

The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

November 2, 2023

Vol. 188, No. 43
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Carol Gargus (back, left), ministry coordinator for Discovery Clubs, watches as Cindy Coop does an object lesson with a student at Birmingham-area Chalkville Elementary School during a recent after-school session.

Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

Gospel exposure

Faith-based after-school programs connect churches with families, administrators

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Little hands shoot up when Carol Gargus asks what God promised to Abraham.

“He promised to give him land,” someone says.

“To make his kids like the stars,” someone else says.

Then Gargus points to a big star in the picture she’s holding and

asks, “What about this one?”

A little boy raises his hand and says, “That the Deliverer will come through him.”

Sharing Jesus

As Gargus and other volunteers share the story with the group of first and second graders at Chalkville Elementary School, the kids read along in a copy of The Jesus Storybook Bible.

Another volunteer, Richard Coggins — dressed as Abraham — brings the story to life as they discuss and ask questions about what they read.

That’s what Discovery Clubs, an after-school program in 23 schools in Central Alabama, is all about, Gargus said — to share the redemptive story of Scripture with children who might have no other exposure to the gospel.

During the hourlong session, held once a week, kids learn Bible verses, hear Bible stories, sing songs and play games.

This school year marks the 20th anniversary of Discovery Clubs, which became a ministry of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association in 2021.

Chris Crain, BMBA executive director, said the program is a “vital (See ‘Playing,’ page 13)

SPOTLIGHT SPONSOR ...

The Baptist Foundation
Is your church earning 5% on its savings?



SCAN ME

OUR EXTENDED ALABAMA BAPTIST FAMILY

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

1-800-264-1225 | www.alsbom.org
Offices: Prattville
Leadership: Rick Lance, executive director

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

205-982-1112 | www.alabamachild.org
Main office: Birmingham
Leadership: Rod Marshall, president and CEO

ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

205-726-2363 | www.abhconline.com
Office: Birmingham
Leadership: Lonette Berg, executive director

ALABAMA BAPTIST RETIREMENT CENTERS

800-264-1225, ext. 329 | www.abrc.org
Main office: Prattville
Leadership: Ken Schroeder, president

THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

334-394-2000 | www.tbfa.org
Offices: Montgomery
Leadership: John Ashworth, president

SHOCCO SPRINGS BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER

256-761-1100 | www.shocco.org
Location: Talladega
Leadership: Russell Klinner, executive director

ALABAMA CITIZENS ACTION PROGRAM

205-985-9062 | www.alcap.com
Offices: Birmingham
Leadership: Greg Davis, president and CEO

ALABAMA WMU

334-288-2460 | www.alabamawmu.org
Offices: Prattville
Leadership: Candace McIntosh, executive director

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

205-726-2011 | www.samford.edu
Location: Birmingham
Leadership: Beck A. Taylor, president

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

251-675-5990 | www.umobile.edu
Location: Mobile
Leadership: Lonnie Burnett, president



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Amy Hacker serves coffee at the TAB Media Group coffee station in the exhibit hall at the 2022 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference in Birmingham.

TAB Media Group continues PC partnership

The 2023 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference, set for Nov. 13 at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery, will feature a variety of connection points for pastors and ministry leaders thanks to the ongoing partnership between the PC and TAB Media Group.

In addition to encouraging times of worship and preaching, attendees will have opportunities to visit the exhibit hall and engage with organizations that provide information pastors and churches need.

“A number of vendors will be in the exhibit hall to connect with church leaders with resources such as bus, steeple and audiovisual services, building needs and seminary studies,” said Jessica Ingram, who coordinates special projects for TAB, including the Pastors Conference program and exhibit hall.

The partnership allows PC leaders to focus on making the conference the best it can be and engaging well with those in attendance while TAB takes care of vendors and advertisers, Ingram said.

TAB also sponsors the coffee station inside the exhibit hall, which helps create a welcoming place for attendees to fellowship during the event.

Pastors Conference leaders change each year, Ingram added, so TAB provides some organizational consistency while also allowing each new president to bring his own ideas and inspiration to the conference.

“It’s a beneficial partnership,” Ingram said, “and we are looking forward to seeing everyone at Taylor Road.”

For more details about this year’s Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference, go to albaptistpc.com.

For more information, visit albaptistpc.com.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

2023 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference officers: (l to r) president, Daniel Atkins, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery; president-elect, Matt Haines, pastor of Central Park Baptist Church in Decatur; secretary-treasurer, Richard Richie, pastor of Blue Springs Baptist Church in Somerville; and vice president, Chad Hess, pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church in Florence.

The Alabama Baptist

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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.
Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org
Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Includes print, digital, app and full web access
Group Rate per subscriber per year — \$16.25
Individual — \$34.95 per year

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Carrie Brown McWhorter Content Editor

Content, design and production

Lauren C. Grim
Daniel Gilliland
Malinda McGill, Holly Smith
Grace Thornton

Digital products

Shawn Hendricks
Hannah Muñoz

Digital services

James Hammack

Marketing and subscriptions

Debbie Campbell
Sarah Gill

Advertising

Susan Stevens
Amy Hacker
Pam Holt
Tim Childers

Operations

Maggie Evans
Jessica Ingram, Robin McCall, Dianna Cagle
Annette Brown, Deb Lowery

NEWS SERVICES

Baptist Press (BP)
Religion News Service (RNS)
Morning Star News (MS)

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE

Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Subscription Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



‘Nation’s Top Regional Christian Newspaper’


1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

Rashional Thoughts

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

 jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

 [@RashionalThts](https://twitter.com/RashionalThts)

College football debate poses questions about loyalty, commitment

Reigning Heisman Trophy winner and quarterback Caleb Williams garnered much of the sports commentary airtime following USC's surprise 42-26 loss at home to Utah on Oct. 21.

Not only was it the first time the Trojans had lost a home game to the Utes in 105 years, but it also was USC's third straight loss on their Los Angeles turf this season.

While Williams' recent slump and what that means for his repeat Heisman hopes and NFL draft options could have been a natural conversation in and of itself, the discussions surrounding the USC quarterback took a different turn.

It all started with a social media post on X (formerly Twitter) by Fox Sports analyst Emmanuel Acho (see screenshot of the post, this page) suggesting Williams sit out the rest of the season.

Within hours, Acho had received 9,611 comments to his post and nearly 1,000 more showed up the next day when he reposted the comment.

From there, the conversation exploded even more and took

top billing for sports talk shows on TV, radio and the internet.

Acho's suggestion, the response it has received and the continued debate among sports fans across the nation also have become the topic of countless news stories online and in print.

What's interesting to me is that Williams didn't start the public debate nor (at press time) has he engaged in the discussion over next steps for his football career.

I'm not sure the idea of walking away from his team mid-season is even on his mind.

Maybe it is; maybe it isn't. We've not heard from Williams. We've only heard from Acho and the thousands upon thousands who have weighed in on how they feel about it.

Is it selfish? Is it a matter of loyalty? Would he be letting his team down?

Should he only worry about himself and his future over the commitment he made to his teammates?

With the new transfer portal options and NIL deals, has col-

lege football shifted to more of a business and left the concept of team and the nostalgia of Dr. Pepper's "Fansville" storyline behind?

Those are all fair questions that sparked ethical debates for days and provide all of us good practice in thinking fully around a situation, attempting to see all sides and weighing out the pros and cons.

What would you do if you were in Williams' shoes? How does his situation compare to routine life decisions made by any of us on any given day?

What are your thoughts about a public debate taking place regarding an individual (no matter how well-known) who didn't initiate nor ask for it?

Let us know what you think.



Emmanuel Acho @EmmanuelAcho · Oct 21

With National Championship hopes gone, Caleb Williams should consider sitting out the rest of the season.

The Heisman is a long shot, CFB Playoffs are even less likely, and he won't play in the bowl game.

The risk of playing FAR outweighs the reward. Business decision.

0:02 **UCLA** 42 14 **STANFORD** 24 0 Ball On **UCLA** 31

9,611 3,710 15.8K 17.8M

Your Voice



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

What does 'full of faith' really mean?

By Karen Moore
karenmooreauthor.com

Recently, I was struck by the word "faithful." I couldn't help thinking that faithful must mean, "full of faith."

Okay, that made me realize that it's unlikely I've ever been "full" of faith. I've had some faith, but I'm probably down a quart or two most of the time, when it comes to "full" faith. I do like the Hebrews 11:1 verse that says, "Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it."

I think I understand that idea. After all, that's the faith by which I perceive the world, and even my family and friends because I have hope. My hope isn't just whimsical or magical. It's a hope based on the awareness that I am not in control

and that God truly exists. Therefore, I believe many things that are still upside down in the world can be turned right side up again. I feel sure God is with us, so I have hope, and that hope makes me want to have more faith.

God is faithful

I cling to this scripture from Deuteronomy that says, "So know that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God. He will keep his agreement of love for a thousand lifetimes for people who love him and obey his commands." It reminds me that even if I have rocky faith, God doesn't. He is forever faithful. He does not forget who we are. That idea encourages me to look for God in all things.

So if I have hope, and if God is faithful, than I have to actually want my faith to grow. Now, that's a chal-

lenge. What will help fill up my faith quotient? Part of the answer has to do with the condition of my heart and my spirit, and the truth that I want to carry around with me. If I want faith to be my anchor, then I have to learn everything I can about it. That means I read God's word and seek His direction. It means I trust Him when things look bleak, and I turn to Him when I don't have any answers for the circumstances around me. To be full of anything, I have to do everything I can to discover it, trust it and gobble it up. I have to immerse myself in it because just giving it a casual glance will never get me where I want to go. My fuel gauge will always be running on empty. Faith has to be active and running for it to ever get to fullness.

Finally, Hebrews 11: 6 says, "Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him."

Okay, I'm taking that as a challenge. I'm taking my scrawny faith and holding it up to God and saying, "Show me more. Teach me more. Help me become more faithful, more full of faith!"

I like the little adage that says, "Doubt knocked on the door, but when Faith answered, no one was there."

Maybe I simply have to trust that Faith will keep showing up, and fill my days with joy.

Leading a church into missional living means helping them give to gospel causes along with helping them participate directly in gospel causes.

Steven A. McKinion
Professor of systematic theology
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

When Jesus said in John 10:10 that He came that we might have life and have it abundantly, His emphasis was on both eternal life and also the proper quality of life now.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

"To reach people, it takes a lot of honesty, one-on-one conversations and consistency," said **Austin White**, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Dayton, Nevada.

"Associations are vital in what we do to stay connected with our churches," said Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Director **Ron Crow**.

The gospel is good news for sinners. Jesus paid for all the spiritual and moral debt you owe. He stands ready to redeem and restore your life.

@brandonelrod
X (formerly Twitter)

Gratitude as a way of life

When I am at my best is when I am most grateful for the people in my life.

We all know that we live in a divisive and chaotic world. The 24/7 news cycle bombards us with harsh and negative news in an unceasing fashion.

One way to counteract that reality is to stop and express appreciation for people. It creates an atmosphere of genuine love which our Lord personified.

Paul the apostle illustrates this lifestyle of appreciation. His letters are filled with thankfulness and appreciation.

Remember, he wrote, "I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1:3).

Let us all follow his example. We all need it.

Rick Lance

Executive director, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions
ricklance.com

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“If you’ve got God, you have everything you need. You serve the awesome living Lord.”

RICHARD BLACKABY
President of Blackaby Ministries International

In order for us to reach the next generation, I think we just need to be praying for the next generation. ... I think the whole church should rally around youth ministry. ... It’s important to really put an emphasis on going out and building relationships, and just loving youth and telling them about Jesus.

Caleb Barbier

Student pastor at Springfield (Tenn.) Baptist Church

There exists an incredible irony in the ministries of many pastors, pastors who work themselves to the brink of burnout largely on tasks that have nothing to do with their primary calling — that is, the call to “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2).

@PastorCroft

X (formerly Twitter)

Few words. But a strategic plan of action. One tested and tried through the ages.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6).

Everything travels through day and night. All the things. Each situation and conversation. Every person and praise and problem.

Susan Lafferty

susanlafferty.com

I’m convinced that PRAYER and PATIENCE are two of the most under-emphasized needs in the Christian life.

Prayer is the means by which God’s work is done. Patience is the evidence that we are relying on God to get His work done.

@DanielDickard

X (formerly Twitter)

“There’s nothing wrong with being an older pastor with years of accumulated wisdom, but we also need to encourage a new generation to take up the challenge of leading

churches,” said **Sam Rainer**, president of the Church Answers network and pastor of West Bradenton Baptist Church in Bradenton, Florida.

Here’s a cheat sheet of how Satan whispers:

If only you were ...
People think you’re so ...
Why can’t you just ...
You’re too much.
You’re not enough.

Don’t let him get you into a state of defeat by believing and repeating his scripts. God knows you completely and loves you fully!

@LysaTerKeurst

X (formerly Twitter)

The King of kings accomplished the exodus for us all. Through Him we have passed from death to life, darkness to light, slavery to freedom. He by His death and resurrection has led us out.

@DianeLangberg

X (formerly Twitter)

The Pharisees wanted Jesus dead because He disrupted their pretentious piety of quibbling over minute doctrinal applications like which herbs to tithe while they ignored the vulnerable, exploited, oppressed and powerless.

Theological precision ≠ True religion before our God.

@blondeorthodoxy

X (formerly Twitter)

41 sermons later and we’re done with Genesis! What a joy it has been to journey through this book looking at the origin of humanity and God’s promise to set things right. I’ve found my faith strengthened in God’s sovereign work in my life.

@ronniep

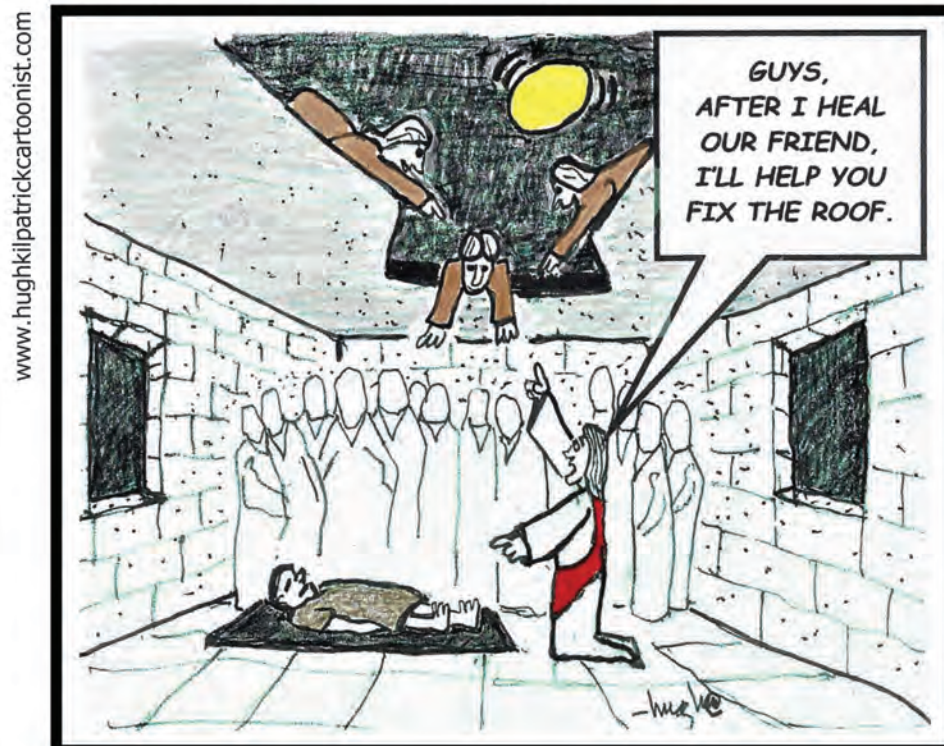
X (formerly Twitter)

God grants sinners repentance and faith, but He does not repent and believe for them.

@pastorjaye

X (formerly Twitter)

HUGH’S VIEWS - HUGH KILPATRICK III



UP ON THE ROOF
MARK 2:1-12

Sustained: 2023 Pastors Conference

The dictionary defines “sustain” as “strengthening or supporting physically or mentally.”

As pastors and ministry leaders, we are all aware of our inability to carry out the call of God on our lives in our own strength.

The pressures of ministry and the barrage of temptation and attack from the enemy are too much for us to handle on our own and, honestly, at times are more than we can bear.

That may be where you find yourself right now.

You may come to our conference walking with a “limp.” You may be carrying concerns for your family, your church, even your own ministry and calling.

Our prayer is for you to be reminded of God’s sustaining grace, power, faithfulness and peace in your life and ministry.

God’s promise to us in 2 Thessalonians 3:3–5 is that He will establish us, guard us and draw us into His love and steadfast faithfulness.

I don’t know about you but that’s a word I need in my life every single day!

We need a powerful move of God in our lives and our churches.

Please join us for the 2023 Pastors Conference, Nov. 13, at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery.

We pray you will be encouraged and empowered by the truth that you are sustained by the God who loves you, created you, saved you, called you and who will finish the work He has started in you!

Pastor Daniel Atkins

President, 2023 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference

EDITOR’S NOTE — Find more information about this year’s conference and a full schedule at albaptistpc.com.

3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of John Thomas

Wiregrass Fellowship of Christian Athletes hosted Fields of Faith in Dothan Oct. 18. The annual evangelistic event draws students from area high schools for a night of worship and fellowship. This year's featured speakers were Roy Evans, founder and pastor of Northstar Church in Pryor, Oklahoma, and Greg Clark, pastor of Cedar Crest Baptist Church in West Monroe, Louisiana. Both were teammates on the 1974 Dothan High School football team. (TAB)

Univ. of Mobile launches search for next president

The University of Mobile has launched a national search for “a visionary leader” to serve as the school’s sixth president.

Current president Lonnie Burnett plans to retire May 30, 2024.

“The University of Mobile seeks a visionary leader who understands UM’s opportunities and challenges and, with dependency on the Holy Spirit, is eager to lead the school into the future,” said Fred Wilson, board member and chair of the presidential search committee comprised of trustees, alumni, denominational leaders, staff and faculty.

The university is accepting nominations and applications for the position through Dec. 31.

An opportunity profile and information about the search process is at umobile.edu/presidentialsearch. (University of Mobile)

Baptist relief continues amid Israel-Hamas war

Southern Baptists have mobilized through local Christian partners to provide housing, food, medical supplies, bomb shelters and trauma counseling for more than 20,000 displaced and hurting people in Israel and the Middle East as conflict continues to impact the region.

“War produces uniquely difficult humanitarian crises, and this is no exception,” Jason Cox, vice president for international ministry for Send Relief, the compassion ministry of the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board, said in a video update.

“As Christians, we want to care for the many hurting, vulnerable people impacted by this violence and upheaval.”

For more information on how you can help, go to sbdr.org/give. (TAB)

Persecuted church

UN official condemns atrocities committed by Burmese military

GENEVA — The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned atrocities committed by the ruling military regime in Myanmar as “inhumanity in its vilest form.”

In remarks to the U.N. Human Rights Council, High Commissioner Volker Turk called for an end to “an unspeakable tragedy,” saying the Burmese military regime should be brought before the International Criminal Court.

“There is no time to lose,” Turk said, noting at least 4,108 deaths caused by the Burmese military — known as the Tatmadaw — and its affiliates.

Last year, the Baptist World Alliance general council approved a resolution condemning the coup in Myanmar, saying the Burmese military

was waging “a campaign of terror and violence, particularly against minority religion.”

Credible sources have reported 24,836 people have been arrested, 19,264 still are detained, and 150 have been sentenced to death by military-controlled courts, Turk said, noting 22 documented incidents of mass killings. At least 7,368 individuals have been convicted “in ad hoc trials, most lasting mere minutes, and without defense counsel,” he added.

The violence has escalated and the human rights situation has deteriorated dramatically in recent months, Turk told the council.



IMB photo

“Widespread campaigns of violence perpetrated by the military continue, in full disregard for the fundamental principles of humanity,” he said. “We are faced here with a system of ruthless repression designed to coerce and subjugate its people and to erode a society so that the predatory interests of the military are preserved.”

Hkalam Samson, past president and former general secretary of the Kachin Baptist Convention, is among the religious leaders who remain imprisoned in Myanmar. Samson was seized last December before he could board a flight to Bangkok, Thailand, for medical treatment.

On Sept. 18, 2021, Burmese military shot dead Cung Biak Hum, a Baptist pastor in Chin State.

Myanmar is No. 14 on Open Doors 2023 World Watch List of countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (Baptist Standard)

Alabama news

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church Birmingham** will have special guest **Charles T. Carter**, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Nov. 5. Carter will be preaching his famous sermon “Come Before Winter.” Worship service begins at 10:15 a.m. Jim Cooley is pastor.

BUTLER ASSOCIATION

► **Keith Gambill** is the new associational mission strategist for **Butler Baptist Association**. Gambill, a native of Alabama, served in the U.S. Air Force after high school, then graduated from Auburn University and earned a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. After 35 years of full-time ministry, he retired in 2019. Gambill spent the time since his retirement serving as pastor of Enon Baptist Church,



GAMBILL

Camden, and helping struggling churches in Alabama become healthier. He and his wife, Rhonda, have two adult daughters, five grandsons and two great-granddaughters.

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **Kerry Sparks** is the new worship pastor of **East Side Baptist Church, Cullman**. After serving more than 30 years in bivocational music ministry, he spent the past four years serving in supply and interim positions across Central Alabama. Kerry and his wife, Teresa, have three adult daughters, one son-in-law and two grandsons.



SPARKS

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

► **Jeramy Ward** is the new senior pastor of **Union No. 3 Baptist Church, Gadsden**, following in the legacy of his late father and pastor, Justin Ward. He is currently working toward his master's degree at New Orleans Seminary. Jeramy and his wife, Brandi, led the senior adult J.O.Y. Ministry at U3BC before he became the lead pastor. The Wards have one son.



WARD

GENEVA ASSOCIATION

► **Lee Ammons** is the new pastor of **New Home Baptist Church, Samson**. His wife is Julianne.

► **Scott Cox** is the new pastor of **Hartford Baptist Church, Hartford**. Cox was born in Dothan and raised in the Wicksburg Community. He attended Wallace Community College,

Dothan, and Mobile College (now University of Mobile), where he obtained a bachelor's degree in mathematics. Cox holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary and a doctor of ministry degree from New Orleans Seminary.



COX

He has been a pastor for more than 30 years and previously served Bay Springs Baptist Church, Dothan; Selma Baptist Church, Dothan; and churches in Florida and Arkansas. Scott and his wife, Loree, have two grown children.

MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► **Spice Pond Baptist Church, Eight Mile**, celebrated its 45th anniversary Oct. 8 with special music provided by Port City Trio. A covered-dish lunch followed the service. Thomas Butler is pastor.

TENNESSEE RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Chris Bell**, who had been serving as interim pastor, is the new pastor of **Fairfield Baptist Church, Hollywood**. He is married to Darlene.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **Winton Patterson** recently celebrated 50 years as music minister of **Circlewood Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. He has worked closely with pastor Herb Thomas for more than 40 of those years, and the two are close friends. Since he first began in 1973, he said much has changed in church music. He leads a blended worship service each week and a celebration choir of high schoolers and adults as he oversees the many music ministries at Circlewood.

“I never thought I would be here 50 years, but I ... give all glory to God,” Patterson said.

He was honored in a special church service and presented with a proclamation from city mayor Walt Maddox and state Sen. Gerald Allen. He also received a letter of commendation from U.S. Sen. Katie Britt.

Winton's wife, Betty, has taught Sunday School for 60 consecutive years at Circlewood.

The Pattersons have three grown children, eight

grandchildren and their first great-grandchild is on the way. Pictured are (l to r) Paul Patterson, Mark Patterson, Betty Patterson, Winton Patterson and Donna (Patterson) Cicero.



Submitted photo

WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Macedonia Baptist Church, Jasper**, celebrated its 100th anniversary Aug. 27. The service began with special music by Kingdom Work quartet followed by long-time church member Talma Jenkins sharing highlights of the church's history. David Nelson with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented Johnny Young (pictured), pastor, with a plaque. Former member J.W. Frye also spoke about the church's past. David Miller, director of missions for Walker County Baptist Association, was the guest preacher.



Photo by David Nelson

Samford part of 'compelling preaching initiative'

Samford University has received a grant of \$1.2 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish The Spirit and Power Project, a new preaching initiative which will involve the university's Beeson Divinity School and other parts of campus.

Lilly Endowment, which currently funds Beeson's Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute, is funding the grant through its Compelling Preaching Initiative, which aims to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully.

The project will be coordinated by Beeson's

Preaching Institute and will, in addition to benefiting Beeson's graduate students, bring in other schools and programs, including the Center for Worship and the Arts, the Christian Ministry Department in the School of the Arts, and the Preministerial Scholars Program in Howard College of Arts and Sciences.

The project seeks to enrich the training and formation of aspiring preachers through existing educational programs, engage preachers with opportunities that enhance their spiritual vitality and theological judgment, and exhibit exemplary preaching for the benefit of current and future preachers alike. (Samford)



Photo courtesy of Samford University

SUSTAINED

2023 ALABAMA PASTORS CONFERENCE

TAYLOR ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

Montgomery, Alabama

NOVEMBER 13, 2023

- Session 1:** The Sustaining Grace of God
- Session 2:** The Sustaining Faithfulness of God
- Session 3:** The Sustaining Power of God
- Session 4:** What is Revival?
- Session 5:** The Sustaining Peace of God

GUEST SPEAKERS



H.B. CHARLES
*pastor of Shiloh
Metropolitan Baptist
Church, Jacksonville,
Florida*



MATT MASON
*pastor of The Church
at Brook Hills,
Birmingham*



ED LITTON
*pastor of
Redemption Church,
Saraland*



JARED WILSON
*pastor at Liberty
Baptist Church,
Kansas City, Missouri*

Visit albaptistpc.com for more information.

SPONSORED BY



ETERNAL HARVEST

6-year-old boy's death inspires Honduras housing ministry for needy families

By David Roach
The Alabama Baptist

osing her 6-year-old son, John Luke, in a four-wheeler accident was more than Johnna Carver could handle.

She removed photos of him from the family's house in Boaz so she wouldn't have to look at them. She even prayed not to dream about him. But God wasn't through using John Luke's memory in her life.

Johnna dreamed that her missionary friend Kim Pate told her John Luke was doing great things in Honduras. The next day Johnna received a check in the mail in honor of John Luke. The donor wanted to fund missions work in Honduras — where Pate served and the Carvers had planned to travel on a short-term trip. The providential confluence of circumstances stirred Pate, Johnna and her husband, Ben, to think.

Maybe John Luke's memory could indeed inspire great work in Honduras.

With the donated funds they founded John Luke Carver Homes of Hope, a ministry that builds houses in Honduras for needy families. To date more than 80 homes have been erected, with plans for 100 by January — which would have been John Luke's 10th birthday. God turned tragedy into hope.

Had John Luke's accident not occurred, "I don't

think that I would have ever totally surrendered my life to Christ because I didn't need Him like I need Him now," Johnna Carver said.

"While I miss John Luke and I wish that he were here, that was not the plan. Had the Lord let me keep him here, I don't think I would have



Photo courtesy of Johnna Carver
A team from Alabama helps build homes for John Luke Carver Homes of Hope in Honduras. To date, more than 80 homes have been erected.

experienced the goodness and the grace and the faithfulness and dug into the Word and learned about His promises. I was able to see His promises and feel His presence."

The accident occurred in March 2020 with a four-wheeler John Luke received as a Christmas gift. He died four days later. Organ donations saved a boy in Texas and two people in Birmingham. Still, the Carvers knew God wanted to do more with his legacy.

They coordinated Homes of Hope with In the Midst Honduras, a ministry founded by Pate. Each house is a

16-foot square with either a wood or dirt floor. All 82 homes built thus far are in La Ermita, Honduras, a valley town in the central Honduran mountains. Each home takes 4–6 hours for volunteers to build and costs about \$2,100.

Several people have received Christ as Savior along with receiving their new homes.

Among them was a man who shared his testimony with the Carvers when they made their first trip to Honduras this July. Because he couldn't provide a home for his family, the man felt sad and attempted to medicate his feelings with sinful decisions. Receiving a home made him feel dignity and softened his heart to hear and believe the gospel.

Encouraged

Providing houses has encouraged not just the Carver family but also their church, Carlisle Baptist Church in Boaz.

"When In the Midst approached the Carver family and our church about using donations to build homes for people in Honduras, I thought this was a great way for our church family to remember and honor John Luke," said Paul Lackey, pastor of Carlisle Baptist. "What God has done with ministry in Honduras and in our church since that time has been utterly amazing. To God be all glory and praise! Through tragedy, God has brought hope to so many."

The ministry's impact is poised to continue for years to come. Currently, more than 270 people are on the waiting list to receive a home.

"I was so desperate in those early days and months (following John Luke's accident) for the Lord to use me," Carver said. "I am honored that He is using something that was so precious to me to grow His Kingdom."

The project is a collaborative effort. Most of the funds have been given by Alabamians who heard the Carvers' testimony. Plans for the houses were donated by the International Mission Board, which has done similar building projects elsewhere.

Along with each home, the recipient family receives groceries to get started in a new phase of life. Most importantly, they also receive spiritual food; they are told the story of John Luke and the gospel.

'Eternal home in heaven'

"They're told these homes are temporary, just like this life is temporary," Carver said, "and that if we serve Christ, we can have an eternal home in heaven."

That witness has yielded an eter-

For more information on John Luke Carver Homes of Hope, see the ministry's Facebook page.



Photo courtesy of Johnna Carver
The memory of John Luke Carver has birthed a ministry that builds houses in Honduras.

"I am honored that [God] is using something that was so precious to me to grow His Kingdom."

Johnna Carver
mother of John Luke Carver

Messengers and livestream information

In addition to worship, preaching and testimony, several business items are on the schedule for this year's Alabama Baptist State Convention.

From the adoption of a budget to the election of officers, messengers sent from cooperating Alabama Baptist churches are an important part of doing the business of the convention.

Every church is allowed one messenger. Additional messengers are allowed based on membership and giving to the work of the convention. The maximum number of messengers per church is 25. Each church determines how its messengers will be selected.

Pre-registration

Pre-registration for the 2023 Alabama State Convention annual meeting is done on the SBC Workspace website (al.sbcworkspace.com).

Instructional letters have been mailed out to every church eligible for messengers.

If you have not received your letter or do not know your SBC username and password, you can obtain it from your local association office or by calling the State Board of Missions office of communications and technology services at 334-613-2266.

Schedule

More information on messenger registration and a full schedule is available at alsbom.org/convention.

Those who are unable to attend in person can livestream the sessions at live.alsbom.org. (The Alabama Baptist)



To livestream the sessions, scan the code with your smartphone's camera.

Paving the way for others to follow

Champion exemplifies 'the kind of servant leadership as president we have needed'

As Buddy Champion nears the end of his second term as Alabama Baptist State Convention president, he said it's easy to pick out the significant moments from the past couple of years.

"One highlight is the privilege of working with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and the missionaries there, and the entities as well," said Champion, who also serves as pastor of First Baptist Church Trussville. "Our state missionaries are laser focused on what their calling is and what they're trying to accomplish, and they have a great strategy and attitude as they go about it."



CHAMPION

He said it's also been a blessing to watch the entities as they fulfill their calling.

"They're all different, and their calling is all different, but the intriguing thing is that

they have Christ and the presence of Christ molded into their strategies," Champion said. "It's encouraging to see their passion to see people come closer to Christ, whether it's the lost or the Church."

He said another significant point was the implementation of the Sexual Abuse Task Force during his first year as president.

'Very necessary task'

"It was a difficult journey to be a part of something like that but a very necessary task that needed to be accomplished, and that team was incredible," Champion said.

He said he prays that in the decades to come, the work of the task force,



Messengers vote on business items during the 2022 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham.

which he calls "unbelievably important," will help victims heal and protect the innocent as well. He noted the task force will report on their most recent work during the state convention

annual meeting Nov. 14-15 at First Baptist Church Montgomery.

At the end of that meeting, Champion will pass the gavel to the newly elected convention president.

Related meetings to be held in Montgomery

▶ **Alabama Church Planter Network** will hold a dinner Nov. 12 at Strong Tower at Washington Park, 5-8 p.m. Visit tabonline.org/acpn-23.

▶ **Alabama Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders annual meeting** will be Nov. 13 at Heritage Baptist Church, 8-10 a.m.

▶ **Compassion Ministries Meeting** is Nov. 13 at FBC Community Ministries Caring Center. Contact Kristy Kennedy at 334-613-2311 or kkennedy@alsbom.org.

▶ **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry**

Leaders will be held Nov. 13 at the AUM Student Center, 4-8 p.m. For more information or to register, visit bcmlink.org/event/unite-2023.

▶ **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary** will hold an alumni dinner Nov. 14 at FBC Montgomery, room 413, 6 p.m. To register, visit tabonline.org/nobts-23.

▶ **Samford University** will hold an alumni dinner Nov. 14 at FBC Montgomery, 5 p.m. To register, visit tabonline.org/samford-23.

▶ **ALCAP** will hold a lunch for pastors Nov. 14 at FBC Montgomery, 12 p.m., in room 413. To register, visit tabonline.org/alcap-23.

"It's been a privilege to serve, and I hope I've been a blessing to our entities and missionaries and Alabama Baptists," he said.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said Champion "has been a champion" in his role as convention president.

'Best of the best'

"He has exemplified the best of the best in terms of leadership these past two years," Lance said. "Personally, Buddy has been a close confidant and wise counselor to me during his tenure of service. We have shared some late-night phone calls and one-on-one meetings which have helped me immensely. I trust him unequivocally."

He said Alabama Baptists "can be proud of Buddy Champion."

"He has exemplified the kind of servant leadership as president we have needed," Lance said. "He has paved the way for others to follow in footsteps as leaders in the future." (The Alabama Baptist)

Officer candidates announced

The 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting is set for Nov. 14-15 at First Baptist Church Montgomery, and part of the business taking place during the meeting is to elect new officers.

Current state convention president Buddy Champion, pastor of First Baptist Church Trussville, is completing his second one-year term (see story, this page) and isn't eligible for reelection.

As of press time, four candidates for officers had been announced.



CARLISLE

— one for president, one for first vice president and two for second vice president.

▶ **Craig Carlisle**, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, will be nominated

for state convention president by Derek Allen, senior pastor of First Baptist Church Tillman's Corner.

"Craig is a well-respected leader and a pastor to pastors. He is known and loved across our state and throughout the Southern Baptist Convention," Allen said in a Sept. 11 Facebook post announcing his intentions to nominate Carlisle.

'Honored and humbled'

Carlisle served as pastor of three Alabama Baptist churches over the course of 30 years prior to leading Etowah Baptists. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the SBC.

Carlisle, a member of First Baptist Church Gadsden, has chaired Alabama's Sexual Abuse Task Force since November 2021 (the task force shifted to the Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force in January 2023) and previously served as a trustee on the State Board of Missions.

"I'm honored and humbled to be considered," Carlisle told The Alabama Baptist.

"I'm a lifelong Alabama Baptist, and I love the Alabama Baptist Convention."

If elected, Carlisle would be the first director of missions to serve

as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

"We have what I believe is the best state convention in the Southern Baptist Convention. To be considered to be the leader for a period of time is very humbling."

Other nominees

▶ **Jarman Leatherwood**, who is serving out his second one-year term as second vice president of the state convention, is being nominated for first vice president.

"[Jarman] has served our Lord and Alabama Baptists faithfully for the last two years as second vice president," said past convention president Tim Cox, who will be nominating Leatherwood. "He is a gifted leader, passionate pastor, soul winner and a faithful servant of the Lord."

"His smile and personality radiate the joy of the Lord wherever he goes," said Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Chelsea. "Jarman is able and willing to continue to serve Alabama Baptists as one of our officers."

Therefore, it is my joy to honor my dear brother in Christ."

Leatherwood serves as pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville and is part of the State Board of Missions church planting team.

▶ **Greg Corbin**, immediate past chair of the State Board of Missions and pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Birmingham, will be nominated for second vice by FBC Gadsden pastor Mat Alexander.

"Greg is an excellent pastor with

years of exemplary service to our Alabama Baptist family," Alexander said. "Personally, as a young pastor, Greg has been a friend and encourager to me over the years."

More than once, he has gone out of his way to take me to lunch or reach out to encourage me.

"Greg's track record of excellent leadership at Lakeside, experience in serving our convention of churches, and ability to encourage and build bridges among his fellow pastors will make him an excellent choice to serve us as second vice president," Alexander said.

▶ **Ryan Whitley**, pastor of CrossPoint Church in Trussville, will be nominated for second vice by Buddy Gray, pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover.

"Ryan is a leader among leaders and a committed disciple maker," Gray said. "He has led missions teams all over the world. He knows what it is like to pastor established churches ... and plant a new church."

"I love Ryan Whitley," Gray said. "He is an encourager of

Alabama Baptists and pastors. He's a good friend and a good brother. I've gone to China with him three times, also to Malaysia.

"He's the real deal wherever he goes. He'd be a great asset to serve Alabama Baptists." (The Alabama Baptist)



CORBIN



LEATHERWOOD



WHITLEY

2023 ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION ANNUAL MEETING

Nov. 14-15

First Baptist Church Montgomery

UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Annual meeting will highlight bicentennial

Mark your calendars now for a grand celebration coming in November!

The annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention — really a family reunion for all Alabama Baptists — will be held Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 14 and 15, at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Woven throughout our time together will be a commemoration of our convention's 200th anniversary, with a focus on the theme "Unfinished" based on Philippians 3:13-14.

You won't want to miss this glorious time of celebrating God's wonderful faithfulness while also stepping into a bright future of missions and ministry for the Lord.

Even if you don't attend as a messenger, plan to take part in the Tuesday evening service at 6:30 p.m., which will



For more information, visit alsbom.org/convention or scan the code below

with your smartphone's camera.

be a wonderful time of worship and celebrating God's faithfulness, featuring a multigenerational

Bicentennial choir, a look back at our convention's roots, exciting missions testimonies and more!

For a complete schedule, messenger registration information, a convention

prayer guide, a video and promotional slides, hotel information and more, visit alsbom.org/convention.



Church Planter Network dinner and seminar day

Church planters and their wives and anyone else interested in Kingdom expansion are invited to a Church Planter Network dinner and seminar day Nov. 12-13.

The dinner will be Nov. 12, 5-8 p.m., and the seminar day will be Nov. 13, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., at Strong Tower at Washington Park in Montgomery.

Topics will include:

► Replanting, led by Brian Harper, state church planting strategist, and Josh Knierim, planter of The Church at Old Town in Helena.

► Rural Church Planting, led by Darryl Brunson, church planter in Montana.

► Urban Church Planting, led by Terrence Jones, planter of Strong Tower at Washington Park in Montgomery.

► Hispanic Church Planting, led by Ramón Vielza, planter of I-10 Church in Mobile, and Campo Londono, retired Hispanic director of Union Baptist Association, Houston, Texas.

To register for the dinner, the seminar day or both, visit plantalabama.org/events.

Lass WORDS

BY KEN LASS
The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

The Perfect Recipe

I admire people who can cook. I've personally never had much interest in it. Finding a recipe, acquiring the ingredients, measuring, stirring, setting timers — seems like a lot of work.

My idea of cooking is putting something in the microwave and pushing the "start" button. Leaves more time for important stuff, like watching football on TV.

Yet I have a friend who loves to cook, loves the challenge of taking a collection of elements and creating something. He especially takes joy in experimenting, adding a little something extra, something special — something that makes the creation uniquely his.

Rewarding moment

He tells me there is nothing more rewarding than serving his trademark dish to his family and watching them gobble it up with glee. He revels in glory when somebody remarks, "Nobody makes this like you do."

It's kind of weird, but I found myself thinking about cooking when I went through the seven days of creation in the first chapter of Genesis the other day.

God had already made the earth and the stars, the plants and the animals, and it was all good.

It gave Him much pleasure to then take the ingredients and create something special, something that would be uniquely His trademark, His special ingredient to the universe. On the sixth day he created man.

What makes us special? Well, we're not just chopped liver. We are made in His image.

Joy in serving

We are given dominance over the other living things. When we do something we were designed to do, such as bringing compassion, mercy and service to others, I like to imagine we are providing Him with the same type of joy my friend gets when his family and friends savor his culinary inventions.

There is that line in Psalm 139 that says, "I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful. I know that full well." There it is — confirmation that we are His special sauce.

Good cooking requires hard work and more than a tablespoonful of patience. So does a solid Christian walk.

Maybe these guys who cook are on to something. I've even tried my hand at it. I started with something very basic, like scrambling my own eggs. After tasting them it became clear that my cooking, like my Christian walk, is a work in progress.

I'm not throwing away my microwave just yet.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Ken Lass is a retired Birmingham television news and sports anchor, and an award-winning columnist for numerous publications and websites.

Richard Coggins portrays Abraham to a class of second graders who meet after school on Wednesdays at Birmingham-area Chalkville Elementary School for Discovery Clubs.

PLAYING A 'CRUCIAL ROLE'



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

Discovery Clubs reaching next generation in Birmingham Metro area

(continued from page 1)
addition” to BMBA’s offerings to the community.

“These clubs play a crucial role in reaching children in our local schools, providing parents the opportunity to provide a biblical worldview for their children and enabling kids to hear about Jesus Christ and learn the gospel,” he said. “Moreover, they instill essential values, helping children become model students who live out Christian principles.”

Discovery Clubs also serves as a bridge to connect churches with local schools and administrators, Crain explained.

For more information, visit discoveryclubs.org.

“This fosters a sense of community and collaboration, strengthening our impact on the next generation in the Birmingham Metro area.”

Gargus, who serves as ministry coordinator for Discovery Clubs, said the children who attend the clubs bring signed permission slips from their parents at the beginning of the year.

This year, about 1,200 students are involved in the clubs across the 23 schools.

Around 100 of those students are at Chalkville Elementary.

Mike Bissell, the school’s principal, said he appreciates the clubs “providing another outlet for our kids in this community specifically with something else to be focused on rather than being a latchkey kid, which can head down some challenging pathways.”

He said he’s a “huge fan” of the program.

“When we make more opportunities available, kids that cling to those things tend to perform better in general, whether it’s socially or academically,” Bissell said.

Bobby Talmadge, who has volunteered with Discovery Clubs for more than 10 years, said he can also see the difference it makes in the children spiritually.

For him, it’s an amazing opportunity to invest in children’s lives and

plant seeds of the gospel, and he said he would encourage anyone to think about volunteering.

“If you think about how many people you get to share Christ with each week, most people would

probably say zero, but here, guaranteed, you’re able to share Christ with a roomful of kids,” said Talmadge, a member of CrossPoint Church in Trussville.

“And most of these kids are not church kids; they’re just doing their own thing,” he added. “So it’s a real opportunity.”

Gargus, who has been a part of the ministry since 2011, said the program is constantly

in need of more volunteers.

Many of their faithful volunteers are serving at multiple schools during the week and could use more help.

Discovery Clubs provides all the curriculum, so “all you have to be able to do is read and speak and love Jesus,” Gargus said.

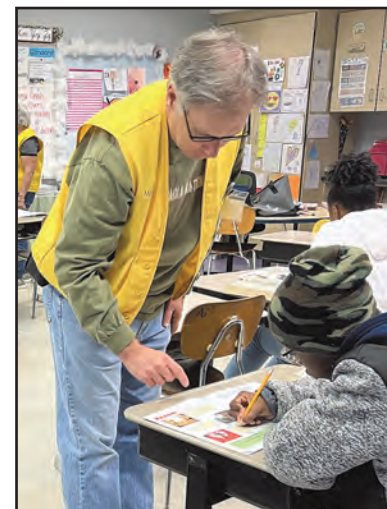


Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

Bobby Talmadge, a member of CrossPoint Church in Trussville, helps fourth graders with a lesson in their Bible workbook.

UM crowns Bell Miss University of Mobile



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile

Anna Katherine Bell of Dothan is welcomed as Miss University of Mobile 2024 on Oct. 13. Bell, a senior early childhood and elementary education major, will serve as a representative for the university until January 2025, which will make her the second-longest-reigning Miss UM in the history of the school as the competition shifts from fall semester to spring semester. The school also crowned Tiago Sarmiento, an international student from Portugal, as the new Mr. University of Mobile 2024. (UM)

“These clubs play a crucial role in reaching children in our local schools, providing parents the opportunity to provide a biblical worldview for their children.”

Chris Crain
executive director, Birmingham Metro Baptist Association

UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Recognize Ireland-Godfrey ALCAP Sunday on Nov. 12

For decades, the second Sunday in November has been recognized as ALCAP Sunday. But this year, the observance is special, according to Greg Davis, president of Alabama Citizens Action Program.

The Sunday has been renamed Ireland-Godfrey ALCAP Sunday in honor of the organization's two former leaders, Dan Ireland and Joe Godfrey, who served there for nearly 45 years combined.

"They represented our churches to the Alabama Statehouse and the Capitol," Davis said. "They

For more information, visit alcap.com/alcap-sunday or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



were our missionaries to Montgomery. They stood in Montgomery for Christian values on issues like alcohol, drugs, abortion,

religious liberty and many others."

Ireland died in 2019, and Godfrey is still actively involved in the organization.

Davis said ALCAP will continue to build on their legacy by representing churches in Montgomery and serving as Alabama's moral advocate.

"Your church's financial and prayer support along with your individual support will go a long way toward making Alabama a great place to live, worship and raise a family," Davis said.

College ministry leaders 'Unite'

Unite — set for Nov. 13 — will offer a chance for campus ministers, college pastors and collegiate church planters to be encouraged and equipped and celebrate what God is doing.

The speaker will be Gary Stidham, director



STIDHAM

of the Baptist Student Ministry at the University of Texas at Arlington, director of training for Texas Baptist Student Ministry and adjunct professor of collegiate ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth,

Texas. He will be talking about creating an evangelism culture in our ministries.

The event will be held at the AUM Baptist Student Center in Montgomery from 4–8 p.m. Dinner will be provided from Taco Mama, and there will be free giveaways for those in attendance. To register, visit bcmink.org/unite.

Youth Ministers' Lunch at annual meeting in Montgomery Nov. 14

Ymlink would like to invite all Alabama youth ministers to enjoy a free lunch Nov. 14 during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting. This is a great time to get to

know other youth ministers from across the state, be introduced to Baptist Campus Ministries and learn more about how Ymlink can support and serve you in ministry.

The lunch will be held Nov. 14, 12–1 p.m., at the BCM of Auburn University at Montgomery.

To register, visit ymlink.org/calendar/youth-ministers-lunch.

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR
New Life Baptist Church located in Bay Minette, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor who unashamedly preaches the Word of God. Please email resumé/profile to: newlifebaptistbmal@gmail.com or mail to: Pastor Search Committee, 15011 Glasgow Lane, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP
Fairhaven Baptist Church, Demopolis, Alabama, seeks a called, gifted believer for leading and engaging members in worship services. Interested candidates may forward resumé to: FBC, 1504 Cardinal Avenue, Demopolis, AL 36732 (ATTN: Worship Search Committee).

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Montevallo First Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please email your resumé for consideration to: mfbcbellsouth.net.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN RENTAL
Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

BUSINESS

EDWARD F. HUTTON JR. INSURANCE
Medicare Advantage Plans with new benefit options, Medicare Part D or Medicare Supplement Plans with new lower rates on Plans G and N. Visit www.medicareadvice65.com or 850-634-0652. Not connected with the federal Medicare program. Alabama lic. 3002360263.

FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS

Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658

SIGNS

CHURCH SIGN
Signs are your first impression. What kind of impression is your church sign making? Call us to replace/update yours with

either digital or traditional. Statewide since 1994. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955. www.reliableesigns.com

MINISTRIES

STRUGGLING TOWARD HOPE: A RESOURCE FOR GRIEF

Following the death of his wife in 1998, Bob Terry wrote, "Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse." This book shares not only the personal lessons he learned along that journey, but also practical tips for survivors as they learn to live after a loved one dies. "Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse," is published by Soncoast Publishing in Hartselle, Alabama, and is available in e-book and print from most major booksellers. Visit his website at drbobterry.com.

TRIPLE THREAT: A TALE OF FRIENDSHIP, LOVE AND BETRAYAL

From the outside, Alex Maddox and his wife Laura seem to have a perfect life, but they have fooled themselves as well as others. Carrying the guilt for a life they helped destroy was bad enough, but no one saw the tragic consequences looming. As their world unravels, new temptations and betrayal tear open old wounds. Triple Threat is Jason Rash's debut novel and is available to purchase on Amazon.

HOSTED CHURCH

Hosted Church is a premium one-stop shop for your church or nonprofit to quickly get your website up and running without sacrificing quality and functionality. Hosted Church is an extension of The Alabama Baptist and The Baptist Paper and is dedicated to helping small to medium churches. Contact us at hostedchurch.com.

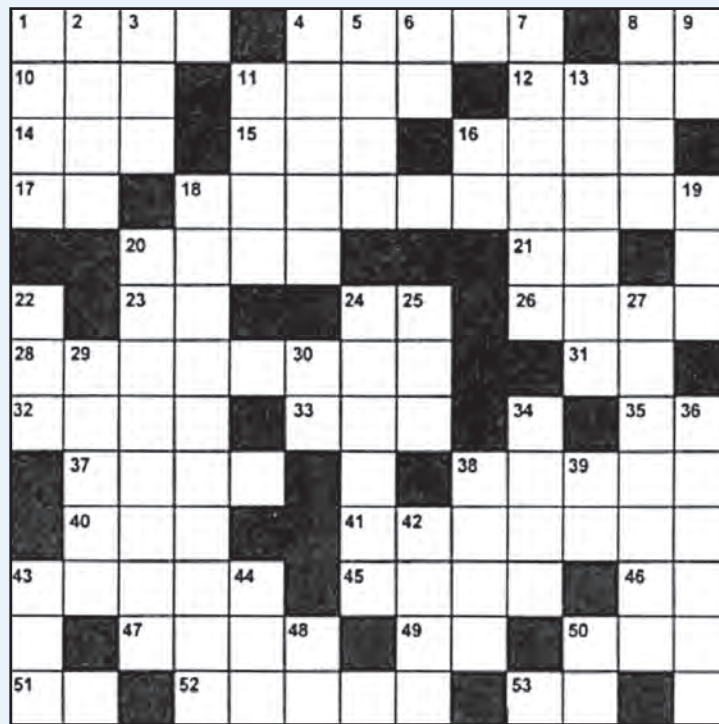
UNFORSAKEN MINISTRIES

Unforsaken Ministries walks alongside those in active addiction and their loved ones. Our mission is to offer hope. This is accomplished by guiding those in addiction and their loved ones through the recovery process. For more information, call 205-246-2030 or email glenn@unforsakenministry.org.

CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. A sword is upon the liars; and they shall _____. (Jer. 50:36)
4. A little oil in a _____. (1 Kings 17:12)
8. The glory which thou gavest _____. (John 17:22)
10. Bringing gold, silver, ivory and _____(s). (1 Kings 10:22)
11. I will ____ out my spirit unto you. (Prov. 1:23)
12. Calf meat.
14. Thou ... hast ____ forth the people. (Ex. 15:13)
15. Sounds of hesitation.
16. Whose names are in the ____ of life. (Phil. 4:3)
17. They could not enter ____ because of unbelief. (Heb. 3:19)
18. True ____, help those women which labored. (Phil. 4:3)
20. Even as a ____ gathereth her chickens. (Matt. 23:37; plural)
21. Roman numeral 6.
23. Like.
24. Egyptian god.
26. Doth not ____ one of you on the sabbath loose his ox? (Luke 13:15)
28. One who installs or endows.
31. See thou tell ____ man. (Matt. 8:4)
32. As he thinketh in his heart ____ is _____. (Prov. 23:7; 2 words)
33. Grain.
35. Border state. (abbr.)
37. Do all things without ____urings. (Phil. 2:14)
38. Short for Elizabeth.
40. Erie law enforcement agency.
41. Made you ____s to feed the church. (Acts 20:28; archaic)
43. They shall build houses and ____it



By Janet Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

19. Yah_____.
20. Children of Ziha, the children of _____. (Neh. 7:46)
22. Publican ... would not lift up so much as ____ eyes. (Luke 18:13)
24. Let us ____ together. (Isa. 1:18)
25. Thou ____ the man. (2 Sam. 12:7)
27. In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be _____. (Phil. 4:11)
29. System of naming things: ____clature.
30. I go unto Jerusalem ____ minister unto the saints. (Rom. 15:25)
34. Covet earnestly the ____ gifts. (1 Cor. 12:31)
36. Pertaining to the skin.
38. Rude child.
39. Symbol for tellurium.
42. Weird. (alt. spelling)
43. Belief system. (suffix)
44. Mixed-up Elks Club.
48. Northern Pacific or B&O _____. (abbr.)
50. Former mate.

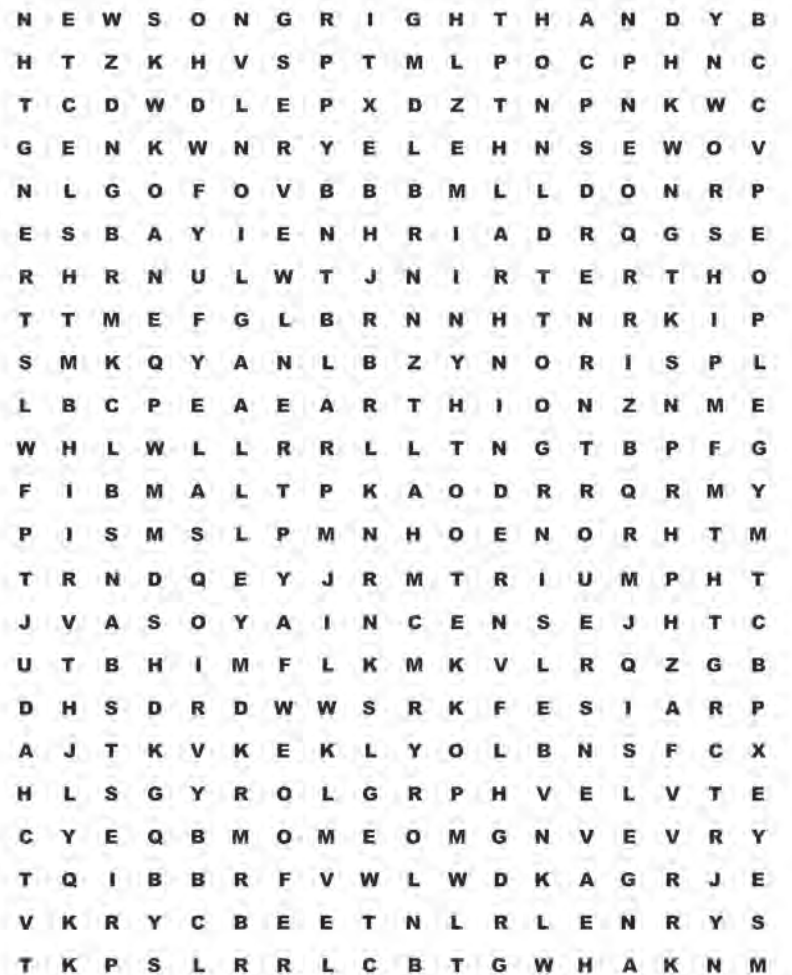
DOWN

1. Surrealist artist.
2. Ye shall see heaven _____. (John 1:51)
3. Senator ____ Kennedy.
4. Wine bottle stoppers.
5. A type of trick.
6. Went forth with them from ____ of the Chaldees. (Gen. 11:31)
7. Man was created, did not ____.
8. Dangerous shark.
9. Hebrew for "god."
11. Unskilled worker.
13. Carried by the wind.
16. Let him ____ Anathema. (1 Cor. 16:22)
18. A thousand years in thy
19. They could not enter ____ because of unbelief. (Heb. 3:19)
20. True ____, help those women which labored. (Phil. 4:3)
21. Roman numeral 6.
23. Like.
24. Egyptian god.
26. Doth not ____ one of you on the sabbath loose his ox? (Luke 13:15)
28. One who installs or endows.
31. See thou tell ____ man. (Matt. 8:4)
32. As he thinketh in his heart ____ is _____. (Prov. 23:7; 2 words)
33. Grain.
35. Border state. (abbr.)
37. Do all things without ____urings. (Phil. 2:14)
38. Short for Elizabeth.
40. Erie law enforcement agency.
41. Made you ____s to feed the church. (Acts 20:28; archaic)
43. They shall build houses and ____it

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

WORD search

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| ANGELS | OPEN |
| BOWLS | PEOPLE |
| EARTH | POWER |
| ELDERS | PRAISE |
| EYES | PRAYERS |
| FOREVER | PRIESTS |
| GLORY | RIGHT HAND |
| HARP | SCROLL |
| HEAVEN | SEALS |
| HONOR | SERVE |
| INCENSE | SLAIN |
| INSIDE | STRENGTH |
| JUDAH | THRONE |
| KINGDOM | TRIBE |
| LAMB | TRIUMPH |
| LANGUAGE | WEALTH |
| LION | WISDOM |
| NATION | WORSHIP |
| NEW SONG | WORTHY |



In a loud voice [the angels] were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Donated property to serve as ministry training center

Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association will use a former banking training center in Birmingham as a ministry training center for the next generation of youth pastors and worship leaders.

The building was donated to SDEA by a commercial real estate company. A grand opening and ribbon cutting was held Oct. 9 for the 203,511-square-foot facility.

Operations for Dawson's evangelistic ministry and its student focus, Strength to Stand, also will be housed in the building.

New trade school

The ministry plans to launch the STS Institute at its new home. The two-year trade school for ministry will welcome its inaugural class in the fall of 2024.

The school's goals include equipping the next generation of youth pastors and worship leaders through one year of educational, theological and leadership

training followed by a year of supervised ministry.

Formerly owned by Patriot Equities, a suburban-Philadelphia commercial real estate company, the space is outfitted to house 600 Institute students for learning, SDEA offices and future growth. The facility was move-in ready and passed all necessary code inspections, a rarity in real estate donation.

"God knew this would be our sending center for ministry," Dawson, founder and CEO of SDEA, said. "It had been vacant for four years, and to their credit, Patriot maintained the building throughout that time. What was originally meant to be a training center for bankers, God knew would be our home."

SDEA exists to reach America with the gospel

of Jesus Christ. It annually hosts evangelistic gatherings in cities across America through its UNITE movement and Safe at Home Faith & Family Nights in partnership with Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball and the National Football League.

It also hosts thousands of students every summer and winter at STS Conference, STS Camp and STS Mission, and it supports student pastors through its STS Counseling and Student Pastor Retreat initiatives.

With the ministry entering its next chapter, the new campus becomes the centerpiece of these outreach efforts and the place where SDEA trains future ministers, hosts gatherings, collaborates with other nonprofit and ministry organizations and launches a movement to unite America.

"God knew this would be our sending center for ministry."

**Scott Dawson
founder and CEO
of SDEA**



Photo courtesy of Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association

The building donated to Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association is a 203,511-square-foot facility and sits at 210 Wildwood Parkway.

"There was a time when SDEA had a birth, and we thought it might have a death," he said, "but now it's become a legacy ministry. We're passionate about reaching the next generation and believe if we can reach them, we can reach America."

Casting a vision

In the early months of 2023, Dawson said he heard from churches across the country about the need for qualified, called student pastors. He shared the need and cast the vision for STS Institute at a pastor's breakfast earlier this year.

Within days SDEA began receiving pledges from church partners to support the Institute.

"We didn't know about the building then, but we knew we needed new space with our team growing and the institute launching. When we saw the facility, I believed God could give it to us if it was supposed to be ours," Dawson said. "That's when I knew it was time to do [the institute]."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Adapted from a story written and published by Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association.

CHOOSE LIFE TODAY



PURCHASE A TAG



d+life
livedthelife.com/bama

\$10 per person

2023 Alabama Statewide D-Life Boot Camp

**NorthPark Baptist Church
Trussville, Alabama**

**Saturday, November 18 | 9 AM–1 PM
(includes light breakfast at 8:30 AM)**

Dr. Bill & Rondie Wilks, D-Life Trainers

REGISTER NOW
with the QR code or go to:
livedthelife.com/bama



Join us in training for a lifestyle of disciple-making.

Good intentions

IMB missionary shares how your church can help children in crisis flourish in families

Ten years ago, I was visiting Shelter Yetu, an orphanage in Naivasha, Kenya.

A young boy stood alone at the chalkboard, wiping away the day's lessons with an old rag. The child — an orphan, I was told — sang quietly as he worked. I watched him from the doorway for a few minutes before greeting him in Swahili.

After some small talk about the day's activities, I asked Boniface how long he had been at the orphanage. "One year," he told me.

Not an orphan

Quietly, I asked him when the last time he saw his family was. I didn't know or expect the answer — in my head, I was thinking perhaps both his parents had passed away. "Last weekend," he said with a smile.

Boniface proceeded to tell me that his mother actually worked at a nearby farm and often came to visit him and his brother on the weekends.

So why was Boniface, who was obviously not an orphan, at an orphanage?

Finding a way

I learned later that he is the sixth of eight children. His family was displaced during Kenya's 2008 post-election violence. They spent two years living in an IDP (internally displaced persons) camp before his father left the family.

Eventually, Boniface's mother found work at a local farm but still couldn't afford to send all eight of her children to school, so she found help the only way she could — she placed them in orphanages.

I wish I could say Boniface's story is uncommon or unusual, but as many as 80% of children living in orphanages have at least one living parent.

Does your church support an orphanage? Have you ever taken a short-term missions trip to serve at an orphanage? Does your family sponsor an under-



IMB photo
Rescued street boys attend morning devotions at Shelter Yetu in Naivasha, Kenya. The goal of the shelter is to reunite children with their families.

privileged child? Have you ever wondered how you or your church could help vulnerable children?

Biblical mandate

Southern Baptists care deeply about orphans.

There is a clear biblical mandate for churches and believers to care for widows and orphans. James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to

visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

Unfortunately, our good intentions have not always translated to the best care for orphans and at-risk children.

A growing amount of research shows that orphanages are not the best place for these kids.

▶ An estimated 5 million children live in orphanages and other institutions worldwide.

▶ Eight out of 10 children living in orphanages have at least one living parent.

▶ The cost of supporting a child in an orphanage is 5–10 times higher than in a family.

Financial aid

▶ U.S. Christians give approximately \$2.5 billion to orphanages annually.

▶ Years of international research has shown growing up in an institution can severely harm children's physical and cognitive development and expose them to a higher risk of abuse and neglect.

For these reasons, many countries and institutions

are moving away from traditional institutional care (orphanages) to family and community-based care.

Psalm 68 tells us that "God sets the lonely in families." Orphans don't just need food, shelter and education. Orphans need a safe, loving family and community in which to thrive.

Today, Shelter Yetu is no longer an orphanage. Instead, it serves as a rescue center — helping children living on the streets, providing those in need with rehabilitation services and reuniting them with safe, loving families while simultaneously working to empower their families.

We are also helping other orphanages transition to a family-based care model, resulting in more children going home.

Getting involved

One of my primary objectives is to help advise U.S. churches on best care practices for orphans and vulnerable children based on biblical principles and emerging research in the field.

Together, we can labor to see more orphans and vulnerable children know Christ's love through placement in loving families.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was written by Kristen Lowry, an IMB missionary who lives outside Nairobi, Kenya, with her family. She serves as an international orphan care consultant for Send Relief. She is co-executive director of Shelter Yetu in Naivasha, Kenya, where she has helped more than 400 street-connected children reintegrate with safe, loving families.

Reliable SIGN SERVICES
"Celebrating Over 25 Years"

CHURCH SIGNS

"We are absolutely thrilled with our new signs. We are a non-profit organization bringing humanitarian aid to those in need around the world. With our new World Mission Center, we had a need for two custom signs. The Reliable Signs team completed our signs with precision, professionalism and reasonable pricing. The installation staff was respectful and knowledgeable. We highly recommend Reliable Signs to anyone who wishes to have a great product for a competitive price without sacrificing excellent customer service."

The Global Impact Ministries, Inc. team
Montgomery, Ala.

www.reliablesigns.com • 1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 5

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



RETURNING Mark 13:24–37

Be Ready! (24–27)

Many people focus on the end times, wondering when Jesus will return and even trying to predict it. This is not the point of this passage.

In the Gospels, Jesus talks about the sign of the times, but His point is not for us to wonder when He will return. The point is to be prepared for it.

Knowing Christ can return at any moment means we can't relax and sit back. We need to live in a way that honors God, loving our neighbors and loving God.

We also need to warn others of the coming judgment so they too can accept the gospel and be prepared.

This day will be a wonderful day of celebration for those who believe, but for those who do not, it will be a time of wrath.

Be Aware (28–31)

Jesus points out that it should not be difficult to recognize the end times. Bad things will happen. There will be wars and rumors of wars (v. 7). This, of course, matches current events. It also matches events throughout history. This is why people become set on determining dates for when Christ will return, and they lose focus of the fact that being ready is what is important.

There have been many episodes in history when people claim to know when Christ will return, and every time they have been wrong. People have sold their goods and waited for Christ's return only to be left dejected.

It also gives Christianity a bad name because of people acting so foolishly. We should live every day as if Christ could return at any mo-

ment, not just try to get ready when we think He will return some time in the future.

Note that when Jesus says "this generation" will not pass away, the word used for "generation" also means "race." This means Jesus is speaking of the human race, not just His hearers in the first century.

Be Alert (32–37)

In the last section, Jesus warns His readers to be alert for His return.

Since no one knows when the return will be, there is no use wasting time trying to figure it out.

Even Jesus Himself does not know the hour; only God the Father does. (This does not diminish Christ's divinity. The incarnation involves Christ limiting Himself, as seen in Phil. 2:5–11.)

It is wise of God not to reveal to us the time of Christ's return because if we knew for sure, many would use this as an excuse to be lazy and not be occupied with honoring God in their lives and ministries.

The fact that we do not know when Christ will return should spur us on to live godly lives, honoring God and telling others about Christ so they can also be a Christ-follower. Many people fool themselves into thinking they can get right with God later in life.

This has two glaring problems. First, we do not know when we will die. Second, we do not know when Christ will return.

God has given us tasks to do to serve and glorify Him, and we need to be faithful to fulfill the task He has given us, not being lazy because we can trust in our salvation but serving Him with gladness.

"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come."

Mark 13:32–33

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biblical & Religious Studies, Samford University



IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD? 1 John 5:1–13

Because the events of the Old Testament stretch over such a long period of time (more than 1,000 years), it is not surprising to see beliefs and practices develop along the way.

Early on, for example, we find no shrine at all for worship. Later, God gives instructions for constructing the tabernacle. Finally, God allows Solomon to build the temple.

Although the New Testament period is far shorter than that of the Old (barely a century), we can still see the same sort of theological development at work. One of the areas where we see this especially is in considering just who Jesus Christ is.

At the moment of Jesus' crucifixion, even the disciples — the group of men who had been closest to Jesus during His ministry — had failed to fully understand who Jesus was. It took time for the Holy Spirit to lead the authors of the New Testament to a more complete understanding of who God's Son was.

One of the most difficult challenges for understanding the person of Christ was that of reconciling Jesus' full humanity and divinity.

Some groups would actually develop beliefs about Jesus that would fall outside the bounds for right belief established by the New Testament. Two of these were the Ebionites and the Docetists.

The Ebionites were part of early Jewish Christianity, and their monotheistic heritage in Judaism made it difficult to accept that Jesus could be divine. The Docetists, on the other hand, were part of Hellenistic Christianity; their struggle lay in believing Jesus could be human. First John 5 seems particularly keen on addressing the beliefs of this latter group.

We become God's children when we believe in Jesus. (1–5)

Accustomed as we are to hearing the word pair "Jesus Christ," we are

apt to miss the challenge about Jesus being the Christ.

In rejecting the humanity of Jesus, some Docetists went so far as to claim that "Jesus" and "the Christ" were two different beings.

The divine Christ was important in their minds; the human Jesus was not. This is the background that stands behind Paul's odd admonition in 1 Corinthians 12:3. Because they thought the human Jesus was of no importance, the Docetists just might pronounce a curse on Jesus.

First John challenges the Docetists by insisting that it is, in fact, Jesus who is the Christ. To be born of God, one must believe this.

"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

1 John 5:12

God gives testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. (6–10)

Verses 6–10 continue the theological challenge. As part of their rejection of Jesus' humanity, some Docetists imagined that the divine

Christ "possessed" the human Jesus at His baptism and departed from Him before He endured the cross.

This was their reading of the dove descending at Jesus' baptism and then Jesus' words on the cross asking why God had abandoned Him.

John counters this by insisting that it was Jesus Christ who came by water (referring to His baptism) and by blood (referring to His death on the cross).

The same person declared to be God's beloved Son at His baptism is the One who suffered the indignity of crucifixion.

We have eternal life only through Jesus. (11–13)

First John both assures its readers that "God has given us eternal life" and insists that this life is found nowhere else. In the letter's own precise theological formulation: "The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Leann Callaway

The Alabama Baptist

Casting Crowns stays focused on the mission and message

As the award-winning band Casting Crowns reflects on 20 years in the Christian music industry, lead singer Mark Hall notes the group's mission and message have remained the same as when they first started touring and performing concerts.

With the upcoming release of their compilation album "Lifesongs: Celebration of the First 20 Years," the group looks back on God's faithfulness and looks ahead with hope and expectation of what is to come.

"Our songs have always been discipleship set to music," Hall told TAB. "These songs are our prayers and a way of reminding us that God is worthy of all of our worship, the breath in my lungs, and that God is seeking our whole heart to worship Him."

Message behind the music

By sharing the message behind their music, Casting Crowns desires to connect listeners to unshakeable gospel truths while reminding them



CASTING CROWNS

Photo courtesy of Casting Crowns

about the importance of praising God in the midst of life's storms.

Band members and their families have dealt with various trials through the years. In 2015, Hall had a cancer scare and took four months off from touring following the successful removal of a cancerous growth on his right kidney.

In 2021, the band's former drummer Andy Williams died tragically from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

"Through various storms I've been reminded that sometimes healing doesn't come the way we want it to, and sometimes it makes us think that God didn't heal at all," Hall reflected. "During those times, it's important to remember that God always brings healing. ... Sometimes Jesus calms the storms,

and sometimes He rides them out with us."

As their music has reached audiences around the world, Casting Crowns is encouraged by hearing from fans.

"God constantly reminds me

about the purpose of this ministry by hearing testimonies from parents about their kids dealing with dyslexia like I did and the struggles they are facing in school," Hall said.

"To know that they are being encouraged to keep pressing on

because they see where I've been and how God has used me is so inspiring. It's also a great blessing to know that my story has encouraged other ministers to enter seminary — because if God can use me, He can use anyone."

In addition to performing and writing both songs and books, Hall has spent more than 20 years working with students at Eagles Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Georgia.

While Hall admitted his schedule remains a constant balancing act, he said reaching as many people as possible for Jesus Christ is the driving force for all he does. His bandmates also serve at their churches in both full- and part-time capacities.

In addition to Hall, Casting Crowns includes Juan DeVevo (guitar), Josh Mix (lead guitar), Melodee DeVevo (violin and cello), Megan Garrett (piano and keyboard), Jack Williams (drums) and John Michael Hall (bass).

Despite the accolades and achievements the group has received through the years, Casting Crowns keeps the spotlight on Christ.

"We started out as a youth group band and that's still where we are today, leading worship for students," Hall said. "You can give [band members] awards, but they're still just the real deal. They love Jesus and students with all their heart."

'Ministry and priority'

"My favorite part about being in Casting Crowns is that this group hasn't lost their focus — we are about serving the local church, and the songs are an extension of that ministry and priority."

This fall Casting Crowns will be doing concerts across the country on their 20th anniversary tour.



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.

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 —————

TO SUBSCRIBE

Visit: tabonline.org/subscribe

Call: 1-800-803-5201

TO ADVERTISE

Email: ads@thealabamabaptist.org

Call: 205-873-0505