

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

J O S H U A 1 : 9

VETERANS DAY

**FOR YOUR BRAVERY, HARD WORK AND DEDICATION
TO OUR COUNTRY, WE THANK YOU.**

NOVEMBER 11

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Photo courtesy of Steve Dunn

Grants like the one that will aid renovations at Bear Creek Baptist Church in Wilcox County are a way churches and ministries can help fund specific work. Grant-writing resources are among those found in TAB's online archive.

Historic church in Wilcox County is preserved

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Alabama Baptist

Bear Creek Baptist Church in Wilcox County has a past and a future, thanks to a grant from the Alabama Historical Commission and a group of local residents who saw potential in the old building.

Organized in 1835, the historic church and cemetery had become overgrown with weeds and towering trees after being abandoned for more than 40 years. The roof, front porch and flooring were in bad need of repair, and new paint was needed inside and out.

But the handcrafted pews crafted from local oak trees seemed sturdy. A dusty piano remained, as did the pulpit and offertory table.

Gladys Mason, clerk and ministry assistant for Pine Barren Baptist Association, and a group of friends felt a need to do something.

Depending on God

"I didn't know where to start," she recalled. "But I knew God would lead our group, and we could depend on Him to restore this beautiful old church."

Mason had never written a grant, but with the support of associational leaders, she got busy. She sent photos of two grave houses and

headstones of soldiers of the Civil War, WWI and WWII. Her work resulted in a \$45,000 grant to help renovate Bear Creek and nearby Shiloh Methodist Church.

Preserving the structure

Over the past 10–12 years, donations have helped repair and replace windows to keep out rain and inclement weather. At least \$20,000 has been provided by area

residents and members of other Pine Barren Association churches who are eager to preserve the structure.

Several services have been held at Bear Creek in the last decade, but the church has been inactive since the 1960s.

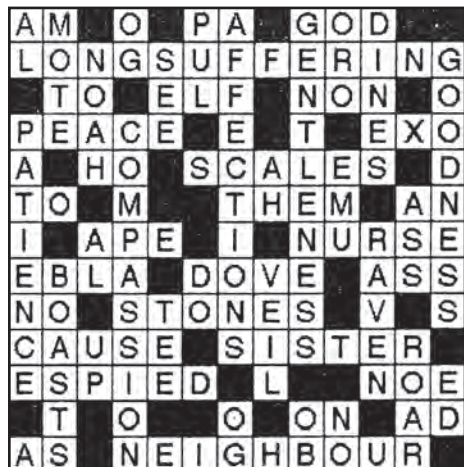
An afternoon praise and celebration service was held on Nov. 6 at Bear Creek.

Mason said the early Christmas program gave the community an opportunity to pray, sing Christmas carols and fellowship.

Steve Dunn, associational missionary for Bethlehem and Pine Barren associations spoke.

Dunn hopes to start monthly services at Bear Creek, offering his services to fill the pulpit as needed and setting up a rotation of supply speakers. Eventually, the building would make a "beautiful backdrop for a wedding," Dunn said.

Find tips for grant writing at tabonline.org/grants.



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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@RashionalThts

Staying alert to where God is working typically changes our plans

As I maneuvered the proof copy of last week's front page around the screen of my phone checking headlines and giving the story about the foster care crisis in Alabama a final glance, an area business owner sitting near me noticed.

He guessed correctly my intense focus was work related. After a few minutes of polite conversation, I intended to make my way through the remaining pages, but God had a different plan.

While the discussion didn't end dramatically nor with a salvation story (at least not yet), it did affirm an area of growth for me and quite possibly changed my friend's lifelong negative impression of Christians.

His only experience with Christians since childhood has been one of being told his religion is false and that he's going to hell. He said some who crossed his path through the years would point to parts of the Bible to prove their point, and some would basically scold him.

Either way, the lack of willingness to get to know him, dialogue about faith and learn why he follows the religion of his heritage turned him off from ever wanting to be part of a faith he deemed pushy and mean.

He manages to still show kindness because his religion teaches the value of "loving your neighbor no matter what," he said, adding he typically tries to avoid religious conversations.

"I always cringe when a customer asks me about my religion," he noted, "but I enjoyed talking to you."

What did we talk about?

We discussed the front-page story I had been proofing.

I read Rod Marshall's challenge out loud, that the crisis in the foster care system in Alabama is a problem Alabama Baptists can solve.

Check out Fruitful for ministry partnership highlights

What an honor it is for me to tag along with such a top-notch slate of dedicated Alabama Baptist entity and State Board of Missions leaders. I also love the deep friendships continually growing with the many gifted team members sprinkled throughout all our ministries.

As you might expect, we chat often and find every opportunity possible to partner. While technically separate organizations, we all are committed to be faithful stewards of your generous gifts through the Cooperative Program.

I shared how following Jesus draws us to live to glorify Him and that includes helping the hurting.

I asked my friend about his faith background. From there, we continued talking about how people of faith can make a difference.

What if it really happened? What if Alabama Baptists dug in and made sure every child currently in foster care found a loving, safe and faith-based home?

And what if every denomination and faith group joined together to make sure the same would be true every year as we all worked together?

My friend and I both sensed the incredible opportunities for people of faith to work together to be a light in a dark world, and the flow of ideas all started with the article featuring the work of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

Our conversation eventually shifted to surface-level items before we wrapped up, but I'm prayerful we'll talk again and that I'll get to share more about Jesus when we do.

However, if I don't get the privilege of another conversation with him, I know God used the recent one to soften his heart — an experience reminding me of the importance to always stay alert to where God is working.

Working together is one way to accomplish that goal.

Fruitful magazine is an excellent example. We at The Alabama Baptist and TAB Media Group are honored to serve our sister Alabama Baptist entities and the State Board by pulling our stories together in this annual publication.

You'll find highlights from each group working faithfully within our ecosystem known as the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

You should have received your

copy in the mail by now. If not, do let us know.

Also, if you are attending the upcoming state convention annual meeting in Birmingham (Nov. 15–16), be sure to stop by to say hello. Making your way to the exhibits will provide the best opportunity to catch most, if not all, entity leaders and team members.

And you know where to find me — press table or press room. I'll be waiting on that hug.

—Jennifer Davis Rash



Your Voice



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

Recognizing, honoring those who sacrifice

By Jeff Iorg

President, Gateway Seminary

One of the most emotionally moving experiences of my life was touring Omaha Beach and other locations related to the Normandy landing in World War II. Two particular moments left a life-changing impact on my understanding of the mentality and quality of American military leaders and soldiers.

‘Cause, not conquest’

The first was reading a plaque describing the Rangers who ascended and assaulted Pointe du Hoc, called by allied commanders one of the most dangerous missions of the war. They were led by Lt. Col. James E. Rudder, who later became the president of Texas A&M University.

It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day in the eleventh month in 1918 when the world celebrated as a treaty was signed ending what was to be “the war to end all wars” — World War I.

Cyndy Salzmann
crosswalk.com

What is a veteran? (The word veteran is synonymous with sacrifice. ... On Veterans Day, we honor those who have served ... for their sacrifices.

Putting veteran into a Christian context, we are all veterans for

The quality of leaders who set aside their careers to serve their country was astounding and humbling. It reminded me to challenge our best and brightest to serve in the military and other forms of public service.

The second was reading an inscription on the wall of the Normandy Visitor Center, a quote from an early speech by Gen. Mark Clark. He said, “If ever proof were needed that we fought for a cause and not for conquest, it could be found in these cemeteries. Here was our only conquest: All we asked ... was enough ... soil in which to bury our gallant dead.”

Our armed forces fought to liberate, not conquer. They fought to ensure freedom, not establish control.

Christ. We are all Christian warriors. ...

(Someone once said,) “A veteran is someone who, at one point in their life wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount up to and including their life.”

A Christian veteran is someone who has done the same — written the same blank check for an amount up to and including their life ... knowing God is the underwriter.

Bob Wittenberg
deerflat.org



IORG

Reading those words brought Jesus’ words to mind, “No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

In the case of our military heroes, they were willing to die for the freedom of strangers, not friends.

What a sacrifice!

These selfless acts — and countless others in wars fought over more than two centuries — are commemorated this week with Veterans Day.

Sadly, except in military communities, this day will pass with only token consideration by most of us. We can do better.

On a personal basis, reach out to veterans in your family and community and show your appreciation to them.

Use your influence to demand better service for veterans by our government. Many veterans are waiting too long for medical care, particularly mental health care, from a system ill equipped to meet their needs.

We have a moral obligation to care first for those who have guaranteed freedom for all of us and assured the strength of a nation that can offer such social programs.

Veterans, thank you for your service. Thank you for making our freedom possible. May God bless you with peace, satisfaction and a sense of pride in the work you have done for the greater good of us all.

A Veterans Day prayer

Almighty God, You are our Creator and Sustainer.

You are our Light and our Fortress.

You are our Wisdom and our Strength.

Today we seek to honor Your sons and daughters who have served or who are serving our country. We are reminded that because of their service, we can live in safety.

We ask that You abundantly bless those who have previously served. May their service time be rewarded. May they gain earthly and heavenly blessings from their unselfish love of country.

Lord, we stop now and remember those who are currently serving. We ask that You provide them with Your protection, Your strength and Your peace. We ask that You would abundantly provide for all their needs.

We ask that You would enable them to overcome every personal and professional obstacle. We ask that You would protect their families from hurt and harm.

May each of our veterans feel honored not just today, but every day.

Beth McLendon
inspirational-prayers.com/
prayer-for-veterans-day.
html

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“Preparation (for teaching) can be viewed as an act of love and a form of worship.”

ROBERT PAZMIÑO

Christian educator

Pastors, a simple word of advice. Follow up on snail mail, email, texts and phone calls. You don't want to be perceived as unreachable, uncaring or undependable. I know life happens, and most people will understand those times. But don't let it be a habit. Your task revolves around people and communication. Be responsible with what God has given you to do.

Michael Smith
Harrisburg, North Carolina

“We believe all life is sacred and we are charged, as His children, to protect life,” **Blake Kersey, pastor of FBC Decatur**, on the church's involvement in foster care ministry. “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.”

The whole framework of Scripture rests upon two realities: incarnation and resurrection.

Through incarnation, God brings Himself close to man. Through resurrection, man is brought close to God.

Pastor Timothy Andrew Brown
FBC Starkville, Mississippi

“My players got to walk where Jesus walked. ... They got to see where He performed His miracles up near the sea of Galilee,” said **Bruce Pearl, head coach of the Auburn Tigers men's basketball team**, on the team's trip to Israel

this past summer. “They will never be able to open up their Bible again the same way because it just comes to life.”

The words we have chosen to use to describe God are both perfectly accurate and, at the same time, not enough to wholly depict who God is.

Hannah Muñoz
“Our God is an awesome God”
The-scroll.com

“In these crazy days pastors seem to need encouragement more than ever before,” said **Robert Mullins, president of the 2022 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference and pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Elmore**.

From the *Twitterverse*

@jasonkeithallen

“Seek not to grow in knowledge chiefly for the sake of applause and to enable you to dispute with others; but seek it for the benefit of your souls.” —Jonathan Edwards

@DL_Staples

Is God's word a joy to you? Is it a delight to your heart? “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O Lord, God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16).

@DanielDickard

Adherence to the Christian ethic of sexuality will be a defining mark of faithfulness over the next decade. Many in the early church wouldn't bow a knee to Caesar & the Roman imperial cult. We may be 2000 years removed from Caesar, but the spirit of Rome with her demands is still alive.

@bellevuepastor

Wake up.
Read your Bible (out loud to stay focused).
Pray fervently.
Enter your day filled with the Holy Spirit.
Be ready to tell people about Jesus.

@PaulTripp

Don't ever try to win a debate between you and God's word.

@shane_pruitt78

The church isn't a building to be maintained, it's a people to be mobilized.

@mhenslee

Pastor ... whether you have 10, 100, 1000, more, or less, we all have the same job description ... Preach the Word.

No matter the crowd or context, give 'em Jesus. Preach, call for a

response and know God is working, even if you can't see it.

@FitHog

Had the joy the other day of helping a man in hospice care trust Jesus. Friends and family have prayed for him for decades. God answers prayer. And Jesus still saves sinners at the 11th hour and 59th minute. Amazing grace!!

@richardaross

Never give up on a teenager. Across 50 years of ministry, I've seen scores of troubled ones become solid Kingdom leaders. No matter their present circumstance, keep loving them and lifting their eyes to Jesus.

@bridgeswisdom

Has it yet gripped you that when God looks at you today, He sees you clothed in the perfect, sinless obedience of His Son?

Church on the sidewalk

By Taylor Field

Send Relief missionary, New York City

All along the street, heroin addicts were huddled in groups against the wall.

This particular community was new to me, and I was questioning how I could possibly reach the hurting people of the South Bronx.

I decided to try something simple to help meet their physical needs — hot coffee.

I drove to a local donut shop, bought their biggest box of coffee and carried my “box of Joe” toward the nearest group of weary people.

I recognized one man as the security guard for a small store on the block. “There's my pastor!” he shouted as I walked down the block. This greeting was strange for two reasons: I never told him I was a pastor, and he had strongly confirmed that his entire family was proudly Muslim.

A woman, Rosa, walked up and soon became the host of the street. She gathered men and women who probably wouldn't give me the time of day. Quickly, stragglers formed circles, laughing and introducing themselves. Then the topic turned to God.

Rosa began boldly proclaiming the goodness of God and her belief in Jesus Christ, declaring it right there on the streets. As others listened and sipped their coffee, Rosa said she knew she needed to find a church.

“Well,” I asked, “why can't church be right here on the sidewalk?”

The group grinned, and some started nodding their heads. I wasn't being flippant — at that moment, we had some very broken people proclaiming Christ's forgiveness loudly on the street and other seekers listening.

Each person there found joy in the fact that we were all reaching out far beyond our own backgrounds. It felt like the kingdom of God.

3 stories you should know



See It Productions Photo by Stasi Bara

A new ultrasound machine is in service at Sav-A-Life Crestwood, located in the Birmingham Metro Baptist Association building, thanks to a partnership between the Psalm 139 Project, a ministry of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Ministry leaders gathered Nov. 1 to dedicate the new ultrasound equipment. Read more at tabonline.org/crestwood. (TAB)

Disaster relief efforts wrap up in Florida

Five weeks after Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief teams have finished their work there.

Mark Wakefield, state disaster relief strategist, said ABDR completed 480 jobs in less than a month with the help of teams from South Carolina and Tennessee. Other requests were taken care of by insurance and other organizations.

At least 35 people professed Christ after conversations with disaster relief volunteers serving in the area. Many were homeowners; three were firefighters who gave their lives to Jesus after a chaplain shared the gospel with them.

Wakefield said the effort in Arcadia was made possible by the generosity of Alabama Baptists who have given to state disaster relief work. (The Alabama Baptist)

State convention will stream on ACTS2

The Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, set for Nov. 15–16 at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, will be streamed on ACTS2, a service developed by the Georgia Baptist Mission Board.

Streaming state convention meetings is “just one more way ACTS2 seeks to be the place where all Southern Baptists are ‘together in one place’ as the Bible says in Acts 2:1,” said programming director Jon Graham. “It’s been a joy to see Southern Baptists from all around the country celebrate the work of God happening through these state conventions.”

The ACTS2 streaming is available at the iOS APP store, Google Play (Android) store, Amazon’s Fire TV, Roku and on the web. (The Alabama Baptist)

Persecuted church

Belarus pastor fears baptism violation may change church’s status

MINSK, Belarus — A court in Belarus fined a Protestant pastor about two weeks’ pay for conducting an off-site baptism service without government approval.

Dmitry Podlobko, pastor of Living Faith Church in Gomel, Belarus, was fined July 28 for a July 9 baptism service in a pool on his family’s land, reported Forum 18 News Service. He was fined about two days of wages in November 2021 for having baptized in a river without permission from Gomel District Executive Committee.

Living Faith Church is a registered congregation. However, according to Forum 18, any event to be held away from approved locations or registered worship sites must have the per-

mission of the local executive committee.

Podlobko decided to baptize in the pool on his family’s land in July because he thought private property would be exempt.

Because this is his second infraction in less than a year, Podlobko fears the government’s religious affairs officials may take away the church’s legal status.

Apostasy charges against 4 Sudanese Christians dismissed

Four Christians possibly facing the death penalty for apostasy saw their charges dismissed Sept. 8.

A Sudanese court stated apostasy is not a crime anymore in Sudan and dismissed the charges, reported Morning Star News.

The four — Bader el Dean Haroon Abdel Jabaar; brother, Mohammad Haroon Abdel Jabaar; Tariq Adam Abdalla; and Morthada Ismail — converted to Christianity from Islam. They were arrested June 24 and released the same day. On June 28, they were arrested again, then released on bail in July.

They were told July 3 they would be sentenced to death, unless they turned from Christianity and ceased all Christian activities, states Christian Solidarity Worldwide. When they refused to comply with the demands, apostasy charges resulted.

Sudan is No. 13 on Open Doors’ 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.



Photo courtesy of Living Faith Church

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Charles H. Johnson**, pastor of Missionary Grove Baptist Church in Cullman, and his wife, **Connie**, died Oct. 26 in a two-vehicle car crash in Cullman County.

Johnson had been the pastor of Missionary Grove since 2020. He was 71. Connie Johnson was 74.

Justin Olvey, director of missions for West Cullman Baptist Association, said the Johnsons left a “tremendous impact” in their community.

“Charles Johnson was a humble and gentle man that displayed the fruits of the spirit daily,” Olvey said.

“He was a solid preacher and caring pastor. Several of our association’s pastors have shared their testimonies of how the Johnsons were an important part of their spiritual heritage.

“Charles was a soul winner who on his last Sunday baptized a man in his 50s who said to me that Charles never gave up on him. I am thankful for Charles and Connie,” Olvey told *The Alabama Baptist*.

Cody McCain, pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Cullman, wrote in a Facebook post: “I don’t know of anyone outside of my own family that had as much of a positive influence on me as Charles and Connie Johnson. He baptized me. I spent most of my teenage years in their basement, probably keeping them up all hours of the night. He was the first person I thought of to preach my deacon ordination, and I was proud to see him come and moderate my pastor ordination a few months later. Pray for ... the family.”

The Johnsons are survived by their two sons and two grandchildren.

► **Dillon Burl Calvert**, 84, of Bremen died Oct. 30 at his home.



CALVERT

A Cullman County native, Calvert served several churches in Cullman County.

“Saddened to learn of the passing of Rev. Dillon Calvert,” Dennis Trimble, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Cullman, said in a Facebook post. “He served churches in Cullman County for many years into his 80s. Thankful to have known him in the walk of this life and to know I’ll see him again someday. Praying for his family.”

Calvert is survived by two children, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

► **Bridgett McLean**, preschool and children’s

ministry director at First Baptist Church Demopolis, died Oct. 29. She was 47.

A native of Thomasville, McLean held a degree in music from the University of Alabama. She was a former employee at Whitfield Regional Hospital as an activity director/music therapist. She was active with the Canebrake Players.

McCLean is survived by her son and her parents.



McLEAN

BIGBEE ASSOCIATION

► **Ward Baptist Church** celebrated its 100th anniversary Oct. 16 with pastor Michael Yancey delivering the sermon and Jimmy Powell (left) leading congregational singing.

Jimmy Rew played the piano and presented the church’s history. David Nelson of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to the church, and Powell gave the pastor a gift from the church for his eighth anniversary.



Photo courtesy of David Nelson

The 100th anniversary bulletin included a piece titled “Memories” written by former pastor Richard Scott for the church’s 75th anniversary. Michael Yancey (right) is pastor.

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

► **Cane Creek Baptist Church, Clanton**, celebrated its 150th anniversary Oct. 16 with former pastor Robert Gibson serving as the guest speaker.

Congregational singing was led by Clayton Hyde. Former pianist Debra Hill accompanied.

Lonette Berg of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate.

“We had a good service and the day went well,” said pastor Bill Reynolds. “It was good to have former members back for the celebration.”



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

CLEBURNE ASSOCIATION

► **Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Heflin**, set aside Sept. 11 and 18 to emphasize prayer and recognized the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering Week of Prayer for State Missions. Both services included special songs and responsive readings and involved people of all ages.

Members made a visual presentation about prayer and read a history of the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

The church’s prayer coordinators and Woman’s Missionary Union coordinated the special emphasis.



Photo courtesy of Cedar Creek Baptist Church

Churches share gospel with Judgement House

First Baptist Church Ardmore is one of hundreds of churches worldwide that have used scripts provided by Judgement House, a ministry founded in 1983, to put on a walk-through drama that depicts what happens to believers and nonbelievers after death.

Members of FBC act out the parts in five walk-through scenes that tell visitors the story of the choices people make and the spiritual consequences that come with those choices.

The gospel is presented clearly, and people have an opportunity to respond, said Tracie Slayton, who coordinates the event. “We don’t know all the seeds that are

planted when they leave; we just have to pray for them,” Slayton said. “It’s a story about a teenage guy who is trying to be the cool guy at school and his girlfriend who is straddling the fence on whether or not to go to church with her best friend.”

Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Ozark also held Judgement House using the Crosswalk script for five dates in October. According to Ridgecrest’s Facebook page, they were able to share the gospel with 1,091 guests, 128 of whom prayed to receive Christ.

Visit judgementhouse.org for more information.



Facebook photo

Alabama feeding team leader 'hooked' on serving

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Becky Noland knows what it's like to be at your wit's end and have someone provide food. "I grew up on the Gulf Coast in Texas and experienced what it's like to go through hurricanes," she said.

And after she moved to Alabama, she often would go back to help her parents with cleanup after a storm.

"I know how frustrating it can get and how much it can mean to get some help," Noland said. "You're without power, without water, and a truck pulls up and says, 'Hey, do you want a hot meal?' Or someone drives up and says, 'Can I help you with this?'"

That's what got Noland, a member of Valleydale Church in Birmingham, interested in disaster relief ministry in the first place. "I've always had a tug whenever I hear of any of the disasters," she said.



Photo courtesy of Becky Noland

Becky Noland serves food during the Hurricane Ian response efforts. Noland, while a volunteer, coordinates the disaster relief response feeding team for Alabama Baptists.

So she signed up to be an Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer, and she was in a training session the day the winds of Hurricane Katrina made it to Alabama in 2005.

After training ended, Noland deployed with a team to help those affected.

"I was hooked," she said.

She had a flexible job, and she started spending a lot of time working with the state's

mass feeding unit, a mobile kitchen that can crank out up to 20,000 meals a day when it's working at top capacity.

"I just fell in love with it," said Noland. "I'm a background worker, and I love helping people who are in a bind."

From there, volunteers can move on to helping people solve other problems, she said.

"It's a special thing," Noland said of the work. "God commands us to take care of people; that whole theme is

'give them a cup of water in Jesus' name.'"

For the past several years, Noland has served as the state feeding coordinator for Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief, pulling together teams to prepare meals in the days after a disaster hits.

"It's a pretty big operation," she said.

In recent weeks, the unit was at work in Arcadia, Florida, preparing meals for the Red Cross to deliver to people affected by Hurricane Ian. Noland said it took a minimum of 35 to 40 volunteers rotating in and out every five days to keep that effort going.

"They work hard," she

said. "We appreciate them so much. There's a whole army of them working from morning to night."

In need of more help

Noland said Arcadia is just one place of many where the kitchen has been used to help people in need — she's constantly looking for more help for the mass feeding unit and the crew feeding kitchens that keep the cleanup crews fed so they can work.

She encouraged Alabama Baptists to consider getting trained so they can join teams that get called up to help out after disasters.

"Everybody can stir a pot," Noland said.

To learn more about training to be an Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer, visit sbdr.org.

ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE



in courage, ENCOURAGE
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November 14, 2022

Shades Mountain Baptist Church
2017 Columbiana Road, Birmingham, AL 35216

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Ken Adams



Mark Clifton



Dr. Jeff Iorg



Sterling Lee



Fred Luter

Visit albaptistpc.com for more information, to RSVP for the conference and to register for the lunch or supper sessions.

Registration for the conference is separate from the meal registration. You must register for the luncheon and supper if you wish to attend.



Children's of Alabama®

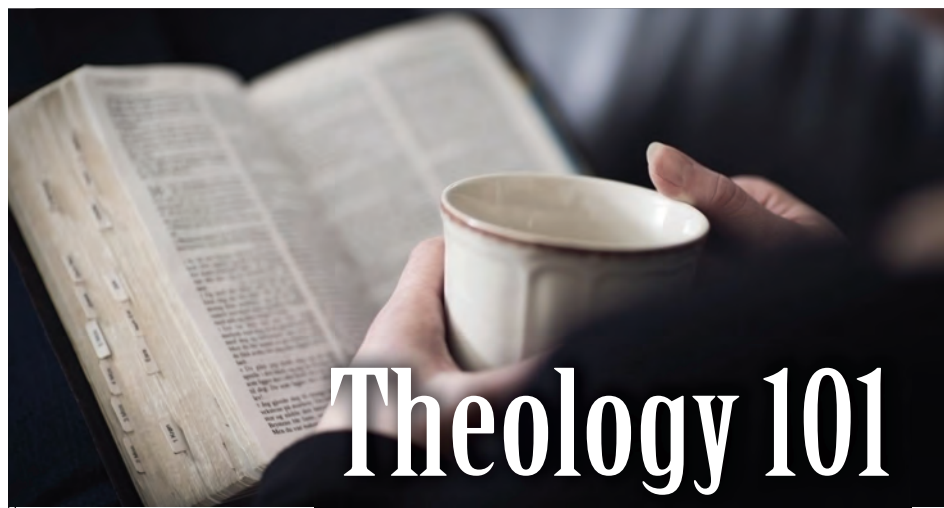
PIRC
Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC)

205-638-PIRC (7472)

The Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) is a FREE, confidential phone response center linking adult callers and community providers to the most appropriate mental health resources for teens and children.

PIRC is NOT a crisis or suicide hotline. Call for mental health resources.

The PIRC is generously supported by funding from the Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope, United Way of Central Alabama, the Daniel Foundation of Alabama and the Walker Area Community Foundation.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Following Jesus' example

Lord's Supper

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

Jesus' final meal with His disciples is referred to by several different names: the Last Supper, Communion or the Lord's Supper.

As the Last Supper, it indeed was the final meal on record that Jesus had with His closest followers. As Communion, it surely was a time of memorable communion between the Lord and His closest companions. To be sure, as the Lord's Supper, it was an event hosted by Jesus, who had conceived the idea of a gathering with the disciples around a table in a borrowed upper room.

Whatever designation we might use to speak of it, what are some of the basic features attached to this significant occasion that have lingering significance for us today?

Remembering the past

The Lord's Supper is an opportunity for remembering the past. The bread is a reminder of the incarnate body of our Lord which He laid down as the perfect sacrifice for sin. The wine is a reminder of His lifeblood which He willingly shed for the remission of sins.

The visual reminder about His body and blood is a powerful incentive for gratitude for us. Jesus introduced the element of thanksgiving into that first Lord's Supper.

The account given in Luke 22:17-19 specifically mentions that when the Lord took the bread, He gave thanks before

breaking it and sharing it with the disciples (v. 19). He also gave thanks with the cup He passed among them (v. 17).

It is almost beyond human understanding how Jesus could express His gratitude for the privilege of sacrificing Himself for the sins of others.

Looking to the future

The Lord's Supper is also a reminder of the future. Speaking to His closest followers, He said, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). This should infuse every occasion of Communion with the hope of salvation. Our destiny will bring us into unbroken, eternal fellowship with Christ and with one another.

The memorial of the past and the anticipation of the future combine to give us an incentive for praise in the present. It was just such an occasion for Jesus and His disciples when they sang a hymn at the conclusion of the supper (Mark 14:26).

Praise, whether sung or spoken, is a fitting way to conclude our fellowship at the Lord's table.

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.



Lance outlines 'difference maker' characteristics

By Elizabeth Bennett
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Be a "difference maker," preached Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, during his Oct. 25 chapel message at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Baptist College in Fort Worth.

In his introduction of Lance, interim president David S. Dockery said "It is a joy to have Rick Lance here," noting Lance was formerly pastor of the historic First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa. Dockery called Lance "a dear friend for nearly 40 years" and said Lance was his parents' pastor. Lance has served as executive director of SBOM since 1998.

In his introduction of the message, Lance said he was once in charge of creating the theme for a work meeting. He decided on making the theme "Difference Makers" and began thinking about people in the Bible that made a difference. The main verse for the message was Acts 4:13, and Lance explained that "the Book of Acts gives us a story of the growth of the early church."



LANCE

Challenged

Lance shared how in Acts, the disciples "were infused by the power of Christ's presence, God's power in their lives, and they were challenged to be difference makers."

He added that the explosion of the church began at the end of Acts 2, and "with the empowering of God's Holy Spirit, they seized the moment."

He described Acts 3 as a powerful moment too, when Peter said to the paralyzed man begging for alms, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk."

Lance said there are three characteristics of difference makers.

First, he said, the boldness of Peter and John in Acts 4 was recognized by the religious officials who had arrested the two disciples and put them in prison.

"This is a holy boldness. It's a boldness that can only come from God. The kind of boldness that will

transform one's life as an instrument for the power of the Holy Spirit in transforming the lives of others," Lance said, adding later "... in the name of truth, speak the truth in love and stand where you are supposed to stand on God's word, His revealed truth, and never waver."

'Holy boldness'

Lance told the story of Martha Myers, a medical missionary with the International Mission Board who was killed by a gunman at Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen in December 2002. Lance explained Myers is an example of holy boldness. Myers is commemorated on the Martyr's Walk outside Mathena

Hall on the Southwestern campus, and Lance called her an example of a difference maker for Christ.

Second, the religious leaders perceived Peter and John's weakness, Lance said. The disciples were uneducated, and God used their weaknesses, he added.

Lance told the story about how when he was a young boy, there was a constant rotation of Sunday School teachers in his class. No one seemed to be able to stay very long and put up with the behavior of the boys, until one memorable teacher.

"He recited Scripture and curriculum by memory, he connected with us and applied it to us. He was a difference maker," said Lance, adding that he did not learn until years later the Sunday School teacher was partially illiterate and worked with his wife Saturday nights to memorize the focal Scripture and lesson for the next morning's lesson.

Third, Peter and John's uniqueness was realized, Lance said. "The disciples had physically been with Jesus. People know when you have been with Jesus. He is the ultimate, consummate, perfect difference maker," he said.

"If He could use those two uneducated, untrained men who only knew how to fish, then He can use you, as long as you and I exemplify that we have been with Jesus," Lance concluded.

Trusting God

Birmingham family shares faith in grief after loss of conjoined twins

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

After their second child was born, Lindsay Lyon and her husband, Nathan, felt like God was leading them to stay in sleep-deprived “baby mode” and have a third child.

So when she went in for an ultrasound, she was stunned to hear she was pregnant with conjoined twins, and even more stunned to be told they wouldn’t survive.

“We found out later that they were joined at the chest,” Lyon said.

‘So close to dividing’

Her two sons were facing each other and had all their own organs and limbs except for a shared liver and one shared heart chamber.

“That cell was so close to dividing enough for them to live,” Lyon said.

But it wasn’t enough. And after she and her husband turned away the suggestion of abortion, Lyon settled into the long road of car-



Photo courtesy of Nathan and Lindsay Lyon

Nathan and Lindsay Lyon welcome their conjoined twin sons, Joshua and Caleb, after their birth April 22, 2021. The twins weren’t expected to make it to 16 weeks, but they were born at 36 weeks and lived six hours after their birth.

rying babies that had almost no chance of surviving.

“We prayed for a miracle, but knew the facts. The doctors were telling us that they would not survive,” she recalled.

But Lyon saw many of what she says were “God smiles” along the way, starting with a new friend she met after the first ultrasound.

“The nurse said, ‘This is so wild, but there’s a woman here whose twins are also conjoined, and she’s one week behind you. We’ve never seen this here; it’s so rare and mind-boggling,’” Lyon recounted. “So I told the nurse she had my permission to give her my name and number.”

But as it turns out, that wasn’t necessary.

‘Same prayer request’

“A few days later my mom said, ‘You won’t believe who is my Bible study leader,’” Lyon recalled. “It was the mother of the other woman who was expecting conjoined

twins. Our mothers had shared the same prayer request.”

The two grandmothers exchanged their daughters’ numbers, and the women got in touch and set up a play date for their children.

“We found out we are very similar,” Lyon said.

‘Similar paths’

Her new friend, Stephanie Castle, had young children already, and her husband was a minister too.

Dwight Castle is pastor of missions for Redeemer Community Church in Birmingham.

Lyon’s husband is youth and family pastor at First Baptist Church Birmingham.

“That was really cool how God brought us together, and we were able to pray for each other,” Lyon recalled. “It was a gift from the Lord to have someone else walking a very similar path.”

But there was one big difference — the Castle twins only shared a liver and were expected to live.

“Even so, everything was unknown, and we could pray for each other. We were scared to death,” Lyon admitted.

She began receiving care at UAB Hospital, which she said was another “God smile.”

‘Supportive’

“They were supportive of our decision to keep the babies and worked hard to make sure our wishes were met,” Lyon explained.

Meanwhile, the Castles were sent to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, the leading hospital in separation surgeries.

On the same day — April 22, 2021 — the Castle twins, Elizabeth and Susannah, were born, and so were the Lyon twins, Joshua and Caleb.

“When we found out they were boys, I had thought of the names Joshua and Caleb immediately,” Lyon recalled. “[Joshua and Caleb of the Bible] were the only ones allowed to enter the promised land because they had trusted God. I knew that was God telling us to trust Him, that He was going to get us through this.”

As expected, the Castle twins survived and were successfully separated in December 2021.

And the Lyon twins outlived what the doctors had predicted — Joshua and Caleb weren’t expected to make it to 16 weeks, but they were born at 36 weeks and lived six hours after their birth.

‘Six beautiful hours’

“God gave us six beautiful hours with them,” Lyon remembered.

She then began a season of recovery that was more difficult than she’d thought it would be, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Having a C-section with conjoined twins was grueling, and the emotions that came with it were as well.

“I trusted the Lord and knew they



Photo courtesy of Nathan and Lindsay Lyon
Nathan Lyon holds his conjoined twin boys who died six hours after they were born.



Photo courtesy of Nathan and Lindsay Lyon

John Mark Lyon, held by his father, Nathan, reaches out to touch his conjoined twin brothers. “He’s using our story to touch other people’s hearts,” said Lindsay Lyon. “It doesn’t make it easier, but it does help to know He is working.”

were in His hands, but I was in a dark place, and it was very difficult in many ways afterward,” Lyon related.

She said the “hardest wrestle” for her has been trying to make sense of why it all had to happen this way.

“But I’m coming to a realization that His ways are not my ways and He sees the bigger picture,” Lyon acknowledged. “I will say the few months following their birth were very difficult for me, but He got us through that. And we can see now how He’s using our story to touch other people’s hearts.”

Part of that is a new empathy for people walking through grief.

“The moment the boys died, Nathan and I were instantly able to empathize with anyone who has lost someone,” Lyon said. “It has been in a way a gift from the Lord in ministry to be able to understand now a little bit of the grief that people go through when they lose a loved one, particularly infant loss. A lot of women have opened up to me now knowing our story that I had no idea had lost a child or had a miscarriage.”

Walking through the loss of her sons didn’t feel like a gift at the

time, Lyon admitted, but she’s come to the point where now it does.

“God is using it, and I know He will for our whole lives,” she said. “It doesn’t make it easier, but it

does help to know He is working and using their lives to touch other people’s lives.”

And she said God has continued to give her gifts, like her friendship with Stephanie Castle and getting to see the twin girls.

“Watching them grow has been the sweetest gift from the Lord — to see the exact rate of growth our sons would have had,” Lyon said.

The Lyons also stay busy with their two oldest children, John Mark and Ella Glenn, whose name means “light in the valley.”

Lyon said God gave her another gift.

‘Little glimpse’

“I don’t know if I should call it a vision, but I had this little glimpse of my boys in heaven, them standing before Jesus on His throne, separate and whole,” Lyon said. “That image in my mind, God just let me have that as a gift to hold on to until I do see them in heaven.”

Photo courtesy of Nathan and Lindsay Lyon
Lindsay Lyon says she has more empathy for the grieving after losing her conjoined twin sons.

How generational faith provides a strong foundation

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Lindsay Lyon said it’s her faith that got her through losing conjoined twin sons last year. She shared the story Sept. 20 at First Baptist Church Montgomery during a Woman’s Missionary Union dinner.

“Nathan and I and our families have learned a different kind of patience in tribulation,” Lyon told the group, “trusting that our faith is real, even when He doesn’t answer our specific prayers to perform a miracle and save our babies. Trusting that even when grief floods over me and paralyzes me, He is somehow still in control and still loves me. Believing that we will see our sons again in heaven. What a treasure to look forward to.”

Lyon said it’s a faith that was passed down to them by their parents and grandparents. Her husband’s father, Lamar Lyon,

was a pastor in the Marbury area, and her father, Ed Cleveland, has been a minister of music for years.

But the women of the family also have passed down a robust faith — Lyon’s mother, Sharon Cleveland, and her grandmother, Bobbie Sue Pate, also spoke during the dinner about God’s faithfulness.

Jane Burdeshaw, who organized the event, said she has seen how Lyon “has walked in God’s will and exemplified such strength, not of her own but of God.”

During the dinner, Lyon met a group of women who sew gowns for stillborn babies, and another group called

Alabama Brushes who paint personalized boxes for the gowns.

“They had made gowns for Lindsay and Nathan, and she was able to keep them,” Burdeshaw said. “That was the first time she had gotten to see them.”

“Nathan and I and our families have learned a different kind of patience in tribulation ... trusting that our faith is real even when He doesn’t answer our specific prayers.”

Lindsay Lyon
mother of conjoined twins



Photo courtesy of Jane Burdeshaw

(L to r) Lindsay Lyon, her grandmother Bobbie Sue Pate and her mother Sharon Cleveland gather at a recent WMU dinner at FBC Montgomery. Lyon says her faith in God was passed down by parents and grandparents.



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

Justin Nelson, pastor of Camden Baptist Church, speaks at Pinnacle Alabama. Nelson wants Christians to see Sunday School as an essential part of discipleship.

Developing disciples through Sunday morning small groups

By Tracy Riggs
The Alabama Baptist

Many faithful Sunday School attenders are unaware that the Sunday morning classes originally began as an outreach.

According to the Baptist Standard, in 1780, the Englishman Robert Raikes came up with the idea of educating children in the slums to save them from a life of crime. Since the children worked six days a week, Sunday was the only day available. The Bible was the main or only textbook.

Attendance rose through the turn of the 20th century and peaked in the mid-1900s, eventually adding adult classes to what was originally only for children.

Concerning decline

Though still a major component of most Baptist churches, Sunday School attendance is on the decline — and that's a concern for Justin Nelson, pastor of Camden Baptist Church.

Nelson wants Christians to see Sunday School as an essential part of discipleship, not just part of the Sunday morning routine. Nelson recently shared some tips with other leaders about how to change a Sunday School's emphasis to making disciples.

"[Sunday School] is making well-educated church members, but it's not making disciples," he asserted, speaking during a breakout session at this year's Pinnacle conference.

Layout change

One immediate element leaders should consider is setup. Arranging classes in circles or semicircles with the leader sitting down encourages discussion, Nelson said.

He also is a strong proponent of discussion-based classes.

A successful disciple-making class also stays grounded in prayer.

"Prayer obviously needs to be a part of this, prayer not just for the sick, but for each other," Nelson said.

Another important aspect is accountability — for being in the Word that week, allowing God to work on personal areas of sin and encouraging each other to abide in Christ.

Fellowship also is vital.

"We need to be in each other's homes," he said.

And service and missions are crucial.

"We don't want to just biblically educate our people," Nelson said. "We want to facilitate life change. We want to make disciples as a result of our group."

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Newbridge Missionary Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, prayerfully seeks a man who will preach the inerrant Word of God and has a heart for missions. Email resumé to: NewbridgePST@gmail.com.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

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. Resúmes 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 resúmes 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 experi-

ence. Submit resúmes 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.

Support for those fighting cancer

Union Hill Baptist Church, Oneonta, hosted Worship in Pink Sunday on Oct. 23.

People were encouraged to wear pink to the worship service in support of those who are undergoing cancer treatments, those who have lost loved ones to cancer and for the

caregivers. The church currently has four women going through cancer treatment, and they were at the service.

“It was a powerful moment as we sought to show them that we are with them as a family,” said Paul Richey, pastor. (Union Hill Baptist)



Photo courtesy of Paul Richey

WMU backpack ministry underway

More than 12,000 backpacks are expected to be donated by Alabama Baptists across the state in this year's Christmas backpacks effort. The ministry partnership between Alabama Woman's Missionary Union and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions is an annual effort to reach some of the nation's poorest families.

The majority of the backpacks will be distributed to children and teens living along the Mississippi River.

“I'm expecting this to be our best year yet,” said Alabama WMU's Pat Ingram.

The backpacks are being collected at 13 sites around the state and then sent to the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Center in Prattville.

Volunteers from churches in Autauga, Elmore, Montgomery and Chilton associations unloaded the first load of backpacks Oct. 28.



SBOM photo by Doug Rogers

Volunteers from several churches and associations in central Alabama unload and sort a truckload of Christmas backpacks at the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Center on Nov. 1.

Each new backpack is filled with toys, hygiene items, art supplies, food and other goodies, along with a copy of the Christmas story. Each is packed with an age range and gender in mind and tagged accordingly.

Some of the backpacks will go to Alabama church plants through direct partner-

ships with associations and churches, Ingram said, noting the backpacks provide an opportunity for ministers to make contact with the families who receive them.

“Our churches and associations are literally being the hands and feet of Christ through this ministry,” she said. (Carrie B. McWhorter)

WMU FOUNDATION

The WMU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, benefiting the work and mission of the Woman's Missionary Union is seeking a President to lead the organization.

Candidate will lead a team by providing leadership, direction, and control to all aspects of the WMU Foundation (WMUF) at the direction of the Board of Trustees, Articles of Incorporation, and corporate bylaws. 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.

Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, managing and providing direction to WMUF staff, along with planning, analyzing, executing, managing and evaluating fund raising activities and planned giving programs. The candidate must also coordinate the formulation of financial development programs in order to se-

cure gifts from individuals and other mission minded organizations with special focus on deferred giving through wills, gifts, gift annuities, charitable trusts, and other instruments for the purpose of increasing the financial support of WMU through the WMUF.

As part of the financial responsibilities, the candidate must also be able to keep up-to-date on current fund raising and planned giving practices and procedures used within the nonprofit sector, and inform the Board and WMU Foundation staff of matters that would benefit their work.

Candidate would research and initiate contact with current and potential individuals, corporate, and foundation donors recommended by Board members, staff members, and other interested entities. The candidate would also oversee asset management relationship with the trust company while giving specific attention to detailed accounting for all funds and endowments.

Candidate will represent the WMUF in national

and state WMU events, churches, associations, and applicable meetings. Reporting to the WMU Executive Board meetings and other WMU Committees as requested is also a key responsibility.

Essential responsibilities: ability to travel; work on a regular and consistent basis; completing assigned tasks; providing oral and/or written reports on projects as requested; and upholding WMU Foundation and national WMU company policies while working in a cooperative manner with team managers, co-workers, customers, and the public.

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.

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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 November 30, 2022.

Faith remains a priority

'I'm on this earth to please Him': Alabama lineman shares faith, impact of missions trip

By Tracy Riggs
The Alabama Baptist

Tanner Bowles grew up surrounded by faith and football, and though football now takes up a lot of his time, faith remains a priority.

The Glasgow, Kentucky, native is an offensive lineman for the University of Alabama Crimson Tide. The redshirt junior is described as a valuable backup who can play multiple spots on the offensive line. He has seen playing time in all of Bama's games this season.

It's a dream come true for the young man who started playing football as a child and decided he wanted to play for Alabama during a moment of sibling rivalry with his older brother, Hunter.

"The first [Alabama game] I saw was actually the National Championship against Texas (in 2010)," Bowles recalled. "My brother originally grew up a Texas fan; his best friend was an Alabama fan. Being the little brother, I wanted to root against my brother. I was 8 years old watching the game, and all I could think about was, 'I hope Alabama beats Texas just so he's upset.'"

Achieving a dream

Hunter Bowles went on to graduate from the University of Louisville, but Tanner Bowles remained an Alabama fan.

"Ever since that game ... working in this path to make it to the college level, the school that I always thought about playing for was the University of Alabama," he said.

That drive to one-up his brother led to excelling on Glasgow High School's football team and becoming

one of the top recruits in Kentucky his senior year. And his brother was one of the first people Bowles told when he heard from Alabama.

Scholarship offer

"I can remember the day I got the phone call that I was getting a scholarship offer," he said. "I told my brother through text. He said the way I worded the text, he knew it was the University of Alabama. I didn't even tell him the school, I just said 'Guess what?' in all caps, and he knew exactly.

"It was something I always worked for and something I was able to achieve."

During the years that Bowles

trained toward the goal of playing for Alabama, he went to church with his family. However, it wasn't until he met coach Gary Cramer, the UA football program's life coach, that he recognized he needed a personal relationship with Jesus.

"Once I got to college and started making a relationship with coach Cramer, I got invited to X-Factor, which is a program to prepare college students for

their opportunities to impact someone else's life in faith," Bowles said.

"We were sitting in one of the meetings, and he read [from Scripture] ... I think it was Romans 2:12. It kind of struck me. It really was the final thing to open up my eyes to give my life to Christ and to not take [salvation] for granted," he said.

One of the ways Bowles does that is through participation in the weekly meetings of UA's Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Another way is through missions. Bowles went on a FCA trip to Costa Rica, after having to wait two years



Photo courtesy of Crimson Tide Photos/UA Athletics

University of Alabama offensive lineman Tanner Bowles prepares to play against New Mexico State University on Nov. 13, 2021. The redshirt junior is described as a "valuable backup who can play multiple spots on the offensive line."

from the original travel date due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He had planned to go to Germany for another missions trip this past March but couldn't go due to the situation in that area of the world.

Eye-opening experience

"Finally we got to May, and I was able to go on that trip [to Costa Rica]," he said.

"I really enjoyed it. It was my first time out of the country, away from Americanized life.

"So getting to see the culture and the adversity that the people in Costa Rica were going through was an eye-opener — to be thankful for what I have, for the opportunities that I've had in my life that some people don't have.

"It was awesome getting to talk to the pastor there who said for 27 years of his life, he didn't believe in God. But his mother on her deathbed was the one who turned him around ... convinced him she believed God had great things [in store for] his life. He became a pastor, and he still struggles. He goes through a lot of things, but

he's thankful for what he has, even though it may not be the same blessings as we have. It was a huge eye-opener and something I would love to do again," he added.

In the past, Bowles turned to his faith and asked for God's help only when life wasn't going as planned. He had the mindset that he had single-handedly earned what he has.

Bowles said he feels that during high school he did not thank God enough for the opportunities he was blessed with. "I worked on it," he continued, "and I'm doing a better job at being thankful every day for all the opportunities."

Bowles is also learning that faith is all or nothing.

Romans 12:1

"(Regarding faith) we kind of dip our toes in here and there. ... We might take this path, but as soon as the doors are closed, what are we going to do away from the public? Once I heard Romans 12:1, I was reminded that I'm on this earth to please Him — to do things through Him."



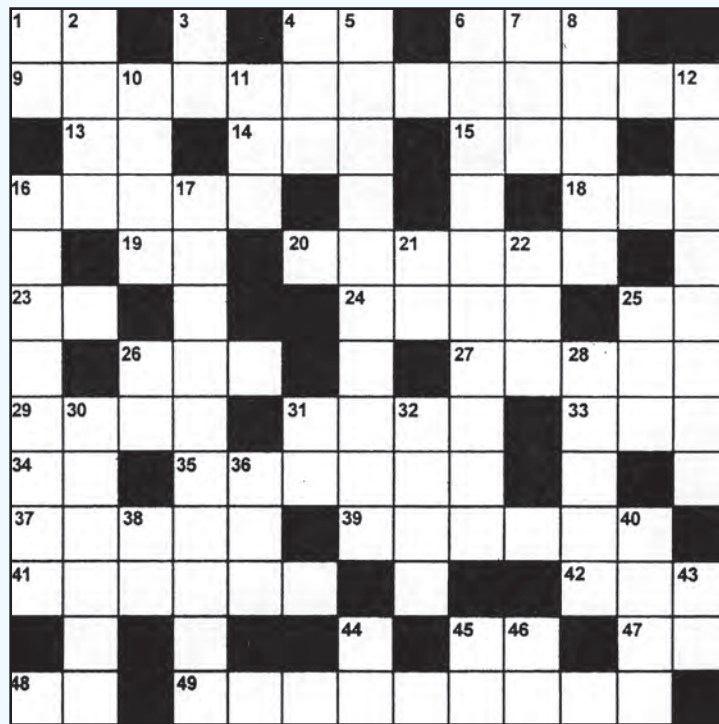
Photo courtesy of Crimson Tide Photos/UA Athletics

Offensive lineman Tanner Bowles plays in a game against the University of Arkansas.

CHRISTIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. I _____. (name of God)
4. Father.
6. A deity or idol.
9. Fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22)
13. Satan went _____ and fro. (Job 1:7)
14. Small, humanlike mythical being.
15. Prefix of negation.
16. _____ from God the Father. (Gal. 1:3)
18. Moses' second book. (abbr.)
19. _____, every one that thirsteth. (Isa. 55:1)
20. _____ fell from Saul's eyes. (Acts 9:18)
23. Peter wrote _____ the scattered Jews. (1 Pet. 1:1)
24. I will ... have mercy on _____. (Jer. 33:26)
25. Indefinite singular article.
26. Hiram's navy brought this animal to Solomon. (1 Kings 10:22)
27. Traveled with Rebekah. (Gen. 24:59)
29. Ancient city.
31. The Spirit descended in this form. (Matt. 3:16)
33. This animal spoke to Balaam. (Num. 22:28)
34. In him is _____ darkness. (1 John 1:5)
35. Used to kill Stephen. (Acts 7:58)
37. Pilate found no _____ of death in Jesus. (Luke 23:22)
39. Relationship of Martha and Mary to Lazarus. (John 11:1)
41. _____ his money. (Gen. 42:27)



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42. Alternate spelling of ark builder.
45. Peleth's son. (Num. 16:1)
47. Year of the Lord. (Latin abbr.)
48. Ye shall be _____ gods. (Gen. 3:5)
49. Love thy _____. (Matt. 5:43)
12. Fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22)
16. Sound in faith, in charity, in _____. (Titus 2:2)
17. Jesus was moved with _____. (Matt. 9:36)
21. _____, Lord God! (Jer. 4:10)
22. Ostrichlike bird.
25. Donkey.
26. Alabama. (abbr.)
28. Brought food to Elijah. (1 Kings 17:6)
30. My soul ... _____ in the Lord. (Ps. 34:2, plural)
31. It is lawful to _____ well. (Matt. 12:12)
32. Face covering. (Gen. 24:65, modern spelling)
36. Golf ball supporter.
38. Opposite of down.
40. Lion's call. (1 Pet. 5:8)
43. Name of an altar. (Josh. 22:34)
44. See 3 down.
45. 21-verse prophet. (abbr.)
46. If we say we have _____ sin. (1 John 1:8)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Ukraine crisis: 5 ways to pray for refugees

Anya was tearfully stacking the burned bricks from her house when a team of volunteers arrived in Ukraine.

As a result of ongoing attacks from Russian forces, Anya's house had little left in it except for a few metal knick-knacks that had survived the flames.

Upon hearing that the volunteers came from a local church, Anya invited them in and broke bread with them while sharing her heartbreaking story. Through a lengthy conversation, Anya committed herself to Christ, and nearly 20 of her neighbors in similar situations began attending services at a partner church.

As the invasion continues, Anya and her neighbors will most likely have to abandon what is left of their community to flee the country. Surrounding nations currently receiving Ukrainian refugees include Poland, Romania, Moldova, Germany and Hungary.

Offering transport

In anticipation of this, Send Relief, the compassion ministry of the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board, funded multiple bus rentals to transport hundreds of refugee families

across the border to local churches that wait with open arms.

Here are ways to pray:

► Pray for a successful registration process and quick resettlement in their new host countries. Many families live months without financial support, work permits, medical attention or proper schooling for their children.

► Pray for adequate housing for families.

► Pray for families to acclimate well to the new language and culture. It's difficult for Ukrainian refugees to navigate settling into their new nations without a timeline for return or any assurance of seeing their homeland again.

► Pray for the Ukrainian men. Many brothers, husbands and fathers remain behind to fight. The people see a nationwide spike in depression and other mental health crises because families now have to live separated indefinitely.

► Pray for the pastors ministering during the war to see the hand of God at work as they serve.

Check with your church, association or state Baptist convention to find out how they are contributing to ongoing relief work in Ukraine. (Send Relief)



IMB photo

A Ukrainian woman and her two children sit with donated food at a picnic table with a small heater at the border crossing near the Polish town of Chelms.

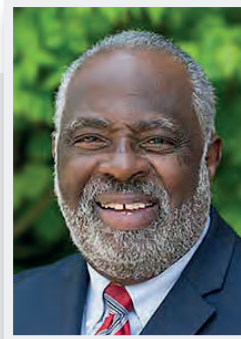
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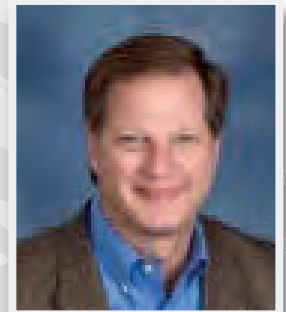
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SPEAKERS INCLUDE **Robert Smith**, professor of Christian preaching and Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School (Tuesday evening); **Buddy Champion**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Trussville (Tuesday morning); **Willie 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.

Seminary student shines light through counseling

By Marilyn Stewart
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

DeAron Washington knew he wanted to use his psychology degree to make a difference for the gospel, but when his Baptist collegiate ministry director suggested seminary, he was stumped.

“What’s a seminary?” Washington asked.

Washington had come to faith in Christ during college, and as a new believer, seminary was a foreign word. But Washington wanted to be salt and light

to the culture, and he began looking for a degree program that would combine counseling licensure with a theological education.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary “was the only place that allowed me to do that,” Washington said. “So, here I am.”

Now as a doctoral resident in the counselor education and supervision program, Washington teach-

es graduate level courses in marriage and family counseling and multicultural counseling. Through the seminary’s Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center, Washington provides professional counseling services to others.

“He’s the kind of doctoral student and professional who takes his learning very seriously and pours himself into it,” said Craig Garrett, associate dean of the counseling division, who also noted that Washington “sows what he has learned back into his counseling, teaching and writing in ways that benefit others.”

“For DeAron, the lines between scholarship, teaching, counseling and ministry in the church and community are continually overlapping. He really does embody the idea of salt and light.”



WASHINGTON

When Washington came to faith in Christ, he struggled with psychology’s “inadequate” understanding of human spirituality, he said. Washington found the gospel filled in the “holes” left empty by psychology.

“The light bulbs came on,” Washington said. “This really is the word of God. [Spirituality] really is an important piece of a person’s life, and it needs to be addressed.”

A biblical understanding of sin and the discord it brings is crucial.

“Sin came in and took us apart from God” is how Washington said he explains it. “Sin took us apart from people and [broke] our relationships. But sin also affects ‘me, myself and I,’ and ‘we’ don’t always agree.”

He has worked with individuals, couples and groups in inpatient and outpatient settings. He also is trained in a variety of behavioral and emotionally focused therapies, trust-based relational intervention and mental health care related to depression, anxiety, relational, spiritual and cultural issues.

Counseling has the ability to help people recognize the disruption caused by sin and helps them heal from sin’s trauma, Washington said.

As he encourages others in their personal struggles, Washington points to Scripture.

“You may ask that question, ‘How long, O Lord?’ How validating it is to know that I’m not the first person to ask,” Washington said.

For more information about the Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center, visit nobts.edu/ccm/counseling-center.html.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 13

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Historical Theology, University of Mobile



LEADERS NEEDED

Micah 3:1–12

Self-serving leadership (1–4)

Micah, a prophet to the southern kingdom around 700 B.C., calls out the leaders of Judah for their abuse of justice.

Israel was a theocracy; their real king was God. The laws of the land revolved around God, and the leaders were required to consider God's law. However, the leaders abused the position God had put them in. They mistreated those they were supposed to rule over benevolently.

Micah uses an analogy of a wild animal tearing apart its prey to show how violent their actions were in God's eyes. Because of these actions, God would not hear their cries to Him when His judgment came.

This has application for us today. First, those in positions of church leadership are called to shepherd their people. Shepherds don't mistreat their sheep, and church leaders are not to abuse their people.

We see this type of abuse regularly with leaders who propose that when people give them money, God will bless the giver financially.

This is called the prosperity gospel, a false gospel teaching that God blesses His followers with material blessings if they have enough faith. This false gospel violates both the teachings and the basic narrative of the Bible.

In the Bible what faithful follower of Christ benefited financially? No one. Followers of Jesus can expect hardship and persecution. All of the 12 disciples were either killed or exiled for their belief.

Second, as Christians, we should be concerned for justice in society. We do need to be careful to measure justice as the Bible sees justice, not as society preaches justice. Rather than social justice, we are to be concerned with biblical justice, which can only be found in Scripture.

Corrupt prophets (5–8)

The so-called prophets in Micah's day were scam artists. They would prophesy good things to those who gave them money and food, and bad things to those who did not of-

fer them bribes. They perverted the prophet's role, and God punished them for this malpractice by not giving them any messages so they would be discovered as frauds and have no more business.

Micah called out these false practices, and in our churches today we have the same responsibility. While we do not receive divine messages to preach, we have access to the direct word of God. Any Christian armed with the Bible has the same ability as Micah to call out sin. In fact, that is what we are called to do.

One role of the Church is to preach against sin, teach what it is and offer correction. Through the process of sanctification, God helps us become more and more like Christ.

Part of this process is a conviction of sin and a repentance thereof. If we are callous to the Holy Spirit or ignorant of His promptings, our fellow Christians need to be the means by which God convicts us. Church discipline is an act of love, not retribution or revenge.

Responsibility declared (9–12)

As a result of the corrupt actions of the leaders of Judah, Micah declares God will bring judgment upon them and the entire city of Jerusalem. This happens in 586 B.C. when the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and take its people into captivity.

God hates sin and must punish it. Sometimes He is quick to punish, and other times He is long-suffering. This impacts us in a few ways.

First, we must remember it is God's job to punish injustice, not ours. We should debate and vote for laws that reflect His justice, but we are not to take the law into our own hands. We can trust Him to administer true justice.

Second, we must share the gospel. We have to be mindful of gospel opportunities and remember that unbelievers will spend an eternity in hell apart from God.

We must maintain a spiritual mindset, being concerned for the salvation of everyone we meet.

Bible Studies for Life

By Rony Kozman, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



OBEY GOD'S WORD

James 1:19–27

Respond to God's word with humility. (19–21)

We have been born anew by the word of truth that comes from the Father (1:18). Just as in the book of Genesis where God creates and brings new life by His word, so also are we born again by God's word of truth, which is the good news of Jesus Christ. The word of truth brings new life since the Word who became flesh, Jesus Christ, is restoring the heavens and the earth.

The new birth God's word generates is set in contrast to another birth that James discusses: the birth of death. In verse 15, we read desire gives birth to sin, and then sin gives birth to death. James distances God from temptation, sin and death.

God does not set in motion the birth of death. Far from it. God sets in motion the birth of our new life by His word of truth. And we must receive His implanted word since by it we are born anew, and by it we are saved.

We must make ourselves fitting recipients of God's word. Rather than being characterized by anger, a quick tongue or wickedness, we should be meek and humble as we receive the Word.

Obey the commands of Scripture without delay. (22–25)

Not only are we to receive God's word with meekness, but we must also do God's word. We must live in conformity to God's word and wisdom.

When we encounter God's word, the law that liberates and completes us, it is as though we are looking at a mirror.

This mirror shows us who we

are and what we ought to become so that we may be made complete.

James's language of the perfect (complete) law in which we should endure reminds us of our need to be made complete as we endure trials (1:2–4) and as we ask God for wisdom to endure (v. 5). We must endure in doing the good that God's word demands of us. And we should do this with humility and with haste so we do not forget what we ought to do.

When James says the "doers who act — they will be blessed in their doing," he reminds us of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Everyone, then, who hears these words and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock" (Matt 7:24).

Our faith is worthless if our words and actions do not line up. (26–27)

James then gives us some specific things we must do if we are to be doers of the Word (v. 22). We must restrain our tongues. Or, as he said earlier, we ought to be slow to speak (v. 19). In addition to restraining our tongues, doing the Word includes caring for those who are especially vulnerable and who may have difficulty obtaining the necessities of life — orphans and widows.

Whereas many believers dismiss religion as empty man-made rules, James tells us there are religious practices that please God, such as caring for the vulnerable.

The kind of religion that is worthless is one where the tongue is wild and untamed and in which one's deeds do not align with God's word.

"My dearly loved brothers, understand this: Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for man's anger does not accomplish God's righteousness."

James 1:19–20

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs
The Alabama Baptist

'Breaking Open' outlines opening up to God while broken

In his 20-plus years of ministry, Jacob Armstrong said he has noticed that everyone has breakdowns.

"Breaking happens when you come to a place where you've just had enough. You don't feel like you can keep going. You are broken. ... You are down. ... Break-down." So begins Chapter 1 of Armstrong's recent book, "Breaking Open."

"You can't avoid breaking. That's going to happen — that's inevitable," Armstrong said. "But you can do what I call break open. That means you're still open to God and open to keep going and open to healing."

Armstrong's first major breakdown occurred after one of the young people he counseled committed suicide. He thought his ministry was over and that he had let God down.

Impacted ministry

"The openness that I ended up having toward God instead of closing off has impacted the rest of my ministry," Armstrong acknowledged. "[I'm] a broken pastor who has his own pain and vulnerability and ministers out of that, instead of in spite of it."

After the suicide Armstrong



JACOB ARMSTRONG

Photo courtesy of Jacob Armstrong

broke down and ran away, he said, not knowing how to talk about it or what to do.

He ended up reaching out desperately to God and cried like he never had before, he remembered. This release opened him up to a desire to be healed.

The next step was reaching out to his brother.

"Being with someone who really loved me, who would listen to me, who let me fumble around in my pain, that is what began the opening up of my heart to God. That's how we begin sometimes to see that God is present with us even in this dark moment."

Not only did God teach Armstrong how to get through those tough times and use them in his ministry, but God already had been preparing him for how to

convey a story, a skill he used writing the book.

His father was a songwriter, and his mother was a librarian. At an early age he loved discovering how a story can "become more."

"Breaking Open" wasn't written because of the pandemic, but Armstrong said he noticed more and more unresolved brokenness, with pain and loneliness as its result. He wanted to share another option besides retreating after a breakdown.

"I have seen that there's so much in the Scriptures about people who come to these critical moments in their lives where they either break down or break open in a way that really leads to the path of true life for that person," Armstrong said.

"This book gives permission to be in those broken places [be-

cause] we see Jesus enter into our broken spots. He is actually broken Himself. I had to learn that — to not learn the life of avoidance or covering over it, but to be honest and authentic about it."

Writing the book has helped Armstrong become a better pastor, he said. He is more perceptive of what's underneath the breakdown in someone's life, and being honest and authentic has made him more relatable to church members.

Love and grace

It also has been a reminder of how big God's grace is.

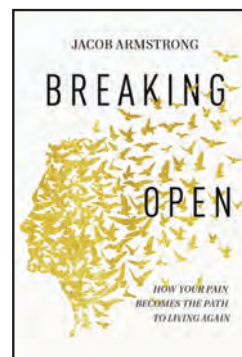
"We're in a messed-up zone right now, right? God has extended love and grace to us through Jesus over and over and over. I can see it much more clearly now," Armstrong said.

God continued to teach him even after the manuscript was finished. Just after turning it over to his publisher he was stung by a wasp. He had a seizure and spent the next three months out of work and homebound, then another seven months recuperating.

The principles Armstrong had written about gave him tools to make it through the difficult time.

Thinking back over the years, even those times when he had breakdowns and difficulty, Armstrong said he wouldn't change anything.

"Even the bumps and bruises and mistakes have led me to the perspectives and strengths that I have now."



"Breaking Open" can be purchased from Amazon or wherever books are sold.

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.

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The Alabama Baptist

Gospel conversations

By Roger Alford
The Christian Index

Want fries with that? Georgia volunteers lead 5 to Christ

Eddie Johnson had stopped at Robo's Drive-In restaurant in rural southwest Virginia for a burger and fries, but he got far more than that.

An unexpected encounter with a team of Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief workers at the roadside restaurant would lead to Johnson rededicating his life to Christ and four others accepting Jesus as their Savior.

'Meant to be'

"Our meeting was no accident," said Johnson, a disabled coal miner who had grown up in church but had strayed away later in life.

"It was meant to be. God put them and us here in the same place at the same time for that to happen."

Nearly 40 Georgia Baptists had been deployed to central Appalachia to help in the aftermath of

flash flooding that killed 38 people and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and businesses.

Members of one of the GBDR crews decided to stop for a quick meal on their way into the flood zone. They found Robo's, a throw-back to earlier generations when the custom was to drive in, walk to a small window to place an order and wait for it to be cooked up.

The restaurant's popularity is reflected in the crowded parking lot where people lean against pickup trucks as they talk and eat.

Robo's has no dining room, but there are two wooden picnic tables off to one side. Longtime GBDR volunteer Chris Fuller took a seat at one of the tables and struck up a conversation with Johnson and his 22-year-old son, Hunter.

Fuller's teammates, Ronnie Register and his wife, Linda, joined the conversation, which quickly turned to the gospel.

While Johnson recommitted his life to Christ, Hunter said he wasn't ready to make a decision. After finishing their meals, they went their separate ways.

But that wasn't the end of the story.

Back at home that evening, Johnson explained, the conversation with the Georgia Baptists was bearing on Hunter. He couldn't get it off his mind.

'I need to be saved'

For a diversion, he looked at Facebook. His feed seemed to be filled with church posts. He looked at TikTok. More of the same. Each post seemed to be speaking directly to him.



Photo courtesy of The Christian Index
Eddie Johnson orders at Robo's Drive-In restaurant in Pound, Virginia, where he received not only a belly full of food but a heart full of Jesus.

"He looked at me and, with tears in his eyes, said 'I need to be saved,'" Johnson said.

It was nearly 10 p.m.

The Johnsons, along with one of Hunter's friends, jumped into a vehicle and drove to Calvary Baptist Church in Pound, where the Georgia Baptists had set up a base camp.

Both Hunter and his friend prayed to receive Christ that night.

Johnson said the Georgia Baptists triggered a domino effect that led to Hunter's grandmother and his girlfriend making salvation decisions.

Fuller said the GBDR volunteers are always vigilant for people with spiritual needs when they've been deployed.

"When people experience the raw power of nature, they can't help but look to God," Fuller said.

"In times like that when people are feeling helpless, they realize their need for God."

While in central Appalachia to help with the flood cleanup, Georgia Baptist teams led 17 people to faith in Christ.

That means more than 50 people have been introduced to Christ by GBDR crews responding to disaster areas since last year.

"We pray for opportunities to share the gospel, not only with actions but with words," Fuller said.

"If you pray for those opportunities, then God will give you those opportunities."

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Photo courtesy of The Christian Index
Eddie Johnson poses for a photo beneath the Robo's Drive-In restaurant sign in Pound, Virginia.

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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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Create headlines that work for sermons, social media and blogs

By Mark MacDonald

The Baptist Paper

Your job to create headlines that work is fairly clear, but certainly not easy.

You have to put the right words together to describe your expanded content so it captures the interest of your audience. But write a wrong headline, and you'll risk having your potential audience ignore the rest.

Once an audience ignores content, it's difficult to engage them again.

Checklist

Here's a checklist to ensure an audience pays attention to your sermons, social media posts, church blogs or newsletters.

▶ **Provide a solution or remind them of a need.** To understand and love an audience means becoming their pain experts and wanting to provide the best solutions. Think

about the needs, concerns and goals that impact them daily. Talk about them authentically because you care.

▶ **Use good keywords or key phrases.** Think what your audience would be googling and use those words. Use a good keyword research tool if necessary. Once you identify the keyword or phrase, be sure to use it regularly throughout the content (i.e., this article's key phrase is "create headlines that work.")

▶ **Create headlines that work by using active voice.** Your audience wants practical knowledge. Most don't want existential or philosophical discussion (unless it can be put into practice).

Use active voice for verbs so the audience knows there'll be steps to achieve their goal or solve their need.

▶ **Keep it short; make it memorable.** Once you create a headline that works by using these points, edit it to make it as short as possible. Brevity makes it easier to remember.

▶ **The unexpected will break through.** Don't make it boring, or it'll get lost. Try to make it sound like content they've never heard and information that'll change their future. If not? It's worth ignoring.

▶ **Create a strong connection between headline and content.** Don't clickbait them (bait and switch doesn't feel good). Always ensure your content delivers what the headline promises.

▶ **Create headlines that work by implying your audience has time for this.** Adding a number to your headline is the easiest way to do this.

Everyone feels like they don't have time to do everything required of them, so let them know you're limiting the solutions to a manageable amount.

That'll help the audience think, "I know the content's outline will be organized, and it'll fit within my attention span."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Mark MacDonald is a communication pastor, speaker, consultant, bestselling author, church branding strategist for BeKnownforSomething.com and executive director of Center for Church Communication, empowering 10,000+ churches to become known for something relevant (a communication thread) throughout their ministries, websites, & social media. His book, *Be Known for Something*, is available at BeKnownBook.com.