

# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

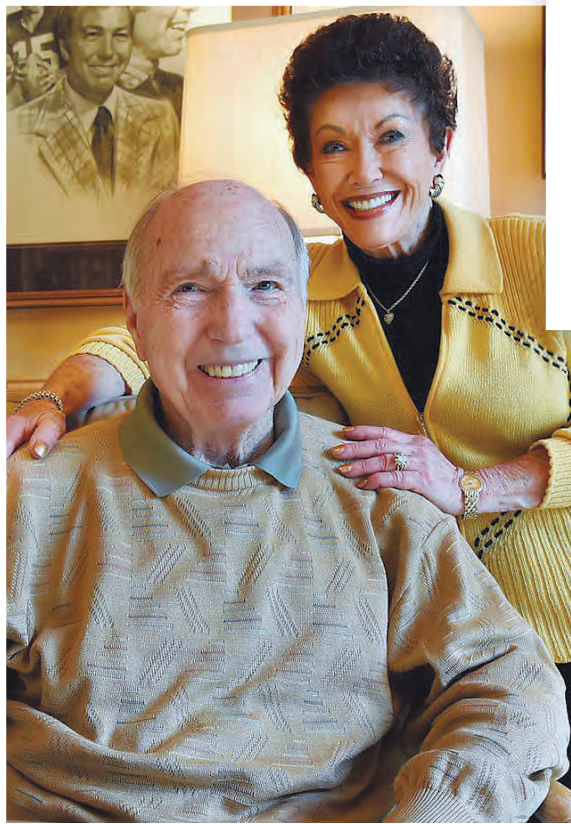
**Right:** Bart Starr was the quarterback for the University of Alabama from 1952 to 1955.



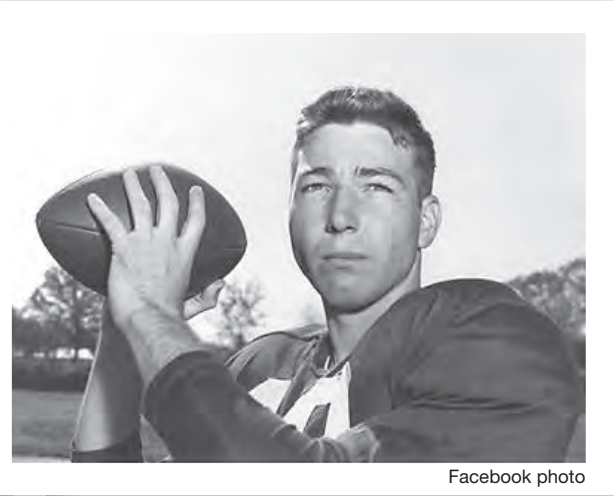
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**Above:** Bart Starr played 16 seasons for the Green Bay Packers.

**Right:** Bart Starr and his wife, Cherry, were married for 65 years.



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## 'Quarterback'

### New series showcases Cousins' faith-centered voice, tribute to Bart Starr

**A**s high school and college football players prepare for final reps before the 2023 season kicks off, avid fans are able to whet their appetite with the NFL preseason underway.

And for fans seeking a side of faith and family values, the Netflix series "Quarterback" offers a viable option while also surfacing a bit of Alabama football nostalgia.

Minnesota Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins' emotional acceptance speech for the NFL's 2023 Bart Starr Award is showcased in the finale of Season 1. The award is named after the beloved Crimson Tide quarterback and Green Bay Packers' quarterback and head coach.

It honors "the NFL player who best exemplifies outstanding

character and leadership in the home, on the field and in the community."

Cousins said during his speech, "To sum up the life of Bart Starr ... you'd say ... leader, respected, humble, coachable, hard-working, persevering, faithful, loving husband, devoted father ... (and) something very significant ... a follower of Jesus,"



COUSINS

Cousins said. "He understood this as I do today: Football will one day end. Life will be based on much more than football ... one thing that can't be taken from me is my personal relationship with Jesus."

Cousins' dedication to his faith in Jesus, wife Julie and two young boys helps breathe some wholesome Christian values into the chaos and foul language that comes with the show. (The Alabama Baptist)

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Photo courtesy of Cedar Creative

## Children's Homes' short film on foster care wins national award

A short film produced by Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries and Birmingham-based Cedar Creative has won a national ADDY Award from the American Advertising Federation.

The "Open Door" short film, which is focused on foster care, previously won gold ADDY Awards at the local and district levels (winning against entrants from five states) before moving on to the national competition. The film was awarded a silver ADDY during the organization's recent national conference in St. Louis.

The short film describes the foster

care experience from the perspective of a parent opening her door to a child in need of care.

### 'Powerful video'

Chip Colee, ABCH chief administrative officer, said, "We are so proud of Kate Tedeton and our communications team and our partnership with Cedar Creative in winning this national award.

"Their storytelling expertise and passion for helping hurting foster children comes through in this powerful video."

According to ABCH, approximately 6,000 children are in foster care in Alabama. (Meredith Flynn)

## 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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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

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The Alabama Baptist



# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



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@RashionalThts

## Back-to-school season an opportunity for all of us to reset

**R**eset, refocus, reboot — no matter what you call it, the start of a new school year provides the perfect time for all of us to regroup.

Even without a member of the faculty, staff or student body in our home, we all can take advantage of the preparation and energy from those around us who do.

Churches also time their shifts in age-graded Sunday School and small group classes with the start of school, and some even use an August-to-July fiscal year.

And, of course, with the start of school comes a growing anticipation for the kickoff to football season as well as the yearning for a slight dip in the Alabama summer heat and humidity.

While I'm still a fan of the top of the new calendar year as an opportunity for an official refresh, a couple of mini check-points throughout the year can keep us from sliding too far from our goals and responsibilities.

### Prepping the 'backpack'

Keeping with the school theme, consider taking a few minutes to peek inside the figurative backpack you sling over your shoulder each morning.

Unzip the main part and dump everything out.

The main section represents the "working" hours of your day, the time you are "up and at 'em" doing whatever it is you need to do each day.

- ▶ What resources do you need in order to accomplish your daily routine?

- ▶ Do you have those in the backpack?

- ▶ Are they in good condition, or do they need to be repaired or replaced?

- ▶ What do you need to add to be at your best each day?

- ▶ What items do you need to remove to lighten the weight of that backpack?

- ▶ Which items might have been tossed in the main section along the way but really should be tucked away in one of those nifty side pockets?

- ▶ As you flip through the various subject titles on the books in your backpack — your daily responsibilities — do you have a sense of confidence in what's needed for the role? Or would it help to meet with a tutor?

### Check side pockets too

Go ahead and empty out those smaller side and top pockets too.

- ▶ Any chance you've tossed in a gum wrapper or other trash that needs to be discarded?

- ▶ Any unnecessary items cluttering up the space making it difficult to quickly find and snatch the specific items meant for those sections?

Before determining exactly what should go back into each section, be sure to give the backpack a good cleansing to freshen it up in preparation for its journey through the next semester.

As you prepare to refill the backpack, take a few more minutes to study each item carefully to confirm it is vital you carry it around each day.

For those necessary items, recommit to an effort to keep them in good working condition and in the pocket meant for them.

## Dadeville High School students, staff met with reminders of love, support from area ministers on first day of school

**D**adeville High School students returned to school Aug. 4, but they didn't have to walk into a new school year alone. Area pastors and ministry leaders greeted students, faculty and staff when they entered the school that morning.

"Our goal was to let them know that we are there for them," Ben Hayes, pastor of First Baptist Church Dadeville, explained.

It's been a long journey for the community since the April 15

mass shooting that killed four and injured 32, one of whom is permanently paralyzed, but the church families continue to minister.

Around \$65,000 has been disbursed to help cover medical and funeral costs, Hayes noted.

### 'Trying times'

"For the most part, students and families are ready to move forward, but we are concerned about emotional and mental health of some," Hayes said, noting a few of the teens

remain under the care of counselors and physical therapists.

Fred Hutcherson, pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Dadeville, predicted back in April the community would stand with the kids.

"We are going through something we never thought we would see. The city is hurting," he said.

"We are a village that will show love in the midst of these trying times," said Hutcherson, who also serves as an agent with the State Bureau of Investigation. —JDR

# Your Voice



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

## Missions efforts continue despite difficult global trends

By **Todd Lafferty**  
IMB executive vice president

As we enter a post-pandemic world, several challenging trends confront Christians as we seek to reach the nations with the gospel. Some of those challenges include the rise of nationalism, a growing multi-polar world, the fragmentation of the web, and booming population growth.

While the world was quarantining over the past two-plus years, nationalism across the world grew.

Many countries set policies to protect their people, canceling visas for foreigners or not renewing visas when the expired.

### Unique cultural heritages

Some countries began to reassert their unique cultural heritage to resist the flattening of the cultures of the world.

Coming out of the pandemic, a separation of major powers into competing spheres of influence for economic and diplomatic dominance seems to be emerging.

China and Russia are holding war games, Russia has invaded Ukraine, and China is threatening Taiwan daily. For the first time, Japan has the votes to remove Article 9 from its pacifist constitution, which would allow it to raise a military and declare emergency powers to defend itself.

Multiple countries are erecting privacy and regulatory barriers that create separate digital silos, thus interrupting what used to be a world-wide web.

Ireland handed down a \$400 million judgment against Meta for their advertising strategies, and

China is siphoning off the world's data through TikTok.

At the same time, China is blocking the global internet from entrance into their digital space.

On top of all that, global population passed the 8 billion mark on Nov. 15, 2022, and India is now the most populous country in the world. Africa's population will double by 2050 and triple by end of the century. Urban population will grow by another 2.5 billion people by 2050, and over 80% of the world's population will live in urban centers by the end of the century.

The number of refugees is on the rise. Over 100 million people are now displaced around the world — either inside or outside their country of nationality status.

In Matthew 24:9, Jesus reminds us that spreading the good news is costly: "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."

### Much work still to do

Despite these global challenges, IMB missionaries are reentering countries, engaging the lost with the gospel, building strong disciples and planting healthy churches.

Digital strategies help missionaries find seekers and train leaders.

Our personnel engage in refugee ministries across the globe and work in tense and dangerous places.

Why? IMB's vision is to see a multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ.

The work is not over until we hear that trumpet sound.



LAFFERTY

## Letters to the Editor

I read the July 13 Rashional Thoughts editorial about your missions experience and the connection to Bill and Audrey Cowley with great joy and wonderful remembrances. I never met the Cowleys, but I too have a Nigeria connection.

Mary Frank Kirkpatrick was a missionary from my home church in Mississippi — Noxapater Baptist Church. She served in both Liberia and Nigeria with the then-Foreign Mission Board (now International

Mission Board), and I'm sure she and the Cowleys met, as Mary Frank was a school teacher.

Mary Frank retired and moved back home around 1980, but it was evident her heart remained with the people of Nigeria, and she even has an adopted son there.

In my teenage years, Mary Frank helped instill a love for missions in my life, and she made Lottie Moon come to life for us.

Interestingly, over the past few

years, through my wife Beth's work with Baptist Campus Ministries, we've met several Nigerian students who have come to the University of South Alabama to work on post-graduate degrees.

Several of them we've talked with are believers, and I've wondered on many occasions if missionaries like Mary Frank and the Cowleys may have had an influence in the lives of their parents or grandparents to bring them into the Kingdom of

God. Perhaps they sat in a classroom that the Cowleys helped start and where Mary Frank taught.

I thank God for missionaries like the Cowleys and Mary Frank Kirkpatrick and the influence they've had on lives at home and abroad.

And thank you for reminding us of how we are all working together for the Kingdom.

**Pastor Jeff Gardner**  
Daphne Baptist Church

*EDITOR'S NOTE — We love to learn about the connections and impressions of readers of The Alabama Baptist. Thanks for sharing with us.*

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

# “Discipleship is a long obedience in the same direction.”

BOBBY MCKAY

Pastor of New Liberty Baptist Church in Morton, Mississippi

We often assume that if sufferers are bringing God’s glory into their suffering they will not scream or bleed, but sit quietly, hands folded and smile peacefully. Glory is never found in such pretense. Our glorious Lord screamed and bled.

**@DianeLangberg**  
X (formerly Twitter)

When evangelist Billy Sunday became a Christian, an older believer gave him some advice. He said, “William, there are three simple rules I can give to you, and if you will hold to them, you will never write ‘backslider’ after your name.

1. Take 15 minutes each day to listen to God talking to you.
2. Take 15 minutes each day to talk to God.
3. Take 15 minutes each day to talk to others about God.”

**@reglaurie**  
X (formerly Twitter)

I did not know the bad decisions I would make or how many times I wouldn’t turn to Him for help. But God did, and He chose me anyway.

**Amy Hacker**  
“Like little children”  
the-scroll.com

Sixteen-year-old **Ava Coulter** said her advice to other teenagers needing to stand up for their faith is to “pray about it because God is going to lead you where you need to be.”

“It is better to listen to God rather than to listen to peers,” she said.

“Peers might go for the revengeful answer more than the peaceful.”

A danger in a successful ministry with great results where God is obviously at work is that too often those who lead that ministry begin to believe more in their leadership ability and insight than in the Holy Spirit and the anointing.

This is not a condemnation; it’s a warning.

**@johnmarkclifton**  
X (formerly Twitter)

The world says it’s over. God declares not until He says so.

The world says give up. God says look up.

The world says all is bad. God declares He turns bad into good.

God is with you. He will not leave you, and He absolutely will see you all the way through this.

**@LysaTerKeurst**  
X (formerly Twitter)

“I can tell you our phones are ringing off the hook, so to speak, from viewers who were moved and want to do something to stop this depraved slavery of children,” said **Phaedra Galloway** of Blanket Fort Hope, on the movie “Sound of Freedom,” which spotlights the atrocities of human trafficking.

My central claim is we can become like Christ by doing one thing — by following Him in the overall style of life He chose for Himself.

—The Spirit of the Disciplines  
**@DallasAWillard**  
X (formerly Twitter)

“God speaks to those who are prepared in their hearts to listen. Discern the voice from heaven above the noisy din of earth’s confusion.”

**@BillyGraham**  
X (formerly Twitter)

The gospel of God’s grace bids us to define our worth by what He says and not by the shame of our failure or pain of our burdens.

**@DanielRitchie**  
X (formerly Twitter)



Popcorn Prayer

© 2012 Jonny Hawkins

## Holding on to hope in uncertainty

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

—Romans 15:4

**By George Wright**

Pastor, Shades Mountain Baptist Church

Hope is hard wired into our DNA. It is a longing of every human heart and is expressed in a variety of life situations.

From the mundane (I hope we have tacos for dinner) to the serious (I hope he doesn’t walk out on me and the kids).

The question is not *if* we look for hope, but *where* we look for hope.

The tumultuous events in our world remind us that the places we often look for hope aren’t as sturdy as they seem.

Biblically speaking, hope is rooted and grounded in God. It’s not just wishful thinking or positivity. It’s a confident expectation in who God is and what He has done for us.

Most of us like the idea of looking to God as our source of hope, but we often struggle to live it out in everyday life.

Paul gives us some very practical advice: read the Scriptures. It’s [a simple] concept, but how many of us are actually doing it?

### Encouraging source

The word of God has been given to us for our instruction, endurance and encouragement ... but it’s hard to remain hopeful when your Bible remains closed. Replace the content that is fueling discouragement, fear, division and hopelessness with content given to you for encouragement and hope.

If we did these things, our perspective on life would change and our attitude toward others would dramatically improve. (An excerpt from the post at [rightfromtheheart.org](http://rightfromtheheart.org))

# 3 stories you should know



IMB photo

International Mission Board teams are eager to receive more than 50 Cuban Baptists as potential global missionary partners, but visa delays are preventing them from traveling. Missionaries like Dora (above, center) often can go to countries Americans have trouble reaching with their U.S. passports. Dora and her husband, Saul, were part of a team working with the lost in Colombia but are back in Cuba awaiting reassignment because of visa issues. (IMB)

## 'The Hiding Place' film set for Aug. 16 release

A filmed stage adaptation of "The Hiding Place," the renowned story of Corrie Ten Boom and her family's hiding of Jewish refugees from the Nazis during World War II, is set for international theatrical release Aug. 16.

The story follows Corrie, along with her sister Betsie and father Casper, as watchmakers in the Netherlands who risk their lives seeking to hide Jews from the horrors of the Third Reich just around the corner.

The stage play, adapted from Corrie's internationally best-selling memoir, was filmed last year in front of a sold-out audience in Nashville.

"The Hiding Place" has sold millions of copies over the nearly 50 years since its publication in 1974. A film adaptation, produced by Billy Graham's World Wide Pictures, was released in 1975. (Baptist Press)

## AM radio broadcasters praise Senate efforts

Faith-based broadcasters are among those applauding a federal legislative effort that would halt auto manufacturers' plans to discontinue the AM band in new vehicles.

AM radio reaches listeners, many of them in rural areas, with news, information and the gospel, Christian broadcasters say.

AM radio is also "time-tested and resilient in times of emergency," said Troy A. Miller, president and CEO of National Religious Broadcasters.

One out of three American radio listeners tune in to AM stations every month, said Nic Anderson, director of government affairs for Salem Media Group, whose network includes nearly 1,000 AM stations.

A spokesperson for Moody Radio Network said more than 100 of its affiliate stations broadcast on the AM band. (Baptist Press)

## Persecuted church

### Pakistani Christian raped, killed after refusing to convert, marry

LAHORE, Pakistan — A 40-year-old Christian widow was abducted, raped by a gang and then killed, reportedly for refusing to convert to Islam and marry one of the assailants.

Morning Star News, quoting the woman's brother, reported that Shazia Imran's throat was slashed and her body doused with acid. Forensics determined she also had suffered a gang rape.

Police arrested the prime suspect — Noman Gujjar — who later confessed to the June murder.

Imran's brother said three others also are suspected in the attack.

Imran was the mother of three children — ages 16, 7 and 6. Her brother said Gujjar is threatening the family to withdraw the accusation, a situation that has caused Imran's family to go into hiding.

"Three days before her abduction, she told [another relative] that Gujjar had threatened to kill her if she did not surrender to his demand" to convert to Islam and marry him, according to Imran's brother.



MS photo

Imran's husband died 18 months ago in what police have classified as an accident, the brother told Morning Star.

Pakistan is No. 7 on Open Doors' 2023 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

### Father in Uganda killed just days after putting his faith in Christ

KAMPALA, Uganda — A young father and recent convert was killed July 8 in Uganda, just

two weeks after he left Islam and committed his life to Christ.

Morning Star News reported that Abudu Amisi, who lived in Kasanvu village, was stabbed multiple times as he returned from a market in Kasasira West village. He died on the way to Mbale Regional Referral Hospital, sources said.

Amisi, who was married and had a 3-year-old son, had put his faith in Christ on June 22. After making this decision, he feared fellow villagers sought to take his life for leaving Islam, one source said. Amisi's church protected him by housing him in a rental home.

The stabbing occurred when he accompanied two men from the church to a market in Kasasira, one of those men told Morning Star.

Uganda's constitution allow for converting from one faith to another, but Christian converts from Islam are often attacked and killed.

# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

► **Doug Foster** — a pastor, professional musician and retired staff member of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries — died July 23. He was 76.

Foster was born in South Carolina, raised in Tennessee and served as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army before surrendering his life to ministry. He served as a youth pastor and music director before serving as a pastor at churches in Oklahoma and Texas. He was also known for his giftedness in singing and playing stringed instruments.



FOSTER

In 1993, Foster and his wife, Jeanne, moved to Alabama, and he began working at the former Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham. He later became a development officer at ABCH, where he served until his retirement.

Steve Sellers, who served alongside Foster at ABCH, said, when churches called ABCH for a representative to speak at their services or events, they "frequently asked specifically for 'the banjo man.'"

"A condition of Doug coming to their churches was often that he would play at least one of his stringed instruments and sing," Sellers said.

Foster was a member of Oak Mountain Baptist Church in Pelham, where he was active in the music ministry and taught several Bible classes. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, three children and five grandchildren.

► Longtime pastor **Timothy Rodger Collins** of Gadsden died July 28. He was 65.

A Morgan County native, Collins was in ministry for 41 years. He served as pastor of Walnut Park Baptist Church, Gadsden, for the last 17 years.

Collins is survived by his wife, Pamela Annette, and three siblings.



COLLINS

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Brooke Gibson**, minister to preschool at **Dawson Church, Homewood**, recently celebrated her 15th anniversary on staff.

► **Greg McEachern**, building and maintenance supervisor for **NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville**, recently celebrated 25 years on staff. McEachern also is a key leader in the church's ministry efforts in Mexico.

► **Valleydale Church, Birmingham**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary Sept. 9 with "50 Years:

An Evening of Stories and Songs" and Celebration Sunday on Sept. 10. For more information, visit [valleydale.org/fifty](http://valleydale.org/fifty).

## BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

► **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church** will hold its regular third Sunday night singing Aug. 20 at 5 p.m. with the Singing Ambassadors. The church is located on U.S. Highway 278 approximately 2 miles east of Holly Pond on the left. For more information, call 256-796-5986 or 256-338-9202.

## CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► **Ray Baptist Church, Alexander City**, will have homecoming Aug. 27. Worship begins at 10:30 a.m. State missionary Mike Jackson will be the guest speaker with dinner on the grounds to follow. Mike Jones is pastor.

## MARION ASSOCIATION

► **Joe Godfrey**, formerly executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), is serving as interim pastor of **Winfield First Baptist Church** as well as on the board of trustees for the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. He was a pastor of churches in Alabama for more than 26 years and served two one-year terms as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in 2003 and 2004.



GODFREY

## MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **New Canaan Missionary Baptist Church, Arab**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary Sept. 3. Worship begins at 11 a.m. followed by dinner on

the grounds. Beginning at 1:15 p.m. a special program will commemorate the history of the church with special music, presentations and a short video. For more information, call 256-550-1018. Jerry Burgett is pastor.

Photo courtesy of Debbie Campbell/  
The Alabama Baptist

## MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► **Emmanuel Baptist Church, Mobile**, celebrated its 75th anniversary May 21. Pastor Rocky Pugh preached the message, and Bobbie Nelson shared the church history.

A commemorative plaque was presented by Dalton Campbell with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Sue Fussell, Stan Winslett and Bobbie Nelson received the plaque on behalf of the church. Special music was provided by the choir and their quartet.

Guests included Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for Mobile Baptist Association, and previous pastors Oliver D. Cagel, George R. Myers and William D. Burt. A special display also was set up in the fellowship hall.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Please send news items to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org). Submissions that include the following information are greatly appreciated:*

- complete details of the event, celebration or honor;
- at least one high resolution photo of the event or honoree;
- the name and phone number of a contact person at your church.

## Samford nursing school awarded grant

Samford University's Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing has received a \$2.6 million grant to improve the preparation of primary care nurse practitioner students committed to careers in medically underserved and rural areas.

The Advanced Nursing Education Workforce program grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration will use evidence-based guidelines to develop experiential learning activities focused on primary care.

### Helping the underserved

Dean Melondie Carter said additional nurse practitioners are needed to meet growing health care needs.

"We are excited about our opportunity to support students with this funding," she said. "[It] provides an opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to address and ... improve health equity and literacy."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports the demand for primary care services has increased significantly due to a growing and aging population, resulting in a shortage between 37,000 to 124,000 primary care providers by 2034.

The program will recruit registered nurses to earn a master's or doctoral degree or a post-graduate certification with a concentration as a primary care nurse practitioner.

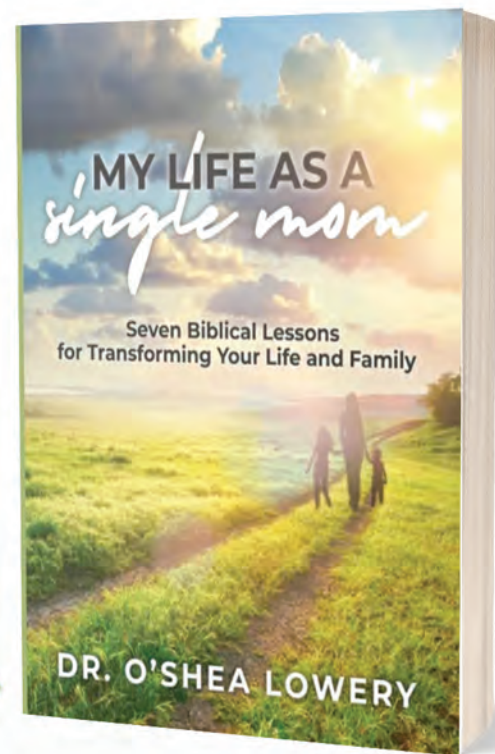
To apply, visit [samford.edu/nursing/graduate-nursing/](http://samford.edu/nursing/graduate-nursing/). (Samford)

# MY LIFE AS A *single mom*

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MINISTRIES



[entrustedhopeministries.org/my-life-as-a-single-mom](https://entrustedhopeministries.org/my-life-as-a-single-mom)

# CHANGING THE DYNAMICS

## Birmingham church sees senior adult ministry as 'vital' to being intergenerational

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Nate Brooks said his church went through a rough stretch around the time the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and now their congregational theme is "rebuild."

A big focus of rebuilding involves the senior adult ministry, he said. Senior adults make up 60% of Greater St. John Baptist Church in Birmingham, where Brooks serves as pastor.

"Seniors often are forgotten about, but those are the people who sustain the ministries," said Brooks.

### Retooling its ministry

During the pandemic, many of the seniors in his community became hesitant to leave their homes because of preexisting health conditions, but many also weren't tech savvy enough to get plugged in virtually, he said.

"We wanted to make sure ministry is still an option for them," Brooks said.

So Greater St. John Baptist has



Fifty seniors paint, talk with each other and hear presentations during a Paint and Sip Fellowship sponsored by Oak Street Health Clinic.

been retooling its ministry to consider the needs of its senior members, many of whom are not used to getting out as much as they used to.

"We want to have an intergenerational ministry that includes them," he said.

Part of that means being sensitive to choosing daytime hours that work for them, or if there is a night event, offering them the option of being involved with the setup that happens earlier in the day.

"They want to be able to do some-

thing and help out," Brooks said.

It can also include being aware of not scheduling events when they might have to drive during rush hour, Brooks said. Another option is to offer them rides.

### 'Amazing stories'

"We want to be willing to change the dynamics of the church to help them be a part," he said. "These seniors have some amazing stories. They're a vital part of our ministry."

Greater St. John Baptist also recently started a new series of events geared toward its senior adult members, starting with a Paint and Sip Fellowship sponsored by Oak Street Health Clinic. Fifty seniors came out to paint, talk with each other and hear presentations on topics like dementia and health insurance.

"It allows them to get information about their health and gives them a healthy activity to be involved in, and it gives caregivers a break," Brooks said. "Our goal is to have something like this every other month to help us build those relationships back."

## Forum planned for men to learn to love, protect at same time

With one church per every 84 people in Wilcox County, Bethsaida Baptist Church's pastor Don Bell has determined a faith-based and moral approach to calling area men to join together for leadership is an urgent need.

If Wilcox County can do it, then maybe it could be a model for the rest of the state and eventually the nation, he said.

"We are hosting a men's event for all denominations to bring men together to remind and declare what the role of a man is," Bell said. "We are going to lose this nation if we don't."

### Time to Lead Again event

Set for Aug. 26 at the church in Furman, the forum — Time to Lead Again — is for boys and men 13 and up. "It's open to men of all faiths or men of no faith," Bell said.

"A lot of men are troubled and frustrated. They see and experience daily the rapid decline

of society," he said. "They are frustrated because they know in their gut they should be leading: family, church, community and nation.

"It is a great concern that a lot of men don't know how to carry themselves and don't understand manhood," Bell explained. "But there's nothing in our society that couldn't be fixed if men of faith, biblical men, stand together and lead.

"It's time for men to lead again and older men to bring the younger men up."

Fatherlessness is part of the problem, said John J. Smithbaker, author of "Man Enough to Forgive."

"Pastors universally acknowledge that their churches are being overwhelmed with the symptoms of fatherlessness both among boys and men," he stated. "The wounds and consequences of a father's absence is holding many men back from pursuing their God-given purpose as a spiritual leader within the family and in the Church."

Bell calls it a "clarion call to action."

"As the largest protestant denomination in America, our Southern Baptist churches are well positioned to lead the way, to fill the void," he said.

Bell's 4-year-old Belgian Malinois, Eli, will be on hand to assist with the presentations Aug. 26. "Eli is trained in personal protection but also trained against forced aggression.

"He will showcase how to remain civil while having the ability to protect when necessary," Bell noted. "Men are looking for how to be masculine, but

they have to return to the purpose they were created for. ... We need to have morals to stand as men and protect and love at the same time ... without inciting violence.

"It's about living fully one's created purpose, being Christ-centered and making a difference." For details, call 251-362-5169. (TAB)



BELL

# Being a blessing

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

## Shades Mountain Baptist members let their light shine before the community through school ministry outlet

**S**onia Carrington said one thing she learned in her 12 years as an elementary school principal is this — how important it is for everyone on staff to be encouraged.

So that's what she and her

care team at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Vestavia Hills work to do each year at nearby Green Valley Elementary School in Hoover.

"We want to encourage them and to let our light shine before others, as Matthew 5:16 says," Carrington said.

Tommy DeRamus, Shades' community engagement minister, said that describes the purpose behind the church's multifaceted school ministry well.

"We have a mission statement at our church that says, 'We're leveraging who we are and what we've been given for the sake of the gospel wherever we are and wherever God takes us,'" he said.

A big part of that is the school care team ministry that includes Carrington's team and teams at three other Hoover schools, four Vestavia schools and the Post Place campus of Unless U, which serves students with special needs.

### Encouraging teachers

"What we try to do is find creative ways that we can let teachers and staff members know that they're appreciated, valued and respected," DeRamus said. "We try to find ways to encourage them in their work, to try to be a blessing to them and just be a friend to them and provide a listening ear when they need or want to talk."

This ranges from planting flowers to providing grab-and-go breakfasts for faculty and staff on teacher workdays to monitoring a dedicated email address where they can send prayer requests or needs at any time, DeRamus said.

"We do a variety of different things, and each school is different," he said. "We listen to what the principals say they need, and we're very respectful of what we can and can't do at the school."

### Showing the love of Christ

Becky Seay, who leads Shades' care team at Pizitz Middle School in Vestavia Hills, said they've been well received by the school's faculty and staff as they've tried to encour-

age them in their work at the school. "The faculty there is amazing. It's just the sweetest group of people, and we so look forward to going there," Seay said, noting that they've received handwritten thank you notes for their ministry at Pizitz. "We want to do anything we can to show the love of Christ there."

Shades also has a care team that serves the staff at the church's early learning center, "which is a ministry of our church but has a tremendous reach outside of our church," DeRamus said.

Shades members are also partnering with several schools outside their immediate area — A.H. Parker High School in downtown Birmingham and three elementary schools in that area.

The church also runs an after-school program called After the Bell that is intended to provide quality, affordable care for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Buses pick up from three Vestavia Hills elementary schools and Pizitz Middle School and bring enrolled students back to the church for playtime, snacks, Bible time and homework.

Across the board, DeRamus said these ministries have provided an opportunity for the church to show love to its community and for faculty, staff and families to connect that love to the love of Christ.



Tommy DeRamus (left), Shades Mountain Baptist's community engagement minister, and a school care team from the church host an event at Vestavia Hills Elementary West at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to honor outgoing care team leader Lissa Schultz (third from left) who had served in that role for more than five years. The care teams develop strong relationships with school faculty and staff.

Because of the relationships built, some people they've met in the community have accepted invitations to come to church events and services, he said, noting that they pray for moments like that to happen.

"The days of you opening the doors of the church and people automatically coming in — those days are over," he said. "This gives us the opportunity to take the ministry of our church out into the commu-

nity and into the schools, the places where people are."

DeRamus encouraged any church who's interested in serving its community to consider finding ways to help a local school.

### Consider the opportunity

"Every church is different and has different focus areas for how they minister in their communities, but I would dare say in every community, the local schools would gladly open their doors to anybody who wants to come in and be a blessing to their teachers," he said.



A family prays together outside Vestavia Hills Elementary East during a prayer walk before the start of the school year.



Members of Shades Mountain Baptist Church and others prayer walk at Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge. Care teams from the church organize these prayer walks each year at local schools.



The Shades Mountain Baptist care team that serves Pizitz Middle School in Vestavia Hills hosts a grab-and-go breakfast for faculty and staff. Team leader Becky Seay (second from right) says this kind of event is intended to encourage and support teachers and show them the love of Christ.



Photo by pressfoto on Freepik

**UPCOMING SPECIAL EDITION**



**NOVEMBER 30 ISSUE**

# Aging Well

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# ‘All for the cause of Christ’

## Sixth grader’s cinnamon rolls raise more than \$2,600 for VBS offering in Mobile area

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

A lot of baking happened at the Allen house in June — nearly 2,000 cinnamon rolls went out the door, thanks to the skills of 12-year-old Meredith.

But Derek and Lindsay Allen both say they’re most thankful for the baked-in perseverance all those pastries honed in their daughter.

“A lot of the time she spent making and selling these cinnamon rolls was sacrificial,” Lindsay Allen said. “She could’ve been playing with friends or sleeping in ... but the way God was using that to grow her character was really great.”

The idea for all the cinnamon rolls started about four years ago after Derek Allen became pastor of First Baptist Tillman’s Corner in Mobile. Meredith had been to Vacation Bible School before, but she found out quickly some differences at FBTC.

Like this — the girls compete against the boys with their offering gifts each year. The winner has the heaviest offering, not necessarily the biggest monetary amount. And the boys had won the past four years in a row.

### Sweet victory

“That year was their fifth year to win,” she said.

So the next year, Meredith had a bake sale and raised around \$800, then gave about \$200 of her own money that she had earned too. She got it all exchanged into pennies to add weight.

And the girls won.

This year being her last in VBS, Meredith wanted to taste that sweet victory again. So she



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Allen

Meredith Allen, 12, sold cinnamon rolls every Saturday in June and raised more than \$2,600 for the VBS offering at First Baptist Tillman’s Corner. At FBTC, the girls compete against the boys for top offering weight instead of amount, so the cinnamon roll money was strategically changed into pennies.

brought back the idea of the bake sale but modified it a little bit. Instead of a variety of baked goods, she focused on cinnamon rolls. And instead of just one sale, she decided to do it once a week throughout the month of June.

She called it Cinnamon Roll Saturday. Preparing the 40 dozen cinnamon rolls each week took a day and a half.

“I make it with sourdough bread, so I have to mix the dough and let it rise all day,” Meredith said.

She’d then roll it out Friday night, shape it into rolls and let it rise overnight before baking it

and making the icing on Saturday mornings.

Her mom helped her advertise through Facebook each week, then they’d set up from 8 to 10 a.m. at a local park.

Lindsay Allen said they didn’t have to market as much as time went on because they “found that once people tasted them, they kept coming back.”

It’s been a church-wide effort, starting with the sourdough, Lindsay Allen said.

“One of our church members gave Meredith the sourdough starter and taught her how to make it in the first place.”



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Allen  
Meredith Allen made about 40 dozen cinnamon rolls per week in June.

It all grew from there. And as the Allens set up to sell the rolls each week, church members came and bought them and gave donations.

One life group even came out and set up a table with free iced coffee and water for anyone who purchased cinnamon rolls.

“They helped us connect with people at the park and bless and thank the customers who came to show their support,” Lindsay Allen said. “We were able to meet people who were visiting the park and invite them to church and to VBS.”

In the end, Cinnamon Roll Saturday raised \$2,610 for the VBS offering at FBTC, which will be split between three missions needs — a Send Network project in Puerto Rico, a missionary family in Southeast Asia and Gideon Bibles.

Derek Allen said he’s proud of Meredith’s perseverance, but he’s even more proud of the way she’s realized that, even though the girls won the competition, the real victory is what God is doing through the missions projects supported by the funds.

### ‘For His glory’

“God has given her baking skills to use for His glory,” he said, noting that she bakes treats at other times during the year too under the name Sugar Creek Bakery. “I thought it was something she might try and then get tired of, but she has taken on the responsibility of all the baking this month with perseverance and consistency.”

Then Meredith shared what God was doing with the other girls by splitting up the pennies among them and having them all take part in placing them on the scales.

“That was her idea,” Derek Allen said. “It’s all for the cause of Christ; it’s not about her.”

# UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

## Senior Adult Leadership Training offered in two locations in August

**W**ant to involve senior adults in your church more effectively and reach those in your community too?

The Senior Adult Leadership Training can provide basic ways to expand the scope of your church's senior adult ministry. Senior adult ministers and lay leaders are invited.

SALT offers two dates and locations — Aug. 22 at Lindsay Lane Baptist Church in Athens and Aug. 24 at Southside Baptist Church in Greenville, both

from 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The event will have three sessions:

▶ Engaging Senior Adults, led by Bob Smith, minister to seasoned adults at FBC Trussville.

▶ Reaching Boomers, led by Edwin Jenkins, LifeLift Ministries pastor/teacher.

▶ Discipling Senior Adults, led by Robert Mullins, executive director of PassionTree Network.

Frank Jones, senior adult event coordinator for the Alabama Baptist State

Board of Missions, will emcee the day and provide music, and Guy Anderson, minister of music emeritus at Elkdale Baptist Church in Selma, also will provide comedy and music.

Both events are free, but registration is required for the included boxed lunch.

For more information, contact Frank Jones at [fjm1117@gmail.com](mailto:fjm1117@gmail.com) or call 205-393-7020.

To register, visit [alsbom.org/salt](http://alsbom.org/salt).

## REACH Evangelism Training

Kindness can go a long way.

That's the philosophy behind REACH Evangelism Training — helping your church members share the gospel by cultivating relationships through acts of hospitality and service.

"A lot of people need to



WILKINS

see that the church genuinely cares about them before they're willing to listen to what we have to say," said Daniel Wilson, director of the SBOM office of evangelism. "This training will present a strategy for your church to work

together to develop caring relationships with unbeliev-

ers that can result in gospel conversations."

REACH Evangelism Training — set for Aug. 15, 10 a.m.–noon, at the SBOM in Prattville — will be led by Scott Wilkins, president of REACH Evangelistic Strategies.

The cost is \$5 per person, which includes lunch.

Register at [evangelizeal.org/reach](http://evangelizeal.org/reach).

## Unwind gives youth leaders a chance to connect

If you're a youth leader, there's a Zoom call you should be a part of on Thursday mornings at 9 beginning Aug. 17.

This weekly chat, called Unwind, is a "great opportunity to connect with student leaders from all over the state," said Josh Meadows,

student ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Jump on the call Thursday mornings and be a part of talking about what God is doing in youth ministries all around the state.

To register, visit [ymlink.org/unwind](http://ymlink.org/unwind).

To register, visit [ymlink.org/unwind](http://ymlink.org/unwind) or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



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### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### FULL-TIME 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](mailto:NewbridgePST@gmail.com) by Aug. 31.

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mitts Chapel Baptist Church searching for a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Mitts Chapel Baptist Church, 935 Cold Springs Road, Deatsville, AL 36022.

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Adellum Baptist Church, small church in Andalusia, Alabama, seeking bivocational pastor. Send resúmes or inquiries to: [cappsly@gmail.com](mailto:cappsly@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

South Hamilton Baptist Church in Hamilton, Alabama, is prayerfully accepting resúmes, for a God-led bivocational pastor. South Hamilton Baptist Church has a traditional Sunday morning Sunday School and worship time as well as a Bible study on Wednesday evenings. To submit a resumé please email: [southhamilton@gmail.com](mailto:southhamilton@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

New Providence Baptist Church, 53080 Rabun Road, Bay Minette, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 503, Bay Minette, AL 36507 or email to: [arlene@pfefferflooring.com](mailto:arlene@pfefferflooring.com).

#### PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER

Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Leeds, Alabama, seeks a part-time music minister to lead our congregation in worship and further develop our music program. For full job description, visit <https://cedargroveleeds.org/jobs>. To apply, send resumé to: [chmassey@charter.net](mailto:chmassey@charter.net).

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### PREGNANCY CENTER DIRECTOR —

FULTONDALE, ALABAMA Sav-A-Life, Inc. is looking for a

full-time center director for its Fultondale location (just north of Birmingham). This team member will manage all routine operations of the pregnancy center in an efficient, effective and professional manner. The center director trains and manages all staff and volunteers in the implementation of necessary programs, scheduling and meets with clients. Applicants need a bachelor's or master's degree, preferably in a helping field, or need related equivalent experience if no degree. To learn more or to apply, please send a cover letter and resumé to [info@savalife.org](mailto:info@savalife.org). No phone calls please.

### SIGNS

#### CHURCH SIGN

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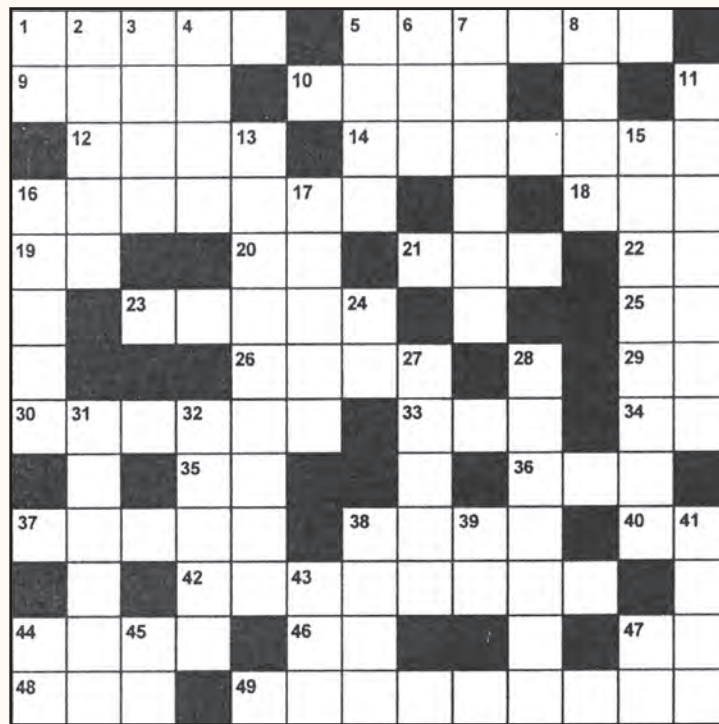
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# CHRISTIAN Crossword



**ACROSS**

1. Sermon on the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 5-7)
5. Barabbas was in prison for insurrection and this. (Luke 23:19)
9. Old Testament priest and book.
10. Hill made of sand.
12. Beersheba means "well of the \_\_\_\_." (Gen. 21:31)
14. The Lord will do this to Zion. (Isa. 51:3)
16. The Sovereign Lord will \_\_\_\_ his anger on Israel. (Ezek. 7:3)
18. O taste and \_\_\_\_ that the Lord is good. (Ps. 34:8)
19. Master of Education. (abbr.)
20. A, B, C, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
21. What the risen Jesus did with broiled fish. (Luke 24:43)
22. Mister. (abbr.)
23. I will not \_\_\_\_ you as orphans. (John 14:18)
25. Annum. (abbr.)
26. Where lions lie down. (Ps. 104:22)
29. Radium. (abbr.)
30. Nehemiah prayed before the God of \_\_\_\_\_. (Neh. 1:4)
33. One of Noah's sons. (Gen. 6:10)
34. J, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
35. Slang for simple.
36. Little Jack Horner's pastry.
37. A half shekel was given to \_\_\_\_ for one's life. (Ex. 30:15)
38. A servant for life had an awl put through this. (Deut. 15:17)
40. District Superintendent. (abbr.)
42. The apostles were unschooled, \_\_\_\_ men. (Acts 4:13)
44. Jesus' garment did not have one of these.



By Janet Hopper Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

10. Hill made of sand. (John 19:23)
16. An inheritance of Asher. (Josh. 19:30)
17. Number of Sceva's sons. (Acts 19:14)
24. \_\_\_\_ Gedi. (1 Sam. 24:1)
27. An inheritance of Issachar. (Josh. 19:19)
28. Paul appealed to him. (Acts 25:25)
31. Jewish Queen of Persia.
32. This of the wicked is like that of a snake. (Ps. 58:4)
38. Zacchaeus sat on one of these. (Luke 19)
39. Bachelor of Arts. (abbr.)
41. The people of Rabbah labored with these. (1 Chron. 20:3)
43. Starting a quarrel is like breaching one of these. (Prov. 17:14)
44. Salvation Army. (abbr.)
45. I \_\_\_\_ the light of the world. (John 8:12)
47. \_\_\_\_ a hen gathers her chicks. (Matt. 23:37)

**DOWN**

1. Come to \_\_\_\_, all you who are weary. (Matt. 11:28)
2. Layer of the atmosphere.
3. Mountains in Asia.
4. Nickname for Nathan.
5. You expected \_\_\_\_, but see, it turned out to be little. (Hag. 1:9)
6. One in Spain.
7. Type of place where 5,000 were fed. (Mark 6:35)
8. One of the kinds of love.
11. Believers receive this kind of life.
13. Song of Rebob. (2 Sam. 8:3)
15. Others \_\_\_\_, He seems to be advocating foreign gods. (Acts 17:18)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

## Preparing for retirement

If you've got questions about retirement, the State Board of Missions has answers.

The Preparing for Retirement workshop will cover these topics:

- ▶ The basics of retirement planning.
- ▶ How much do I need to retire?
- ▶ When can I retire?
- ▶ Basics of GuideStone investments.
- ▶ Withdrawal strategies.
- ▶ Basics of Social Security and Medicare.

It will be available at two dates and locations:

- ▶ Sept. 18, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at Canaan Baptist Church in Bessemer
- ▶ Sept. 21, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at First Baptist Church Decatur.

To register, visit [alsbom.org/preparing-forretirement](http://alsbom.org/preparing-forretirement). or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



## Church Revitalization conference Sept. 25

Is your church's vision for the future expanding? Is the congregation growing? Are most of your church leaders under the age of 60?

If your answer to any of these questions is "no," it might be time to consider starting a revitalization journey and get some valuable information that could help you chart the course for the future.

The Church Revitalization event Sept. 25 will share the latest research on having a healthy church.

Sam Rainer, author of The Church Revitalization Checklist, will be the speaker for this event.



**RAINER**

He is the president of Church Answers and lead pastor of West Bradenton Baptist Church in Florida.

The one-day conference will be held Sept. 25, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the State Board of Missions in Prattville. The

\$10 cost includes lunch and materials.

To register, visit [churchhealthal.org/cr-rainer](http://churchhealthal.org/cr-rainer).

# IS THE MOVE A STEP OUT OF BOUNDS?

## Southern Baptist missions giving opportunities expand, draw questions

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Stories like the one you are about to read are always difficult to develop, not because the information is hard to explain but because the tone and presentation will be interpreted based on the reader and his or her involvement, prior understanding and sympathies (or frustrations) toward the topic and/or group.

The details are technically straightforward, but some will read it as a promotion or endorsement. Others will read it as an indictment.

However, it's important

for your Baptist media outlets to keep you aware of happenings within the denomination and help provide the necessary context for you to fully understand the implications.

Please approach this story as one of information sharing, not as an advocacy or attack piece.

You are an important part of our Southern Baptist family, and you deserve to have the facts presented in full as well as with compassion and grace so you can work through and pray through how best to respond.

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

When the July 24 email under Paul Chitwood's name appeared in inboxes with the subject line "I wanted to extend an invitation," many people likely didn't blink.

Those receiving the invitation to join the new Seven Nine Community by becoming a monthly donor had given in some form in the past to the International Mission Board, where Chitwood serves as president.

However, some receiving

the email, who also work to keep their church giving tied to the Cooperative Program, did blink.

And while designated giving around the CP isn't new, intentional efforts to solicit donors is tricky for Southern Baptist Convention entities receiving CP funds.

Those serving Southern Baptists throughout their careers say the secret behind why CP has worked for nearly 100 years comes down to the agreement that it is the official funding mechanism. Debate over how many dollars should focus on state ministry efforts and how much should go to the national entities continues.

At the same time, concerns surface annually about whether the gifts flowing through churches to state conventions and then on to the national entities will be enough to cover the latest missions and ministry efforts. Individual donor initiatives help alleviate some of the financial needs but bring with them the discussion of whether the move is a step out of bounds.

### Policy on fundraising

The key seems to be whether the entity is approaching individuals versus asking churches for money.

The official Business and Financial Plan related to

SBC entities states the following related to fundraising efforts:

**"1. Approval of Financial Activities** — No entity of the Southern Baptist Convention shall conduct any type of fund raising activity without the advance approval of the Convention, or its Executive Committee. No advance approval shall be required for the two Convention ap-

proved special offerings: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

**"2. Reporting Fund Raising Activities** — Each Con-

vention entity shall report annually to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention on any type of fund raising activity conducted by the entity. The report shall include a summary of the activity, its title, financial goals, structure, cost and the results of such fund raising during the past year (not required for LMCO and AAEO) ...

**"3. Cooperative Program Promotion** — Each Convention entity shall report on its efforts during the year in promoting Cooperative Program missions giving.

**"4. No Financial Appeals to Churches** — In no case shall any Convention entity approach a church for inclu-



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sion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions.”

## Seven Nine Community

Chris Kennedy, IMB’s chief advancement officer, told The Alabama Baptist the new giving opportunity — known as Seven Nine Community — falls within the parameters of the Business and Financial Plan.

“It’s still LMCO dollars (but is presented in a form) that acknowledges the behaviors of our givers,” he explained, noting the opportunity to give to IMB work through a recurring method has been in place since 2021 and more people are beginning to prefer that style of regular giving.

The launch of online giving through a recurring donor mechanism was shared during Chitwood’s reports to the EC and the messengers at the SBC Annual Meeting that year, he noted.

“As of Jan. 1, 2021, we had 1,166 givers who had given a recurring gift in the previous three months,” he said, noting it has naturally increased since 2021. The number at press time was 1,870.

Kennedy did not break

down how many of the monthly donors are individuals versus churches but noted IMB is promoting cooperative giving with the churches by assigning a list of specific churches to missionaries to contact.

When it comes to the LMCO, which once was seasonal and now is a year-round effort, Kennedy noted gifts come through a variety of channels, even donations of vehicles, houses and land.

“We are here to serve all givers no matter what God has entrusted them. We want to help them turn all God has entrusted into mission impact,” he said, noting

leaving the LMCO name and logo out of the new initiative “is not a glossing over or redirecting them to think about something else.”

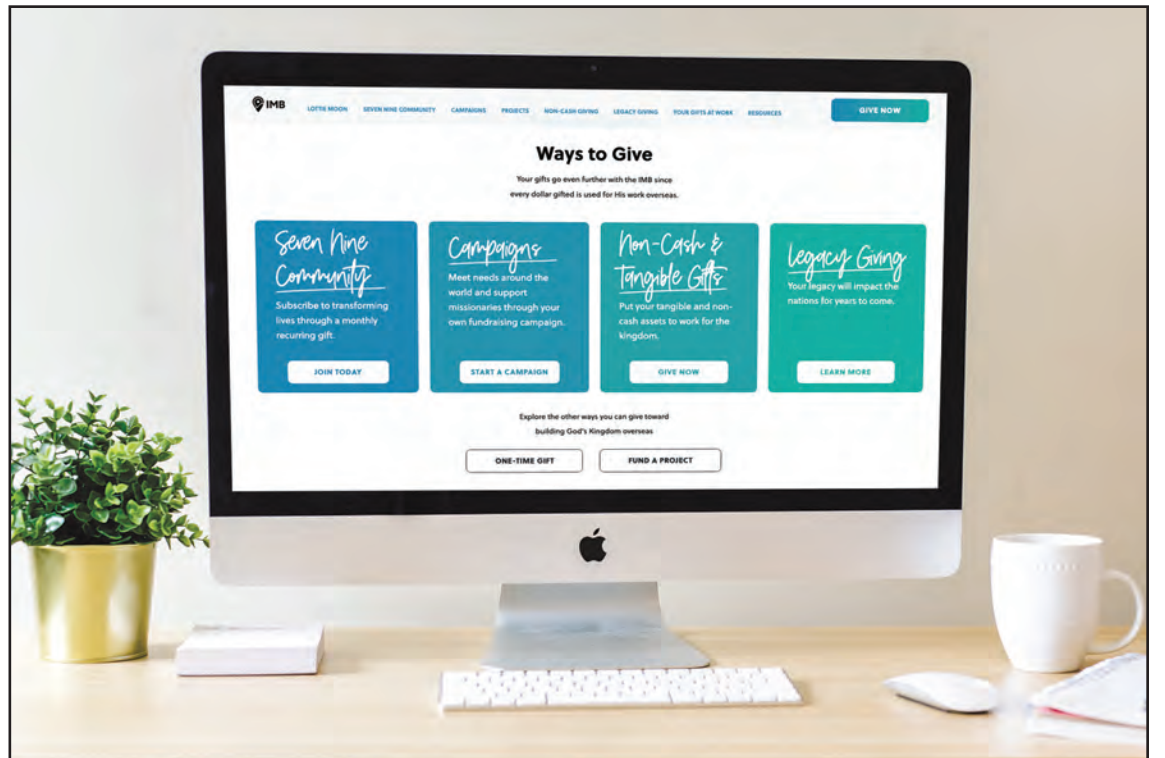
Some donors aren’t Southern Baptist but contribute because they are

connected to a specific missionary or missionary family. The LMCO brand isn’t as familiar to this segment of donors, so the more generic approach seems to work best in this case, Kennedy said.

“We want to optimize every opportunity and may not introduce complexity to those not familiar with denominational life.”



KENNEDY



TAB Media Group graphic with Unsplash.com

“The Seven Nine Community is no different than if we began to publicly acknowledge gifts by check or credit card as a new option,” Kennedy added.

## Same for other SBC entities

Other entities also offer individual donor options, and Kennedy said he had not heard of any concerns coming from the other SBC entities.

Along with individuals who contribute to SBC entities on a personal level, church leaders have options for how they promote, pres-

ent and collect special offerings such as LMCO and AAEO as well as how they handle CP giving.

State conventions also vary in how they count designated giving that doesn’t go through the CP, and donations submitted directly to the entity around the church qualifies the individual and/or church to receive personalized donation requests from that entity.

Louisiana pastor Philip Robertson, chair of the SBC EC, told The Alabama Baptist that while he “like many in our Southern Baptist family” was surprised to learn of the Seven Nine Community fundraising effort, “I do not believe anyone at the IMB wants to harm the broader cooperative work of Southern Baptists intentionally.”

Still, “we have to be careful and thoughtful that we don’t do so unintentionally,” he noted. “Unquestionably,

the Cooperative Program of the SBC has been a highly successful method of shared funding to accomplish the Great Commission.

“Southern Baptists have faithfully given over \$20 billion through the Cooperative Program since its inception.

“The agreed-upon parameters which guide Cooperative Program funding are an important part of that success,” Robertson said.

“Therefore, I look forward to having conversations in the near future with IMB leadership and others within our SBC family to evaluate these types of appeals and fund-

ing guidelines to be sure that we do not unintentionally diminish or jeopardize the proven success of our cooperative missions effort that has clearly worked for nearly 100 years.”

To learn more, visit [imb.org/generosity](http://imb.org/generosity) and [sbc.net/missions/cp](http://sbc.net/missions/cp).



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**The International Mission Board receives 50.41% of Cooperative Program dollars submitted to the SBC Executive Committee for distribution. In 2022, IMB received \$100.4 million (CP) and \$203.7 million (LMCO).**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 13

## Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Mobile



### TRUSTWORTHY Jeremiah 42:7–22

Johanan and the other army officers decided to flee to Egypt to escape Nebuchadnezzar's wrath they feared would descend on the whole land once he learned of Gedaliah's death. Before they fled to Egypt, Johanan and the people with him decided to seek Jeremiah's advice.

For 40 years no one had listened to Jeremiah, but finally he had become respected as a prophet of God. They asked Jeremiah to pray and ask the Lord if they should flee to Egypt or stay in Judah. They assured him they would do whatever God revealed to him.

#### Option 1 (7–12)

Jeremiah had to wait 10 days before the Word of the Lord came to him. The prophet could not set the time for hearing from God, nor did he speak until he was sure he had discerned God's message.

Armed with God's reply, Jeremiah summoned Johanan and all of the people to assemble and hear the Word of the Lord. He prefaced his words with a reminder that he was declaring God's Word to them. This was not the first time Jeremiah had to deliver an unpopular message.

The Lord presented two options to the people. If the people remained in the land of Judah, God would plant them back in their land, rebuild them and protect them.

Jeremiah assured them that they had no reason to fear King Nebuchadnezzar if they would stay in Judah. Fleeing from Judah would imply guilt for Gedaliah's assassination. They should fear him only if they persisted in their plans to go to Egypt.

The Lord declared that He was with them to save and rescue them from King Nebuchadnezzar. The promise of God's presence with His people should have been sufficient

assurance to alleviate their fear.

If they obeyed the Lord and stayed in the land, not only would the Lord show them compassion, but so would King Nebuchadnezzar by allowing them to return to their land.

#### Option 2 (13–18)

After assuring the people they should not leave Judah, Jeremiah warned them of the consequences of not obeying the Lord. If they fled to Egypt in hopes of escaping war and hunger, they were making a mistake. Egypt was no safer from God's presence than Judah.

God warned them that if they insisted on going to Egypt, they would die there by sword, famine and plague. What they hoped would be a life of freedom and safety would only bring hardship and death. People who reject what they know to be the will of God invite disaster into their lives (Rom. 6:16).

This remnant of Jews had witnessed God's wrath poured out on Judah and Jerusalem. Now He would pour it out on the people who went to Egypt. They would become objects of cursing, scorn and disgrace. They would never see Judah again. The smoldering ruins of Jerusalem should have been enough evidence to convince them of the truthfulness of God's Word.

#### Warned (19–22)

Jeremiah encouraged the people to remain in the land as God had commanded. He reminded them again that they had asked him to seek divine guidance and that they were only deceiving themselves if they disobeyed.

People who seek God's will and then refuse to do it risk God's punishment. Even as he spoke, Jeremiah saw their faces and knew that the people would no more listen to him that day than they had in the past.

***“Do not fear the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid.  
Do not fear him, declares the Lord, for I am with you.”***

Jeremiah 42:11

## Bible Studies for Life

Roy Ciampa, Ph.D.  
Armstrong Chair of Religion, Samford University



### SET APART IN THE WAY WE LIVE 2 John 1–9

“The elder,” traditionally understood to be the Apostle John, writes to “the elect lady and her children,” which is probably a metaphor for a church and its members.

This letter may have been sent along with the longer message found in 1 John as a separate word of encouragement to a particular church.

The key theme is to continue in Christ's teaching, which entails walking in the truth and walking in love.

#### Walk in truth. (1–4)

The opening verses of this letter repeatedly speak of the truth. John loves those he writes “in the truth” as do “all who know the truth,” and that is because of “the truth that remains in us and will be with us forever.”

John was pleased to have found some of the elect lady's children “walking in truth.” In verse 3, we're told that grace, mercy and peace will be with us “in truth and love.”

In every place where “the truth” is mentioned, one could substitute the word “Christ” and have the same meaning. The starting point is recognizing, as Jesus told us in John 14:6, that Jesus is the Truth.

By referring repeatedly to the truth rather than simply to Christ, the point is made that to reject Christ is to reject the truth, and that all who reject Him are following lies and falsehoods. It also reminds us that all who are committed to Christ must also have a relentless commitment to the truth.

In Scripture, “to walk” is a metaphor for living life in a particular way. To walk in the truth is walking in step with Christ, who is the Truth.

### Walk in love. (5–6)

Jesus first gave the command to love one another twice in John 13:34, where He declared it was a new command. He repeated it in John 15:12 and 15:17, and it is often repeated in the New Testament, especially in 1 John.

The command is a rewording of Leviticus 19:18 — “Love your neighbor as yourself” — which is also often repeated by Jesus and the apostles. To love Christ is to obey His commands, especially His command to live a life of love for others.

#### Walk in obedience to the teachings of Christ. (7–9)

One of the reasons why the confession of Christ's coming “in the flesh” is important is because Christ “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) when, on the cross, He “suffered in the flesh” (1 Pet. 4:1) and was put to death in the flesh” (3:18). Any suggestion that Christ did not come in the flesh — as a real human being capable of suffering — undermines the truth of Christ's suffering on the cross and suggests that Christ's love for us was not

as costly or truly sacrificial as the Bible insists it was. That would also undermine the command we have been given to love one another as Christ has loved us.

If His love wasn't actually a costly love, perhaps ours doesn't need to be either. But Christ suffered and demonstrated a costly and self-sacrificing love to which we are also called (see again vv. 5 and 6).

Anyone who seeks to rob the Church and the world of that teaching is another example of “the deceiver and the antichrist” (v. 7), whose teaching endangers all who hear it.

***“Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.”***

2 John 1:9

# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs Frontz

The Alabama Baptist

## Study Bible options abound for readers who want more resources

In 1985, the era of the modern study Bible was born. This movement has continued to pick up speed in the decades since, with hundreds of Bibles using a variety of themes, looks and study helps being published.

This is a review of 11 Bibles that have come out in the last few years, ranging from traditional to innovative, from small to large, from created for children to adults.

**1. *Grace and Truth Study Bible*** (Zondervan, 2022; New International Version, New American Standard Bible): R. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, headed up the editorial team for this study Bible.

Beyond the generously sized concordance in the back, a cross-reference index in the middle column and thorough study notes at the bottom of each page, a key feature is decorative columns outlining the introductions of each book, which help when finding a certain Scripture.

**2. *The Jesus Bible*** (Zondervan, 2019; NIV, English Standard Version): This Bible has a goal of highlighting Jesus throughout the entire Bible. Each book introduction ties one of Jesus' characteristics to verses within the book.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.



Photo by Tracy Riggs Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

This version has wide margins for notes. Though it doesn't include charts, graphs or maps, it does have a small dictionary and concordance.

**3. *Life Application Study Bible*** (Zondervan, 2019; NIV, New Living Translation): The number one best-selling Bible of this generation, this third edition version has been updated with more current information. It includes overviews, full-color maps, charts, graphs and study helps at the bottom of the single-column text.

There is a cross-reference system in the inner margins and a small amount of space for notes in the outer margins. It also has an exhaustive index, a dictionary and concordance and a daily Bible reading chart.

**4. *Rainbow Study Bible*** (Holman Bible Publishers, 2017; Christian Standard Bible, King James Version, NIV): Every verse is color-coded for 12 themes — salvation, God, family, love, history, prophecy, evil, sin, commandments, discipleship, outreach and faith.

**5. *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*** (Zondervan, 2016; New King James Version, NIV, New Revised Standard Version): This one dives deeply into the context behind Scripture. It has a two-column layout with a cross-reference index in the middle.

Extensive notes, often longer than the Scripture included, are on each page. There is a short glossary of New Testament terms, a concordance and photos, maps, charts and graphs scattered throughout — all in full color.

**6. *The Readable Bible*** (Iron Stream Media, 2022): Not technically a study Bible, this Bible is a new translation. Having a novel-like look, the version uses modern language translated directly from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

It includes charts, maps and tables and a small glossary but no concordance. Instead of expository notes, it has alternate meanings for some of the phrases used in the text.

**7. *Beautiful Word Coloring Bible*** (Zondervan, 2018; NIV): This Bible isn't a study Bible and has no notes, charts, maps or graphs. Its primary purpose is for journaling — with full-page verses to color.

This Bible is easy to read, with a one-column style, and is easy to write and color in, with paper thicker than many traditional Bibles.

**8. *Time to Revive Gospel-Tabbed Bible*** (Life Bible Study, 2017; NASB): This unique Bible has 11 numbered tabs. Each tab brings the reader to a verse in the plan of salvation. The final tab opens to a couple of pages describing first steps as a new Christian. It's a small, relatively plain paperback that is easy to carry when evangelizing and affordable enough to give away to those who become saved through it.

**9. *CSB Student Study Bible*** (Holman Bible Publishers, 2021; CSB): This Bible has the same characteristics of the exhaustive study Bibles listed earlier, with commentary, charts, full-color maps, a cross-reference system and a small concordance. It also suggests 99 verses to memorize. Though it's titled for students, it would also be a good choice for a new Christian.

**10. *Apologetics Study Bible for Students*** (Holman Bible Publishers, 2017; CSB): Also a good pick for students or new believers, this Bible explores more than 130 questions students typically ask.

**11. *Explorer Bible for Kids*** (Holman Bible Publishers, 2022; CSB): This colorful Bible helps explain the who, what, when, where and why for each book while also showing how the whole Bible points to Jesus. It also includes QR codes for videos.

# LARGEST-CIRCULATED PAPER IN THE STATE

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# National WMU

By Sandy Wisdom-Martin

Executive director, national Woman's Missionary Union

## 135 years of 'profound and unprecedented impact' on SBC missions

It was 135 years ago when 32 delegates from 12 states endeavored to gain a new perspective and caught a vision for how God wanted to work in their midst. Woman's Missionary Union was birthed. Those who have gone before gained altitude and dreamed of what could happen for the Kingdom if we marshaled and stewarded our resources.

Southern Baptists have certainly gained altitude through WMU's domestic and global missions efforts.

The WMU offering bearing Annie Armstrong's name has brought more than \$2 billion for Southern Baptist missions efforts in North America.

The WMU offering bearing Lottie Moon's name has raised more than \$5.2 billion.

We celebrate the generosity of Southern Baptists.

WMU further supports field personnel with water filters through our Pure Water, Pure Love ministry; scholarships for missionary kids (MKs); free missions discipleship resources; and more.

### Meeting goals

In 1919, WMU committed to raise \$15 million as part of Southern Baptists' \$75 Million Campaign.

WMU was the only SBC entity to meet their goal five years later. This denomination-wide effort was to expand the work of Baptists on all fronts. Our boards borrowed money

on faith that pledges would be paid.

WMU was one of the founding forces behind the Cooperative Program in the 1920s. At the time, leaders from the SBC asked WMU to cease their domestic and global offerings. WMU leaders did not think that was a good idea.

### Influential leaders

SBC leaders responded saying that if the offerings continued, they would deduct those offering totals from the CP allocations given to the

home and foreign missions boards.

WMU leadership fought for the boards to receive full CP allocations in addition to the WMU missions offerings. The influence of those indomitable WMU leaders is still being felt today.

WMU worked with the mission boards to establish an annuity for their missionaries.

In 1900, Annie Armstrong worked tirelessly to establish and fund the Church Building Loan Fund for the

Home Mission Board. Thousands of churches benefitted through the decades.

In support of the campaign "For a Debtless Denomination by 1945," WMU agreed to raise one-third of the total amount, exceeding their million-dollar goal in 1943.

Many more examples can be given through 135 years of partnership.

WMU has had a profound and



Photo by Van Payne/The Baptist Paper

Sandy Wisdom-Martin (right), executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union, and Connie Dixon, national WMU president, speak about the ministry of WMU at New Orleans' Franklin Avenue Baptist Church on June 11.



Facebook photo

National WMU Youth on Mission members serve at Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans and Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans in June. Students distributed food, clothes and backpacks to the homeless in the area.

unprecedented impact on SBC missions — both in North America and around the world — that continues to resonate today in our collective Southern Baptist work and life.

It is our sacred privilege to serve alongside the SBC to accomplish the mission of God.

We tell the stories of IMB and NAMB missionaries. Our doctrinal readers are SBC seminary trained.

WMU, SBC, supports our denomination and affirms the SBC's current statement of faith. Our desire is to see all ages energized, motivated and equipped for missions.

Would your church benefit from knowing more about God's work in the world through Southern Baptist missions?

We can help.

What would happen in your congregation if members were pray-

ing more, giving more generously, doing missions and telling more people about Jesus?

We can help.

### Live on mission

We make disciples of Jesus who live on mission. That's what we do. That's all we do. Everything is for the sake of the gospel.

We believe the world needs to

hear the good news of Jesus Christ, and we have a responsibility to take the gospel to the nations. It is His work, and we join Him. He guides. We follow.

We must seek His will with all our hearts

and then with courage go forward, dedicated to the God-given task of proclaiming the good news to all the world.

Let's be on mission together with God.

To view a gallery of historical WMU photos, visit [tbponline.org/historical-wmu-photos](http://tbponline.org/historical-wmu-photos).

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## Tips for designing an effective church website

By Mark MacDonald

The Baptist Paper

**W**ebsites are the primary way most people pursue information these days.

Your ultimate goal is for your church website to be up to the standard of most other sites.

This is not the time to be creative. Give people information as quickly as possible in the manner that they expect to receive it.

### Your church website may need help if:

**1. The web address (URL) is difficult to say and remember.**

People find websites by either searching the church's name or by remembering your URL.

Make sure Google is pointing to your website on its first results page. To find out, search for your church name with the city name.

If your church doesn't show up on the first page of the search results, then ensure your domain name is easy to remember (e.g., [www.yourdomain.org](http://www.yourdomain.org)) and that it's easy to say from the stage too.

**2. You're not proud of it.**

If you're not proud of your church website, chances are your congregation and community won't be either.

Your website reflects your church; invest in its design and content.

**3. You don't use the website yourself.**

When was the last time you used the website? If you don't use it, you won't suggest your congregation use it either.

**4. Your physical address isn't on the homepage.**

Approximately 90% of first-time guests will start with your website. Is it easy to find your address?

Consider placing it prominently on the homepage — near the top — and make it clickable so visitors can use map apps for directions.

**5. Headlines don't match URL slugs.**

Each page should have one key word or phrase that defines the

theme of the page. Clearly identify this theme as the largest headline at the top of its page.

Additionally, ensure that the keyword(s) are included in the URL slug after your main domain name.

The slug becomes the unique identifier for the page's content.

For example, your location page might be [www.yourchurch.org/location](http://www.yourchurch.org/location).

**6. People say, "I can't find what I'm looking for."**

If people frequently express their inability to find what they're looking for on your church website, it's easy to know your church website needs help.

A good starting point is to improve the organization of your website's main menu.

Ensure each page fits logically under the relevant menu item.

Limit the number of items in your main menu and drop-downs to five or six, facilitating a faster and more intuitive navigation experience for visitors.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Mark MacDonald is a communication pastor, speaker, consultant, best-selling author, church branding strategist for [BeKnownforSomething.com](http://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 and social media. His book, *Be Known for Something*, is available at [BeKnownBook.com](http://BeKnownBook.com).*

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# MEDIA REVIEWS

By **Brandon Elrod**  
North American Mission Board

## Clifton's posthumous book demonstrates passion for church planting, flying

**W**hen Clint Clifton was tragically killed in a January aircraft accident, he left behind a legacy of faithfulness as a pastor, a church planter and, most importantly, a husband and father. In the days and weeks after his death, many testified to his fervent desire to see the gospel go forth.

Clifton was senior director of resource and research strategy at the North American Mission Board, a role he filled due to his passion to support and develop the next generation of missions-focused leaders in the church.

Clifton's son, Noah, described this aspect of his dad's legacy during his father's memorial service.

"My dad would repeat the words of Ephesians 4:12 often. 'Equip the saints for the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ,'" Noah said. "He took this verse as his own personal mission.

"He figured out a formula that churches make disciples, and disciples make churches. This is why my dad spent so much of his time training and equipping new leaders so that more churches can be planted. My dad would always say that when a church gets planted into a community, it is like a disciple-making



**CLINT CLIFTON**

NAMB photo

factory has been planted into that community."

One of Clifton's final projects was a short book written to help church leaders do exactly that — make disciples who make churches.

### Passing wisdom along

The book, "How to Start a Residency: Turning Members into Missional Leaders," affords Clifton another opportunity to pass his wisdom along to pastors and church leaders as a free resource through NewChurches.com, a site he helped steward.

"Clint believed that everyday pastors were the sleeping giant for training the next generation of church planters and that church-based residencies were the best opportunity for seeing a genuine multiplying movement in the future," said Colby Garman, lead pastor of Pillar Church of Dumfries, Virginia, which was founded by Clifton in 2005 and became one of Outreach Magazine's top 100 reproducing churches in the United States.

"He didn't just put the ideas in a book but lived them out day after day in our work together," Garman continued.

"In this final book that he left for us, you can find the building blocks that provided the foundation for his extraordinary impact. They are simple, reproducible and ready for you to carry on the work wherever God has placed you."

One of the striking elements about the book is its cover — a drawing of a single-engine aircraft flying through the clouds. Given how Clifton died when the plane he was piloting crashed in north Georgia, his colleagues at NAMB considered changing the cover but hesitated and asked his family for input since it was something Clifton had created personally.

"Clint designed the cover himself. He loved it; he was proud of it," said his wife, Jennifer.

"If you could have seen how his face lit up when he finally finished the cover design, how excited he was, you would have also left it like he designed it," she noted. "It is how the kids and I can honor all his hard work and passion for church planters."

### Time well spent

Jennifer said of her late husband that he only had two hobbies, church planting and flying, and that Clifton wove the two together in "How to Start a Residency."

Beyond bringing the two together in his book, he used flying to fuel his passion for church planting.

"In his last few months, most of his flying time was to see his church

planters. Flying provided him more time on the ground with his planters rather than wasting time driving in his truck," Jennifer said.

"All he ever desired to do was to spend as much time as possible encouraging, loving and supporting those out planting churches."

### 'Balancing act'

Noah Clifton was one of those church planters Clint Clifton loved and encouraged as Noah participated in his father's last residency cohort. Still, Noah said he was Clint Clifton's son above being a resident.

"The weird balancing act of dad and pastor was something my dad made very simple for himself. He was just my dad," Noah said. "He trusted God and his fellow elders at our church to pastor me, and he focused on raising me."

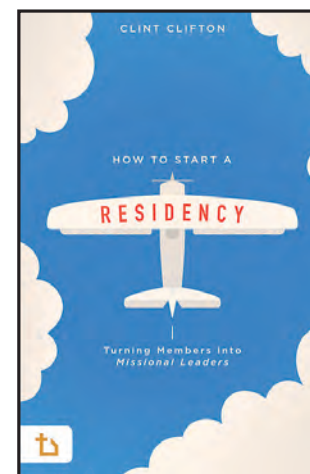
Noah said he had a front row seat to his father's ministry and learned much from watching his dad.

"The most impactful thing my dad did was to be a faithful Christian who loves Jesus and wanted to bring glory to God by making disciples who make disciples," he said.

"The impact of watching him do that is infinite for me and many others around the world."

Dozens of pastors, church planters and other leaders will leave similar legacies because Clint Clifton poured his life into and discipled them, and his final book will enable his wisdom to continue doing so.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was originally published by the North American Mission Board.*



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