

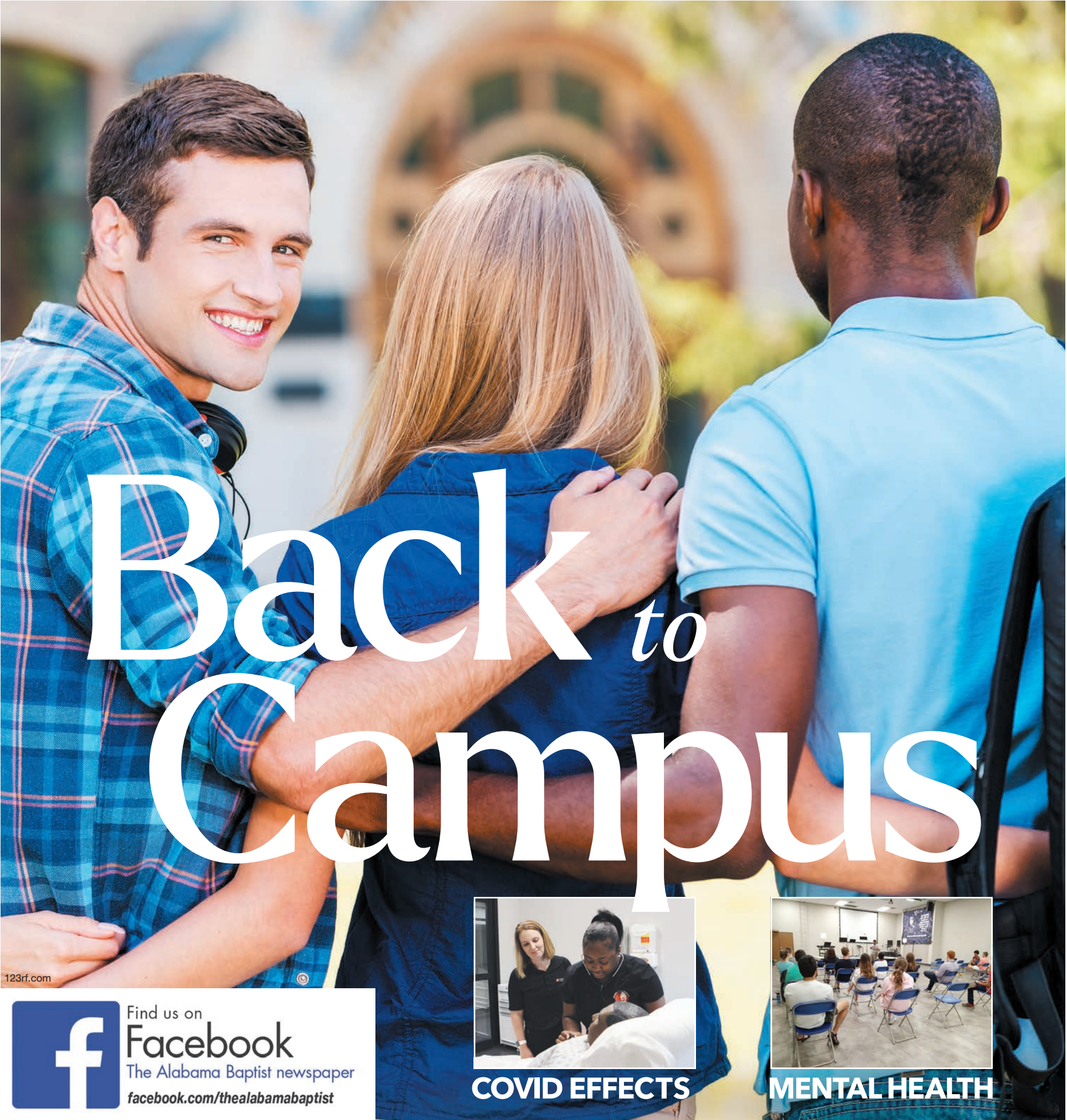
SPECIAL EDITION

# The Alabama Baptist

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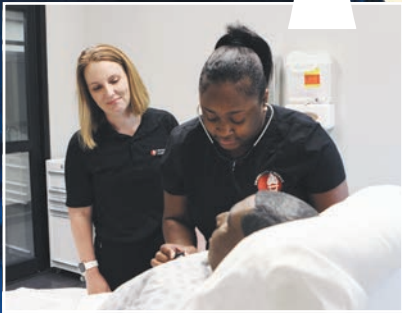


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COVID EFFECTS



MENTAL HEALTH



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Two years isn’t too short for BCM involvement



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Biblical theology for people in the pew

## 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 19.



# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**By Jennifer Davis Rash**

President and Editor-in-Chief



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@RashionalThts

## College offers time for building faith, learning job/life skills

**W**hat's the point of college? It's a question on the minds of many these days, but it's an especially important question for current and prospective college students and those who love them.

Post-secondary education has long been seen as a stepping stone to career success and financial stability. In the United States, that usually meant at least a bachelor's degree earned at a four-year college.

In recent years, as health care and construction-related trades have emerged as some of the fastest growing — and well-paying — job markets, certificate programs and two-year degrees have become more respected career paths.

Growing up, I saw both options represented in my family. My mother was a teacher and school counselor, my dad a journeyman fire sprinkler fitter. I always knew I would go to college, but I appreciated that others might choose differently.

Later, I spent two decades teaching first-year writing to college freshmen. They often wrote of their hopes and dreams, and building wealth was usually the main reason they gave for seeking a college degree.

Economic security and professional outcomes are certainly good reasons to pursue higher education.

But I have learned a few things as a teacher and parent that I didn't know as a high school student.

First, post-secondary education or training, whether at a four-year college or a technical school, is an opportunity to learn not only job skills but also team work, communication and time management — professional skills employers want and need in their employees.

Second, college students enjoy a unique opportunity to engage with professors and peers inside and

outside the classroom and develop valuable critical thinking skills.

A basic understanding of history, science, math and literature makes for better conversations in the long term, but in the short term, class discussions and writing projects help students learn to evaluate information, make assertions and support their positions with evidence.

That leads to a third and perhaps most important element of college — faith-building.

In a world that's skeptical or

outright dismissive of our faith in the risen Christ, believers of all ages must be prepared to share the "reason for [our] hope (1 Pet. 3:15), to "stand firm and hold to the traditions [we] were taught" (2 Thess. 2:15).

The college years offer ample opportunities to get involved in student-focused ministries, discipleship under experienced leaders with peers who are in the same stage of life and missions at the local level and beyond.

Even with all their temptations and difficulties, the college years are truly unique, a vital period for young people to grow and mature in their faith as they spend time together in Christian community on campus.



**By Carrie Brown McWhorter**  
Content Editor

## Ways to help college students find local faith community

**I**f you have influence in the life of a young person headed to college or back to college this fall, here are four suggestions for how you can help them get a great start in the local faith community:

► Tell them about Baptist Campus Ministries. Better yet, connect your student to the BCM campus minister on his or her campus using this form: [bcmink.org/ministries/transitioning](http://bcmink.org/ministries/transitioning). Campus ministers love to have a head start on contacting new students.

► Help your student find a church. Attending a new church

for the first time can be intimidating, but there are ways to make it easier.

My son found his local church through a progressive dinner organized by the BCM early in the semester that took students to several churches in the city.

My daughter is already listening to sermons at churches she's thinking about visiting. If move-in is scheduled for a weekend, visit a church together.

► Encourage them to take advantage of at least one ministry and missions opportunity on campus during their first semester.

► Pray. Some college students may feel comfortable sharing specific prayer requests; others may not. Pray regardless.

Pray that college students, both those in your family or circle and those across the state, will be faithful, bold witnesses on their campuses. (Tip: Download a printable prayer guide produced by South Carolina BCM at [tabonline.org/prayer-guide](http://tabonline.org/prayer-guide).)

Each student and situation is different, but intentional efforts to get a good start can make all the difference.



# Your Voice



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

We have been created on purpose and for a purpose. I believe that purpose is to fulfill Jesus' command when he says in Matthew to "go and make disciples." How we live out this purpose looks different depending on where we end up working and where we have the opportunity to serve others with excellence.

I believe we train our students to be excellent at their vocation so they can spend a lifetime serving others and discipling well in whatever field they go into.

**Lori Guy**

Assistant professor of music  
University of Mobile

We prepare our students to engage with an ever-changing world, one that continually asks new things of them personally and professionally.

It is our job, then, to continuously reinvent the university — sometimes in small ways and occasionally on a larger scale — to remain relevant and to serve our students and communities well.

**President Beck Taylor**  
Samford University

Just look for His peace in the next step. He will reveal the rest in His time!

**Julie Hughes**  
Assistant professor  
of nursing  
University of Mobile

## Samford student shares about finding a local church

By Cole Shiflet  
TAB Media

As college students return to campus this fall, many do not have a local church they call home.

In any season of life, finding a church has vast importance for Christians, but it can be especially helpful for college students often living on their own for the first time.

In high school I was around the church but never really belonged to one. I didn't submit my membership, surround myself with mentors or serve in ministry. Rather, I simply showed up and passively attended an hour-long service on Sunday morning.

Now, to be clear, I read my Bible, prayed and led a parachurch Bible study at my school, but I wasn't involved in a local church.

While parachurch ministries can be helpful, the Bible speaks quite a bit about local churches and indicates that the church is vital for growth as a Christian.

When I moved nearly 700 miles away from home and arrived in Birmingham for college, I knew I needed to find a church, but I wasn't sure how. Through the advice of mentors, internet searches and church visits, I eventually found one, and I have been a member there for the past three years.

When incoming freshmen ask what they should look for in a local church, three key areas come

to mind: expositional preaching, edifying community and evangelistic focus. While this is not an exhaustive list, I believe it describes some of the most important aspects of church life.

### Expositional preaching

"So shall My word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

It is important to recognize that Isaiah does not say, "So shall *the preacher's word* be that goes out from his mouth." He is quoting the Lord, Who declares that His word shall not return empty. Expositional preaching puts the focus on the meaning of the inspired text rather than the wit of the preacher.

Jason Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, says "expositional preaching begins with a commitment to preach the text." At its core, it "explains what the Bible means by what it says."

While expositional preaching takes a passage of Scripture and explains the meaning based on the text, topical preaching selects a topic and expounds on a number of related verses or passages.

While addressing particular topics can be helpful to the church, it is best for churches to address

these messages by selecting a passage of Scripture and explaining what the Bible says about it.

It may be easy to dismiss the importance of expositional preaching to the everyday believer, but it can play a key role in discipleship. Preaching transforms the way we as laypeople in the church view God.

When we see the sermon as a bullet-point list of three ways to make our lives better, we miss the point. The sermon is meant to explain a text so we might be exposed to all of Scripture.

### Edifying community

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16).

Sadly, I have been part of churches that had phenomenal Bible teaching yet lacked deep community.

Following the pandemic, loneliness and isolation skyrocketed, and they continue to plague the church today. The solution is accountability in an edifying community.

At Multiply Groups, the campus ministry I lead at Samford University, we hold students accountable to Scripture reading, prayer, personal holiness and evangelism.

In the past few years, we have found that many students have been unable to find the type of community and accountability in the local church that we have in our ministry.

As a campus ministry leader, this



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“It ought to be the business every day to prepare for the final day.”

MATTHEW HENRY  
Nonconformist minister and author

is heartbreaking. Scripture clearly conveys the importance of belonging to a church, and it is my firm conviction that campus ministries are simply supplemental to the church.

Finding an edifying community that knows you, cares for you and points you to Jesus is an essential aspect of college life.

### Evangelistic focus

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Finally, your church should have an evangelistic focus.

Southern Baptists have a long history of being “Great Commission Baptists.” Even before that alternate name was approved in 2012, South-

ern Baptist churches have long focused on evangelism and missions, both domestically and abroad. As Christians, we recognize that this hope referred to in 1 Peter 3:15 is Jesus Christ Himself. The gospel is not about our self-improvement, but about God’s great mercy.

In addition to looking for biblically saturated sermons and Christ-honoring community groups, you need to look at a church’s focus on evangelism. Do they provide opportunities to learn how to share the gospel? Are they regularly explaining the gospel during the Sunday gathering?

In His last words before His ascension, Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit ...” (Matt. 28:19). Evangelism and discipleship belong at the center of the church.

### Next steps

If you’re a college student without a church home, look for these three qualities in the churches you visit.

While campus ministries can help you meet new friends and get connected quickly, the local church is God’s primary plan for reaching the world. Finding a healthy church with expositional preaching, edifying community and an evangelistic focus will help you grow in your faith during college.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Cole Shiftlet is a junior at Samford University and a member of Redeemer Community Church, Avondale. He is from Denton, Texas.*

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @Jeff\_Iorg

Effective witnessing is simple, direct and a natural part of daily relationships.

### @AdamGreenway

Christian leadership is different from other kinds of leadership because no Christian leader can assume the position of being “number one,” that is, THE leader. This is true because those who believe in Christ know there is only one “Number One” ... —William D. Lawrence

### @ArtRainer

Jesus is alive. And that changes everything about today.

### @ricklance

I once was concerned about the subtle but sinister influence of secularism pervading our society. Now

I am mortified by the invasion of secularism in every area of our lives.

### @jasonkeithallen

“He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day.” —John Bunyan

### @NOBTSApologetic

“I thought doubt and faith were opposites — that if I questioned what I believed, I’d somehow be a failure in God’s eyes. But this definition of faith has more in common with how atheists understand faith than how the Bible defines it.” —@alisachilders

### @haines\_matt

If the Bible is our spiritual Word that nourishes our soul, we cannot continue to starve ourselves of God’s word and expect to walk in spiritual victory in our lives.

### @albertmohler

Ministry leaders in our day don’t need less theological training — they need more. ...

### @bellevuepastor

Before today is in the books...  
Read the Bible,  
Thank the Lord for His blessings,  
Ask Him to give you wisdom,  
Ask Him to fill you afresh with His Spirit,  
Ask Him to guard & guide your speech,  
Take every sinful thought captive,  
Pray Scripture & Walk today in joy & peace.

### @SEBTS

“I’m not just trying to give information or to give clarity of thinking; I’m trying to connect life and belief.” — @kswhitfield

## ‘Be 100% invested’

Dee Ferguson served this summer through One Mission Students. Earlier this summer, he shared his thoughts on missions.

### Q: What led to your calling to serve in Utah this summer?

A: Being in Provo for spring break and seeing the lost state of souls all across the city due to the deception of the LDS church. The state of Utah is beautiful with the scenery and mountains but they are in the top 10 in the U.S. for death rate by suicide. It didn’t sit well in my heart knowing these facts.

I [went] back out there [hoping] to see lives truly changed by the power of God.



FERGUSON

### Q: What role has your college/campus ministry played in helping you understand this calling?

A: The intentionality from the college pastors has helped me out a lot. On the missions field, you have to be intentional about your relationships, and having that while going through the semester has been very beneficial to me.

### Q: What would you say to others contemplating serving on mission?

A: Pray diligently about it and be 100% invested and intentional while you are serving. The missions field isn’t something you do just for fun, just because or to post about later on social media. It’s serious business.

Lives need to be saved and souls need to be rescued by Christ. He is allowing you to represent Him in front of others who may not know the gospel.

Have a great time, but don’t take the task lightly.



# Brief time, big impact

BY SELAH VETTER | TAB MEDIA

## Two years isn't too short for Baptist Campus Ministries involvement

Despite challenges with the structure of smaller and technical universities, Alabama Baptist Campus Ministries has become creative and flexible with events and opportunities to minister to students.

The need for ministry is just as important to students at two-year universities as it is at four-year institutions, since the college years are

a formative time for young adults. Despite many students still living at home, BCM campus ministers realize they want to make their faith their own, not just their parents'.

### 'Real compass'

"Their faith becomes the real compass of their lives in college, or it doesn't," said Christy Hicks, who directs a nonprofit organization whose goal is to reach

college students in north central Alabama.

Ministries at two-year higher education institutions face the unique challenge of students attending the school for a shorter time, which limits ministry availability.

"Our ministry is constantly rebuilding," said Jonathan Lancaster, BCM

campus minister at Snead State Community College in



BROWN

Boaz. "One year we have terrific sophomore leaders, the next we have a large group of freshmen who are still deciding if they want to plug in."

Metro Mobile BCM campus minister Jerrod Brown said the culture of the campus determines what

kinds of ministries are used. Campus ministers at two-year schools learn to be flexible when planning events.

Catching students when they are on campus is a huge challenge, Hicks said.

Due to many students being commuters and working full- or part-time jobs, they work ministry around the students' schedules, through meals and activities during the day.

BCM ministers also part-



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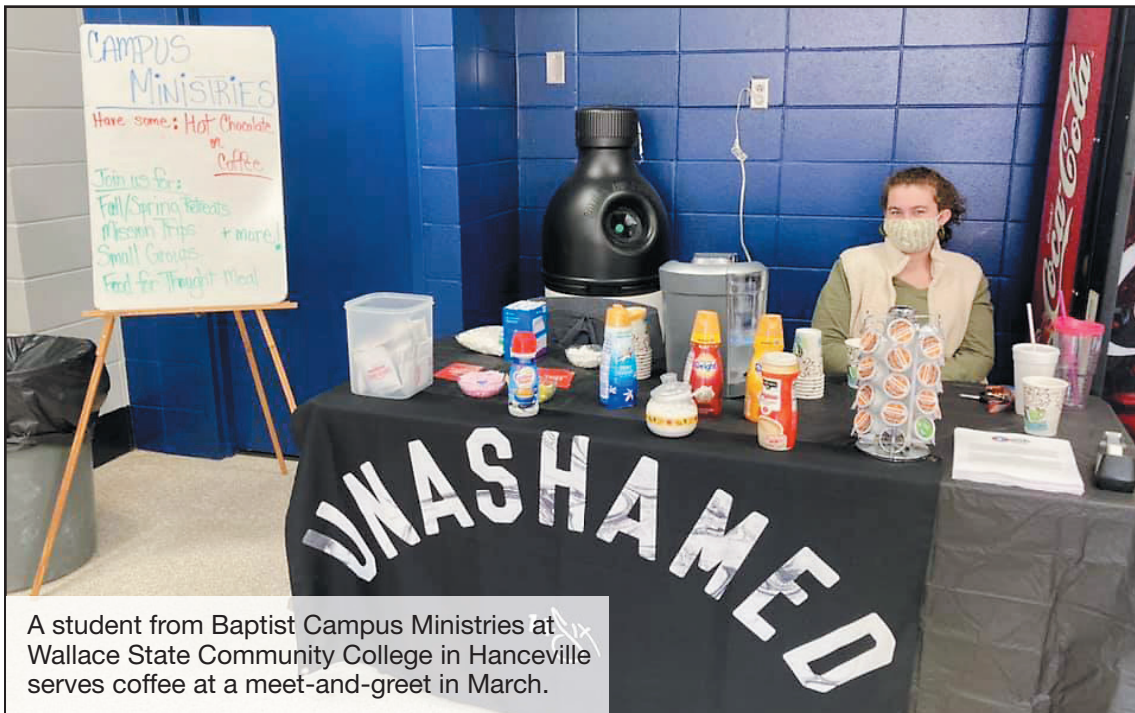


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Facebook photo

ner with local churches and university coaches to reach students in multiple settings.

“We are very quick to encourage students to connect with faithful churches in the area that are offering events for college students on other nights of the week if their schedules conflict,” Lancaster noted.

“When it comes to our athletes, most of the coaches we’ve come in contact with are very excited that their players want to be involved with BCM.”

Lancaster added that his family and families within local churches also help minister to students by attending athletic events and inviting them into their

homes, resulting in ongoing and deeper relationships.

“My wife and I try to attend athletic events to cheer on our students, especially those whose families aren’t able to regularly attend games,” Lancaster said. “Families from local churches have opened their homes to students for meals or to stay the night when the dorm was closed over a break.”

Baptist ministries at a smaller school often have strong partnerships with local churches and organizations, which help provide resources and opportunities for students to become part of a Christian community and local church. “We have a very

good relationship with the local churches and Baptist associations,” said Christina Meigs, BCM campus minister at Southern Union State Community College in Wadley.

### Church support

“They are very supportive of our BCM program and of the students at Southern Union. They are always willing to help with providing meals for our weekly services, contributions for

projects we do and worship opportunities.”

Common events for BCM include lunches or dinners for students, often in collaboration with a local church or ministry. The meals provide a more intimate setting for campus ministers to talk to and minister to students. College ministries also provide a gateway to plug students into missions involvement.

Jake Duke, Baptist campus minister for the West Alabama area, helps students find ways to serve so they “will begin to make missions a daily part of [their] lives and not something we do for a week or a month or a season.”

Taking students on missions trips is a “blessing,” he wrote in a blog post at [onemissionstudents.org](http://onemissionstudents.org),

because such trips help students realize “we can serve and be on mission every day wherever God has planted us.”

### Great impact

Despite the quick turnover of students and unique challenges that arise due to the structure of a two-year college, BCM campus ministers have seen how a college ministry can greatly impact students’ faith.

“Our ministry investment means something eternally, no matter how limited the time may be,” Brown said. “I have been amazed at how God has used many short conversations to further the gospel going forth, to encourage struggling students and to help students grow more consistently in their faith.”



BCM Link Facebook photo

Meals on campus, worship nights, small group discipleship and retreats are just some of the ways Baptist Campus Ministries and local churches help reach college students.

**“Our ministry investment means something eternally, no matter how limited the time may be.”**

**Jerrold Brown**  
BCM campus minister, Metro Mobile

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# Adaptation

BY SELAH VETTER | TAB MEDIA

## COVID-19 has lasting effects on campus ministries

It seems that not a single aspect of life was untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic, college ministry included.

With the sudden changes brought to campuses in spring 2020 and later social distancing guidelines and restrictions during the 2020–21 academic year, Alabama’s Baptist Campus Ministries also had to adapt.

### Zoom meetings

“We were scrambling to figure out a way to stay in touch for the last month-and-a-half of the [spring 2020] semester,” said Sean Thornton, Auburn University BCM campus minister. “We

learned on the fly how to have Zoom meetings, along with everyone else. There was a newness and excitement to that aspect at first; but, of course, we all got tired of Zoom after a while.”

One of the biggest challenges BCM faced was reaching freshmen.

Due to a lack of orientation and in-person gatherings and events, it was difficult for campus ministers to meet new students. Online and socially distanced events not only affected new students, but also upperclassmen.

Adjusting to the new normal of having both classes and ministry events online was a shock and became difficult for many students.

“One challenge for our upperclassmen was culture shock,” said Kimberly Andrews, University of Alabama BCM campus minister. “A lot of what they knew of college was suddenly very different at the home they had established away from their hometown.”

### Issue of loneliness

While the pandemic created numerous challenges, it also brought to light students’ needs and desires.

The pandemic illuminated the major issue of loneliness among college students, making it important for ministries to provide multiple social settings for students to connect with fellow believers

— even after COVID-19.

“I recognized this year just how much students need the social aspect of our ministry,”

Thornton noted. “They need to be around other believers both in formal and informal settings.

“Loneliness was a real issue that students faced last year. It is probably always a problem, but we were more aware of it due to the pandemic.”

Smaller event settings due to social distancing allowed campus ministers and students to be more intentional and aware of discipleship.

“While large group attractional events may be fun, it is the initiation of a gospel friendship that makes the real difference in someone’s life,” Auburn BCM campus minister Stephen Thompson said. “Students stayed involved in reaching out to peers through appropriately-sized gatherings for life groups, fellowship events, prayer tables and spiritual surveys on the concourse.”

Thompson noted that student efforts to stay involved despite COVID-19 restrictions led to new students attending weekly worship gatherings.

Additionally, he saw an increase in gospel conversations, accountability and

discipleship relationships.

“Students this year expressed strong desire to deepen their experiences in the areas of Christian community-building, discipling peers, evangelism and prayer life,” Thompson said. “Toward the end of this year, student leaders recognized they could have used the fellowship events we were able to provide as more purposeful platforms for out-

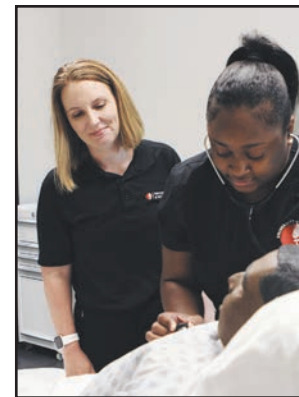
reach, rather than seeing the same core participants at each [one].”

Thompson also realized the importance of engaging with students in a more personal, smaller setting.

“While it seems to get harder each year to put myself out there among thousands of very young faces, this year in particular taught me to embrace my real strength with students through one-to-one mentoring,” Thompson said.

### Embracing lessons

While leaders and students of BCM are excited to return to large-group settings and more in-person events this school year, campus ministers hope to continue embracing the lessons they learned during the pandemic to help equip students to live by the gospel and to strengthen relationships.



University of Mobile photo  
Normal routines for students were interrupted by COVID-19. Most classes were held online.

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# Mental health

BY LANELL DOWNS SMITH | TAB MEDIA

## Students seek truth and community after COVID-19 pandemic

Chris was attending a Christian university in north Alabama when the coronavirus pandemic struck. At his home, Grandpa Joe lived with Chris’ parents and was at high risk for disease.

During the height of the pandemic, Chris’ family worked hard to limit their exposure and attempted to shield Grandpa Joe from the

risk of catching COVID-19. Chris’ stress increased as he wondered, “What if I get [COVID-19] or if I’m a carrier? What if I give it to my grandfather?”

### Stressors of college

He needed to attend in-person classes for his major and also wanted to be socially connected — to be a normal student. As the pressure continued to rise, the stressors of college life

during a global pandemic began impacting Chris’ mental health.

Is Chris unusual? Not really.

According to Mary-Claire Marshall, a counselor at the University of Mobile Student Success Center, college students frequently experience stress associated with the transition from

adolescence to adulthood and finding their own identity. Making new friends, juggling the pressures and stress load of college courses, and managing the financial concerns of independence and the cost of college all add to the pressure.

In 2017, the Pennsylvania State University Center for

Collegiate Mental Health Annual Report revealed a growing number of college students who sought mental health counseling over the previous four years. Anxiety and depression ranked as the top two concerns.

Rich Yoakum, director of counseling and wellness at Samford University in Birmingham, said technology and social media can amplify feelings of anxiety and depression and contrib-



MARSHALL

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Students from 47 states and 30 countries		
<div>96%</div> <div>of undergraduate alumni are working or in further study within six months of graduation</div>	<div>87<sup>th</sup></div> <div>oldest institution of higher learning in the U.S.</div>	<div>14:1</div> <div>student-to-faculty ratio</div>
		<div>#34</div> <div>private university in the U.S. for value and affordability</div> <div>—Kiplinger’s Personal Finance</div>
		<div>5,729</div> <div>Enrollment</div>

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ute to a sense of isolation among students by creating the perception of connection.

“Students are, of course, able to compare themselves with others now because of social media,” Yoakum noted. “The top common stressor is the anxiety that’s connected with feeling connected or feeling enough.”

Anticipatory grief related to the pandemic heightened all the normal stressors for students like Chris, Marshall pointed out. Pandemic-related changes in social structure coupled with a lack of in-person gatherings left some learners without peer support, which is critical to a student’s feelings of well-being.

Marshall added, students also experienced “group trauma” during the pandemic.

### Left in limbo

“While they typically would have mentors or additional support, as the entire world was experiencing this pandemic together it left many adolescents and young adults in limbo,” she explained.

For many students like

Chris, campus resources are available to provide professional counseling and spiritual guidance for managing the stress of college life.

### Finding support

At Samford, students find support from resident advisers and a team of faculty and staff who engage with them and invest in their lives, Yoakum noted.

Professionals in the university’s counseling and wellness center meet with students to assess mental

health concerns and help them learn coping skills for dealing with anxiety and depression.

The University of Mobile also offers free individual counseling to students with a wide range of concerns.

Because of COVID-19, these services transitioned to an online format in addition to in-person sessions, which resumed last fall, Marshall said.

UM has continued offering virtual sessions, she added, and many students with anxiety or social concerns have responded well to the options.

Baptist Campus Ministries campus minister Matt Daniels talks with students at the University of North

**“Our BCM grew tremendously simply because we provided two things: We provided truth, and we provided community.”**

**Matt Daniels**  
BCM campus minister, UNA



Metro Huntsville BCM Photo

Alabama in Florence who sometimes struggle with a sense of identity and also grapple with next steps after college, like marriage and finding a job.

Daniels speaks intentionally with students about mental health from a scriptural view and offers practical steps toward healing through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Pandemic-related restrictions caused many UNA students to experience a “year of isolation,” Daniels said.

University administration permitted Baptist Campus Ministries groups to continue gathering during the pan-

demic, he noted, and many students came to events seeking community.

“Our BCM grew tremendously — we tripled in size this year — simply because we provided two things: We provided truth, and we provided community.”

UNA’s BCM sponsored two mental health events last year.

At each, Christian counselors instructed students on what the Bible says about mental health, the importance of focusing on Scripture and truth, how to identify stressors and when to seek professional help. At one, students also learned how to

develop coping techniques, like doodling to regain focus or squeezing a stress ball for frustration.

### What Scripture says

“Jesus commands us to not be anxious,” Daniels said. “Jesus didn’t ever say, ‘Don’t be mentally ill,’ because we’re not in control of that.”

“We reminded [students] what Scripture says: that they are a child of God, redeemed [and] clothed in God’s righteousness. We told them, ‘You’re all of these things that are true, and that are real, which means you don’t have to be anything that the world says.’”



DANIELS

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# Paying for college

BY LAURA LEE LEATHERS | TAB MEDIA

## A look at the dollars and 'sense' of funding higher education

**A**ttending college is a major decision. Ideally, funds are available because a financial plan was established early in a student's life. In reality, each student and each financial situation is different.

No matter where you are on the college preparation scale, it is important to take some time to review, check off, add to your list and glean additional information and resources.

It's time to set up a spreadsheet or create a binder with yearly plans, information, college and scholarship applications, goals and expenses and incomes.

### Be practical

The decision to attend college begins with asking yourself some questions.

► **Where is the best advice regarding college choice, finances and mapping course requirements?** Technically, this can be anyone — parents, friends, advisers from the college or someone who has the degree you want.

► **What degree are you pursuing?** It will play a significant role in what college you should consider. For example, certain universities are known for their agricultural degrees, some for biblical studies and others for medical work. Remember, if you switch degree programs and transfer to another school, you may lose credits and incur additional costs.

► **When will you attend college?** Do you plan on working a year before your freshman year? What about engaging in missions work



Photo by unsplash.com

before you start? Are you needed at home because of someone else? When do you want to attend, starting in the spring or fall semester? Do you want to continue through summers to complete your degree earlier?

► **Where will you attend college?** One student told me she had scholarships to

out-of-state universities and wanted to do this. However, it would have meant taking out student loans. She chose to stay with an in-state university and graduated debt-free. Weigh the costs and reasons for attending an in-state or out-of-state school.

► **How long will it take to obtain the degree?** Are you looking for a two- or four-year plan? How much would you save if you attended a junior college first? Do you plan on pursuing additional education with a master's or doctorate? These can play a big role in funding college and living expenses.

### What are your assets?

Now that you've made your choice regarding a degree program, the college to attend and an estimate of what it will cost, including living expenses, look at your assets.

► Savings bonds may be a thing of the past, but many relatives have given them for special occasions. Check your family's lockbox. Perhaps some have reached maturity, gained interest and are ready to be cashed in.

► Parents are wise to establish money market or savings accounts in a child's early years. Hopefully, it has been added to as the student also worked throughout high school.

► One grandmother put away \$20 a month for each of her grandchildren. It wasn't a large amount when the student started college, but it certainly helped.

► Another source of

revenue is an investment account. Marcus Hall, a Christian financial adviser in Dothan, said, "I encourage [parents] to look at invest-

ing funds if you're starting early in your child's life. It allows a larger growth possibility over time. But it also carries more risk than money market and bank savings accounts."

► Consider 529 Plans.

"529s include some tax advantages if you make sure all the funds are used for school purposes," Hall said. "In most cases, any funds not used for school are penalized 10%, and you'll owe tax on any growth over the years.

"One major exception to the penalty is the use of

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scholarships. If your child earns scholarships, you can withdraw that amount from the 529 account without penalty. You still owe tax on the growth.”

### Taxes and FAFSA

Who likes to file taxes? Honestly, no one. Yet it’s vital for parents and students to file federal income tax returns as soon as possible.

Once that’s done, it’s time to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which can be completed after Oct. 1.

Once submitted, the school you’re attending will assess financial need by comparing your Expected Family Contribution, which is a calculation of your family’s financial strength.

The institution calculates the need against a formula established by law. It also hinges on dependent or independent status.

Learn more, including the most up-to-date changes in federal financial aid due to

COVID-19 at [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).

Two federal tax incentives, the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit, potentially are available to students and their families.

If you have student loans, be sure to check out the Student Loan Interest Deduction. Additionally, consult a CPA or tax adviser to help plan and take advantage of all available credits and deductions.

### Paying for college

The application process for many scholarships begins in high school.

Ask your school counselor or the financial aid office at the institution you plan to attend for a list of scholarships, then apply, apply, apply.

In addition:

► Check with your church. Many have bequeathed money for scholarships to be used for a ministerial student or one



Photo by unsplash.com

going into a church-related vocation.

► Check with community organizations about scholarship opportunities.

► If you attend a junior college, be sure to ask about transfer scholarships.

► Consider educational benefits through the ROTC, military service or military academies.

► Attend job fairs to learn about co-op programs and internships. Companies are willing to invest in a student who will be an

asset to their company. In turn, the student commits to working with the company for a certain number of years. Co-op programs also can open the door for a job opportunity. And the experience gained is excellent on your resumé.

### Part-time jobs help

► Consider loans very carefully. Someone has said that for every dollar you borrow, it will cost you two. Scripture also advises against debt (Prov. 22:7),

and financial experts often advise taking out loans as a last resort.

► Get a job. The college schedule and class load, which change each semester, will determine each student’s available hours for off-campus employment. One student said she was able to take classes two days a week and work three days; another took courses in the morning and worked in the afternoon.

A good rule of thumb is 20 hours per week or fewer. Be careful of overloading. Moving to college marks a massive transition for the student and their family.

It’s the beginning of a new adventure as a young adult, but choices made, positive or negative, will have a huge impact on the student’s future.

Prepare early, do your homework, review your plan and look forward to watching how God weaves and works.



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# Samford grad sees God's hand in career path

By Shawn Hendricks  
TAB Media

For Haley Joe Febrey, graduation from college was all about landing a dream job and figuring out the perfect five-year plan.

But since earning her degree from Samford University in Birmingham in 2020, she has seen God's grace while also discovering that finding true fulfillment isn't as formulaic as she once thought.

Febrey recently shared her story on the TAB Media podcast, "Amplify: Conversations About Life and Faith with Maggie Evans."

## 'Inconvenient time'

Febrey, who majored in journalism and mass communication, was one of many college seniors whose 2020 spring semester was turned upside down during the global pandemic. It was a time she describes as "probably the most inconvenient time in world history" to graduate from college.

Last March, Febrey recalled, she was in the thick of finishing up her

senior year and getting ready for spring break when one of her professors told the class to take all their textbooks and anything else they needed home to finish online.

While at first shocked, Febrey remembered being "annoyingly optimistic" about the announcement.

"I was convinced it was going to be three weeks and I'm going to be back at school," she remembered. "I'm going to finish out my senior year, graduate and get a job. But suddenly it was just taken from me."

To make things worse, as the pandemic lingered, she found out the fellowship program she was pursuing with Southern Living magazine was canceled. Suddenly her hopes of launching a media career seemed in doubt.

The situation left Febrey "sad and heartbroken" with "a lot to process."

"But I remember thinking, 'You have no choice but to see the positive in this,'" she said, "because if you don't, it's going to make things even more difficult."



Facebook photo

Samford graduate Haley Joe Febrey currently works as a recruiter for Birmingham-Southern College.

And ultimately, Febrey believes her disappointments have strengthened her faith and helped relationships with her family while living at home for an extended time.

"It was a really cool time spiritually just to take a step back from everything that I had been claiming as my identity and to really just rest in that identity in Christ," she said.

Since then, she has landed a college recruiter position at Birmingham-Southern College. While it's not what she initially expected, she remains thankful for the opportunity.

## Work with students

Febrey also has discovered a strong passion for discipling middle-school and high school girls as a Young Life leader.

"I think a lot of that is just because I want to be the friend that I needed in that time," Febrey said. "I've gotten to know 20 of the most precious girls."

Ultimately, she said that while enjoying work is important, she's also learning God can use "our passions" to serve Him beyond the workplace.

And she remains open to how the Lord may use her. "Even if it's not how we think it will look, He is so faithful. It's been really cool to see how that plays out."

Hear more of Febrey's story at [tabonline.org/amplify-graduation](https://tabonline.org/amplify-graduation).



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# Freshmen

BY LANELL DOWNS SMITH | TAB MEDIA

## First year can be exciting, stressful time for students and parents

Freshman year can be an exciting time for students transitioning from high school to college. But for some, living independently, making friends and taking steps toward a future career come with some unique challenges.

### Decision-making

According to Rich Yoakum, director of counseling and wellness at Samford University, learning to navigate college life often requires freshmen to utilize decision-making and problem-solving skills

without parental support for the first time.

Every student adjusts in their own unique way, he noted. Transitional stressors like juggling a heavy course load or managing financial pressures can affect a student's appetite, sleep schedule and motivation. Some students grapple with difficulty going to class and maintaining focus, while others suffer from panic attacks or trouble sleeping.

In response, students

sometimes avoid responsibilities or attack feelings of uncertainty or adjustment by being overly responsible, Yoakum said.

"They'll start to feel isolated [and], as they start to increase feeling either depressed or anxious, they can isolate from their friends or from others," he added.

At the University of Mobile Student Success Center, Shanoa Reed, student success coordinator for first- and second-year programs, sees students



YOAKUM

every year who want to leave college after the initial excitement of being on campus diminishes. Homesickness is completely normal, she said, and fades in time.

### Homesickness

For example, one student came to Reed seeking help in her third week of classes. Homesick and missing her family, she planned to withdraw. Reed talked with her about ways to manage homesickness and recommended she get involved on campus or invite a friend out for coffee each time she felt lonely. That student overcame her homesickness and is returning this fall as a peer mentor, to help other students going through the same thing.

The coronavirus pandemic magnified many common stressors for incoming freshmen. High school seniors who missed rite-of-passage traditions — like senior prom and graduation ceremonies — anticipated a traditional college transition. But pandemic-related restrictions altered how freshman year played out for many.

"Our incoming freshmen had an abrupt end to their high school experience, and many lacked the closure that typical senior year activities provide, making homesickness a more common issue," Reed

noted. "It was also more difficult to make new friends with social distancing guidelines in place, impacting their ability to find community and connect to the university."

While students learn to navigate college life, parents also can struggle with the transition, missing their child and feeling unsure about how best to parent their college student while fostering independence. Last fall, pandemic shutdowns added to the strain, causing financial hardships for some families who found themselves unable to provide support.

Samford's campus counseling staff helped students through these difficulties by dealing with the angst brought on by financial

strain and connecting them with student aid and emergency assistance services to help bridge the gap.

"[These students] learned to trust that other people wouldn't judge or shame them for

asking for help," Yoakum said. "They provided the initiative, and they worked hard, fighting through and making it a very successful semester."

### Resources available

The University of Mobile also offers mental health resources, like one-on-one or group counseling, and addresses typical transi-



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Kellum also suggests parents help students find a local church by offering to visit with them.

“Go in and sit with your children in a church for six weeks and say, ‘Hey, we’re gonna find your church. I’m gonna go with you — your choice.’”

And churches can assist transitioning freshmen by offering to help with chores like laundry or inviting students for a homecooked meal.

Matt Daniels, campus minister at the University of North Alabama, Florence, said opportunities for service through the local church can remind students that life is bigger than “me.”

“The students I see [who] are not struggling with mental health are the ones that are plugged into and serving in the local church,” Daniels noted. “They’re engaged in the local church, and with the people of the local church.”

tion concerns in a first-year course. Each UM freshman is paired with an upper-classman mentor who is trained to identify transition issues and help students work through them, or connect them with counseling staff, Reed noted.

Freshmen need the support of their parents as they adjust. Mirroring the excitement they want their student to feel is a good start, Reed suggested.

Encouraging students to do simple tasks like

requesting transcripts or making their own doctor’s appointments fosters the independence they will need during college, she added.

### Parents can help

Parents can help prepare students for college life. Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions youth ministry strategist Scooter Kellum recommends discipling them early and teaching them to make choices that honor and glorify God.

## UM’s Knowledge for College podcast available now

Got butterflies in your stomach just thinking about college? Looking for tips for getting a great start this fall?

Check out the Knowledge for College podcast from the University of Mobile.

Each weekly episode lasts 15–30 minutes and features casual conversations about life in college with

university professors, students and various professionals.

Focal topics include getting involved in

college, financial aid vocabulary, calling and living on campus.

Some information is specific to UM, but the episodes

are designed to help the broader college audience. (Carrie B. McWhorter)



UM photo

**More information on the Knowledge**

**for College podcast is at [umobile.edu/podcast](http://umobile.edu/podcast).**

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# Nontraditional

BY TRACY RIGGS | TAB MEDIA

## Students defy categories, balance many roles in pursuit of degrees

**T**raditional college students are generally defined as those entering college straight from high school, going to school full time and living on campus. But almost half of today’s students have at least one “nontraditional” characteristic. Nontraditional students include those older than 24 who are working, married, have children and/or hold a GED. First-generation

college students and veterans also have this distinction, which is important. “A traditional-age student and a nontraditional student are getting the same degree, but in my opinion the nontraditional student has to work exponentially harder because they’re getting pulled in so many different directions,” noted Lee Viar, president of the Maryland-based nonprofit Association for Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education.

Numbers vary between institutions, but now “nearly three-fourths of U.S. college students can be considered nontraditional,” according to a 2015 study by the National Center for Education Statistics. “The term ‘nontraditional’ has kind of lost its meaning over the last few years,” said Bryan Gill, director of professional studies at Samford University in Birmingham. “The number of students in this category has grown so much from a national level that we have decided to use the term ‘contemporary students’ because that covers a wide range.” “At Samford, we have contemporary students who range from 18-year-olds working full time to our most recent graduate who appeared on the ‘Today



GILL

Show with Hoda and Jenna,’ 78-year-old Vivian Cunningham. “Contemporary students have jobs, families, some are caring for small children, and some are caring for their elderly parents,” Gill added. “Some are working two jobs, are in the military or they are home-schooling their kids. When contemporary students come to you with a concern or a problem, I’ve learned that these problems are usually major life events.”



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Gill also recognizes how COVID-19 affected this population. “These students had to homeschool their kids, work from home and in some cases, they lost their jobs. The one thing that had to be paused was their education. We have seen this number begin to grow now that things are getting back to normal.”

These students often need flexibility, and though online learning is easily accessible, it is not necessarily the best avenue. Some do better in a classroom.

According to the nontraditional students association, these students also need to have reliable support systems, and one of the most important aspects of success is to ask for help.

“They have to realize that on campus, but especially online, they’re not on an island all by themselves,” Viar said.

The University of Mobile is another school that includes the nontraditional student in its regular support system.

“As we do for traditional students, faculty advisers and staff serve as mentors and as an ongoing support mechanism as they walk through that journey,” said Todd Greer, UM vice president for academic affairs. “They are likely to call and check in ... and are deeply attuned to the unique aspects of the adult career.”

## Multiple avenues

“The unique trend we are recognizing is nontraditional students are less desirous of nontraditional programs,” Greer noted. “They would rather participate in traditional program opportunities. To accommodate those needs, we are providing multiple avenues for students, regardless of their age, to be able to find the right degree opportunity at the University of Mobile.

“While we see some students desiring evening

and online classes, a heightened number of nontraditional students are choosing to come back for the daytime experience,” Greer continued. “We are seeing that adult students desire face-to-face opportunities that include people of multiple ages and experiences.”

Finances can be especially challenging for nontraditional students.

Gill said that at Samford, “professional studies tuition is significantly discounted from that of Samford day students.”

“We’ve reduced the tuition because

these students are fully online and are not seeking the on-campus college experience,” he said.

“We know these students are balancing life and jobs and families, and we try to offset that expense.”

## Rewarding work

Watching these students succeed has been rewarding for both Gill and Greer.

“Working with these students has helped me to understand why I’m in higher education,” Gill noted.

“These students are the most resilient and hardworking students I’ve ever been around. It challenges me to keep pressing on, to keep moving forward.”

Greer added, “It is so rewarding to see somebody who is able not only to make their dreams come true, but also to significantly impact their family and community with an increased understanding of their discipline, an increased opportunity for their earning potential, and increased pride in their accomplishments. You can’t put a price tag on how good someone feels from being able to see what they can accomplish. You’re never too late. It’s never too late to pursue the growth and service that you’ve been thinking about.”

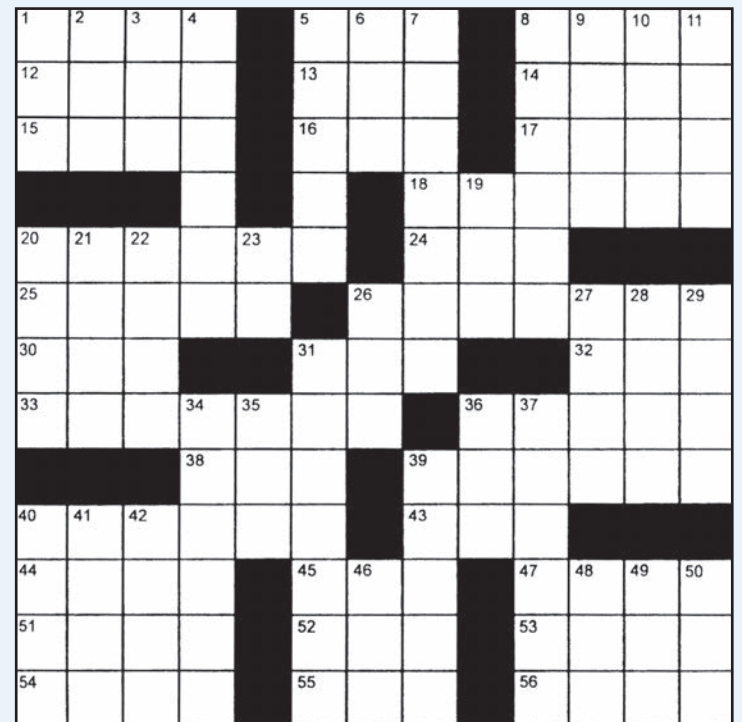


GREER

# CHRISTIAN crossword

## ACROSS

1. In \_\_\_\_ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
5. And so forth.
8. Cut them with \_\_\_\_, and with harrows. (1 Chron. 20:3)
12. They called his name \_\_\_\_: he is the father of Jesse. (Ruth 4:17)
13. Standing Room Only. (abbr.)
14. Equal.
15. Freezing point centigrade.
16. Greek “T.”
17. House. (Spanish)
18. Value of 15 cross.
20. To break camp.
24. To be. (Spanish)
25. Then I will be an \_\_\_\_ unto thine enemies. (Ex. 23:22)
26. Matthew, sitting at the \_\_\_\_ of custom. (Matt. 9:9)
30. One. (Scottish)
31. My \_\_\_\_ Sal.
32. Chinese Communist Party Chairman.
33. Found in \_\_\_\_ as a man, he humbled himself. (Phil. 2:8)
36. Summer TV fare.
38. By faith \_\_\_\_ch was translated. (Heb. 11:5)
39. Then I will set my face against that man and his \_\_\_\_\_. (Lev. 20:5)
40. I will \_\_\_\_ of thee. (Job 38:3)
43. Grain.
44. Tel \_\_\_\_.
45. Miss Farrow.
47. We stumble at \_\_\_\_ day. (Isa. 59:10)
51. Anger.
52. Put on strength, O \_\_\_\_ of the Lord. (Isa. 51:9)
53. \_\_\_\_ Timnah. (Gen. 36:40)
54. Ardor.
55. No. (Scottish)



By Janet Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

56. I am the bright and morning \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 22:16)

## DOWN

1. Woman's nickname.
2. Lincoln's nickname.
3. Mal de \_\_\_\_.
4. And \_\_\_\_ was over the tribute. (2 Sam. 20:24)
5. To bar legally.
6. \_\_\_\_ la la.
7. Pharisees and lawyers rejected the \_\_\_\_ of God. (Luke 7:30)
8. And thou shalt be \_\_\_\_, because there is hope. (Job 11:18)
9. His king shall be higher than \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 24:7)
10. \_\_\_\_ me thoroughly from mine iniquity. (Ps. 51:2)
11. Thin strip of wood.
19. Atomic Energy Commission.
20. And the \_\_\_\_ hear. (Matt. 11:5)
21. Sicilian resort.
22. After “bees” and before “dees.”
23. Belonging to me.
26. His father saw him, ... and \_\_\_\_ and fell on his neck. (Luke 15:20)
27. The son of Omri, the son of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Chron. 9:4)
28. \_\_\_\_, a servant of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 1:1)
29. Short for Anthony.
31. For a \_\_\_\_ some would die. (Rom. 5:7)
34. Joy shall be in \_\_\_\_ over one sinner that repenteth. (Luke 15:7)
35. There was no room for them in the \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 2:7)
36. Sunbeam.
37. Improves.
39. Picture holder.
40. For a good man some would even \_\_\_\_ to die. (Rom. 5:7)
41. Not rendering \_\_\_\_ for evil. (1 Pet. 3:9)
42. Polish distance measure.
46. \_\_\_\_ and Ithrite. (2 Sam. 23:38)
48. Though our \_\_\_\_ ward man perish. (2 Cor. 4:16)
49. Central European river.
50. Abner, the son of \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 14:50)



ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries



# YOUR CAMPUS CONNECTION


[bcmlink.org](http://bcmlink.org)

**B**aptist Campus Ministries is a student organization on college and university campuses, a ministry of local Baptist churches, and a great way to make sure your students **CONNECT**.

These state missionaries serve on college and university campuses around our state through Baptist Campus Ministries. Please visit [bcmlink.org/connect](http://bcmlink.org/connect) to learn how we can help make sure your students get connected to a campus minister and BCM on their campus.



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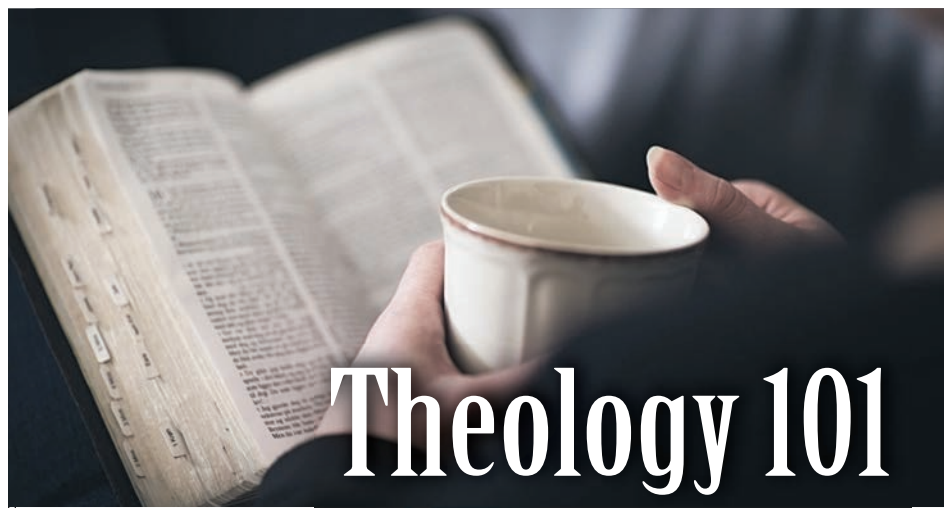
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# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Christ's Power

### Forgiving Power

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
TAB Media

**T**he Gospel of Matthew records a time when a paralytic was brought to Jesus. Rather than speaking to the man about physical healing Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you" (9:2).

When onlookers assailed Jesus for daring to pronounce spiritual forgiveness rather than physical healing, He responded with a question: "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" (9:5). In answer to His own question, Jesus added, "'That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins' — He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house'" (9:6–7).

#### Heart of the gospel

At the heart of the good news of the gospel is the power or authority of Christ to forgive sins. A notable example of His exercising this power occurred in the house of a Pharisee, when Jesus encountered a sinful woman who began to wash His feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. When religious leaders took exception to His allowing this to happen, Jesus rebuked them before announcing to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). Jesus demonstrated not only His healing power but also His forgiving authority.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to Colossian believers, reminded them, "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircum-

cision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:13–14).

#### Wonderful promise

In 1 John 1, the Apostle John gave sinful humanity that wonderful promise about God:

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Christ His Son cleanses us from all unrighteousness" (v. 7), to which he added, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9).

The basis for Christ's authority to forgive sins is His own atoning death, by which He took upon Himself the sins of all humanity in order to pay the divinely appointed penalty for human sinfulness. Even the worst of sinners cannot out-sin Christ's power and authority to forgive them if they repent and call upon Him in faith.

*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.*



# College advisers offer more than help with class schedules

By Grace Thornton  
TAB Media

**A** gateway. A mentor. A resource. These are some of the different roles a college adviser can serve.

Dana Basinger, assistant dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences at Samford University, says it's vital that incoming freshmen know what an adviser is — and how important it is to build a good relationship with theirs.

"They may think an adviser is the same as their high school guidance counselor, and it's not the same," she said.



BASINGER

"In college, academic advisers have a much smaller number of students to serve, and depending on the college, they might look more like a mentor than just a class scheduler."

An academic adviser "ushers students through the years of their academic program," Basinger said.

Matthew Downs, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Mobile, said college "can be confusing, especially for incoming freshmen or for students switching to a new area or major."

An adviser can be a gateway into a new area of study and a translator to help understand different majors and course requirements, he said.

"The college adviser is a great resource for students, from first-time freshmen to the senior preparing for graduation," Downs said.

"Students who develop a constructive relationship with their adviser will truly get the most out of their college career."

He and Basinger offered some thoughts on how college students can make the most of their relationship with their adviser.

## 1. Take the initiative.

Students need someone in their corner to help them navigate college,

and their parents aren't there to do that. They need an on-campus go-to who can be their problem solver, Basinger said. Their adviser can be that person.

How do students build that relationship?

"Show up at their office a couple of times a semester even if you don't have to. Email them questions.

"Get on their list as someone who has some energy and really cares about what's happening," Basinger said.

"You'll learn really quickly that person can be a valuable resource."

Downs agreed.

"Students should reach out to their adviser early and often during their time on campus, not just when it's time to choose courses," he said.

"Advisers can provide help about career paths, about resources on and off campus and can help connect students with opportunities unique to their major.

"It's easier for me to connect my students with internships, with conferences and with events in the area when I've talked with them about their specific interests and career goals."

## 2. Be prepared.

Downs said students should keep in mind that an adviser is just that — an adviser.

They're there to "provide clear, informed advice" students can use to set their own path.

"Students should be prepared when meeting with an adviser, aware of the courses being

offered, degree requirements and prerequisites and semester workloads," he said.

"I always tell my advisees that the more they have prepared for our meetings, the better and more specific my advice to them can be, and the more they can get out of our time together."



DOWNES

**Students need someone in their corner to help them navigate college, and their parents aren't there to do that.**



# 3 stories you should know



AP Photo/Nic Coury

Firefighters take a break as dozens of large wildfires burn across the western U.S. The biggest, the Bootleg Fire in the Fremont-Winema National Forest northeast of Klamath Falls, Oregon, along the Oregon and California border, had burned nearly 400,000 acres as of July 22. Southern Baptists are responding. Baptist Church on Homedale in Klamath Falls is reaching out to those in need by providing two meals daily to those displaced by the fire. (TAB Media)

## ***Courts affirm Christian groups' campus rights***

A federal appeals court ruled July 16 that the University of Iowa violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in exercising "viewpoint discrimination" against the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship chapter on campus for requiring campus leaders to be Christians.

The university action in deregistering InterVarsity was "clearly unconstitutional," a three-judge panel of the St. Louis-based appeals court said in a unanimous decision.

The opinion marked the third time in recent months a court has ruled in favor of a student ministry that had been kicked off campus because of its beliefs. Rulings in March and April involved campus organizations at the University of Iowa and Wayne State University in Detroit. Read the full article at [tabonline.org/first-amendment-on-campus](http://tabonline.org/first-amendment-on-campus). (BP)

## ***West Africa church leaders train, grow***

Church planters in West Africa are working to organize disciples into healthy churches through training provided by the IMB.

IMB missionary Trevor Yoakum, a full-time professor of practical theology at the West African Baptist Theological Seminary, helps teach leaders in local churches.

Yoakum recently has been focusing on biblical characteristics of a healthy church. He also teaches hermeneutics (biblical interpretation) and homiletics (sermon preparation and delivery).

After just a few months, Hallo Pascal, a church leader in Lomé, the capital of the West African nation of Togo, said he has new understanding of Scripture.

"We see that we must preach the word of God; it is not our own word. That's what changes lives." (IMB)

## Headline news from around the Southeast

### **Arkansas**

Crossroads New Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, celebrates watching a man from their community defeat addiction and give his life to Christ, reports Arkansas Baptist News. Jesse battled addiction all his life. Several church members began praying for him every Wednesday. His life began to change after he was released from a rehabilitation facility, giving his life to Christ and getting baptized. Now Jesse serves on the worship team.

### **Florida**

Believers all over have been covering the weary first responders in South Florida in prayer, but Florida Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers found a way to minister to the rescue workers, reported the Florida Baptist Witness. The Salvation Army and disaster relief volunteers worked together to provide laundry service for those working 12–18

hour shifts, spending days in the same clothes. Even though laundry seems like such a small task, the first responders welcomed the comfort provided by the disaster relief effort.

### **Kentucky**

At 168 years old, New Friendship Baptist Church in Sadieville, Kentucky, had its first on-location baptism recently. Pastor Greg Mullins baptized a woman in a tub on the church's rock wall, reported Kentucky Today. In the past, the church would use another church's baptismal, but after merging post-pandemic with nearby Eagle Creek Baptist Church, Mullins decided it was time to have baptisms at their own church.

### **Louisiana**

Kevin Goodman, once an airline pilot, never saw himself becoming a pastor, much less going to seminary, but after a series of seizures,

Goodman was diagnosed with epilepsy, taking his ability to fly. Through God's provision, Goodman found himself the pastor of Boeuf River Baptist Church in Winnsboro, Louisiana. Wanting to be the best for his church, Goodman decided to pursue a seminary education at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary through a scholarship that helps small-church pastors.

### **Mississippi**

Super Summer wrapped up recently for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The five-day event is a leadership, evangelism, apologetics and discipleship training conference "designed to provide spiritual growth and help develop student leadership in Mississippi churches," according to the convention's Facebook page. The training is designed for eighth graders through seniors and covers a different area each year the student attends and builds on the previous year's study.



# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

► **Jerome Sherrill**, a retired bivocational pastor in **Franklin Baptist Association**, died July 15. He was 86.

Sherrill served as pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, Russellville; Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Spruce Pine; Crooked Oak Baptist Church, Tuscumbia; Vina First Baptist Church; and back to Mount Hebron Baptist before retiring. In total, he served as a pastor for 46 years. He also retired from Reynolds Aluminum after 36 years as a crane operator.



SHERRILL

Sherrill is survived by his wife of 67 years, Yvonne; sons, Mike and Alan; five grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

## CHEROKEE ASSOCIATION

► “The Lord was all in the service” when **Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Centre**, celebrated its 125th anniversary June 13. “We could feel His sweet spirit,” church member Julie Bobbitt said.

The guest speaker for the service was Thomas Cole from Georgia, who helped rebuild the church after it was destroyed by a tornado in April 2011 (pictured). The church’s rebuilding process was a focus of the morning, as the church looked at photos of where they’ve been and talked about how they want to keep “growing for God” as they build new Sunday School rooms soon on land donated to the church.

Wendell Dutton, director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association and a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical



Photo courtesy of Pilgrim Rest Baptist

Commission, presented the church with a plaque in a later service. Michael Roach is pastor.

## CLARKE ASSOCIATION

► **Ulcanush Baptist Church, Coffeetown**, will have homecoming Aug. 1 at 11 a.m. with lunch following and revival Aug. 2–4 at 7 p.m. with David Roberson as the guest speaker. Jessie Griffith is pastor.

## COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Mountain View Baptist Church, Childersburg**, will celebrate its 75th anniversary Aug. 1. Jimmy Wilson, a former pastor of the church, will be the guest speaker. A covered dish meal will follow the morning service. The church will also hold revival Aug. 1–6 at 6:30 nightly. Guest speaker will be Scott Jordan, pastor of County Line Baptist Church, Ashland. Roger Singleton is pastor of Mountain View Baptist.

## COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Tommy Weems** is the new pastor of **Enon Baptist Church, Andalusia**. He previously served in a variety of ministry roles and interim pastorates in Missouri, Arkansas, Texas and Alabama. He earned his master’s degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and did doctoral study at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Judy — who has played the piano and led children’s ministry when needed — have two daughters and four granddaughters.



WEEMS

## ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

► **New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Brewton**, will hold a 100th anniversary celebration Sept. 26 at 11 a.m. with Rick Lance preaching. Lunch will follow. Casey Jones is pastor.

## MADISON ASSOCIATION

► **Tim Milner**, pastor of **Essential Church, Huntsville**, raised \$1,000 in a dunking booth June 13 for Charis Project to help end human trafficking.



Photo courtesy of Tim Milner

## MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Walnut Grove Baptist Church, Decatur**, will host Jason and Braden Runnels in concert on Aug. 1 at 11 a.m. Admission is free. John Bain is pastor.

► **Jerome Ward** is the new pastor of **Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hartselle**. He previously served as the church’s minister of music. He also has 23 years of experience as an educator. Ward has a bachelor’s degree from Athens State University, a master’s degree from the University of North Alabama in Florence and a doctoral degree in educational administration from the University of Alabama. He and his wife, Tracy, have four children.



WARD

## WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Blake Prater** is the new pastor of **New Prospect Baptist Church, Jasper**. He previously served as associate pastor of Farmstead Baptist Church, Jasper, for more than 11 years. Before that, he served as music/youth pastor at Fairview Heights Northside Baptist Church, Anniston. He is married to Juliana.



PRATER

## WEST CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► **Travis Coleman** is interim pastor of **Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma**. He has been serving in interim roles since he retired as pastor of First, Prattville, in 2019 after 45 years of full-time Christian work.



COLEMAN

## Persecuted church

### *Pastor in India beaten, dragged from home by Hindu mob*

BELGAUM, India — Hindu extremists dragged a Christian pastor from a home April 5, beat and kicked him as he was marched a mile to his church’s meeting place, and forced to perform Hindu rituals.

The mob accused Pastor Sanjay Bhandari of converting the community to Christianity.

Two in the mob of 50–60 extremists in Halaga village near Belgaum city were people with whom Bhandari had had a good relationship.

Bhandari was hospitalized for his injuries.

His wife, Bhimshen Bhandari, also was injured.

Santosh Satpute, formerly a Hindu but now a Christian, stood up to the mob and spoke in support of Pastor Bhandari. Satpute was attacked as well.


The mob told Bhandari not to be seen in the area again, further warning that he would be cut into pieces if he conducted church services.

India is No. 10 on Open Doors’ 2021 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. In 2013, the year before current Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office, India ranked No. 31. (MS)



Morningstar News photo





# PINNACLE

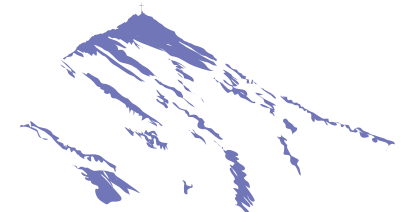
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*For more information, a complete schedule and to register, visit [alsbom.org/pinnacle](http://alsbom.org/pinnacle).*

*This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.*



**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](http://alsbom.org/events). To register for virtual events, visit [PinnacleAlabama.org](http://PinnacleAlabama.org).

**AUGUST**

- 1 Social Issues Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 2 Financial Issues Conference**, Calhoun Association Office, Anniston, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 3 Financial Issues Conference**, Huffman, Birmingham, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 6-7 Pinnacle Alabama@Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 10 Financial Issues Conference**, Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals, Linda Hicks, ext. 2263
- 12 UpLink on the Road**, Andalusia First, Jessica Palmer, ext. 2262
- 12 discipleFIRST Forum**, CrossPoint, Trussville, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 26 UpLink on the Road**, Trussville First, Jessica Palmer, ext. 2262
- 29 A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Southside Baptist Church, Southside, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
- 30 A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Carrollton Baptist Church, Carrollton, Lori McGough, ext. 2245

**SEPTEMBER**

- 2 Get Acquainted Day**, SBOM, Prattville, Amy Nelson, ext. 2231
- 9-10 Alabama Singing Men Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 9-10 Alabama Singing Women Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, April Brewer, ext. 2279
- 12 A Night of Encouragement and Evangelism**, Lusk, Gilbertown, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
- 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, Greenville, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 17-18 Pursue**, Opelika First, Mike Nuss, ext. 2276
- 19 Anti-Gambling Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 2289
- 21 Senior Adult Singin'**, Northside, Jasper, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 21 Preparing for Retirement**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241
- 30 Personnel Management**, SBOM, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 2241

**OCTOBER**

- 1-31 Cooperative Program Month**, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 2283
- 7-9 Interlink Marriage Retreat**, Camp Baldwin, Elberta, Jessica Palmer, ext. 2283
- 8-9 Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 2223
- 10-11 Who's Your One? Tour**, Shades Mountain, Birmingham, Lori McGough, ext. 2245
- 12 Abundant Living**, Westmeade, Decatur, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 2285
- 14 Sharing the Fire: A Conference on Revival and Spiritual Awakening**, Redemption, Saraland, Terry Long, ext. 2260
- 15-16 Fall Missions Festival for Children**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 2223
- 19 Fall Missions Festival for Adults**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Kathryn Helms, ext. 2325
- 21-23 Faith Focused Security Training B+Level**, SBOM, Prattville, Angie Williams, ext. 2373



**ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION,**  
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[alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention)



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## CHURCH POSITIONS

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FBC Loxley, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor to lead and shepherd our congregation. Under the Lord's leading, please send resumé to: [fbcloxleypastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:fbcloxleypastorsearch@gmail.com).

### BIVOCATIONAL SENIOR PASTOR

Lakeview Baptist Church of Oxford, Ala., is seeking a bivocational senior pastor. Send resumé with a link to sermons to: [ChurchOffice@LBCOxford.com](mailto:ChurchOffice@LBCOxford.com). Address: Lakeview Baptist Church Search Committee, 132 Central Ave, Oxford, AL 36203.

### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, Ala., has position available for bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: [jbshaw@mound.net](mailto:jbshaw@mound.net) or mail to: PHBC, P.O. Box 339, Moundville, AL 35474-0339.

### FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC & MEDIA

York Bluff Baptist Church in Sheffield, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music and media interested in growing a multigenerational, blended music ministry and overseeing a plan to maximize the church's web presence. Resumés may be mailed to: Search Committee, York Bluff Baptist Church, 301 N. Atlanta Ave., Sheffield, AL 35660 or emailed to: [kim@yorkbluffbaptist.com](mailto:kim@yorkbluffbaptist.com).

### CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

First Baptist Madison, Ala., is seeking a part-time contemporary worship leader. For more information please go to: <https://bit.ly/3eQpu0p>.

### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP OR YOUTH PASTOR:

Seeking a bivocational worship and/or youth pastor to lead a blended worship service as well as serve in our youth ministry. Position could be divided into two positions or one depending on qualifications. Please email resumé to: [Ladonia Baptist, Phenix City, by Sept. 1 to: PastorGreg@ladoniabaptist.org](mailto:Ladonia Baptist, Phenix City, by Sept. 1 to: PastorGreg@ladoniabaptist.org).

## OTHER POSITIONS

### DAYCARE DIRECTOR

Eastside Baptist Church. Responsibilities include planning, organizing and execution of all programs and care. Send resumé to the Personnel Committee at [churchoffice@ebcbirmingham.org](mailto:churchoffice@ebcbirmingham.org).

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER DIRECTOR

A thriving child development center in metro Birmingham is looking for a qualified director. Over 100 children enrolled! This is a 40-hour/week job (Monday-Friday.) Job description includes administrative tasks as well as being a personable leader with the parents and for the staff. Hope Community Church, 4445 Montevallo Road, Birmingham. Please send your resumé to: [jbaker@hopebhm.org](mailto:jbaker@hopebhm.org).

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## DISCIPLE MAKING

### BOOT CAMP TO FOCUS ON STUDENTS

The first D-Life boot camp for students will be Aug. 1 at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville, Alabama, from 5 to 11 p.m. Along with the training and onsite practice led by Bill Wilks, senior pastor of NorthPark, and a team of skilled student pastors, the students will enjoy a pizza dinner and ice cream social. The six-hour event will equip students with a simple, disciple-making process modeled after Jesus. The event is \$10 per person and is for student

leaders who are upcoming juniors or seniors in high school, recent graduates and college students. To register, visit [livedthelife.com/students](http://livedthelife.com/students).

### STORIES PODCAST

Have you checked out TAB Media's new Stories serial podcast yet? If not, then you'll want to catch Season 2, the Flatline story. The full first season is also available featuring Sammy Gilbreath, state missionary in evangelism with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. TAB Media's Grace Thornton writes and produces the shows. Listen to the Stories podcast at [tabonline.org/stories](http://tabonline.org/stories) or anywhere you get your podcasts.

### TAB DIGITAL

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### TAB HIGHLIGHTS

TAB Highlights is an email newsletter delivered to your inbox every Monday-Wednesday-Friday with the day's top stories from the world of faith-based news. The complimentary service is managed by the TAB Media team. Headlines come from international, national and Southern Baptist coverage, as well as one story that has been trending during the week. TAB Highlights also provides a link to the latest podcast released from the TAB Media team. To sign up, email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org).

### VISUALLY IMPAIRED READERS

Know someone who's visually impaired and finds it difficult to read? The Alabama Baptist is now offering a free way to listen to stories and news in a format that comes in the mail. For more information contact 205-870-4720, ext. 108, or email [tabnews@tabmedia.group](mailto:tabnews@tabmedia.group).

### YOUTUBE VIDEO CONTENT

TAB Media Group's YouTube channel is the place to find special reports on breaking headline news, missions updates from WMU, IMB, NAMB and other entities and video content on a variety of helpful topics. Find our customized channel at [youtube.com/tabmediagroup](http://youtube.com/tabmediagroup).



Facebook photo

Daniel Gilliland says holding a variety of positions since completing his master's degree at Beeson Divinity School has given him a greater appreciation of the value of work.

## 'Season of waiting' nurtures appreciation

Daniel Gilliland's career path hasn't gone as he initially planned, but he continues to rest in the hope he has through Christ.

Gilliland shared his story in a recent episode of the TAB Media podcast, Amplify: Conversations About Life and Faith with Maggie Evans.

Since graduating with a master of divinity degree from Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in 2019, Gilliland has worked in a coffee shop, part-time positions at his church and currently at a drugstore to help pay the bills.

Meanwhile, he continues to pursue his desire to find a position with a church as teaching pastor.

His calling to ministry was sparked as a student at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, where he became heavily involved in campus ministry.

### Expectations

Gilliland said when he graduated from seminary, he expected to immediately transition into a successful ministry position at a church — but that didn't happen.

Today, he admits he has struggled with doubts.

"I definitely thought, 'OK, surely I'll figure everything out by the time three years

comes up, and I'll have a sweet [ministry position], but that was not the case," Gilliland said.

For now, he describes being in a "season of waiting," which hasn't been easy.

"[It] kind of feels like you're waiting in a holding pattern [like] an airplane," said Gilliland, who described feeling drained by the "what's next?"

### Appreciation

Through this journey, he has developed an appreciation for work even if it's not the work he originally thought he'd be doing.

"Work is good, ... and it's good for the kingdom of God and what that means on this earth," Gilliland said. "There certainly are days when meaning is hard to come by and that's not because the work is undignified; it's not because the work is too low for someone who got a degree. It's just this strange sensation when you feel like you're waiting on something else."

For now, Gilliland enjoys the days when "you leave work and feel like we did some good today," and he rests in knowing that God is there regardless of the highs and lows.

Hear Gilliland's story at [tabonline.org/amplify-waiting](http://tabonline.org/amplify-waiting). (Shawn Hendricks)



# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 1

## Explore the Bible

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



### WHAT TIME IS IT? Ecclesiastes 3:1–15

Regardless of our birthplace, age, occupation or religious persuasion, we all have at least one thing in common — time. We all have 24 hours each day, but we cannot credit any of today's hours to tomorrow's account. Furthermore, we get only one opportunity to use each minute we have. The teacher realized the importance of time and the central role it plays in human life.

#### Time and Place (1–8)

Verses 1–8 have an important connection with the theme of the book and relate closely to what precedes and follows. Man is to take his life day by day from the hand of God, recognizing that God has a fitting time for each thing.

These verses are important because they teach us that man is responsible to discern the right times for the right actions. And when he does the right action according to God's time, the result is beautiful.

In these verses, Solomon set forth 14 pairs of opposite events, each of which are to occur at appointed times. The fact that he mentioned them in a multiple of seven and began his list with birth and death is highly significant. The number seven suggests completeness, and the use of opposites indicates totality. Although not every conceivable event of life was listed by Solomon, the whole of life was in view.

#### Enjoy Life (9–13)

Two questions arise out of this text. First, what is the profit? When life is examined and reduced to its essentials, what gain or value is there in a person's endeavors? The answer is none.

Solomon indicated this in his list of opposites with each pair containing a positive and a negative that seem to cancel out each other. The net result, therefore, is zero. Human life has its endless cycles just as nature does (1:3–11). Man's existence is empty and profitless.

Second, what is the purpose? Where is life going? As the pairs of opposites suggest, human life is

going nowhere. We experience birth and death and have no control over either. Why should we think there is any value to be found in between these events?

All we discover are ceaseless cycles of love and hate, planting and reaping, building and destroying, laughing and weeping.

How can we find profit and purpose "under the sun"? We must transcend our human perspective by developing a Christian worldview.

God has placed eternity in our hearts. We have an innate sense that life continues beyond this present existence, but we are unable to discover the work God has done from beginning to end. The word "discover" has the sense of figuring out or comprehending by study. The teacher realized that both his desire to understand all of life, as well as the limitations on his ability to do so, have been ordained by God.

When we lift our eyes from earth and begin to see life with a heavenly perspective, we are enabled to acknowledge that God has made everything appropriate or beautiful in its time. As we mature in Christ, we come to understand that God gives believers the ability to rejoice and enjoy life. The "good life" is to treat others with the dignity and respect they deserve as human beings created in the image of God.

Rather than becoming embittered by what God has not granted human beings, we should enjoy the gifts God has given us.

This radical change in focus points the way toward meaning and deliverance from despair.

#### God Works (14–15)

God's works are permanent and His deeds are thorough and complete. His works endure and never lack anything. The short-lived vanities of this world reveal all the more clearly the enduring work of God.

The sovereignty of God and His purposes are meant to bring us to a sense of humble reverence and awe before Him.

## Bible Studies for Life

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



### SERVE WITH TRUST 1 Kings 17:7–16

Trust is most clearly revealed when it is most costly to demonstrate.

#### Follow God's direction, even when it doesn't make sense. (7–12)

Elijah had been staying beside a wadi that only had water during the rainy season. When it dried up, God sent Elijah to an unlikely place to find refuge.

The author points out that Zarephath was in the region of Sidon so that we won't miss the fact that this is Phoenician territory, the heart of Baal worship. And in the middle of a drought, a widow would be an unlikely source of food since widows were particularly vulnerable during such times.

Indeed, this widow, a believer in the Lord, is preparing to die of starvation with her son.

It might seem audacious for a prophet to ask a widow for help who is suffering from the drought he has brought about.

However, in commanding the woman to provide for Elijah, God telegraphs that He will also provide her with sufficient resources to meet Elijah's as well as her own.

The fact that that widow "happened" to be gathering wood at the city gate when Elijah arrived there reflects God's providential arrangement of a "divine appointment" so Elijah did not have to search and find her.

Elijah's requests the widow give him a cup of water and a piece of bread may seem self-serving on the surface, but they opened the door for her to receive what Jesus would later refer to as "a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41–42).

She would be a beneficiary of what God was about to do. Her attitude is remarkable.

She doesn't suggest this stranger is out of line asking for food rather than offering food to a poor widow. She seems to suggest she would get him some bread if only she had any to offer.

She isn't cursing God for her

situation. She simply doesn't have any bread to offer this stranger in need.

#### Encourage others to join you in trusting God. (13–14)

Elijah knows God's intention is not for the widow and son to die in the act of providing for his needs. Rather, her positive response will be the key to her own survival and that of her son.

He promises the widow and her son will be saved from starvation by stepping out in faith and giving him some of the little food they have left rather than keeping it all for themselves. That act of faith is the key to their own salvation.

And the promise is not one that Elijah makes in his own name, but rather, "this is what the Lord God of Israel says."

Elijah trusted the Lord and encouraged the widow to trust Him as well, knowing that she could do no better than to stake her life (and that of her son) on God's promises.

We also can do no better than to stake our lives on His promises and to encourage those around us to do the same.

#### We see God work when we trust His guidance. (15–16)

God provided miraculously in response to the widow's obedience. What would have been one or two portions of bread turned into a supply that met the needs of the three of them "for many days." God kept His promise, as He always does!

We never go wrong when we take God at His word, follow His guidance and encourage and help others to do the same. God won't always save us from our challenges (miraculously or otherwise). Often, He will show His strength through our weakness.

Sometimes He intervenes miraculously or providentially. Either way, His work and glory are revealed when we trust and obey Him in even the most difficult circumstances of life, as the widow and Elijah did.



# MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs  
TAB Media

## Humorist, author advises audiences to find reasons to laugh

**J**eanne Robertson insists she's not a comedian or a motivational speaker, and though she's "definitely a Christian," she doesn't call herself a Christian speaker either.

"It really affects your crowd — who is coming. It implies your speech will be religious, in my opinion, [with] maybe an offering plate," she laughed.

Robertson prefers to think of herself as a humorist. She doesn't tell jokes — she just talks about the humor in everyday life.

Her routines have a message that carries through what she says: One can find humor in anything. "If we don't find it, it's not because it's not happening. We've just chosen not to look for it," Robertson said.

Robertson's career started when she was selected Miss North Carolina in 1963, even though she was a 6-foot-2-inch basketball player who wanted to shoot hoops for her talent.

She got a great deal of practice speaking while on tour as Miss North Carolina before her first big break: being asked to be the "filler" act for the following year's televised Miss North Carolina pageant.

"They'll just call you out on stage ... and you just come out and be funny," she recalled producers tell-



JEANNE ROBERTSON

Photo courtesy of Jeanne Robertson

ing her. "I had just turned 20, and I said, 'Absolutely!' When that was over, the phone was ringing and ringing. I became a hot commodity."

### Education

Robertson didn't imagine a full-time professional speaking career at that point. She graduated with a health, physical education and recreation degree from Auburn University, got a job as a PE teacher and basketball coach and even taught a few years at "Thuh Judson," Judson College in Marion.

Her speaking engagements were just a side job. But Robertson became more popular, and she adapted through the years, changing her material to reflect her current life stages, finally becoming a full-time speaker.

She's also had to adapt physically on occasion. When she broke her leg a few years ago, she started a "Rocking Chair Tour," sitting in a rocking chair while on stage.

During the pandemic Robertson couldn't do speeches live, so she

expanded her social media presence.

She started streaming a one-hour improvisation show, "Live from the Back Porch."

Robertson shoots the video literally on her back porch telling stories, interviewing friends and answering fan questions. Some shows have garnered more than 100,000 views.

Though a lot of her material is about life in the South, one person stands out: "Left Brain or LB," Jeanne's very logical, precise and frugal late husband. Calling him Left Brain started live on stage in the 1990s.

"I jokingly said, 'My husband, Jerry,' and then I stopped myself. 'Well, really a lot of people call him Jerry, but I call him LB for Left Brain.'"

She goes on to share about being left brained, "If you have no idea what I'm talking about, then you are probably one too."

Audience reaction was incredible. Eventually a YouTube video about Left Brain, "Don't Send a Man to the Grocery Store," went viral and

currently has more than 15 million views.

In addition to DVDs and CDs, in 2020 Robertson released her first book, "Don't Bungee Jump Naked and Other Important Stuff," which includes both older, popular stories and new ones.

It also has a unique component, "Extra Excitement for Left-Brained People!" where Robertson deliberately left a few errors for "left-brains" to find.

Another source of Robertson's material comes from strangers. She said she has been guilty of reclining her airline seat to hear better if the passengers were laughing.

One time she met a woman whose grandparents in Luverne had an interesting relationship concerning church — during their entire 65 years of marriage, one went to a Methodist church and the other to a Baptist one across the street.

Robertson related what the grandmother said: "We ride and park together. But then I go to my church, and he goes to his church.' Then she did add, 'They got out later. We knew if the Baptists were already out, we've done something wrong.'"

### Finding humor

Robertson always comes back to the importance of finding humor in anything. "Even during COVID, if you have some friends who look at the world through humorous eyes, get on the phone with them. Perk each other up," she said.

But keep in mind that if Robertson overhears, your stories could end up in one of her shows.

Robertson is scheduled to be at the Alabama Theater in Birmingham Oct. 15. Her book, DVDs and CDs can be purchased through her website, JeanneRobertson.com.

### 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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