

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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‘LET GOD WORK’

Alabama-Alaska partnership begins with church relaunch in Craig

By Margaret Colson
TAB Media

When Alabama Baptists and Alaska Baptists officially signed their partnership agreement May 14, Jamie Baldwin had already given a five-week jumpstart to the effort.

Baldwin, recently retired from Alabama Baptist work in Sunday School and discipleship, has been in “The Last Frontier” since April 8 on a six-month assignment to assist with a church relaunch.

Although a long way from his home and family, Baldwin said, “Everywhere I turn, God is working. It’s amazing, I mean, amazing, how God is working.” He confided that he often reminds himself, “Jamie, stay out of the way and let God work.”

Baldwin, with help from several Alabama Baptist mis-

sions teams, is working with local bivocational pastor Cody Schwegel for the July 4 grand opening of Liberty Church, Craig, Alaska, a fishing and logging town with about 1,000 residents on Prince of Wales Island.

The island, about 160 miles long and 30 miles wide, is accessible only by small aircraft or ferry.

Rainforest location

Because of the island’s location in a temperate rainforest in the southern part of Alaska, it doesn’t typically have the bitterly cold and brutal winters associated with the 49th state, but it does get more than its fair share of rain, approximately 200 inches per year.

The church is a relaunch of the former Anchor Baptist Church, which closed a few
(See ‘New,’ page 9)



A team from FBC Tallassee helps with construction projects at Liberty Church, Craig, Alaska.



Photos courtesy of Jamie Baldwin



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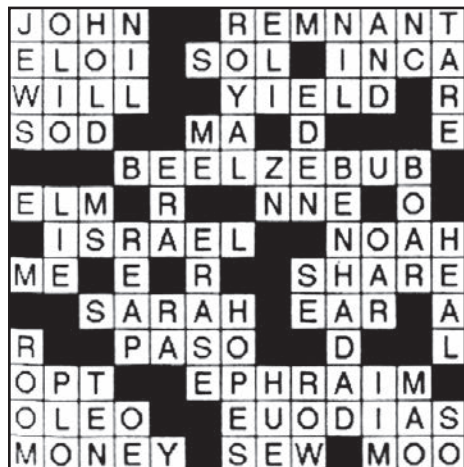
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**The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 15.**

Facebook sensation Brenda Gantt publishes cookbook

In July 2020, TAB published a story about Brenda Gantt, an Alabama grandmother who had gained a social media following that all started with a video of her making homemade biscuits.

At that time, she had about 413,000 Facebook followers and was “shocked” about it. Now she’s got more than 2.3 million. She has another 177,000 followers on Instagram.

Her Facebook page, Cooking with Brenda Gantt, has gotten national attention. In September 2020, she was a guest on the Kelly Clarkson Show, and in April she was on Huckabee Today and Simply Southern.

She’s been on the cover of Taste of the South, Alabama Living and Wiregrass Living magazines.

And in March, she announced the publication of her first cookbook, “It’s Gonna Be Good Y’all,” which contains more than 100 of her favorite recipes along with old and new photos and stories about her life.

It’s published by Alabama publisher Hoffman Media.

The whole thing started when Chris Harwell, a young husband at her church, kept joking with her about teaching his wife to make

biscuits. Other young men at the church got on board with that idea, too.

They knew her homemade biscuits were the best.

For Gantt, a member of Bethany Baptist Church, Andalusia, cook-

ing was second nature.

She had made biscuits for her husband, George, all through their 50 years of marriage, right up until he died in 2018.

She still cuts them out with a cut-off Chef Boyardee can she started using right after they married — a “prized possession,” she said.

“So one Sunday I was going to make biscuits, and I thought, ‘I

might as well video this and put it on Facebook and these guys can show their wives,’” Gantt told TAB in 2020.

She held her phone in one hand and made biscuits in a bowl with

the other hand, and then she uploaded that to her Facebook page. Within a week, the Harwells were buying White Lily flour and giving it a

try themselves — and not too long after, people all over the country were doing the same thing.

(Grace Thornton)



Facebook photo

Brenda Gantt (right) and her daughter, Hannah Merrell, display Gantt’s new cookbook. Gantt gained social media popularity after a video of her biscuit-making lessons went viral in 2020.

**For more information,
visit [facebook.com/
cookingwithbrendagantt](https://facebook.com/cookingwithbrendagantt).**

**“So one Sunday I was going to make biscuits,
and I thought, ‘I might as well video this and put it
on Facebook and these guys can show their wives.’”**

**Brenda Gantt
Alabama cook and Facebook sensation**

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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as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist
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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief



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Five decades of life lessons excellent preparation for rest of the journey

Turning 50 definitely puts perspective on the reality of mid-life and the fact a hill does indeed exist. While I like to think I'm standing dead center on top of that hill, those ahead of me contend I shot right past the top and am now officially "over the hill."

That's OK, I'm still ready to embrace the rest of the second half and round out the third quarter with even more gusto — and no regrets.

After all, climbing up a hill should be harder than strolling back down, even with the slips and stumbles that come from the momentum gained on the descent. So, let's go for it.

Reflecting back across the decades, I recently realized a few life lessons I've learned along the way that helped mold the current version of this particular redhead.

And being a redhead is what led to one of my early ah-ha moments.

First decade of life (0 to 9 years old) — I realized each of us as individuals has value and offers something special to the world.

It would be later that I truly comprehended how each of us is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27), but as an elementary

school child I could have easily withdrawn into a shell because of my hair color.

The red hair and freckles combo automatically means you stand out in a crowd, and children tend to prefer similarities with those around them, which means they can pick on those who are different.

I was blessed with multiple layers of family and friends who always made me feel safe, loved and extra special, so I was spared what could have been difficult self-esteem issues.

Once I made it out of the teen years, I quickly embraced the parts that help me stand out, but the childhood experience taught

me to be aware of others who might need a little extra support to know his or her value.

Second decade of life (10 to 19 years old) — This is when I gave my whole heart and life to Christ and committed to serve Him in all that I say and do.

I make mistakes every day and sometimes can be really hard on myself when I do, but clinging to Jesus always carries me through the difficult moments.

Third decade of life (20 to 29 years old) — Wait, what? I really haven't figured life out by now? How did I miss that?

It was hard to accept at first, but the reality of "the more I

learn, the less I know" started in my 20s and has only increased through the years.

Fourth decade (30 to 39 years old) — Reevaluating the pressure we put on ourselves and shifting to an appropriate intensity allows us to strive for excellence in everything we do in a more healthy manner — and enjoy it in the process.

Fifth decade (40 to 49 years old) — People you love and admire will let you down, disappoint you and even hurt you, but they are still worth loving and forgiving.

Some boundaries are essential in certain situations, and we should pray for discernment during those times, but we all still need a little grace and forgiveness along the way.

Now armed with five decades of life experience, I'm ready to apply what I've been learning while also continuing to learn new lessons every day.

Thank you for how you help me grow personally and care enough to share with kindness when I make a misstep or cause confusion in some way.

And please know how much you are appreciated. You are the reason we do what we do, and we cherish the opportunity to serve you by serving the Lord through TAB Media.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



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

Shocco says thanks, looks forward to biggest, best summer

By Russell Klinner
Executive director, Shocco Springs

Summer of 2020 was definitely not “business as usual” for Shocco Springs.

Campus was beautiful as always, but it was quiet. We missed the usual sounds of constant multitudes of kids splashing in the Aqua Park on the lake and the cheers of students as they prepped for team activities.

Groups coming back

It was strange not to see groups of kids sprawled all over the grass in front of the chapel or on the rock walls near the stream, working on their daily Bible studies.

But they’re coming back this year,

and we can’t wait to see them again!

This summer very possibly may be the biggest and best we have ever had at Shocco, and we are so thankful to God for His provision.

In addition to our faithful, long-term groups like CentriKid, Student Life, Christway, Golden Acres and many others, we welcome new partners in ministry this summer: Generate YM360, Victory Church Leadership Retreat, Victory Christian School Football Camp, Rabun County High School Football Camp, Morning-side Baptist Church, Crosspoint City Church, The Bridge Ministries

Youth Camp, Launch Point Church College Summer Retreat, Tullahoma FBC Family Retreat, to name a few.



KLINNER

Returning campers who didn’t make it to Shocco last summer will find the first floor of Bagley Center beautifully renovated. Our hospitality desk has been moved across the lobby from its old location and combined with the gift shop and snack shop into a “one stop does it all” spot called THE STATION.

The handsome cabinetry, countertops and many of the fixtures inside THE STATION were designed and handmade by some of our maintenance staff.

Remember the yellow tables and benches in the old snack shop? They have been replaced by beautifully handcrafted tables with chairs and sofas in a new lounge area.

And new this summer you will find two arcade games and carpet-ball games for your enjoyment.

More campus upgrades

The driveway and parking area in front of Gilbert Dining Hall in our Adventure Camp has been redone with new concrete, and it looks amazing. We have new signage across campus that fits the rustic ambience of our wooded environment. The older staff house that was located between Bagley Center and the chapel has served its time and has been torn down to make room for much needed parking space.

And when students are looking for somewhere to hang out during their free time, they’ll find a new, sand-filled beach volleyball court set up outside Bagley, along with a new Gaga ball area as well.

God has been faithful to Shocco, and we are committed to faithfully serving Him as we welcome the thousands of people who will visit our campus this summer.

Please pray for us as we continue hiring staff and complete our summer preparations. If you are within commuting distance to Shocco and would like to be a part of all the excitement, we still have part-time positions open (shocco.org/employment).

As always, we are thankful for God’s blessings on Shocco Springs and for the support of our guests, our financial partners and our prayer partners.

No better time to examine commitment to God

How diligent are you in your Christian faith? Churches of every denomination are struggling at present and have been on a downward trend in growth for the past decade — long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A 2019 Pew Research study found an amazing 65% of Americans describe themselves as Christians when asked.

Yet according to a January 2021 poll by Statista, only about a third of respondents say they attend formal worship services at least monthly or seldom.

Just 24% say they are in church every week.

Studies also suggest that overall church attendance across all faiths has dropped at least 7% in the past decade.

Consequently, one must conclude that our society is trending toward a laid back approach to worship. It seems most Americans are seeking more of a “feel good” spiritual life that fits our overall lifestyle.

Where do you fit in these studies? If you need or are seeking guidance in your choices for worship, I direct you to 2 Timo-

thy 4:3–4 (TLB): “For there is going to come a time when people won’t listen to the truth but will go around looking for teachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. They won’t listen to what the Bible says but will blithely follow their own misguided ideas.”

No time is better than the moment to reexamine your life and face the reality of God’s role in your life.

Hope to see you in church this Sunday!

James W. Anderson
Talladega, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“There are many of us that are willing to do great things for the Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things.”

D. L. MOODY

In the verses that precede Ephesians 4:16, Paul explains how it takes different people with varying abilities, gifts and callings to organize, run and grow the church. As Christians, God gave us all unique spiritual gifts and the strengths and traits that accompany them so we can work together to grow His kingdom. And despite our differences, that is what unites us.

Sara Claudia Cain
Speaker and author
Saraclaudia.com

As Christ-followers, we are called to live a life of love. We are called to love God and others. Sometimes it is hard for us to love. Love is putting God and others before ourselves. Love is a verb; it

is what makes a beautiful life. Let's live a life of love every day.

Pastor Jeff Simmons
Rolling Hills Community Church
Franklin, Tenn.

Any church that grows primarily through transfers from another church needs to question why that is happening.

Keelan Cook
Associate director
Union Baptist Association
Houston, Texas

I hear so many today say (including some Christians), “But, we are all children of God.” False! God is the Creator of all (Genesis); we are all creatures of God, but not His children. In fact, the Bible teaches

that we all begin as “goats.”

We come into the world as sinners, estranged from God, and even enemies of God. (See Gen. 3; Rom. 5:6–10; 12–21). And it is only after a person is saved that “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

Blog post by Doug Bell
Central Baptist Church
Eureka, Missouri

When we evangelize and baptize but do not teach, we lay the foundation for problems which are not anchored in Christian ethics and/or biblical directives.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

From the *Twitterverse*

@philpnation

I'm convinced that if modern church leaders read more church history, we'd have more unity, less hand-wringing and more urgency to be witnesses for the gospel.

@CSLewisDaily

“There are only two kinds of people: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, ‘All right, then, have it your way.’” —C.S. Lewis

@michaelcatt

There's so much posturing and pontificating on social media by religious leaders. What we really need is a remnant gathered at the foot of the Cross, broken, desperate and confessing our sins. Then we might see a breakthrough.

@GaryFenton07

If you are spiritually healthy you

will find that you are very susceptible to generosity. If being generous rarely or never crosses your mind, you probably need to check your spiritual health.

@ricklance

When William Wordsworth wrote his poem “The World Is Too Much with Us,” he could not have imagined the cultural challenges we face. As Christians, we are to impact culture for Christ and not have culture impact us with its agenda.

@davidjeremiah

The God who made heaven and earth knows you by name.

@joshreavis

This morning I sat by my parents during worship. They both sang loudly. I was overwhelmed with thanksgiving that I've heard them sing this way my entire life. I learned how to sing in church from

them. Parents, let your kids hear you sing. Teach them by example.

@macbrunson

“Never be content to know about God. Know God yourself in the intimacy of prayer and by quarrying in the book of God.” William Sangster

@DannyAkin

“Let Jesus command, and I delight to obey.” Samuel Clopton, first Southern Baptist missionary. Died on the field in China at age 31.

@jasonkeithallen

“Days of trouble must be days of prayer.” —Matthew Henry

@TheonlywaytoGod

There is only one way to get rid of the burden of sin. We must bring it to Jesus. He is our great Sin Bearer. Saved people carry sins, and lost people carry sins. Bring them all to Jesus. He will take them away.

Living by the treasure principle

Jesus talked so much about what we do with our resources, it leads us to believe that the way we manage resources not only affects our quality of life, it also impacts God's initiatives in the world.

Jesus specifically encourages his followers to lay up treasures in heaven. ... Here are a few things to remember as we live by the treasure principle:

► God wants us to become good managers of all our treasures. God is the primary owner of all things, and we are temporary stewards of those things placed in our care. Often we speak of time, talent and treasures. But time and talent are also treasures.

► God wants us to make wise investments with our treasures. Our treasures come in many forms: money, family, friendships, personal network, tangible property, intellectual property, spiritual insight, spiritual gifts, vocational skills, reputation, influence and time. To lay up treasures in heaven means to manage my resources now so that the investment bears dividends for eternity.

► God wants us to be cheerful and generous in giving of our time, talent and treasure. The three primary enemies of the treasure principle are greed, debt and materialism. And the antidote for greed, debt and materialism is generosity. Because God is love, as our hearts become molded in His likeness, we will naturally move toward a life of greater generosity that is transformational rather than transactional.

As followers of Jesus, God invites and equips us to become wise managers of our resources so we can use all of our treasures to advance God's kingdom.

Pastor Barry Howard
Church at Wieuca
Atlanta, Ga.

DENOMINATIONAL DISCUSSIONS

SBC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES RESPOND


**RANDY
ADAMS**
AGE
60

CURRENT ROLE
*Executive director-treasurer,
Northwest Baptist Convention*
**YEARS OF MINISTRY
SERVICE OVERALL**
38 years
► How do you define the role of the SBC president?

The SBC president represents the churches affiliated with the SBC to the SBC. The role has certain defined responsibilities, including the appointment of certain committee members and involvement in planning the annual meeting of the SBC. The president also has influence through the pulpit and other public statements. This influence is a sacred trust which I intend to use to push for transparency and accountability from our entities, as well as expand the participation of our churches in the annual meeting of the SBC.

► What do you hope to bring to Southern Baptists if you are elected president?

I will insist on transparency and accountability from our leaders and push to restore partnership and build back the trust of our churches. Southern Baptists are disheartened by the erosion of trust and partner-

ship at various levels of Baptist life. We have over 5,000 fewer churches supporting Cooperative Program missions than in 2007, with a decline of over \$85 million dollars. Baptisms have plummeted, and church starts are less than half the number a decade ago, despite NAMB increasing the budget. It's time to get honest about the wrong road we took in 2010 through the Great Commission Resurgence recommendations. We will do this first through transparency about results and finances. I will push for opening bankbooks. Then we must hold ourselves accountable, making necessary changes so that we can save the SBC ship.

► What was the determining factor in your decision to allow your name to be nominated for president?

Decline in Great Commission effectiveness is a major reason. As a pastor and a leader in two state conventions, I have learned Southern Baptists are at our best when churches are served by the denominational systems. Churches are served best beginning with the local association, then state convention and finally national SBC entities. The GCR inverted this, empowering NAMB and weakening states and associations. This has been a disaster. Most of the decline in Cooperative Program has been absorbed by the state conventions. Plus, NAMB ended the cooperative agreements with the state conventions. Our churches deserve better — beginning with transparency, accountability, enhanced participation by churches and rebuilding partnership.


**ED
LITTON**
AGE
61

CURRENT ROLE
*Senior pastor, Redemption
Church, Mobile, Alabama*
**YEARS OF MINISTRY
SERVICE OVERALL**
*34 years as a senior pastor
(7.5 as Arizona church planter)*
► How do you define the role of the SBC president?

The person elected has the primary task of making appointments to the boards of the various entities, as well as presiding over the annual meeting.

The president also provides leadership and influence for what could be and should be in the future direction of the convention. God's word gives a clear vision of getting the gospel out to every man, woman, boy and girl. To accomplish this as a convention of churches requires cooperation through the Cooperative Program, working together on mission and unifying people around the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I believe that the president is to foster unity and not division. While the president does not speak for Southern Baptists, he must certainly speak to Southern Baptists and to the watching world in a way consistent with God's inerrant, infallible and sufficient Scripture.

► What do you hope to bring to Southern Baptists if you are elected president?

I hope to bring a vision of reaching out to our neighbors and challenging our churches to not be isolated from those in our communities who do not look like us or may not think or vote like us. To bring gospel reconciliation to our communities and to our divided nation. To be a biblical community that serves its city for the purpose of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people.

I believe our decline in baptisms is tied to our isolation in the bubbles of our buildings. In such bubbles we are prone to self-absorption. We need a passion for those without Christ. If I am elected as your president, I want to help you reach your community, help you see revitalized congregations, and help you to join with other Southern Baptists to please the heart of our Savior by being unified in the gospel.

► What was the determining factor in your decision to allow your name to be nominated for president?

The determining factor for me is the current condition of disunity. I believe we have forgotten that the Great Commandment and the Great Commission are linked. Our credibility for the Great Commission is found in the heart of biblical love one for another. Jesus' said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."



ALBERT MOHLER

AGE
61

CURRENT ROLE

President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College

YEARS OF MINISTRY SERVICE OVERALL

43 years

► How do you define the role of the SBC president?

Technically, the most important responsibility of the SBC president is to preside at the annual meeting, to make certain that Southern Baptists in that meeting accomplish what the convention must do in order to further our mission work, theological education and denominational programs. The second thing the president does is to make certain appointments, but those are less significant than the larger responsibility of the president to speak to Southern Baptists and to speak on behalf of Southern Baptists to the larger world as a matter of witness, testimony and evangelism.

► What do you hope to bring to Southern Baptists if you are elected president?

I hope to bring to Southern

Baptists the full measure of conviction so that we never forget that we begin with the biblical beliefs that bind us together, including the inerrancy of Scripture and exclusivity of the gospel. We have absolute confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ and that is fundamental to our missions and evangelism program. I would hope to help Southern Baptists talk through some of the critical issues of our day in such a way that would maintain conviction and build the fellowship of our convention of churches. I would hope that our churches would be more faithful and more joyful together in our work through the Southern Baptist Convention.

► What was the determining factor in your decision to allow your name to be nominated for president?

A significant number of Southern Baptists came to me and asked me to be willing to be nominated because they felt that the SBC, in this crucial juncture, requires someone with a steady hand, someone who deeply loves the SBC and knows it pervasively, and someone who can help Southern Baptists work through issues courageously and respectfully, maintaining conviction and fellowship. I have been committed to the Southern Baptist Convention for my entire life, and I want to see the Southern Baptist Convention healthy, faithful, energetic, generous and joyful moving into the future as we answer the call of the Great Commission.



MIKE STONE

AGE
50

CURRENT ROLE

Pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Blackshear, Georgia

YEARS OF MINISTRY SERVICE OVERALL

30 total, nearly 25 at Emmanuel

► How do you define the role of the SBC president?

The headquarters of the SBC is the local church. And our Baptist bodies are only beneficial to the point they assist local churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. Therefore, the role of SBC president is a position of service to our local churches.

I have regularly stated that I have served in nearly every capacity in SBC life, from the local church pastorate down to the chairmanship of the SBC Executive Committee. My congregation has joyfully allowed me to serve within our local association, as well as our state and national conventions. Whether leading as associational music director or president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, each position has been a place of service.

Messengers in Nashville will not elect a pope to lord over us or a father to lecture us. We need a pastor to lead us. A pastor who understands the daily challenges and opportunities of a typical Southern Baptist congregation.

► What do you hope to bring to Southern Baptists if you are elected president?

First, I will zealously focus on a nationwide evangelism emphasis. 2020 statistics were recently announced, and the news was not

good. While 2020 was clearly impacted by the pandemic, we saw our ninth straight year of declining baptisms. Southern Baptists must be about evangelism. And our convention must lead the way in resourcing and equipping local churches in that mission.

Second, I will champion, in my communications and appointments, the sufficiency of Scripture. We do not need the unbiblical theories that are threatening the unity of our convention.

Finally, I will seek to foster greater participation in our meetings. The time has come for a strategic look into multisite participation in our annual meeting. This is not a simple undertaking. There are legal and logistical concerns many people have not considered. But the costs of attending the annual meeting create a real barrier for too many of our churches. With advances in technology, the time has come for our processes to allow input from more Southern Baptists.

► What was the determining factor in your decision to allow your name to be nominated for president?

When I vacated the chairmanship of the SBC Executive Committee last summer, I had no thoughts of a presidential nomination. But I sensed the Lord place this possibility on my heart in a time of prayer. It was soon confirmed by my wife, my church staff and our lay leadership. Finally, pastors and other leaders from across the SBC asked me to consider a nomination.

My nomination is supported by a broad coalition of Southern Baptists. From across geographic, methodological and soteriological lines, thousands of Southern Baptists share the concerns and emphases I referenced above. We each believe our convention will be best led by a local church pastor whose connections and other positions do not create a conflict of interest. I am first and foremost a husband, father and pastor. But if the messengers agree, I would consider it a privilege to serve our convention as SBC president.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20

EDITOR'S NOTE — These are the four known candidates for SBC president at press time. Others can be nominated until time for the election at the annual meeting June 15-16 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Judson faithful gather on campus for goodbyes

Over 425 students and alumnae filled the Judson College campus in Marion on May 22 for one last Step Sing and a time of sharing memories of their time on campus.

Step Sing is a Judson tradition where alumnae and current students sing together from a canon of songs that have been learned and passed down by each generation of Judson students.

Claire Kinnaird Keel, president of the Judson College Alumnae Association, called the event “This is Goodbye and not Goodnight.”

The Judson faithful arrived on campus from across the United States to visit “Mother Judson” after learning the institution will close July 31 after 183 years of educating young women.

In remembrance of past dress codes, some of the attendees wore dresses and hats, which were once required attire for church on Sunday mornings. Many wore strands of pearls, another signature accessory in the Judson tradition.

Day of remembrance

During the day, alumnae walked through the auditorium where they attended concerts, plays, pageants and graduations.

They visited the chapel, where they attended weekly services and listened to guest speakers in the light of pastel-tinted windows and

with music from the pipe organ.

They mingled in Jewett Hall, the site of numerous Christmas teas over the years, as well as the home of many campus offices and the campus dining hall.

And they crowded the bookstore, purchasing Judson shirts and remaining pieces of the Judson china, a special pattern by Wedgwood featuring scenes of Judson that was first sold in 1941.

Those gathered shared laughter and tears as they expressed their love for the buildings, the school, faculty, education, sisterhood and traditions.

Traditions

Traditions also closed the day's events. Seniors and alumnae serenaded underclassmen under the senior oak. At noon, everyone gathered on the steps of Jewett Hall for one last Step Sing.

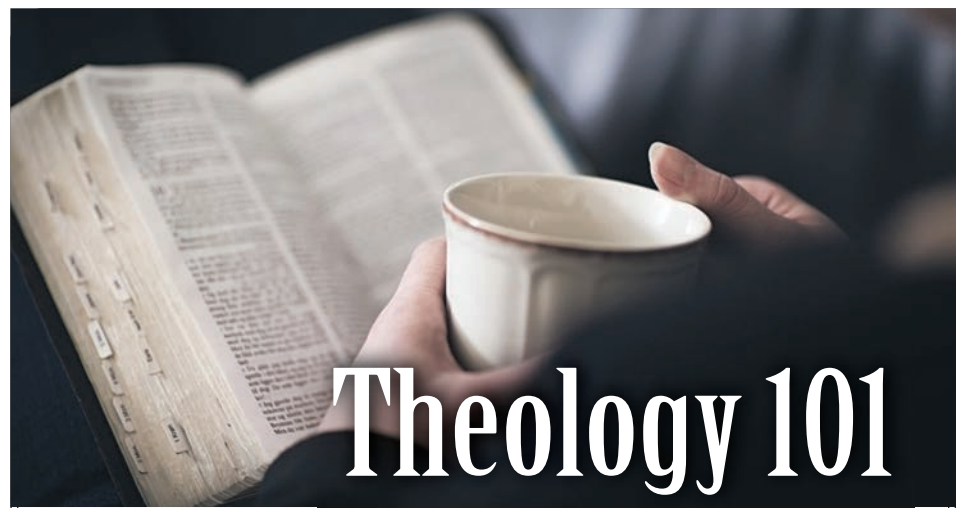
One of the traditional songs, “Tell Me Why,” summed up the emotions of many alumnae and students in the wake of the school's closure.

However, for Judson alumnae, their families and all those who have called Judson home, the words of “There'll Always be a Judson,” chosen to close the historic event, ring true: “There'll always be a Judson, and Judson will ever be, if Judson means as much to you as Judson means to me.” (Cynthia Walker Watts)



Photo by Travis Frontz

A singing of “There'll Always be a Judson” closed out a day of activities for alumnae and friends who gathered May 22 to say goodbye to Judson College, which is closing July 31 after 183 years of educating young women.



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

God's Word

Inspired

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

Basic to all that may be believed and spoken about God's word is the truth that it is “inspired.”

The declaration of 2 Timothy 3:16 is, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” — literally “God-breathed.” Second Peter 1:20–21 elaborates: “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Divine-human collaboration

The Bible is uniquely the result of a combination of the divine activity of the Holy Spirit and the human instrument of the writers. The result of this divine-human collaboration is a sacred book that came into being by the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit upon divinely selected men, by which the Spirit through the vocabularies and personalities of those men resulted in writings that are truthful, trustworthy and authoritative.

For example, David, who penned many of the psalms, declared, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2). With even higher authority, Jesus spoke of God's written word as a “word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Even so, Jesus attested the inspired writings of David with

His declaration to the Pharisees, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’?” (Matt. 22:43)

As an inspired book, the word of God “is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

An aspect of this inspired book is that although it proclaims itself to be the word of God, it is also the words of men.

God in His infinite grace chose to communicate with human beings by using human words.

The Bible's divine inspiration assures us that it had a divine source. By His activity of inspiring its writing, God superseded the adage, “To err is human.”

Being both a divine and a human book, God's word is without error.

To be sure, the human writers God used in producing His word were not perfect. But God, in His grace and power, was able to produce a perfect book through a variety of imperfect human instruments, just as a straight line can be drawn by a crooked stick.

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



'New vision'

Liberty Church set for July 4 opening with emphasis on freedom in Christ

(continued from page 1)
months before Baldwin's arrival.

"There were about seven members who felt there needed to be a restart because the church was not healthy," he explained.

By the time Baldwin arrived, the number of people involved in the church relaunch had almost doubled, with guests dropping in regularly.

The faithful few affiliated with Anchor Baptist Church had been meeting in the basement of their church building for several years because that was the only finished portion of the facility.

The fledgling group didn't have financial resources to finish out the entire building. For community residents who didn't know better, the building looked like it had been abandoned. For Baldwin, the church building looks like home, at least for six months. Since Baldwin's arrival in early April, the

basement, which had housed Sunday School classes for the former church, became his living quarters, a living option that seems appropriate for the man who epitomized Sunday School for generations of Alabama Baptists.

Such a construction dilemma is understandable because of exorbitant expenses on the remote island.

It's a three-hour ferry ride from Ketchikan, Alaska; getting supplies to the island costs \$7,000, in addition to the cost of supplies.

One of Baldwin's assignments is "to help the church finish the main entrance to the church and finish some Sunday School rooms for Bible study and discipleship," he said.

An estimated \$3,800 is needed per room to finish the 10 rooms in the church.

Even as construction is underway, Schwegel "has been meeting



Photo courtesy of Beth Baldwin

A team from FBC Tallahassee helps with construction projects May 7-14 at Liberty Church, Craig, Alaska. Liberty Church sits at the highest point in the town, and its vantage point allows the church to be a "lighthouse" for the fishing and logging town, says missions volunteer Jamie Baldwin.

with a small handful of people to disciple them on the meaning of a New Testament church. They are now ready to reach out and minister to the community."

Already, Schwegel is seen by many as the "island chaplain. It seems so many people rely on him and call him in time of crisis," Baldwin said.

He is also helping "get the word out that there is a new church and vision in town."

Alabama Baptists have played a huge role in the church relaunch.

Baldwin said some Alabama Baptist construction teams have helped in the beginning phases of finishing the building, and numerous Alabama Baptist churches have helped fund construction.

One church even provided the full \$3,800 to finish one room. Also, several Alabama Baptist missions teams are slated to travel to Alaska this summer and conduct Vacation Bible School, backyard Bible studies in a local park and a back-to-school bash.

"Our goal is two-fold," said Baldwin. "One, we want to reach the unchurched in the town of

about 1,000. Two, we want to make the town aware of the church."

Because the church building sits on the highest point in the town, it can be a "lighthouse" to community residents, Baldwin believes.

'Tremendous days ahead'

Church leaders intentionally chose July 4 for Liberty Church's grand opening which will include a cookout and children's activities. This year, July 4 is on a Sunday, and it also is the pastor's birthday.

Most importantly, Baldwin said, "We chose that day because the name of the church is Liberty, and we want to proclaim to this city that in Christ you can have liberty. God has some tremendous days ahead for this church."

EDITOR'S NOTE — This article highlights one of several ways the partnership between Alabama Baptists and Alaska Baptists will be lived out over the next five years. The partnership was officially approved May 14. Watch for more Alabama/Alaska partnership stories in future issues of TAB.

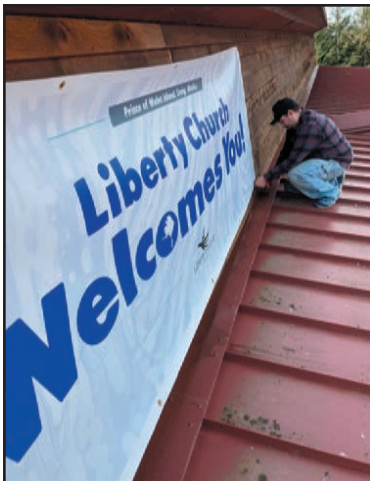


Photo courtesy of Jamie Baldwin

Liberty Church, Craig, Alaska, is ready to reach out and minister to the local community.



Photo by Beth Baldwin

Volunteers from FBC Tallahassee install drywall in a future Sunday School classroom at Liberty Baptist Church during a missions trip to Craig, Alaska.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

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By Jack Anderson

Alabama Baptist churches, through the Cooperative Program, provide support on a 50/50 basis to ministries and missions within our state and for Southern Baptist ministries and missions around the world.

On a state level, a church's gifts through the Cooperative Program support ministries such as the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper, Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, Shocco Springs, Board of Aid to Students in Church-Related Vocations, University of Mobile, ALCAP, Alabama WMU, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Education Commission and Christian Life Commission.

Through the SBC, your gifts support ministries such as the SBC Executive Committee, International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, six seminaries, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives.

We encourage each church to give through the Cooperative Program from undesignated funds by percentage.

Jack Anderson serves as associational missionary for the Alabama-Crenshaw Baptist Association. He wrote this column recently for the ACBA newsletter.

For more information about the Cooperative Program and resources to help promote it in your church, visit AlabamaCP.org or contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg, (334) 613-2283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Event and location are followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613 plus the listed extension, or visit alsbom.org/events. To register for virtual events, visit PinnacleAlabama.org.

JUNE

- 7-11 **YMLink on Mission-Alabama**, Birmingham, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 15-16 **Southern Baptist Convention**, Music City Center, Nashville
- 22 **Church Administrative Guidelines**, State Board of Missions, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- 24 **Men's Ministry Swap Shop**, Birmingham Metro Association Office, Larry Hyche, ext. 2268

JULY

- 4 **Citizenship and Religious Liberty Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 6 **Financial Issues Conference**, State Board of Missions, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 9-10 **Children's Music Summit**, Shocco Springs, Karen Gosselin, ext. 2318
- 11-16 **Super Summer Alabama**, JSU, Jacksonville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 12 **Financial Issues Conference**, Heritage, Dothan, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 12-16 **Mix MusiCamp@Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Karen Gosselin, ext. 2318
- 13 **Financial Issues Conference**, Mobile Association Office, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 16-17 **SPEAK**, NorthPark Baptist, Trussville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 18 **A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Southside, Fayette, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
- 19 **Financial Issues Conference**, Tuskegee Lee Association Office, Opelika, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 19 **A Time to Plant**, Etowah Association Office, Gadsden, Brian Harper, ext. 2332
- 23-24 **Connect** (formerly Equip), Shocco Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 2223
- 25-31 **YMLink on Mission - North America**, New York City, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 31 **Called Conference**, First, Trussville, Larry Hyche, ext. 2268

AUGUST

- 1 **Social Issues Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 2 **Financial Issues Conference**, Calhoun Association Office, Anniston, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- 3 **Financial Issues Conference**, Huffman, Birmingham, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- 6-7 **PinnacleAlabama @ Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 10 **Financial Issues Conference**, Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- 12 **Uplink on the Road**, First, Andalusia, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 26 **Uplink on the Road**, First, Trussville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 2280
- 29 **A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Southside Baptist Church, Southside, Lori McGough, ext. 2245

SEPTEMBER

- 2 **Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM, Prattville, Amy Nelson, ext. 2231
- 9-10 **Alabama Singing Men Retreat**, Shocco Springs, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 9-10 **Alabama Singing Women Retreat**, Shocco Springs, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 12 **A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Lusk, Gilberttown, Lori McGough, ext. 245
- 12 **Single Adult Sunday**, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 12-19 **Week of Prayer for State Missions & Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering**, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2235
- 14 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Southside Baptist Church, Greenville, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 17-18 **Pursue**, First, Opelika, Mike Nuss, ext. 2276
- 19 **Anti-Gambling Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 21 **Senior Adult Singin'**, Northside, Jasper, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 21 **Personnel Management**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241

Baltimore church leaders offer safe harbor

By Grace Thornton

TAB Media

Jeff Belcher had been in music ministry and student ministry for years when he and his wife, Kelly, began to sense God moving in their hearts to plant a church.

He had spent time traveling in a worship band, then had served on staff at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, and at two church plants.

"Kelly and I resonated with the work of a church plant," said Belcher, a Gardendale native. "So in January 2014, we called the North American Mission Board and said, 'We'll go to any city, and to any part of the city.'"

Zero church plants

At that time, Baltimore had recently been named one of NAMB's Send Cities — a focus city with a need for healthy church plants.

They spoke with Ron Larson, who at the time served as Send City missionary for Baltimore, and he told them there was definitely a need for church plants in other cities, but Baltimore had seen no new churches in a number of years.

So the Belchers went to visit.

"It's been hard. There have been ups and downs, but God has been really kind."

Jeff Belcher
Baltimore church planter

"After a few days in the city, Kelly and I felt a great burden for the people, so we committed to moving there," he said.

By that fall, they had moved their family to an 800-square-foot row home in inner city Baltimore, and by February 2015 they had started a church in their living room.

The first year, they baptized 12.

Now, more than six years later, their church — Church of the Harbor — has grown and added another church plant with a third on the way.

"It's been hard. There have been ups and downs, but God has been really kind," Belcher said.

Where they live, they run into "desperate needs all the time," he said.

"There's addiction, broken families and high crime, and many of the people in our area lack even basic skills such as reading."

The Belchers — joined by volunteer teams from all over the U.S. — started right away engaging their community through door-to-door visits and compassion ministries.

Since they arrived in Baltimore, they've knocked on literally hundreds of thousands of doors.

Meeting neighbors

"Our evangelism efforts help us to build rapport and introduce spiritual conversations.

The first time we knock, they say, 'Nah, I'm not interested.' By the 10th time it's, 'Hey, Pastor Jeff!' It's a way to get to know our neighbors."

Belcher said they rarely see someone make a decision to follow Christ on their porch or in the park, but these visits and invitations to church often lead people through the church's doors.

And when that happens, those people are ready to have an honest conversation.

"Sometimes they make a profession of faith the first



Facebook photo

Church of the Harbor reaches addicts, people with broken families and in areas of high crime. The leaders have opened a thrift store to sustain the church's work.

time they visit," he said.

God is doing great things there, Belcher said — the church is growing with its third location opening last week. But he also knows Church of the Harbor will likely never be self-sustaining.

They serve a significant number of people, he said.

So the church recently converted a fellowship hall into a thrift store as a way to bring in extra revenue to support its new church plants and outreach efforts.

Belcher says he also sees

it as a way to help church members grow in dignity as they grow in their faith.

"We're

happy to lavish grace on people, but we also want to teach people it's healthier to work and spend even a little

to buy a shirt at the thrift store rather than have us provide it for free," he said.

Belcher says they'll continue to meet people where they are — they are constantly doing compassion ministry in their area. The needs are great — it's not uncommon for them to knock and, when the door is opened, see that there is not a stick of furniture in the house.

Hunger is a problem too. During the pandemic, they were able to get up to 12,000 pounds of food a week from the Maryland Food Bank, and they delivered it to people in their community who were too far from local schools to pick up meals. They also serve meals after their church gatherings.

Pointing to Jesus

They use both of those things as a way to encourage people toward Jesus and toward following Him with their whole life.

"It gives us the opportunity to sit across the table with them for a few minutes and have an honest conversation," Belcher said.

"Every community is different, and we're just trying to reach ours right where they are."



BELCHER

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3 stories

you should know



Photo by Rich Johnson/Flickr

Pro-life activists say 2021 has been a good year for legislation seeking to prohibit abortions based on a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome. About 1 in every 700 babies in the U.S., or roughly 6,000 annually, is born with the condition. There are no official figures on how many prenatal diagnoses of Down syndrome prompt a decision to abort; a 2012 study by medical experts estimated the abortion rate was 67%. Read more at tabonline.org/ds. (TAB Media)

June 6: Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church

The Southern Baptist Convention's Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church will be observed June 6.

"Scripture makes the point from beginning to end: persecution is the norm for followers of the one true God," said Nik Ripken, missionary emeritus with the International Mission Board. "But God can use persecution. ... His highest purpose in persecution is to call His people closer to Himself, to refocus their attention to the suffering of their Lord."

Ripken said believers must not pray for persecution to end but rather "pray for persecuted believers to remain obedient through their suffering."

The IMB provides resources for the day of prayer at imb.org/persecuted. (TAB Media)

Membership decline continues in SBC

According to the latest Annual Church Profile report, the Southern Baptist Convention saw key metrics decline in 2020, including baptisms, membership, average weekly worship attendance and giving.

The number of churches cooperating with the SBC increased by 62 to 47,592. The number of church-type missions dropped by 504, but multisite congregations reported an additional 529 campuses where local church ministry takes place.

Reported membership of SBC congregations declined by 435,632, down 3% to 14 million members. This continues a 14-year trend of membership decline.

Membership in SBC congregations peaked at 16.3 million in 2006. Read more at tabonline.org/acp-2020. (Lifeway)

Headline news

from around the Southeast

Arkansas

When police officers in Cabot, Arkansas, are called into action, Tina Frost is called into her ministry as volunteer chaplain with the Cabot Police Department. She often rides with officers where she discovers opportunities to minister not only to victims but also to officers, Arkansas Baptist News reported. "I am there to be a ministry of presence and help where I am needed," she said. She also started a nonprofit to provide additional ministries.

Florida

A church in a skating rink? "Why not?" asked Pastor Mike Kirby of TruLife Church, Ocala, Florida. "Lost people are going there during the week. So let's go to it instead of putting up a building and trying to call people to the building," he said. Kirby and church leaders oversee the skating rink on Friday and Saturday nights

and hold church services there on Sundays, the Florida Baptist Witness reported.

Georgia

Some Georgia Baptist hikers have found a productive new missions field in the backcountry. On the trail, the hikers intentionally look for opportunities to pray with, minister to and share the gospel with other hikers, The Christian Index reported. "We're in God's creation when we're out on the trails," said hiker David Tolbert, a deacon at Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens, Georgia. "What better place to talk about God, to praise God?"

Kentucky

Since 2014, more than 300 members of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky, have served a Native American community in South Dakota that is recognized

as the poorest in the Western Hemisphere where poverty, crime and abuse run rampant. The Kentucky church works with Creator's Fellowship, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, which has helped launch two church plants in the state and also conducts many outreach activities for children, Kentucky Today reported.

Tennessee

A seldom-used missionary house owned by Loudon County Baptist Association in Tennessee has been transformed into The Immanuel House, a safe house for children awaiting foster care placement because they have been removed by the Department of Children's Services from their homes due to neglect or abuse. The safe house works in partnership with DCS, and about 60 local church members became certified through DCS to volunteer at the house, the Baptist and Reflector reported.

Alabama news

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

► **Matthew Allen** is the new minister to students at **Bell Lane Baptist Church, Clanton**. He and his wife, Brittney, have one son.



ALLEN

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Joseph Morris** is the new pastor of **Mignon Baptist Church, Sylacauga**. He previously served as



MORRIS

associate pastor of Seddon Baptist Church, Pell City. He has a bachelor's degree in religion from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and is currently studying at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kelli, have three sons.

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► Seeing various ministries and Vacation Bible Schools canceled was hard for Debbie Keaton (left), ministry associate at **East Cullman Baptist Association**, as it was for many in 2020.

It was "disheartening and depressing" to miss out on the steady flow of volunteers and visitors who usually came in and out of the association's Ministry Resource Center every week, she said.

But the association's staff and volunteers — led by associational missionary Randy Makemson (right) — used that time to work on some needed building renovations for the Ministry Resource Center, which they celebrated with an open house on May



Photo courtesy of East Cullman Association

23. The center serves as an office space for the association, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. It also offers meeting space and a room full of resources for churches and serves as a hub for missions projects.

"We have been very blessed, and this event is a way to reaffirm our churches and show them what we had going on before the pandemic is still going on," Keaton said.

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Rex Looney** is the new minister of worship and discipleship at **First Baptist Church, Hartselle**. He comes from serving in the role of associate pastor of worship ministries at First Baptist Church, Tanner, since 2018. He previously served as associate pastor/worship and senior adults at CrossPointe Church, Madison; associate pastor of music and adults at

Capshaw Baptist Church; and minister of music and senior adults at Shiloh Baptist Church, Saraland; and as a full-time evangelist. Looney studied at the University of Mobile and was ordained to the ministry in 1996. He and his wife, Mitzi, have three children and two granddaughters.



LOONEY

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA ASSOCIATION

► **Scott Cox** is the new senior pastor of **Selma Baptist Church, Dothan**. He previously served as pastor of Bay Springs Baptist Church, Dothan, and Southern Heights Baptist Church, Berryville, Arkansas. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Mobile, a master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctorate from

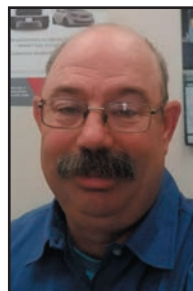


COX

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Loree, have two adult children.

TALLAPOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **Don Waldrep** is the new pastor of **Sandy Creek Baptist Church, Camp Hill**. He previously served as youth pastor and Sunday School teacher at Liberty Baptist Church, Alexander City.



WALDREP

He also has a gospel music group called For Heaven's Sake. Waldrep and his wife, Donna, have one adult son and two grandchildren.

► **Eddie Rape** is the new pastor of **River Road Baptist Church, Alexander City**. He previously served as interim pastor of New Elkahatchee Baptist Church, also in Alexander City. He is a graduate of Faith Bible Theological Seminary in Milton, Florida.



RAPE

TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

► **Brian Payne** is the new pastor of **Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn**, beginning June 20. He will serve concurrently with long-time pastor Al Jackson until Jackson retires Oct. 31.

Payne has earned two degrees from the University of Alabama. He served as a pastoral intern on the Lakeview staff from 1999 to 2002.

Payne holds a master of divinity in systematic theology and a doctor of philosophy degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

He returns to Lakeview from Kentucky, where he presently serves as pastor of First Baptist Church, Fisherville, and professor of preaching and theology at Boyce College.

Payne and his wife, Heather, have five children.



PAYNE

Persecuted church

Pakistani Christian held illegally after blasphemy charge filed

LAHORE, Pakistan — A Pakistani Christian man was tortured into confessing to false charges of blaspheming Islam and was held illegally for two months.

Salamat Mansha Masih was arrested after a Muslim overheard Masih and friend Haroon Ayub Masih reading the Bible in a Lahore park.

Members of a far-right Islamist political party pressured police to charge the two friends with making derogatory remarks against Mohammad, punishable by death, according

to Masih's attorney. Masih was mentally and physically tortured into confessing, said his attorney. Police threatened to kill Salamat Masih and tortured him into naming others in the Bible study group.

Police also raided other Bible studies, taking members into custody and torturing them, the attorney said.

Masih was not presented to a judge until April 16, even though his court appearance should have been within 24 hours of his Feb. 13 arrest, according to his attorney.

Pakistan is No. 5 on Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)



MS photo

Hendersons to join TAB Media as regional correspondents

For the past three years, Trennis and Pam Henderson have meandered around the U.S. in their RV, collecting and sharing the stories of what God is doing through national Woman's Missionary Union.

Starting Aug. 1, they will be doing something similar for The Baptist Paper instead. The Baptist Paper, TAB Media's new biweekly national publication launched May 13.

In their new role, the Hendersons will serve as regional correspondents, focusing primarily on developing partnership story ideas and reader engagement for The Baptist Paper.

"We are excited about what they will bring to the

team," said Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB Media president and editor-in-chief.

"Trennis and Pam bring a unique blend of communication and administrative skills, combined with a flexibility to travel and a general interest in missions, ministry and the people we serve."

Active in Baptist life

Before serving as national correspondent for WMU, Trennis Henderson served for a decade as vice president for communications at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Before that, he served as editor of the Kentucky Baptist publication, Western Recorder, from 1999 to 2008; editor of Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine from 1992 to 1999 and as managing editor of Missouri Baptists' Word & Way from 1982 to 1992.

Pam Henderson founded the weekday preschool of Second Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, in 2008 and



PAM & TRENNIS HENDERSON

Photo courtesy of Trennis Henderson

directed it until 2016.

Before that, she served as director of the weekday preschool at Crestwood Baptist Church in Kentucky.

She has also served as a volunteer adult reading and writing trainer with national

training from the North American Mission Board.

"It has been a privilege to help communicate WMU's mission and vision as we

produced on-site missions and ministry coverage across the U.S.," said Trennis Henderson.

"As Pam and I shift to the next phase of our ministry and travels, we look forward to partnering with TAB Media and The Baptist Paper.

"We're excited to work alongside Jennifer and her team as they launch this new venture for the benefit of Baptist readers throughout the nation." (TAB Media)

To learn more about The Baptist Paper, visit thebaptistpaper.org.



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PASTOR

Forest Hills Baptist Church of Florence, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking God's choice for our next full-time pastor. We are looking for an experienced pastor with a master of divinity degree who is energetic and can focus on growing our membership while staying true to the Scriptures. After praying for God's will on your life, please send resumé to: admin@foresthillsbaptist.net.

PASTOR

Seeking part-time or full-time. Must be motivated to bring lost or new people in. Send resumé to: White House Fork Baptist Church, 39057 County Road 39, Bay Minette, AL 36507, ATTN: Alice Long.

PASTOR

Horseshoe Bend Baptist Church seeking a full-time pastor. In prayer for supply pastors also. Please send resumé to: horseshoebendbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Paden Baptist Church is seeking resumé for bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Paden Baptist Church, 900 Padenreich Avenue, Gadsden, AL 35903 or padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP

First Baptist Church of Dillon, S.C., is seeking a full-time associate pastor of worship. Applicants should have at least 2 years experience leading worship and a minimum of a 4-year bachelor's degree. For further information and job description, please visit <https://www.fbcdillon.com/associatepastor>. Please send resumé to: search@fbcdillon.com.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

First Baptist Church in Greenville, Ala., is seeking a part-time children's minister. Please

send resumé to: 212 Fort Dale Rd., Greenville, AL or email to: kelly@myfbcgreenville.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The boards of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) and American Character Builders are seeking a new executive director to succeed Joe Godfrey, who has announced his upcoming retirement. To apply and receive a complete job description and salary range information, send a cover letter and resumé to ALCAP. Search@gmail.com or mail to: ALCAP & ACB, 2376 Lakeside Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244. All information will be kept confidential. Applicants must be willing to submit to a background screening.

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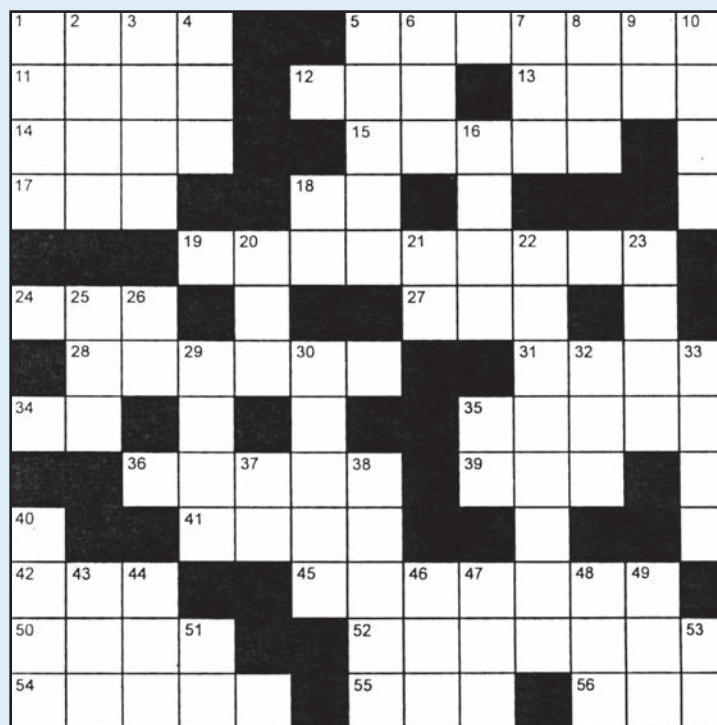
Have you checked out TAB Media's new Stories serial podcast? If not, then you'll want to catch Season 2, the Flatline story. The full first season is also available at tabonline.org/stories.

CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. Matthew, Mark, Luke, ____.
5. Yet will I leave a ____.
(Ezek. 6:8)
11. Jesus cried, "____,
Eloi, lama
sabachthani?"
(Mark 15:34)
12. Sun. (Spanish)
13. Ancient South
American Indians.
14. Jesus ... touched
him, saying, I ____.
(Matt. 8:3)
15. ____ yourselves unto
God. (Rom. 6:13)
17. Jacob ____ pottage.
(Gen. 25:29)
18. Mom.
19. Ye say that I cast
out devils through
____. (Luke 11:18)

24. Under oaks and
poplars and ____s.
(Hos. 4:13)
27. North northeast.
(abbr.)
28. Thy name shall be
called no more
Jacob, but ____.
(Gen. 32:28)
31. But ____ found
grace in the eyes
of the Lord.
(Gen. 6:8)
34. Maine. (abbr.)
35. Sharpen every
man his ____.
(1 Sam. 13:20)
36. ____ thy wife shall
bear thee a son.
(Gen. 17:19)
39. Give ____ to my
words, O Lord.
(Ps. 5:1)
41. Texas city: El ____.
42. Choose.
45. Joseph took them
both, ____ ... and
Manasseh.
(Gen. 48:13)
50. Butter substitute.
52. I beseech ____.
(Phil. 4:2)
54. No scrip, no bread,
no _____. (Mark 6:8)
55. A time to rend, and
a time to ____.



By Amy Rognlie Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

- (Eccles. 3:7)
56. Cow noise.

DOWN

1. Where is He that is
born
King of the ____?
(Matt. 2:2)
2. A dish of many
ingredients.
3. God will ____ thy right
hand. (Isa. 41:13)
4. Nothing.
5. Ye are a chosen
generation, a ____
priesthood.
(1 Pet. 2:9)
6. The child did minister
unto the Lord before
____. (1 Sam. 2:11)
7. Same as 4 down.
8. With; as well as.
9. North Carolina. (abbr.)
10. Weed.
16. Thou hast been in ____
the garden of God.
(Ezek. 28:13)
18. Myself.
20. Period of time.
21. Zinc. (abbr.)
22. ____ the king of Syria
was sick. (2 Kings 8:7)
23. The ____ out of the
wood doth waste it.
(Ps. 80:13)
25. A faithful witness will

- not _____. (Prov. 14:5)
26. Master of science.
(abbr.)
29. They that sow in
tears shall ____ in joy.
(Ps. 126:5)
30. To obliterate.
32. All that handle the
____. (Ezek. 27:29)
33. ____ me, O Lord.
(Jer. 17:14)
35. Southeast. (abbr.)
37. Egyptian sun god.
38. [Love] always
protects, always
trusts, always ____.
(1 Cor. 13:7)
40. Space.
43. Palestine Liberation
Organization. (abbr.)
44. There met Him ____
men that were lepers.
(Luke 17:12)
46. Color.
47. The second ____
shall be an emerald.
(Ex. 28:18)
48. They departed from
____. (Num. 33:45)
49. Deceased Chinese
leader, ____ Tse-tung.
51. Old English. (abbr.)
53. He had sent
messengers to ____
king of Egypt.
(2 Kings 17:4)

Isaiah 58 ministry helps women in crisis

Dawn Green says her church's Isaiah 58 ministry didn't start as a program — it started one person at a time.

And the first person was an inmate at Tutwiler Prison for Women, someone who was about to be released.

"She had gotten saved in prison and was doing well," said Green, a member of Santuck Baptist Church, Wetumpka. "She didn't want to go back to her boyfriend's house where her stuff was because it wouldn't be safe for her."

So she had nothing — no clothes, no toiletries, no money. And Traci Martin, a prison chaplain at Tutwiler, started trying to collect things for her to help her start her new life.

Carload of items

Martin "got on the phone and started calling around" looking for shoes and clothes in the woman's size, and before long, she had a whole carload of necessities, Green said.

Green noted that much of the time when women are released from prison, they leave with little more than the clothes on their back.

So Martin started collecting things for more women, and as people gave, she filled up a couple of rooms in her house. It wasn't long before she needed more space. So the church offered a room.

"We started with one room and now have probably eight," Green said.

The ministry has grown to help any woman in crisis — whether that be leaving prison, fleeing an abusive situation or recovering after a house fire. Green now directs the ministry, named

from Isaiah 58, which talks about sharing what you have with those in need.

She and seven other volunteers pack suitcases for women prepar-

ing to leave prison and pray over them before they deliver them. They also allow women facing other crises to come and "shop" in the rooms at the church that are dedicated to the ministry.

"Every lady also gets a Bible and devotional materials," Green said. "This is a tangible way for them to see God's love. It's been fun; it's my heart."

For more information, email i58@santuckbaptist.org or call 334-567-2364. (Grace Thornton)

For more information, email i58@santuckbaptist.org or call 334-567-2364.



Photo courtesy of Paula Garrett

Traci Martin, a chaplain at Tutwiler Prison and founder of Isaiah 58 ministry, prays with a guest visiting the ministry's shopping area. The ministry helps any woman in a crisis situation.

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Pat Howard
quotes:

"You'll never learn a thing as long as you're the one doing all the talking."

"The joyful people are those who are generous and kind; the miserable people are those who are selfish and unforgiving."



Photo courtesy of Ben Bowden

On May 2, Pat Howard marked more than 50 years of teaching adult Sunday School at FBC Enterprise.

"Until they are about 14 years old, children do as you say. After that, they do as you do."

"The best way to make your children perfectly miserable is to give them everything they want."

FAVORITE VERSE

"LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH, AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART, BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT, O LORD, MY STRENGTH, AND MY REDEEMER."

Psalm 19:14 (KJV)

FAVORITE HYMN

"HIS WAY ... MINE!"

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 6

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D., Associate Professor
of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



FAITH TESTED Job 1:8–22

Job is the story of a righteous man, prominent and influential, who in a matter of minutes lost all his material possessions, children and health. Job's wife told him to curse God and die. His friends used the occasion to condemn him rather than comfort him.

Even worse, God did not respond to Job until the very end.

What makes this inspired story so perplexing is that Job was the most righteous man on the earth, the least deserving of such tragic affliction. This raises the question: Why does a good God allow tragedy to come to His children? It was God who removed His protection from around Job, allowing Satan virtually unlimited access into his life to bring soul-devastating destruction.

In the opening verses, the reader is informed of something Job never learned — he was a test case. Throughout the entire trial, Job never did understand why he was suffering. There were no explanations from God. In the absence of any God-given insight, Job's faith was stretched to the very limits.

Permission Granted (8–12)

One day as the sons of God presented themselves before the Lord, Satan came with them. Once the highest archangel, Satan had been banished from heaven for his rebellion against God. Yet, mysteriously, he still could approach God's throne in heaven.

God praised Job, His most trusted servant, knowing that he would remain faithful to Him when attacked by Satan. Satan responded by asking the Lord: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan accused God of "buying" Job's worship.

There were people in the New Testament who followed Jesus because of the blessings He gave them, not because they desired to be His disciples. And today there are people who associate with the church for the benefits they obtain.

This is a question all believers ought to ask themselves: Would I fear God if there were no blessings

in the here and now and greater blessings promised in the age to come?

Satan told God if He would allow him to take away Job's material blessings, Job would curse the Lord. In His divine sovereignty, God granted Satan permission to attack Job's life, with restrictions. Satan was given access to remove Job's possessions and loved ones, but he could not remove his health or take his life.

The Attack Executed (13–19)

The Sabeans, merchant traders from Sheba, stole Job's cattle and slaughtered his servants. Only one traumatized servant escaped to tell Job the tragic news. While this servant was still speaking, another lone messenger came and reported to Job that "God's fire fell from heaven" (probably lightning) and burned his sheep and servants.

While this servant was still speaking, another messenger arrived and told Job that the Chaldeans had stolen his camels and murdered his servants attending them. He alone had survived the attack.

Facing tragedy upon tragedy, yet another dagger was thrust into Job's heart. Another messenger came running and told Job that while his sons and daughters were together for an enjoyable family gathering, a powerful wind had destroyed the house and killed them all.

Trust Maintained (20–22)

When Job heard of the loss of all his possessions and children, he got up, tore his robe and shaved his head. These were outward expressions of his deep, inner sorrow and grief. Then he fell to the ground and worshipped the Lord. Job declared that all his possessions, servants, sons and daughters were gifts from God, who alone had the right to take them at His discretion.

Job responded with true faith in God. He did not sin by blaming God for these calamities. His high view of God caused him to offer praise to the Lord in the most tragic moment of his life.

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong
Professor of Religion, Samford University



CHARACTERIZED BY LOVE Revelation 2:1–7

In chapters 2–3 of Revelation, Jesus dictates letters to seven churches in the province of Asia. Jesus addresses each church and highlights its particular strengths and weaknesses.

Each church is more than simply the sum of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual believers within it. Each church has things it values more or less than others and things for which it is particularly known. Jesus addresses both the church as a whole and individual members within it as He calls us to return to our first love.

Be known for your good works. (1–3)

Knowing that Christ is in our midst should give us courage and comfort, and it should also serve as a challenge for us to honor Him with every day we are given. Christ knows the challenges we are facing and how we continue to persevere and represent Him in our lives.

The Ephesians had hung in there and had continued to follow Christ and do good works in His name despite significant opposition. Their faith was reflected in their service for Christ and others.

In holding to their faith and the works inspired by their faith, they guarded themselves against wicked people and false teachers. Christ will commend every church known for these things.

Let your love for Christ fuel your good works. (4–6)

While the Ephesians had not fallen away due to persecution but had held fast to the faith, they failed the higher and expected standard of maintaining the vital love for the Lord that had fueled their daily lives in the beginning. And their work for the Lord had diminished over time.

Verses 4–5 suggest that our love will manifest itself in good works and service. That they had abandoned their first love could be seen in the fact that they were no longer serving Him as they had at first.

Our love for the Lord is not to be reflected merely in emotional enthusiasm but in the way our commitment to Him is clearly reflected in our daily choices and priorities, including working to make His name known and loved in our communities.

As we recover from the pandemic, many of our churches recognize that lockdowns, social distancing and a proper concern to avoid infecting each other has led in many cases to a reduction in much of our outreach and our personal contact with our neighbors.

Some of us may have seemed to have abandoned our first love as we have also withdrawn from various kinds of worship and service that had marked our lives previously.

Now is a time when we need to work together so we all get back on track in sharing the love and truth of Christ with those around us in authentic and creative ways. Our work for Christ is to be a reflection of our love for Christ and fueled by that love, even as it also provides opportunities not only to express our love but also to grow in our love for Christ.

Our obedience to the Lord should never waiver based on our emotional state or any perception that God has grown distant from us. The Lord is with us, as He walks in our midst (v. 1), whether we feel Him or are emotionally attuned to His presence or not. We need to be reminded of that, as Christ reminded the churches, and let our love for our ever-present Lord be the fuel for everything we do in His service.

Remember you will one day dwell with Christ forever. (7)

To "conquer" or "overcome" is to hold fast to our faith in and testimony for Christ even if it should cost us everything we have, including our very lives.

We can offer our entire lives to the Lord, whatever that might cost, knowing that in doing so we are entrusting them to the One with whom we will spend eternity in perfect fellowship in paradise.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust

TAB Media

Netflix's 'Blue Miracle' spotlights faith, fatherhood and second chances

Omar is a man of faith with a big heart and a strong desire to save the street kids of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

He's also a man who puts his faith into action.

He and his wife, Becca, operate an orphanage for more than a dozen boys, teaching them right from wrong and instilling in them the traits that helped Omar survive, including hard work.

Some of the children were abandoned. Others were abused.

Unfortunately, though, Omar's orphanage is short on funds. Without a quick infusion of cash — specifically, \$117,000 — the bank will close the orphanage within a month. And those children will be sent back to the street.

Omar needs a miracle.

Perhaps a storm will help.

A hurricane hits Cabo San Lucas, flooding the orphanage and sending the rest of the community into chaos. This includes the region's Bisbee's Black & Blue fishing tournament, which is plagued with cancellations from international travelers and desperately needs participants.

Witnessing Omar's financial plight, a tournament official pairs



"Blue Miracle"

Netflix photo

Omar's orphanage with a has-been fisherman and enters them into the competition.

Could the Bisbee Black & Blue — the world's richest fishing tournament — be the answer to Omar's financial plight?

The new Netflix film "Blue Miracle" (TV-PG) recounts this unlikely tale, which is based on a true story about an orphanage, Casa Hogar, that was on the verge of closing when the unexpected happened.

The film stars Jimmy Gonzales ("Godzilla: King of the Monsters") as Omar and Dennis Quaid ("I Can Only Imagine") as the fisherman, Wade.

With themes involving second chances, fatherhood and prayer, "Blue Miracle" is one of the most inspiring dramas of 2021. It even

has a positive message about temptation (Omar and Wade briefly consider cheating in order to win).

Thankfully, "Blue Miracle" also is family-friendly, with only a handful of instances of minor language and no sexuality or violence.

Still, parents of small children may want to be cautious due to themes of abandonment and street violence.

Also worth watching this month:

► **"Spirit Untamed"** (Theaters, HBO Max) — A young girl develops a passion for horses —

and horse-riding — after being sent to the wide-open frontier out west. "Spirit Untamed" includes a family-centric plot and is one of the year's most kid-friendly movies. Rated PG for some adventure action.

► **"Expedition Back to the Future"** (Discovery Plus) — Explorer Josh Gates joins actor Christopher Lloyd to search for the famous DeLorean time-traveling machine from the "Back to the Future" film series. Some families may not consider "Expedition Back to the Future" appropriate for young children — it includes minor language and scenes — but parents who grew up in the 1980s probably will enjoy it. TV-14.

► **"Oklahoma"** (Disney Plus) — A farm girl is courted by two cowboys in this 1955 musical classic. It was nominated for four Oscars and won two (Best Music, Best Sound). "Oklahoma" stars Gordon MacRae, Rod Steiger, Gene Nelson and Shirley Jones. It includes some of the best tunes you'll ever hear in a musical. Rated G.

► **"Meet the Meerkats"** (Discovery Plus) — Meerkats rescued from the illegal trade are returned to the Kuruman River Reserve in Africa and then followed by cameras as they adapt to the wild. It's a fascinating animal documentary that has elements of a comedy and a drama.

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.

"With themes involving second chances, fatherhood and prayer, 'Blue Miracle' is one of the most inspiring dramas of 2021."

MEET THE REVIEWER

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

Ironworks *and art*

Mississippi craftsman, with help from family, shares faith through metal signs

By Carolyn Tomlin
TAB Media

When an elderly wood carver was asked how he could whittle a dog out of a block of wood, he replied, “Well, the dog was in there all the time. I just helped him come out.”

“This is basically the same approach to crafting ironwork decorations from 14-gauge steel,” says Alan Moore of Houston, Mississippi, owner of Iron Works of Houston, which produces metal designs, many with a Christian theme.

When people think of “ironwork” they may visualize more of a structural form, such as steel beams in a building. Moore’s work is typically more creative — home decorations, as well as farm and ranch signs and address markers.

Sharing verses

Many of the designs give Moore an opportunity to share Bible verses or inspirational thoughts and thus share his faith with those who browse his work on Facebook or Etsy.

“I like to think that when people read a Bible verse or see an inspirational thought, they are reminded that God loves them,” says Moore.

As a young boy growing up in west Tennessee, Moore mowed grass for neighbors to earn spending money. As a teen, he restored antique cars. His love of math led him to pharmacy school, and he worked 35 years as a pharmacist.

A good fit

In 2016, Moore began working with iron ... “to keep my sanity,” he said. The hobby also seemed a good fit because his son, Ross, attended welding school. Metalwork seemed like a good opportunity for father and son to spend time together.

“I never thought about it becoming a second career,” Moore said.

But that’s just what has happened, and the entire family is involved. In addition to Ross’ help, Moore’s daughter, Kali, a nurse in Tupelo, often provides inspirational thoughts for his designs.

Today, Iron Works of Houston is known from coast to coast and internationally. His metal Christmas



Facebook photo

As a teenager, Alan Moore restored antique cars. Moore picked up his metalworking hobby again in retirement when his son, Ross, attended welding school. Now the Moores work together to create unique metal artworks.

nativity designs are especially popular.

While Moore and his wife, Lesa, were visiting a “Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Nations” in Israel, he was approached about supplying signs that say: “It is well with my soul” and “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening,” (1 Sam. 3:10).

These signs now hang in the House of Prayer in Jerusalem, where those who visit from around the world are reminded of God’s greatness.

“When tourists visit the church, I hope these Bible verses and other inspirational thoughts will make a difference in the life of those who read them,” Moore said.

Moore and his family are active members of First Baptist Church,

Houston, Mississippi, where Moore participates in Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief, missions projects and other ministries where his pharmacy background is a great help.

Greg Simmons, FBC Houston student minister, said, “Alan is always ready to work with church programs and encourages others to step up.”

Recently, Moore discovered an ancestor known as Black Jack McKnight from

the mid-1800s who was the blacksmith in west Tennessee. In his shop, McKnight not only took care of horses, he also repaired metal farm equipment.

“Perhaps working with iron is in my DNA, and I’m just now finding it out,” says Moore.

For more information on Alan Moore and Iron Works of Houston, visit facebook.com/ironworksofhouston or etsy.com/shop/ironworkshouston.



Photo courtesy of Alan Moore

Creating words and art out of iron was a skill Mississippi Baptist Alan Moore discovered after retiring from a 35-year career as a pharmacist. The owner of Iron Works of Houston also volunteers with missions and disaster relief.

***“Perhaps working with iron is in my DNA,
and I’m just now finding it out.”***

Alan Moore, owner of Iron Works of Houston