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The Church's role in veteran support and how Christians can be involved, see page 13

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Alabama Baptist DR team helps 97-year-old WWII veteran

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

In recent weeks, we've shared stories about Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers helping out in the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia, which hit the Florida Gulf Coast in late August.

But we haven't shared with you yet about a man one disaster relief team met at the end of a road out into the keys in Ozello, Florida — 97-year-old Ellis Bailey, a World War II veteran.

"He doesn't look 97 at all," said Mark Presswood, associational missions director for Clarke Baptist Association, who was doing flood recovery work with the association's DR team.

And Bailey wasn't used to being the one receiving the help.

"He was sitting on his riding lawnmower when we showed up," Presswood said. "He wheels his walker down to his neighbor's house and gets on the riding lawnmower, then mows his grass and the grass of three of his neighbors. He's the oldest man in that neighborhood by far, but he just wants to do it; he's got a servant's heart."

In WWII, Bailey served on the

U.S.S. Alabama. He was on the ship when it led the U.S.S. Missouri — which had Gen. Douglas MacArthur on board — into Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, which ended the war.

'A lot of stories'

"He's got a lot of stories," Presswood said.

Bailey told the team that he grew



Photo by Grace Van Wyck

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers helped clean out the water-damaged basement of 97-year-old Ellis Bailey, a World War II veteran, in the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia, which hit the Florida Gulf Coast in late August.

up in church — his mom and dad would walk him there each week hand in hand with his siblings, and they would all sit on the front row together. He gave his life to Christ at a young age.

"He's known the Lord for a long time," Presswood said. "He smiles a lot. He just seems happy."

When the team finished helping Bailey clean out his water-damaged basement, they were glad to have been able to help a fellow believer, but they felt like

they were the ones who had received the blessing.

"When we left at the end of working there, I said, 'Mr. Bailey, we'll see you in heaven one day,' and he said, 'Oh yes, I'll remember you.'"

News Update

The article, "Hospital blast reminds Baptists of work in Gaza," published in the Oct. 26 issue of TAB has drawn several reader comments.

The goal of the article was to highlight the historic ties of the hospital once known as Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza and Baptist work in the region. Limited information was available at press time on who was responsible for the explosion and the number of

casualties. U.S. intelligence officials and others who have studied video footage now say the damage was most likely caused by a failed rocket launch from Hamas or a terrorist group supporting Hamas. A U.S. intelligence official told media outlets there was only "light structural damage" to the hospital.

Intelligence officials say they do not have an estimate of the casualties caused by the blast. (TAB)

The Alabama Baptist

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

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.



Rashional Thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
President and Editor-in-Chief

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‘Live with urgency ... focus on relationship with Christ, to one another’

Sunday, Nov. 5, Charles T. Carter preached his “Come Before Winter” sermon for the 55th straight year in a row.

Dr. Carter finds an opportunity each October or November to deliver the message he developed from the idea of another preacher, Clarence E. Macartney, whose original manuscript of the theme was dated October 1915.

It was 1968 when Carter first debuted his own version of the theme out of 2 Timothy 4:9, 21, and this year he shared it with the congregation of FBC Birmingham.

FBC Birmingham pastor Jim

Cooley thought to spread the word about the special presentation and a sanctuary full of guests showed up, appreciative to get to hear “Come Before Winter” again.

Paul’s letter to Timothy shares how he is anxious for Timothy to come to him before winter because of pending travel hazards and because Paul had a premonition he was going to die, Carter explained.

‘Life’s opportunities’

2 Timothy 4 helps us understand the urgency to do what we need to do now. It helps us see “the passing of life’s opportunities.”

Where should our urgency focus?

1. **Receiving Christ (Ps. 39:7 and 2 Cor. 6:2b).**
2. **Sharing Christ (John 4:35).**
3. **Living for Christ (James 4:14).**

Receiving Christ as soon as we understand His invitation provides more time to share with our family and friends and to show His love to those in our lives, Carter noted. And living for Christ starts with:

A. Reforming our character.

“Whatever your character is today, you are in the process of becoming forever — unless you make a conscious decision to change. Do

it now while there is still time.”

B. Restoring broken relationships.

“Is there someone somewhere you have a broken relationship with? ... Sometimes people let that go on forever and ever. Don’t do it. Take care of it right now.

“With your family, your family needs to hear you say, ‘I love you,’ amen? Do it now.”

Don’t wait until it’s too late. Live with urgency while we have time, Carter urged.

“The smallest deed done is better than the biggest intention left undone.”

Tragic situation: First Baptist Church Phenix City, pastor’s family need our prayers

When the story out of FBC Phenix City and the nearby city of Smiths Station broke the morning of Nov. 1, it shocked the local area as well as the Baptist family across the state and nation.

By the evening of Nov. 3, however, those same communities experienced a second shock to learn FBC Phenix City pastor and Smiths Station mayor Bubba Copeland took his own life.

During the Nov. 1 Wednesday night church service, Copeland addressed the article released on-

line that morning by 1819 News.

The article reported Copeland had a secret online presence and posted explicit content and images under the name Brittini Blaire Summerlin.

Copeland, sharing from the pulpit and acknowledging the audience joining via livestream, called the article an “internet attack.”

“I apologize for any embarrassment caused by my private and personal life that has become public.

... This will not waver my devotion to my family, to serving my city, to serving my church,” Copeland said.

“I’m thankful for the grace of God

and willingness to forgive. I have nothing to be ashamed of. A lot of things ... were taken out of context.”

‘I love my family’

“I love my family. They are number one,” he said. “I’m sorry for what my actions have caused. I’m thankful for the hundreds ... of people who have reached out to me today in love.”

On Nov. 3, the Lee County Sheriff’s Office confirmed Copeland’s death by suicide. The Opelika-Auburn News reported that deputies had been asked to check on Copeland when the incident happened.

“The office received information at approximately 4:14 p.m. Friday that a welfare check was needed for Copeland,” according to the OA News article.

“Deputies found Copeland in the Beulah community and a slow pursuit ensued (to Lee Road 275). [He then] pulled over ... exited the car with a handgun and took his own life, authorities said.”

Along with prayers for Copeland’s family, his church and the community, the deputies on duty that day also need our prayers.

Full coverage is available at tabonline.org. (Jennifer D. Rash)

Your Voice



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

The Lord is my helper: Encouragement from Hebrews

By Franklin L. Kirksey
Robertsdale, Ala.

The late British evangelist G. Campbell Morgan observed, “The supreme need in every hour of difficulty and distress is for a fresh vision of God. Seeing Him, all else takes on proper perspective and proportion.”

One passage from Scripture that provides such encouragement to the believer is Hebrews 13:5b–6. Allow me to point out three things from these verses.

First, there is the perpetual attendance of the Lord. Hebrews 13:5b reads, “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

We read the following about the one making this promise: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Psalm

46:1 reads, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Second, there is the personal alliance with the Lord. Hebrews 13:6a begins, “So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper. ...’”

Psalm 121:1–2 reads, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills — from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.” The psalmist knew the Lord would help him in His own time and way and that His help would be appropriate to his need. It is wonderful to have an Almighty ally!

Third, there is the perfect assurance from the Lord. Hebrews 13:6b reads, “I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

Psalm 118:6–7 reads, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can

man do to me? The Lord is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.”

Alan Redpath explains, “The help of God does not come to us when we are indifferent. It comes to the man who is depending on God in the thick of the fight. It comes to the one who tarries for the vision in faith. It comes to the one who believes that he who waits upon the Lord shall never be confounded.

“It comes to the one who rests upon the promises of the Word. It comes to the man who lives by faith as if in the actual possession of the answer to his prayer, although the enemy is still around him. It is faith which turns distress into singing.”

Though Samuel was a judge, a prophet and a priest, his strategy was successful against the enemy. He led the Israelites to repent and seek the Lord, resulting in His help in defeating the Philistines. They could have experienced this victory earlier (1 Sam. 4) if they had followed that formula. First Samuel 7:12 reads, “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’”

May we sing with Robert Robinson:

*“Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thine help I’ve come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.”*

May you truly be able to boldly declare, “The Lord is my helper!”

“How could my face not be changed forever if I am reflecting the love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control so freely given by the Holy Spirit?” said **Paul Lawrence**, who along with his wife **Harriet**, wrote, “Going to School in Gaza: Lessons Learned in Thirty Years of Service in the Middle East.” Both served as Southern Baptist representatives among the Palestinian people, first in Gaza and later in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Our job as parents is not to instill self-esteem in our children, but to guide them to the foundational truths about who God says they are. The God who breathed everything into existence says that they have inherent dignity and worth and that they are irreplaceable (Luke 12:7, Jer. 1:5).

Pastor Micah Gaston
3Circle Church Midtown
Mobile

Success in evangelism is not contingent on the outcome nor rooted in the result; success is based on the obedience of the messenger. God saves, we share. When success in evangelism is measured by sharing, it liberates Christians from anxiety and frees us to be faithful witnesses.

@DanielDickard
X (formerly Twitter)

The value of working together

Southern Baptists are all different, and that’s what makes our churches so beautiful.

Our worship styles, languages, customs, service times, preaching proclivities, fall festivals, prayer rooms, summer schedules, theological nuances and snow day policies differ. ...

We do have a few rock-solid, no compromise, do or die essentials:

1. Jesus saves.
2. The Great Commission.

3. Our churches are all autonomous.

4. And we work together. ...

Just imagine how much we disciples could do together if we tried less to be Lone Rangers and worked together.

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Matt Tullos

Tennessee Baptist Mission Board

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“If God can save any person, He can save any church.”

SAM RAINER
President of Church Answers

“Young adults rarely go somewhere they are not invited. I cannot stress this enough. Train your people to invite every young adult they know — friends, family members, coworkers, college students, gym members, babysitters, etc. Invite every unchurched young adult connected to your members.

Phillip Slaughter

Campus minister in Arkansas

“Donating a kidney was not on my radar. ... Whatever God blessed you with is to bless other people. I knew my good health was for more than going to the gym,” said **Randal Lyle**, senior pastor of Meadowridge Community Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, on donating a kidney to Rudy Kebreau, the church’s next generation and children’s minister.

“When I go into an area that I’m not familiar with, I’ll ask the director of missions at the association what churches (in the area are available to help). ... That association is vital,” said **David Wells**, who directs Texas Baptist Men’s disaster relief efforts.

“We are constantly involved in raising money to make adoption more affordable for families. Anything that we can do to help we believe we should do it. That is where God’s heart is — we’ve got to help the orphans and widows,” said **Steven Bell**, adoptive parent and pastor of worship and family ministry at Hindman (Kentucky) First Baptist Church of Hindman, Kentucky. Bell won more than \$61,000 on Wheel of Fortune in September.

“We earnestly want to build bridges between the generations. We also desire to build bridges between denominations, styles and preferences, knowing that the love and power of our Lord breaks not only every chain, but also every division,” said **Keith Erwin** of the Grammy-nominated and Dove Award winning

southern gospel music group The Erwins.

God is our primary source in the Dixon house, whether I’ve got work or not. He’s going to take care of us, and He’s going to provide for us as long as we continue to put our faith and hope in Him.

Colton Dixon

Singer/songwriter

“Stumbling churches have a similar experience. They stop paying attention to where they are headed and what they are intentionally doing to get there. Then they stumble,” said **George Bullard**, a strategic thinking mentor for Christian leaders through his ForthTelling Innovation ministry.

“Our songs have always been discipleship set to music. 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,” said lead singer **Mark Hall** of award-winning band Casting Crowns.

“Remember, you don’t have to navigate crisis challenges alone. Pray for wisdom and seek advice from fellow pastors, mentors or communication experts within your church community. They can offer valuable insights and support as you navigate difficult situations online. You are not alone,” said **Mark MacDonald**, church communication consultant.



What are you chasing and why?

When we chase after earthly things, success, titles, position, money, even leisure, we can never attain enough. None of these earthly treasures will bring the peace and joy our hearts desire. They cannot.

Reaching for these with a longing to find peace, satisfaction and happiness only leads to sorrow, misery and messed up lives. No matter how many highs and triumphs we attain, any satisfaction and pleasure is short lived.

Happiness comes from external circumstances. Happiness is always fleeting. Happiness can be wiped out in a matter of seconds. Joy on the other hand comes from inside, not from external instances.

True joy comes from God above. Only God can give a person joy because God is the creator and possessor of joy. True joy can only belong to one who sets aside all earthly desires for self and follows after the desires of the God of the universe.

It is only when we lay aside our chasing after what we think will bring success and happiness that we can find joy, peace and a greater success than this earth can give.

Things to consider:

► Am I chasing after my dreams or what God created me to be?

► Am I living for one of those fleeting moments of happiness or for those awe-inspiring God moments?

► How many of the items on my calendar this week are to help someone else rise above their apparent circumstances and not about me and my personal life?

► Is accomplishing my goals as pleasing to God as it is to me?

George Yates

Pastor and church health strategist
alsbom.org/blog

3 stories you should know



Wikimedia Commons photo

Grand Canyon University, the country's largest Christian university, is being fined \$37.7 million by the federal government amid accusations it misled students about the cost of its graduate programs. GCU denies the allegations and says it is being unfairly targeted. The college has more than 100,000 students, mostly in online programs, and has disbursed more federal student aid than any other college, DOE officials said. GCU has 20 days to appeal the fine. (TAB)

Midwestern's Spurgeon collection 'one of a kind'

The Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Seminary has acquired the Heritage Collection from Spurgeon's College UK.

The collection consists of thousands of books, manuscripts, letters, artifacts, newspaper cuttings and more from Charles Spurgeon.

The new acquisition makes the Midwestern library home to the largest collection of Spurgeon materials in the world.

Midwestern president Jason Allen said, "The Heritage Collection is truly a one-of-a-kind collection and an invaluable stewardship.

"This is a stewardship we feel well beyond Midwestern Seminary," he said. "It's a stewardship for Southern Baptist pastors and churches. It's a stewardship for the broader Baptist and evangelical world." (Missouri's The Pathway)

Barber speaks out on brief filed in abuse case

SBC President Bart Barber on Oct. 30 said he gave the final go-ahead for the SBC Executive Committee to sign on to a hotly contested court submission related to a sexual abuse case being appealed in Kentucky.

The legal document — an amicus curiae brief which came to light Oct. 24 in an article by the Louisville Courier Journal — was signed and submitted by the EC, Southern Seminary and Lifeway Christian Resources in August 2022.

An existing lawsuit in Kentucky (separate from the one related to the amicus brief) impacts the three entities and also deals with the statute of limitations issue.

Sexual abuse survivors, entity board members and others criticized the move in light of sexual abuse reform efforts in the SBC. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Pastor in India jailed on charges of 'alluring' people to his 'foreign God'

NEW DELHI, India — A pastor was jailed on a reportedly baseless claim that he violated India's anti-conversion laws, even after the magistrate reprimanded police for the arrest.

Bajarang Rawat, a pastor who converted to Christianity from Hinduism, is accused of converting people by means of "allurement," reported Morning Star News, quoting the pastor.

Hindu extremists accused Rawat of brainwashing people and alluring them to Christianity and to Rawat's "foreign God." However, neither police, media nor opposition could find witnesses who stated such, Rawat said.

Rawat was arrested July 16 in Loni Katra in India's Uttar Pradesh state and charged under the Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Re-

ligion Act, 2021. His Bible and songbooks were taken from him.

He was released hours later but rearrested that evening. He was released on bail Aug. 7.



MS photo

India is No. 11 on Open Door's 2023 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

During the time in between, his wife and two children had neither home nor adequate sustenance nor source of income because Hindu extremists forced the family to leave their house and destroyed the stall Rawat used for his business, Morning Star reported.

Three Christians killed, street preacher beaten unconscious in Uganda

KAMPALA, Uganda — A Christian tour guide from Uganda and a married tourist couple were slain Oct. 17 in Queen Elizabeth National Park in the country's Kasese District. Members of the Islamic-affiliated group Allied Democratic Forces are suspected in the attack.

A witness told Morning Star News that the terrorists accused the three of supporting Christians in Uganda and using "tourist" as a cover. The witness said the assailants shot them and burned the vehicle in which they were traveling.

In a separate event, six extremists beat Robert Settimba, 27, in the Kawaala area of Kampala on Oct. 10 as he walked home after a time of street preaching. Friends took Settimba to the hospital, where he regained consciousness.

Alabama news

AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Calvary Baptist Church, Prattville**, has a tent revival Nov. 9–10, 7 p.m. There will be preaching, worship and singing. Dave Burns is pastor.

BETHEL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Jefferson Baptist Church, Demopolis**, celebrated 203 years of ministry Sept. 10. Founded in 1820 by three Revolutionary War veterans as Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, the name was changed in 1944 to Jefferson Baptist. In 1977 the building was added to the National



Photo by Harold Speir

Register of Historic Places.

Through the years, Jefferson Baptist developed a strong relationship with Jefferson Methodist Church that continues to-

day. Sunday School meets at Jefferson Baptist, but worship services alternate between the two churches, who refer to themselves as “two churches; one family.”

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, spoke at the celebration, and Anna Speir presented a plaque to pastor Jake Duke. Revelators, a quartet from Grove Hill, provided special music.

CHEROKEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Providence Baptist Church, Centre**, celebrated its centennial anniversary Sept 3.

Special presentations were made by Wendell Dutton (center), association missionary and commissioner of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, to Josh Bryant (left), pastor, and Jerry Richardson (right), deacon. Music for the service was provided by The Masters Quartet from Tupelo, Mississippi.



Photo by Sheila Richardson

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Steve Thompson** has retired from full-time ministry after serving 30 years as associate pastor of education and administration at **Woodmont Baptist Church, Florence**. A reception for Thompson was held Oct. 15. A native of Florida, Thompson graduated from Samford University in 1981 and Southwestern Seminary in 1986. He spent five years as associate pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Enterprise, before being called to Woodmont in 1993. During his 30-year tenure, he helped lead the congregation

through numerous building campaigns and the development of the east campus; filled the pulpit; organized educational ministries; managed facilities; provided spiritual leadership stability during interims; and, most importantly, led people to Jesus Christ. His wife, Cinda (second from left, pictured with their daughters), served alongside him, working in special needs ministry, children’s and women’s



Photo by Sandy Holcombe

ministries, and other areas. Thompson will continue serving as pastor emeritus of Woodmont.

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

▶ **Darryl Wood** is the new interim pastor at **Hepzibah Baptist Church, Talladega**. Wood grew up in Decatur and studied religion and philosophy at Samford University. He then earned a master’s degree and doctorate from New Orleans Seminary. Wood is a chaplain at Lakeside Hospice, Pell City. He and his wife, Marcie, have adult children and grandchildren.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Sammy Gilbreath** will lead a revival at **Harmony Baptist Church, Andalusia**, Nov. 12, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Nov. 13–15, 7 p.m. For more information, call 334-222-8117; text 334-464-6936; email scott.donaldson6936@gmail.com; or visit harmonyinandalusia.com. Scott Donaldson is pastor.

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Malvern Baptist Church, Malvern**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 12. The service begins at 10:30 a.m. Tim Bedsole, association missions strategist for Geneva Baptist Convention, will speak and the Malvern Trio will sing. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service. Hosea Parker is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Will McGee** is the new senior pastor of **Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. Originally from Scottsboro, McGee most recently served as lead pastor of Crossroads Christian Church, Brooklyn, New York. Prior to serving at Crossroads, he served at First Baptist Church Jacksonville, Alabama, and The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. McGee holds a bachelor’s degree from Auburn University and a master’s degree and doctorate from Southeastern Seminary. He and his wife, Rebekah, have three children.



McGEE

▶ **Jonathan Woodlief** is the new college pastor of **Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. He most recently served as the lead minister of missions and mobilization at Northway Church, Dallas, Texas. He was previously on staff at the Village Church, Dallas, and Cru, East Asia. Woodlief holds a bachelor’s degree from Kennesaw State University, Georgia, and a master’s of theology from Dallas Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Caitlin, have two children.



WOODLIEF

▶ **Chris Anderson** is the new youth pastor at **Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. Originally from

Dothan, he has a bachelor’s degree from Troy University. He attended Calvary’s college ministry, The Well, while obtaining his master’s degree at the University of Alabama and served on the Well leadership team as a worship leader and a life group leader. He was interim youth pastor at Calvary for a year and a half before stepping into the full-time position. Anderson was ordained to the gospel ministry in 2023. He is currently pursuing a master’s degree at Midwestern Seminary. He and his wife, Elizabeth, married in July.



ANDERSON



BURNS

▶ **Ron Burns** is the new minister of music and worship at **Crestline Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. He previously served as minister of music at Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster; Prattmont Baptist Church, Prattville; and most recently as associate pastor, worship and children, at Moundville Baptist Church, Moundville. He serves as a chaplain with Marketplace Chaplains. He and his wife, Patty, have two children. Clay Womble is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Will Spivey** is the new next gen pastor at **First Baptist Church Opelika**. Spivey has a bachelor’s degree from Troy University and a master’s degree from New Orleans Seminary. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in biblical exposition with a minor in missiology at New Orleans Seminary. He has been the college pastor at FBC Opelika for the past four years. Will and his wife, Shelby, have one son. Jeff Meyers is pastor.



SPIVEY

‘Rise up and Pray’

Moms in Prayer International offers ‘sisterhood’ praying over children

As far as she can tell, Kathy Steele — former missionary, licensed professional counselor and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary counseling professor — started the first Moms in Prayer International group in Cuba nearly 20 years ago.

Today, more than 3,000 women are active in Moms in Prayer International groups across Cuba, meeting weekly to pray Scripture for their kids, Steele has learned.

“Knowing your kids and knowing God’s word and then praying His Word for them is one of the most powerful things we can ever do for our kids,” said Steele.

Former International Mission Board missionaries to Central America, Steele and her husband Ed, have worked closely with Cuban believers through the years.

In 2003, while Steele and other NOBTS professors were teaching at the Havana seminary, she showed women there how to set up an MIPI prayer group.

Two years later, Steele taught at the Santiago seminary on the opposite end of the country and did the same.

In MIPI, women pray Scripture — such as Philippians 4:6 — as they bring their children’s names before the Lord.

In a country that has known poverty and a shortage of goods and resources, the groups multiplied quickly.

“They have no other re-



NOBTS photo

Kathy Steele — former missionary, licensed professional counselor and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary counseling professor — started the first Moms in Prayer International group in Cuba nearly 20 years ago.

sources except God,” Steele said. “Going to God for their children is a really big deal for them.”

While the first MIPI group in Cuba began in 2003, God provided a key resource years earlier, Steele said.

IMB missionaries

Serving as IMB missionaries at the time, Steele and her husband were moved to El Paso’s Baptist Spanish Publishing House when their place of service in Central America grew unstable.

While there, Steele worked with an editor to translate the MIPI leader’s guide and manual into Spanish.

In Havana in 2003, Steele used the MIPI materials she had helped translate to start the first MIPI group. Ten years after the first group began, women came together from across Cuba to celebrate how God had answered prayers and worked

in their children’s lives, Steele said.

Praying Scripture for children first caught Steele’s attention during the couple’s 20-year tenure on the missions field after reading a book on the subject.

Later, at seminary following their IMB service, Steele wrote her dissertation on the impact of praying Scripture for children.

Using measurable techniques, Steele researched the emotional health of children whose moms had prayed Scripture for them as compared to moms who had prayed without praying specific Scripture.

The difference was “significant,” Steele explained.

“The longer the mom had been praying [Scripture] for her kids, the stronger their emotional health was,” Steele said.

“The emotional health of our kids is probably one of the most important measurable factors of how well they are going to do in life.”

Moms in prayer groups welcome nonbelievers to come and pray, Steele said.

“It is incredible how many women come to faith in Christ through Moms in Prayer,” Steele said.

Laura Riley, wife of NOBTS ethics professor Jeff Riley and leader of a Moms in Prayer International group on the seminary’s campus, said MIPI prays for children, schools and teachers.

Power of prayer

“Moms in Prayer provides a sisterhood of moms praying for their kids and schools,” Riley said. “God unleashes His power through prayer.”

For information about joining or starting a Moms in Prayer International group, go to momsinprayer.org. The website includes resources, events, Bible studies and a podcast. (NOBTS, TAB contributed)

For information about joining or starting a Moms in Prayer International group, go to momsinprayer.org.

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Grandparents 'light the way' for the future

There are more than 30 million Christian grandparents in America, and Legacy Coalition aims to help them mentor future generations for the Kingdom.

"When we started our ministry in 2016, research said that there was only 1% of Christian grandparents who had ever heard a sermon, listened to a podcast, attended a class or read a book on the topic of Christian grandparents — only 1%," said Larry Fowler, founder of Legacy Coalition.

In the years since, Legacy Coalition has built a ministry around helping grandparents in their role of mentoring and loving the next generations.

Legacy Coalition's Grandparenting Summit, billed as the only one of its kind, is held each October as part of the effort to address the needs and opportunities of Christian grandparenting.

About 600 grandparents gathered in Dallas for the live event, and hundreds more participated at host sites around the country, including Shades Crest Baptist Church in Bluff Park.

Listening is critical

Speakers this year included former University of Alabama football star Jeremiah Castille and his wife, Jean, who stressed the importance of keeping in touch with grandchildren who don't live close.

Young people need someone to listen to them, said author and counselor Mark Gregston. They need to hear the wisdom their grandparents have learned, he said.

Fowler echoed that idea.

"Make the decision to become an intentional Christian grandparent, to do all you can to light the way for your grandchildren," he said.

For information and resources, visit legacycoalition.com. (Tracy Riggs Frontz)



Photo by master1305 on Freepik

INTENTIONALITY

New discipleship resource intended for busy families

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Josh Wilks said there's a big need for realizing that the Great Commission is not the "great suggestion" — everyone who is a follower of Christ is called to make disciples.

And that includes making disciples of their children, he said.

That's what inspired him to write "D-Life for Families," a book that guides parents through the New Testament in 52 weekly segments.

"I wanted to create something that is practical and gets people reading and discussing the Bible," said Josh Wilks, college and young adult pastor at Valleydale Church in Birmingham.

Bible as a textbook

His father, Bill Wilks — pastor of NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville — started D-Life 10 years ago as a way to help fellow followers of Christ fulfill the Great Commission. D-Life offers a simple, reproducible way of training up disciples using only the Bible as a textbook.

Josh Wilks said he had used his

dad's "fantastic curriculum" for years while discipling college students and young adults. But as his family expanded to include three small children, he started thinking about a way to make that curriculum applicable for families.

Families are busy

"It's unrealistic for a busy family to sit down and go through an extensive curriculum every day," he said.

"D-Life for Families" offers a way for families to read and discuss the Bible together. The book guides them to read a passage, paraphrase it and talk through three or four discussion questions.

It also provides a prompt to help families serve together in some way once a month and to go get ice cream together when they finish a book of the Bible.

"Our kids are still young, so a lot of times our time in the Bible is an 'as we go, let's discuss,'" Josh Wilks said, noting that that can be

while the kids are having bath time or while the family is driving somewhere. "The goal is to get parents discussing the Bible with their children in a habitual, intentional way."

Bill Wilks said there has not been a time in history when family discipleship has been more important than it is now.

"Discipleship begins in the home, and it must be intentional," he said. "Parents cannot begin too soon to teach their children a biblical world-

view. 'D-Life for Families' is a very simple, practical and biblical tool to assist them with this."

He noted that the book could be used as a stand-alone tool or in conjunction with the "D-Life Journal for New Testament." He also encouraged

anyone interested in more training in personal and family discipleship to consider attending the Alabama Statewide D-Life Boot Camp on Nov. 18 at NorthPark Baptist.

For more information or to register for this event, visit livedthelife.com/bama.

For more information or to purchase *D-Life for Families*, visit livedthelife.com/store.

'Melting pot' of people reached by Caribbean ministries

EDITOR'S NOTE —
Baptist World Alliance is a global community of 51 million Baptists from 176,000 churches. Under that umbrella, BWA Women provides support for missions and ministries in seven continental unions representing more than 150 countries. This is the sixth in a series of eight stories about leaders in each region, the challenges they face and the way they see God working through women across the globe.

By Tracy Riggs Frontz
 The Alabama Baptist

Known for tourism, the Caribbean is a chain of countries in the Americas that consists of the Caribbean Sea and its islands. The Caribbean also contains the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union, of which Karlene Edwards-Warrick is president.

The Caribbean doesn't have a big problem with unemployment or education since about half of the population receive advanced education. The islands do have a lot of diversity.

"The Caribbean is a melting pot made up of people from all over the globe. In the Caribbean, there is a blend of African, Indian, European and in some cases, Asian influences," Edwards-Warrick noted.

The Caribbean people often celebrate through festivals centering around music that includes steel drums, maracas and guitars, as well as by playing cricket.

The biggest challenge in the Caribbean is deal-



Photo by Tracy Riggs Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

"The Caribbean is a melting pot made up of people from all over the globe. In the Caribbean, there is a blend of African, Indian, European and in some cases, Asian influences," Karlene Edwards-Warrick notes.

ing with natural disasters, Edwards-Warrick said.

"Hurricanes and storms have grown worse in the past 10 years," she said, and with each storm comes a recovery period.

Mentoring emphasis

The women of the Caribbean need a lot of support, she noted. One goal of the CBWU is to unite women older than 50 with the younger women in ministry and raise up leaders.

The CBWU has had a focus and intentionality on leadership development the past few years and has already seen growth in that area.

Edwards-Warrick personally became a leader at a young age.

"It was after the sudden and unexpected passing of my mother at [my] age of 18 years that God affirmed my calling to leadership and to assist others in identifying their gifts and to serve in the body of Christ. My passion

is to see men and women fulfilling their God-given assignments. Toward this end I conduct leadership training and workshops."

Ministry hasn't been her only focus throughout her life though. Edwards-Warrick's secular career has helped her do what God has called her to do for the CBWU.

"I was employed for three years with the government of Trinidad and Tobago and 32 years with a private

steel giant in my country. The last nine years of my employment was spent in human resources, training and development. After the closure of the company in Trinidad and Tobago, God led me to begin my own consultancy in leadership, training and development."

Edwards-Warrick is also a pastor's wife, leads other women's ministries, is involved in her church and is the mother of three adult children. She has been in ministry and leadership for more than 45 years.

Being installed as president of the CBWU at a virtual ceremony in July 2020 was a moment she says she'll never forget.

It was attended by women gathered from around the world.

Connection to international women is why she loves serving as CBWU president. She especially loves interacting with "dynamic leaders

from around the world, all called by God, unique and gifted in their calling."

God provides

Becoming president in 2020 meant that those early interactions were all virtual.

"However," she added, "I give God praise that He provided a way through technology."

The prayer needs of CBWU include:

- ▶ that younger women in the Caribbean will continue to hear God's voice and answer the call to serve Him with their gifts and talents.

- ▶ for the Safe House Shelter Project to assist women who are abused and vulnerable.

- ▶ for the horticulture, cakes and pastry, chicken, pigs/goats and soap projects that assist unemployed mothers.

- ▶ that its leadership development will continue to bear fruit.

To find out more about CBWU, go to bwawomen.org and find this region in "Continental Unions" under the "About Us" tab.

Discovery happens here.

When physicians, scientists and researchers with extraordinary talent and passion are given the technology, the facilities, and the support, they achieve great things. The discoveries, innovations and clinical trials happening today will help shape the future of treatments and lead to cures.

Children's of Alabama

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REPAIRING THE DARKNESS

Haitian American churches respond to world's 'deepest need' by reaching the lost

The prayer team walked quietly through an affluent Paris shopping district. They prayed for workers in the high-end shops advertising joy through retail therapy. The team kept walking past the famous French cafés and into an upscale neighborhood.

Keny Felix felt a heaviness as he prayed for families in the homes they passed. The affluent neighborhood stood in stark contrast to the sugar cane fields lined with migrant shacks he walked the week before in Dominican Republic. Yet, he'd felt the same heaviness there.

"Both cities — whether no running water or glitzy lights — have the same deepest need," the senior pastor of Bethel Evangelical Baptist Church and president of the Southern Baptist Convention National Haitian Fellowship realized. "People are [spiritually] lost and need to understand the love that God has for them. This is a spiritual fight — the very presence of light searching to repair the darkness."

Shift in focus

Haitian American churches in the Southern Baptist Convention are on mission to create a greater evangelical presence among the nations. These 500-plus churches in the United States have always been missions-minded, but as Felix pointed out, most focused on Haiti where relatives lived. With Haiti's political instability, many churches shifted their focus to other areas of the world where they can use their language skills.

John Voltaire, Haitian multicultural catalyst for the Florida Baptist Convention, pointed out most Haitian American young



IMB photo

Paris is a diverse city with people groups from all over the world. Keny Felix, president of Southern Baptist Convention National Haitian Fellowship, is urging Haitian American congregations to consider partnering with the IMB in French speaking countries around the world.

adults grow up speaking three languages — English, French and Spanish. This opens partnerships with International Mission Board missionaries in Europe, Africa and the Americas.

"Most people think Haitian churches just go to Haiti but it's quickly becoming the opposite," Voltaire said, noting one of the 350 Florida Haitian churches just returned from partnering with missionaries in Kenya while another group had been to Mexico. "The gospel was taken to Haiti by missionaries. Now, Haitian pastors and churches look forward to being missionaries and taking the gospel to those who do not know."

In any given month, Felix said his church is somewhere partnering with International Mission Board missionaries, like on this recent trip to Paris. His team worked

Carolina and South Carolina did everything from English clubs to homeless projects to worship services in the park.

Harris said with Felix's church members spread out among the other American volunteers, they were able to cover more ground because the Haitians could translate as well as engage in gospel conversations.

Working together

Partnering with English-speaking churches for mission trips is another avenue Felix sees his fellow Haitians increasing their gospel reach. He also envisions it being a way for two Southern Baptist churches to cooperate and extend the arm of missionaries among unreached people groups.

"The opportunity is ripe for Haitian churches to channel their missions engagement to other French-speaking groups around the world," he said. "God has prepared us for such a time as this where we can use our culture and language skills to work in diverse communities." (IMB)

with Jason Harris, IMB missionary, and even helped translate for other short-term teams working the same broad gospel seed-sowing campaign. The American volunteers from Florida, Alabama, North

State Department issues 'worldwide caution' advisory

The U.S. State Department has issued a "Worldwide Caution" advisory urging U.S. citizens to exercise increased caution while traveling globally. This advisory is in response to escalating tensions worldwide, primarily driven by the Israel-Hamas conflict and ongoing conflicts in various countries.

The advisory warns of the

potential for terrorist attacks, demonstrations or violent actions targeting U.S. citizens and interests abroad and encourages travelers to stay vigilant, especially in tourist frequented areas.

The FBI has also issued warnings of increased threats against the United States related to the Israel-Hamas conflict. (The Alabama Baptist)

UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Nov. 14-15 annual meeting to highlight bicentennial

It's time to come together for a grand celebration! 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 attend the Tuesday evening service at 6:30 p.m., which will be a wonderful time of



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

with your smartphone's camera.

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 Doorway Is Open

Our church was in the process of finishing a substantial addition to its educational space. Professional builders had put up the walls and roof and finished the lower floors.

To save some of the expense, the church asked the men of the congregation to come and finish the upper floor. This area was to be the youth ministry worship space. I'm not much of a build-it or fix-it guy, but I truly wanted to be part of the effort.

As soon as I showed up, I knew I was in over my head. All the guys were wearing tool belts, holding drills, stretching out measuring tapes, operating table saws and blowing insulation into wall panels.

They were wearing hard hats and overalls. I showed up in shorts and a See You at the Pole T-shirt.

They had brought all of their tools and machines from their home workshops. I brought my cell phone and my car keys.

Out of place

These are good fellas. They welcomed me warmly and tried their best to find something useful for me to do. But having no tools and lacking the ability and knowledge to use them anyway, the possibilities were limited.

I tried to fit in by carrying lumber and handing out bottles of water, but there was no hiding from the fact that I was dreadfully out of place. I wound up

relegated to holding the door frames in place so that one of my skilled friends could install the hinges and bolt them in.

I was embarrassed and quiet. My friend must have recognized my humbled demeanor. That's when he looked at me and said, "Isn't it amazing that teenagers will walk through these doors unsaved and will walk back out having made decisions to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? What happens through these doorways will change lives."

Sincere effort

I was stunned. His simple observation struck me as incredibly profound. The task I was doing was minor, but that didn't mean it was unimportant. Nothing done in the service of Jesus is of no value.

God honors every sincere effort, big and small. From that moment on, I decided to be the best door frame holder I could possibly be.

That was more than 20 years ago. Thousands of young people have passed through those doorways. My doorways. Thank you, Lord, for finding a purpose in your plan for even the least of us.

MEET THE AUTHOR

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

Healing, hope and homage

The Church's role in veteran support and how Christians can be involved

By Denise George
The Alabama Baptist

Military service, for both individuals and their families, often means prolonged separations, life-threatening situations and traumatic experiences. These challenges can cause spiritual and emotional turmoil that require a compassionate and understanding Christian support system.

For those returning from active military service, transitioning back into civilian life can be riddled with challenges, including settling back into community, work, church and family life and potentially dealing with physical, emotional or mental health issues resulting from service.

Veterans and their families have made significant sacrifices for the sake of our nation's freedom and security. These sacrifices — including loss, health challenges and disrupted family life — deserve our recognition and gratitude.

Bedrock

The Church, inherently rooted in Christ's principles of love, empathy and communal support, serves as a natural sanctuary for service members and their families to find solace and assistance. The Church can become a bedrock of spiritual and emotional support, providing a safe and understanding space where service members and their families can find comfort, peace, spiritual guidance and practical help.

Churches can develop a specialized ministry that caters to the needs of military families and veterans. This ministry could coordinate events, workshops and programs that are specially tailored to address the spiritual and practi-



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cal needs of those who are actively serving or have served, along with their families.

The Church offers unconditional love and acceptance, a nonjudgmental environment where individuals can be themselves, sharing their struggles without fear of misunderstanding or ridicule. This can be fostered by creating safe spaces where individuals can share their experiences, struggles and stories, which promotes a culture of active listening and genuine empathy.

Pastoral care that is available, approachable and known for confidentiality can provide a resource for those who need a safe and private space to explore struggles and seek spiritual guidance.

Building a framework

Prayer groups can be a place where, with confidentiality, respect and discretion, veterans and their families can share prayer requests or personal struggles. This type of Christ-centered environment pro-

vides a framework to explore meaning, purpose and hope during the trials that come from experiences in service. Through prayer, pastoral counseling and spiritual activities, the Church not only addresses spiritual needs but often connects individuals with practical resources, professionals and community support networks.

The Church fosters a sense of belonging and community, offering a stable social network that can be significant for those navigating the complexities of military service and what it entails. This can be done by designing programs that welcome and integrate military families into the local church community. This may include hosting welcome luncheons, designating dedicated welcome teams and holding orientation sessions to help them get acquainted with available resources and programs.

Social events, gatherings and outings can be organized specifically for military families and veterans,

enabling them to connect, share experiences and build a supportive network within the local church.

Special teams can support families during times of deployment, providing practical assistance like child care, meal preparation and regular check-ins. The teams could also assist with communication between the deployed service member and family members when possible.

Providing workshops

Workshops can help veterans reintegrate back into civilian life, addressing aspects like career change, social adaptation and family dynamics. Churches could also provide skills development workshops for veterans transitioning to civilian employment, including resumé building, interview skills and partnerships with local businesses to explore employment opportunities.

The values of self-sacrifice, service and altruism are celebrated and understood within the Church, making it a place that appreciates and recognizes the contributions and sacrifices of service members.

Churches can acknowledge and honor veterans by hosting recognition events that honor and recognize the service and sacrifices of military members, veterans and their families, including appreciation dinners, award ceremonies and special worship services.

As our nation observes Veterans Day, there are so many ways the Church can stand as a source of multifaceted support, offering spiritual nourishment, emotional support and practical assistance to those in the military, veterans and their families, demonstrating anew the work of faith in action and ministering through Christ's love, grace and tangible aid.

UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

College ministry leaders invited to 'Unite' Nov. 13

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 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

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



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 bcmlink.org/unite.



STIDHAM

Alabama African American Fellowship to gather for annual banquet Nov. 13

This year's Alabama African American Fellowship banquet will be held Nov. 13 at 5:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church Montgomery in room 413.

D'Linell Finley, pastor of Southlawn Baptist Church in Mont-



FINLEY

gomery, will speak from Philippians 1:6 on the theme of Working to Finish the Unfinished.

Jarman Leatherwood, one of AAAF's co-coordinators, said the purpose of the gathering is to "celebrate what

the Lord has done, while also staying committed to doing the work that He started."

"It will be a time of fellowship, focus and encouragement in the faith, and we're asking everyone who can to join us for this amazing time of sharing," Leatherwood said.

Youth Ministers' Lunch set for 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.

To register, visit ymlink.org/calendar/youth-ministers-lunch or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



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CHURCH POSITIONS

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

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.

WORSHIP LEADER/ MINISTER OF EDUCATION

First Baptist Red Bay, Alabama, seeking full-time worship leader/minister of education. Apply by resumé to: 602 4th St. SE, Red Bay, AL 35582.

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.

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MINISTRIES

THE DEVILS IN ALABAMA: A SUSPENSE NOVEL SET IN ALABAMA

Bryan Gill's debut novel, "The Devils in Alabama," is a southern suspense novel set in Alabama. It is a story about a dysfunctional family, childhood trauma, crime, love, loss, and hope. It is available to purchase on Amazon.

SAMFORD MTI

The Ministry Training Institute at Samford University exists to equip Christians to be leaders in their churches and communities through theological education and practical ministry training. Education opportunities exist through the institute's vast extension network and robust online certificate curriculum. Find more information at samford.edu/programs/ministry-training-institute.

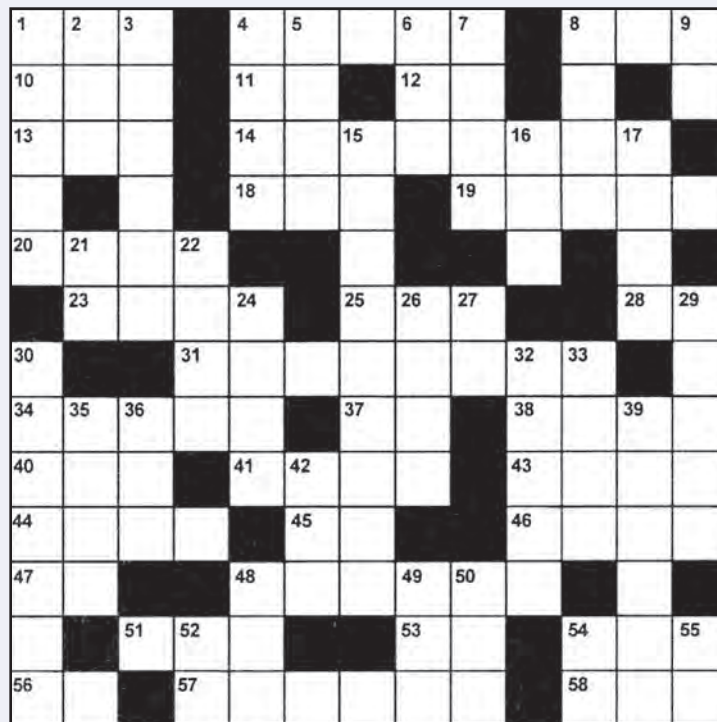
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CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. The patience of _____. (James 5:11)
4. Messenger of God.
8. _____ so loved the world. (John 3:16)
10. Before.
11. There was _____ room for them. (Luke 2:7)
12. _____ be taxed with Mary. (Luke 2:5)
13. To place.
14. Mary's hometown. (Luke 1:26)
18. Exclamation of triumph.
19. The angel appeared to Joseph in a _____. (Matt. 1:20)
20. Son of Noah. (Gen. 6:10)
23. Valley where David fought Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:2)
25. Noah's second son.
28. Licenses Surgeon. (abbr.)
31. Elizabeth. (variation)
34. Pale.
37. About.
38. True.
40. Buzzing insect.
41. His _____ drew the third part of the stars. (Rev. 12:4)
43. Therefore, I _____ you. (Rom. 12:1 NIV)
44. Burnt offerings of _____. (Isa. 1:11)
45. District Attorney. (abbr.)
46. Time in office.
47. And _____ came to pass. (Luke 1:41)
48. Mary's husband. (Matt. 1:20)
51. Life story. (abbr.)
53. Rear Admiral. (abbr.)



By Rebecca Souder Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

54. New. (prefix) openeth the womb.
56. _____, the angel of (Luke 2:23)
24. Clue.
26. Cain's brother.
27. Come unto _____. (Matt. 11:28)
29. Melchizedek king of _____. (Gen. 14:18)
30. The angel _____. (Luke 1:26)
32. I am the way, the _____, and the life. (John 14:6)
33. It is good for us to be _____. (Matt. 17:4)
35. They sit in Moses' _____. (Matt. 23:2)
36. Touched the _____ of his garment. (Matt. 9:20)
39. Concurs.
42. Fuss.
48. Good tidings of great _____. (Luke 2:10)
49. Historic period.
50. Cooking pot.
52. Unto you _____ born this day. (Luke 2:11)
54. Not available. (abbr.)
55. All right.

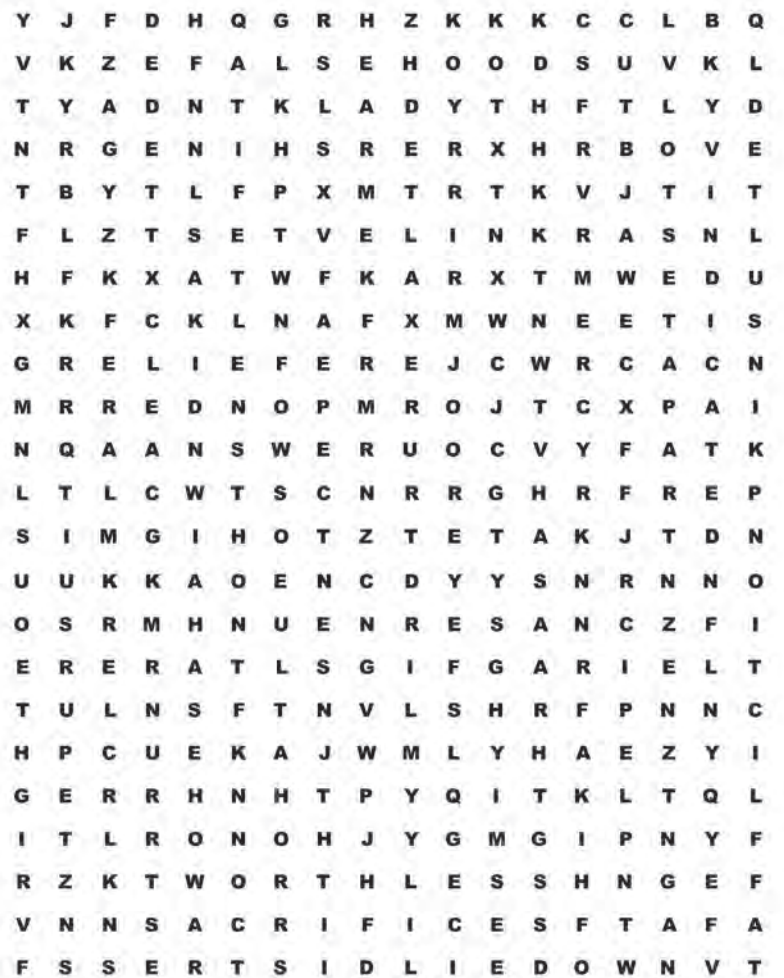
DOWN

1. The Son of God.
2. Mine product.
3. He called the name of that place _____. (Gen. 28:19)
4. A prophetess. (Luke 2:36)
5. He built an ark.
6. Greek vowel.
7. The angel of the _____. (Matt. 7:12 NIV)
8. Entrance.
9. _____ to others. (Matt. 7:12 NIV)
15. Father of John. (Luke 1:59)
16. Make a mistake.
17. _____, thou that are highly favoured. (Luke 1:28)
21. _____ shall be called John. (Luke 1:60)
22. Every _____ that

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

WORD search

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| AFFLICTION | LIGHT |
| ANGRY | MERCY |
| ANSWER | PEACE |
| ARROGANCE | PONDER |
| AWE | PRAYER |
| COUNTENANCE | PURSUIT |
| DISTRESS | REFLECT |
| ENLARGED | RELIEF |
| EXALTED | RIGHTEOUS |
| FAITHFUL | SACRIFICES |
| FALSEHOODS | SAFETY |
| GRACIOUS | SET APART |
| HEAR ME | SHAME |
| HEART | SHINE |
| HONOR | SIN NOT |
| INSTRUMENTS | TRUST |
| INSULTED | VANITY |
| JOY | VINDICATED |
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NOVEMBER 30 ISSUE

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Someone You Should Know

DENNIS STASTKA

By Leigh Pritchett
The Alabama Baptist

Dennis Stastka, 72, of Robertsdale has served in a number of areas in his community and church, including being a volunteer worship leader for 25 years and church pianist. His mission is to serve others, which he continues to do while undergoing treatment for stage 4 kidney cancer. Stastka has been an independent insurance agent for 52 years. He and Joan, his wife of 50 years, owned their own agency for 20 years. The couple has three daughters and 11 grandchildren.

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.

A: I am a board member for the Women's Care Medical Center and Youth-Reach Gulf Coast and am on the advisory board of Under His Wings. I also have served 40 years on the support group for the Baldwin location of the Alabama Sheriffs

MINISTRY: Layman, deacon, chairman of trustees, leader of facilities committee, member of steering committee for possible expansion of worship center, member of missions committee, trustee for Baldwin Baptist Association

CHURCH NAME: Bethel Baptist Church, Robertsdale, in Baldwin Baptist Association

LIFE VERSE: "I have fought

Youth Ranches. As chairman of the missions board of International Missions Association (an independent missions effort under the leadership of Southern Baptist evangelist and missionary Johnny Tucker), I have had the pleasure of serving for 35 years and have been on missions trips to Guatemala, El Salvador and the Philippines.

a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7-8)



teaching me to take one day at a time. I initially asked God, "Why me?" and then I realized I should be asking, "Why not me?" I am hoping and praying God will use me to encourage others on their faith walk as I travel this journey of cancer. I have been so blessed by literally hundreds of Christians praying for me. God has been so good to me!

Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith?

A: "God Will Make a Way" and "He's Been Faithful to Me." These two songs speak for themselves in relation to my life's journey with God. ... Another favorite song that I've sung many times in our church is "Oh May All Who Come Behind Us Find Us Faithful." My prayer is that one day when I'm home with my Jesus, folks I have left behind can say, "He was faithful to the very end!"

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

A: My parents, Jerry and Dorothy Stastka, who always set the example of servanthood.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: After my diagnosis with cancer (in October 2022), God has been

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 12

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



WILLING Mark 14:32–42

Distressed (32–34)

Jesus knew that He was going to be crucified. His disciples, however, did not understand this. They were following their leader, not fully grasping the sacrifice He was going to make on behalf of all mankind.

Jesus took with Him His closest three disciples — Peter, James and John — who had been with Him by themselves before at the transfiguration. Jesus wanted support while He was praying.

As Christians, we need close Christian friends we can trust and lean on in times of both joy and sadness. The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. We need to be part of a community of believers, being active in the lives of others so they can encourage and convict us. This is one way we are sanctified.

Surrendered (35–36)

Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow so He prayed to the Father, asking Him to stop the upcoming crucifixion. Jesus was fully man and fully God and would therefore feel physical pain on the cross as any other man would. He would also face the weight of the sin of mankind, which was far more foreboding.

Our sins were poured out on the only sinless person who has lived. Jesus had to bear God the Father's wrath on our behalf. (See 2 Cor. 5:21, Isa. 53, John 1:29, Heb. 9:28 and 1 Pet. 2:24).

In the midst of this trial, though, Jesus prayed not that His own will be done, but the will of the Father. This is a good lesson for us to learn and apply. Many Christians believe that God will give them whatever

they ask for — money, health and more. However, God gives us what is best for us, even if it doesn't feel like it to us.

We are told that we need to ask according to God's will and that is the rub (1 John 5:14). We can ask God whatever we wish, but we will only receive that which is in accordance with God's will. This should give us confidence that when we pray, God will give us what is best for us.

Weak (37–42)

The disciples were not able to stay awake because of their tiredness. They did not understand what was about to happen. If they did, they may have chosen a different course of action. Regardless, it shows the frailty of humans in that even when we are doing something spiritually beneficial, we do not always carry it out successfully. In spite of this, Jesus did not condemn them for their inability to stay awake.

Instead of fearing God's disappointment or anger, we should be resolved to repent and accept God's forgiveness. One of the most disabling things for a Christian is to not accept the grace of God in the forgiveness of our sins.

We are often convicted for our sins, which is a necessary part of sanctification, but the repentance and then acceptance of God's forgiveness is just as crucial.

When we realize we serve a loving God who wants our best, we can gladly accept the payment for our sins that Christ brings about and follow God in the victory already established by Jesus on the cross.

“... He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.’”

Mark 14:35–36

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Professor of Biblical & Religious Studies, Samford University



WON'T ALL PEOPLE ULTIMATELY GO TO HEAVEN? Matthew 7:13–23

The opening chapters of the Book of Amos are a rhetorical tour de force. In his opening salvo, the prophet thunders forth the Lord's message: “I will not relent from punishing Damascus for three crimes, even four.”

After detailing the sins of this northern neighbor and the punishment they have invited, Amos then moves on to pronounce the same judgment on Gaza: “I will not relent from punishing Gaza for three crimes, even four.” Step by step, in a veritable geography lesson, the prophet turns his withering gaze from Gaza to Tyre, from Tyre to Edom, from Edom to Ammon and from Ammon to Moab. Finally, he arrives at Judah. For Amos's audience in the northern kingdom, Israel, this must have been almost too good to be true.

Righteous little Judah with its temple and its palace was getting its comeuppance too. “Preach, Amos!” they might have yelled, right up to the moment when Amos arrived at his real target. “I will not relent from punishing Israel for three crimes, even four.”

It is not hard to misunderstand one's place in the biblical story. Reading the account of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, it is easy to imagine that we are Moses, the one person following God, while all those “others” keep going astray. It ruffles our sensibilities a bit when we realize our place in the story is not that of Moses, but that of the Israelites. The story of these stubborn, stiff-necked, untrusting people looks at us and declares, “Thou art the man!”

Most people will not go to heaven. (13–14)

What is true for Amos' message and true for the account of Israel's wilderness wanderings is no less true for the Sermon on the Mount.

When we read the sermon, we are apt to imagine ourselves standing beside Jesus, casting a stern look of disappointment down on that audience full of folks who just can't get it right. But Jesus' warning, “enter through the narrow gate,” is a warning meant for us.

It is a call for us to examine our own hearts (and, as we will see below, our own behavior) to make sure we, ourselves, have entered the narrow gate that leads to life rather than the broad way that leads to destruction.

Not all who claim to speak for God speak the truth. (15–20)

One challenge we will face in this process of self-examination is that of deciding which voices we ought to be listening to. Amos was challenged by the priest Amaziah (Amos 7), and Jeremiah wrangled with the false prophet Hananiah (Jer. 28).

Jesus warns His hearers to watch out for false prophets. The key, He says, is examining the fruit these prophets produce. Though their messages may sound good, their pleasant words are merely “sheep's clothing,” disguising their wolf-like character within.

Only those who trust and obey God will enter the kingdom of heaven. (21–23)

If prophets can be false, so can we. It is for that reason that this section of the Sermon on the Mount culminates with a warning about our own character.

It is possible to proclaim to the heavens that we are followers of Christ while our hearts still remain far from Him. We can even do great things in Jesus' name while not truly belonging to Him.

Jesus warns us that true discipleship results in true obedience. If we do not show the latter, we do not have the former.

“A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.”

Matthew 7:18

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Steve Potts

The Alabama Baptist

Recent books explore Christian roots, theology, practice

Church History

By Simonetta Carr

Reformation Heritage Books, 2022

There are many large tomes detailing the 2,000-year history of the Church in all its branches and developments. But for the average Christian believer, much of this story is remote.

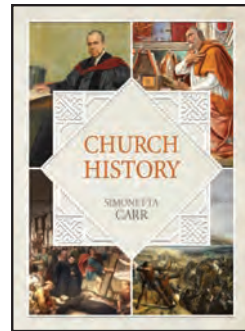
Simonetta Carr is the author of “Church History,” an excellent overview of Christian history written especially for younger readers. Carr is best known for her beautifully illustrated biographies for young people of notable Christians like Augustine, Martin Luther, Lady Jane Grey, Charles Spurgeon and others.

In this new volume, she has prepared one of the most accessible accounts of the story of the Church from the age of the apostles to contemporary times. Most of the major events are noted and explained, and many significant individuals and groups are highlighted.

Her perspective is evangelical and Reformed, so that colors her viewpoint. But for Bible-believing Christians in many denominational traditions, this book is both enjoyable and understandable.

Carr also touches on notable differences among the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant branches of

Christianity. “In these 2,000 years, the Church has learned many lessons, sometimes the hard way,” she writes. She amply illustrates that assertion as she tells the story of the Church.



The attractive hardback is generously illustrated with photographs, artwork, maps and discussion questions. There is a glossary and index.

This would be a welcome addition to any church library, homeschool or personal library.

What Does It Mean To Be a Thoughtful Christian?

By David S. Dockery

Lexham, 2022

There are very few individuals who have had the breadth of academic influence of David Dockery.

A native of Tuscaloosa, Dockery has studied and served at all levels of Southern Baptist academic life. He is the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as president of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Union University. He has been a professor, an administrator and a pastor. He is also the author or editor of more than 40 books.

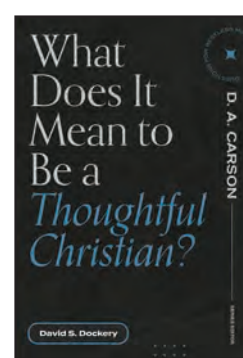
One of his newest is “What Does It Mean to Be a Thoughtful Christian?” This is a short book with a strong devotional quality. He encourages believers to be intentional about how they use their minds for Christ.

“Becoming a thoughtful Christian means learning to think well and to think Christianly,” Dockery writes. He spends 10 brief chapters ad-

ressing what it means to do both. He stresses that we should be rational as well as faithful in the ways we think.

He points to having a clear Christian worldview that undergirds how we think. He sees this as being dependent on God’s Word with a strong commitment to the authority of Scripture. He lays out the foundational truths of God’s creation, humanity’s fall into sin, the saving work of Christ, renewal by the Holy Spirit and how God will bring the ultimate consummation of all things in His eternal reign.

Dockery celebrates the Christian intellectual tradition and directs the reader to savor the insights of great Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and Edwards along with more contemporary examples like C.S. Lewis,



Dorothy Sayers and others. He also points out the importance of reading widely from our culture and faithfully living in the culture. He calls on thoughtful Christians to

serve the Church, the culture and the world to the glory of God.

You Are A Theologian: An Invitation to Know and Love God Well

By Jen Wilkin and J.T. English

B&H Books, 2023

Books on theology can be rather dry and difficult for many Christians. Jen Wilkin and J.T. English set out to remedy that by writing “You Are a Theologian,” an overview of Christian doctrine that

is easy enough for newer believers but also engaging for more seasoned Christians.

Wilkin is a popular women’s Bible teacher from the Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas. English is the pastor of Storyline Church in Arvada, Colorado and has a doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. They emphasize that all people have thoughts about God, whether accurate or not. In that sense, everyone is a theologian.

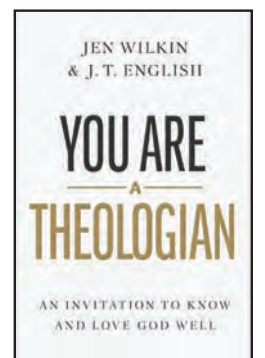
The authors make a case for the importance of sound theology and then survey nine general areas:

the Trinity, the attributes of God, the revelation of Scripture, the nature of humanity, the tragedy of sin, the person and work of Christ, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the nature of the Church and the doctrine of the end times.

They address some of the major heresies that Christians have faced, particularly in how Jesus is understood. They also give concise explanations that many church members will find enlightening.

There are some controversies they avoid, however. You won’t find a description of the debate between Calvinists and Arminians or a detailed look at different views of the gifts of the Spirit or end-time events. They stay focused on issues about which most evangelical Christians have agreement.

For some, this may be a drawback, but for those looking for a good introduction that lays a strong foundation about basic biblical doctrine, this is a valuable resource.



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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Equipped to go

By Myriah Snyder
International Mission Board

Cubans on hold, but ready to serve hard-to-reach places

Cuban Baptists are poised to go to the nations. International Mission Board teams are eager to receive these missionary candidates as global missionary partners. But it's sometimes difficult for them to get visas, and at times, when they do, they're finding it hard to renew them.

Prayer is desperately needed as these potential Cuban global missionary partners (GMPs) face obstacles in procuring visas, in many countries, and sufficient funding.

Currently, more than 50 potential missionaries in Cuba are preparing to go.

These missionaries, backed by the mission boards of the Cuban Baptist conventions on the eastern and western sides of the island, are largely sent by funds provided through the Cubans to the Nations project.

Cuban GMPs ready to serve include Saul and Dora.

This couple was working with the lost in Colombia. Both the husband and wife are musicians, and they've been able to use their musical giftings to compose songs, sharing the gospel in the musical style of each of the people groups.

Accessing tough places

They're now back in Cuba awaiting reassignment because of visa issues. Another Cuban missionary family also worked with unreached groups in Colombia.

The husband is a doctor, and he was able to provide medical and gospel access to several communities. The wife is a musician. She was able to work with the other GMP musicians to share the gospel through music. Currently, they are also back in Cuba waiting to be reassigned because their visas were denied.



IMB photo

Dora (center) teaches Colombians the gospel through music. She and her husband, Saul, were part of a team working with the lost in Colombia but are back in Cuba awaiting reassignment because of visa issues.

There are other candidates ready to be deployed, but they're awaiting visa approval and funding to enter their assigned countries.

These missionaries can bring gospel access to places many Americans have trouble reaching with their U.S. passports. This is largely due to governmental relationships between Cuba and various hard-to-access countries, explained Roy Cooper, an IMB team leader in Latin America.

Cooper and his wife, Dirce, have worked with the Cuban church for more than 20 years.

Ronald and his family are examples of Cuban global missionary partners who still have valid visas and are impacting lostness in the "circle of silence" in Mexico.

That area is believed to be less than 2% evangelical. It's filled with unreached people groups just a few hours south of the American border. In just over one year in this hard-to-

reach place, global missionary partners have seen three baptisms and a church planted.

Hector is another Cuban GMP serving in Uganda. He works with IMB teams there. He evangelizes, disciples and trains young leaders, using sports to connect with refugees in camps there.

Oscar and Yolanda are Cuban GMPs who use sports, music and other tools to take the gospel to unreached communities in Colombia.

'Specially prepared'

Not only do Cuban passports provide different avenues of access, but shared traumatic experiences uniquely equip Cubans to go to hard places.

"God has just so specially prepared Cubans because of the kind of pressures they've had to face in their churches as believers preaching the gospel," Cooper explained.

Instability and unrest dominated the political landscape in Cuba.

Association with an evangelical church was frowned upon. Even something as simple as getting permission to leave the country to be a missionary seemed out of reach for most Cubans for years.

Better but not ideal

In the early 1990s, Cuba began to open its borders and religious liberty was more widely accepted. The fear of practicing evangelical Christianity openly abated. And home missions flourished in Cuba.

Around 2014, the Cuban Baptist conventions on both sides of the island reached out to the IMB to help facilitate the training and sending of their candidates to the nations.

Cooper acknowledged that God uses these tragic circumstances Cubans have endured for His glory.

Now, these Cuban missionaries "have been prepared to go into hard places and can identify with folks who are hurting and who have gone through challenges," he said.

Things back home in Cuba still aren't ideal, but "I think that God, in a very special way, has been preparing a missions force to be able to go to these places."

With international travel being more open, Cubans are understanding the missionary task, and they're ready to go.

While some Cuban missionary partners have been allowed to remain on the field, others are struggling to renew or maintain visas.

The IMB requests prayer to help these Cuban believers fulfill their calling to the nations.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names may have been changed for security reasons.

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Be informed

By Ken Camp
Baptist Standard

Recognize trauma's prevalence in pews and pulpits, professional counselor says

Trauma survivors sit in practically every church pew and even stand behind many pulpits, licensed professional counselor Katie Swafford told workshop participants during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Seven out of 10 adults in the United States have experienced a traumatic event at some point in their lives, and pastors are not immune, the National Council for Behavioral Health reported. A 2022 American Bible Society survey revealed 70% of pastors and church leaders experienced trauma, Swafford noted.

Approximately 13 million Americans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and an estimated 60 million are survivors of childhood sexual abuse, she added.

"Trauma is everywhere around us," said Swafford, director of counseling services for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Trauma is the body's response to a terrible event or loss, and it affects survivors physically, mentally and spiritually, Swafford said.

It can result from an actual event that happened to a survivor or an event the survivor witnessed happening to another person.



Photo courtesy of Baptist Standard

"Trauma is everywhere around us," Katie Swafford says at Texas Baptists' Family Gathering, but trauma-informed churches can provide survivors a place of connection through Scripture, prayer, lament and fellowship.

Survivors of trauma often feel invisible, silenced, neglected and abandoned, Swafford said.

Place of connection

Trauma-informed churches can provide survivors a place of connection through Scripture, prayer, lament and fellowship, she said.

"Your church can be a safe place for survivors' stories to be heard —

a place of refuge," Swafford said.

"Survivors need to be seen, known, heard and understood."

Not all Christians are called and equipped to minister to trauma survivors, but they can be informed about trauma and sensitive to the pain of survivors, she said.

Trauma-informed care means understanding that survivors need safety, the unconditional presence of someone in their lives and patience on the part of someone who is willing to hear their stories, she explained.

Quoting Ernest Izard of Heartmend, a church-based ministry for trauma survivors, Swafford said, "They need courageous Christians

to be the face of God to them. ... A courageous Christian is a person who is glad to be with another person, no matter the difficulty."

When survivors tell their stories, they need listeners who will validate their pain, meet them where they are and not push them beyond a point where they are prepared to go, Swafford said.

"Sometimes that means hearing the same story over and over and over again, because that's how they are processing the trauma," she said.

Reporting requirements

Listeners also need to know when they legally are required to report abuse. Reporting obligations and other information is included in Texas Baptists' "Sexual Misconduct Handbook: Protect, Report & Care" resource. To download the handbook, visit tbponline.org/texas-baptist-handbook.

In a trauma-informed church, individuals who have experienced trauma can see themselves as precious children of God who are resilient survivors rather than as victims, Swafford said. In a supporting and encouraging church, they can enter into meaningful, joy-giving relationships and thrive in their faith.

"We are wounded in relationships, and we are healed in relationships," she said. "Joy is relational. Relationships are bigger than any problem."

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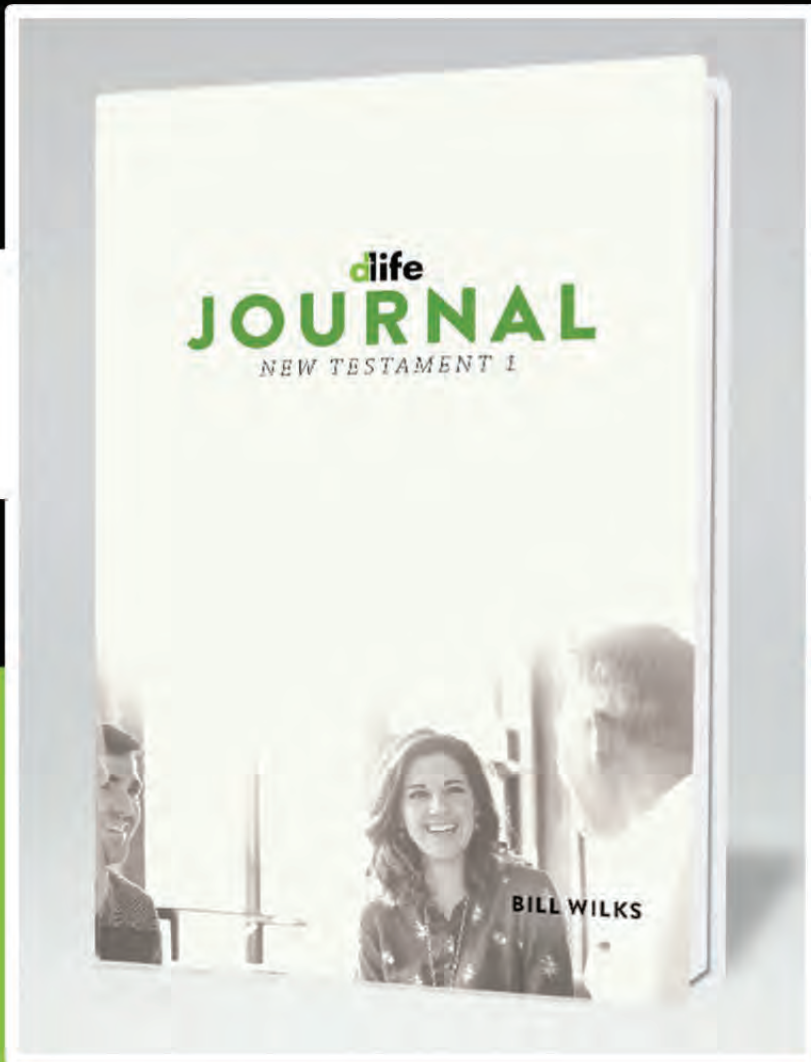
"YOUR CHURCH CAN BE A SAFE PLACE FOR SURVIVORS' STORIES TO BE HEARD — A PLACE OF REFUGE."

KATIE SWAFFORD, LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

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

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Biblical mandate

By Kristen Lowry

Send Relief

How is your church supporting orphans, vulnerable children?

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.

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, staying at an orphanage?

Finding help

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?



Photo courtesy of Send Relief

IMB Kenya missionary Kristen Lowry works alongside national partners to run Naivasha Children's Shelter. They work on the streets to rescue boys, restore their lives and reunite them with their families.

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

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

Southern Baptists care deeply about orphans. There is a clear biblical mandate for churches and believers to care for widows and orphans.

Psalm 68 tells us that "God sets the lonely in families."

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 or impact on orphans and at-risk children.

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

▶ An estimated 5.4 million children live in orphanages and other institutions worldwide, but 80% aren't orphans.

▶ Research shows that orphanages often harm children's social, emotional and cognitive development.

▶ Institutionalization of very young children has a similar impact on early brain development

as severe malnutrition or maternal drug use during pregnancy.

▶ Young adults raised in institutions are 10 times more likely to fall into sex work than their peers and 500 times more likely to take their own lives.

▶ Placing a child in an orphanage also quadruples the risk of sexual violence.

For these reasons, many countries and institutions are moving away from traditional institutional care (orphanages) to family and community-based care.

Safe environment to thrive

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, they serve as a rescue center — helping children living on the streets, providing them 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.

As the new orphans and vulnerable children consultant for Send Relief, one of my primary objectives is to help advise local churches in the United States on best care practices for orphans and vulnerable children based on biblical principles and emerging research in the field.

I'm here to help you, and I'm excited to partner with Southern Baptist churches to provide the tools, training and advice you need to help you and your church care for orphans in their affliction.

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

EDITOR'S NOTE — Kristen Lowry is an IMB missionary who serves as an international orphan care consultant for Send Relief.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP, EMAIL KRISTEN LOWRY AT CHILDREN@SENDRELIEF.ORG.