

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

Beloved evangelist Hill honored with legacy award

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

As voices singing “It Is Well With My Soul” filled the sanctuary of First Baptist Church Decatur and the song ended with applause, beloved Alabama Baptist evangelist Junior Hill sat on stage in a wingback chair, eyes closed, pointing upward.

Before preaching at the evening session of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on Nov. 15, the 85-year-old Hill was honored with the inaugural Fred Wolfe Lifetime Pastoral Ministry Award.

“I feel very inadequate for any kind of recognition like that,” said Hill, who is approaching his 70th year in ministry. “I’m just a backwoods preacher; I don’t know much, but I love Jesus.”

‘Rare breed’

Robert Mullins, pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Elmore and Pastors Conference president-elect, said God prompted conference leaders to honor “a rare breed — the pastor to pastors.”

They named the award in honor of Fred Wolfe, a longtime Alabama Baptist pastor who died in January.

“Brother Fred, as he was affectionately called, was an incredible



Evangelist Junior Hill takes in a worshipful moment of congregational singing as Matt Rouse, minister of music at FBC Decatur, leads the crowd in “It Is Well With My Soul.”

Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

man of God,” Mullins said. “He was a leader, visionary, evangelist, equipper and certainly a pastor to pastors.”

The award will be given annually to a pastor who has invested through mentoring, discipling and

encouraging other men of God.

“This is a legacy award of faithfulness to the Lord, to the ministry and to the work of the pastor,” Mullins said.

As Hill came to the stage to accept the award, video testimonies

about him from Baptist leaders around the state played on the screen.

Though the award was a surprise, the sanctuary was packed with pastors and others who had come to (See ‘Hill,’ page 14)

Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is
good; His love endures forever.
1 CHRONICLES 16:34

Happy Thanksgiving from TAB Media

Expressing GRATITUDE

Inaugural Friends of TAB dinner honors board members

TAB Media held its inaugural Friends of The Alabama Baptist dinner at Southside Baptist Church in Decatur on Nov. 15.

During the meeting, Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Davis Rash expressed gratitude to the TAB board of directors, staff and ministry partners, thanking them for the way they care about each other, love Jesus and love Alabama Baptists.

She also announced a new partnership between The Baptist Paper — a TAB Media publication — and the Mississippi Baptist Record. The Mississippi paper went all online in April 2020 and now plans to point readers looking for a print subscription to The Baptist Paper.

“They’re a vital group of Baptists who want to stay connected, and we’re glad to partner with our ministry peers across the state to make that happen,” Rash said. “We are excited to help supplement the work taking place across the nation as well.”

The dinner also honored Rob Jackson, who is the outgoing chairman of the board of directors but will remain on the board. Gary



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Davis Rash shares her heart with the TAB board of directors, staff and ministry partners, thanking them for the way they care about each other, love Jesus and love Alabama Baptists.

Fenton was elected as the new chair. Scott Swedenburg will serve as vice chair and Chris Roberts will serve as secretary.

“The Alabama Baptist is the glue for our state because we’re family,” Fenton said. “TAB is what keeps us all connected because we’re able to

learn about each other.” And The Baptist Paper is on the road to becoming that for the Southern Baptist Convention, he said. “I’m excited to work with you to make sure the family stays connected.”

Jackson also honored outgoing board member Travis Coleman, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church Prattville, who has served on the board since 2012 and served as finance committee chair the past three years. (Grace Thornton)



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Travis Coleman shares about his affection for The Alabama Baptist as he’s honored during the inaugural Friends of The Alabama Baptist dinner. Coleman, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church Prattville, served on the board of directors from 2012 to 2021, most recently as chair of the finance committee.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 15.

OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



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@RashionalThts

New state convention officers continue tradition of faithful leadership

Three new state convention officers were elected to serve during the final session of the annual meeting last week (see page 6).

All three were touted as dedicated family men who have a fierce love for their congregations and the communities they serve.

They are proven leaders, each in different ways but proven nonetheless, and all are mentors and coaches of others coming behind them.

And I'm not sure if this is unusual or not, but each also has a personal story of enduring a season of suffering — the kind of pain that brings perspective to what's really important.

We'll help you get to know president Buddy Champion, first vice president Morgan Bailey and second vice president Jarman Leatherwood more in the coming days.

For now, know they all expressed sentiments similar to those outgoing president Tim Cox shared during his president's address the day before — a sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve in these roles and a deep love and appreciation for Alabama Baptists.

Champion, pastor of First Baptist Trussville, served as first

vice president for the past three years and served as second vice president for the two years prior.

He made me a little weepy as he teared up during the gavel hand off in the closing session.

“Thank you for your love, support and prayers,” he said. “As we go on this journey wherever God leads us, my wife Lynn (reminded me that) to whom much is given much is required. I pray I live up to what is required, to represent you well and represent our Lord.”

Leatherwood, founding pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, said he looks forward to seeing “how God uses us together.”

“I want you to know how much it means to be selected for this role,” Leatherwood said. “The support of all of you who have been so faithful and kind, to encourage us not only in the work that we are doing but also as a person.

“As one of seven young boys dreaming to be something more than what we had been ... coming from a small city like York, Alabama, we never thought a day like this would be possible.”

Bailey, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Ranburne, was not present due to the death of his father Nov. 15 but has consistently shared his great honor and joy to serve as an officer of the convention.

The day following the annual meeting found Bailey at the funeral of his father, Leatherwood leading his church to serve food boxes to around 200 families in the community and Champion praying over names to select for the new Sexual Abuse Task Force (see page 7).

Real people living real lives doing real work while loving Jesus, their families, their congregations and their communities — a precise model of who we are as Alabama Baptists.

The word on the street is that the 2021 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting was “one of the best ever” and we hope our coverage provides helpful highlights from the week.

It's a tremendous honor and blessing to serve our Lord and you through the ministry of The Alabama Baptist

Whether it be by providing coffee, hot tea and hot chocolate at the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference or helping you locate important resources, we are here to serve.

And it's our distinct honor to be a calm voice of truth, grace and love for you through our various platforms of communication at TAB Media.

Thank you for your kindness and continuing to believe in us.

—Jennifer Davis Rash



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist

Your Voice



Keep looking to Jesus, Cox encourages in final address as convention president

By Tim Cox

President, Alabama Baptist State Convention

I find it fitting the author of Hebrews chooses the metaphor of the marathon to illustrate the Christian life.

There is one main point the author is driving at in Hebrews 12, found at the end of verse 1: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

The Greek word translated race is the word from which we get our English word agony. Like a marathon, the Christian life is a matter of endurance through the struggles and through the difficulties.

We get tired. We are tempted to quit. We may even question if it is worth it. I confess I’ve been there through all those temptations.

I want to encourage you: Hang on! The journey can be long, but there is victory in Jesus.

Runners in a race run. They participate and make progress. The Christian life is that way. There is a starting line — salvation. There is a finish line — glorification. But in between there is a journey — sanctification.

On mission

Alabama Baptists, we have one mission — the Great Commission. As followers of Christ we are to invest our lives for His glory. We live on mission with Jesus, to be known as His followers and make Him known to others.

Part of my joy as your president these past three years has been to witness Alabama Baptists running together in the right direction with a gospel priority.

The writer of Hebrews indicates the race is marked out for us. Every believer’s duty is to run the race — not just ministers, but all of us



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Chelsea, served three years as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and was first vice president and second vice president for two years each prior to being elected president.

as children of God. That gave me encouragement during the past few months.

God started this. It’s His race. He allowed us to be part of it, and He’s going to finish it.

How can we run with endurance?

We can look to the great men and women of faith in the Old Testament. They were not perfect. They had failures and imperfections, yet they ran. They endured. They crossed the finish

line! Their endurance is an inspiration to those of us who come behind them.

But we cannot run when we

are carrying excess weight. What weighs us down today? Distractions? Division? Theological arguments? Social media? Sexual sin? World events? Bitterness? Unforgiveness? Envy?

We must lay aside anything that hinders us in running this race.

We must also lay aside the sin that so easily entangles us. The reference here is to the sin of unbelief, of doubting God.

Doubting and living in faith contradict each other. Unbelief entangles the Christian’s feet so he cannot run. There are times when the struggle is real.

**“God started this.
It’s His race. He
allowed us to be part
of it, and He’s going
to finish it.”**

**Tim Cox
president, Alabama Baptist
State Convention**

God’s promises get really murky.

Focus is critical when running in a race. Nothing will slow you down or throw you off your stride like looking at your feet or the runner coming up from behind or the crowds in the stands.

Focus on Christ

We cannot be preoccupied with self and run the race well.

We cannot be preoccupied with others, what they are doing or what they think, and run the race well.

Our gaze cannot even be on the great men and women of faith who came before us.

Our focus must be locked in on Jesus Christ.

He is the source of our faith — the One on whom our faith is founded. He alone is the capstone. King of kings and Lord of lords. He’s the finisher of our faith — the One who carries it through to completion.

He endured the cross. He despised the shame. He suffered. And then on the other side of His suffering, He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Work complete.

But it’s not over. The Bible says there is coming a day that the One who is at the right hand of the throne today will come again.

Jesus shows us how to be faithful to the end. Keep looking unto Jesus — not to leaders in the state convention, not to Southern Baptist Convention leaders, not even to leaders in our church.

Keep looking to Jesus because He’s not done yet. He’s not through with the mission He called us to be part of.

Alabama Baptists, with endurance, let us run the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus.

ChristCentered testimonies

With ChristCentered as the theme and Colossians 1:17–18 as the signature verse for this year’s Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, Joshua del Risco expounded on the joy and riches believers have.

“Paul wanted his readers to understand the wealth they had in Christ Jesus,” he said. “Paul reminds us as Christ-centered believers, we have it all.”

When thinking about the theme, the pastor of Iglesia Bautista Vida Nueva in Fulton-dale shared that it made him think of a reality TV show, “The Fabulous Life of,” which follows celebrities with a lavish lifestyle.



DEL RISCO

“Custom-made was a given and VIP treatment was nonstop,” del Risco said. “There are many believers who are always looking for something more, to be able to say ‘I have a fabulous life.’”

‘A time of change’

“We live in a time of change,” said del Risco, who has served with the North American Mission Board and Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Homewood, where he was hired as a church planter.

“Our culture is changing. We’re moving into an anti-biblical, anti-Christian culture.

“We as believers are bombarded constantly by the fiery darts of the devil,” he said. “Unfortunately there are many Christians who don’t realize what they have in Jesus Christ.”

For del Risco, a Christ-centered life involves living “a lifestyle where they see Christ in me. We should be filled with joy, my brothers and sisters.”

Because of that relationship with Christ, believers should be joyful, grateful people, del Risco said, mentioning the virus of ungratefulness in our culture.

“As believers, we have everything we need,” he said. “For me, the Christ-centered life is a fabulous life. It’s a life where the Lord is with us every moment.” (Dianna L. Cagle)

Dewayne Rembert, church planting strategist for Montgomery Baptist Association and lead pastor of Flatline Church at Chisholm, knows the exact moment he first heard the gospel — Feb. 3, 2002, 11:17 a.m. He’s never been the same since.

That moment, along with the rest of his testimony, was shared as part of the ChristCentered theme of the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 16.

Describing dramatic experiences from his life before he met Jesus nearly 20 years ago, Rembert shared how he remains committed to telling others about Christ and encouraging them to do the same.

Speak boldly

Rembert said he has taken Ephesians 6:19 to heart, to open his “mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.”

“We’ve got to witness and disciple in the same area we live,” he said, noting the temptation is to engage in ministry in other places so the responsibility of discipling new converts falls on someone else.

“If you understand what was done for you, we should be compelled to go and share the good news,” Rembert said. “If we are going to be Christ-centered, then we need to love God and love our neighbor and be intentional in carrying His good news into all the world.”

TAB Media covered Rembert’s story as part of its Stories podcast, which launched earlier this year. “Season Two: The Flatline Story,” along with seasons 1 and 3, is available at tabonline.org/stories.

(Dianna L. Cagle)



REMBERT

A ministry that began with one student on the campus of Alabama State University in September 2019 has grown into more than 50 students on two historically black university campuses, even amid pandemic lockdowns.

Bringing the final ChristCentered testimony during the 2021 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Zachary Beasley said the only explanation for the 50-fold campus ministry growth over



BEASLEY

two years is, “We teach Christ. We teach the supremacy of Christ, the nature of Christ and the love of Christ.”

Beasley, Baptist campus minister at ASU and Tuskegee University, described how the ASU campus ministry began with one student and quickly grew. But as COVID-19 forced shutdowns, attendance dropped to four students. “I remember thinking, ‘Lord, You are going to do something amazing because these four love you and desire to grow,’” he said.

When a planned 2020 summer missions trip was canceled, the four participated in an “intense” five-day Bible boot camp where they learned how to study the Bible, pray and evangelize.

Three of those students now serve as leaders for the RealTalk College Ministry (Baptist Campus Ministries), he said. “When others see He is at the center of your life, they are more likely to place Him at the center of theirs,” Beasley said.

Freshman Tuskegee students experienced Christ’s love this September when Beasley and some friends helped them move into their dorms, just as RealTalk was being launched. Within two months, several Tuskegee students have become Christians and entered into discipleship relationships with ASU students.

More than 200,000 unreached students on Alabama’s college and university campuses are “waiting to hear about Jesus,” Beasley said. “What are you waiting for?”

(Margaret Colson)

CONVENTION SERMON

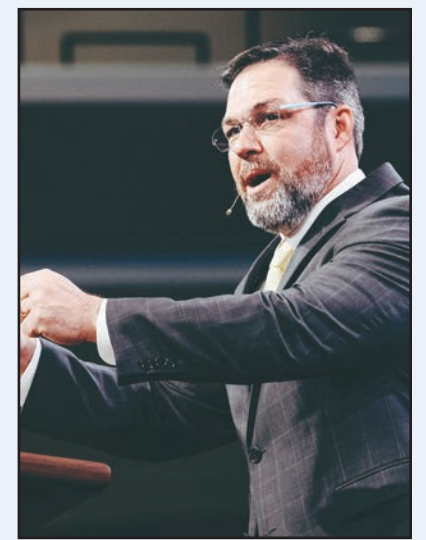


Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist
Jeff Meyers is pastor of First Baptist Church Opelika.

Stay the course

Jeff Meyers, senior pastor of First Baptist Church Opelika, said he — like many others — has had a tough past 18 months.

He never imagined an Easter where he would be the only one in the church, preaching to a camera. He never imagined the hard days the COVID-19 pandemic would bring for his church and other churches.

Preaching from 1 Peter 1 at the Alabama Baptist State Convention Nov. 17, Meyers said the idea of “greatly rejoicing” in the midst of trials isn’t something he felt connected to all the time over the past year and a half.

Meyers urged Alabama Baptists to look for the good in the midst of the pandemic and its effects on life and church statistics.

“There are still people being saved,” he said. “There are still marriages being healed. There are still lives being transformed. And don’t get me wrong, it’s hard to see it. But it’s there.”

According to 1 Peter 1:7, “the reason you do what you do is because Jesus is coming back,” Meyers said. “One day Jesus Christ will return, and I know you want to be found faithful. ... Stay the course.” (Grace Thornton)

D'Linell Finley, pastor of Southlawn Baptist Church in Montgomery, presents Resolution No. 3 as part of the resolutions committee report Nov. 17.

United on the issues



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist

Resolutions on abortion, race among 5 adopted at ABSC annual meeting

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
TAB Media

Resolutions on abortion and race were among the five resolutions approved overwhelmingly by messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention Nov. 16–17 at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Resolution No. 2, “On Protecting Unborn Children by Prioritizing Legislation,” calls for Alabama legislators to work within their power to end abortion. It passed after an amendment was

offered by Jason Hobbs, pastor of and messenger from Community Baptist Church in Maylene, to adapt the original language in one section from “further regulate and limit abortion” to “abolish abortion.”

Resolution No. 3, “On Sufficiency of Scripture Concerning Racial and Intercultural Relations,” acknowledges that “the sin of racism continues to exist” and calls for ongoing “engagement with and improvement of” rela-

tions with “persons of all racial and cultural backgrounds.”

However, “we will not embrace any theory, including Critical Race Theory or any theory of racial supremacy, that is inconsistent with our understanding of Scripture,” the resolution states.

Resolution No. 1, “On Affirmation of Judson College,” commends Judson’s leadership and graduates on their efforts to sustain the college and the legacy left by the 183-year-old institu-

tion that closed earlier this year.

Resolution No. 4, “On Affirmation of Joe Godfrey,” expresses appreciation for the retiring leader of Alabama Citizens Action Program and American Character Builders. Godfrey will retire April 30, 2022.

Resolution No. 5 recognized Whitesburg Baptist Church, Madison Baptist Association and area leaders for hosting the 2021 convention annual meeting.

None of the resolutions garnered floor debate, and all passed with no dissenting votes.

To read the full text of the resolutions, visit tabonline.org/resolutions.

New Alabama Baptist State Convention officers elected



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Buddy Champion, pastor of First Baptist Church Trussville, is the new state convention president and Morgan Bailey (inset photo), pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Ranburne, is the new first vice president.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

The new second vice president Jarman Leatherwood (left), pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, is congratulated by Rick Lance on being the first African American officer elected to serve the state convention.

Careful **review** planned

Motion for Sexual Abuse Task Force in Alabama passes; members to be named this month

By Jennifer Davis Rash
TAB Media

Newly elected Alabama Baptist State Convention president Buddy Champion said he plans to name the members of a Sexual Abuse Task Force by the end of the month.

The task force is being established following a motion approved by convention messengers Nov. 16 during the annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Retired attorney Melissa Bowen, a member of First Baptist Church Prattville, proposed the motion as a way to review policies and practices of Cooperative Program-funded entities and the State Board of Missions.

Bowen's motion reads that "the newly elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention name a Sexual Abuse Task Force of at least seven members with the newly elected president being an ex-officio member. The purpose of this task force would be to review the policies and practices of our Cooperative Program-funded state convention entities and auxiliaries, including the State Board of Missions, related to sex abuse. Reviewing members of the task force will not include paid staff of the entities, auxiliaries or State Board and will report back to the 2022 Convention. The executive director of the State Board of Missions will serve as a resource for the task force. Expenses of the task force will be covered by the State Board of Missions."

Opportunity to help

Bowen spent a decade representing domestic violence victims through Legal Services Alabama before she retired in 2017. She cares deeply about the issue of abuse and sees the motion as an opportunity to help.

"Although sexual abuse is not my



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist
Retired attorney Melissa Bowen, a member of First Baptist Church Prattville, proposes the motion approved by messengers to review policies and practices of Cooperative Program-funded entities and the State Board of Missions.

story, God has brought an awareness of this terrible issue to me over many years. Often throughout my career, I represented victims of domestic violence. Many, many of my clients told me about their past sexual abuse ... the experiences of sexual abuse taught them that they were worthless and any abuse or mistreatment for them was deserved (in their minds)."

'Especially damaging'

"Sexual abuse that takes place in a church or Christian setting is especially damaging because it gives a message that the abuse is part of Christianity or maybe even approved by God," Bowen said. "Sexual abuse is an issue that our churches should be passionate about because it destroys faith and separates people from God."

"There is a time and a need to lament the harm caused in the past to children, youth and women in our churches," she said. "But we must do more. We must stop those who would victimize them. We must bring this terrible cycle to a close."

Bowen shared that the State Board of Missions can be a help to churches by providing training and modeling policies and procedures. "That's the reason for the motion."

"In its role, the State Board resources, assists, trains and does all the things to help churches do a good job, so we want to ensure its policies and practices are carefully reviewed," she shared with The Alabama Baptist prior to proposing the motion. "We want to do the same for all partner entities and auxiliaries which are funded by the Cooperative Program."

Supporting the proposal

The CP-funded entities and auxiliaries which partner with the State Board of Missions include: Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, Alabama Citizens Action Program, Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, The Alabama Baptist, The Baptist Foundation of Alabama and University of Mobile.

Leaders of each of the groups mentioned indicated to The Alabama Baptist they support the proposal for a review.

Judson's final report, other updates shared during annual meeting

In the final report of Judson College to the convention, Judson president Daphne Robinson thanked Alabama Baptists for their "kindness and generosity" through the years.

Harrell Cushing, chair of the Alabama Baptist Education Commission, urged Alabama Baptists to send their stories and memories of Judson and other Baptist colleges to the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission for posterity.

Beck Taylor, president of Samford University, and Lonnie Burnett, president of University of Mobile, also provided updates.

In other reports, Mike Jackson of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions shared favorable reports from the audit and insurance committees related to convention entities. And Athens pastor Joel Carwile was announced as the 2022 convention preacher with Jarman Leatherwood of Huntsville as alternate.

Messengers approved Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville as the location for the 2025 annual meeting. Next year's meeting will be Nov. 15-16 at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham. (TAB Media)

Lance shares State Board's expanded missional initiatives

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

During his Nov. 16 report to the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, introduced seven missional initiatives that express how the SBOM is trying to be “Christ-focused and Christ-centered.”

1. Spiritual renewal

Lance said he is praying for Alabama Baptists to be spiritually prepared for a movement of God.

“We need spiritual renewal in our individual lives and in the lives of our homes and families, and we need it in our associations and churches, the Southern Baptist Convention and all of evangelical Christendom,” Lance said.

2. Making disciples

The SBOM continues to look for ways to encourage disciple making across the state, Lance said. A new effort called Gospel to Everyone aims to connect personally with everyone in Alabama. More details are coming in early 2022, he said.

Lance recommended a book from the SBOM Sunday School and Discipleship office called “4 Invitations: How the Four Disciple-Making Invitations of Jesus Can Help You Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples,” written by Mark Gainey with contributions from Andy Frazier and Daniel Edmonds.

3. Church health

Alabama has the largest network of church planters among state conventions that handle church planting, Lance said.

The SBOM plans to continue promoting revitalization, planting and replanting so there will be more healthy Great Commission churches in Alabama. The SBOM has resources and a process in place to help aging or changing congregations who would like to partner with a new church plant “rather than letting that legacy die.”

4. Calling out the called

The SBOM wants to focus on praying and mobilizing more workers to the harvest, Lance said. Part of that is the new Timothy Initiative.

“We’re trying to take juniors and seniors in college, get them together and be mentored so they can make a missional difference in whatever their major is in college and wherever they go next,” Lance said.

5. Biblical stewardship

Lance announced that Alabama Baptists have surpassed this year’s Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering goal of \$1.2 million. And by the end of 2021, Alabama Baptists also will have given \$1.5 billion through the Cooperative Program since its inception in 1925, he said. The state is the largest contributing convention in the Southern Baptist Convention, providing almost exactly 10% of the SBC budget, he said.

He encouraged Alabama Baptists to continue their “commitment to biblical stewardship and giving.”

6. Sexual abuse

The SBOM has never taken the issue of abuse lightly, Lance said. They began training and resourcing churches on the topic in 1990 and in recent years have started an “intentional” partnership with MinistrySafe, an organization advising churches and ministries of best practices to prevent sexual abuse and providing training and workshops for churches.

Two more MinistrySafe trainings are scheduled for February and March 2022. More information is available at alsbom.org/ministrysafe.

7. Intercultural relations

The SBOM is committed to “helping churches in Alabama Baptist life to strive diligently to improve relationships with people of all races and cultural backgrounds,” Lance said.

Part of that is achieved through working together to plant multicultural churches, he said.



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist
In his report, SBOM executive director Rick Lance emphasizes the importance of a Christ-centered life.

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET FOR 2022

(Approved by convention messengers Nov. 16)

	2021 BUDGET	2022 BUDGET
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES		
SBC causes	18,750,000	18,500,000
Total for Southern Baptist Convention Ministries	18,750,000	18,500,000

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS MINISTRIES		
<i>EVANGELISM/DISCIPLESHIP (30 full-time employees)</i>		
Evangelism	108,383	106,938
Sunday School and Discipleship	312,022	307,862
Collegiate and Student Ministries	97,730	96,427
Evangelism/Discipleship Salaries/Housing	1,663,012	1,640,839
Evangelism/Discipleship Travel/Field Services	166,566	164,345
<i>LEADERSHIP RESOURCE (5 full-time employees)</i>		
LeaderCare	208,891	98,800
Church Health		199,232
Worship Resources	88,115	86,940
Leadership Resource Salaries/Housing	530,536	523,462
Leadership Resource Travel/Field Services	52,568	51,867
<i>MISSIONS MOBILIZATION (12 full-time employees)</i>		
Associational Missions & Church Planting	766,877	756,652
Global Missions	212,182	209,353
Missions Mobilization Salaries/Housing	688,668	679,485
Missions Mobilization Travel/Field Services	68,235	67,325
<i>MISSIONS SUPPORT (20 full-time employees)</i>		
Executive Director	26,082	25,734
Associate Executive Director	524,757	509,000
Facility Services	1,345,964	1,329,278
Financial Services and Human Resources	2,315,878	2,285,000
Communications and Cooperative Program	360,284	355,480
Missions Support Salaries/Housing	1,625,801	1,604,124
Missions Support Travel/Field Services	161,091	158,943
Subtotal for State Board of Missions Ministries	11,323,642	11,257,086
GuideStone Church Retirement Plan	801,140	790,338
GuideStone’s Mission:Dignity	9,000	9,000
Subtotal for GuideStone	810,140	799,338
Total for State Board of Missions Ministries	12,133,782	12,056,424

STATE CONVENTION ENTITY MINISTRIES		
<i>Christian Higher Education Ministries</i>		
A. A. Earl Potts Scholarship	113,271	111,761
B. Board of Aid to Students	358,895	354,110
C. Judson College	1,052,192	
D. University of Mobile	2,663,238	3,000,000
<i>Other Entities and Commissions Ministries</i>		
A. Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries	257,052	400,000
B. Shocco Springs	552,307	700,000
C. The Alabama Baptist	560,141	600,000
D. The Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers	188,641	250,000
E. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama	134,038	200,000
F. The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission	129,502	150,000
G. The Christian Life Commission	24,806	24,475
H. The Education Commission	3,273	3,230
<i>Auxiliaries and Other Ministries</i>		
A. ALCAP	66,237	100,000
B. Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union	512,625	550,000
Total for Convention Entity Ministries	6,616,219	6,443,576
GRAND TOTAL COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET	37,500,000	37,000,000

SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS		
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering	12,250,000	12,000,000
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering	6,250,000	6,000,000
Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries	3,000,000	3,000,000
Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering	1,200,000	1,200,000
Alabama Baptist World Hunger Offering	800,000	800,000
Total for Special Offering Goals	23,500,000	23,000,000

‘Christ-centered MINISTRIES’

Alabama Baptists celebrate missions efforts, adopt plans to extend reach

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Alabama Baptists voted to build a new disaster relief facility, celebrated 100 years of collegiate ministry and started a five-year partnership with Alaska Baptists during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 16–17.

The new disaster relief facility — which will go on the property of the current facility in Pine Level — will help expand the state’s thriving ministry that “takes Christ into crisis,” said Mel Johnson, who presented the recommendation to the convention.

“Disaster relief remains one of the wonderful Christ-centered ministries, made up of 7,000 trained, credentialed and background-checked volunteers from all of our churches,” said Johnson, lead mission strategist for Autauga Baptist Association and a member of the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief task force.

Johnson was the state’s disaster relief strategist when construction began on the first disaster relief facility. It was completed in 2016, the year Mark Wakefield, current disaster relief strategist, took over the role.

Alabama ranks in the top five states for Southern Baptist disaster relief ministries in terms of size and deployment of personnel. That’s great, but the growing ministry needs more room to store equipment and supplies, Wakefield said.

‘Growing pains’

As Johnson told messengers, “We are in the middle of some growing pains, and we need to have an expansion.”

The messengers approved the construction, the cost of which will not exceed \$275,000, according to the recommendation. The funds will come from the general disaster relief account.

During the meeting, messengers also celebrated another thriving min-



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' Ken Allen presents this year's Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Awards to three Alabama Baptist pastors (l to r): Tim Henning, Jarman Leatherwood and Blake Kersey.

istry — Baptist Campus Ministries.

“One hundred years ago, God began using Alabama Baptists to penetrate this place with the incredible influence of the gospel in a dedicated and intentional way,” said Mike Nuss, director of the SBOM office of collegiate and student ministries.

Today Alabama is home to 300,000 college students, he said.

“The university campus is the greatest and most strategic missions field in the world,” he said. “Where else in the world has God brought together so many so they can hear and respond to the gospel?”

It’s also the best place to raise up missionaries and church leaders, Nuss said, noting that the partnership between churches and college ministries is vital.

While that partnership has been going on for a century, Alabama Baptists started a new one during the meeting — a five-year partnership with Alaska Baptists.

Scotty Goldman, director of the SBOM office of global missions, thanked messengers for their support of the effort and introduced three ministry partners — Randy

Covington, executive director of the Alaska Baptist Resource Network; Jae McKee, a native Alabamian who serves Alaska Baptists as director of missions and church planting; and Cody Schwegel, pastor of Liberty Church in Craig, Alaska. Jamie Baldwin, who recently retired from the SBOM, spent six months serving at Schwegel’s church.

Beyond state borders

Covington said it was a “real joy” to partner with Alabama Baptists in ministry.

“One of the things I love about Alabama Baptists is you’re not just restricted to the boundaries of your great state; you have a desire to see the gospel go beyond your borders ... and to help us in reaching our state for Jesus Christ,” he said. “Thank you so much for the partnership.”

Also during the meeting, messengers approved a \$37 million Cooperative Program budget.

The budget — which is \$500,000 below 2021 and 2020 — will continue to be divided 50/50 between Southern Baptist and Alabama Bap-

tist missions and ministries, according to Rick Lance, SBOM executive director.

Special awards

In other business, Wakefield announced this year’s winner of the Tommy Puckett Award for Excellence, named in honor of Johnson’s predecessor, a longtime Alabama Baptist men’s ministry and disaster relief strategist who died in 2018. The award is presented annually to someone who contributes strategically to ABDR.

This year’s honoree, Ron Warren, recently retired as state disaster relief coordinator. Warren has “for 20 years or so been ... the heartbeat of responding with chainsaws and with heavy equipment to flooded areas,” Wakefield said. “He has spent untold hours on the telephone lining up teams to go to areas that are affected by disasters.”

Ken Allen, director of the SBOM office of LeaderCare, also presented this year’s Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Awards to:

► Blake Kersey, pastor of First Baptist Church Decatur, for established work.

► Jarman Leatherwood, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, for new work.

► Tim Henning, pastor of New Beginnings Fellowship in Trussville, for bivocational work.

Lance also announced the annual for this year’s meeting will be dedicated to Morrison, Lance’s predecessor who died in September.

Also during the SBOM report:

► Messengers voted to accept the 2020 audit report.

► Messengers affirmed the special offering goals for 2022 — Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$12 million; Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, \$6 million; Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries, \$3 million; Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, \$1.2 million; Hunger Offering, \$800,000.

‘God is at work’

Stay faithful even when you can’t see final result, urges New Orleans seminary president



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

By Grace Thornton
TAB Media

Jamie Dew said as he traveled in Europe years ago, the cathedrals he saw made a big impact on him. “The cathedrals of Europe ... took centuries to build,” said Dew, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. “It meant that there were entire generations of stonemasons, and these people would be born into this world, they’d grow up, start an apprenticeship and become a master, and for their entire life, they’d cut stone and they’d lay stone,” he said.

“And they never saw the finished product.”

Living faithfully

That’s what it’s like for followers of Christ who live faithfully day after day knowing they will not see the fulfillment of their hope on earth, he said.

“Friends, that’s our job. We’re not going to see it all in this lifetime.”

Preaching from Hebrews 11, he told those present at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 16 that followers of Christ are tasked with one thing — being faithful. He described three characteristics of faithful people.

1. People who are faithful trust even when they don’t see.

Dew reminded listeners of how Abraham responded in faith to move to a “super nondescript” land he couldn’t see, just because God told him to. “To be faithful means you trust even when you don’t see,” he said. “God has not abandoned you. God is at work.”

He noted that whole generations “have lived, served and died in faith and never saw the redemption of their Lord.” But that redemption is coming in the life to come, and faithful people trust in that, Dew said.

2. People who are faithful are increasingly unsettled in this world and they long for another world.

Dew said when he was younger, he used to think the deep longing he felt was for the things he didn’t have yet, things like marriage and a family.

Then when he got those things, “it was all as good as I thought it would be, but there was still a hunger for something more,” Dew said.

He feels that hunger even though his bucket list is empty. That’s by divine design, he said.

“I long for a new home, a King and a Kingdom that will come to



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Christian artist Christy Nockels leads worship during the Nov. 16 evening session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.

me. ... Friend, your joy and your life is not found in platforms or experiences; it is found in Christ, the coming King and His kingdom.

“Now that I know Christ, there is no amount of anything that can satisfy my soul.”

3. People who are faithful set their minds on that which is above.

Dew said it will “always be our temptation to want to go back to live a different kind of life where

you didn’t have to live constantly with this call to crucify the flesh.”

“It is an easier life, but it is not a better life,” he said.

The faithful men and women named in Hebrews 11 didn’t just acknowledge the coming Kingdom — they kept their mind focused on it and lived accordingly, Dew said.

“It all starts right here, with what you meditate on.”

To watch this session, visit alsbom.org/convention.

“FRIEND, YOUR **joy and your life**
IS NOT FOUND IN PLATFORMS OR EXPERIENCES;
it is found in Christ,
THE COMING KING AND HIS KINGDOM.”

— JAMIE DEW



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Boards and commissions

Trustees, board members elected to serve State Board, other entities

Report of Committee on Boards and Commissions

EDITOR'S NOTE — Messengers voted to elect or reelect the following during the 2021 Alabama Baptist State Convention. An asterisk () before the name indicates a layperson. The executive committee and State Board of Missions members are grouped by associations while board*

members of convention entities are designated by church membership.

Executive Committee

Earl Mitchell, Etowah; Sam Tate, Alabama-Crenshaw; Greg Woodard, Colbert-Lauderdale; Donnie Payne, Tuscaloosa; Charles Brown, Mobile

State Board of Missions

Terms to Expire 2024: Mel Johnson, Autauga; Robert Burns, Baldwin; Mike Fortenberry, Barbour; Chris Kynard, Bethel;

Micah Gandy, Bethlehem; Greg Corbin and Jason Leight, Birmingham Metro; Blair McBride, Butler; Ben Curlee, Carey; Barrett Long and Chris Underwood, Colbert-Lauderdale; Neal Butler, Conecuh; Max Buttram and Skip Parvin, Coosa River; Gary Miller and *Shirley Smith, Covington; Christopher Woodall, Dale; Kevin McCreless, DeKalb; *Jessica Hadaway, East Liberty; *Beth Baldwin and Jim Graham, Elmore; Cavin Cawthon, Escambia; *Julia Ford, Etowah; Mark Smith, Friendship; *Lewis

Edwin Gaza, Lamar; Dusty McLemore and Kevin Ward, Limestone; *Andrea Dyess, Tim Milner and Kevin J. Moore, Madison; Derek Allen, Roy Hill and Jeremy Smalley, Mobile; Daniel Atkins and *Patti Shoemaker, Montgomery; Clayton Speed, Morgan; Mark Milwee, Muscle Shoals; Charlie Wilson, Pickens; Richie Ashburn and *Karen Melton, Russell; Andrew Knick, Salem Troy; *Gary Oswalt, Sipsey; *Rhonda Grandstaff and Don Tew, Southeast Alabama; Roger Kendrick, Tallapoosa;

Shandy Dill, Tennessee River; *Debbie Eads and Keith Pugh, Tuscaloosa; Robert Blankenship, Walker; *Connie Cook, West Central

— Convention entities —

The Alabama Baptist

Terms to Expire 2025: Gary Fenton, Dawson, Birmingham; Rob Jackson, FBC Prattville; Scott Swendenburg, Dawson, Birmingham; Don Reed, Mount Zion, Huntsville

Board of Aid

Terms to Expire 2025:



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- Adam W. Greenway, President of Southwestern Seminary

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David Nelson, Thomasville;
Jerry Reeves, FBC Leroy;
*Tammy Simms, University, Huntsville

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries

Terms to Expire 2025:
Barry Bledsoe, FBC Montgomery; Blake Kersey, FBC Decatur

Christian Life Commission

Terms to Expire 2025: Joe Bob Mizzell, FBC Montgomery; Kenny Hoomes, FBC Montgomery; John Thomas, FBC Dothan; James Jackson, Glynwood, Prattville

Education Commission

Terms to Expire 2025:
*Sammie Barstow, FBC Tuscaloosa; Bill Cannon, FBC Union Springs; Jerry Henry, FBC Fairhope; *Debbie Morris, Chulafinnee, Heflin

The Baptist Foundation of Alabama

Terms to Expire 2025:
*Marcalyn Price, Parkway, Auburn; *Joel Lake, FBC Tuscaloosa; *Tim Mitchell, Parker Memorial, Anniston;

Jay Wolf, FBC Montgomery; *Rick Gibson, FBC Tuscaloosa; *Bill Harper Jr., Eastern Hills, Montgomery; *Diane Kennedy, Spring Hill, Mobile

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

Terms to Expire 2025:
*Debbie Campbell, Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; *Ralph Foster, FBC Montgomery; *Joyce Peters, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Sarah M. Walters, FBC Birmingham

Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers

Terms to Expire 2025:
William Hand, North Shelby, Birmingham; *W. Forrest Hatfield, Elkdale, Selma; Curtis Pace, FBC Montgomery; *Shannon Mayes, FBC Prattville; Lee Wright, Heritage, Montgomery

University of Mobile

Terms to Expire 2025:
Tim Cox, Liberty, Chelsea; *Terry Harbin, Redemption, Saraland; *Paul Carter, Cottage Hill, Mobile; *Ronald Moore, Dauphin Way, Mobile; *Michael Tew, FBC Tillman's Corner; *Gabi Constantine, Restoration, Citronelle

Shocco Springs Conference Center

Terms to Expire 2025:
*Chelsea Kellum, Crossroads, Elmore; Ryan Whitley, CrossPoint, Trussville; *Sonya Tucker, Pinedale, Montgomery; *Gena Butler, Parker Memorial, Anniston

Report of Committee on Committees

Committee on Boards and Commissions

Chairperson 2021–2022:
Craig Carlisle, FBC Gadsden

Chairperson 2022–2023:
Joel Carwile, FBC Athens

Terms to Expire 2023:
Joel Carwile, FBC Athens; *Sue McFadden, FBC Ft. Payne; Mack Amis, Parker Memorial, Anniston; *Kelley Redmond, Parkway, Auburn; Jim Tate, Memphis, Dothan; Nathan Daniels, Bethany, Andalusia; *Amy McCullough, FBC Frisco City; *Carrie Stubblefield, FBC Jackson; Lee Tate, Benton; John P. Gates, Mount Vernon, Jasper;

*Katherine White, FBC Arley; Daven Watkins, FBC Pelham; James Watkins, West End, Clanton

Audit Committee

Chairperson 2021–2022:
*Rick Gibson, FBC Tuscaloosa

Terms to Expire 2024:
*Jody Singleton, FBC Headland; *Dave Furst, Eastern Hills, Montgomery

Insurance Committee

Chairperson 2021–2022:
*Mike Colquett, Mexia

Terms to Expire 2024:
*Cliff Slaten, Taylor Road, Montgomery

Committee on Time, Place and Preacher

Chairperson 2021–2022:
John Thweatt, FBC Pell City

Terms to Expire 2022:
John Thweatt, FBC Pell City; Teman Knight, Heritage, Montgomery; Britt Green, FBC Eclectic; Robert Mullins, Crossroads Community, Elmore; Barry Cosper, Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; Les Hughes, Hartford; Eric Fuller, Ozark

Memorials Committee

Chairperson 2021–2022:
Clarke Skelton, Mountain Brook, Birmingham

Terms to Expire 2022:
Clarke Skelton, Mountain Brook, Birmingham; Pat Ingram, Millbrook; Dave

Burns, FBC Prattville; Jennifer Foster, Heritage, Montgomery; Guy Anderson, Elkdale, Selma

Committee on Order of Business

Chairperson 2021–2022:
Chip Starnes, FBC Bay Minette

Terms to Expire 2024:
Neal Hughes, Heritage, Montgomery

Committee on Resolutions

Chairperson 2021–2022:
Roger Willmore, Meadowbrook, Oxford

Terms to Expire 2022:
Roger Willmore, Meadowbrook, Oxford; Michael J. Brooks, Siluria, Alabaster; *Dawn Cox, Liberty, Chelsea; Josh Wootton, Eastern Hills, Montgomery; Jarman Leatherwood, House of Hope and Restoration Church, Huntsville; Chris Crain, Lakeside, Birmingham; Chris Kynard, Linden

— President's nominees —

Committee on Committees

The President of the State Convention nominates the following for three-year terms (expiring in 2024) on the Committee on Committees:

Chairperson 2024: **Jim Cooley, FBC Birmingham**
Laurie Barnett, FBC Prattville; Carl Williams, FBC Demopolis

Totals for the 2021

Alabama Baptist State Convention

Total churches registered: 325

Total messengers registered: 668

To check out our photo gallery, visit
tabonline.org/absc2021.

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Hill is known for encouraging others as 'a pastor to pastors'

(continued from page 1)
hear Hill preach. What they experienced was exactly what those who have known him over the years would expect — humor and soft-spoken encouragement.

"It's hard to be a man of God in this day in which we live," he said. "I want to just try to encourage you tonight so that you won't be down-trodden when somebody hurts you. I want to remind you that you're going to be hurt. ... You're not going to have a ministry without hurt."

Hill shared about how as a young seminarian in New Orleans, he served as pastor of a church in Mississippi that fired him without telling him. He found out when he and his wife drove there on Saturday and stopped in town for a haircut. The barber broke the news.

They had to drive the 200 miles back to New Orleans without enough money for gas.

"I want to tell you something very wonderful. Along the way, I came to understand that those who are faithful to God may have lots of troubles, but they will never be forsaken."

Evangelist Junior Hill

In the days that followed, as he drove his beat-up, old car around country roads looking for a church that would hire a fired pastor, he told God he wouldn't quit, even though he had no idea how he was going to support his family.

"I want to tell you something very wonderful," he said. "Along the way, I came to understand that those who are faithful to God may have lots of troubles, but they

will never be forsaken."

As he wrapped up his message, he thanked pastors for their ministry even when it's tough.

'I pray His best'

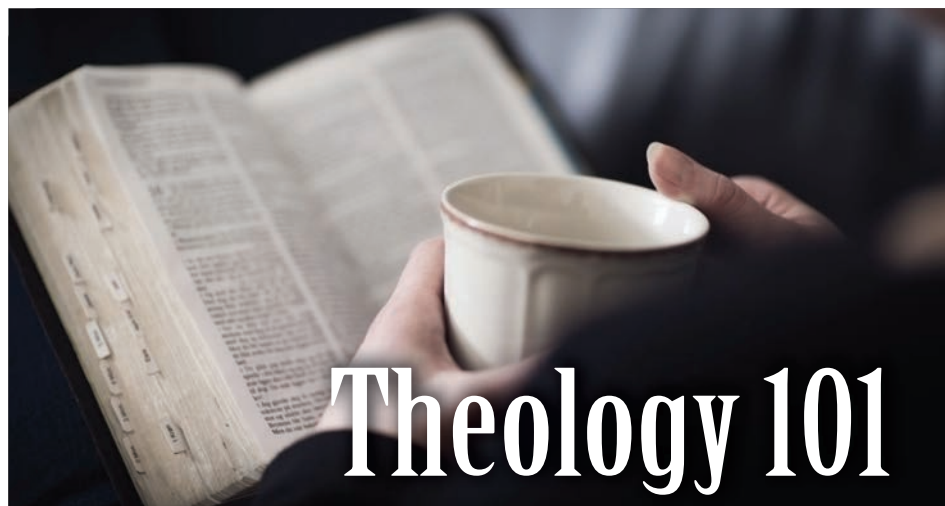
"I just want to tell you I love you, and I praise God for every one of you, and I pray His best upon you, that He'll use you in a special way," Hill said. "I'm honored that you took the time to make this presentation, which has humbled me beyond words."

Full coverage of the 2021 Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference will be in next week's issue.



Robert Mullins (right), pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Elmore and Pastors Conference president-elect, presents beloved Alabama Baptist evangelist Junior Hill with the inaugural Fred Wolfe Lifetime Pastoral Ministry Award.

Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Giving Thanks

A Gracious Thing to Do

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
TAB Media

If we look closely behind all the reasons we have for giving thanks to God every day, especially Thanksgiving Day, we will look upon some aspect of His grace, since "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father ..." (James 1:17).

As Christians through the ages have thought about God's grace, they have identified two broad categories. One is often called "common" or "general grace."

Jesus made reference to God's common grace in the Sermon on the Mount, noting God "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

When people pause at Thanksgiving to express gratitude to God, the emphasis tends to be on giving thanks for His many expressions of common grace.

This giving of thanks might make mention of food made possible by the common blessing of sunshine and rain. Christians and non-Christians alike experience multiple expressions of the general grace of God. Mention likely will be made about the supply of life's necessities, such as prompted the thanksgiving of the pilgrim colony at Plymouth.

In addition to giving thanks for material benefits of food, clothing, shelter, friends and family, many may also mention common nonmaterial blessings, such as love, freedom, friendship and peace.

In this Thanksgiving season, we will no doubt think about the common freedoms all of us enjoy as citizens in this "land of the free and home of the brave."

'Saving grace'

The second category of grace usually is termed "particular" or "saving grace." John 1:17 speaks of the grace that "came through Jesus Christ." In like manner, Titus 2:11 calls attention to "the grace of God that brings salvation." Then there is the witness of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

For those of us among the "whoever-believes-in-Him" group, our national day of Thanksgiving has many deeper and eternally meaningful reasons for expressions of gratitude.

In giving thanks for God's saving grace, we offer thanks for the gift of His Son. In so doing, we will be doing our best to speak about God's gift that is indescribable, by attempting to express what is inexpressible or take the measure of what is immeasurable (2 Cor. 9:15).

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.



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Immanuel Baptist Church in Benton, Ill., with an average attendance of 400 is seeking a senior pastor. Details for the position are available at jobs.sbc.net and pastorsearch.ibsa.org.

PASTOR

Pathway Baptist Church in Dothan is seeking a full-time pastor. For qualifications, email questions or forward resumé to: avpbcdothan@gmail.com ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, or mail to: Pathway Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 3551 Flowers Chapel Road, Dothan, AL 36305.

WORSHIP PASTOR

Second Baptist Union City, Tenn., is prayerfully seeking our next worship pastor. We average 700-800 (post-Covid) in Sunday morning worship and our musical style is intentionally blended in all services, with a large choir. A detailed job description/qualifications can be found at secondbaptistuc.com. Competitive salary based upon experience, health, dental, vision and retirement benefits. Submit resumé to: apply@secondbaptistuc.com.

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BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

New Hope Baptist Church, Talladega, is seeking a bivocational worship leader. We enjoy a blend of hymns and contemporary music. Interested persons send resumé to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 493, Talladega, AL 35161-0493.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Purpose Baptist Church, Opelika, Ala., is looking for a bivocational worship leader. Please send resumé to: PurposeBaptist@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL CHILDREN'S MINISTER

East Highland Baptist Church, Hartselle, Ala., is prayerfully seeking God's choice for a bivocational children's minister who will lead the children's ministry program. Applicants should subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist

Faith & Message. See additional information under the announcements tab at ehbc.church. Please send resumé to: cmsc@ehbc.church.

OTHER POSITIONS

ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARY

The Randolph Baptist Association is seeking an associational missionary. The candidate must be an ordained Southern Baptist minister with a heart for missions and a true desire to work with our local pastors and churches. If interested, please submit a resumé to: Randolph Baptist Association, ATTN: Search Committee, P.O. Box 287, Wedowee, AL 36278. All resúmes must be submitted by Dec. 13.

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MINISTRIES

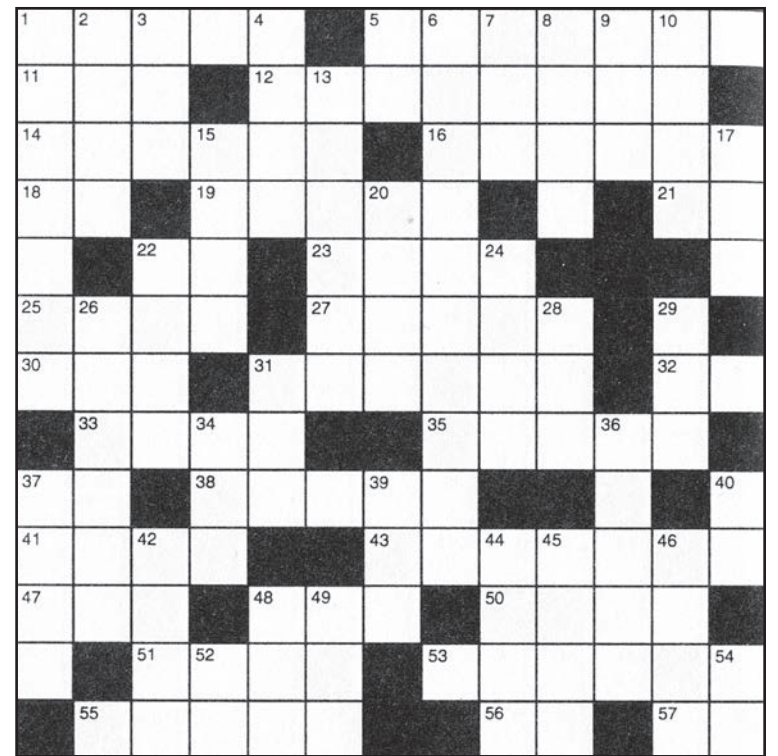
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CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. Hosea's wife.
5. Herod ... made an ____ unto them. (Acts 12:21)
11. Shall the ____ boast itself against him that heweth therewith? (Isa. 10:15)
12. A person from Ephesus.
14. The borrower is servant to the _____. (Prov. 22:7)
16. Greek god of music, poetry and sunlight.
18. Noah built ____ altar unto the Lord. (Gen. 8:20)
19. The Israelites had to ____ to living in the wilderness.
21. "Praise ____ the Lord."
22. Millimeter. (abbr.)
23. Ninth letter of the Greek alphabet.
25. ____ do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Phil. 4:13)
27. There was silence in heaven about the ____ of half an hour. (Rev. 8:1)
30. A city belonging to Simeon. (Josh. 19:7)
31. To repeat again.
32. Verse. (abbr.)
33. Hiram's kingdom. (2 Sam. 5:11)
35. Get thee ____, Satan. (Matt. 4:10)
37. A city destroyed by the Israelites. (Josh. 8:21)
38. O come, let us ____ Him.
41. To judge.
43. Our good works are ____ without faith in God.
47. Josaphat's father. (Matt. 1:8)
48. A ____ of thieves. (Mark 11:17)
50. For whosoever will save his life shall ____ it. (Matt. 16:25)
51. The first "marked man."
53. Put thou my tears into thy _____. (Ps. 56:8)
55. ____ them into the pot of pottage. (2 Kings 4:39)



By K.B. Liesner Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

56. I am; you are; he ____.
57. "A long, long way to run."

DOWN

1. Where Galatians come from.
2. Balak's offering. (Num. 22:40)
3. Adam, Isaac, Joseph, Paul, for example.
4. A bruised ____ shall he not break. (Isa. 42:3)
5. ____ that I had wings like a dove. (Ps. 55:6)
6. Attaches again.
7. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the _____. (Isa. 11:8)
8. From the beginning of the crea____. (Mark 10:6)
9. How the Israelites kept time: a sund____.
10. Take now ... thine ____ son, Isaac. (Gen. 22:2)
13. I will ____ thee, O Lord, with my whole heart. (Ps. 9:1)
15. But he that believeth not shall be ____ed. (Mark 16:16)
17. Poetic form of "over."
20. Head of the Catholic Church.
22. Thou shalt be a father of ____ nations. (Gen. 17:4)
24. Word after "heart," "stomach" and "head."
26. Lot dwelled in the ____ of the plain. (Gen. 13:12)
28. A incalculable amount of time.
29. Mother of Cain and Abel.
31. The color of the dragon having seven heads and ten horns. (Rev. 12:3)
34. Isaac's substitute. (Gen. 22:13)
36. What Jehoiada commanded set outside the temple gate. (2 Chron. 24:8)
37. Eve's husband.
39. Let us ____ with patience the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12:1)
40. ____ the hart panteth after the water. (Ps. 42:1)
42. Tongues like as of fire ... sat upon ____ of them. (Acts 2:3)
44. ____, ____, lama sabachthani? (Mark 15:34)
45. ____ wife, not exactly a "pillar" of the church.
46. Who his own ____ bare our sins. (1 Pet. 2:24)
48. Though I should ____ with thee. (Matt. 26:35)
49. For to this ____ Christ ... died. (Rom. 14:9)
52. City given to Lot's children. (Deut. 2:9)
54. Abbreviation for 42 down.

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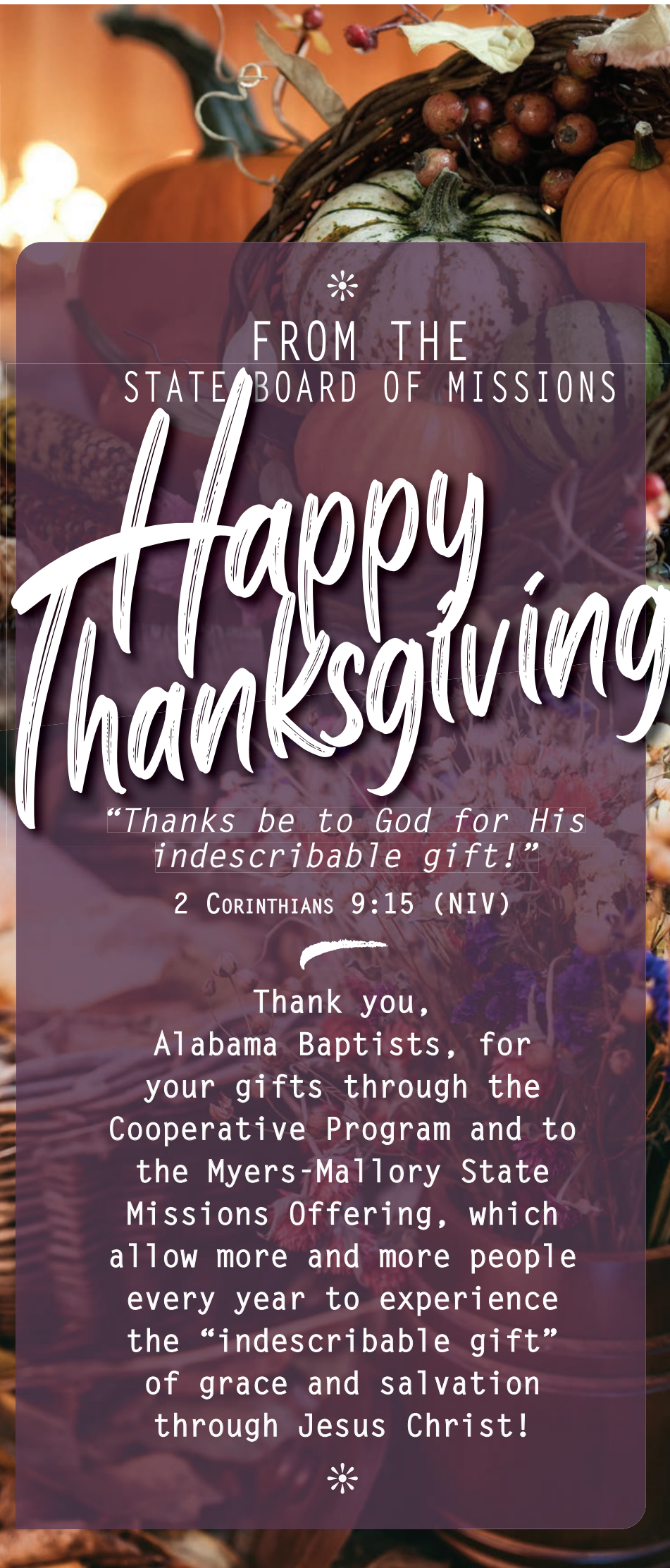
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2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 (NIV)

Thank you,
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Littons encourage, challenge church planters

By Grace Thornton
and Dianna L. Cagle
TAB Media

As Ed Litton talked to church planters at the Plant Alabama gathering Nov. 14, he spoke about another church planter — Paul.

“He was a catalyst, a mobilizer, a strategist,” said Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church in Saraland and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, explaining that the adversity Paul faced served to move the gospel forward.

Preaching from Philippians 1, he challenged church planters to keep Jesus at the center as Paul urged. When Jesus is the center, “three surprising things take place,” Litton said — problems become platforms, opposition becomes opportunity and death becomes defeated.

When Paul was imprisoned, his suffering became a

platform for the gospel and emboldened others to share. The same goes for church planters, Litton said.

“Everything you go through in life is for Christ,” he said. “Your mountaintop experiences are for Christ. Your deep valleys are for Christ.”

‘Love each other’

Opposition from others is also an occasion to demonstrate the gospel, he said. If others start “preaching out of envy and rivalry” as Paul mentioned, the gospel still goes out, and it’s also an opportunity to pray for them and love them.

“We’re on a mission together,” he said. “It’s not about you getting this and me getting that — it’s about honoring the reality that God has brought us together. We just need to preach Jesus and love each other.”

Death is also ultimately



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist
Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church in Saraland, shares with Alabama Baptist church planters meeting at House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville for the group’s annual gathering.

defeated as church planters stay faithful through suffering, he said. “I don’t know what sort of ash heap you’re sitting on right now, but I’m here to tell you He alone will make your ashes into a crown of beauty. That’s the God we serve.”

About 70 attended the planter network gather-

ing, held at House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville.

Brian Harper, lead church planting strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said the purpose of the network and the gathering is “loving people and growing churches.”

During the event, Litton’s

wife, Kathy — director of planter spouse development for the North American Mission Board’s Send Network — also encouraged church planters’ wives.

She shared about the sacred influence wives have, noting that “influence is kind of hard to see.”

Whether disastrous or glorious, “our influence really comes out in life-on-life situations,” she said.

During the last few years, people have experienced lots of emotions, Kathy Litton said. But a close walk with Jesus helps keep those emotions in check.

‘True contentment’

“We don’t need to let our feelings guide our life,” she said. “True contentment is when we continue on faithfully and joyfully from the heart independent of the circumstance by the power of the Holy Spirit.”



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 28

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



RESTORATION Philemon 8–25

Sent (8–12)

The often-overlooked book of Philemon is the shortest of Paul's epistles, but it contains an important message of Christian forgiveness.

The story behind the Book of Philemon is a runaway slave named Onesimus who fled his Christian master Philemon and ended up in Rome with Paul. We are not sure how Onesimus ended up with Paul, but while with him, Onesimus became a Christian. Philemon is Paul's letter to the slave owner, appealing for him to forgive Onesimus. Slavery in the Roman world was not race-based slavery. Different forms of slavery and different reasons for being a slave existed but quite often slavery was like being an indentured servant.

Onesimus had been a great help to Paul while Paul was in prison in Rome, and the apostle is now sending the runaway slave back to his master in the city of Colossae. While Paul had a right as an apostle and a Christian to demand Philemon do what was right and forgive Onesimus, he instead appealed on the basis of love.

Here we have two divided Christians — a runaway slave and his master — being reconciled by Paul. This is a great example, for we as Christians are to promote forgiveness and reconciliation between our fellow Christians. This acts as a picture of the gospel. Since God has forgiven us in Christ, we are to forgive others when they sin against us.

Paul is encouraging Philemon to live out his Christian belief, and it shows us how we also should be willing to forgive those who sin against us.

As a Brother (13–16)

Paul would have liked to keep Onesimus with him because he was so helpful to his ministry, but Paul realized the slave belonged to Philemon, and that situation needed to be reconciled. The apostle recognized the slave's situation ultimately led to his salvation, and now, because of his flight, he was a brother in Christ.

In the Roman Empire, the penalty for being a runaway slave was severe, with even the possibility of execution. But Paul is counting on the fact Philemon will accept Onesimus back without punishing him and maybe even freeing him.

So Welcome Him (17–21)

Since a slave was a valuable asset to the owner, Paul understood this could be an issue for Philemon, so Paul himself offers to pay for any damages that might have been incurred because of Onesimus.

Some scholars suggest that Onesimus may have stolen property from Philemon when he fled, which would mean not only did the slave's flight cost the slave himself, but also property. It is somewhat humorous to think that Paul, being a prisoner, could actually pay back whatever the cost may have been. But Paul emphasizes the joy Onesimus has been to him to help cool Philemon's attitude toward this slave.

The book of Philemon teaches a valuable lesson in the role of forgiveness. Paul encourages reconciliation between the two parties which shows us how we should promote reconciliation between Christians today. It also shows us when we have wronged someone we need to ask forgiveness. Thankfully, we have the help of the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, and then we need to act on this conviction, repent and ask forgiveness. Finally, it shows when someone has wronged us, we need to forgive him or her. It is common for people to hold grudges and harbor seeds of resentment. This is far outside the scope of Christian attitude and behavior. We are obligated to forgive those who have wronged us.

As Paul says in Ephesians 4:32, "Forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." In this way the book of Philemon is a picture of the gospel. Onesimus is to repent and ask forgiveness. Likewise, we repent and ask forgiveness. Paul is the one reconciling the two, pleading Onesimus' case. For us, Christ pleads our case and reconciles us to the Father.

Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament, Samford University



CONFIDENCE IN TIMES OF TESTING Genesis 22:1–14

Today we close our series on Abraham and Sarah. Because we have skipped chapters 18 through 21, read those for context. Today's passage falls between two stories of loss: Ishmael's banishment and Sarah's death.

Many readers have noticed similarities between this passage and the book of Job. One is the use of dramatic irony. Job and his wife are oblivious of the reason they suffer because they do not see the scene between God and the accuser that readers witness. Similarly, because of Genesis 22:1, readers know about Abraham's test, but Abraham himself does not.

A second similarity is that if Abraham carries out God's instructions, he will have suffered a calamity as unimaginable as the one Job and his wife endure.

Finally, despite the ending of the Book of Job and the affirming words of Genesis 22:11–19, both stories disallow easy answers about faith and its testing.

A striking irony is that Abraham has endangered God's promise of offspring many times, and Sarah has done so at least once. Now God seems to require the death of the promised child.

Our faith will often be tested. (1–2)

The vocabulary and syntax of verses 1 and 2 parallel 12:1, and both passages emphasize the enormity of God's commands.

We do not know where "the land of Moriah" is. Later, it will be identified as the hill on which Solomon built his temple (2 Chron. 3:1).

Verse 2 contains three redundant statements. When God says, "Take your son," there is but one choice, yet God goes on to say, "your only son, Isaac, whom you love." The repetition increases the pathos, the suffering, of the reader.

The imprecise use of "only son" helps us to recall the elder son, Ishmael, and his mother have just been banished. Hence, we also are re-

minded that Isaac, not Ishmael, is the awaited heir. Furthermore, whereas Abraham was distressed about the loss of Ishmael (21:11–12), here we hear nothing about his feelings.

Trust God in the midst of the test. (3–10)

We know how the story ends, yet the slow release of details in verse 3 evokes dread from us. The language, "on the third day" (v. 4), and "'God Himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering'" (v. 8), led early Christians to view Isaac as a foreshadowing of Christ.

In the context of the story, "on the third day" shows us how the narrative slows to an intolerable crawl once they see "the place."

Note the juxtaposition in verses 6 and 9: The wood is laid on Isaac and then Isaac on the wood. Also note the ghastly irony of verse 7: The sacrificial victim asks where the victim is.

Because Abraham is stopped from slicing his son's throat only when the knife is in his hand and because a ram, not a lamb, is provided, it is not clear that verse 8 shows Abraham knows what will happen. He is presented, rather, as willing to slaughter his son in obedience to God and burn the dismembered corpse.

God's provision is always on time. (11–14)

The traditional translation of "The Lord will provide" (or "The Lord will see") is Jehovah-jireh. Genesis 22 contrasts with 18:22–33, in which the patriarch challenges "the Judge of the earth to do what is just" (18:25). God receives the challenge and answers.

In light of that episode, Abraham's unflinching obedience here raises the question, "What would I do if I were convinced God required such a thing of me? Would I behave like the Abraham of Chapter 22 or like the Abraham of Chapter 18?"

May we seek to obey while we remain "standing before the Lord" (18:22).

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

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To learn how your church can connect personally with international field personnel, contact Scotty Goldman, sgoldman@alsbom.org, (334) 613-2387.

For more information about field personnel from Alabama serving around the world, please visit a18c.org.

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



Photo by Dianna L. Cagle/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Greg Davis reviews the 2021 issue of Fruitful magazine, featuring his selection as the next executive director of ALCAP.



Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist

Above, left: The Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women provide special music during the memorial service Nov. 16. **Above, right:** Andy Pettigrew, student mobilizer manager with the International Mission Board, speaks to campus ministers and collegiate church leaders at the Unite gathering Nov. 15.

Life at convention



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist

Left: Church planters worship during the Nov. 14 Plant Alabama event at House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville.

Below: Rick Lance (on stage) recognizes past convention presidents during the Nov. 16 opening session of the annual meeting.

Photo by Tracy Riggs/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist



Above: TAB Media's Dave Walsh (right) talks with Don Metzler, president of We Care Program, in the Pastors Conference exhibit hall.

Below: Jackson Allen, 13, a messenger from First Baptist Church Tillman's Corner in Mobile where his dad, Derek, is pastor, does homework between sessions.



Photo by Hannah Muñoz/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Samford University president Beck Taylor speaks at the college's Nov. 16 alumni and friends breakfast.

Right: Alabama Baptist associational leaders chat during their annual gathering Nov. 15 at Hillwood Baptist Church in Huntsville.



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Maggie Evans/The Alabama Baptist