

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

ROMANS 10:15

INTENTIONAL PRAYER WALKING

Church's connection with European city 'catalyst for gospel awareness'

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

To Melanie Arnold, it's a blessing when she gets the opportunity to

have conversations with people, listen well, look them in the eyes and let them know they matter.

In July, while she and several others from Lineville Baptist Church were in western Europe, she got the opportunity to do that with several people

and plant seeds of the gospel when she could.

"[The conversations] naturally flowed out of genuinely caring and looking into their eyes and letting them know they matter," Arnold recalled.

Training and practice

Taking that approach to sharing the gospel was something she practiced while there, and wants to do more of now that she's back in Alabama.

She said the two IMB missionaries her church partners with in western Europe, Wallace and Dee, did an amazing job of training her team in the culture and history of the city and how to have that kind of conversation.

Arnold said they also

taught her a kind of intentional prayer walking she had never experienced before.

"It was so much more than just having instructions to

walk around and pray," she said. "Wallace did a great job of equipping us for the task."

(See 'Investing,' page 10)



Photo courtesy of Melanie Arnold

A missions team from Lineville Baptist Church prayer walks in a western European city as part of a partnership their church has with Alabama IMB missionaries who serve there.



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The Living Donor

Stories podcast continues with kidney transplant from pastor to member

In 2012, TAB Media shared the story of how God led First Baptist Church Jacksonville to pray for Jennifer Borders, a church member who needed a kidney transplant.

Pastor Derek Staples recalls saying to Borders' husband, Jason, one night after a special prayer meeting for her health, "You and I are going to step back and be amazed what God does to bring healing to your wife."

A group of people from the church volunteered to be tested to see if one of them was a possible kidney donor for Borders. Staples thought it was possible his wife, Julie, might be — she was the same blood type as Borders.

But when the results came back, she wasn't a match. He was.

"With his being different, we knew it was a God thing," Borders said. Staples said he remembers the Sunday morning he told the church he was a match after they had been "praying intently" for God to provide a kidney for her.

"I remember the look on every-



Jennifer Borders (left) stands with her pastor, Derek Staples (right), who says prayers were answered when in 2011 he was able to donate a kidney to Borders. Staples reflects that the only explanation is "the greatness of God."

body's face," he said. "We all knew that the Lord was showing up and showing out. It was clearly of the Lord. We could not have orchestrated these events in any other way. There's no other way you could explain it but that it was just the greatness of God."

Borders said it's impossible to explain the gratitude she feels for people being willing to give her the gift of life — first her mom, who donated a kidney to her when she was 16; then a friend who donated

another to her when she was 30; then Staples at age 40.

Their story is the second one featured in the newest season of the Stories podcast, Season 7: The Living Donor Story. You can hear more about how God's sovereignty showed up in their story, how it changed Borders' life and how it strengthened the faith of their church.

Listen at tabonline.org/stories or wherever you get your podcasts. (Grace Thornton)



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

Correction to church security article

We have heard from a few readers concerning the article "Church security: safeguarding congregations against active shooters" on page 10 in the Aug. 11 issue of The Alabama Baptist.

The article included a list of tips for churches and church security teams. One of the tips, "establish a no concealed weapons policy," was poorly worded and wrongly attributed to the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. The suggestion came from another source, but as with other policies and procedures at

the local church level, best practices for church security and safety are decisions for church leaders.

In this case, we realized our mistake shortly after the issue went to print and immediately corrected the article online and in the digital issue of TAB, but the print issue was already in progress.

You can read the corrected article at tabonline.org/safeguarding-congregations.



Our goal is always to be accurate, and we are reminded in instances like this how important our systems and checks are. We are working with our team to make sure that we don't let our editorial guard down, so to speak.

We appreciate our readers who help us see areas for improvement while also demonstrating grace to our team when we fall short of our goals. (TAB)

The Alabama Baptist

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

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



jrash@thealabamabaptist.org



@RashionalThts

Instead of fretting shortages, embrace opportunity to shine

Despite it being months since my favorite brand and style of butter has been available at the local grocery store, I still glance at the shelf where it normally sits each time I walk by — just in case the red-topped container reappears.

And, guess what? It reappeared a few days ago.

I did a double take as I passed by and then quickly backed up to grab one.

The temptation to purchase several was real, but I knew others would enjoy reuniting with our Land O'Lakes friend as well, so I left with only one.

Why this particular tub of butter is among the random items currently hard to find, I'm not sure, but the concept of scarcity and shortages may be a reality we can no longer ignore.

Going without

It's been nearly 50 years since we experienced the extreme fuel shortage of the 1970s.

And while we've experienced a rough season of crops — avocados, peaches, tomatoes, etc. — here and there, those under the age of 50 had not truly felt the pinch of a shortage until the toilet paper scare in 2020.

Since then, we've learned how to conserve as well as how to make our own masks and disinfect our homes without name brand cleaners.

Many parents with young babies continue struggling to find formula, however, and the lack of a variety of other commodities affects pricing, scheduling and decision-making for countless others.

Still, it's the list of shortages in the workforce that seems to grow by the day — teachers, bus drivers, nurses, paramedics, police officers, counselors, airline pilots, air traffic controllers, flight attendants, baggage handlers, waitstaff at restaurants, football officials and on and on.

And in the ministry, shortages are real for churches when it comes to pastors, ministers of music, piano players, Sunday School teachers and a variety of volunteer positions.

We have plenty of people capable of working, and we know people are called to these various roles, so what's different now?

Why are so many positions and areas of responsibility left vacant with no one coming behind to fill in when others leave?

And why are so many bailing out?

We've heard it called the Great Resignation, and it does seem to tie closely to the life and culture we now know as we've emerged from the worst of the pandemic.

The number of people leaving their positions could be related to new perspectives on what is important in their daily routines, as well as realizing we can live on less in many situations.

Lack of appreciation

I also wonder if it has to do with the harsh and negative way so many in society treat others today.

Pile a constant flow of ridicule and criticism on top of already excessive demands, and even the best of the best can only take so much.

Many argue higher salaries and better benefits will do the trick, and if employers truly can do better for their employees they should, but I'm not sure we can buy ourselves out of the current workforce crisis.

We need better training, consistent mentoring and more ownership. We need trust, flexibility, security and commitment among team members.

We need to learn to appreciate and value each other as individuals as well as what each of us brings to the table.

We need to challenge each other to strive for excellence while also demonstrating grace in the moments where grace is needed.

We need to learn humility and how to be teachable — and to understand the importance of step-by-step advancement that allows for life and work experience before we are in leadership positions attempting to bring others along.

We need a workforce in which many leaders have studied at the feet of the ultimate mentor and leader — Jesus Christ.

And we need congregations constantly looking for people in their communities to help move forward in their circumstances and areas of influence.

Is it possible the shortages we see all around us could be the exact opportunity the Church needs to stand out among the chaos and make a difference one life at a time?

Covington Baptist Association churches said yes to the idea of investing in others earlier this year and are celebrating the first fruits of their efforts this week (see story, page 14).

You'll find other examples on almost every page in this week's issue. What are ways your church can stand in the gap during this season of shortages?

Your Voice



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

How social media hurts teenagers' mental health

By Chris Martin

Author, "Terms of Service"

Hallways and lunchrooms were the primary stages for social engagement in high school in years past. It was that time in between classes or while eating lunch that the social dynamics were most active.

High school hallways and lunchrooms are like little stages on which teenagers craft their personas and identities among their peers. It's exciting and stressful, just like performing on any stage.

No escape

In the 20th century, teenagers left the social stages when they went home. Unless they had plans to attend a social function in the evening or hit up the mall, the social dynamics of high school were left for phone calls with trusted friends until the next school day.

Today, as Derek Thompson says in his book "Hit Makers," teenagers are always in the high school hallways. There is no escaping the social stages on which teenagers perform because instead of walk-

ing the runway of the high school hallways for a couple of hours a day, five days a week, teenagers have their personal stages in their pockets, calling them to perform every hour of every day with no opportunity to retreat to a social backstage for rest from their ever-present performance.

If you remember the social stressors of the high school hallways and lunchrooms, you can empathize with the feelings today's teens have as they carry those performance arenas around in their pockets all the time. Is there any wonder then why teenagers are more anxious and depressed than before?

Mountains of data have been collected in the last few years that point to a clear relationship between increased social media use and increased experiences of anxiety and depression.

Authors Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff cite one particularly troubling study in their book "The Coddling of the American Mind."

Research shows that in the early 2000s, just more than 1 in 10 girls aged 12–17 had a major depressive episode in the previous year. By 2016, nearly 1 in 5 girls aged 12–17 had a major depressive episode in the previous year. The rate of major depressive episodes among adolescent girls nearly doubled in less than a decade.

Haidt and Lukianoff note that adolescent boys also experienced an increase in depressive episodes, but not as dramatic as that of girls.

Root of anxiety

Girls are more likely to become anxious or depressed because of increased social media use than boys because the root of anxiety and depression in girls tends to lie more in social dynamics than it does for boys. Whereas boys often deal with social conflict through direct, physical confrontation, girls are more likely to deal with social conflict in ways exacerbated by social media, which is one explanation for their increased anxiety and depression.

We find ourselves in a spot in which we feel we have to live our lives and create a documentary of our lives at the same time. We hover behind ourselves and watch ourselves live our lives while living our lives. Is it any wonder mental health crises are on the rise? Another unfortunate reality is that this is not limited to teenagers.

Data shows social media use is adversely affecting adult mental health, too. Sure, it's safe to say that adults may feel less peer pressure to be as active on social media as teens are, but we're all performing in the same way. Constant performance brings constant pressure. Constant pressure brings

the gnawing anxiety that you're going to fail in the spotlight at some point. How long can you really perform before you need to take a break? What if you feel like you can never log off and take a break?

Navigating the current technology and social media landscape as a parent, let alone as a Christian parent, is daunting.

On one hand, banning all social media activity can unintentionally ostracize your child from his or her peers. On the other hand, the evidence shows that social media can easily hurt young people.

Lean on God

In the face of the fear and difficulty that comes with parenting amid such tension, we parents must run to the Scriptures and cling to our God, who says in Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

God is with us as we love our children and do all we can to lead them in the ways they should go. We must lean on Him for our strength and our hope.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Chris Martin is a content marketing editor at Moody Publishers and a social media, marketing and communications consultant. His book "Terms of Service" was published this year by B&H Publishing.



MARTIN

Letters to the Editor

Ireally enjoy doing the Christian Crossword. Some clues I know, but I still look up the Scriptures and read them. Sometimes a particular Scripture speaks to me for that day.

Patricia Nance
Gadsden, Ala.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“A joyful heart makes a face cheerful, but a sad heart produces a broken spirit.”

PROVERBS 15:13

There's more I want to practice and more I want to learn. ... I don't want to stop learning just because I'm done with school.

I think it's important to be at least somewhat well-rounded in a few things, continuing to learn and improve in a variety of skills or subjects. ... I'd like to take some of my time to learn and practice other things.

Hannah Muñoz

the-scroll.com

“Never stop growing, learning”

“I have always been convicted that you just don't preach or minister to the folks who come to church — you've got to go where the people are. It's not always clean, and it's not always where it's a comfortable

place to be,” said **Mike Whitt**, pastor of **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Ozark** and jail ministry coordinator for **Dale Baptist Association**.

“That ministry of presence is so powerful, just to be able to sit with somebody in their grief as their homes are being attacked and their loved ones are being captured or killed. And just to be with people, cry with them and hurt with them — they were so grateful, so encouraged by that,” said **John Stone**, associate pastor of **Willowbrook Church in Huntsville**, on the church's missions efforts in Ukraine.

“I knew I loved online community, and I had seen it work before. I thought I'd find five people who

hate papyrus font as much as I do,” said **Katie Allred**, founder of the Facebook group **Church Communications** and the author of “Church Communications: Methods and Marketing.”

Telling your testimony can encourage someone and even change the course of their life. Focus on the redemptive power of the gospel and magnify Christ. He's the reason you have a story to share.

Dana Watson
via Facebook

“There are a lot of people who are out there hurting, and I need to bring joy, smiles and laughter,” said **Bill King**, songwriter, musician and storyteller.

Kind words make impact

I have served in 4-year-old preschool Sunday School since 2012. ... I have learned a lot and have gained a lot from the experience, including many sweet and funny stories.

But no Sunday was as memorable as one when I was a substitute director for the class and learned a lesson I never forgot.

A brother and sister from out of town were visiting family and attended Sunday School. I didn't know who they were. I don't remember their names and didn't see them after that.

The problem was, the kids were not happy to be there.

The brother especially took offense at being left in this room. He said no to every invitation to participate — as if on principle. Not just initially but over the entirety of the class time, he said no. His sister was potentially more amenable to joining in, but her brother was saying no, and you could almost see her making a choice about what to do. Ultimately, she chose Team Brother, and she also said no to every invitation to participate. ...

When their relative came back for the children, she was smiling in an optimistic, hopeful way and asked, “Did you have a good time?” This is why that whole day matters.

It was my desire in that moment to speak words of affirmation to the relative and to do so in front of the children. But I couldn't lie, or they'd know it. So I said these very specific words instead: “We are so glad they came.”

When the little boy heard me, he dropped his offense and rushed to hug me tight. When he was done, the little girl did the same — she dropped her offense and rushed to hug me tight as well.

I've always remembered that moment. ... It reminds me that you never know how things will go.

Minnie Lamberth
Montgomery

From the *Twitterverse*

@Brook_Hills

We are praying for parents, students, educators & administrators as the new school year begins! Pray for our students to grow closer to Jesus & be bold in their witness & pray for their parents, teachers & administrators as they guide, encourage & support them this year.

@vaughnforest

“Part of our story, Church, is that the gospel message doesn't just make us right with God ... it makes us right with one another.” —Adam Bishop

@DrDavidLAllen

There is a great chasm between leading people and merely giving them a lecture about leadership principles.

@davidgbowman

Religious practices are good if

they flow from deep connection with our Father in heaven. They are empty rituals if they flow instead from habits grown cold. (Hosea 6:6)

@bellevuepastor

Three excellent disciplines:

1. Do the right thing.
2. Be kind to everyone.
3. Walk in humility.

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

@alan_floyd

“The world is characterized by 2 things during the days of Noah: vice and violence.” Great first week of men's Bible study!

@EElliotFdn

“The taking up of the cross is not going to be something heroic or

dramatic or enviable. It's going to be a daily practice of acceptance of small duties which you don't really like.” —Elisabeth Elliot

@randyalcorn

The God who fed a million-member family in the wilderness for forty years, fed five thousand with one boy's lunch, and who is perfectly capable of turning water into wine and stones into bread, will not have any trouble providing whatever He knows you need.

@CSLewis

“Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.”

@drjamesmeritt

“One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Anyone who has never done that needs a knee replacement.”

3 stories you should know



IMB photo

Wycliffe Bible Translators commemorates 80 years of Bible translation work this month. Founded in 1942, Wycliffe completed its first Bible translation in 1951. The 500th translation was completed in 2000. Wycliffe estimates there are more than 7,300 spoken or signed languages in use throughout the world today but only 717 have a complete translated Bible, leaving more than 1.5 billion people who don't have the full Bible available in their language. For more information on Wycliffe's Bible translation efforts, go to wycliffe.org.

The Village Church settles in abuse suit

The Village Church, a Dallas-area megachurch led by pastor Matt Chandler, recently announced it has reached a "resolution" with the woman who filed a civil lawsuit claiming the church was negligent and mishandled her abuse claims against a former children's minister at the church.

The church said the two parties came to a resolution and the civil case was dismissed from the Dallas County Court.

The church denied any wrongdoing and said the safety of children remains its "highest priority."

The family of the woman countered that assertion in a statement, claiming the church was not being "fully truthful, transparent or caring for the traumatized."

Read the full story at tabonline.org/village-settlement. (TAB Media)

Ukraine Baptist leader says 400 churches lost

About 400 Ukrainian Baptist congregations have been lost in Russia's war on Ukraine, said Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary President Yaroslav Pyzh.

While volunteers at six humanitarian relief We Care Centers across Ukraine are helping internally displaced people winterize their homes by replacing roofs, windows and doors, Pyzh said the real challenge for UBTS is restoring pastoral leadership to impacted cities.

Many pastors were displaced from war-torn areas, Pyzh said, leaving no one to bring godly hope in the midst of fear and hopelessness.

About 2,300 Baptist congregations existed across Ukraine before the war began in February, according to the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian-Baptists. (Baptist Press)

Persecuted church

Christian church, members' homes attacked by extremists in Egypt

LUXOR, Egypt — Muslim extremists attacked a church and the homes of some of its members in Luxor, Egypt, after the government approved an official license for the congregation.

The attack occurred June 23 in the al-Halla village of Luxor, relief group Barnabas Fund reported. The church had met unlicensed since 2003 and without objection from Muslims in the village, a source said.

As is the government's standard procedure when a church is licensed, interior ministry guards were posted June 23 outside the building. Local Christians suspect that the guards' presence inflamed Muslim extremists because it signaled the licensing.

A mob attacked the church, threw stones at

homes of Christians and burned their vehicles.

Local police helped interior ministry guards secure the church property and closed streets where Christians live.

Prior to a new law in 2016, a church's ability to obtain a license was nearly nonexistent, so many met illegally in unregistered buildings, Barnabas Fund reported.

Egypt is No. 20 on Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

China enacts new legal restrictions targeting Christians, other faiths

BEIJING, China — The Chinese Communist Party is clamping down even tighter on religious groups in the country.

The relief group Barnabas Fund reported China's "Measures for the Financial Management

of Venues for Religious Activities" went into effect June 1. The 55 articles included in the new legal restrictions target churches, monasteries,



Photo courtesy of the CIA World Factbook

mosques and other places of worship.

The measures give the CCP's religious affairs department greater authority to regulate, audit and inspect ministries and punish violators.

They come 13 months after "Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel" went into effect.

Those measures mandate that church leaders who want to be state registered must pledge allegiance to China, support the CCP and adhere to socialist tenets.

Alabama news

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► **Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Weogufka**, celebrated its 175th plus two anniversary July 17 with guest speaker David Crowe, director of missions for Central Baptist Association.

Congregational singing was led by music minister Josh Culver with special music by Miriam and David Crowe, Albert Palmer, Jackson Wallace, Jeff Dye and Danny Hutcherson.

Ralph Foster (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to deacon Ralph Goswick

(left), who has served for 47 years.

“The celebration was wonderful! It was a humbling experience to be part of a church that started in the hearts of people so many years ago,” said Pastor Jimmy Brown.

Lunch was served following the service.



Photo courtesy of Ralph Foster

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **West Side Baptist Church, Eva**, celebrated its 50th anniversary Aug. 14. Charter member Jeff Nelson shared memories and facilitated

members in a time of sharing their testimonies.

Music director Leah McRae led congregational music and a choir special. Randy Makemson, East

Cullman Baptist associational missionary, presented a plaque, as did the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

“It was wonderful to see God’s hand in the church for 50 years,” said Pastor Gary Peebles. “We have watched Him move in many ways.”

Maybelle Mangrum, chair of the church’s anniversary committee, made an anniversary cake and cookies for the occasion. Lunch was served following the service.

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Ryan Baptist Church, Joppa**, celebrated its 100th anniversary July 31 with former pastor Eldridge Criscoe delivering the message. Criscoe also preached for the 75th anniversary and has served as a revival speaker and interim pastor.



Photo courtesy of Joe Teal

New Beginning sang, and Caleb Hudson, a member of the group and former music director, led congregational singing. The choir also participated in the service.

Joe Teal (left) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate.

“It was a great day for our church,” said pastor Terry Hudson (right), who was a member and deacon and was later called to ministry.

Peggy Binning, church secretary, wrote the last 25 years of church history to add to the history of the first 75 years. Michelle Hicks painted a picture of the church and provided artwork for the cover of the church history book and anniversary bulletin. Lunch followed the service.

PINE BARREN ASSOCIATION

► **Bible Baptist Fellowship, Camden**, celebrated its 25th anniversary Aug. 7 with its first pastor, Don Newton (left), preaching. Butch King of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Linden, led congregational music and sang two specials. Etta Wick-er served as pianist.



Photo courtesy of Jerrol Hare

Pastor Tommy Primm (center) read the history of the church, and Jerrol Hare (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate. A covered dish lunch followed the service.

SALEM-TROY ASSOCIATION

► **Harmony Baptist Church, Troy**, celebrated its 150th anniversary July 24 with Michael Moseley of Prattville as the guest speaker. Congregational singing was led by music director Larry Tillery with special music by Moseley. Ellen Dewberry of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate. A covered dish lunch was served following the service.



Photo courtesy of Ellen Dewberry

“We had a wonderful crowd,” said Pastor Curtis Faulkner.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► Outstanding high school band students are invited to apply for a seat in the 14th annual **University of Mobile Honor Band**.

The event for students in grades 9–12 will take place Feb. 9–11 on the University of Mobile campus. Admission is based on application and band director recommendation.

The three-day event will conclude with a concert. Applications for UM Honor Band can be found on the honor band website at umobile.edu/honorband. Deadline for applications is Nov. 21.

For more information, contact Steve Dunn at sdunn@umobile.edu.

WMU Foundation President David George announces 2023 retirement

David George, president of the WMU Foundation, plans to retire June 30, 2023. He made the announcement July 28 during the executive committee meeting of the foundation’s board of directors.

George said he wants to devote more time to his family, his church and volunteer ministry efforts. He believes the WMU Foundation is in a strong position and ready for transition.

“Serving at the WMU Foundation for 21 years has been the absolute pinnacle of my professional life,” George shared with executive committee members, according to a WMU Foundation news release. “I will forever be grateful to the WMU Foundation Board — past and present — for their unwavering support.”



GEORGE

Board chair Bob Cardinal said in the news release, “We are excited for David as he begins this new chapter in his life, and we are grateful to him for his exemplary service to and leadership of the WMU Foundation. ... David will be greatly missed. His wisdom, vision and leadership under God’s guidance have been vital in helping the WMU Foundation to be poised to enter confidently into a new era with a new president.”

A search committee for a new president has been appointed and will begin its work immediately. The goal is for the committee to bring a recommendation to the full board at its April 2023 meeting. (TAB Media)

Fact-finding mission

Southern Baptist Convention under review by federal prosecutors

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

During a special-called meeting Aug. 15, members of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee heard a report and updates related to the Aug. 12 announcement of a federal investigation into the SBC.

The meeting was not open to the public, but more details related to the EC's next steps in a variety of areas are anticipated in the coming days.

The Aug. 12 news report and accompanying statement by SBC entity and auxiliary leaders and SBC President Bart Barber (see below) does not indicate when EC leaders first learned of the United States Department of Justice investigation but does state the investigation will include "multiple SBC entities."

The DOJ also has not released any information on the topic.

Purpose of assessment

The work being done by federal prosecutors is technically fact-finding in nature at this point.

Its purpose is reportedly to determine whether any criminal activity allegedly occurred by any individual or group (beyond those already convicted of crimes) that appears in the sexual abuse report released by Guidepost Solutions.

The Guidepost report was the culmination of the 2021 SBC messengers' call for a third-party investigation into the EC's handling of sexual abuse.

According to the DOJ's website, evidence obtained by the prosecutors in cases such as this one will be pre-



Photo by Van Payne/The Alabama Baptist

sented to a grand jury, and the grand jury will in turn vote on whether indictments should be issued.

At press time, the EC is the only group confirmed to have received a subpoena from DOJ, and no individuals from the EC have been subpoenaed, according to an EC spokesperson.

Along with contacting the EC, The Alabama Baptist reached out to each of the 11 other entities and one auxiliary (Woman's Missionary Union).

All responded and most confirmed no subpoena has been received.

Two entities pointed back to the joint statement released Aug. 12 by SBC leaders.

It states the following:

Joint statement

"The SBC Executive Committee recently became aware that the Department of Justice has initiated an investigation into the Southern Baptist Convention, and that the investigation will include multiple SBC entities.

"Individually and collectively each SBC entity is resolved to fully and completely cooperate with the investigation. While we continue to grieve and lament past mistakes related to

sexual abuse, current leaders across the SBC have demonstrated a firm conviction to address those issues of the past and are implementing measures to ensure they are never repeated in the future. The fact that the SBC Executive Committee recently completed a fully transparent investigation is evidence of this commitment.

"We recognize our reform efforts are not finished. In fact, those efforts are continuing this very moment as the recently announced Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force begins its work and as each entity has strengthened its efforts to protect against abuse. Our commitment to cooperate with the Department of Justice is born from our demonstrated commitment to transparently address the scourge of sexual abuse.

"While so many things in the world are uncertain, we can be certain that we serve a mighty God. Nothing, including this investigation, takes Him by surprise. We take comfort in that and humbly ask you be in prayer in the days and weeks ahead.

"Specifically, we ask God to grant wisdom and discernment to each person dealing with the investigation."

Signed by:

- ▶ Daniel L. Akin, president, Southeastern Seminary
- ▶ Jason K. Allen, president, Midwestern Seminary
- ▶ Bart Barber, president, SBC

- ▶ Paul Chitwood, president, International Mission Board
- ▶ James K. Dew, president, New Orleans Seminary
- ▶ Hance Dilbeck Jr., president, GuideStone Financial Resources
- ▶ Kevin Ezell, president, North American Mission Board
- ▶ Adam W. Greenway, president, Southwestern Seminary
- ▶ Jeff Iorg, president, Gateway Seminary
- ▶ Brent Leatherwood, acting president, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
- ▶ Ben Mandrell, president, Lifeway Christian Resources
- ▶ Willie D. McLaurin, interim president, SBC Executive Committee
- ▶ Albert Mohler Jr., president, Southern Seminary
- ▶ Sandra Wisdom-Martin, executive director, WMU

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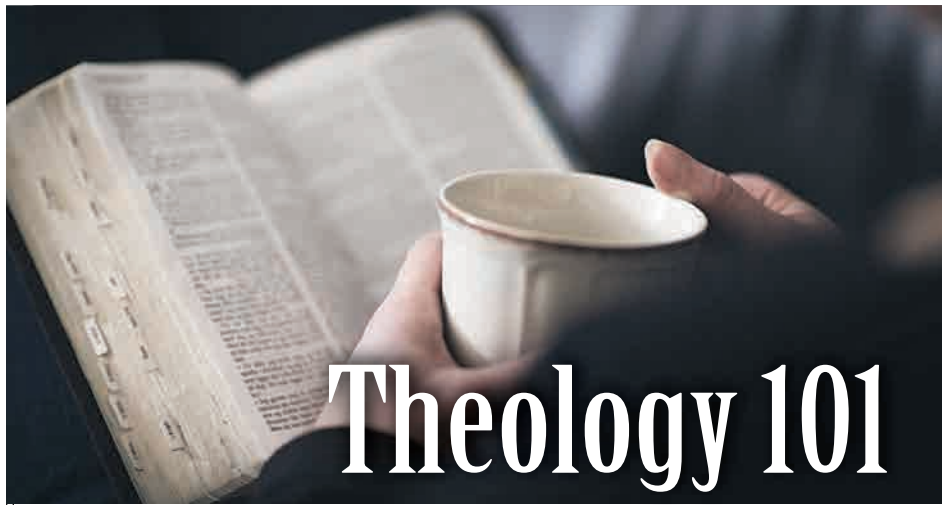
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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Spiritual Blessings

Failing to Obey

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

There is both a conscious and unconscious dimension to sin. Last week Theology 101 focused on the deliberate decision to cross boundaries God sets up. These may be labeled “sins of commission.”

This week we consider what we might call the unconscious dimension — failing to obey what God commands and expects. These may be called “sins of omission.”

God’s positive commands and expectations are many and varied. We might begin with what is commonly termed the Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37–39: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Commanded to love

If this is the Great Commandment, failure to obey it is the great sin. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus broadened the commandment to love when He admonished, “I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you” (Matt. 5:44).

The biblical command to love is quite broad. Not only are we commanded to love God, but also to love others — our enemies as well as fellow believers.

Not only is it sinful to disobey the Great Commandment, it also is sinful to fail to obey the Great Commission.

Jesus commanded, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19).

Pursue good

The unconscious sins of failing to do as the Bible commands are quite far-reaching. For example, James 4:17 says, “To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

First Thessalonians 5:14–22 contains numerous commands:

- ▶ Always pursue what is good.
- ▶ Rejoice always.
- ▶ Pray without ceasing.
- ▶ In everything give thanks.
- ▶ Do not quench the Spirit.

Unfortunately, we regularly encounter the sins of failing to do good — neglecting to help, speak, worship, pray, bear witness or make disciples, just to name a few.

God’s word and His Spirit work together to sensitize His children to sins of both commission and omission.

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



New app designed to plug men into discipleship

By Hamilton Richardson
The Alabama Baptist

For men striving to follow Jesus, advice from churches and ministries can take different forms. But sometimes it takes out-of-the-box thinking to make the right impact, which is exactly what happened when some Christian leaders put their heads together and created a men’s ministry app.

Andy Blanks, a member at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, is co-founder and adviser for Youth Ministry 360, which provides youth workers with a growing number of innovative, creative and relevant Bible study resources and events.

“I co-founded YM360 in 2010,” Blanks recalled.

“We started as a publishing company but added live events in 2015. So in addition to curriculum and discipleship resources, we do our GENERATE camp and a preaching conference called CLEAR.”

‘One-stop shop’

Blanks also is co-founder of Iron Hill Press and lead developer of the Strive app, which he calls a one-stop shop for men as they pursue Christ.

“I gave leadership to all of our content efforts, publishing and training until this year,” he said. “In January, I stepped away from the day-to-day leadership [of YM360] to grow our men’s ministry imprint called Iron Hill Press. Up to that point it had simply been a passion project, but I felt God calling me to give it full-time attention. I am still on the YM360 board and a special consultant, but I am growing our men’s ministry brand full time now.”

The Strive app includes daily devotions, weekly articles, a growing

sermon library and Bible studies, Blanks said, adding that the idea behind it was pretty simple.

“We’ve been doing men’s ministry for about seven years, and we’ve noticed a couple of things,” he explained. “First, many men aren’t plugged into daily discipleship rhythms. They don’t have the good spiritual habits necessary for real growth. Strive is our attempt to address this.”

Having a strong desire to help men become who God intends them to be, Blanks said he wants to see men passionately pursue God and invest deeply in their families, churches and communities.

“We want men in God’s word each day and to be growing in their faith by reading articles about marriage, parenthood and spiritual development,”

he noted. “We want them to have access to solid biblical voices in the form of sermons and Bible studies.

“The second thing we noticed is that there are a lot of men who know they need to be growing in their faith, but they don’t know where to turn to do it.”

‘Theologically solid’

With so many men’s ministry resources available, Blanks said some are excellent but cautioned that some are not.

“Many are theologically unsound,” he explained. “We wanted to deliver theologically solid content in one place so men know right where to go to find it. That’s our goal.”

Blanks said he and others at Iron Hill Press are excited

about the impact the app is making, but continue to work on new ideas to help improve the spiritual lives of men.

“We’ve got a lot more ideas in the works,” Blanks said. “This is really just the beginning.”



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For more information about the Strive app and the ministry of Iron Hill Press, visit ironhillpress.com. To learn more about YM360, visit youthministry360.com.

Investing in others

Missions partnership brings ‘new concern and desire to see the lost reached’

(continued from page 1)

Now she’s prayer walking her neighborhood in the same way and encourages others to do so, too.

Ben Curlee, pastor of Lineville Baptist, noted the church’s work with Wallace and Dee “has been a catalyst for gospel awareness.”

“Our people are fully engaged in this,” he said.

The partnership started in 2018 when Scotty Goldman, director of the office of global missions at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, told Wallace that God had put it on his heart to connect him and Dee with Curlee. Originally from Alabama, the couple had reached out to Goldman for help recruiting partners to prayer walk.

Developing relationships

“We are desperate for people to come here and pray,” Wallace said. “We recognize God working here is tied with prayer.”

Goldman’s role is part of the Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections ministry — to help Alabama Baptist churches develop relation-

ships with missionaries from the state. It is funded in part through the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering and is undergirded by prayer support provided during the Myers-Mallory Week

of Prayer, which also assists disaster relief, Alabama Women’s

an’s Missionary Union, church planting and church revitalization.

This year’s Week

of Prayer is Sept. 11–18, with an offering goal of \$1.2 million. Lineville Baptist’s partnership with Wallace and Dee is featured on Day 5. (See Week of Prayer preview on page 11.)

Wallace said they already can see the fruit of the Myers-Mallory offering — the partnership with Lineville Baptist has been a perfect fit. The church has

sent teams to prayer walk and encourage them, and he feels “they truly are invested here with us.”

Curlee said partnering with Wallace and Dee also has impacted the church.

“It galvanized our people in ways I’ve never seen in my years as a pastor. There’s been a new concern and desire to see the lost reached.”

For more information about and downloadable resources for the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering visit myers-mallory.org.



IMB missionaries say prayer walking is vital to their work in Europe.

**“We are desperate
for people to come
here and pray.
We recognize God
working here is
tied with prayer.”**

Wallace
IMB missionary

Week of Prayer

for State Missions is Sept. 11–18.



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DAY 1

Introduction

Through the ministry of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Alabama Baptists can be actively involved in missions by praying for, volunteering with and helping support five strategic areas — Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, disaster relief, church planting, church revitalization and partnership missions.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 2

Disaster Relief

Cookie Baker said her work as a Disaster Relief chaplain has brought her in contact with person after person who needs to hear there's hope for the future. Led by Mark Wakefield, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers like Baker are bringing that help and hope to places where people are hurting.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 3

Alabama WMU

For 25 years, Marti Richardson has taught missions to preschoolers at Eastmont Baptist Church in Montgomery, and she's seen some of them grow up to be missionaries. That's exactly the kind of missions discipleship Alabama WMU exists to support.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 4

Church Planting

Gilliam Springs Baptist Church in Arab wanted to reach their area more effectively, so they began working toward planting a church in the Lincoln Mill area of Huntsville. As they did, SBOM's church planter training helped them prepare.



Photo courtesy of Melanie Arnold

DAY 5

Partnership Missions

Wallace and Dee, an Alabama missionary couple serving in western Europe, said they were "desperate" for partners to come and pray for the people they serve. SBOM connected them with Lineville Baptist Church, and both the missionaries and the church have seen God move in a big way.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 6

Church Revitalization

The revitalization journey of First Baptist Church Rogersville had been up and down for several years, so they decided to call SBOM and ask for help from a revitalization consultant. The church has since been able to refocus, make plans and grow.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 7

Disaster Relief

Ron Culberson says his teams can do a lot more a lot faster these days than they could when he first started serving as a Disaster Relief volunteer. That's because of a growing fleet of equipment provided by Alabama Baptists. With machinery like skid steers, they're able to help more people more quickly.



Photo courtesy of SBOM

DAY 8

Alabama WMU

Hannah Thomas, a longtime missionary in Sub-Saharan Africa, says the seeds of her missions call started at WorldSong Missions Place. The camp invests yearly in children, helping them know they can have a relationship with God and share that with others around the world.

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

To download resources for the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering, visit myers-mallory.org.



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3 must-learn church communication lessons

By Mark MacDonald
The Alabama Baptist

Avenues for communication and promotion are constantly changing. Is your church shifting with them?

No longer does the church have to rely on people visiting a building, getting a church bulletin or driving by our signs. With the internet we can slide into search results, become part of a personal podcast ritual or appear on a social media feed. But we still need the right content to get their attention.

Three lessons

Here are three must-learn church communication lessons to ensure content gets discovered:

1. Learn to say their name. In our noisy communication world, the church needs to cleverly engage.

Saying their name is the best way. Like a crowded room where everyone is talking, most will ignore you until you say someone's name. Then that person will look to you.

First, however, a church needs to know what name to say. You need to understand the group you're trying to engage.

Learn to get their attention by showing pictures of that demographic or using keywords or phrases.

2. Learn to speak their pain. Once you know the groups in your congrega-

tion and in your community, learn as much about them as you can.

God also wants us to go a step further and love them. That means we need to understand their needs and concerns and speak solutions to them. Love them enough to help solve their problems or meet their needs.

3. Learn the solutions to proclaim. Don't say their names unless you want their attention. Then don't speak their pain unless you have solutions.

When you do offer solutions, you'll get your targeted audience to lean in for proof. What a great time to offer stories and testimonies.

Should every communication be spiritual? Not necessarily. But every temporal thread (or conversation) should easily connect to the eternal scarlet thread of the gospel. Your church needs to discover its thread (a solution) and then educate itself on how to use it to attract people in the community, engage them with fellowship and weave in the gospel story.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Mark MacDonald is a pastor, author, church branding strategist and executive director of Center for Church Communication. His book, Be Known for Something, is available at BeKnownBook.com.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

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Providence Baptist Church, Town Creek, Alabama, is in search of a senior pastor. Please send resumés to: jcrosslin89@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Sweet Home Baptist Church in Guntersville, Alabama, is in search of a pastor. Interested candidates may send a resumé to: sweethomesearchcommittee@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Spring Bank Baptist Church in Silas, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Please email resumés to: michaelthorn@gmail.com.

PASTOR

Lakewood Baptist Church, Phenix City, Alabama, is now accepting resumés for the position of full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: pastorsearch@lbcpc.org or 4011 Lakewood Drive, Phenix City, AL 36867.

PASTOR

Union Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Resumés will be received through Sept. 30 by mail at: Pastor Search Committee, Union Baptist Church, 5251 Grand Bay Wilmer Road S, Grand Bay, AL 36541 or by email at: admin@ubcgrandbay.org.

PASTOR

Thomaston Baptist Church, Thomaston, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Please email resumé to: thomastonbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Concord Highland Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: CHBC2672@bellsouth.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Prattville, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumés to: PHBCPrattville@gmail.com.

WORSHIP PASTOR

FBC Fairhope is searching for a full-time worship pastor to lead corporate worship, including choir, praise team, orchestra and praise band. The worship ministry also includes administrating children, youth and senior adult choirs and leading several special events during the year. For more information, contact Kerry Flowers at kerrybflowers@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Collinsville Baptist Church is seeking a minister of music to direct a small sanctuary choir and lead traditional music for our friendly congregation. Starting salary is \$800 a month, may fluctuate based on training and experience. Mail your resumé or letter of interest to: CBC, P.O. 558, Collinsville, AL 35961.

MUSIC MINISTER

Philadelphia Baptist Church in Smiths Station, Alabama, is seeking a full-time music minister. Our congregation enjoys worshipping to both traditional and contemporary music. If you enjoy Jesus and serving His church, please send your resumé to: duck.clay1@gmail.com.

YOUTH AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz, Alabama, is now accepting resumés for a full-time youth and recreation minister. Please send resumés to: Sardis Baptist Church, 1501 Church Street, Boaz, AL 35956 or to Mike Goforth at megoforth@yahoo.com. We are a growing, missions minded church who is very active in sharing the gospel at home and abroad. Contact Mike Goforth at 256-506-2875 with any questions.

STUDENT MINISTER

Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, seeks to fill the full-time position of student minister. Resumés may be mailed to: Student Minister Search Committee, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420. ATTN: Mr. Jim Syler, Chairman.

YOUTH MINISTER

Immanuel Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, is seeking applications for a full-time youth minister. Must have a love for Christ and a passion for ministering to young people. Send resumé to: ibc.youthsearch@myimmanuel.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

EDITOR/PRESIDENT

The Baptist Courier, the oldest ministry partner of the South Carolina Baptist Convention (153 years), is seeking a full-time editor and president. The position requires oversight of the print and electronic editions of the monthly magazine, the website, weekly podcast, social media, Courier Publishing (books), tours and fundraising. Qualifications include significant

experience as a Baptist communicator/writer who adheres to the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message; active member of a Southern Baptist church; resumé with at least three references; and at least a master's degree. Deadline for receiving resumés and letters of reference is Sept. 30. Please email resumés and letters of reference to: tarafreeman@fbccola.com.

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

FBC Tallassee's PreSchool Academy has job openings for teachers for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. Send a letter of interest or resumé to: julie@fbctallassee.com. For more information, contact Denise Voss, dvoss@fbctallassee.com.

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PROVIDING A CALMING EFFECT

By Grace Thornton
Special to the SBOM

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief chaplains take help, hope to hurting people

Since 2005, Cookie Baker has loaded up and headed to a disaster zone more than 80 times. As an Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief chaplain, she has sat with person after person and been a listening ear. She's talked with them after they've suffered loss, some even losing everything.

"It's my ministry. It's my heart. It's what I do," she said.

One of the conversations she remembers most vividly happened just before Christmas in 2021, after a tornado plowed through Mayfield, Kentucky.

"One family I talked to, a couple and three boys — the oldest was six years old — they were living in the car," Baker said. "They were almost emotionless, like they were devastated. It's heartbreaking to see children like that."

They had lost everything, and she was able to give them gift cards to buy the children Christmas presents. The mother "just broke down crying and said, 'I told you an angel would show up, I told you there is a God and He would send somebody,'" Baker said. "That's what our teams do is try to give people hope."

Every deployment is different and unique, because every disaster brings its own unique heartache for the people it touches, she said. Each one offers opportunities to share hope.

But in her experience, flood recovery provides the best chance to get to know the people personally.

"With flood recovery, typically you're working in their homes, so the homeowner is there and the work may last two or three days," Baker said. "You get to listen to them longer, build a better relationship with them. That has been one of my favorite things to do because you get to spend so much time with them. If it's a brother and sister in Christ, you're encouraging them. If not, you get opportunity after opportunity to talk about Jesus."

State Missionary Mark Wakefield, Alabama Baptist

disaster relief strategist, said DR chaplains get to have conversations over and over with hurting people.

"One of the functions chaplains do is just to be with people in a nonjudgmental way to listen and encourage them through what they're facing," he



Photo provided by Cookie Baker

Presenting Bibles to homeowners like this one in Panama City, Fla., is one of the many ways Cookie Baker and other disaster relief chaplains minister to those in need.

said. "Often we hear people say that it's comforting just to hear that the way they're feeling and reacting is normal."

A disaster can affect a person spiritually but also physiologically — the brain can have difficulty thinking or making decisions at a time like that. Having a chaplain who is trained to help a person tell his or her story can be a huge help in their distress, Wakefield said. "Chaplains are trained to listen well and calm others by meeting very basic needs. Listening to a story has a calming effect. They can also help people problem solve."

Often victims of a disaster have a lot of spiritual questions, he said. Chaplains listen but also

sometimes have opportunities to offer insight that might be helpful.

Baker said she's grateful for the generous contributions of Alabama Baptists to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering that pave the way for chaplains to have those conversations. Those gifts provide tools to help people — skid steers, shower trailers, mobile kitchens, and the vehicles to transport them all.

Without people giving, "we would not be able to go out and do the jobs that we do," she said.

For more information about Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief, visit SBDR.org or contact Mark Wakefield, mwakefield@alsbom.org, 334-613-2267.

**WEEK
OF PRAYER**
for State Missions
is Sept. 11-18.


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NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE

Covington CWJC leaders, participants celebrate first graduating class

By Lanell Downs Smith
The Alabama Baptist

Covington Christian Women's Job Corps in Andalusia provides job and life skills training in a Christian environment to help equip and encourage women in need of a new life in Jesus — spiritually, physically, economically and socially.

The first Bible study and parenting classes were held April 8, an effort spanning more than 25 years from inspiration to fruition.

National Woman's Missionary Union began developing CWJC in 1994 as a method of women helping women address the needs of those in poverty. In 1998, Judy Phillips, who volunteered with the Christian Service Center in Andalusia, learned of the ministry and wanted to help develop a local site.

With the encouragement of Neal Wyatt, then-Covington Baptist Association director of missions, Phillips was trained to coordinate a local CWJC. But the site didn't immediately come together.

Need for local site

Current Alabama WMU President Shirley Smith learned about CWJC through Missions Mosaic magazine and her involvement as a church and associational WMU leader. Some 10 years before retirement from her job as an accountant, Smith heard a testimony about CWJC at the annual Alabama WMU Connect (formerly Equip) conference. She felt the need to look seriously at beginning a local CWJC site.

In 2018, Pat Ingram, Alabama WMU missions and ministry consultant, met with Smith and current Covington Association DOM Otis Corbitt to discuss CWJC.

Around that time, Phillips learned that Crossover Ministry, a local residency program for men and women recovering from drug or alcohol addiction, needed help providing parenting classes for women.

"My wheels began to turn," Phil-



Photo courtesy of Shirley Smith

Covington Christian Women's Job Corps co-coordinator Judy Phillips facilitates the first CWJC Bible study class in Andalusia. Developing a local site was an effort spanning more than 25 years from inspiration to fruition.

lips recalled. "The women's supervisor for the Crossover Ministry [and I discussed] how we could meet that need. In the meantime, Shirley Smith and I had begun conversations about CWJC. I shared my earlier story with her and the conversation with the women's supervisor. Shirley, the newly elected WMU state president, took the 'bull by the horns' and she and I began to get certified [as coordinators]."

After assessing local needs and available resources, the two agreed helping Crossover Ministry was a place to begin. The COVID-19 pandemic created delays, Smith said, but she and Phillips attended the first CWJC online training in 2020.

'We are blessed'

Next Smith and Phillips set about enlisting and training mentors with the goal of providing volunteers to meet one-on-one each Friday to listen to and pray specifically for the mentees, help them set realistic goals and review progress with

goals for accountability and encouragement.

"Our mentors have been committed and dedicated from the start," Phillips noted. "We are blessed to have these ladies join us each week to meet with the participants and encourage them to set goals and to complete the program."

Covington CWJC currently operates out of the newly renovated Christian Service Center space with some 14 volunteers who are mentors and/or advisory board members. Numerous individuals, Sunday School classes and missions groups have come alongside to support the work in prayer and help provide services, Phillips said.

"We partner with the Crossover Ministry to provide a Bible study and parenting class for its clients," she noted.

"Crossover partners with our local community college to provide GED and other classes for the participants.

"Because we are under the um-

brella of the Covington Baptist Association, we are included in its budget and newsletter updates and connected with the local churches in our association. Several Sunday School classes and individuals have provided lunch for us on a weekly basis."

'God at work'

Co-coordinators Smith and Phillips have witnessed God at work in the lives of the women involved in Covington CWJC.

"Bible study never fails to impact the lives of those who hear, read or study the Word," Phillips declared. "We've seen attitudes change and [the] overall outlook on their future change."

"One of the participants works at a local restaurant and her supervisor is in my Sunday School class. She has told me how [the participant's] language, attitude and even her work habits have improved. Bible study, prayers and mentoring are what have made the difference."

CWJC includes a covenant relationship, Smith noted. Signed by volunteers and participants, the covenant outlines the commitments they make with CWJC and each other.

Mentors and the advisory board have begun to evaluate the program to review what is working well and find opportunities for improvement, Smith said. They plan to continue working through Crossover and hope to expand services to other women in the area by conducting a job fair and offering a range of life skills classes, including family budgeting, career choices, preparing resumés, interview preparation, menu planning/cooking and banking.

The first Covington CWJC class is scheduled to graduate Aug. 26.

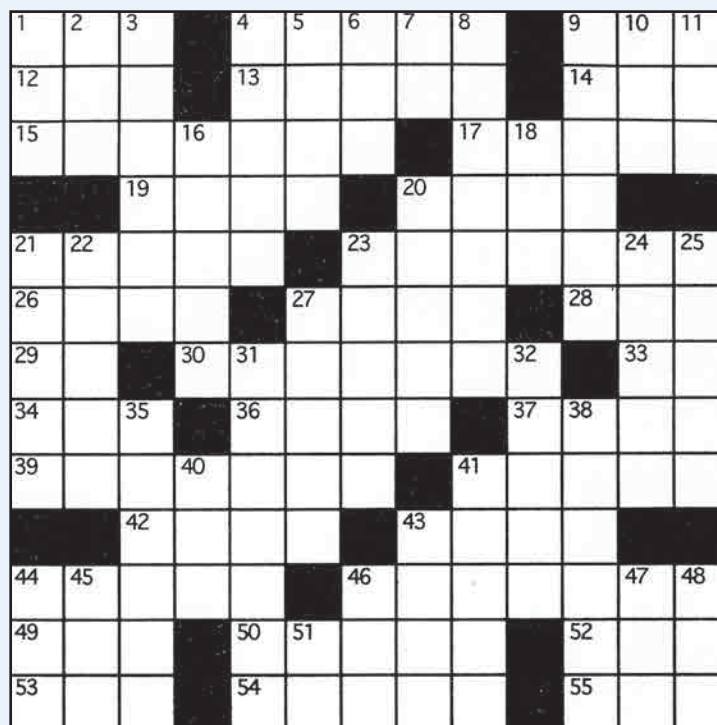
Individuals and groups can help by volunteering as mentors or providing meals, treat bags, paper products, journals or devotion books, and backpacks with basic supplies.

To learn more about CWJC visit alabamawmu.org/cwjcsites or contact Alabama WMU at 334-613-2226.

CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

1. Pronoun.
4. Essential.
9. Genetic initials.
12. Wrath.
13. ____ the Netophathite. (Jer. 40:8)
14. "Having Bethel on the west, and ____ on the east." (Gen. 12:8)
15. "Let thy cattle gender with a ____ kind." (Lev. 19:19)
17. "Let us ____ before the Lord our Maker." (Ps. 95:6)
19. "Take thine ____, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke 12:19)
20. Component of teen's "uniform." (pl.)
21. "The street" on the Left Bank.
23. Evangelist's family.
26. Prophet who interceded for Judah. (2 Chron. 28:9)
27. "Claudius commanded all Jews to depart from ____." (Acts 18:2)
28. Saturate in liquid.
29. Brit. Isl. off Normandy.
30. Smote them with _____. (1 Sam. 5:6)
33. Cathode. (abbr.)
34. Santa ____.
36. Computer. (abbr.)
37. Layer.
39. "His meat was ____ and wild honey." (Matt. 3:4)
41. Belonging to Shakespeare.
42. Actress Peggy.
43. "Jubal, father of all such as handle the ____ and organ." (Gen. 4:21)
44. "Otello" is one.
46. Those who bring about.
49. "The Lord shall ____



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- the bough." (Isa. 10:33)
 50. "O ____, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55)
 52. Sup.
 53. Fine point. (abbr.)
 54. "____ into His gates." (Ps. 100:4)
 55. Former Ford model.
- ## DOWN
1. "Your life is ____ with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3)
 2. A son of Bela. (1 Chron. 7:7)
 3. Extreme.
 4. Usually a sentence from a Bible chapter.
 5. ____ dixit.
 6. Article.
 7. Twelve-step group. (abbr.)
 8. "Who ... can be ____ unto the Lord?" (Ps. 89:6)
 9. Belonging to the son of Zorobabel. (Luke 3:27)
 10. Negative vote. (var.)
 11. Feel ill.
 16. Escape.
 18. Masculine name.
 20. Bodily swelling.
 21. Of a limited area.
 22. Chief of David's captains. (2 Sam. 23:8)
 23. "Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of ____." (Luke 16:20)
 24. "Be ye not unequally ____." (2 Cor. 6:14)
 25. Boxes.
 27. Retires.
 31. Sermon.
 32. "I will exalt my throne above the ____." (Isa. 14:13)
 35. "My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I ____." (Job 42:8)
 38. A city of Benjamin. (Josh. 18:27)
 40. Middle East. rep.
 41. Brand well known to hockey players.
 43. "____ mercy upon me, O Lord." (Ps. 6:2)
 44. "For if God ... spared not the ____ world." (2 Pet. 2:4-5)
 45. American author.
 46. Siamese.
 47. Tattle, with "on."
 48. Reg.
 51. TLC giver.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the *Faith*

Anne Bradstreet — first poet in America

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672) was the first writer in England's North American colonies to be published. A Puritan poet, her work still resonates with readers today.

This year marks the 350th anniversary of her death.

Anne was born in Northampton, England, on March 20, 1612, to Puritan parents, Thomas Dudley and Dorothy Yorke. Receiving a superior education for her time, she was tutored in history, literature and several languages.

When Anne was 16, she married Simon Bradstreet. They, along with her parents, emigrated to New England in 1630 during the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Finding a home

After arriving in what is now Salem, Massachusetts, the Bradstreet family moved around until finally settling in North Andover.

Despite poor health, she had eight children in 10 years, all of whom lived to adulthood. In addition to her various other duties, Anne wrote poetry.

Her first collection, and the only one published during her lifetime, was "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America." Published in 1650, it was popular both in America and Britain.

Most of her poems centered around family, nature, faith in God and eternity.

Two of her most popular poems were published after her death: "To My Dear and Loving Husband" and "Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666."

Her personal library contained more than 800 books. When her home burned, she lost many earthly items but kept her faith: "And when I could no longer look/ I blest His grace that gave and took/ The world no longer let me love/ My hope, and treasure lies above."



BRADSTREET

Bradstreet contracted tuberculosis toward the end of her life and died Sept. 16, 1672. Although the location of her grave is uncertain, many historians believe she is buried in the Old Burying Ground in North Andover.

The Bradstreet Gate at Harvard and the Anne Bradstreet Early Childhood Center in North Andover are named in her honor.

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M—Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).

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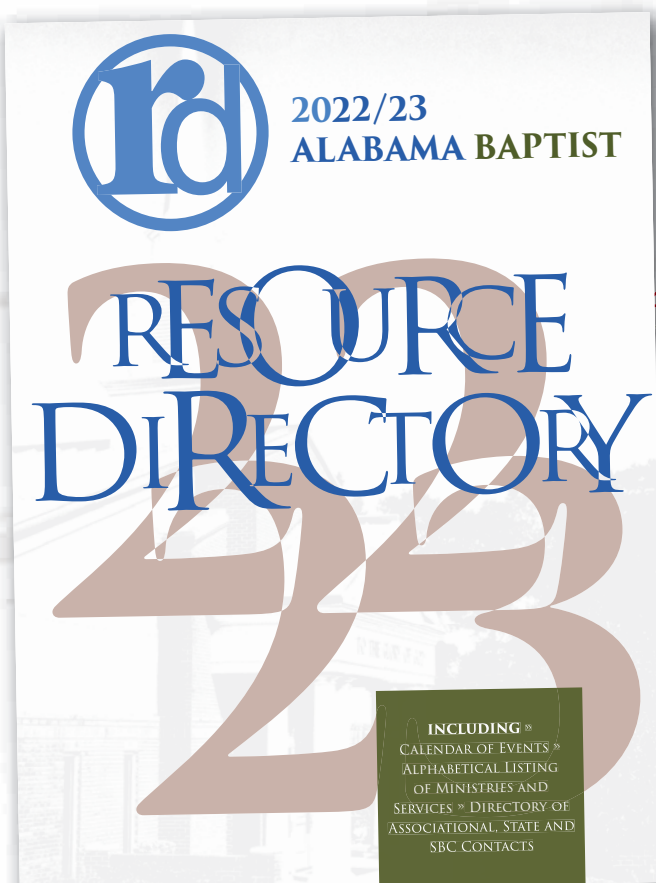
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Providing calmness

Artist uses gifts to 'create something beautiful and give back' at Brookwood Baptist Medical

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

For Tracy Jarrells, art is a great release. It brings her joy “to kind of get in there and make a mess and see what comes out of it.”

Her art also brings calm to people around her.

“I like to make pieces that are calming and soothing, and the responses I’ve been getting from the community are just that — they feel relaxed, warm, soothed,” Jarrells related.

That fits well with the art she had on display in the Patricia S. Bendall Art Gallery at Brookwood Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham in July. She sees it as a way to minister to patients and visitors.

For patients

“It gives them something else to think about other than being in the hospital,” Jarrells explained.

The gallery hosted the work of local artists until the COVID-19 pandemic caused the program to be paused. Jarrells is the first artist to be

featured as part of a restart.

David McKinney, community relations and communications manager for Brookwood Baptist Health, said the gallery “offers Brookwood visitors an opportunity to brighten their days while receiving care and is a favorite facility landmark of staff members across several departments.”

Inspired by faith

McKinney noted many of Jarrells’ pieces have Bible verses on the back and are inspired by her faith so they’re a great fit in the gallery, which is directly across from a new chapel.

Her work “perfectly represents Brookwood Baptist Health’s mission of extending the healing ministry of Christ,” McKinney said.

Jarrells says that’s her hope on a holistic level. She always prays for God to guide her art, and hospital work is close to her heart as well. She was a “candy stripper” growing up; her parents always served at their local hospital; and her father was president of the auxiliary.



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist
Local artist Tracy Jarrells stands with her art on display at Patricia S. Bendall Art Gallery at Brookwood Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham.

And her daughter is a NICU nurse at another medical facility.

“It’s a great place, a hard place, but it’s important that we invest,” Jarrells said. “I think it’s important to support, love and encourage those who are there.”

Like her hospital service, Jarrells’ art also started when she was a child. An aunt would do crafts with her and her sister, and she loved it.

“I loved creating something, making something,” she said.

She took classes at the local art museum and college, then studied art in high school, but tabled it as she earned a college degree and raised a family.

“I had my kids, my family, and moved around, and now they’re grown so I have a little bit more time,” Jarrells said. “I pulled out all the supplies again, and it’s been really fun.”

“I think the one thing

I would say is if you’re a young mom, we get put on the back burner a lot. No regrets, of course, but it would’ve been great if I would’ve taken a little time and made that time to enjoy [creating art]. I encourage people to take time to do what you love.”

Most of Jarrells’ work is acrylic on canvas, though she has been experimenting with textures, thicknesses and adding things like sand and stones to her pieces. She said she loves the opportunity to make something other people can enjoy.

‘Consume so much’

“We are in a world where we consume so much — we consume social media, entertainment, movies and sports,” Jarrells said.

“It’s really fun for me to be able to create something

beautiful and give back.”

She believes God gave her the ability and passion to express herself through art.

“I think the Lord really downloaded that in my DNA. To be able to pull it back out has been really fun,” Jarrells said. “The inspiration comes from all different

things, and I try to put a Bible verse on the back of most of them, either for insight or encouragement for somebody else.”

The pieces reflect the truth of the verse, she said, like the piece that says “do not be anxious” on the back. Her prayer is that anyone who sees it will “be reminded that the Lord’s got it.”

The art gallery at Brookwood is on the ground level between the main entrance and the Women’s Medical Center.

For more information
about Jarrells’ art
visit her Instagram,
[@tracyjarrellsart](https://www.instagram.com/tracyjarrellsart).



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 28

Explore the Bible

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



GOD MOVES 2 Kings 22:8–20

Josiah came to the throne as a boy, inheriting a nation in terrible spiritual condition. But he made a deep personal commitment to the Lord that transformed his life. When the word of God was providentially discovered, he led the nation in spiritual renewal and reformation.

Discovered (8–10)

While the temple was being repaired, Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law in the form of a scroll. Scholars have long debated the contents. It included the Book of Deuteronomy and perhaps all of the first five books in the Bible.

It is difficult to think such an important book could ever be lost. But the pagan worship of Manasseh and Amon would have had no need for it, since it condemned all they were doing. Hilkiah gave the scroll to the court secretary, Shaphan, who read it.

Shaphan updated King Josiah on the progress made on the temple repairs and the expenses related to it. Then he read the book of the law to the king.

Response (11–13)

The word of God is powerful and self-authenticating. When King Josiah heard the words Shaphan read to him, he was deeply convicted to the point he tore his clothes. This rending of his clothing was an outward sign of inner repentance. He understood how his nation had violated the requirements of God's covenant and had come under God's judgment. Each word Shaphan read only further highlighted the people's neglect of and disobedience to the word of God.

Since Josiah had never encountered the word of God before, he desired to have it confirmed by a godly person he trusted. He sought a prophetic word to interpret the ramifications of this disobedience. He knew he needed to test his understanding of God's word in the light of the understanding of spiritual people he respected.

The king's response revealed

something of the spiritual darkness of this period in Judah's history. He appointed a team of trusted representatives to go personally and directly to the Lord to inquire about His anger against His people. Josiah was concerned for himself, the people and all Judah. He was certain God's wrath was kindled because the nation defied God's commandments.

Josiah realized God's people had been disobeying His will, but his uncertainty surrounding the necessary response was telling. After years of infidelity, even the godly king was ignorant of how to respond.

At least he did not attempt to explain away generations of disobedience. He was overwhelmed with the realization of the guilt of his people. He acknowledged this disobedience had begun with their ancestors. He recognized the nation's corporate responsibility for its sins.

Proven (14–20)

The representatives went to see Huldah, one of five prophetesses named in the Old Testament. She was otherwise unknown and was the first female prophet encountered in the Book of 2 Kings. Huldah had a double message for Josiah. First, God would bring judgment on Judah just as He had brought judgment upon Israel. The same judgment that befell Ahab and Jeroboam would be visited on Judah. The nation had been guilty of spiritual abandonment and sin. Her words were reminiscent of Deuteronomy 29:20–28. God's wrath would be kindled against Judah. Not even the godliness of Josiah could hold back the outpouring of divine judgment.

Second, Huldah offered a more positive word to Josiah. Because of his humility and grief over the nation's sin, he would die in peace before the judgment fell. Although judgment could not be avoided, it would be delayed until after his death. Huldah's message of grace was not for Judah. The grace was for Josiah, whose heart was responsive to the Lord.

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D.
Armstrong Chair of Religion, Samford University



SHARE CHRIST WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR John 1:40–49

It is rare for any two people to come to faith in precisely the same way. In the Gospels, Jesus encountered each person in a personal way that connected with his or her specific needs and experiences. We who already know Christ need to trust Him to use our feeble attempts to introduce others to Him as a foundation He can build on to make Himself known to them in His way and time.

Love others by telling them about your experience with Christ. (40–42)

Andrew was one of John the Baptist's early followers, and when he heard John identify Jesus as the "Lamb of God," he began to follow Jesus (vv. 35–40). The first thing Andrew did was find his brother, Simon, and tell Simon the wonderful news that he had found the Messiah. The second thing Andrew did was bring Simon to Jesus so he could see for himself. Jesus gave Simon a new name: Cephas, or Peter (Cephas is Aramaic for "rock," which rendered into Greek comes out as Peter).

Peter became the most prominent of Jesus' disciples and was a key leader or "pillar" of the early church (see Acts 15 and Gal. 2:7–9). Peter was the first apostle to preach the gospel to Gentiles (non-Jews) and to baptize the first Gentile converts (see Acts 10). What if Andrew hadn't made the effort and taken the risk in his relationship with Simon to tell him about Jesus?

Invite others to "come and see" about Jesus for themselves. (43–46)

When Jesus calls Philip to follow him, Philip finds Nathanael and tells him he and others have found the One who had been written about by Moses and the prophets. Philip probably has in mind the "prophet like me" Moses mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15, as well as various prophetic texts about the coming Messianic king from the line of Da-

vid, who would redeem Israel and rule over all nations (see, for example, Ps. 2).

Philip identifies Jesus in the traditional way, by his hometown and his father's name: "Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth." Nathanael's response suggests Nazareth was not known as a hothouse of spiritual leaders but as a place filled with people of questionable morals. He doubts anything (or anyone) good could come from Nazareth (and thus, how much less the Messiah Himself).

Notice Philip does not give up on getting Nathanael to Jesus, despite the latter's initial resistance and skepticism. Philip pushes right past Nathanael's opening deflection and urges him to "come and see" for himself. Philip serves as a fine example to us today, reminding us that although we are not ultimately responsible for the faith or unbelief of those around us, we are expected to do our best to let others know about Christ and the life and hope we have found in Him. We must learn to trust that Christ will honor and use our humble attempts to make Him known to others.

Trust God to work in the hearts of others. (47–49)

Jesus knew what He needed to do to win the faith of Nathanael. In Nathanael's case, it meant letting him know Jesus had seen him and knew about him when that would have been impossible for a normal human being (since Jesus evidently could not have seen Nathanael from where He was with human eyes). Nathanael recognized Jesus was not merely another human teacher but God's Son and Messiah, confessing, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

We often wish we and our friends and family could experience Jesus "in the flesh" like His original disciples did. But Christ promised to be with us to the end (Matt. 28:20). By the work of His Spirit in and through us, He continues to reach out to others and to meet each one at the point of his or her need.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust
The Alabama Baptist

Kendricks' new movie 'Lifemark' highlights inspiring adoption story

Filmmakers Alex and Stephen Kendrick are known for movies that convict the heart, tug at emotions and point viewers toward a major biblical truth.

"Courageous" (2011) urged fathers to take their roles more seriously. "War Room" (2015) encouraged Christians to take prayer more seriously. "Overcomer" (2019) reminded believers of their identity found only in Christ. And "Fireproof" (2008) helped strengthen countless marriages.

The Kendricks will release their latest film, "Lifemark," Sept. 9. The good news? It has the same emotional punch and gospel-centric truth of those earlier hits.

Inspired by true events, "Lifemark" tells the story of David, an 18-year-old high school student who is enjoying a carefree life when he learns his birth mother wants to contact him.

Birth mother's heroic role

Thankfully, David's adoptive parents, played by Kirk Cameron and Rebecca Rogers Nelson, have prepared him for this moment by openly discussing his birth history and championing the birth mother's heroic role in his life. Still, it's a lot to process.

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.



'LIFEMARK'

Photo courtesy of the Kendrick Brothers

"I don't even know her," David says pensively, unsure what to do. "There's no rush," his father responds.

As we follow the emotion-laden plot, we also learn more about David and his family's past. He's a high school wrestler. He's also a talented public speaker, and we see that on display as he gives a speech in front of a large audience about his adoption. As he's speaking we watch his birth mom — hundreds of miles away — Google information about him, thrilled to learn about the young man he has become. It's one of the movie's best moments.

Eventually David becomes friends with her on social media. After a few exchanges, he decides to meet Melissa (Dawn Long) face to face. He's excited, but nervous, about the in-person visit.

Asked what he may say to Melissa, he thinks for a moment and

answers solemnly, "Thank you."

"Lifemark" is an inspiring pro-adoption movie that perfectly captures all the emotions of the adoption process, making you empathetic for both sides as you cheer for David's success in life.



Via flashbacks we learn why David's birthparents placed him up for adoption. We also watch them sort through dozens of paper bios before landing on the mom and dad that became his adoptive parents. During one emotional scene, we watch a young Melissa place an out-of-the-blue phone call to the future adoptive mom, asking her how she baits her fishing hook.

Of course multiple scenes bring tears to your eyes.

Comic relief character

The filmmakers smartly use humor to cut the emotional tension thanks to David's goofball friend,

Nate, who is filming a documentary about David's life and wants him to display more on-screen joy ("You have the emotion of a rock!").

The film's lead actor, Raphael Ruggero, is stellar.

It is the first Kendrick Brothers film not directed by Alex (who is an executive producer). That task went to Kevin Peeples, who previously directed "Like Arrows."

The movie's first hour is as gripping as any Kendrick Brothers film.

"Lifemark" is a faith-based movie that promotes adoption, affirms biblical truth and leaves you wanting to get more involved in the adoption movement.

It's a film every church can embrace. For more information, visit lifemarkmovie.com.

More to check out

► **Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters (Pureflix)** — A father comes to grips with his now-grown daughter getting married and moving to Mexico, based on the book by Meg Meeker.

► **Love + Local (Pureflix)** — Two morning DJs of a popular Christian radio station cope with change under a new producer. It's a mockumentary series starring Dave Coulier and Emily Pendergast.

Both titles are hilarious, solid additions to the lineup of Pureflix, a faith-based service that has grown since being sold to Sony in 2020.

MEET THE REVIEWER

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

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Nothing is Impossible with God

BUT JESUS LOOKED AT THEM AND SAID, "WITH MEN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE,
BUT NOT WITH GOD; FOR WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE." MARK 10:27 (NKJV)

You've been there. You've been to the place where you were ready to reach for a star, set your dreams in motion, get your life moving and then the unexpected happened. Clouds became so thick you could hardly see your star; your dreams went off kilter and your path was more than rocky. You looked at it all and declared, "It's impossible!"

In a culture that fosters fear, we long for peace. In a world of shocking headlines, we seek hope, and in a life that is continually changing, we seek something to hold on to.

As believers, we acknowledge the words of Jesus, teaching us that things not really possible for us, are still possible for God. "It's Still Possible" reminds us that God is holding up the light so we can move forward, encouraging us to trust Him for everything we need. God promises abundant life — even in the middle of the mess! After all, in God's hands, all things are possible.

it's still Possible

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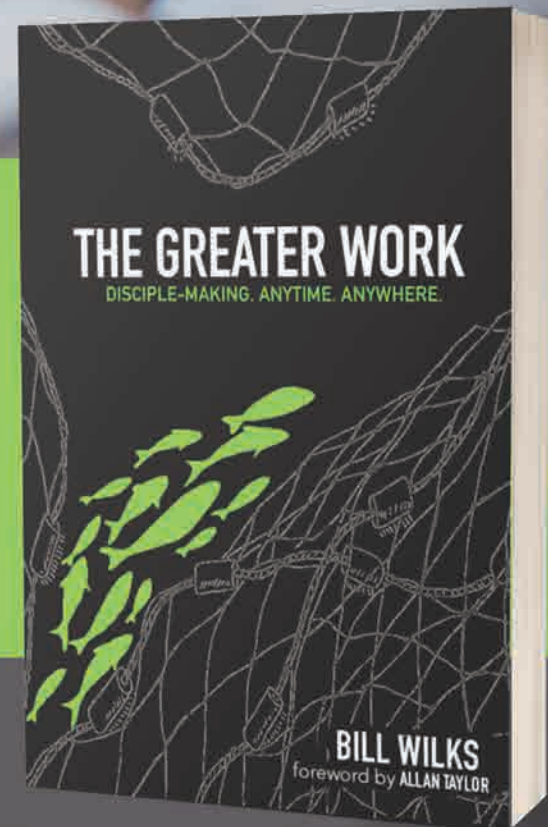
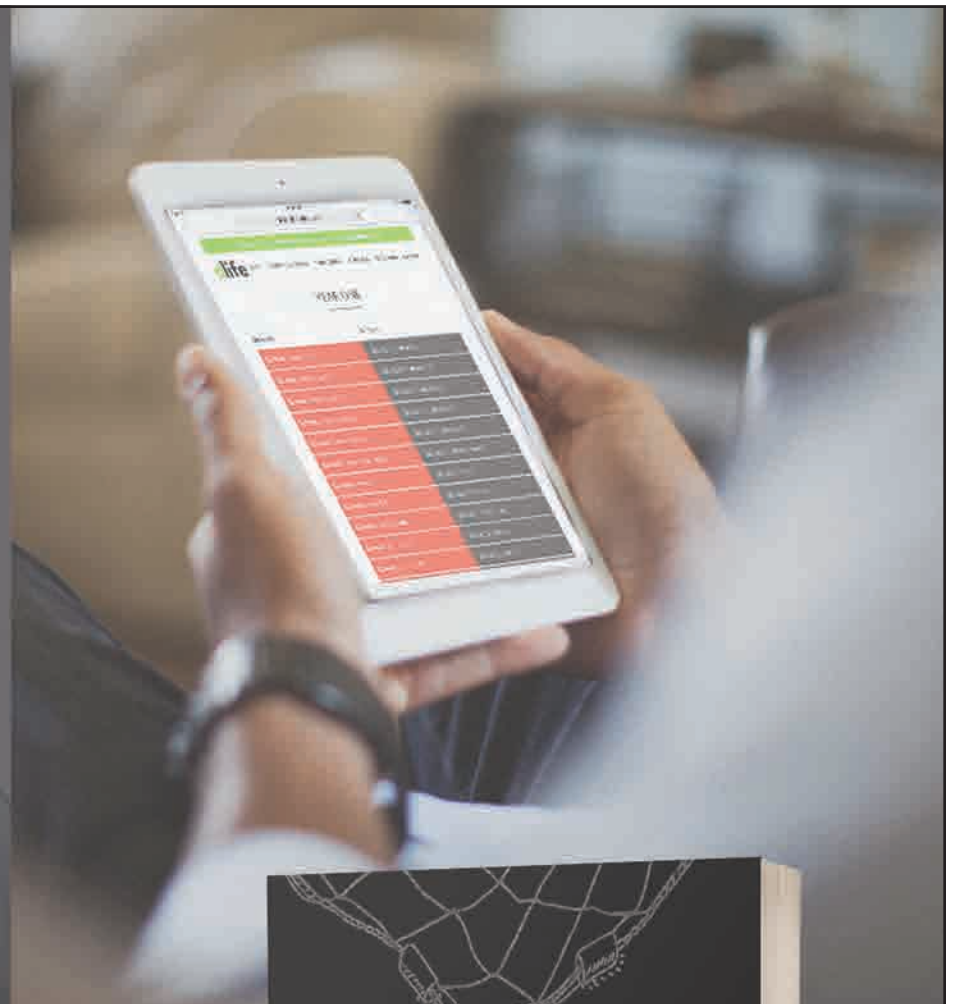


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By Pat Terry
The Wellness Kitchen

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Makes one 14 inch or two 10 inch round pizzas

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound pizza dough, homemade or pre-prepared at room temperature	1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil divided for the resting dough, greasing the pan and as a topping	1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoons European butter (Kerrygold)	1 cup mozzarella cheese, divided
1 Vidalia onion or other sweet onion, thinly sliced	1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped
	1 pound fresh figs, trimmed and sliced into three pieces
	4 ounces fresh soft goat cheese, crumbled*
	1 cup fresh baby arugula

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Place the room temperature dough in a glass bowl and drizzle with 1–2 tablespoons of olive oil. Let the dough rest while the onions cook.
- Preheat the oven to 475°
- In a medium-size skillet, melt butter on medium and add onions, cooking until they are soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add the balsamic vinegar and cook again for about 5 minutes. Remove onions from the pan and set aside on a paper towel to absorb any extra juices.
- Oil the pizza pan with 1 tablespoon of olive oil all the way to the edges.
- Roll out the dough and place on your choice of pan. Brush the dough with 1–2 tablespoons of olive oil. Use more if needed.
- Sprinkle the dough with garlic powder.
- Top the dough with 3/4 cup of mozzarella cheese leaving a 1- to 2-inch border. Cover with chopped rosemary.
- Evenly distribute the onions, figs, goat cheese and 1/4 cup of mozzarella.
- Bake for 20 minutes or until bubbly and golden. Let rest for a few minutes and add the arugula on top.

*Goat cheese can be replaced with blue cheese, ricotta or mascarpone. (adapted from ambitiouskitchen.com)

What's in season right now? Figs!

Fossilized figs from the Stone Age give us some idea of how long this fruit has been enjoyed. Figs have been used for centuries as both food and medicine. Though native to Asia, figs both fresh and dried have been most prominent in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine.

Spanish missionaries brought figs to California, but it wasn't until the turn of the century that California figs began to be commercially cultivated.

Figs grow well in the south and family recipes for fig preserves or jam are passed from generation to generation. Fig leaves are also prominent as a cooking ingredient in many cultures. Figs can range in color and texture depending on the variety, of which there are more than 150.

Peak time: August to October

Average price: \$3.99 pint or free from your yard or a neighbor

Nutritional highlights: Fresh and dried figs are excellent sources of dietary fiber and also contain moderate amounts of magnesium, potassium, copper, iron, calcium, strontium, pantothenic acid and vitamins B6, A, E and K. Figs are rich in antioxidant phytonutrients, especially the polyphenol flavonoids such as carotene, lutein, tannins and chlorogenic acid.

Recent research shows that chlorogenic acid in figs helps lower blood sugar levels and control blood glucose levels in people with Type 2 diabetes. Fig phytonutrients also benefit digestion, bone health, and blood pressure. Ripe figs contain the most antioxidants.



Unsplash.com

Dr. Pat Terry started The Wellness Kitchen as a way to share the knowledge she's acquired over the 30 years she served as a professor of nutrition and dietetics at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Prior to her work at Samford, Terry was the first nonclinical dietitian appointed by the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to serve overseas. Visit her website at thewellnesskitchenrd.com.



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SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN WRITERS CONFERENCE BOOK OF THE YEAR

goodnight, sweetheart.

*"Love bears all things ... hopes all things ... endures all things ...
Love never ends." 1 Corinthians 13:7-8*

BY ALAN JOHNSTON

When life is suddenly and dramatically interrupted, what do you do? React in fear, despair, become overwhelmed with anxiety, just give up?

"Goodnight, Sweetheart" tells the story of how Alan Johnston dealt with the 16-year illness and eventual death from Alzheimer's of his beloved wife, Judy.

Johnston says, "... none of the negative thoughts and emotions improved our situation, nor did they solve any problems. Perhaps the best advice is that which comes from the Apostle Paul "... stand firm in your faith."

Chapters include, "When a Man Loves a Woman," "The Twilight Zone," "Bad Things Happen to Good People," "Man of Sorrow," "Paradise Found," "Those That Mourn," "Joy Comes in the Morning" ... and more.



Alan Johnston is a retired pastor living in Chattanooga, Tenn. During his 54 years of ministry, he pastored churches in Alabama and Tennessee, and during 34 of those years he was also a certified financial planner. He is founder of Path2Truth Ministry and spends much of his time teaching and writing.

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