

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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Unsplash.com

Ongoing need

Foster care system lacks enough homes for children

By Hamilton Richardson
The Alabama Baptist

When the U.S. Supreme Court in June overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Alabama Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries carefully considered some questions many were asking: What would the ruling mean to families and children? How would the decision affect the foster care system?

"I have served here for nearly 28 years," said Rod Marshall, ABCH president and CEO. "I get to see changed

lives every day through the incredible faithfulness and hard work of our social workers, counselors, foster parents, ministry partners, prayer warriors and financial supporters."

Changing lives

Marshall said no one yet knows the full implications of the Supreme Court ruling, but he knows there are many children who need families, and lives continue to be changed by the ministry of ABCH.

"There are currently 6,000 children in Alabama's foster care system and only 2,500 licensed foster homes," Marshall noted. "Before *Roe v. Wade* was ever reconsidered, we already had a foster care crisis.

"Interestingly, there are a little over 3,000 Alabama Baptist churches. If all these churches come together collectively

to advocate for these hurting children, we believe we could solve the foster care crisis in our state."

Marshall noted an increase in individuals and families showing interest in becoming foster parents, as well as churches contacting ABCH asking how they can help with the possible increase of children in foster care.

Shortage of families

As the state's largest faith-based provider of foster care services, ABCH sees more and more children entering the foster care system.

"Sadly, many days we decline more referrals than we are able to accept because we do not have enough foster homes," Marshall lamented.

(See 'Churches,' page 9)

Abortion measures on Nov. 8 ballots

Voters in five states will weigh in on abortion-related measures when they cast their ballots Nov. 8.

In California, Michigan and Vermont, voters will decide whether to amend their state constitutions to establish some form of a right to an abortion.

Vermont is one of four states that allow abortions at any stage of pregnancy. New Mexico, Colorado and Alaska are the others, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization affiliated with the abortion-rights movement.

California and Michigan permit abortions before viability, usually defined as 24 to 26 weeks of pregnancy.

Kentucky voters will decide whether to amend the state constitution to say the right to an abortion is not protected. A similar measure in Kansas failed earlier this year.

Montana voters will decide the fate of the state's *Born-Alive Infant Protection Act*, which requires doctors to provide care for infants "born alive" at any stage of development. Montana restricts abortions after viability.

Guttmacher reports that since the June 24 Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 66 clinics across 15 states have ceased offering abortions. (Carrie Brown McWhorter)

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Photo courtesy of Myra Thomas

Myra Thomas (bottom right) puts the roomful of fabric left to her by her mom to good use. She and a group of women from FBC Cleveland started sewing dresses for missions. The project turned into a sewing program through a local CWJC.

Mother's sewing legacy leads to changed lives

By Grace Thornton

The Alabama Baptist

Myra Thomas said her mama left a big legacy. That included a good example, and it also included a roomful of fabric.

"She had lots of love for quilting," said Thomas, a member of First Baptist Church Cleveland. "After Mama's passing in 2010, I wanted to respect all of the fabric she left and do something good with it. Every little scrap was very precious to Mama; she didn't throw anything away."

It was an overwhelming thought to Thomas at first, but then one day she was reading a magazine and saw an article about women making dresses for missionaries to give to young girls in need.

"That just really clicked with me, and I shared it. Of course all the women of the church just loved my mom, and they wanted to help me with this project," Thomas said.

They started having sewing days at the church, and before she knew it, they were turning out dozens of dresses. She lost count somewhere around the 400 mark.

And at about the same time, she also got involved in something else — getting a Christian Women's Job Corps chapter called Anchor Ministries started in Blount County. At Anchor, women could learn skills for jobs, parenting and life.

"I just wanted to be part of the everyday workings of it," Thomas said. "But I didn't feel like I was qualified to [lead] anything like that."

At this point she was very qualified to start a sewing program.

"Finally one day the Lord impressed on me, 'Yes, you can. You can do something. Use your mama's fabric,'" Thomas said.

'It's been a blessing'

Since then, the women of Anchor Ministries have made quilts for Sav-A-Life and for hospice care, and they have made dresses for missions.

As Thomas and other volunteers and staff have walked through life alongside the women of Anchor Ministries, they've seen some of the women go on to get their GED and have their children returned to them from foster care.

It's been a blessing, Thomas said. And it all started with a room full of fabric and a magazine article.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Myra Thomas' story is what the staff of The Alabama Baptist always hopes as we publish your stories — that other people will read them and feel inspired to replicate or adapt ministries in their own context. If you have a story to share of how someone else's story has inspired you, please email us at news@thealabamabaptist.org.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



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Part 2: Family responds after recent arrest of Alabama Baptist pastor

The family of Alabama Baptist pastor Ken Daniel has responded following his Oct. 19 arrest on charges of “facilitating solicitation of unlawful sexual conduct with a child.”

Along with messages being shared in various outlets from family and friends asserting Daniel is innocent, his daughter Megan Daniel posted a video “In Defense of Ken Daniel” to YouTube on Oct. 23 detailing what she describes as misinformation and violations of his constitutional rights.

In the video, Megan Daniel requests formal apologies from news media outlets and calls for

an investigation into the Blount County Sheriff’s Office.

Blount County District Attorney Pamela Casey and Blount County Sheriff Mark Moon both told The Alabama Baptist on Oct. 28 that Megan Daniel’s accusations are false claims.

“We stand by the investigation, that it was done properly and was done thoroughly and look forward to presenting our case in court,” Casey said.

According to childwelfare.gov, when an allegation of possible child abuse is made, an investigation should be initiated and conducted by experts in child welfare/children’s advocacy.

“Investigations may be conducted by child protective services staff and/or law enforcement and often include a multidisciplinary team,” according to the site. “Child protective services investigations must reflect a balance between protecting children and preserving the rights of parents and family members. Child welfare workers and family advocates should work to support families to help provide safe and nurturing environments so that children may remain in the home or in a relative placement when possible.

“Children’s advocacy centers offer an evidence-based, trauma-informed, multidisciplinary response to child abuse allegations through multidisciplinary

team coordination, forensic interviews, medical exams, evidence-based mental health services and victim/family advocacy. The forensic interviews conducted with alleged victims of child abuse are often essential to the investigation,” the site explains. “Investigations include interviews of children, parents and others who may have knowledge of the situation.”

The Alabama Baptist contacted church leadership several times beginning Oct. 21. Contact was made with the church office but no public statements had been provided at press time.

To watch Megan Daniel’s full video appeal, visit tabonline.org/megan-daniel.

Part 3: Jefferson and Shelby counties add charges to pastor’s list

Five counts of sexual abuse of a child under the age of 12 and one count of sex abuse by force have been added to charges against longtime pastor Ken Daniel.

The latest charges come from Shelby County (four counts) and Jefferson County (two counts, which includes the sex abuse by force).

The three locations for charges are tied to the alleged

incidents reported by the girl, who lives in Blount County with her grandfather. Daniel lives in Alabaster, which is in Shelby County, and the church is located in Jefferson County.

The Alabama Baptist confirmed the charges with Blount County District Attorney Pamela Casey and Blount County Sheriff Mark Moon the morning of Oct. 28.

Daniel, pastor of First Baptist Church Chalkville, was

arrested Oct. 19 by the Blount County Sheriff’s Department and charged with “facilitating solicitation of unlawful sexual conduct with a child”

According to multiple media reports, the alleged victim is 7 years old and was inappropriately touched by Daniel, 64, on several occasions since January 2020.

The girl reportedly said the incidents happened on church property as well as at Daniel’s home and during a pool party.

Detailed information regarding the investigation could not be released to The Alabama Baptist because the content deals with a juvenile and with sexual abuse, Moon explained.

Casey added, “We stand by the investigation ... and look forward to presenting our case in court.”

Daniel remained in the Blount County jail at press time.

Your Voice



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

What do conservatives do after Roe? We need to focus on helping families

By **Daniel Darling**
Author, pastor and podcast host

Now that the nearly 50-year struggle to overturn Roe v. Wade and allow states to pass laws that recognize the unborn has proven successful, where does family-based conservatism go from here?

We are in a moment when shaping our policy proposals around the basic social building block of the family is both a winning strategy and one good for human flourishing.

What would family-based conservatism look like? First, it should begin by protecting the most fragile members of our human family. As the abortion debate moves to the states, conservatives should work to pass meaningful restrictions on the practice.

Though the majority of Americans don't yet favor a total ban on abortion, there is growing support among Americans for significant restrictions.

Valuing life

According to a survey conducted by Lifeway Research and the Land Center for Cultural Engagement, 41% of Americans favor restrictions after the sixth week of pregnancy, 52% favor restrictions after the 12th week, 59% favor a ban on abortions after 15 weeks and 65% favor a ban after 20 weeks.

What's more, 35% of Americans believe life begins at conception. Another 28% believe life begins at the detection of the first heartbeat.

The end of Roe could be the dawn of a new era in which the most vulnerable among us are seen

not as inconveniences to be discarded, but as full and welcomed participants in America's promise of liberty.

But conservatives shouldn't be satisfied with merely passing laws that recognize the dignity of the unborn. We should supplement the growing network of pregnancy resource centers and other compassionate endeavors by championing policies that help sustain a healthy and flourishing family life.

Patrick Brown, a fellow at the conservative Ethics and Public Policy Center, wrote in the New York Times, "Helping women, including low-income and working-class women, gain access to more resources during pregnancy and after childbirth will reduce the demand for abortion while state legislatures pass bills restricting the supply.

Republican lawmakers should coalesce around a legislative package that takes seriously the unique needs of mothers and their babies."

Our survey showed there is significant support for this, with 81% of Americans, including 61% of pro-life Americans, saying they believe state governments have a responsibility to increase support and options for women who have unwanted pregnancies.

Offering stability

This growing support fits well with many conservatives' growing openness to economic policies that buoy family stability. This is why pro-life advocacy groups such as Susan B. Anthony List are building infrastructure to help champion and deliver services to women and families in need.

Conservatives can and should debate the finer details of what a pro-family agenda looks like. And good people on all sides may disagree on exactly what is most efficient for government to execute and what is best left to mediating religious and civic institutions.

Where some see the end of Roe as an electoral earthquake, conservatives might see it as an opportunity to coalesce a coherent vision for flourishing. But it will take creativity and courage.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Dan Darling is the director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Seminary. This opinion piece was originally published in USA Today. It is adapted for space and reprinted with permission.

Letters to the Editor

Jerry Batson's Theology 101 contribution in the Oct. 6 edition put me in mind of the following:

One of my mentors who was old when I was young spent the last 60 years of his life in an intensive study of the Holy Spirit.

He distilled his study into a single sentence:

"Every time and every place the Holy Spirit has been talked about, taught, preached, recognized and given His proper place, there has been an awakening" (C.S. Cadwallader Sr.). Please God, in our time and our place.

Keep the presses rolling, my friends!

Cecil Taylor
Emeritus professor
Christian Studies
University of Mobile

Robert Olsen's Sunday School lesson in the Sept. 29 issue of The Alabama Baptist about the first chapter of Jonah revealed something new to me, even though I've read the story many times.

Jonah didn't go in the direction God told him to go, but God still used him for something very good. The pagan sailors accepted God.

We can only imagine the number of people they brought to God. Thank you for this lesson and others you have written.

Affie Martin
Clanton

I enjoy reading many of the articles in The Alabama Baptist, including the Sunday School lessons, Christian crossword puzzles, features about individuals and Rational Thoughts.

Recently, you wrote about forgiving debts. Matthew 18:21-35 is about forgiving the debt of sin.

TAB reader

“The Lord has been leading us to get this generation ... to get [students] Christ in their culture.”

PASTOR DEWAYNE REMBERT

Flatline Church at Chisholm, Montgomery

The church is mandated with the mission of proclaiming the gospel to a sick and dying world with every ounce of its being, mind, body and soul. If we are only singing to ourselves and ministering to ourselves and doing feel-good projects, then we should immediately remove our church sign and replace it with the words community center.

Don Hayden
Tuscaloosa

I once heard a layperson in a church tell a pastor, “I break guys like you.” What he was saying in essence was, “You don’t have my support, and I’m going to do all I can to make ministry hard for you.”

This type of behavior exists in a lot of churches — people who pur-

posely work to tear pastors down and discourage them to the point they quit. These individuals have a strong disregard for leadership.

Hear me well. This kind of behavior is what keeps churches from thriving and is one of the reasons why some of our churches are dying. Proud personalities have the clutches of death on the church.

We will all have to give an account for our actions as it relates to the Lord’s church.

Pastor Jarman Leatherwood
House of Hope and Restoration
Church, Huntsville
via Facebook

Recently, Alabama played Texas A&M in a super stressful football game with lots of adversity.

[Alabama] won the game, but there was doubt in every Bama fan’s mind throughout the game.

We recorded the game and our son, Jonah, was able to watch it on Sunday afternoon. He made the comment, “Daddy, I really like watching the game when I already know who won.”

As Christians, this is the way we should live our lives. We already know how everything is going to work out, so even when adversity comes our way or we have doubts in our minds, we can rest easy knowing the Lord goes before us and has already won the victory for us. Let’s walk in His victory this week!

Steven Nelson
Circlewood Baptist Church
Tuscaloosa

Knowing and doing the will of God

By James Long
Retired minister of education

In 1995, for the very first time since I had become a disciple of Jesus 38 years prior, I actually started growing as a disciple.

That year I worked through the “Experiencing God” workbook. While there are countless great resources which are very useful as guides for Bible studies, “Experiencing God” is definitely in a league by itself.

God truly began a new and significant work in me and in the lives of people around the world in the 1990s.

The process is still ongoing. I am definitely a work in progress — continuing to learn, still being refined, desiring to grow more and more toward spiritual maturity but never arriving.

I challenge you to use “Experiencing God” for a Bible study if you have not done so before or have not done so recently. But be forewarned: God could use it to change your life from the inside out. That is what happened to me. That is my story of what God has done!

Since the inception of the study, my understanding is that “Experiencing God” author Henry Blackaby has been insistent that the subtitle be: “Knowing and Doing the Will of God.”

The following statement from Blackaby has helped me immensely in putting the major matter of a daily quiet time in perspective: “I don’t have a daily quiet time in order to have a relationship with God, but because I have a relationship with God, I have a daily quiet time.”

It is only out of our ongoing, actively growing love relationship with God through His word, our praying and our genuine love for others that we can truly grow toward spiritual maturity ourselves and make disciples of others.

From the *Twitterverse*

@haines_matt

One of the best [pieces of] advice anyone has ever given me is “each one of us is just one decision away from stupid at any moment.”

@DanielDickard

Christians who crave the approval of the world are usually those who cave to the pressures of the world.

@sendrelief

“We don’t want to know people by their need. We want to know them by their name.”

— @TaylorField33

@lorifrank1

The antidote to moral decay is the gospel, not political power and ideology. The Holy Spirit is not

your national errand boy. He empowers that which lifts up Christ, not man. Check your idols, and plow for hearts, not votes.

@danwhitejr

Most people don’t live their theology. They live out of their fears and project them onto theology.

@alsbom

Pray that we will fall in love with the word of God and that we will have a hunger for the truth.
#PrayingAlabama

@BrianNall

I pray every church will functionally embrace that they need other local churches in order to reach the mission field of their community. #BetterTogether

@NOBTS

“God is the only desire, not one among many, but the only desire that our hearts should have.”
—@DocThos3

@SEBTS

“Our story, as believers, should be told by the way we live our lives. What story does your life tell?” — Zeb Cook #SEChapel

@micahfries

The recent increase in anti-semitic rhetoric is unfathomable to me. It’s inhumane. It’s offensive to denigrate anyone who is made in God’s image. Particularly, for me as a Christian, anti-semitic sentiment is incongruent with a Christian ethic and, I believe, an offense to God.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

You decide

Alabama voters face constitution changes, amendments Nov. 8

Alabama voters will go to the polls Nov. 8 to decide several statewide races and weigh in on a reorganization of the state constitution.

Races for governor, U.S. Senate and the Alabama Legislature will be on the ballot.

Voters also will decide on the Constitution of Alabama 2022, a reorganized version of the state's 1901 constitution.

The effort would remove racist language from the current constitution, delete repealed and repeated portions, arrange local amendments by county and place related amendments together in a more logical form.

In addition, 10 constitutional amendments are on the ballot. Here's a rundown of those:

▶ Amendment 1 would create Aniah's Law, which would limit bail for individuals accused of specified violent crimes. It is named after Aniah Blanchard, who was murdered by a man that was out on bond for attempted murder.



Pexels.com

▶ Amendment 2 would allow state, county and municipal governments to spend federal stimulus funding through grants for broadband infrastructure projects.

The state has already allocated money for this purpose.

▶ Amendment 3 would require the governor to notify the state attorney general and a vic-

tim's family before postponing or commuting a death sentence.

▶ Amendment 4 would require any law impacting a general election to be passed at least six months before the election.

▶ Amendment 5 deletes outdated language related to county probate courts' authority over "orphans' business."

▶ Amendment 6 would allow

towns that are already permitted to collect a special property tax to use those dollars to directly pay for construction projects instead of incurring new debt.

▶ Amendment 7 would give more power to local government. Under current law, only specified counties and municipalities are permitted to use public funds to sell property, lend credit or become indebted for economic development purposes.

This amendment would extend that power to all local governments.

▶ Amendments 8 and 9 would give jurisdiction of privately owned sewer systems in Shelby, Tuscaloosa and Jefferson counties to the Public Service Commission.

▶ Amendment 10, if the reorganized 2022 constitution and all 10 amendments are adopted, would incorporate those amendments in a logical position within the new constitution, instead of appearing as a separate list at the end of the document. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Extremists slay dozens of Christians, kidnap pastor in Nigeria

ABUJA, Nigeria — Dozens of Christians were killed and a pastor was abducted in September in Muslim Fulani herdsmen's ongoing attacks on Christians in Nigeria.

Morning Star News reported a Christian security guard was slain Sept. 11 as Fulani kidnapped Pastor Bung Fon Dong from the Church of Christ in Nations property in Ganawuri in Plateau State. The pastor's wife was injured.

The next day the assailants demanded 20 million naira (\$46,650) in ransom from the family.

In Benue State on Sept. 18, Fulani and their terrorist accomplices murdered three Christians. The extremists had killed more than 20 others in the same area during the previous three weeks.

On Sept. 21 and 23, they continued their attacks in seven villages in Benue State, slaying dozens of Christians, Morning Star reported. Christian leaders believe the Fulani seek to take over Christians' land and impose Islam.

Iranian Christian denied asylum in Europe; faces death if deported

GREIFSWALD, Germany — A European court has denied asylum to an Iranian Christian who may face prison or death if he returns to his country.

The European Court of Human Rights dismissed his appeal in August; therefore, Hassan (name changed for

security) may face deportation, stated Alliance Defending Freedom International. Hassan said he learned about Jesus from his brother-in-law, who ultimately was tortured and killed for his faith while jailed in Iran.

After it was discovered that Hassan, his wife and family had placed their faith in Jesus, forces raided their home. The family fled to Turkey, then to Germany.

After German authorities rejected Hassan's asylum request, he appealed to Greifswald Administrative Court, stated ADF International. That court considered it unlikely a Muslim would convert after a relative was killed for his faith. The court said such an experience would have been a deterrent to becoming a Christian.

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



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Ricky E. Lowery**, 68, died Oct. 18. Lowery had served as pastor of Greenbrier Baptist Church, Madison, since May 2005. Raised in the area, he was ordained to preach in July 1981 and has led two other churches in the area as a bivocational pastor. He has been a pastor for 40 years, with 17 years at Greenbrier.

He is survived by his wife, Mickie Lowery of Toney, two daughters and four grandchildren.



LOWERY

► **William David Payne**, age 70, of Foley, died unexpectedly from complications following open-heart surgery Oct. 7 at Thomas Hospital in Fairhope.

A native of Toccoa, Georgia, he was a music major at Troy University. He served as a minister of music/youth at several churches in Alabama (Abbeville, Dothan, Brundidge, Gulf Shores, Magnolia Springs, Bon Secour) and in Marianna, Arkansas.



PAYNE

He became director at Camp Baldwin in Elberta in 1992. With God's leadership, Payne grew the camp from a seasonal summer camp for children and youth to a full-time, year-round ministry. He retired in 2018, but was still a regular at the camp until recently.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Pam Cook Payne, a daughter and four grandchildren.

BETHEL ASSOCIATION

► **Friendship Baptist Church, Thomasville**, is hosting its bicentennial Nov. 13 at 10:30 a.m. with a fellowship meal following the service. Clay Davis, whose great-great-great-grandfather was one of the founding members and the church's second pastor, is pastor.

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

► **Ramah Baptist Church, Peterman**, celebrated its 150th anniversary Oct. 9 with Bill Bodiford, four-time former pastor, serving as guest speaker and Wayne Risher leading congregational singing. Lonette Berg (right), executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a certificate.

"This church has been around for 150 years," pastor Greg Hart (left) said. "It was the center of the



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

community. Our prayer is, 'What now? What will we do to preserve the church?'"

CONECUH ASSOCIATION

► **Sweet Home Baptist Church, McKenzie**, celebrated its 100th anniversary Oct. 16.

Pastor Allen Joyner, who has been at the church more than 42 years, shared his memories of serving as deacon, associate pastor and now pastor for 20 years. Joyner also led congregational singing, along with special music from Rande Lee and daughter, Aleisha Langford.

"It was a wonderful day," said Mary Horton, a member for more than 70 years. "Everyone loved hearing the memories and church history that were shared."

Horton shared the history of the church, and Julie Wells compiled a photographic slide show of every stage of the church from the original building to the latest project, a family life center.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Harmony Baptist Church, Andalusia**, will host its fall festival Nov. 6 at 4 p.m. There will be food, fun and fellowship.

DEKALB ASSOCIATION

► **New Harmony Baptist Church, Albertville**, celebrated its 150th anniversary Oct. 9 with pastor Morris Stephens and DeKalb Baptist Association's associational missions strategist Keith Wrenn speaking.

Terry Edmondson, minister of music, led congregational singing and the choir special.

Wrenn and Wendell Dutton of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented certificates to the church Oct. 16.

"Our church has always been a stable part of

the community," said Kelly Armstrong, who was raised in the church and serves as deacon, treasurer and on the technical team. "When you do things God's way, He will always be there to support. He has blessed us exponentially."

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Central Baptist Church, Decatur**, is hosting the North Alabama Church Library Conference on Nov. 5, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Sessions include Bible repair, historical archiving, cataloging and classifying, reading club ideas, etc. Registration is free. Visit cbcd.booksys.net. Click "Display" then "Links" for more information. Email library@cbcddecatur.org with questions.

WINSTON ASSOCIATION

► **New Hope Baptist Church, Haleyville**, celebrated its 125th anniversary Oct. 16 with Rick Yocum, who was ordained to the ministry at New Hope, as guest speaker. Mike Fannin



Photo courtesy of Jimmy Austin

led congregational singing with Christy Aderhold as pianist and soloist. Jimmy Austin (left) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to James Spain (right), deacon.

"It was a blessing to see how far we have

come from our early beginnings, from a wood plank building to our modern church building," said Helen Berryhill, church clerk. "We have stayed together for 125 years where other churches have had to close."

Australian Bible scholar to visit Samford

Brian Rosner, biblical scholar and principal at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, values conversation around identity formation.

As the department of biblical and religious studies 2022 Holley-Hull lecturer, Rosner, the author of "How to Find Yourself: Why Looking Inward is Not the Answer," will speak three times Nov. 15 at Samford University.

Rosner will deliver a sermon in the Wright Center titled "Jesus, Paul and the Self-Made Self" at 10 a.m.

He will also meet with area pastors for a free lunch-and-learn titled "You Do You: The Bible and Identity Formation" in the

Rotunda Club from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Rosner will later give a lecture at 3 p.m.

in Brock Forum (in Dwight Beeson Hall) titled "Be Yourself: A Christian Response to Expressive Individualism."

"I hope to equip people to engage sympathetically and critically with the dominant approach to personal identity in our day and to consider an alternative strategy for identity formation, one modeled and commended by Jesus Christ," Rosner said in a Sam-

ford University press release.

To register for the free luncheon, visit tabonline.org/rosner-lecture. (Samford)



ROSNER

GOD-ORDAINED MOMENTS

Disaster Relief chaplain sees God's hand in home visits after Hurricane Ian

By Grace Thornton

The Alabama Baptist

Cliff Knight said he knew God had arranged the visit before he even got to the house.

It was his first day as an Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief chaplain, and he was riding around Arcadia, Florida, with Rich Power, an assessor visiting homeowners who requested help after Hurricane Ian.

"We were making our second visit, and he informed me this next visit may be a tough one," said Knight, who also serves as associate pastor and minister to families at Lakeview Baptist Church in Auburn. "Not only was the lady's home damaged, but she also lost her adult son six months before."

Knight didn't say anything in response, but he knew immediately why he was there. He had lost his 26-year-old son five years before.

Sharing stories

"We arrived at the home, and it immediately became clear her greatest hurt was from the loss of her son more than the damage to her home," he said.

"We listened to her tell her story and share about the son she loved and lost."

Then Knight shared his story and told her he could understand her grief.

"I shared how God had faithfully walked us through our sorrow, and I knew He would do the same for her," he said. "We cried together and confessed our mutual hope in the gospel. Then I prayed for her, and we gave God the glory and said, 'God is good.'"

The next day, Knight and his teammate knocked on the door of another home where the resident had experienced great loss — her husband, son and granddaughter had all died in the past year.

"She too was broken, and obviously we were there for that and not just her home needs alone,"



Photo courtesy of Rich Power

As they work through their list of job requests around Arcadia, Florida, following Hurricane Ian, Disaster Relief assessor Rich Power (right) and chaplain Cliff Knight discover God has set up some "divine appointments."

Knight said. "I began to share with her about losing my son and began to comfort her, and she stopped me.

"She said, 'Wait a minute, are you the same man that talked to my sister yesterday? She called me last night and told me how much your visit meant to her.'"

Knight said he and his teammate were amazed God had put those two work requests in their packet of 10 to assess.

"There were more than 800 requests, and God put two sisters who did not live close to each other or have the same last name in our packet so their hurt was matched up with my life story and ministry," he said. "Only a sovereign and all-knowing God can do and will do that."

Dan Wiggins, state chaplain coordinator for Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief, said since ABDR volunteers began responding to those affected by Hurricane Ian in Arcadia, eight to 10 chaplains per week have been serving there alongside

assessors and work crews.

He said there have been more chaplains who are new, like Knight serving in Florida, than there have been on other recent deployments.

"Several experienced chaplains have also been there, and they've been able to mentor these new chaplains," Wiggins said.

He said he's also been able to send two volunteers to Arcadia who met a request for Spanish-speaking chaplains.

"That was kind of a God thing because I was praying about it and hoping God would provide someone who could minister to our Hispanic friends, and He answered," Wiggins said.

Finding Jesus

Since ABDR work started in Arcadia several weeks ago, 29 people have professed faith in Christ.

Roy Pickering, a chaplain with the Montgomery Baptist Association chainsaw team, said he continues to pray one particular conversa-

tion he had in Arcadia will result in new faith in Jesus too.

When he arrived at the first home of the day with his team, he learned the homeowner was Hindu, his wife was Muslim and their son was raised in a Catholic school. He spent two hours talking with the wife while the crew worked on the house.

Being bold for Christ

"We discussed religions, beliefs, heritage and the vital need to look each other in the eye and actually listen and understand," Pickering said. "As the roof work was completing, I became bolder in my speech. I knew that in two hours' time, I could not untangle a lifetime of merging three major world religions. But I knew Who could."

He asked her if she had a Bible, and she said she didn't. He promised to get her one, and she said, "If you give me one, I shall read it."

They had built a friendship in that time, and God used that to soften her heart, Pickering said.

And right then, without prompting, a teammate walked up and handed him a New Testament. Pickering asked the woman if she had seen what God provided for her without him asking.

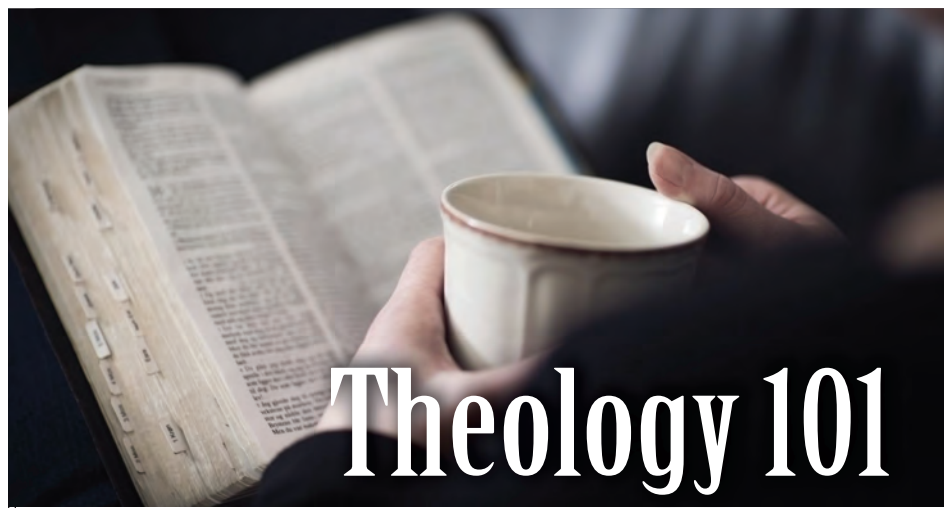
"She understood and began to cry," he said. "I gave her the Bible, bookmarking the Gospel of John with a plan of salvation tract. As we left, she waved her thanks, holding the book tightly across her chest."

Pickering said he knew in that moment God had ordained his presence that day on his first-ever disaster relief callout.

Wiggins said he's heard several stories from Arcadia that, like this one and Knight's, feel like divine appointments.

"No question about it, they were the ones who were supposed to be there at the time," he said. "God arranged that, and I'm so thankful."

To support Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief or to learn more about training to be a volunteer for future callouts, visit sldr.org.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Following Jesus' example

Baptism

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

At a point in the worship service, the minister enters a pool of water joined by a candidate for baptism. After speaking a few words, the minister lowers the candidate beneath the water. Being raised up, the person leaves the pool to “walk in newness of life.” We know this procedure as Christian baptism. What is the significance and meaning of baptism?

One aspect of Christian baptism is that of being an enacted witness to Christ's saving work. In the mode of immersion, baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Upon His death, Jesus' body was taken from the cross and buried in a borrowed tomb. The third morning He came out of the tomb and subsequently was seen by many eyewitnesses.

Christ's saving work

Each time we witness the baptism of a new believer in Christ, we have an opportunity to think anew about Christ's saving work. Upon recalling our Savior's sacrifice, we take occasion to give silent thanks for so great a gift.

This act of a repentant sinner's baptism is also a public declaration of that person's gift of God's salvation, being an outward attestation of inward faith.

Such was part of the meaning of the baptism of an Ethiopian eunuch who, upon hearing the good news of Christ's saving work, responded positively and personally. He asked Philip, “Here is wa-

ter. What hinders me from being baptized?” Peter's response to the man's question was simply, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch's response was simply and sincerely, “I believe” (Acts 8:36–37). Thereupon, his baptism became an outward expression of his inward faith.

'Final resurrection'

In another sense, being baptized is a new Christian's outward witness of new life in Christ. Romans 6:4 declares, “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Water baptism by immersion is also a symbolic testimony to a believer's faith in the final resurrection from the dead. This blessed prospect is declared in 1 Corinthians 15:51–54, “Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. ... Death is swallowed up in victory.”

In short, baptism has a past, present and future dimension to its meaning and symbolism.

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.



Churches can support ABCH by praying, serving, giving

(continued from page 1)

“There is also a greater need for families that can care for school-aged children, teenagers or sibling groups. Though not everyone is called to be a foster parent, all followers of Christ are called to respond to the plight of a child in need.”

Some churches that have recently stepped up in the crisis include First Baptist Church Athens, Malvern Baptist and FBC Decatur.

“These three wanted to provide love offerings to either our ministry, or several ministries that care for hurting children, due to the potential of more children entering foster care and the current overwhelming demand for foster families,” Marshall said.

FBC Athens originally set an offering goal of \$3,000. When members exceeded that, they raised it to \$5,000 and ended up raising \$31,381, Marshall reported.

Church leaders at Malvern Baptist had been praying for Roe to be overturned, and when the Lord answered their prayers, they decided to give \$10,000 to four organizations that work to serve needy children, including ABCH.

“FBC Decatur [also] is a very involved and passionate partner to our ministry,” Marshall noted. “They provided a \$10,000 offering ... but this is only one of many things they are doing to create awareness to help children in foster care within their church family.”

Each Wednesday throughout November, the church will highlight a ministry that serves children in need, including ABCH.

In January, they plan to heavily promote ways members can take the next step by serving, sponsoring, giving or opening their homes as foster parents.

Blake Kersey, pastor of FBC Decatur and member of the ABCH board of directors, explained the

motivation for the church to get involved: “When Roe was overturned, we celebrated that the decades-long prayers of millions of Christians were answered.”

'Truly pro-life'

“We believe all life is sacred and we are charged, as His children, to protect life. As the pastor, I wanted our congregation to continue our mission to support life even after this decision.

“As a church, we are more than just anti-abortion — we are truly pro-life. This means caring for lives beyond the womb and supporting families in difficult situations.”

Kersey added that the congregation financially supported ABCH but wanted to literally put their money where their mouth was, and over the course of a month, members gave \$10,000.

“This ministry not only cares for children, but also walks with families through the foster and adoption process, provid-

ing counseling, resources, a community and most importantly, prayer support,” Kersey said. “ABCH is truly one of the most effective and life-changing ministries in our convention.

“I know many of the staff personally, and they are incredible men and women of God. Their impact will not be fully seen until we are

on the other side of eternity.”

Marshall suggested three ways to become involved: “We know that not everyone is called to foster, but everyone can do something,” he asserted.

“For individuals and churches, there are three ways we share that they can help children in foster care — pray, serve and/or give.”

Prayer is essential for foster children to experience healing from abuse, neglect and trauma many have experienced, Marshall said.



Unsplash.com

For more information about ABCH visit alabamachild.org/nextsteps or call 205-982-1112.

Dylan Cardwell (44) goes up for a dunk in the March 5 game between Auburn and South Carolina at Neville Arena.

Spiritual realignment



Photo by Jacob Taylor/AU Athletics

Auburn's Dylan Cardwell says 'God is clearly moving' in basketball career, life

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**
The Alabama Baptist

College students often keep lists to keep them on track, but lists have taken on a new significance for Auburn University basketball player Dylan Cardwell. He's seen God's hand at work through them.

"Twice I've put things on a list, and both times God used those things to spread His kingdom," said the junior center.

Cardwell made the first list as a high school student during the 2019–20 basketball season, writing down 10 goals for his senior year.

"My first goal was to pray every day and get closer to God," Cardwell recalled. "And I thought that putting God at No. 1, He would bless 2 through 10."

But what happened next didn't seem like a blessing.

Change of plans

Cardwell, an Augusta, Georgia, native, played his first two years of high school ball in Evans, Georgia, before his junior season at Oak Hill Academy in Wilson, Virginia, which prides itself as a training ground for future NCAA basketball players.

He returned to Georgia for his senior year. But because of Georgia High School Association transfer rules, he was deemed ineligible to play at McEachern High School in Powder Springs. The 6'11", highly touted college prospect suddenly was relegated to practicing with the team.

Writing on Instagram at the time, Cardwell said, "My faith was being tested, and I've grown a lot while weathering this storm. ... I must re-

member that this is God's plan for me. And His plans are far ... greater than mine."

Reflecting back on that time, Cardwell says now, "I had to realign my spiritual goals and truly put God first. I got really, really close to God because He took basketball away for a whole year. I couldn't have made it out of that situation without Him."

A year on the sidelines only intensified Cardwell's desire to play college basketball. But as the 2019 season progressed, coaching changes at his top two schools eliminated them from contention.

In December, he still didn't have a plan, so he pushed his commitment to spring. In March, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and recruiting, like everything else, was put on pause.

During that time, an Auburn professor challenged him to consider the bigger picture.

"He said, 'Look at your gut, and go where you feel God is pushing you,'" Cardwell recalled.

"I realized this is the place I want to be," he said.

Cardwell saw action in all 27 games his freshman season, averaging 3.8 points per game and 3.6 rebounds. He was the only player in the country that season to shoot bet-

ter than 70% from the floor, and led the team with 49 offensive rebounds. The business major also was named to the First-Year SEC Academic Honor Roll.

During his sophomore season,

Cardwell played in all 34 games, averaging 3 points and 3 rebounds per game. The team won the regular season SEC championship, and Cardwell was named to the SEC Academic Honor Roll and the SEC Community Service Team.

Last spring, Cardwell fully committed his life to Christ and was baptized. Despite his busy schedule, he makes time to participate in small group Bible study

and attends Church of the Highlands in Auburn.

That's where his second list comes in. After hearing a sermon on the prayer of Jabez last fall, Cardwell felt moved to write his own list of blessings to bring to God in prayer.

Growing influence

"I wrote down 'more opportunities, more success,' those kinds of things, but then I wrote down 'more influence' just to have five things," he recalled. "But the last thing I cared about was influence. I don't care how many followers on social media I have, but I put it there. And I began to pray it every day."

Fast forward to last fall's Auburn vs. Georgia State football game.

Sitting among a mass of discouraged students early in the game, Cardwell had an impulse to take off his shirt and wave it like a rally flag. It didn't work.

"Nobody cared," Cardwell said with a laugh.

But in the third quarter, he tried again, and as he waved his shirt in the air and started dancing, he saw himself on the jumbotron.

Cardwell kept dancing, cheered on by the energized crowd, and when Auburn rallied to win the game, Cardwell became known as "the jumbotron guy."

"Most people didn't even know I played basketball," he said. "But it had a domino effect for the rest of the year."

His social media following grew by 10,000 almost instantly, and since he shares Bible verses and stories of his faith journey there, his influence grew as well. He now has more than 26,000 followers on Instagram and shares a weekly devotional in addition to other posts.

Cardwell used his Instagram account to chronicle his team's 10-day trip to Israel, which included a baptism service in the Jordan River.

"It felt like seeing the Bible come to life," he recalled. "Two years ago I was lost, and now to be part of something so special is crazy. I don't know what's going to happen next, but God is clearly moving."

Auburn's basketball team will play an exhibition game against UAH on Nov. 2 at Neville Arena in Auburn. The team opens the season against George Mason University on Nov. 7.



Photo courtesy of Auburn Athletics
Dylan Cardwell participates in a baptism service in the Jordan River. The Auburn men's basketball team went to Israel in early August.

Bible coming to life

Auburn basketball coach shares thoughts on Israel, Jewish faith at FBC Opelika

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Pastor Jeff Meyers told his church Oct. 16 that their event that evening felt a little bit like the beginning of a joke — what happens when a Jewish basketball coach and a Baptist pastor walk into a room?

Bruce Pearl, head coach of the Auburn Tigers men's basketball team, voiced a possible answer — “You fill it up?”

He was right. The 3:16 Center of First Baptist Church Opelika was full, with the crowd also using the worship center as an overflow space for “A Celebration of Israel with Bruce Pearl.”

Pearl had been invited to share about his team's trip to Israel in early August, a trip that went viral after several of the players were baptized in the Jordan River.

He also shared some of Israel's history and geopolitical significance as well as some thoughts on growing up Jewish.

Holy Land experience

Meyers said the idea for the talk started because he is planning to lead a group of 104 people to the Holy Land in March 2023.

Some members of FBC Opelika who work in the Auburn athletic department mentioned that Pearl might like to speak to the group as they prepared for the trip, as he has family ties to Israel and is passionate about people experiencing the Holy Land.

“But March is the worst possible time for him to do it with basketball season, so he wanted to do it now,” Meyers said. “We got on a Zoom call to talk about it and ... decided it might be good to have him come and invite anyone from the church who might like to come and hear his talk.”

During the event, Pearl showed a 20-minute video about his team's trip to Israel. Though the purpose was to play three games against Israeli teams, the players also got to experience a tour of historic and religious sites.

“My players got to walk where

Jesus walked. They got to see where He was born. They got to see where He performed His miracles up near the sea of Galilee.

And they got to see where He was betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane,” Pearl said. “They will never be able to open up their Bible again the same way, because it just comes to life.”

He said they could decide what to do with the facts they experienced in Israel. He wanted them to have the chance to do that for themselves.

They also got to visit a Holocaust museum, where Pearl, who has relatives who died in the Holocaust, got to share with them what it looks like to stand up for your neighbor and take care of them.

Pearl said he “couldn't think of a better place for them to get the basketball aspect, but also get the history and the religious and the spiritual” than in Israel.

Several players gave testimonies of their experiences on the video, including Chance Westry, who said his baptism in the Jordan River was his “favorite part of the trip.”

“I lost my mother, and that was pretty hard for me before I came to college,” he said, noting she always told him to stay close to God because He had his best interest at heart.

“So getting baptized was just an

amazing feeling,” Westry said. “I felt like I got closer, not even by that but by sticking to the Scriptures and loving my God.”

Another player, Tre Donaldson, said he felt like he had “grown spiritually” on the trip. “I got baptized to make it known that I want to give my life to God,” he said.

Sharing a passion

NCAA basketball teams are allowed to take an international tour once every four years, and Pearl said taking the team to Israel had been a dream of his for a while.

Meyers, who interviewed Pearl during the evening, said he and the coach may have different faiths, but they share a passion for the Holy Land. He told The Alabama Baptist that since the event, many of his church members have expressed a new interest in learning more about Israel or visiting. At the end of the evening, as Pearl talked about his Jewish faith, he shared that his wife, Brandy, is a Christian.

She prays for him to come to faith in Jesus because she loves him and “she knows what eternal life is for

her and she wants it exactly that way for me.” She also finds richness in her faith in Jesus through learning more about the Holy Land and the Jewish festivals Jesus celebrated when He walked the earth, he noted.

Pearl said for him personally, his identity lies in his Jewish faith. He said

he believes in the miracles of Jesus, but he holds to Judaism “because my people have been murdered for their faith” and because “that's my father's religion, that's my grandfather's religion, that's how I was raised.”



Facebook photo
Auburn University men's basketball team head coach Bruce Pearl shares about his team's trip to Israel at FBC Opelika.



Facebook photo
Jeff Meyers (right), pastor of FBC Opelika, talks with Bruce Pearl, Auburn Tigers men's basketball coach, during an event at FBC Opelika on Oct. 16.

To watch
Jeff Meyers'
conversation
with Bruce
Pearl, visit
[tabonline.org/
jeff-meyers](http://tabonline.org/jeff-meyers).

**“My players got to walk where Jesus walked,
they got to see where He was born.”**

Bruce Pearl
Auburn University men's basketball head coach



Photo courtesy of RE/MAX

ALCAP has new office space after selling its former building (pictured) on Lakeside Drive in Birmingham.

ALCAP sells building, relocates office space

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Citizens Action Program has a new home as of early October.

The ministry working with Alabama Baptists on moral and ethical issues recently sold its building on Lakeside Drive in Birmingham and moved to a rented space in the facilities of Crawford Broadcasting, according to Greg Davis, ALCAP president and CEO.

“ALCAP built the office building in the late 1980s, and it has served the organization well,” he noted.

But that much space is no longer needed, and the financial burden of upkeep was high.

“It was wise stewardship to test the market in this current economy,” Davis said. “The sale of the building is a continuing legacy of Dr. Dan Ireland and the board of directors from that time period, and Cecil Lane who was very influential in raising the funds for the building project.”

Funds from the sale were invested through The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, and Davis said interest will pay for rented office space for the foreseeable future — one

way the legacy of previous ALCAP leaders who built the building will continue to benefit the entity.

The new ALCAP office shares a building with the radio show Davis hosts,

“Priority Talk Radio,” which airs on weekdays from 5 to 7 p.m. on Birmingham station 101.1 WXJC-FM.

“It’s very convenient and efficient to be in the same building,” he noted.

Of note

Davis asked Baptists to continue to pray for the ministry of ALCAP and noted several upcoming events:

► ALCAP Sunday is set for Nov. 13, and Davis encouraged churches to consider highlighting the entity’s work. A three-minute video is available to show before or during services.

► ALCAP’s legislative prayer breakfast, a long-standing tradition held weekly during the legislative session, is restarting after a two-year hiatus. ALCAP is seeking churches that would like to help sponsor the event.

► ALCAP will hold a lunch Nov. 15 during the Alabama Baptist State Convention meeting, with Alabama Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth sharing his faith testimony.

For more information, contact ALCAP at 205-985-9062.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad below for \$1 per word.

For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 200, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org. To place an online classified ad for \$9.99/month, visit thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

First Baptist Childersburg is in search of a full-time pastor. If interested send resumé to the following — email: childersburgfbcworship@outlook.com, mail: 200 8th Ave. SW, Childersburg, AL 35044.

PASTOR

Church located in Mobile County, Alabama, seeks a full-time pastor or possible bivocational pastor. Prior pastoral service desired. Submit resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church of St. Elmo, P.O. Box 159, St. Elmo, AL 36568.

PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Dunns Creek Baptist Church in Echola, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: jaanderson@live.com.

SONG LEADER

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 6057 County Road 50 in Moundville, Alabama, is searching for a song leader to lead congregational singing on Sunday morning only. Please send resumé to: jbshaw@mound.net or call 205-454-0035.

MUSIC LEADER/PASTOR

Wadsworth Church in Deatsville is looking for a paid part-time music leader/pastor. A church profile, job description and application can be found at wadsworthbaptist.com/music. Additional compensation for travel may be considered.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP & FAMILIES

First Baptist Church of Atmore, Alabama, is realigning ministry positions. The church is seeking a full-time minister of worship and families to lead the worship ministry and serve as “second chair” to the pastor in a church undergoing an exciting revitalization. The church is also seeking a co-vocational minister to students. Resumé may be sent to: keving@fbcatmore.org.

MUSIC MINISTER & YOUTH MINISTER

Verbena Baptist Church is seeking both a bivocational music minister and a bivocational youth minister. Please email resumé to: verbenabaptist@att.net.

STUDENT PASTOR

Concord Baptist, Anderson, South Carolina, is seeking a student pastor (grades 6–12). Degree required from an accredited seminary and minimum of three years church/ministry experience. Submit resumé via email to: jjames@concordbaptist.com or to: Concord Baptist, 1012 Concord Road, Anderson, SC 29621, ATTN: Dr. Don Cox. Church website: concordbaptist.com

OTHER POSITIONS

WMU FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

The WMU Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation, benefiting the work and mission of Woman’s Missionary Union is seeking a president to lead the organization. The candidate must be a Christian who is actively involved as a member of a local Southern Baptist church with evidence of and commitment to the purpose and work of WMU. Candidate’s job location will be from the WMU building in Birmingham, Alabama. Successful candidate qualifications are a bachelor’s degree with a master’s degree in business or finance, preferred; five to eight years progressive work experience in development and investment/trust management; excellent interpersonal, written/verbal communication skills; technical expertise in the area of planned giving. Interested candidates should submit an email and resumé to the search team at this email address: WMU-Foundation-Search-Team@outlook.com on or before Nov. 30.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Baptist Church at McAdory is seeking an individual to fill the full-time position of administrative assistant to the pastor and staff ministers. Responsibilities will include general secretarial and bookkeeping. Knowledge of Microsoft Office programs and church financial software a plus, but training will be provided. Compensation based upon experience and training. For more information and to apply, please send request and resumé to: newpersonnel.bcm@gmail.com.

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TAB EXTRAS

STORIES SEASON 7: THE LIVING DONOR STORY

It’s an amazing thing for someone to give someone else a kidney and with it a new chance at life. It’s even more amazing the way God brings the paths of the donors and recipients together. This season shares three of those stories. TAB’s Grace Thornton writes and produces the shows. Listen to the Stories podcast at tabonline.org/stories.

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.

TAB HIGHLIGHTS

TAB Highlights is an email newsletter delivered every Monday–Wednesday–Friday with the day’s top stories from the world of faith-based news. Headlines come from international, national and Southern Baptist coverage as well as one story that has been trending during the week. To sign up, email news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Celebrate

PSALM 100



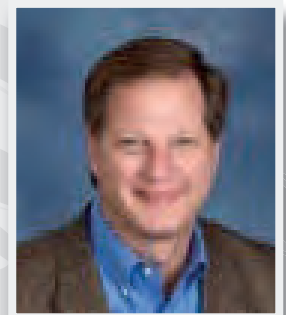
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION NOVEMBER 15-16, 2022 SHADES MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH / BIRMINGHAM

Join us for this family reunion as we kick off a year-long commemoration of the Alabama Baptist State Convention's **200th** anniversary!

SPEAKERS INCLUDE **Robert Smith**, professor of Christian preaching and Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School (Tuesday evening); **Buddy Champion**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Trussville (Tuesday morning); **Willie McLaurin**, interim president/CEO, SBC Executive Committee (Tuesday afternoon) and **Joel Carwile**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Athens (Wednesday morning).



Robert Smith



Buddy Champion



Willie McLaurin



Joel Carwile

For a complete schedule and hotel information, visit alsbom.org/convention.

And don't miss the **Pastors Conference** also at Shades Mountain on Monday, November 14! Visit albaptistpc.com for details.

Interpretation for the Deaf will be provided for each session of the Pastors Conference and the Annual Meeting.

‘A beautiful picture of God’s people’

‘Perfect match’: Kidney transplant recipient experiences ministry of care

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Lynell Lovinggood wishes she had written down the date when a woman she didn’t know prayed a heartfelt prayer over her because she remembers hearing the woman ask for a kidney that was a perfect match.

“And that’s exactly what happened,” Lovinggood related.

It’s a sobering reality. She knows the kidney she so desperately needed came from a 27-year-old on the other side of the country who didn’t live to see the next day. She knows the family of that person grieves on the same date each year that she celebrates.

But she also knows in the midst of the donor’s death, God worked a miracle. The kidney was a 6-out-of-6 antigen match, a rare occurrence outside identical twins and some siblings.

And she remembers the date she got the call that gave her a new chance at life — Aug. 8, 2007.

“They told us the kidney worked while I was still on the table,” Lovinggood said, noting they normally “rest” before doctors know if they’re going to function properly.

“It’s been such a beautiful story.”

Prayers for healing

Lovinggood’s transplant story started in the 1990s when her rheumatologist saw some things he was concerned about. He thought they might be dealing with lupus, though Lovinggood didn’t have some of the primary symptoms.

It wasn’t long before they found



Photo courtesy of Lynell Lovinggood
Lynell Lovinggood (left) stands with her daughter, Sarah, (right) at her wedding.

lupus lesions on her kidneys. She began two years of chemotherapy.

“As the lesions were being destroyed, the kidneys were also and the function started going down,” Lovinggood said.

That’s what brought her to the day when she went to a service geared to prayers for healing, and the stranger prayed for a perfect match for her. Some friends from her church, Shades Mountain Baptist in Birmingham, had suggested she go.

And that was the beginning of what Lovinggood said has been a long journey of her church caring for her so well. Her family was going through a difficult season even before transplant surgery was discussed, and the love of her faith family came at just the right time, she said.

“It was a sweet time of ministry from my church.”

Immediately after the transplant surgery, the worship leader and his wife came to visit and sang her favorite song, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” over her.

And in the days that followed, cards flowed in. She taped them all around her door so she could see them every day. Food came at the same rate. Two months later, meals were still showing up at her door.

“That was such a testimony for the clinic to hear when they asked me about whether or not I’d been eating well, and I could tell them how my church had been providing meals for me ever since the surgery,” Lovinggood related.

“It was a beautiful picture of God’s people over and over again.

“It was overwhelming. Sometimes I would just cry. I don’t know if there’s anything like it, to see God work in so many specific ways through different people.”

Fifteen years later, the donor kidney is still keeping Lovinggood alive. She remembers with gratitude the love of her church and the love shown to her by her three children in that tough season. God used them to get her through, she said.

The whole situation has shown her God’s faithfulness in a way she wouldn’t have gotten to experience otherwise, she added.

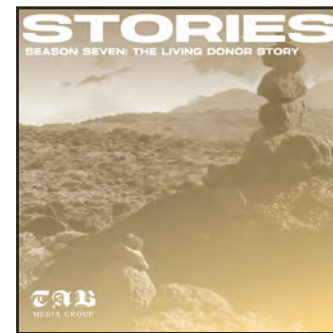
“Without Him, I’m not sure where I would’ve been,” Lovinggood said.

Hear more

Sometimes kidneys come from a tragic loss of life followed by a family’s generous decision to donate a loved one’s organs. But other times they come from living donors who feel prompted

to step up and donate to a person in need.

For three incredible stories of donors like this, check out Season 7 of TAB Media’s Stories podcast, available now. Listen at tabonline.org/stories or wherever you get podcasts.



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



Photo courtesy of Lynell Lovinggood
Lynell Lovinggood (right) dresses up for ‘60s day at the school where she works.

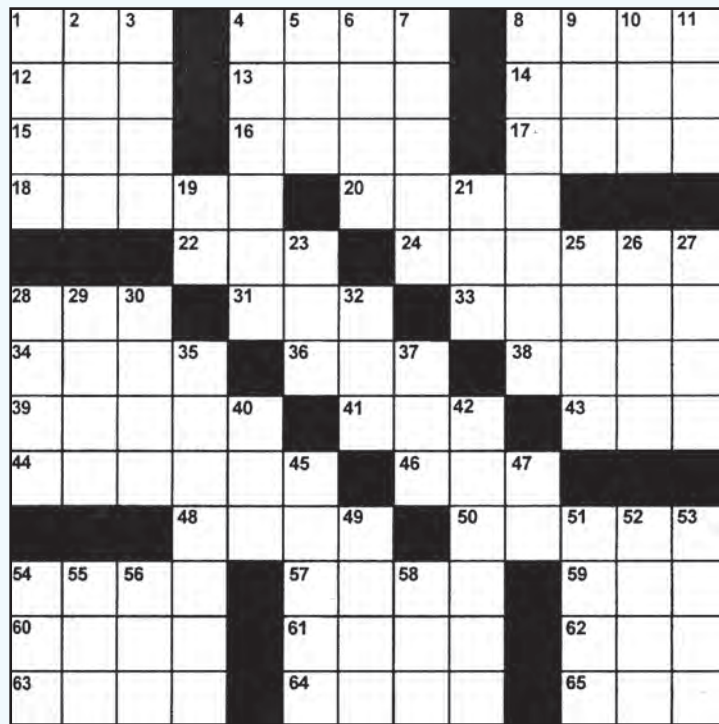
“It was overwhelming. Sometimes I would just cry. I don’t know if there’s anything like it, to see God work in so many specific ways through different people.”

Lynell Lovinggood
kidney transplant recipient

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Touched the _____. (Matt. 9:20)
4. I know in _____. (1 Cor. 13:12)
8. Sendeth _____ on the just. (Matt. 5:45)
12. The serpent beguiled _____. (2 Cor. 11:3)
13. Brother of Jacob. (Gen. 25:26)
14. Woe to them that are at _____ in Zion. (Amos 6:1)
15. _____ as a sheep to the slaughter. (Acts 8:32)
16. I will give you _____. (Matt. 11:28)
17. As the Lord _____. (Josh. 11:9)
18. I _____ toward the mark. (Phil. 3:14)
20. Now abideth faith, _____, charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)
22. Your life is _____ with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3)
24. This is the _____ of John. (John 1:19)
28. They called for Jesus' death.
31. All things _____ possible. (Mark 9:23)
33. Where Joshua and all Israel stoned Achan. (Josh. 7:24)
34. A 10th of an ephah. (Ex. 16:36)
36. Verily I say unto _____.
38. Say ye unto your brethren, _____. (Hos. 2:1)
39. Moses' brother. (Ex. 4:14)
41. National Security Council. (abbr.)
43. Labor Day month. (abbr.)
44. How Samuel's sons were influenced. (1 Sam. 8:3)
46. _____ hath not seen. (1 Cor. 2:9)
48. Ahab served _____ a little. (2 Kings 10:18)
50. If thy _____ eye offend thee. (Matt. 5:29)
54. Run with patience the _____. (Heb. 12:1)
57. I am the true _____. (John 15:1)



By Mary Ann Freeman Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

59. Japanese drama.
 60. The 12th month. (Esther 3:7)
 61. Seared with a hot _____. (1 Tim. 4:2)
 62. Solomon's navy brought him this animal. (1 Kings 10:22)
 63. The son of _____. (Mark 6:3)
 64. _____ any of you. (1 Cor. 6:1)
 65. Were there not _____ cleansed? (Luke 17:17)
- DOWN**
1. _____ thou mine unbelief. (Mark 9:24)
 2. Sing of the mercies of the Lord for _____. (Ps. 89:1)
 3. Darius' nationality. (Dan. 11:1)
 4. Cyrus king of _____. (2 Chron. 36:23)
 5. Indicates an enzyme.
 6. Be not _____ with thy mouth. (Eccles. 5:2)
 7. Private instructor.
 8. Isaac's wife. (Rom. 9:10)
 9. Auto club.
 10. Independent School District. (abbr.)
 11. Indicates maiden name.
 19. Be quiet!
 21. Green vegetable.
 23. O ye _____ bones. (Ezek. 37:4)
 25. Electrical units.
 26. Bear witness also at _____. (Acts 23:11)
 27. To shed drops.
 28. Ruth left this country. (Ruth 1:22)
 29. One of the sons of Eliphaz. (Gen. 36:11)
 30. One of the sons Zophah. (1 Chron. 7:36)
 32. Long time.
 35. Thought it not _____ to be equal with God. (Phil. 2:6)
 37. Them which despitefully _____ you. (Matt. 5:44)
 40. National Education Association. (abbr.)
 42. They found a man of _____. (Matt. 27:32)
 45. Jesse's youngest son. (1 Sam. 17:14)
 47. East Indies. (abbr.)
 49. Italian money.
 51. Which strain at a _____. (Matt. 23:24)
 52. The _____ of glory. (Col. 1:27)
 53. _____ that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor. 13:10)
 54. Abraham went and took the _____. (Gen. 22:13)
 55. American Dental Association. (abbr.)
 56. Automobile.
 58. Neither cold _____ hot. (Rev. 3:16)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Security tips for children's and preschool ministries

By Julie Donovan
The Alabama Baptist

Basic safety and security plans should be a high priority in children's and preschool ministries.

"Christ is our 'safe person,' and church should be a safe place for children and families to come and worship," said Meg Brown, associate minister to children at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, speaking at this year's Pinnacle Alabama conference.

Writing out procedures for various situations and training teachers to respond during a crisis will help churches reach that goal, she said.

Guidelines for handling weather emergencies, intruders or fires are straightforward, Brown said. The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions provides several resources for such situations at alsbom.org/ministries/church-security.

Brown also suggests putting together an emergency backpack for each classroom. Use a clear backpack, she recommended. Place it in a secure but readily accessible location and include the following items:

- ▶ Basic first-aid supplies.
- ▶ Bullet-point checklists for various emergencies.
- ▶ Neon reflective safety vest (to increase visibility of teachers after an evacuation).
- ▶ Flashlight.
- ▶ Whistle.

Additionally, some type of class roster should be available, Brown added.

Procedures to address allegations of abuse are more challenging, Brown said,

because myths abound related to child sexual abuse or other forms of abuse.

Church leaders are apt to think:

- ▶ "It can't happen here."
- ▶ "We know everyone."
- ▶ "We would hear about it."

Statistics from the Crimes Against Children Research Center show 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys will be victims of child sexual abuse. Children between the ages of 7 and 13 are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse.

Regular reviews

It's critical to be prepared and provide clear, up-to-date instructions for handling an allegation of abuse, she said.

When a leader is texting a student, she recommends copying the child's parent or another trusted parent on every message. Online interactions, such as Bible studies conducted via Zoom, should

be treated as if they are being conducted within the physical building. At least two adults should be present in the virtual classroom.

Church leaders also can access MinistrySafe training (ministrysafe.com) to increase awareness of child sexual abuse and how to prevent it in the church.

The first 1,000 Alabama Baptist churches to sign up with MinistrySafe will receive a \$200 scholarship for a net cost of \$50 in the first year if they register at ministrysafe.com/alsbom.

SBOM will host Basics of Church Security on March 14 in Prattville. To register, visit alsbom.org/event/the-basics-of-church-security-3.



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

NOVEMBER 2022

- 1** **Ministers' Wives Connection**, ONLINE (alabamaWMU.org), Trish Jackson, ext. 2224
- 3** **Creative Ideas for Bible Drill**, ONLINE, Belinda Stroud, bstroud@alsbom.org, ext. 2255
- 5** **North Alabama Church Library Conference**, Central, Decatur, Eva Nell Hunter, ext. 2255
- 7** **Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 8** **Great Commission Conversations**, ONLINE (alabamaWMU.org) Cindy Wilson, ext. 2225
- 13** **ALCAP Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 13** **Alabama Church Planter Network Dinner**, Raleigh Avenue, Birmingham, Dawn Watkins, ext. 2315
- 14** **Unite**, Shades Mountain, Birmingham, Ben Edfeldt, ext. 2276
- 14** **Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference**, Shades Mountain, Birmingham, albaptistpc.org



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 15-16, 2022
SHADES MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH | BIRMINGHAM
alsbom.org/convention

DECEMBER 2022

- 4-11** **Week of Prayer for International Missions & Lottie Moon Christmas Offering**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 8** **Early Bird Tax Event**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241

JANUARY 2023

- 1-7** **January Bible Study**, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 5** **Church Tax Conference**, SBOM, Lee Wright, ext. 2263
- 11** **Church Tax Conference**, First, Silverhill, Lee Wright, ext. 2263
- 12** **Church Tax Conference**, First, Decatur, Lee Wright, ext. 2263
- 13-14** **Student Missions Weekend**, WorldSong, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 15** **Sanctity of Human Life Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 17** **Intentional Leader Series: Person**, SBOM, Kim Britton, ext. 2218
- 19-21** **Youth Ministry Conclave**, Chattanooga Convention Center, Jessica Ingram, ext. 2262
- 25** **Church Tax Conference**, South East Alabama Baptist Association, Dothan, Lee Wright, ext. 2263
- 26-27** **DNA Annual Gathering-Making Disciples Through Great Groups**, First, Montgomery, Steve Layton, ext. 2221
- 28** **Bible Skills and Drills Retreat**, Shades Crest, Birmingham, Belinda Stroud, ext. 2255
- 29-30** **State Evangelism Conference**, Lakeside, Birmingham, Lori McGough, ext. 245

Church budgets: 5 ways to save in communication

By Mark MacDonald
BeKnownForSomething.com

No church wants to hurt momentum while seeking to save money, and no one wants to waste God's money. Yet the fact remains that most churches are looking for a productive communication strategy while striving to stay within a budget.

Is that possible? Here are five ways to save in communication:

1. Branding

Church branding allows you to say less so they'll listen more. In the long run, this investment will save money as your communication becomes more effective.

A good branding process will define audience potential and help your church find its niche in your community. A brand guide will also help you design things faster, speak in unison across

ministries with calming and unifying messaging and get better community engagement.

2. Teams

Establish a volunteer team structure to allow talented people in your church to participate in ministry using their God-given gifts. You will also need a leader to ensure volunteers follow a plan and process.

3. Tools

There are so many free (or almost free) tools available for the church. In fact, one of the biggest ways to save in communication is to stop budgeting for paid tools when freebies exist. I've compiled a list here: beknownforsomething.com/freebies.

4. Websites

Having an online church presence can be expensive.



Unsplash.com

There are three components you need: a domain, hosting servers and a content management system.

Once you have those set up, remember these tips: Check around when your domain is up for renewal to make sure you're getting a good price, search for shared hosting packages and find a content management system that matches the skills of the staff or volunteers setting up

and maintaining the website. (To read more about affordable and user-friendly website solutions from Hosted Church, visit hostedchurch.com.)

Ultimately for an online presence, ensure you're getting enough speed, storage and service.

Small churches may want to consider only using a Facebook page. It sounds crazy, but most website con-

tent can be delivered in a very believable way on this free platform. You can even redirect your URL (domain) to your Facebook page at no cost.

5. Print materials.

Reduce the number of print materials you send out. The Alabama Baptist offers an affordable and efficient way to share your news and information through its local edition service. The back page and inside back page can be customized to subscribers in your church and/or association.

For more information, call 1-800-803-5201.

Also, if you have a website, use it to cut down on needing extra print pieces. Keep the online information up to date and accurate. Checking content at least weekly will ensure old news is removed and the most urgent items are highlighted.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 6

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



THE RESTORATION PROMISED Hosea 14:1–9

True repentance (1–3)

The final chapter of Hosea begins with a call to repentance. In the Book of Hosea, God has made His case against the nation of Israel: She has turned to the worship of foreign gods, failed to meet God's demands for righteousness and trusted in foreign nations rather than God for help. However, despite all of these transgressions, God still calls on His people to turn to Him, and He promises to forgive their sins.

The continuing theme of Hosea, that God will judge sin but calls people to repent and turn to Him, is as relevant now as it was in the days of Israel. God still offers His forgiveness to those who trust in Christ. True commitment to God means repentance: turning away from our sins, turning to God and accepting Christ's righteousness to cover our sins. This, of course, is the good news of the gospel. Because this is the one way people can be made right with God, it is a message worth sharing.

Just as Hosea was called to share this message with the northern kingdom, we also are called by God to share this message with our families, coworkers and in some cases, across borders into other countries. If we truly believe the only way to be saved is through the gospel message, this is a message worth sharing with all people everywhere. We need to be involved in supporting missions efforts through our local church, convention and with people we know personally who are involved in missions here in the U.S. and abroad.

True forgiveness (4–7)

The passage continues with a plea for the Israelites to return to God. If they do, God will bless the nation of Israel. While this would not be fulfilled in the days of Hosea due to the Israelites' continual disobedience, this prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled when Christ returns and makes all things new. Throughout the Old Testament

there is an anticipation of a joyful kingdom in which each person lives in peace because of the blessings of God.

This theme will see its fulfillment in Christ's return. This is the reason Christians can live with hope in the midst of world disasters and awful political entities and leaders. We live with hope that God will restore the earth, and all believers will live in His presence.

True wisdom (8–9)

God shows the futility of worshipping foreign gods by explaining He alone is the One responsible for the fertility of their crops. The Israelites worshipped foreign fertility gods in the belief this would help the crops grow and produce fruit abundantly. But God reminds them the wise man is the one who realizes God is the source of all the Israelites' blessings. God alone is the God of the universe, the One who created the trees and plants that produce food and the God who sends rain or withholds it. The wise man realizes these things and turns to God.

Wisdom is a key feature of the Bible. The Book of Proverbs begins with an emphasis on the need for wisdom, and Jesus Himself discusses the wise man in Matthew 7, where He says the wise man is the one who hears His words and puts them into practice (Matt. 7:24). This is as much a reminder for us today as it was in the days of the Bible.

We live in an age where there are many temptations for our time and energy, and we are often drawn away from our dependence on God. We need to be mindful in our era of business to make time to spend in God's word so we know what it says, and then put it into practice. We also need to be in fellowship with others in church to be encouraged and learn how to put God's word into practice.

Hosea encouraged his audience to be wise and turn away from their sin and toward God. The message resonates with us still today.

Bible Studies for Life

By Rony Kozman, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD Psalm 1:1–6, Philippians 4:8

Meditating on Scripture provides blessing and delight. (Ps. 1:1–3)

Psalm 1 and 2 may be taken together as the introduction to the entire psalter. Psalm 1 is about the blessed man who meditates on God's law, and Psalm 2 is a coronation psalm about God's anointed king.

Several themes and phrases tie both psalms together. Psalm 1 begins by describing the blessed man as the one who meditates on God's instruction. Psalm 2 closes by describing as blessed those who take refuge in God's anointed king (2:12). Like the theme of blessings, the idea of meditation is also in both psalms. In Psalm 1:2, the blessed man meditates on God's law, and in Psalm 2:1, the people meditate on vanity as they array themselves against God's anointed king of Israel.

What is the significance of reading these two psalms together? Both are about God's anointed king of Israel. The blessed man who flourishes if he meditates on God's law is Israel's king. He would have a copy of the law of Moses (God's covenant with Israel), and he was expected to read it.

God commanded Joshua (the leader of the people) to meditate on the book of the law both day and night (Josh. 1:8), which is very similar to Psalm 1:2.

The flourishing of God's king and the people depended on their meditation on and obedience to God's law. If the king keeps God's law, he and Israel will receive the blessings of keeping God's covenant. They will flourish in the promised land and defeat foreign nations who attack Israel's king (Ps. 2). But if the king does not meditate on God's law, the result will be the curses of the covenant which include the king's and the people's destruction.

Meditating on Scripture helps us pursue righteous living. (4–6)

Throughout Scripture, the re-

peated problem is that Israel's king and people have not kept the covenant. In contrast to this, Jesus is the faithful King (Son of David), and He is faithful Israel. Jesus was faithful to God's law.

He is the "blessed man" of Psalm 1 who faithfully meditated on God's law.

The result of Jesus' fidelity to the covenant is that He successfully launched God's kingdom and defeated rulers who arrayed themselves against the kingdom of God — sin and death.

We share in Christ's reign as we entrust ourselves to Him and follow His instructions. We must follow His example, meditate on Scripture and seek to obey God's commands.

The faithful King of Israel who did that successfully teaches us how to keep God's instructions as we follow and learn from Him. And as we follow Jesus' example, teaching and fidelity to Scripture, we also live lives that flourish in God's kingdom (Matt. 4:1–11; 5:1–10).

Meditating on Scripture keeps us focused on the right thoughts. (Phil. 4:8)

Meditating on Scripture orients our thoughts and our hearts towards God's kingdom. As we go about our days and nights, we are influenced by the things of the world and by the allure of sin, all of which seek to turn our allegiance away from Christ's kingdom.

Regularly reading Scripture and attending to its teaching reminds us of the things of the kingdom of heaven and the flourishing life that belongs to those who keep the wisdom of God and of Christ which is found in Scripture.

Scripture orients us to the things that are noble, right, excellent, true and admirable, and Scripture reminds us of their superior value and the better life and Kingdom to which they (and we) belong.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust
The Alabama Baptist

Silly song 'Gobble Gobble' serves as bridge to gospel

Christian musician Matthew West has won multiple Dove Awards and an American Music Award and was nominated for five Grammys.

Even so, fans sometimes buy tickets to his concerts based on their enjoyment of a tune that likely won't ever win any honors: "Gobble Gobble."

The official video for the Thanksgiving-themed silly song was released in fall 2020 and has tallied 3 million YouTube views. It depicts West wearing a turkey outfit and dancing around a table as he sings about cranberry jelly, gravy boats and dinner rolls.

It employs silly G-rated humor that attracts youngsters and parents alike and has served as a bridge for new fans to discover his Christian music.

Used by God

"I've got kids coming to my shows now that actually found my real music by way of some of my goofy songs," West said. "So you just never know how God might use a different part of your gifting in a unique way."

The lyrics bemoan the dearth of Thanksgiving songs in popular culture and celebrate various types

of food in silly song style: "I stick a straw in the gravy boat/ I'mma eat a dozen dinner rolls." The chorus is simple: "Gobble gobble one/ gobble gobble two/ gobble gobble me/ gobble gobble you."

Popular songs

"Gobble Gobble" is one of several popular silly songs West has written over the years. "Quarantine Life" (with more than 2.8 million YouTube views) expressed the feelings of lonely Americans in April 2020: "I think I might have had a birthday/ but I don't know what month it is."

He began singing silly songs, West recalled, when he was a new artist and didn't have a record deal.

"I was an independent artist traveling around playing college campuses, and a lot of times the colleges would set me up in an area of the campus where there really wasn't an audience," West related.

"People were just walking by, and so I would play my normal



'GOBBLE GOBBLE'

YouTube screenshot

songs, and maybe one or two people would come. And then to try to get people's attention, I would just start making up a song about some college kid who, you know, was stuffing doughnuts in his face or something. ... And the

crowd would start to gather. And I always remembered that.

"Over the years, as my career has progressed, I started to realize how humor can play a really important role in music."

Musicians "can take ourselves too seriously," West admitted, and silly songs are a way to stay grounded and connected with fans.

Making people smile

"So I like to write funny songs just to make people smile," he said. "It's been really cool to see how even the funny songs have brought a smile to people's faces during a tough time."



MATTHEW WEST

Facebook photo

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.

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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'The gathering spot'

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Baptist Paper

Abandoned country store draws churches, community together

When two senior adult men decided to open an abandoned country store, formerly the J.B. Warren & Son Grocery, as a church-related community restaurant in July 2021, some were surprised.

After all, Turk Warren, age 98, and Ray Ellington, 86, had never owned or managed a restaurant.

But this didn't stop the two entrepreneurs from a new venture.

The name, the Fork Restaurant, comes from the phrase, "Keep your fork, the best is yet to come," the men said.

Some 10 miles east of Brownsville, Tennessee, the restaurant is thriving. Instead of selling cheese and bologna sandwiches as first planned, the Fork is now a full-fledged establishment open six days a week.

The menu changes daily and includes breakfast biscuits, sandwiches, omelets and more. Lunch includes sandwiches, burgers and "stuffed taters." Friday night is catfish dinner, and Saturday night is steak. Sunday's buffet always includes chicken and dressing.

Bringing people back

But it's more than delicious food that brings people back to the Fork. It has become a gathering place in the rural community.

One thing Warren and Ellington hoped would happen has been accomplished: The restaurant is bringing churches and the community together. With Woodland Baptist Church just down the road, many members enjoy Sunday lunch together. Union Grove United Methodist also is nearby and



Photo courtesy of Carolyn Tomlin/The Baptist Paper

This country restaurant is bringing nearby churches and the community together. Formerly the J.B. Warren & Son Grocery, it is now named The Fork Restaurant, which comes from the phrase, "Keep your fork, the best is yet to come."

Zion Baptist is only a few miles away. And people who attend other churches from across Haywood County come to enjoy the Fork.

Ellington shared a story of a couple from California who planned to move back to Brownsville in a few months. Looking for a restaurant that offered good Southern food, someone recommended the old Warren county store. The man, who grew up in the area, said, "Yes, I know where it's located, but that store has been closed for years."

"Imagine his surprise to find the country store open and turned into

a thriving restaurant," Ellington laughed.

"When people come in, it's also a time to share my faith and invite them to church," Ellington added.

Large tables provide space for neighbors to gather, laugh, talk and get to know one another. And before they eat, someone usually asks the blessing.

"The food is delicious, but communicating with our friends and neighbors — well, we haven't had this in our community for a long time — if ever,"

one customer said.

Farmers in the community drift

in about noon, enjoy a hearty meal and take box lunches back to those working in the fields. One farmer was overheard saying, "The Fork provides a place to relax, rest a bit and enjoy a healthy meal. If the restaurant wasn't close by, we would eat a cold sandwich brought from home. It's too far to drive into Brownsville for lunch."

'We're grateful'

"Besides, being in the fields, we are dusty and tired," the farmer added. "We're grateful for this place nearby. God is good. He provides."

Because the Friday night catfish dinner and the Saturday night steak are so popular, Chef Allen Phillips advises people to arrive early. It's not unusual to sell out of both.

Misty Walls, Phillips' daughter, serves customers with a smile and makes suggestions from the menu.

"We can seat approximately 70 people," she said, adding, "church and civic groups frequent the restaurant throughout the week."

Renewal of former ties

Randall Kellough, pastor of Woodland Baptist, appreciates the way the community has responded to the Fork.

"Many are the stories of days gone by of old country stores in the rural communities, how they served as the gathering spot. The Fork Restaurant is a renewal of the former ties.

"It fosters chances to sit and talk as families, and members from different churches frequent the tables," Kellough said. "It is a gathering for prayer on Saturday every other month, with a hope that the Lord will rekindle the old virtues of righteousness."



Photo courtesy of Carolyn Tomlin

Owners Ray Ellington (left) and Turk Warren brought life back into their rural community by opening the Fork restaurant.

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The Wellness Kitchen

"Nature is God's Wellness Kitchen where Food is Medicine."

By Pat Terry
The Wellness Kitchen

HARVEST PEAR SALAD WITH APPLE CIDER VINAIGRETTE

Makes 6 to 8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar with the mother (Bragg)	3/4 cup dried figs, cut into thin strips
1 garlic clove, minced	1/2 cup golden raisins
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard	1 small red or purple onion, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon sugar	1 cup jicama, diced
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil	1 (6 ounce) package fresh baby spinach
2 pears, chopped (crisp pears like Asian or Bosc)	1/2 cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon lemon juice	1 (4 ounce) package of crumbled Gorgonzola or blue cheese
3/4 cup dried apricots, cut into thin strips	

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Whisk together the apple cider vinegar, garlic clove, Dijon mustard and sugar. Then whisk in the olive oil until blended. Pour into a jar and seal it with a lid.
2. Toss together the chopped pear and lemon juice in a medium bowl. Add the apricots, figs, raisins and onion, tossing well. Shake the dressing in the jar until mixed well. Pour over the pear mixture and toss again. Chill one hour or overnight.
3. When ready to serve, have each person arrange spinach on their plate and then top with the pear mixture.
4. Sprinkle with pecans and cheese.

Adapted from southernliving.com

What's in season right now? Pears!

Pears, as many other fruits, first grew wild in prehistoric areas of both Central Asia and Europe. Pears were also one of the first fruits cultivated by American colonists. These were European pears of several varieties.

Today most commercial pears are grown in Washington, Oregon or California.

Bosc, d'Anjou and Comice are winter pear varieties that need a cold climate, are harvested green and then are stored to finish ripening. Summer pears like Bartlett or Asian varieties ripen without storage and are popular in backyards throughout the south. Bartletts have more of a bell shape. Asian pears have more of an apple shape and are crisp and sweet. No matter what variety, there is a pear to sweeten up your fall.

Peak time: August to October (harvest for summer and winter pears)

Average price: \$1.52 per pound

Nutritional highlights: All pears are excellent sources of dietary fiber, with about 6 grams/serving. However, Asian pears have the most with 9.9 grams per serving. Pears are a good source of potassium, copper, phosphorous, vitamin C and vitamin K. Much of the phytonutrient antioxidant content of pears are in the peel or just under the peel including lutein and zeaxanthin. Red



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pears will have the most phytonutrient content. Pears contain about 86 calories per medium sized pear and about 100 calories per cup. Combined with a protein source like peanut butter or cheese, pears are an excellent snack!

Pat Terry started The Wellness Kitchen as a way to share the knowledge she's acquired over the 30 years she served as a professor of nutrition and dietetics at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Prior to her work at Samford, Terry was the first nonclinical dietitian appointed by the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to serve overseas. Visit her website at thewellnesskitchenrd.com.



I SEE HE'S PREACHING ON THE JEBUSITES AGAIN TODAY!

YEAH. POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE BOREDOM, FATIGUE, AND GENERAL SLEEPINESS.



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**How to
Find
Yourself:**
**Why Looking Inward
is Not the Answer**
*with Brian Rosner, principal of
Ridley College in Melbourne Australia*

Tuesday, Nov. 15

Event schedule:

10 a.m. *Wright Center, Sermon,
"Jesus, Paul and the Self-Made Self"*

11:30 a.m. *Clergy/Faculty Lunch and Learn:
"You Do You: The Bible and Identity Formation."
▪ Rotunda Club ▪ Register via bridgewa@samford.edu*

3 p.m. *Brock Forum, Lecture, "Be Yourself:
A Christian Response to Expressive Individualism"*

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