:12, plural)
45. The man behind McDonald's.
47. Feels contrite.
49. Sound of a dropped melon.
52. ___-de-France.
53. "If he shall ___ the



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- whole world."
(Matt. 16:26)
 55. Apollo's mother in myth.
 56. Careless.
 57. He was. (Lat.)
 58. Work of art.
- DOWN**
1. "The Lord of hosts shall ___ the bough with terror."
(Isa. 10:33)
 2. Star of The Barefoot Contessa.
 3. "Yet Thou in Thy ___ mercies forsookest them not."
(Neh. 9:19)
 4. "What ___ shall I give thee?"
(Gen. 38:18)
 5. Direction for printer. (abbr.)
 6. First ___.
 7. Slave Scott.
 8. To die.
 9. Son of Kemuel. (Gen. 22:21)
 10. "For a good man some would even ___ to die."
(Rom. 5:7)
 11. Act.
 16. King of Egypt. (2 Kings 17:4)
 18. Lift. (Fr.)
 20. Tripoli is its capital.
 22. Move downwind.
 24. Red vegetables.
 26. Branch.
 28. Move stealthily.
 29. "For no man can do these ___."
(John 3:2)
 30. State. (Fr.)
 31. King. (Sp.)
 33. Alien.
 36. Bulwer-Lytton heroine.
 37. "Sin is a reproach to any ___."
(Prov. 14:34)
 41. Seed covering after fertilization.
 42. Lugosi.
 43. Peak.
 44. "The bright and morning ___."
(Rev. 22:16)
 46. Currency of India. (abbr.)
 48. A Nethinim family, the children of ___.
(Neh. 7:46-47)
 50. Chewed.
 51. High craggy hill.
 54. Bible division.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

How church members can support their pastor

By Denise George
The Alabama Baptist

Most church members depend on their pastors to be biblically knowledgeable and spiritually impassioned to preach, teach and help them keep their own faith strong and dynamic.

But according to a recent George Barna study, more than half of today's pastors (53%) say "it is at least somewhat difficult to find time in their ministry schedule to invest in their own spiritual development."

Pastors spend enormous amounts of time shepherding their flocks and often have little personal time to pray, study Scripture, meditate and recharge their spiritual batteries.

What do pastors wish church members knew about their faith?

Today's pastors admit they:

- ▶ Can experience spiritual dryness.

- ▶ Have difficulty finding time in their

busy schedules to spend time with God in prayer, personal Bible study or meditation.

- ▶ Are in the business of giving themselves to others, which can lead to their own spiritual exhaustion, especially if they are not receiving love and care in return.

- ▶ Need a strong, vibrant personal faith if they are to be effective ministers, so spiritual burnout is something they fear.

- ▶ Worry their own spiritual dryness will impact the faith of their congregation.

- ▶ Need to be supported by the prayers of church

members if they are to stay spiritually strong.

How can church members support and care for their pastor?

- ▶ Ask God for wisdom and strength to spiritually support the pastor.

- ▶ Send emails, notes and letters telling him they are praying for him and asking how they can better pray.

- ▶ Pray with him.

- ▶ Help diffuse conflicts that arise within the congregation.

- ▶ When concerns arise related to the church, set up a time to share those concerns with the pastor during the week to avoid distracting him on Sunday.

- ▶ Understand their pastor needs scheduled personal solitude to spend

time with God, pray, study and meditate on Scripture.

- ▶ Encourage and respect his times of solitude, time he sets aside for spiritual growth.

- ▶ Encourage the pastor

to take spiritual retreats, and, if possible, give him the gift of a spiritual renewal getaway.

- ▶ Find out what keeps the pastor spiritually replenished, then encourage him by making it possible for him to do those things.

- ▶ Pray without ceasing, supporting the pastor, his family and ministry with constant prayer.

The Apostle Paul openly encouraged the Thessalonians to pray for him (1 Thess. 5:25).

He knew that when pastors get busy in ministry, they may often let their time with God suffer.



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Greenhouse effect

The Station Church in Bessemer sees God moving in and through its people

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Alabama Baptist

When Randy Norris started The Station Church in Bessemer in 2006, he had no idea how God would bless the congregation or his ministry.

The church field is broad and reaches miles into metro Birmingham, Norris noted.

“Even the name is unusual,” he said. “The Station Church is actually representative of a couple of different things. With a rich train history, nearby historical markers include Parkwood Station, Brock’s Gap and Ross Bridge. With this heritage we felt ‘The Station Church’ not only tied us to our history, but it is indicative of who we are.”

‘God has called us’

A station is not a destination, Norris noted, and the word is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, a station is only a stopping place where people gather then head somewhere else. He said

people gather at The Station because “God has called us to go out into the world.”

Specific purpose

As a verb, station means being assigned to a specific place or a purpose, Norris said, and “we believe that God has stationed us here to glorify Him as we seek to impact the nations, our neighbors and the next generation.”

Meeting in three different locations, The Station didn’t have a permanent home for the first 12 years.

However, in the summer of 2018, God provided a facility. Guests soon began arriving and attendance steadily increased.

Norris, along with his wife, Susan, and their three children, planted the church along with seven other families. Today, The Station has two worship services with attendance of more than 500.

Church leaders also recently purchased 2 1/2 acres of green space next to the church for future expansion.

Norris said there are many reasons for the growth,



Photo courtesy of The Station Church

Since moving into a permanent location in the summer of 2018, attendance has increased and two worship services are needed each Sunday at The Station Church in Bessemer.

namely God moving in and through the people.

Missions are at the center of everything, he added.

Missions teams have served in Mobile, San Antonio, Guatemala, India, the Himalayas and Uganda.

The congregation also is dedicated to funding missions. In the past several years, 25% of every dollar given through the church goes back to missions.

Church leaders also place a strong emphasis on discipling all age groups.

Making disciples

“The Station’s mission is to make disciples who make disciples, to impact the nations, our neighbors and the next generation,” Norris said.

The church uses small groups in a comprehensive disciple-making strategy called HUBs (Holy living, Unified community, Biblical knowledge) to help reach the community, he said.

“Breaking this down

into smaller groups, called Huddles, we have developed a program where men mentor men and women mentor women.

“This consists of three to six individuals who meet on their own time, and through The Station’s strategy, they learn how to develop their personal relationship with Christ,” Norris explained.

The Station’s strategy includes a new book released Aug. 11 — “Cultivate Disciple-Making.” The book was co-written by Norris and Kevin Blackwell, disciple-making and teaching pastor at the church.

The book addresses how churches can develop intimacy, instruction and an impact for Christ.

“Like a greenhouse presents a perfect culture for growth, The Station offers an environment for growth in both numbers and spirituality,” Blackwell noted. “Basically, we are cultivating discipleship.

“With a missions purpose, we’re involved in the school system, the community — in fact, we at The Station are giving ourselves away,” he said.

Unified body

“We have a body of believers who believe in unity. Our pastor leads in unity. What we are doing is fundamental to the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:16–20. People will drive to where a church is alive.”

Church member Chad Glover added, “I believe people are drawn to The Station Church for a variety of reasons. They will consistently hear Spirit-led expository preaching of God’s word every time we meet.

“Secondly, we have an aligned vision to impact the nations, our neighbors and the next generation,” he said. “Lastly, we engage in authentic community, whether through worship, fellowship or service.”

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 18

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



SEEK GOD Amos 5:4–15

The Choice (4–9)

One of the issues Amos had to confront was that the Israelites thought if they made the sacrifices required of them, they had done their duty.

However, God is not concerned solely about external actions. This was not only a struggle in Amos' day, but it is also a recurring struggle for every era of history.

Even today, many people think if they go to church or if they read their Bible, then they are in good standing with God. This is the foundation of legalism, the idea that if I do the right things outwardly, then I am right with God.

Instead, God is concerned with the condition of the heart. Amos is not the only one who addresses this.

Hosea says, "For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6). Samuel says, "Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).

Even Jesus had to address this repeatedly in His day when confronting the Pharisees. The solution to this is not only to read God's word, but also to believe it and do what it says out of love for God.

The Reality (10–13)

Even though Israelites were religious, their religious ways did not result in godly behavior. Instead of helping those in need and providing justice for the poor, they used their positions to abuse the poor.

Poor people are vulnerable to abuse because they have no power. It was not uncommon for people to bribe officials and cheat the poor out of their goods and money through taxes.

If we look around today, we see the same thing: Some wealthy people in power use their positions to gain money and power at the expense of the poor in society. But God judges those who mistreat

the poor. If the Israelites did not change, God was going to destroy their country.

The Solution (14–15)

In response to the news of judgment, Amos tells the people of Israel to turn from their wicked ways and work toward justice. There are several implications that can be drawn from this.

The first is the need to repent. God's call to salvation involves repentance, which is turning from bad behavior and turning toward God and His desires. In order to become a Christian, repentance is required.

Once we are Christians, we need to continually live lives of repentance, allowing the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, turning from our evil ways and living in a way that honors and glorifies God.

Christians should be concerned with the poor.

Jesus said, "You will always have the poor with you" (Matt. 26:11). This did not preclude Jesus from caring for the poor, nor should it keep us from caring for those in need.

This requires discernment. There are ministries whose purposes are to minister to people without housing.

By working with these ministries or making new ones, Christians can actually help solve physical problems for people who are homeless.

At the same time, believers can share the spiritual remedy for humanity's eternal problem — the gospel. It is easy for us to look down on people who are struggling.

But God loves us while we are still sinners (Rom. 5:8), and we need to show the love of Christ by loving others unconditionally.

In addition, we need the Bible to dictate to us what justice is. We live in a world that talks about social justice, often in a nebulous, symptom-based way that does not take into account the biblical view of justice.

Bible Studies for Life

By Rony Kozman, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



FAITH ON DISPLAY IN YOUR ACTIONS James 2:14–26

A faith not backed up by our actions is a useless faith. (14–17)

In James 2:1–13, James emphasized the importance and necessity of keeping the whole law (vv. 10–12). To fail in one part is to be guilty of breaking the whole law.

James entreated his audience to keep the whole law by not failing to show love and mercy to the poor as they seek to enact justice. They must not favor the rich as they judge cases. It should not be surprising to us that when James gives us a specific example of dead faith (v. 17), it is one where someone recognizes a poor person's need of food and clothing and does nothing more than mouth platitudes to their needy brother or sister.

Such a person who claims to have faith has no more than a dead faith. True faith, a faith that is alive, is animated by works of charity and love toward those in need.

True faith feeds the hungry. True faith clothes the needy. Those with true faith are the ones Jesus recognizes and welcomes into His kingdom (Matt. 25:34–36).

Faith is more than merely what you believe. (18–20)

James is adamant that true faith is always coupled with good works. Faith and works are an inseparable pair; the two cannot be disjointed or separated. We must not claim to have faith while neglecting to do the deeds God requires of us.

James uses two similar descriptions of faith to emphasize the union of faith and works. A faith that does not have works is dead (2:17). Just as a living person breathes, so also a living faith works. And the phrase is this: "Faith apart from works is useless."

Merely believing true things about God is insufficient. After all, even the demons have this kind of useless faith.

Demons have true cognitive knowledge of God. If faith is merely knowing true things about

God, we will find ourselves in the company of demons and sharing their "faith" — a faith that does not do good works. True faith is demonstrated by our works.

Genuine faith is seen in our obedience to God. (21–26)

James uses Abraham as an example of the inseparability of faith and works. When Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22), he showed he believed God's promise that He would make Abraham's offspring abundant (Gen. 15:4–6). After all, if Abraham was willing to kill his only son, the one through whom God's promise and covenant was to be established, by binding up Isaac, Abraham demonstrated through his faith that God would keep His promise.

In the story of Abraham, faith was not idle, but faith and deeds worked together, James asserts. And just as James earlier said that endurance completes the one who perseveres through trials (1:4), now James says works complete one's faith.

James' statement that we are "justified by works and not by faith alone" seems to be in tension with Paul's assertion that one is justified by faith and not by works of the law (e.g., Rom 3:28). A few observations lessen the tension.

Whereas for Paul, the faith in view is effective and brings us into union with Christ and into God's kingdom, the faith that James criticizes is a useless faith devoid of works. Second, Paul (like James) also writes of the necessity of works for justification (Rom. 2:13). For both James and Paul, obedience is necessary for justification, and faith in Christ is foundational to our obedience.

True faith produces the works God requires. And works are the children of faith. Since faith generates good works, Paul emphasizes faith as foundational for justification. True faith always successfully gives birth to works.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Alabama Baptist

Author, speaker makes best of pandemic, writes new devotional, cookbook

Barbara Eubanks is an author, Christian humorist and conference leader, but she never intended to become a writer. In fact, she was a shy child and avoided the spotlight whenever possible.

But with encouragement from her late husband, Steve, and “holy nudges” from God, she has published seven books and is in demand as a speaker at Christian events.

Her latest book, “Fear to Fearless,” was published in 2021 following a season of fear during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Fears come in different sizes, forms and shapes — some rational and some not,” Eubanks writes.

“From falls to foes, heights to hell, storms to swamps, people are prone to fear.

Naming fear

“Fears are known by different names: phobias, anxiety, terror, worry and dread, but regardless, any of these that disturb our calm and serenity hinder the life God desires for His children.”

The book includes 365 devotionals.

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.



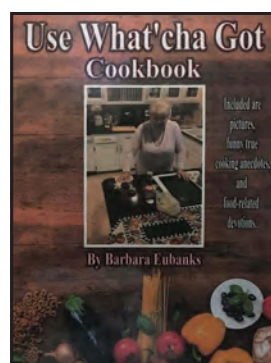
Photo courtesy of Barbara Eubanks
Barbara Eubanks holds her latest book, “Fear to Fearless,” which was published in 2021. A member of Sardis Baptist Church in Boaz, Eubanks credits her husband and “holy nudges” from God for her seven books and invitations to speak at Christian events.

Contributors include Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance; Mike Goforth, pastor of Sardis Baptist Church in Boaz; and retired Alabama Baptist pastor A.L. Courtney.

Eubanks found that being creative helped her deal with COVID-19 fears and at the same time share her skills with others.

She used her cooking skills and started making videos called “Use What You Got,” in which she shares cooking tips, how to substitute ingredients and humorous family stories.

She published a cookbook by the same name last year. “Use What’cha Got Cookbook” includes recipes, pictures, funny cooking stories and devotionals.



The food-related devotions were a suggestion from her oldest son, Steve Eubanks Jr., she said, who commented that devotionals

were really her “expertise.”

Eubanks has come a long way from the 15-year-old who married her sweetheart. Before she was 20, the couple had three sons.

Her husband, a long-time pastor, encouraged her as she went on to earn three college

degrees.

“You can do it!” he would say.

Writing wasn’t even a thought in the early days, however. The discipline wasn’t emphasized when she was in school, but God gave her a desire early on to share her thoughts in writing.

In college she intended to study

nursing, but the Samford graduate gained confidence in her writing as professors recognized her gift.

“I did well on essay-type questions,” she said.

“I remember feeling validated when a professor would write a personal note in the margin of my test paper. Encouragement is so important.”

Her mission

She went on to teach English for 35 years. During these years she kept a journal of students’ funny sayings, along with humorous personal anecdotes.

Just before her retirement in May 2005, Eubanks wrote three humorous devotionals back-to-back, filled with personal anecdotes and spiritual insights. It became her mission to spread the gospel using the written word and laughter.

After her retirement, Eubanks developed a platform for speaking and felt God calling her to help others.

“If what I write or [what I say] can help others be saved, I have obeyed God. Even if just one person is saved, I have done what God asked me to do.”

Eubanks said she has trained her mind to look for inspirational thoughts and devotionals — driving, taking a walk, nature and God’s creation provide ideas.

She’ll continue sharing what she’s learning with audiences and readers as long as she can.

For more information about Barbara Eubanks, visit barbaraebanks.com. You also can find her on Facebook at [Barbara Ann Eubanks](https://www.facebook.com/BarbaraAnnEubanks).

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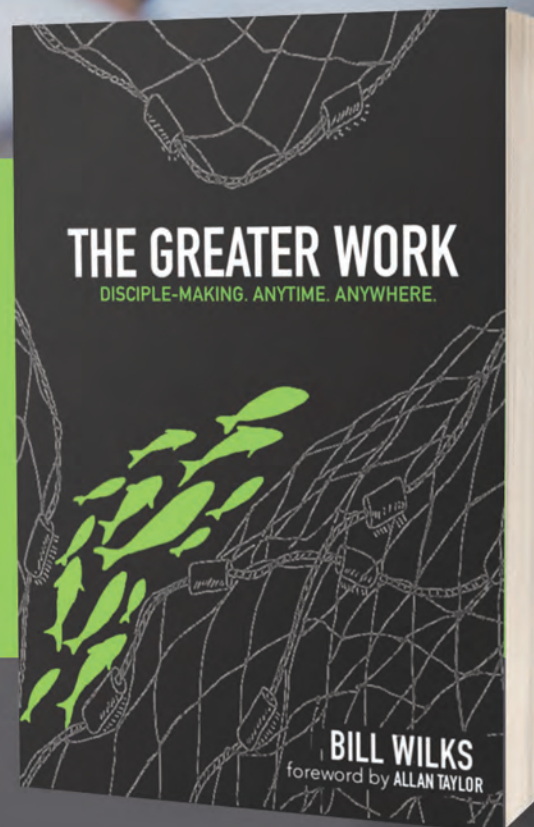
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Spiritual gifts

By Aaron Wilson
Lifeway Research

What your church needs to know about being a piece of the puzzle

From the Enneagram to what-character-are-you quizzes on social media, many people desire to understand themselves and the roles they play in their communities. Yet as fascinated as people are with knowing their inner workings, many pastors are concerned church members feel indifferent about using their spiritual gifts to serve others.

A recent study from Lifeway Research revealed people's apathy and lack of commitment to the church is one of the greatest needs pastors say they need to address. Can we chalk this apathy up to a simple "meh" attitude about serving? Or is it an issue of Christians misunderstanding spiritual gifts and how to employ them in the church and community?

Daniel Darling, author of a new Bible study, "Spiritual Gifts: What They Are and How to Use Them," sees a right understanding of spiritual gifts as a key to helping Christians unlock a passion to serve the church and live on mission.

This Q&A with Darling, who is also director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, explains why spiritual gifts garner such fascination and misunderstanding within the church.

Q: Why is it important to understand a theology of spiritual gifts as we seek to discover and lean into our specific giftedness?

Darling: Understanding spiritual gifts, at the most basic level, is about discovering where and how God wants us to take up our crosses and follow Him in obedience. God calls every believer to participate in His kingdom activity as expressed

through a local body of believers.

When we understand how spiritual gifts work, we can also recognize and appreciate the gifts of others. The Bible describes Christians like a body or a building in that God has gifted believers for diverse callings. Sometimes our quarrels and fights in church life stem from our inability to understand how God has called people to serve the Kingdom in ways different than our own calling.

Q: Many Christians desire to know and understand their spiritual gifts. But that's just one piece of the puzzle, isn't it? What's the value of looking outside ourselves to recognize the giftedness of others?

Darling: This is one of the most overlooked aspects of spiritual gifts. We often exclusively see them as a

way of understanding our own callings. We should remember Scripture teaches spiritual gifts are given to a body and to a people.

One of the best ways for us to see our own gifts is to get plugged into a church community. In the process of serving, others can recognize our gifts and encourage us to exercise them. In the same way, we should be eager to point out others' spiritual gifts so they can use them.

God often leads and directs us through the patient and loving encouragement of our fellow believers.

Understanding the theology of spiritual gifts also helps us escape the temptation to see Christianity as a merely individualistic faith — about me and my needs and happiness. It allows us to see ourselves as members of both a local body and a

worldwide communion of saints.

It allows us to resist two false ideas: I am not needed in the kingdom of God, and the entire work of God rests solely on my shoulders.

Neither statement is true. When a body of believers faithfully submits to Christ's calling, there's a beautiful harmony of people using their gifts side by side for the sake of the gospel.

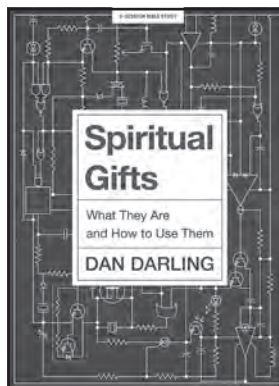
Q: What are some common misconceptions about spiritual gifts?

Darling: There are quite a few. First, we sometimes value certain gifts over others. In the study, I distinguish between what I call speaking gifts and serving gifts.

Speaking gifts are more public, and serving gifts are more behind the scenes. We too often value speaking and stage gifts at the expense of undervaluing serving gifts. Both kinds of gifts are valuable and needed. Another misconception is that a Christian can't have more than one spiritual gift.

There's the misconception that if we aren't spiritually gifted in one area, we don't have to be obedient in that. For instance, all believers are called to evangelize, but some are supernaturally gifted in evangelism. That doesn't absolve all of us from evangelism.

Lastly, some feel the Spirit's assigning of spiritual gifts is fixed, but I don't see that the Bible teaches that. God may gift us in one way in one season of our lives and another way in another season. I think of a young pastor who can teach and lead in his younger years. But in his older years this same pastor may be gifted with the ability to encourage and exhort younger generations.



"SHOW OF HANDS—HOW MANY OF YOU WOULD RATHER I CUT OUT POINTS ONE AND TWO AND GET TO THE GOOD STUFF?"



STRUGGLING TOWARD HOPE:

LIFE AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE

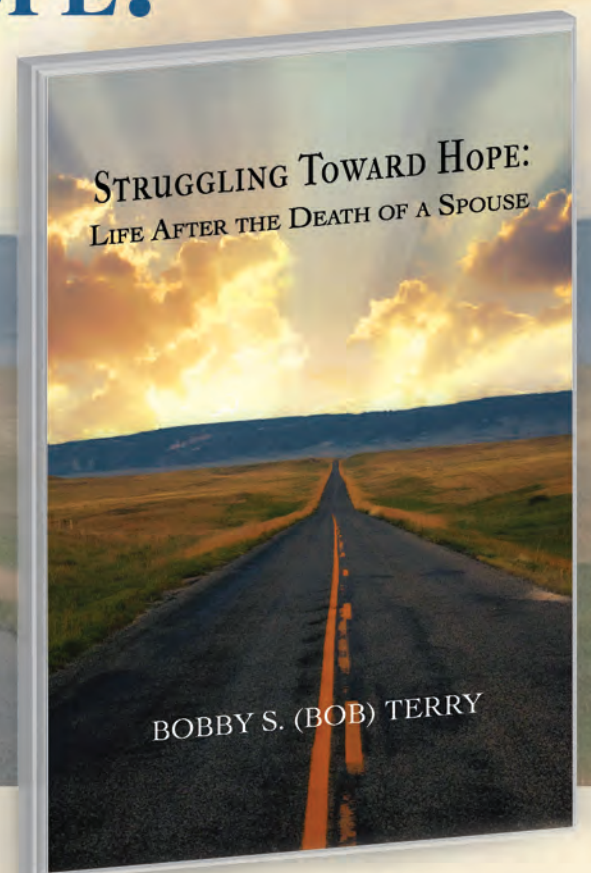
A powerful, beautiful and very helpful account of working through the loss of a spouse. Dr. Terry describes the deep sense of loss he felt and then the process of building hope. This is not a "how to" book on grief, but one that allows the reader to follow the journey and then engage on several levels. As I read the book, I wish that it had been available when as a pastor I struggled to minister to church members who were going through this process. I firmly believe that this book needs to be in every pastor's library to read with extra copies for folks to read as they go through their own grief journey. Dr. Terry's background as a journalist allows him to unpack his own story with unique insights along the way. It is a must read for pastors and counselors.

DR. GARY FENTON
RETIRED SENIOR PASTOR OF DAWSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
BIRMINGHAM, ALA.



BOBBY S. (BOB) TERRY

As a Christian minister Bob thought he understood grief. He had done special studies about death and dying and walked with numerous families through the loss of loved ones. But when his wife died from injuries suffered in an automobile accident while the couple was on a mission trip, Bob learned the difference between studying grief academically and knowing grief personally. In this book, Bob relates his own struggles about putting life back together after the death of a spouse. He examines issues related to the changes that death brings and questions about religious faith, about the grief journey and about finding a new hope-filled sense of life.



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