

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Photo courtesy of Robert Mullins
Pastors attend a PassionTree Network retreat in North Carolina. The group “exists to encourage and equip men to fulfill their calling from the Lord as disciple-making pastors.”

Messengers pledge support for pastors through resolution

August is here, and with it comes the shift from camps, Vacation Bible School and other summer fun to the routine of the school year and all its activities.

Before we know it, store shelves will be filled with Halloween, Thanksgiving and even Christmas decor, and the fall calendar will be filled with events right on through to the end of the year.

Stress and burnout

In such a fast-paced culture, it's no wonder feelings of stress and burnout are so common. At work, home and church, we are all very busy. No one is immune from the weariness that can result from an overpacked schedule and navigating a variety of relationships. The strain affects us mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

In the past few years, pastors and ministry leaders especially have shouldered this burden — so much so that messengers to the 2023 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting adopted a resolution “On Needed Care and Support for Pastors and Ministry Leaders.”

Acknowledging the “difficult, unique and multifaceted challenges” church leaders face, the resolution text cites
(See ‘Holistic,’ page 9)

Real rest

Pastors retreat an intentional opportunity to encourage each other

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Right now, more than 500 Alabama Baptist churches are looking for a pastor. “Serving as a pastor just takes a toll, and many say they can’t do it anymore,” said Robert Mullins, longtime pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Elmore and soon-to-be executive director of the Madison Baptist Association.

“And the ones who are retiring or quitting, we’re not seeing them

regenerate through the younger generation.”

He said he believes a lot of that is because the pastors have burned out and “the younger generation sees that and doesn’t want any part of that.”

Time away is necessary

But Mullins, leader of PassionTree Network, a group that “exists to encourage and equip men to fulfill their calling from the Lord as disciple-making pastors,” said he believes that toll could be

countered in many cases with one thing — real rest. It’s always been a need, but the need was ramped up during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even now, “for whatever reason, there’s still a lot of stress and pressure,” Mullins said, adding that tensions in the Southern Baptist Convention aren’t helping anything.

That’s why he believes time for retreat is necessary.

“I think now more than ever, pastors need an opportunity to step away from their normal, everyday
(See ‘Connecting,’ page 9)

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Members of FBC Gadsden participate in a Sunday morning outdoor worship service as part of Reach Week, a ministry effort in the changing city.

Do you have a 'comeback' story? We'd love to hear it!

A comeback story doesn't exist without the "before," when things weren't so great, hard decisions were needed and a different frame of mind was required.

First Baptist Church was there in 2012 when Mat Alexander arrived, a fresh-faced 26-year-old in his first full-time pastorate.

Like many cities that grew out of industrialization, Gadsden began experiencing an economic downturn in the 1980s.

The decline grew in the 90s when the steel mill plant closed and Goodyear Tire and Rubber downsized by more than 1,300 jobs. Goodyear closed down for good in 2020. As employment opportunities decreased, drug addiction, crime and homelessness increased.

Starting point

FBC Gadsden remains in its historic downtown location with an easy view of the changes and challenges. There were about 100 in attendance when Alexander arrived. His daughter was the only baby in the nursery. However, there was a starting point on which to build.

"It was not a dead church," Alexander said. "People loved the Lord and wanted it to grow."

And that's what Alexander wants people to know. He was and is happy to be at First Baptist and to raise his family there.

Multigenerational benefits

"Much of that was because of the wonderful people we have," he said. "I want my kids to be around senior adults. They need that."

It was also important to communicate the benefits of a multigenerational church.

"I was able to present a vision plan for reaching families, to encourage them to visit the church," he said. Central to those efforts was "relentless gospel commitment."

Renovations began and things started to turn around, said church member and previous interim pastor Larry Fuhrman, a well-known minister and former local Christian school headmaster, who was a big supporter of Alexander and the church.

Now the city of Gadsden is undergoing a rebirth of its own, with new restaurants downtown and other improvements in the works.

Whatever the future looks like, FBC Gadsden will be involved and serving, Alexander said.

Read the full story from Baptist Press at tabonline.org/fbc-gadsden.

Does your church have a comeback story? Share it with us! Email information and photos to news@thealabamabaptist.org or visit our website, tabonline.org, and click on Story Ideas at the bottom of the page.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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

 jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

 @RashionalThts

Help us celebrate our half-birthday with extra prayers

Earlier this year, The Alabama Baptist marked 180 years of serving Alabama Baptists. In fact, we are currently at the half-year mark right in time for Read The Alabama Baptist Day, Aug. 20.

A lot has changed since 1843, but our mission remains the same: to equip you with resources and information — and serve with competence, compassion and fairness as a dependable news source.

You, and many others before you, have played a role in supporting this ministry that has now grown into a full media group.

We've expanded to include a digital edition for on-the-go reading, a variety of podcasts, a website hosting service for churches and even a second, national publication, The Baptist Paper.

Striving forward

Both The Baptist Paper and The Alabama Baptist continue to be available in print, and The Alabama Baptist is now the largest circulated newspaper in the state.

We plan to continue informing, inspiring and connecting Baptists for many more years to come. We know it's possible be-

cause of your partnership. You are the lifeblood of what we do. You are the people we serve.

We thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program. Your gifts support a slate of incredible ministry efforts, including TAB Media Group.

We also are grateful for your subscriptions to The Alabama Baptist, The Baptist Paper and all of our digital offerings. Without your support in this way, we wouldn't be able to do what we do.

No matter how you engage with the content produced by TAB Media Group, always keep us in your prayers. Pray for our

staff and our ministry efforts, that we would be tireless in communicating truth with compassion.

Sunday, Aug. 20, would be an excellent day to share this message with your Sunday School class, small group or even full church family.

Knowing Baptists across the state are praying for us, and especially on the same day, would be the best half-birthday gift you could give us.

We are here for you, Alabama Baptists, and we need your help along the journey. Together, we can move the Kingdom forward, one story at a time.

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Help keep Alabama's largest-circulated newspaper — **The Alabama Baptist** — strong and healthy.

Spread the word — Read TAB Day is Aug. 20.

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The Alabama Baptist

Your Voice



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

How can we find harmony in a culture of outrage?

By **Tony Martin**
The Baptist Record

In today's world we are surrounded by outrage. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have made it easier than ever for people to express their opinions and emotions in real time.

As Christians, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves and seek peace in all circumstances, but now outrage seems to be the norm. Whether it's social media or news outlets, individuals are quick to respond with anger and indignation over even the smallest issues.

This culture of outrage can ultimately divide us as a society, but as Christians we can take steps to move past it and find harmony.

Why it's harmful

The first step is to understand what outrage is and why it's harmful. It is a "feeling of anger or indignation caused by a perceived injustice or wrongdoing," and a natural response to something we feel is unfair or unjust.

However, when outrage becomes a way of life it can be damaging to mental health and relationships. It's easy to get caught up in the frenzy and start feeling outraged ourselves — even when we don't fully understand the issue — which can lead to negativity, divisiveness and even hate.

So how can we move past this culture of outrage and find harmony?

Here are a few ideas:

► **Focus on empathy and compassion.**

This is one of the best ways to move past outrage. When someone does something that offends us, it's important to take a step back and try to understand where the other person is coming from.

Maybe they have a different experience or perspective we haven't considered. Maybe they are struggling with something we don't know about.

By focusing on empathy and compassion, we start to bridge the divide

and find ways to work together toward a common goal. We can have productive conversations, listen to each other and find solutions that benefit everyone.

That's actually what Jesus taught — to respond in love (and be sure to speak truth with compassion).

► **Practice self-care.** We can limit our exposure to news and social media and focus on positive things. We can surround ourselves with people who lift us up and support us. We can find ways to take care of ourselves spiritually, physically and mentally.

► **Find common ground.** It's important to remember we are all human beings, with different experiences and perspectives. We don't have to agree on everything, but we can respect each other and find common ground. By doing so we can start to build bridges and find ways to work together toward a common goal.

Engaging in constructive dialogue is essential to finding common ground and moving beyond outrage. It's important to approach conversations with an open mind and a willingness to listen, just as Jesus listened to and engaged with people from all walks of life.

By sharing ideas and opinions we can come to a deeper understanding of each other and find solutions that benefit everyone.

► **Practice forgiveness.** Forgiveness is essential to finding harmony. Jesus taught us to forgive others, even when it's difficult. We must forgive those who have wronged us,

and ask for forgiveness from those we have wronged. By doing so we break down walls of anger and bitterness and create an environment of grace and mercy.

► **Focus on positive change.** Instead of getting caught up in outrage, take action to make a difference. Pray for leaders, volunteer in churches and communities and spread the love of Christ through acts of kindness and service.

Positive change

By focusing on positive change we shift our attention away from the negative toward the positive, creating a more harmonious environment for ourselves and those around us.

► **Take action.** Instead of just expressing outrage, find ways to reach out and make a difference. Volunteer, donate to and support causes in which you believe. By taking such action, we can bring about the positive impact we seek.

We are called as followers of Christ to respond to outrage with love, compassion and forgiveness, and set our focus on positive change. We can foster understanding and engage in constructive dialogue, even with those with whom we disagree. By doing so we create an environment of peace and harmony where individuals are encouraged to listen, share and ultimately find common ground.

Let's work toward a world where outrage is replaced by love, compassion, forgiveness and service, and where the love of Christ is at the center of all we do.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was originally published by The Baptist Record.



MARTIN

Letters to the Editor

The July 27 Back to Campus issue was timely and full of helpful advice for the times we are living in. The editorial on navigating today's technology by Carrie B. McWhorter was right on target. Thanks to the TAB team for all you do!

Pastor Philip Morris
Chulafinnee Baptist Church
Heflin

Read your Aug. 3 Rashional Thoughts editorial about the process of decision-making and was reminded that we can always repair a squeaky wheel we still have. We sometimes tire of complaints but typically they come from a place of wanting us to do better, and believing we can.

Jason Davis
Spruce Pine

“As a parent of faith, share your testimony with your student early and often.”

RYAN SCANTLING
College campus minister in Arkansas

God is doing amazing work in small churches all across America. Souls are being saved. Marriages and families are being healed. Disciples are being made. God is doing work in places that don't get tweeted about or podcasts recorded about.

Be encouraged. The gospel is on the move!

@DanielRitchie
X (formerly Twitter)

“I was like, ‘I can't stay here. I have to go!’ These are the people who need the gospel,” said **Kar-eyn Hellman**, a recent college graduate who is working with IMB missionaries to create content and strategies for using social media to connect with people in Buenos Aires.

“If Jesus can be stolen from in His ministry purse, any of our ministries can be,” said **Nathan Salsbery**, an executive vice president with the accounting firm CapinCrouse LLP. Salsbery during a webinar titled “Fraud Case Studies and Controls to Protect Your Organization.”

“It still all comes back down to the fact that we can do all this, but if we're not teaching the gospel through it, we're missing [the point],” said **Nikki Young**, who shared about the creative approaches of the children's ministry of New Beginnings Baptist Church in Longview, Texas.

Keep studying Scripture. Don't discount a book just because you think you know all the stories in it or have read it over and over again. There's always something new for God to teach us through Scripture.

Jessica Ingram
the-scroll.com
“Finding ‘new’ truth”

“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,” said **Sandy Wisdom-Martin**, executive director, national Woman's Missionary Union, on the 135th anniversary of WMU.

“Sometimes we get so close to the religious work that our hearts

can be far from the heart of Jesus, and we don't mourn what Jesus mourns,” said **Phil Waldrep**, an evangelist from Alabama.

Satan “is blinding a generation to the truth of their identity. To reach them will take compassion,” said **Katie McCoy**, director of women's ministry for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.



Wholesome entertainment as outreach

By **Brice F. Marsh**
Member, Central Baptist Church, Trussville

Is it appropriate to schedule entertainment programs such as Christian comedians, bluegrass music groups or southern gospel quartets in the sanctuary of a church?

Since the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, many faithful churchgoers have yet to return to regular attendance. Many newcomers to our neighborhoods and subdivisions have yet to be introduced to a new church home. And increasing numbers in the younger generations have never attended church at all.

Sadly, an invitation by a visitation team or an announcement of a revival is not likely to attract these people to come to church.

Having a program of wholesome entertainment to entice new people to visit our church is perfectly good, I think, in the sight of God.

Once they come and feel the warmth and love within our fellowship ... they will be drawn to come back to worship with us on Sunday. Then God and the Holy Spirit can minister to them according to their spiritual needs.

We should demonstrate that our church is our happy place. They may be searching for a new happy place themselves.

And let's not forget these entertainment programs are delightful to our members as well.

God gives us some guidance in Nehemiah 12:27. Regarding the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, Scripture says “they celebrated joyfully with singing, cymbals, harps and lyres.”

Philippians 4:8, Psalm 95:1 Genesis 4:20–21 also point to God's gift of music and the things we should enjoy.

God has a sense of humor and we are made in His image. Let's have fun in ways that will be pleasing to Him.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of Southeast Alabama Baptist Association

Rehobeth Baptist Church in Dothan hosted a night of musical worship July 30 featuring more than 110 choir members representing at least seven area churches. The event was organized by worship leaders serving churches in Southeast Alabama Baptist Association. John Thomas, SABA mission strategist, said the event represents the association's mission: "Churches serving churches to advance the gospel." Read more at tabonline.org/saba-worship. (TAB)

Southwestern sees uptick in enrollment, giving

Speaking to personnel Aug. 9 ahead of the fall term, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President David Dockery announced slight increases in enrollment and unrestricted giving during the 2022–2023 academic year, which concluded July 31.

Enrollment for the 2022–2023 academic year totaled 3,574, an increase from the previous year of 171 students and 1,583 credit hours taught, said Dockery, whose investiture as the seminary's 10th president will take place Aug. 22.

Unrestricted giving for 2022–2023 came in slightly more than \$3.2 million, compared to \$2.8 million in the previous academic year, he said.

Read more about Southwestern's finances, enrollment and accreditation concerns at tabonline.org/swbts-concerns. (TAB)

Kidnapped aid worker, child released in Haiti

The American nurse and her child who were abducted in Haiti on July 27 have been freed.

The Christian organization, El Roi Haiti, confirmed the safe release of Alix Dorsainvil and her child Aug. 9 in a statement, expressing gratitude and joy for their rescue.

Authorities from both the U.S. and Haiti had been collaborating to secure their release. Details about the release were not available at press time.

Dorsainvil worked at El Roi's ministry site near Port-au-Prince where the abduction occurred. She is married to El Roi's ministry director, Sandro Dorsainvil.

The U.S. Department of State has issued a travel advisory for Haiti due to rising violence and civil unrest, particularly widespread kidnappings. (TAB)

Persecuted church

31 Nigerian Christians killed in June as violent year hits halfway mark

ABUJA, Nigeria — Thirty-one Christians were killed in a matter of days in June in the Nigerian states of Plateau and Taraba.

Morning Star News reported that extremists are suspected in the slayings of 11 Christians in Plateau state and 20 in Taraba state, all killed in attacks on multiple villages in late June.

"[O]ur communities are now under the firm occupation of terrorists and herdsmen," said Isaiah Magaji Jirapye, a pastor and chairman of the Taraba State Chapter of Christian Association of Nigeria.

In the past 24 months, more than 200 Christians have been killed and about 5,000 homes destroyed in the town of Takum and in areas nearby, sources told Morning Star.

In a statement, six Christian legislators of the Taraba State House of Assembly said, "[Some] villages have been overrun by bandits and terrorists who have forcefully ejected the Christian inhabitants and turned their farmlands into grazing fields, banditry camps and safe havens for other criminal activities."

Nigeria is No. 6 on Open Doors' 2023 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a

Christian and leads the world in the number of Christians killed for their faith or abducted.

Contributing to the violence are the nation's high unemployment, poverty rate and the misappropriation of resources.



Unsplash.com

Group disrupts Indonesian church's service for second time in one month

SURABAYA, Indonesia — A group disgruntled about the presence of a Christian congregation in the community disrupted a worship service while police watched.

Morning Star News reports that Muslims upset with the congregation being in a Muslim-majority area disrupted the July 2 worship service of Mawar Sharon Church at a café in Setia village in North Sumatra province.

Demonstrations against the church preceded the disruption of the worship time. It was the second time in a month that Muslims had halted the congregation's worship time.

Indonesia is No. 33 on Open Doors' 2023 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

▶ **Erskine G. “Don” Donald**, a longtime historian and previous commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, died Aug. 10. He was 83.

Donald studied aerospace engineering at the University of Alabama and worked for NASA for 30 years. At the time of his death, he worked as a realtor for Great Southern Land Company.

In addition to his work with the ABHC, Donald served as deacon chairman at Bethsaida Baptist Church in Furman and was instrumental in moving the first home of The Alabama Baptist to the church grounds in 2022 for preservation as part of the Furman National Historic District.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Mary Charles; three sons; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

▶ **Douglas “Doug” R. Turner**, who served as pastor of several Alabama Baptist churches during more than five decades of ministry, died July 9. He was 75.



TURNER

Turner was licensed to the ministry in 1964 by his home church, Spring Bank Baptist Church, Chatom. During his more than 50 years of ministry he served as pastor of Yellow Pine Baptist Church, Fruitdale; Fruitdale Baptist Church; Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery; First Baptist Guin;

First Baptist Church Roanoke; Sweetwater Baptist Church; and Black Creek Baptist Church. He also served as associate pastor of First Baptist Troy and as a trustee of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Turner earned a bachelor’s degree in religious education at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; a master’s in religious education at New Orleans Seminary; and a doctorate in religious education from the International Bible Seminary.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 30 years, Verna, and is survived by his wife, Shelia; three sons and 10 grandchildren.

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

▶ **The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will host a retirement reception Aug. 20 at 11:30 a.m. honoring Susan Harrison for her 17 years of ministry as the church’s administrative assistant. Attendees are invited to bring a card. Bill McCall is pastor.

CLEBURNE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pine Grove Baptist Church, Heflin**, celebrated its 175th anniversary June 11. Special music was provided by the choir and a special trio — Connie Moore, church pianist, and her children, Amy Minter and Stewart Moore. Sonja Adams (left) presented a commemorative plaque from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission to pastor James Owens (right). Following lunch, afternoon singing featured the Sounds of Jericho quartet.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Campbell

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Oak Grove Baptist Church, Munford**, celebrated its 125th anniversary July 9. Pastor Raymond Miller (center) shared a special message after Chosen Anointed and Strings for Him led in worship. Miller also joined Stan Albright (left), director of missions for Coosa River Association, and deacons Tommy Hand (second from right) and Mike Morrow (right), for the presentation given by Roger Willmore (second from left) on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Willmore also serves as director of missions for Calhoun Baptist Association. The celebration concluded with a potluck lunch.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Campbell

EAST LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Don Downs** is the new associational mission strategist for **East Liberty Baptist Association**. He has served in various roles in churches in Florida and Alabama, and most recently as senior pastor of West End Baptist Church, Valley, for more than 16 years. Downs holds a bachelor’s degree in theology from the Baptist College of Florida and a master’s of religion from Liberty University. He and his wife, Donna, have two daughters.



DOWNS

MADISON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Bob Wilson** is the new lead pastor of **Meridianville First Baptist Church**.

He has served churches in Florida, Tennessee, Nevada and Michigan. He holds a doctor of educational ministry and a master of theological studies from Midwestern Seminary. Additionally, he earned a bachelor’s in biblical and theological studies from Boyce College of Southern Seminary. He and his wife, Christa, have six children.



WILSON

TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Concord Baptist Church, Notasulga**, will host its 184th homecoming Aug. 20. The day’s celebration begins with music from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. followed by special guest preacher Billy Short, pastor of Newsong Community Church, Opelika. A potluck dinner will be served at noon and southern gospel groups will sing from 1 to 3 p.m. Kevin Johnson is interim pastor.

UM’s Burnett to retire in May 2024

Lonnie A. Burnett, president of the University of Mobile, announced Aug. 8 that he plans to retire at the end of the 2023–2024 academic year (May 30, 2024).

Burnett, who became the fifth president of UM in 2019, made the announcement at the conclusion of the opening session of the institution’s annual faculty and staff convocation gathering.

A 1979 graduate of what was then Mobile College, Burnett has spent 45 years working in all levels of education, the last 20 at the university where he has been a professor of history, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and, for the last five years, president.



BURNETT

Burnett said when he became president he had several goals for the university, including providing a quality academic, spiritual and social experience for students; ensuring financial stability; and maintaining positive relations with Alabama Baptists.

He said he is proud these goals and others have been realized, even while navigating the school through a global pandemic and the resulting disruptions in the national economy and workforce.

“It has been the honor of a lifetime,” Burnett said. “The people I have had the good fortune to work with, as well as the exceptional students I had the privilege to teach in my time here, have made this a wonderful experience.” (UM)

TAKING CARE

Connecting faith, health and wellness in the life of the believer

By Julie Donovan
The Alabama Baptist

Scroll the internet or social media, and you will find many tips and tricks on how to maintain good health.

The secular world often focuses on longevity and appearance as the benefits of wellness, but believers have an even greater “why” when it comes to healthy living.

Think of it this way: Have you ever borrowed something from your neighbor or a friend? Did you mistreat it? Probably not. Normally, if you borrow something from a friend or a family member, you take good care of it, keep it safe and strive to return it in the same or better condition.

Everything we have belongs to the Lord, so taking care of our bodies, souls, minds and time as best we can is an act of stewardship.

Let’s start with why health is important.

Temple of the Spirit

In the Old Testament, God instructed King Solomon to build a temple. God’s presence dwelt in the temple for many years, but when Christ died on the cross, the veil in the temple that separated God from everyone else was torn (Matt. 27:51).

The Spirit of God who resided in the temple now resides in those who believe in Christ. Galatians 2:20 reads, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is

no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

When you repented of your sins and placed your faith in Christ, you gave your soul and everything else to God. John 3:30 reminds us of this truth: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

This may seem overwhelming, but biblical health and wellness is a chance to strengthen your relationship with the Lord. Glorifying the Lord instead of ourselves is not an easy approach to health and wellness because our hearts desire the things of this world, which may not be best for us physically or emotionally.

Christ calls us to be stronger than our physical desires. This does not mean we have to be supermodels and bodybuilders, nor does it mean that your health will be perfect because of your strong faith. It does mean we should strive to take care of our bodies as God’s temple (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

What does that look like? In a series of upcoming articles, we’ll explore the physical and spiritual elements of wellness from several different angles, including mental health, spiritual health, physical health and the powerful benefits of awe.

FIRST OF 5 IN A SERIES



Photo courtesy of Robert Mullins

Robert Mullins (center) and other pastors spend time together during a recent pastors retreat.

Connecting with God, other pastors

(continued from page 1) routine, to step into a different perspective — maybe even a different place — and rest,” he said. “Jesus is the model for this. He often withdrew to the wilderness to pray. Retreating for rest is a very biblical model, but most pastors do not practice it,” he said.

That’s why PassionTree held its first retreat for pastors in 2014 and has continued to hold one every year since then in partnership with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

“We started with seven pastors in a cabin in North Carolina, and this year we had 30 pastors from all over the country,” Mullins said of the retreat, called The Summit.

No agenda

“Rest and refreshment are cornerstones of the retreat. It’s not a conference; it’s not about tips and tricks. It’s about you connecting with God and other pastors.”

In the afternoons, there’s nothing on the schedule — pastors can go for hikes, take naps in

hammocks, go fishing, whatever they want to do.

The setup is intentional; Mullins wants to create an environment for pastors to completely unplug.

No work

“The encouragement is just not to do any work — sermon writing isn’t allowed,” Mullins said. “It’s a little difficult at the beginning for first-time guys, but they almost race back after that first time.”

Larry Hyche, who focuses on men’s spiritual development at the SBOM, said The Summit is a “very unique type of retreat.”

“It has been a huge encouragement to me personally and to several others I know,” he said. “In ministry you end up with lots of stories and scars and all kinds of stuff. To be able to have a group of guys you can confide in — it’s extremely valuable.”

Brandon Fomby, pastor of East Tallassee Baptist Church, said for him, the retreat is a “reset button.”

It’s made up of “some life-giving realities that pastors need,” he said. “It’s a wonderful thing.”

For more information, visit passiontree.org/events.

‘Holistic well-being’ necessary for ministry leaders to thrive

(continued from page 1) some startling statistics from Pastoral Care Inc.:

▶ 42% of pastors are thinking of leaving the ministry in the next year.

▶ 80% of pastors believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families.

▶ 75% of pastors have reported a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.

▶ 70% of pastors do not have someone they consider to be a close friend.

The committee-generated resolution affirms the importance of “godly relationships, counseling, rest and recreation that contributes to the overall wellness of pastors and other ministry leaders” and encourages them “not to bear their burdens in isolation, but to seek help when needed.”

“Our church pastors ... they get the joy of serving us, but a lot of times they bear all of the collective hurts of their congregations, whether it’s marriages that are falling apart, people have lost loved ones,” said Dani Bryson, a member of the Resolutions Committee. “I mean, they’ve

walked through all of our traumas with us, and that’s a wonderful gift to their congregation(s), but it can also really take a toll on a pastor.”

Bryson, a member of First Baptist Church in Dickson, Tennessee, threw out the initial idea that later evolved into the resolu-



Photo courtesy of Robert Mullins

The holistic well-being of ministry leaders “helps them lead God’s people faithfully,” a recent SBC resolution states.

tion. Committee members Kristen Ferguson and Tony Dockery helped flesh it out before the full committee finalized the text.

A burden for pastors

“This was a burden on many people’s hearts in the committee,” said Ferguson, a member of 11th Street Baptist Church in Upland,

California, where her husband serves as pastor. “We’re all very aware of the reality that COVID put our churches and our ministry staff and our pastors through significant trials and burdens. ... Coming out of that, we felt that our pastors and our ministry leaders need more support.”

Dockery, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in La Puente, California, said the resolution is “critically important,” aiming “to help pastors come out of the shadows and just get the concern and the care that they need, and also to en-

courage churches to support and help their pastors to know it’s okay to seek out resources to help (them) negotiate those challenges.”

In passing the resolution, messengers acknowledged that the holistic well-being of pastors and other ministry leaders “helps them lead God’s people faithfully” and affirmed “the importance of godly relationships, counseling, rest and recreation that contributes to the overall wellness” of those in church leadership.

Resolving to encourage pastors and ministry leaders to seek help, and exhorting churches and ministries to “neither ignore nor stigmatize the internal and external struggles of ministry leaders,” messengers committed to “promote a culture of holistic flourishing” for leaders at all levels.

‘Launch pad’

While resolutions are not binding on convention churches, Ferguson said they can be a “launch pad.”

She hopes God will use the resolution “to encourage churches to be more aware of the burdens of ministry” and lead them to ways they can support their pastors and ministry leaders better. (Reporting by Baptist Press, Carrie Brown McWhorter contributed)



Photo courtesy of Robert Mullins

“Retreating for rest is a very biblical model, but most pastors do not practice it,” said Robert Mullins, longtime pastor and head of PassionTree Network.

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Baptists' collegiate ministries reach 'important missions field'

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Chad Stillwell said he was at a low point the day he walked across the commuter parking lot at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and was offered a Coke. "I wasn't in church and was very far from God and depressed," said Stillwell, who was a pre-med student at the time.

When students from UAB's Baptist Campus Ministries offered him a free drink, he asked what the catch was.

"I said, 'Do I have to sign up for a credit card?' And they said, 'No, we're just here to let you know God loves you and He has a plan for your life,'" he said.

That struck Stillwell. Before he knew it, he had gone back with some of them to the BCM building to talk about it more.

"Within days I was attending Bible studies and worship, and within months I was a summer missionary going out to serve," he said.

'Critical' window

Within years, he was serving on the BCM student leadership team and wrestling with a call to full-time ministry. His Baptist campus ministers talked him through that, just as they had talked with him about his faith in Jesus the day he took that free soda in the parking lot.

Now Stillwell serves as director of collegiate ministry for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, leading the same type of ministry that changed his life years ago.



Students who are part of Baptist Campus Ministries at the University of North Alabama gather April 24 for worship and to share testimonies of how God changed their lives during the 2022-23 school year. UNA's BCM celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

"I'm completely grateful to Baptists in Alabama who sacrificed and gave and continue to provide ministry so college students like me could hear the gospel and grow as disciples and figure out God's calling on their lives," he said. "There's this four-to-five-year window in our culture where people make most of the decisions that chart the direction of their lives. It's critical we reach them with the gospel during the years when they decide what careers they'll have, when they'll marry and what they'll do for the next 30, 40 or 50 years."

That's exactly why Steven Thompson — who was one of Stillwell's campus ministers at UAB before moving on to Auburn University —

has also invested a large share of his life in campus ministry. He believes in it.

College students, he said, "are at a vulnerable age and most open to learning about themselves and the world."

Wrestling with faith

Thompson, who retired in summer 2022 after 26 years as senior Baptist campus minister at Auburn, said some of the most joyful times have been watching students come in as freshmen, wrestle with their faith and discover what faith in Jesus is to them personally.

"It's also been fascinating to see students come to grips with 'how can

I harness this vocational calling — teaching, medicine, whatever it might be — how can I leverage that for spreading the gospel?'"

Mike Nuss said those joys have been repeated over and over in the century since collegiate ministry got its start in Alabama.

Finding their feet

"In general, one of the things I've loved most is seeing students get it. I love when you see the lights go on," said Nuss, who also retired in summer 2022 after 22 years as director of the office of collegiate and student ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Before that, he served 22 years as a campus minister.

For him and Thompson, their early years of serving with Baptist Campus Ministries — or Baptist Student Union, as it was previously called — involved helping students who grew up in church find their feet in their faith and make it their own. It felt familiar — it had been Nuss' own story as a student.

While studying at the University of Montevallo, Nuss — who grew up in church — was mentored by a Baptist campus minister and shown what it looks like to take an active part in ministry. He continued to see that as a primary spiritual need for students as he began his work as a campus minister.

And he saw that illustrated at the University of Alabama BCM's 100th anniversary celebration in April 2022.

"They asked in the meeting, 'If you were a summer missionary here, stand up.' And a lot of folks stood up.



Students from the BCMs of Alabama State University and Tuskegee University share the gospel with clients at a Send Relief Tour dental fair hosted by Strong Tower at Washington Park in Montgomery. Campus minister Zach Beasley helped start the two BCMs in 2019 and 2021, respectively.

'If you met your spouse here, stand up.' Lots of folks," Nuss said.

But then when the group was asked to stand if they were saved through BCM, not as many stood.

"I think the focus on evangelism has evolved more in recent years, not just under my leadership, but I think Dr. Lance is a key factor in that," he said.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said the college or university campus is "one of the most important missions fields."

"Students from numerous countries come to Alabama campuses for a college education.

Through collegiate ministries, we have an opportunity to help their lives find a Christ-centered direction," Lance said. "Our collegiate ministers are dedicated to the cause of sharing the gospel with students, training them to share their faith and helping collegians from all walks of life be disciplined in Christ. There is no greater calling than to reach people for Christ, especially young adults in this very important time in their lives."

It's become a critical calling to a "critical missions field" — Nuss and Thompson both said they've seen more and more students who have never had any exposure to the gospel.

And Nuss said he's heard statistics that show that as much as 95% of college campuses are unreached.

"Not to disparage missions work in any other part of the world in any way, but I think we have our work cut out for us right here, with 300,000-plus college students in Alabama," he said. "If the statistics are true and even 90 to 95% of those students don't have a relationship with Jesus, that's a pretty overwhelming task."

As Nuss and other leaders have watched the need grow, they've also watched the resources for collegiate ministry shrink at the national level.

"I'm praying that Southern Baptists understand the critical need for us to be on the campus reaching students, disciplining students, mobilizing students," he said.

Now the collegiate ministry assignment at the SBC level rests with the North American Mission Board, and Southern Baptist collegiate ministry happens in a grassroots organization of campus ministers, state office leaders, the mission boards and Woman's Missionary Union who do the best they can without a specific funding source for this ministry.

But Nuss said in Alabama, collegiate ministry has been well resourced, and he's grateful.

"Things are going great here," he said. "The support of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program has been phenomenal."

For the 17 Baptist campus ministers scattered around the state, that means they can focus on ministry and not have to take time to raise support, he said.

Planting churches

It also means Nuss and his team have been able to continue to adapt conferences and resources to help high school students connect with Baptist campus ministers before they go to college so that they aren't lost in the transition.

"More recently, I've loved the advent of collegiate church planting," Nuss said.

For instance, in 2015, Highland Baptist Church in Florence turned its college worship service — called The Well — into a church plant called The Well Church Florence. In the years since, several other churches have been planted in The Well Network, with the goal of having 16 locations near campuses around the state by 2026.

"The Church at the Oaks in Tuscaloosa (a church plant in The Well Network) baptized 22 students in 2021, and that was I think the largest number of baptisms from a new church plant in Alabama," Nuss said.

He said he's "really enjoyed being a part of helping churches and associations understand the need for more churches who are missionally focused on the college campus."

The SBOM collegiate and student ministries office now has a contract worker who focuses on resourcing those church plants.

It's important to have all the different ministries — BCMs, missionally focused churches, new church plants — working together because "there are still thousands of students who need to be reached," Nuss said. "You can't rest on your laurels in this ministry, it changes fast. What students are doing and what students need is constantly changing. You have to have campus ministers who are a bit entrepreneurial in their spirit who are willing to push against barriers, and sometimes that's uncomfortable."

He said he's thankful for Alabama Baptists investing in this ministry for the past century, because it's part of the Great Commission, and tomorrow's church leaders are found on college campuses, he said.

He's also excited about the Timothy Initiative, which just started its second year and focuses on training college juniors and seniors for ministry and missions.

Discipling, mobilizing

"We want to mobilize them for service," Nuss said.

Ben Edfeldt, current director of the SBOM office of collegiate and student ministries, said he and others across the state are seeing that happen, through Timothy Initiative and other means.

"When we think about Alabama BCMs, we want to see students disciplined and mobilized," he said. "We know of students who when they walked on campus didn't have a relationship with Christ, and God used the ministry of BCM and their fellow students through His mercy and grace, and now they feel compelled to go and proclaim to people beyond their campus."



Photo courtesy of The Well Network. Malachi Cole, pastor of Banner Church in Jacksonville, baptizes a college student May 7. Banner Church is part of The Well Network.



Students and Baptist Student Union leaders from Alabama attend Collegiate Week at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina in 1952.

Someone You Should Know

JUANITA TIDWELL

By Leigh Pritchett
The Alabama Baptist

Ask 100-year-old Frances Juanita “Nita” Thompson Tidwell about her calling in life, and her response will be that it was “to raise my family.” She was a stay-at-home mom who never employed a babysitter. For 25 years, she was a school crossing guard in Montgomery. In her 60s, she started a career at Parisian (which became Belk), retiring just four years ago. At church, she was a Sunday School class secretary, active in Woman’s Missionary Union and, with husband Neil, taught children and teens in what was then called “training union.”

Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?

A: My daddy’s oldest sister, Aunt Alta Thompson Claybourne. She led me to Christ when I was 7 years old. We lived in a small town in Mississippi and she was always involved in church. She was such an inspiration to me, to lead me to Christ. She was a living example of what a Christian woman should be. She was always there for me when I needed her. I appreciate all the time she spent with me in my childhood and adulthood.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: To be an example for my family and to do things to help them when they need help. To be supportive of my children and my grand-

MINISTRY:
Wife for 65 years and stay-at-home mom



CHURCH NAME:
Capitol Heights Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

children and great-grandchildren. To be close to them and stay in touch and be a friend to them. I feel like God has been strong in my presence every day. I am so blessed because I have four children (one deceased), eight grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?

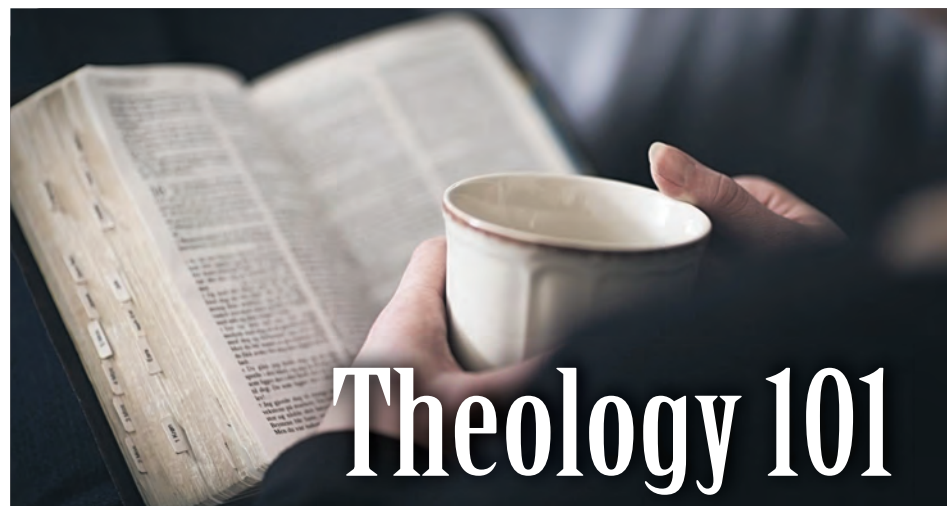
A: “Victory in Jesus,” “In the Garden,” “Amazing Grace” — I like the old songs. There’s nothing like those. The old songs just seem so close to my heart. They bring tears to my eyes sometimes when I hear them. I guess I’m just old-fashioned.

Q: Does your church have any special traditions that mean a lot to you? What are they?

A: They keep up with old traditions to keep up with the founding of the church. We have founded other churches and supported them. There is a deacon in my church who keeps up with me every week. I think it’s so important to keep in touch with homebound people and keep them connected.

DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS Someone You Should Know?

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to news@thealabamabaptist.org.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Justification

Basis of Justification

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

That God justifies forgiven sinners is a rather startling doctrine. In Romans 4:5, the declaration is that God “justifies the ungodly.” This statement means that God knowingly treats ungodly persons as though they had not sinned by accepting them immediately into His holy family and ultimately into His perfect heaven.

The basis on which God takes such action is declared in Romans 5:6, where the Bible asserts that “Christ died for the ungodly.”

In thinking about such a declaration, one might ask, “Who are the ungodly?” Romans 5:8 declares, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” We are the ungodly.

Fully accepted

The only basis for the removal of human guilt and God’s full acceptance of us is the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Romans 5:9 expresses this with the opening phrase, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood.”

When we focus on the cross, we are correct in thinking that the just One has died for unjust ones, the innocent One has died for the guilty ones, and the perfect One has died for the imperfect ones.

Not only has the action of the innocent One been effective potentially for everyone, but the action of one — namely Adam — has been effective actually for everyone. This latter truth is

declared in Romans 5:19: “For as by one man’s disobedience many have been made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” God justifies us by passing on to us for Christ’s sake the verdict which Christ’s obedience merited.

Favor bestowed

By His perfect obedience, Christ was not guilty before God. On the basis of Christ’s death on the cross, God declares repentant and believing sinners not guilty and thereby accepts us into full favor with Himself. Only Jesus has ever lived up to the declaration He uttered at the time of His baptism: “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

In the history of our planet, only one person has ever lived a perfect life. Through Christ, repentant sinners can find full acceptance with God and admission into His heaven.

God no longer counts us guilty because Christ has taken the legal consequences of our sin upon Himself on our behalf. The Bible assures us that God is “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

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.



‘Delivery system for God’s Word’

SBOM Intentional Leader series helps pastors grow in preaching skills

By Michael Brooks
The Alabama Baptist

Hershael York, professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said he loves to “talk shop” with other preachers.

York, who is also pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Kentucky, spoke to Alabama Baptist pastors at the fourth in a series of Intentional Leader events at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions facility in Prattville on July 27.

York shared tips and encouragement with those gathered, noting that even after decades in ministry, he still sees ways to improve.

‘Still learning’

The act of preaching is never “mystical” or “instantaneous,” he said.

“I always have an overwhelming sense of failure after I preach, and my sermons never equal what I aspire to,” he said. “I encourage myself to know I’m still learning, and next week I have another shot at it!”

York said preaching has three major components: the text, the sermon and the delivery.

“We Southern Baptists have a high view of Scripture, and we believe Paul’s word about it being profitable,” he said. “We study to understand the text and get it right, using proper tools to understand the historical, cultural, religious and geographical context.

Importance of study

“We also seek to understand the genre of Scripture since there is narrative, poetry and drama in the Bible. We must learn what the authors meant.”

York said sometimes pastors choose a “nifty, lifty” Bible text and use it as a departure point.

“I’m not against this and I’ve done it,” he said with a laugh.

“My father had a great sermon about Christian parenting. He took Jacob’s word from Genesis 33 when he said, ‘the children are tender, and I must lead them gently.’ The original context had nothing to do with par-



Photo by Doug Rogers

Hershael York, professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, speaks at the fourth in a series of Intentional Leader events at the SBOM facility in Prattville on July 27.

enting; it was Jacob’s excuse not to go with Esau since he was still uneasy about this.

“Dad used the text and always did a great job with the idea that our children need gentle guidance. However, I think we should tell the main point even if we dwell on a minor point.”

York said the sermon must show not only the meaning of Scripture, but also the application.

Value of application

“The sermon must have a proposition,” he explained. “This is the main thing you want people to do based on the text. Then you can have two points — or eight points depending on the

text — but I think every point should have an application, such as the writer of Hebrews does with his frequent use of ‘Let us.’”

The sermon is much more than a “data dump,” York said. It must touch people in their everyday lives.

“Application is one way we claim our listeners’ attention,” he said. “I don’t think

people reject our message. In most cases, they just don’t hear it. We compete with so many distractions, but we are the delivery system for God’s Word.”

He urged pastors to be “natural” in the pulpit and encouraged attendees to keep working to honor Christ and Scripture on Sundays.

York said two research tools he especially appreciates are “Explore The Book” by J. Sidlow Baxter and Logos Bible Software.

For more information on Intentional Leader events, contact Ken Allen, SBOM director of LeaderCare, at 800-264-1225, extension 2210, or by email at kallen@alsbom.org.

The final event in the 2023 Intentional Leader series will be Sept. 25 and will feature Sam Rainer, president of Church Answers.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

LIFT! event provides resources for church worship ministers

The LIFT! Defining Worship Conference has a simple purpose — to worship God with all of our heart, mind and soul, and give you tools to take that worship back to your church with fresh tools to meet your church's needs.

This event is created for worship leaders, lay leaders, worship teams, pastors and more to join together and rediscover the love and importance of leading worship. It's also a great time for networking and fellowship with people doing ministry similar to yours in their own churches. LIFT! features



SBOM photo

corporate worship plus breakout sessions to choose from. The conference will be held Sept. 28, 9:30–2 p.m., at First Baptist

Church Trussville. The cost is \$35 and includes lunch. To register, visit alabamaworship.org/lift.

Tools for personnel committees

Do you serve on a church personnel committee? The Personnel Management Conference — set for Sept. 19, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at the State Board of Missions in Prattville — can give you some tools to help you serve more effectively.

The conference can help you better understand the

committee's role and how to provide for the financial and working needs of church personnel. It can also help you think through the process of adding new staff members.

The cost is \$15 per person and includes lunch.

To register, visit alsbom.org/personnel.

To register, visit alsbom.org/personnel or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



Fortify event to help teen guys strengthen faith, respond to culture

The world can be tough on teen guys. Fortify, set for Aug. 26 at Westwood Baptist Church in Alabaster, strengthens guys in 7th–12th grades with

biblical teaching. The goal is to reveal their Christ-centered identity in response to the confusing messages of today's culture.

The speaker will be Jason

Cook, senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church near Atlanta. The cost is \$20.

For more information, visit alabamamen.org/fortify.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad below for \$1 per word. For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 200, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org. To place an online classified ad for \$9.99/month, visit thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds.

CHURCH POSITIONS

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 by Aug. 31.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

New Beginnings Baptist Church, a small congregation in Hayden, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send inquiries/resumés to: sonyahumber@gmail.com.

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 resumés or inquiries to: cappslly@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

South Hamilton Baptist Church in Hamilton, Ala., is prayerfully accepting resumés, 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.

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.

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.

OTHER POSITIONS

PREGNANCY CENTER DIRECTOR —

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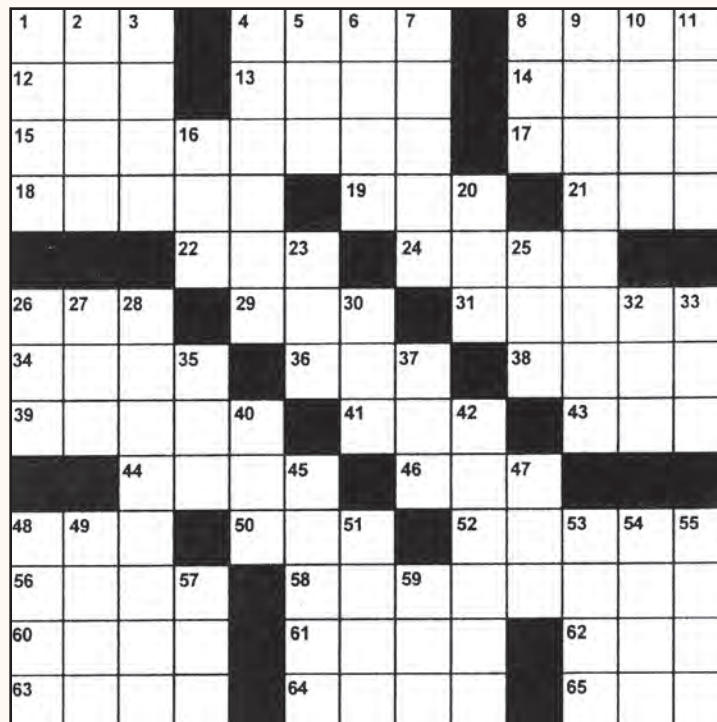
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CHRISTIAN Crossword



ACROSS

- 1. A son of Jacob. (Gen. 30:11)
- 4. King or emperor.
- 8. Opened slightly.
- 12. 52 in Roman numerals.
- 13. Southern vegetable.
- 14. Thy will be _____. (Matt. 6:10)
- 15. ____ him as a brother. (2 Thess. 3:15)
- 17. A son of Seth. (Gen. 4:26)
- 18. Wonders and mighty _____. (2 Cor. 12:12)
- 19. Take, ____: this is my body. (1 Cor. 11:24)
- 21. Go to the ____, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- 22. If a man ____ a pit. (Ex. 21:33)
- 24. Pants' support.
- 26. Because Judas had the _____. (John 13:29)
- 29. Abraham's nephew. (Gen. 11:27)
- 31. A prophet of Judah.
- 34. My God. (Mark 15:34)
- 36. Daniel was in one. (Dan. 6:16)
- 38. Foundation.
- 39. That which I do I ____ not. (Rom. 7:15)
- 41. Cain lived here. (Gen. 4:16)
- 43. Peter and John used one in their work.
- 44. Combat between two persons.
- 46. A brother offended is harder to be ____ than a strong city. (Prov. 18:19)
- 48. Kind of tree.
- 50. Paper sack.
- 52. She answered the door when Peter knocked. (Acts 12:13)
- 56. Red and Dead.
- 58. To bind up the brokenhearted, to ____ liberty. (Isa. 61:1)
- 60. Cover (a road).



By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

- 61. Abraham's wife, _____. (2 Pet. 3:6)
- 62. Hot or cold drink.
- 63. Simmer or boil slowly.
- 64. Falls away or declines.
- 65. Standard. (abbr.)
- ye that labour. (Matt. 11:28)
- 28. Silver and _____. none. (Acts 3:6; 2 words)
- 30. ____ little Indians.
- 32. ____ not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. (Gal. 5:13)
- 33. His servants ____ him and told him. (John 4:51)
- 35. Debt note. (abbr.)
- 37. ____ I know in part. (1 Cor. 13:12)
- 40. Spider's home.
- 42. A seamstress who was brought back to life. (Acts 9)
- 45. Slip gradually, drift into.
- 47. National Hockey League. (abbr.)
- 48. The poison of ____ is under their lips. (Rom. 3:13)
- 49. Make a mercy ____ of pure gold. (Ex. 25:17)
- 51. Snatch.
- 53. Grain. (plural)
- 54. Eating plan.
- 55. Will ____ rob God? (Mal. 3:8; 2 words)
- 57. Stitch.
- 59. Sphere.

DOWN

- 1. We will rejoice and be ____ in it. (Ps. 118:24)
- 2. Assistant.
- 3. Ten cent coin.
- 4. A common childhood illness, ____itis.
- 5. Slide on snow.
- 6. Funeral vehicle, he ____.
- 7. She hid the spies sent out by Joshua. (Josh. 2:1)
- 8. A sweetened beverage.
- 9. A son of king Saul. (1 Sam. 13:16)
- 10. He that heareth the word, and ____ with joy receiveth it. (Matt. 13:20)
- 11. I will give you _____. (Matt. 11:28)
- 16. Unusual.
- 20. The ____ Commandments.
- 23. The Supreme Being.
- 25. Experiment room. (abbr.)
- 26. Nickname for Beatrice.
- 27. Come unto me, ____

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

The Disciple Making Leader

Looking for a way to challenge your church to reach your community?

At The Disciple Making Leader, discover Jesus' strategy for raising up leaders, growing the church and multiplying a movement.

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ETHEREDGE

This conference will be held Aug. 21, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., at Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile, and Aug. 22, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.,

To register, visit makingdisciplesal.org/events or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne. Craig Etheredge — pastor of CrossCreek Church in Colleyville, Texas, and author of "The Disciple Making Leader" — will be the guest speaker.

To register, visit makingdisciplesal.org/events.

Start your church's own ESL ministry

An English as a Second Language ministry can be a great way to make connections with internationals in your area. If your church doesn't have one, a first step

toward getting involved is to attend an ESL workshop.

The next workshop will be held at First Baptist Church in Prattville Aug. 25–26 from 1 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. At the workshop, you'll learn the skills to start an ESL ministry. The cost is \$25 and includes materials, dinner Friday and lunch Saturday.

ESL offers a chance to meet the needs of your international neighbors and introduce them to the gospel.

For more information or to register, visit alsbom.org/esl.

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New film explores life with combat PTSD

By Jon McGill
The Alabama Baptist

Whether in training or live combat, moral injuries that occur from preparing for and going to war run deep into the psyche of combat veterans and military personnel.

Some warriors don't make it home, and their families are left to grieve the loss of loved ones.

Some make it home with emotional scars so deep they never find emotional stability and end up taking their own lives.

"Trauma Comes Home: The Battle for the Warrior Family" is the third in a trilogy of films produced by Front Porch Media, a subsidiary of Crosswinds Foundation for Faith and Culture.

Family struggles

Producers hope to shine a light on the issues faced by military veterans who are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder induced by the effects of combat. This third film focuses primarily on the struggles experienced by the family members



Photo by Jon McGill

of wounded warriors and those who don't return home from battle, either in body or in mind.

Bob Waldrep, founder and president of Crosswinds Foundation and executive producer of the film, said the "idea was take a topic that's really not being addressed and get out in the public where more people are talking about it."

For those who return home, it is

evident the emotional scars of war are deep, and many of these warriors find it difficult to reenter civilian life.

"Trauma Comes Home" is not a typical documentary about the heroics displayed by a particular division or individual in the heat of battle.

The heroics displayed in this film are seen in the families as they strive to overcome grief and despair to find help for themselves and for their loved ones who have borne the battle.

It is often difficult emotionally as the viewer experiences the stories of struggle and loss as described by the families of service members.

Difficult though it may be, the film is important because it shines a light on a topic that, according to Waldrep, has mostly gone unrecognized by those outside of the military community.

The need for more support for the families of military personnel is clearly displayed in this film.

Eugene Cuevas, director of the film, said PTSD is a universal concept military families deal with

across multiple generations. The purpose of the film is to educate and connect audiences to the resources needed for healing and health in their own families.

Viewers will not walk away from "Trauma Comes Home" with all of the answers needed to help these families, but the shared stories do open a window into the minds of the veterans and families of those effected by PTSD and how to get the conversation started to find help.

Resources

- ▶ For a free manual to help defeat PTSD and moral injury in the home go to warriorhope.online/WFA.
- ▶ To attend a premiere, host a screening or sponsor the distribution of the film, visit traumacomeshome.com/.
- ▶ To learn more about Crosswinds Foundation, visit crosswindsfoundation.org/.

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DISCERNING GOD'S CALL

Called conference helps students pursue future in ministry 'from ground level'

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Jamie Dew said for him, everything changed the night of June 16, 1995, when he was at a Centrifuge camp.

"The night I came to Jesus, I knew two things," he said. "Number one was that I was home in Jesus, and number two that I was going to spend the rest of my life doing this."

He didn't know what "this" meant at the time, other than some kind of ministry — and he definitely never pictured his current role as president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dew told the 128 high school and college students present at the Called conference Aug. 5 at Samford University that even though that uncertainty can be an uncomfortable place to be, it's a great place for God to work in them.

"You're at this really exciting, scary, maybe vulnerable time in your life, and you know God's stirring in your heart to do ministry, but you don't know exactly what you're supposed to be doing," he said. "You're exactly where you need to be."

During the conference, designed for young men and women exploring a call to ministry of any kind, Dew shared how God clarifies that call — He cultivates individuals as they grow in their love for Him.

Start with Scripture

"You won't be able to go to a weekend seminar and come out knowing, 'Man, I know exactly what I'm supposed to do,'" Dew said. "That's not unheard of, but it's not normal."

He said God often deliberately holds the specifics back as he did with Abraham so that his people learn to trust and follow Him more closely. Dew told students that to discern God's call on their life, they needed to start with Scripture — find out what the Bible says about following God.



Photo by Bekah Gordon

Jamie Dew, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, speaks to high school and college students at the Called conference Aug. 5 at Samford University. Dew challenged students to walk closely with Christ as they seek life direction.

Then live in what he called "sustained seasons of submission."

Dew said it's not about having a spiritual high and thinking you have it all figured out — it's about walking with God and falling more in love with Him until your desires match His.

"As He cultivates you ... as you walk in that season of submission, He's going to rewire your heart," Dew said. "All of a sudden the passions and the burdens of your heart begin to morph, and all of a sudden there are just going to be some things that show up that you didn't put there, and that only happens if you walk faithfully with Him."

He also challenged them not to wait until later to start serving in ministry — to serve right where they are in a variety of ways, from cleaning toilets at church to teaching Sunday School.

Dew told students they may find that God shows them passions they hadn't realized, and He will use the other members of the church to point out and affirm places where they see giftings in them.

Students also had the opportunity during the conference to be intro-

duced to different areas of service through breakout sessions that ranged in topic from international missions to leading as a pastor to women in ministry.

Biblical training

Larry Hyché, who serves as men's spiritual development specialist at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said the biblical training offered to students at Called is "important because it helps them from ground level pursue God's call in ministry leadership."

"The healthy ministries of tomorrow start with healthy foundations today," he said.

To close the day, Dew shared 10 necessities for ministry:

1. Be a disciple and make disciples.

This is a person's primary task as a follower of Christ and especially in ministry, he said.

2. Protect your purity and your reputation.

Falling into sin doesn't happen overnight, Dew said. He challenged students to learn to guard themselves now in the small things.

3. Start serving now.

As Dew had challenged in an earlier session, he urged them again to roll up their sleeves and get started.

4. Determine your spiritual gifts and calling.

He reminded them again of the importance of digging into Scripture and walking with Christ in sustained seasons of submission.

5. Work hard and be dependable.

"The moment we're in culturally is a flaky culture," Dew said, challenging students to be ready to do hard things and persevere.

6. Educate yourself.

Theological education, whether at the undergraduate level or seminary level, is important for the work of passing on the gospel faithfully to the next generation, he said.

7. Learn how to communicate.

All ministry will involve writing and speaking, Dew said, challenging them to find ways to practice that now.

8. Marry the right spouse.

He challenged students to find someone who is on board with the work God is calling them to, Dew said, noting that his wife "loves Jesus more than she loves me" and helps keep him focused.

9. Manage your finances well and avoid going into debt.

"If your plan for college involves tens of thousands of dollars of debt, I would strongly encourage you to consider other options," he said.

Debt will be an obstacle for serving overseas or in other capacities without limitations.

Find a way to pursue education that won't be a handicap in the future, he said.

10. Be involved in missional experiences.

Seeing the darkness and hopelessness of a place without Christ creates an important burden for a follower of Christ, he said.

"Go to the hard places," Dew said. "It stirs your heart, changes your perspective, gives you the ability to dream a different dream and plants seeds and passions."

For more information, visit alabamamen.org/called.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 20

Explore the Bible

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



JUST Jeremiah 50:11–20, 33–34

In this chapter, Jeremiah prophesied against Babylon. God used the Babylonians as his instrument of judgment against Judah. But the fact that God uses a person or nation to fulfill His righteous purposes does not excuse them from their sins.

Jeremiah wrote this prophecy to remind the people of Judah of God's faithfulness to His covenant. God would hold the Babylonians accountable for having mistreated and harmed His covenant people. Babylon would be invaded by a coalition of nations from the north.

The sons of Israel and Judah would begin their journey home from exile following the plunder and destruction of Babylon (50:10).

Vengeance Exactd (11–16)

Babylon had rejoiced in its plundering of Judah. Its proud exultation was compared to a cow treading grain and eating whatever she wanted and to stallions attacking with arrogant confidence.

These two word pictures describe the self-indulgence and arrogance of the Babylonians as they attacked Judah. Their sense of superiority manifested itself in a disregard for others and the presumption that they could destroy any nation in their path.

Babylon, which had been first among the nations, would now become the least among the nations. It would become as desolate as an uninhabited desert.

Those who saw her ruins would be appalled and scoff at the devastation of this once proud nation.

Just as the Lord had used Babylon as His instrument of judgment against Judah, now He was going to raise up the enemies of Babylon as His instruments of judgment to invade and destroy it. In verses 14–16, the Lord called on the enemies of Babylon to begin the siege of Babylon. He urged them to spare none of their weapons because Babylon "has

sinned against the Lord." Babylon's invaders took vengeance on Babylon for its evil. God's purpose would be accomplished.

Return Promised (17–20)

Israel was described as a stray lamb that had been scattered and devoured by lions. The first "lion" to devour Israel was Sargon II, the king of Assyria. The Assyrians completed their conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 or 721 B.C.

The second "lion" was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The Babylonians first came to Judah in 605 B.C.

They destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Like a shepherd leading his flock back to pasture, the Lord promised He would bring Israel back to its own land. They would prosper under God's protection and provision.

The people would once again experience

satisfaction in the restored land of their inheritance.

Most importantly, the Lord declared that He would forgive all their iniquity. They would have a renewed relationship with the Lord. Everyone who turns from their sin and trusts in Christ will be forgiven of all their iniquity and sin!

Redemption Assured (33–34)

Although the promise of freedom and restoration to the land of Judah seemed unbelievable to the Babylonian exiles, the Lord of Armies assured them it would happen as He said. The Lord acknowledged that His people had been oppressed by their enemies. The Lord of Armies guaranteed their release from captivity and return to the promised land.

No power can thwart the Lord of Armies when He champions the cause of His people. Our God is just and faithful. He will do everything He says He will do.

May He strengthen our faith to keep on trusting Him.

"Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is His name. He will surely plead their cause."

Jeremiah 50:33a

Bible Studies for Life

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



SET APART FOR THE JOURNEY Philippians 3:12–21

God has called us to a lifelong journey of growing into Christlikeness, striving to model the life that we will only perfectly reflect on the day of our final resurrection.

Sanctification is a continual journey toward Christlikeness. (12–14)

The great Apostle Paul himself was clear about the fact that he had never attained his ultimate goal, which was "to know [Christ] and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death," with a view to attaining the resurrection from the dead (vv. 10–11). He had not reached this goal, but rather he made "every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus."

The goal of perfect Christlikeness is a call that is ultimately realized only in the resurrection of the dead, but Paul pursued Christ and Christlikeness throughout his life, knowing it is a continuous journey.

Spiritual maturity comes as we follow the example of mature believers. (15–19)

Paul urges us to follow his model of mature thinking in Christ, which is forward-looking rather than backward-looking.

We must "live up to whatever truth we have attained," which Howard Hendricks, former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, used to paraphrase by saying, "May God keep us from trafficking in un-lived truth." What a great prayer.

What good is it to listen to thousands of sermons if the truths we are learning are not reflected in our daily lives? Paul urges us to find and follow the examples of godly people. There are too many others who reject Christ and follow any of the many

idols that lead to destruction rather than the life offered to us in Christ.

Spiritual growth is not complete until our glorious transformation in heaven. (20–21)

Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, and we are waiting for our King to come and deliver us from the evils of this present world by our resurrection and the establishment of His Kingdom when He will vanquish all His enemies. Whatever other citizenship we might have is of no eternal importance.

The fact that our citizenship is in heaven has often been misunderstood to mean our destiny is a heavenly one in contrast to an earthly or bodily one. In Paul's world many were Roman citizens, but that didn't mean they would ever go to Rome. It meant they were expected — and legally authorized — to live life the Roman way wherever they lived within that empire.

Our citizenship is in heaven, and we await not our departure to there, but "we eagerly wait for a Savior from there." Christ will come back to transform our bodies to be like His own, to give us resurrected bodies fit for a new heaven and a new earth where everyone and everything will be subjected to Christ.

One significance of a resurrected body is to remind us that God created us as physical and spiritual creatures within a physical and spiritual creation, and His redemptive plan is for us to be physically and spiritually glorified in a world where sin has no place and where the glory of God is perfectly manifested and reflected in all of creation.

We will only know perfect Christlikeness in our resurrected bodies but must follow Paul's example of seeking it out and anticipating it in our daily lives here and now.

***"But our citizenship is in heaven,
and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."***

Philippians 3:20

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Steve Potts
The Alabama Baptist

Recent releases explore God's love, Sermon on the Mount, singles ministry

The Great Love of God

Heath Lambert
Zondervan, 2023

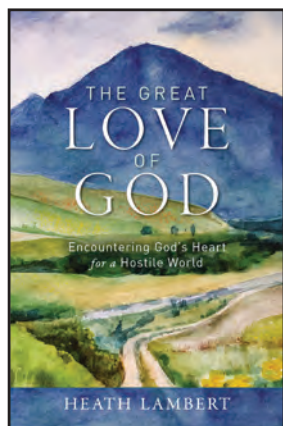
In his new book, “The Great Love of God,” Heath Lambert reflects on his experience of how the reality of God’s love sustained him through a troubled childhood, a painful ministry experience and four brain surgeries. (He went through his fifth brain surgery just after completing this book.)

Lambert is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, and an associate professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Though he has written academic works, this book was intended to be more accessible and devotional in nature.

In 12 brief chapters, he sketches out a biblical meditation on God’s love from several helpful perspectives.

Lambert observes clear biblical statements of God’s loving char-



acter and addresses why people sometimes have difficulty accepting God’s love.

He notes the experiences of biblical characters like the Apostle John, King David, Mary and Martha, while pointing to Christ and His saving work as the centerpiece of God’s love for us.

The author also addresses difficult matters, such as how God’s love relates to our obedience and to the reality of hell.

Lambert wanted this book to be one you could give a new believer or someone who is not yet a Christian to show them the beauty of God’s love. He more than met that goal. Even seasoned Christians will find this book to be a warm and encouraging reflection on God’s love that will anchor the soul in the midst of life in this fallen world.

Ethics for Every Day

Dewey Mayfield Sr.
Independently published, 2023

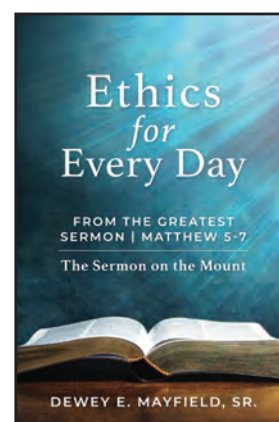
Imagine having an extended conversation with a veteran pastor about what he has learned over many years of preaching and teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.

He tells you about insights gathered from respected professors, insightful scholars and his own careful study of the Gospel of Matthew and the “greatest sermon” ever preached by Christ.

This is what we find in “Ethics for Every Day,” written by Dewey Mayfield Sr. Now well into his 10th decade, Mayfield has served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Mississippi. He also served as director of missions of the Columbia (now Southeast Alabama) Baptist Association.

His book is not a technical commentary written in dense academic language, but an engaging, fast-

paced Bible study that guides the reader through Christ’s teaching and its context. He writes in a clear, understandable manner, strategically explaining relevant words and phrases from the text.



Mayfield divides his book into two major sections. Chapters 1–8 provide a basic exposition of the sermon. Chapters 9–30 give a more extended review and application that has the feel of well-honed sermons based on the text.

Mayfield emphasizes that seeking to live the principles of the Sermon on the Mount depends on faith in the redeeming work of Christ. “The sermon also calls all of us to faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord,” he writes.

Mayfield’s book is full of pithy statements and practical encouragement. For a layperson looking for a helpful study of the Sermon on the Mount, as well as for pastors and Bible study leaders seeking an accessible volume for a small group or Sunday School class, “Ethics for Every Day” is a welcome new resource.

Single, But Not Alone ... and Then!

Mary Strebeck Morton
Wyatt House Publishing, 2022

Churches often stress the value of ministry to the whole family, with a priority placed on children and youth. This is vital and appropriate, but congregations

must not neglect meaningful ministry to singles.

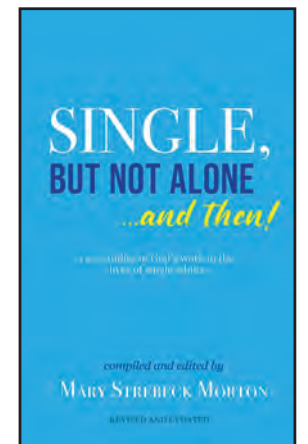
In “Single, But Not Alone ... and Then!,” author and editor Mary Strebeck Morton gives the reader a rich mosaic of the importance of ministry to single adults in the church and community.

Morton and her husband, Bobby, lead Morton Christian Ministries based in Mobile. Mary Morton has a master’s degree in counseling and has led effective singles ministries for many years.

In this slim volume, recently updated from an earlier version, she collects the insights of 10 single (or formerly single) Christians, along with her own story, to show the powerful impact that ministry to singles can have.

Single adults in our communities and congregations are very diverse. Some are younger and others much older. Some have experienced divorce, while others may have lost a spouse through death. Some have children; others do not. As this book makes clear, ministry to single adults involves facing the reality of these diverse circumstances with understanding and compassion.

A common thread throughout the book is how God uses the love and fellowship of the singles ministry and the whole church to bring hope and encouragement to those who are single, whether they are single for a season or for a lifetime.



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 Wellness Kitchen

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

By Pat Terry
The Wellness Kitchen

FRESH BABY LIMA BEAN SALAD

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

For the salad:

12 ounces baby lima beans, fresh or frozen (thawed)

3 cups chicken broth

1 slice thick-cut bacon

1 cup fresh corn kernels (two ears)

1 cup grape tomatoes, halved lengthwise

1 red bell pepper, diced (about 1 cup)

1 green bell pepper, diced (about 1 cup)

1 small red onion, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)

For the dressing:

4 cloves garlic

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt and more to taste

Black pepper to taste

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon honey

1 teaspoon celery seeds

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Combine the lima beans, broth and bacon in a small saucepan and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat to simmer and cook until the beans are tender and cooked through, about 10 to 12 minutes. Add the corn during the last 2 minutes of cooking.
3. Remove and discard the bacon and drain the beans and corn. Set aside to come to room temperature.
4. Sprinkle the garlic cloves with about 1/4 teaspoon salt. Use the flat side of a chef's knife to press down on the garlic and drag it across the cutting board. Keep mincing, pressing and dragging the garlic until it forms a paste. Place in a large bowl. Add the vinegar, honey and celery seeds.
5. Gradually whisk in the oil until combined. Season with salt and pepper as desired.
6. Add the lima beans and corn, tomatoes, peppers and onions and toss until combined.
7. Season with additional salt and pepper as needed. Serve at room temperature.

Adapted from Becky Satterfield of satterfieldsrestaurant.com

What's in season right now? Baby lima beans!

Lima beans get their name from Lima, Peru, where they were cultivated even before corn. All common beans, or legumes, originated from Central and South America. Fresh lima beans are one of many varieties of fresh shell beans available at local groceries, farmers markets and our own gardens in the summer months. Fordhooks are most popular and still the standard as they yield early. Our big Southern butter beans are just baby limas left to grow to maturity. Legumes are valued for all their nutrients but especially for their high amounts of vegetable protein, and when they are combined with various nuts, seeds and grains in the diet, they make a complete protein.

Average price: \$6.99/pound, shelled

Nutritional highlights: Lima beans are high in dietary fiber and protein. Limas have more protein than many beans, with 15 grams of vegetable protein per cup. They are rich in the antioxidant vitamins A, C and E, as well as vitamin B6, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and biotin and are an excellent source of the minerals potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, copper and manganese. They are especially high in iron, more so than most other legumes. Limas are

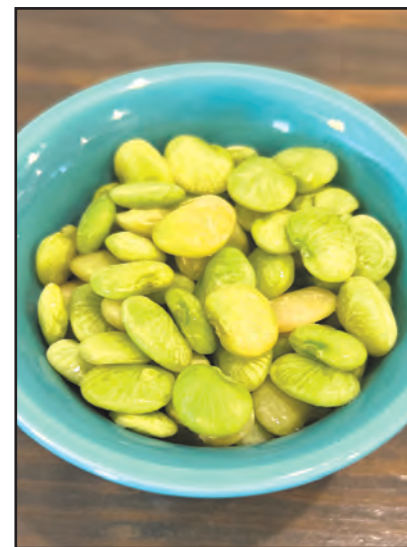


Photo by Lauren C. Grim/The Baptist Paper

high in both soluble and insoluble dietary fiber, with 9 grams per cup. This dietary fiber contains prebiotics that aid in the production of healthy gut bacteria and digestion, controlling blood sugar levels and lowering blood cholesterol.

Peak time: Summer months

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



UPCOMING SPECIAL EDITION



NOVEMBER 30 ISSUE

Aging Well

Resources that encompass aspects of growing older, including fitness and wellness tips, estate planning, housing and health care, and ways to mentor the next generation.

The Alabama Baptist

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‘Divine mission’

By Sue Sprenkle
International Mission Board

NextGen teams ‘on front lines of lostness,’ reaching nations with gospel

Sticky notes plastered to the wall represented all the ways summer volunteers will embark on the missionary task in the next few weeks and months. The handwritten notes ranged from hiking to remote villages that have never heard Jesus’ name to teaching English using Bible stories at public schools.

Janna Smith, International Mission Board missionary serving in the Americas, pointed around the room at the six tasks of missionaries — entry, evangelism, disciple-making, healthy church formation, leadership development and exit/partnerships — atop the sticky notes.

“Everything you do this summer will be part of this missionary task. You will be working on the front lines of lostness,” Smith told the NextGen teams training to be sent out this summer. “You are a strategic part of reaching the nations with the gospel.”

Gavin Norris looked at his teammate, Alex Hamm, and couldn’t stop smiling as their purpose sank in.

The two college students from Alabama are part of 1,600-plus individuals who will serve and work with IMB missionaries in 72 countries as IMB’s NextGen teams. This includes youth, college students and young adults — ages 15–29.

They serve through summer, semester or a gap season overseas. Each opportunity is tailor-made to



IMB photo
The Mexico City NextGen team collapses in laughter after creating a social media boomerang video spoofing the intro to the sitcom “Friends.” This team will spend time making intentional friendships that lead to gospel conversations.

join a strategy that engages the missionary task while serving alongside IMB missionary teams that will mentor and train them.

Perfect fit

Norris and Hamm will spend their time in rural South America among two unreached people groups.

The job description couldn’t be any more of a perfect fit. Like many teams around the world, they will hike into rural areas, research and learn more about these peoples while creating a way for the UPGs

to have access to the gospel.

“I can’t believe God is going to use our love of the outdoors, nature and hiking for His glory,” Norris said. “It’s humbling to think that God may use us to share the gospel with people who have never heard.”

A social media team going to Argentina echoed the hikers’ amazement at how God lined up their unique giftings.

Kareyn Hellman just graduated from Texas Christian University with a degree in strategic communications. She joined artist Kat Ivey from Georgia and business/marketing major Argyle Contreras from Texas.

The team of three will create content and strategies for using social media to connect with people in Buenos Aires.

In this bustling city of 15 million people, everyone is always busy.

IMB missionary Heather Tolbert told her NextGen team this can make it difficult to engage with individuals.

They will not only create a strategy for digitally engaging people but will also learn how to take online relationships to “in real life” ones.

Hellman didn’t understand why God kept bringing this opportunity to the forefront when she should have been thinking about finding a job after college.

She didn’t feel qualified to go to Argentina. She didn’t speak Spanish and didn’t even have a passport. So, she prayed about it and in the process, developed a heart for the nations.

“I was like, ‘I can’t stay here. I have to go!’” Hellman said. “These are the people who need the gospel.”

Watching young adults like Hellman grapple with the question, “What is my role in God’s divine mission?” is something Andy Pettigrew, IMB’s NextGen mobilization manager, has done for the past 15 years. IMB’s wide range of opportunities across the globe aim to invest

in this next generation and provide opportunities for them to serve. He sees them making an immediate impact on a spiritually lost world.

“When more than 50% of the world’s population is below the age of 30,

we need teens, college students and young adults to share Christ’s love with people like them all over the world,” Pettigrew said.

“Our mission, given by God, requires the faithfulness of His children — including the NextGen.”

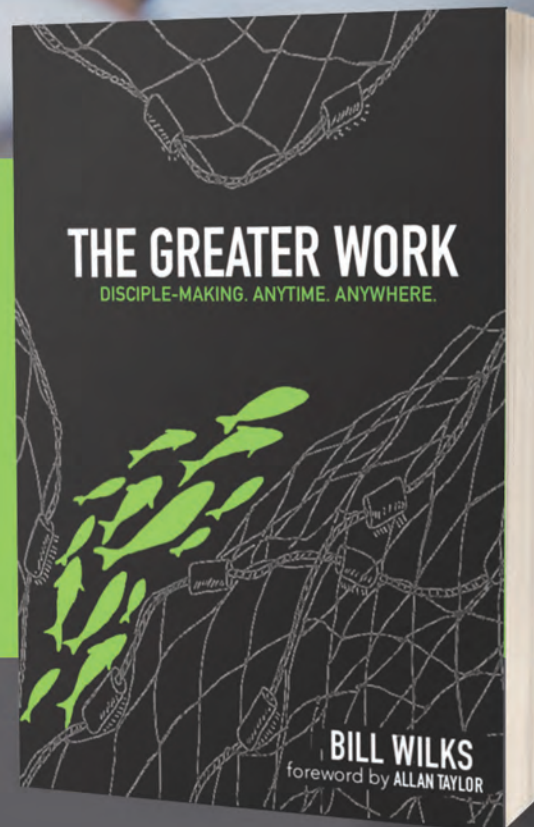
EDITOR’S NOTE — This story was originally published by the International Mission Board.

“I WAS LIKE, ‘I CAN’T STAY HERE. I HAVE TO GO! THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO NEED THE GOSPEL.’”

KAREYN HELLMAN
TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

d+life

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MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust
The Baptist Paper

Johnny Cash documentary spotlights his road to Christian redemption

Few stars in American entertainment history have successfully crossed the line between mainstream and Christian music as much as Johnny Cash.

His music is loved by Saturday night barhoppers and Sunday morning church attenders. That's because he sang at whiskey-serving saloons and, later, at Bible-preaching Billy Graham crusades.

If you want wall art depicting him making an obscene gesture, they're available. And if you're wanting a CD of him reading the entire New Testament, that's available too.

A new documentary, "Johnny Cash: The Redemption of an American Icon," tells the faith-centric story of the music legend by following his rise to fame and then his destructive fall. He nearly died from alcohol and drug use. He nearly died in a car crash. God, though, had other plans for his life.

The film, now on home video, is the first one to spotlight his faith.

'So much influence'

"Johnny Cash transcends genres," said Brent McCorkle, who wrote the music for the film and co-directed this year's box office hit "Jesus Revolution."

"You're looking at a guy who was



Photo courtesy of Kingdom Story Company

"JOHNNY CASH: THE REDEMPTION OF AN AMERICAN ICON"

a Christian and was really outspoken about his faith, and yet was so ubiquitous and had so much influence and was able to speak into so many people's lives."

The film includes interviews with those who knew him and follows his trajectory from a young boy in rural Arkansas to worldwide fame. His life was shaped by tragedy, his brother having been killed in a horrific accident when he was young. On multiple occasions, Cash nearly died from recklessness and drug addiction. It was during one of those brushes with death that he had a spiritual transformation.

Proclaiming the gospel

As the star of ABC's "The Johnny Cash Show" (1969–1971), he proclaimed the gospel to millions. He did the same during appearances at Billy Graham crusades.

The film includes interviews with Johnny's sister Joanne Cash Yates and his son, John Carter Cash, as well as Marty Stuart, Wynonna

Judd, Sheryl Crow, Alice Cooper, Greg Laurie and Tim McGraw. It was made by the same company — Kingdom Story Company — that produced "Jesus Revolution" and "I Can Only Imagine."

It's uplifting and gripping.

Also worth watching this month:

► **His Only Son (home video)** — Abra-

ham is told by God to travel to a distant location in order to sacrifice his son Isaac. This excellent Angel Studios film surprised Hollywood observers by opening at No. 3 at the box office and is the first in a planned multifilm series about Bible characters. It was released on home video, for free, June 25. Visit Angel.com for more information.

► **Chupa (Netflix)** — A Mexican family takes in a mythical creature — a baby "chupacabra" — and hides it from a greed-filled explorer. It's a fun film that has elements of the award-winning movie "E.T.," with enough plot twists to make it unique. (The elderly man in the film was formerly a luchador.) Rated PG for some action, peril and thematic elements. VidAngel and Clearplay offer filters.

► **God's Country Song (Pure Flix)** — A rising country artist sees his life changed forever when he learns he has a son he has never met. Adding to the plot is the revelation that the boy's mother recently died. Real-life musician Justin Gaston portrays the country singer who agrees to raise the boy. It's the latest original film from the Christian streaming service Pure Flix, which is one of the best faith-based alternatives to Netflix and Disney+. Visit PureFlix.com.

► **Nate Bargatze: Hello World (Prime)** — Bargatze, who is one of the funniest comedians in America today, gives his unique take on life. The best part: He keeps his show family friendly. He told Fox News, "I just can't imagine cursing in front of your parents. ... So that's how I write. ... I want them to be proud and be like, 'Oh, come watch my son do comedy,' and not be offended by it." If you've ever wanted to watch clean comedy with your kids, this is your chance.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in *The Baptist Paper* 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 Group.

MEET THE REVIEWER

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