

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

INSIDE



Alabama family takes different approach with New York church

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Rosalie Hall Hunt recalls memories from family life, missions field

◆ Pages 10–11



Partnership from Alabama to Oklahoma births ministry of Christmas bags for Chickasha children

◆ Page 14

One hundred teenagers from a variety of cultures attend the state's first All Nations Youth Camp at WorldSong Missions Place.



The church of today

All Nations Youth Camp ministers on 'purpose, identity and calling'

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

This summer, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' first All Nations Youth Camp packed out WorldSong Missions Place in Cook Springs with 100 teenagers from a variety of cultures.

Annel Robayna, intercultural ministries missionary for SBOM, said the four-day event was intended to "reach out to a community we haven't reached out to in this way before" and to prepare students to be strong in their faith as they

grow into adulthood. "Some youth may grow up in youth group, but once they get to college age a lot of them ... forget about the church," Robayna noted.

"Knowing that [many of the students] were seniors, our idea was to do a camp based on purpose, identity and calling so that they know they are valuable before the Lord."

'Now rather than later'

He said they also wanted to challenge some of the teens who might be wrestling with a call to ministry to "think about it now rather than later."

During the week, 10 students professed faith in Christ and more than 20 committed their lives to missions and ministry.

Kimberly Sandoval, a min-

istry assistant who is part of the SBOM's intercultural ministries team, said in addition to those decisions, one of the biggest things she saw was that students began to realize they are not the church of tomorrow.

They are the church of today. "They understood that the Great Commission is for them, and the majority of them understood they are also called to serve in their church," she said.

(See 'Thirsty,' page 13)



SBOM photos

Annel Robayna, intercultural ministries missionary for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, high-fives a participant at All Nations Youth Camp.

HIGHLIGHTS



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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 15.



Photo by Maggie Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Amy Hacker (left) and Sarah Gill take on new customer-support roles at TAB Media Group. “They are going to take great care of all who engage with us,” said Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB’s president and editor-in-chief.

TAB Media staff members take on new roles

If you call TAB Media Group these days, depending on what you’re calling about, you might hear a different friendly voice on the other end of the phone.

Two staff members — Amy Hacker and Sarah Gill — have taken on new roles recently and look forward to continuing to serve you and your church any time you reach out.

‘Common purpose’

Hacker, who now is special accounts manager, will be the contact for local editions and Hosted Church website assistance. She also will assist advertisers and help readers with issues related to subscriptions.

“I’m excited to be able to work closely with our subscribers and advertisers, helping them reach their ministry goals and watching them flourish,” said Hacker, who joined TAB Media’s staff in 2016 and previously served as creative services associate. “I feel blessed to be a part of a team that encourages and strengthens each other as we work toward a common purpose of sharing the love of God and furthering His kingdom.”

Gill, who now is subscription manager, will oversee TAB’s subscription database, solving problems that may arise and making sure everything runs smoothly from the presses to your mailbox.

“It’s always great to learn new things,” she said. “I love the idea of being more useful to our team and our subscribers by learning as much as I possibly can about our subscription database.”

Gill came on board at TAB in 2017 and served as digital services associate before taking this post.

Jennifer Davis Rash, TAB Media president and editor-in-chief, said she’s excited about the expansion of the roles.

“Amy and Sarah were both more than ready to take on new levels of responsibilities and will be a vital part of the continuing expansion of TAB Media Group,” Rash said. “They match the culture of our work environment well with high energy, enthusiasm for the ministry and flexible spirits.”

‘Talented team’

Rash noted TAB Media has a “talented team of hard workers who love and care for each other well,” and Hacker and Gill are “no exception.”

“They are going to take great care of all who engage with us,” she added. “If you haven’t had a chance to get to know them, I hope you will have that opportunity soon.” (Grace Thornton)

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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OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



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@RashionalThts

Unresolved issues and conflicted hearts hinder our mission

The interview question stumped me for a moment. How would I focus my time and energy if I knew I only had 24 more hours in this life?

At 20 years old, my answer could have gone in multiple directions, and the interviewer anticipated an adventurous, risk-taking type of response.

When I finally determined what it would be — simply spending quality time with my closest family and friends — the woman 10 years my senior sitting across the table scoffed.

“That’s not true,” she said. “Surely you would do something daring like skydiving. You would only have 24 hours, and you wouldn’t have to be scared of hurting yourself because it wouldn’t matter. With all the options, I can’t believe you would choose to do something so boring.”

Attempting to explain

Her mocking pierced me, and a bit of defensiveness leaked out. As I assured her my answer was sincere, I noticed my tone changed from reflective to pointed.

I even attempted, in an admittedly shaky and disorganized way, to use the opportunity to

share about my faith in Jesus and how it connected to those I love the most in this world.

My parting gift would be a calm, carefree day of expressing my love and gratitude to those who have always been there for me, invested in me, put up with me and loved me in return.

Resolving past hurts

More than 30 years later, I think my answer remains the same — with one addition. A day like that would also allow unresolved issues to be cleared up, so we could truly and fully be at peace with one another.

It’s no secret family members and close friends sometimes disagree, face conflicts and even hold grudges.

What I’ve learned through the years is how much more empathetic, compassionate, generous, patient, confident, secure and emotionally healthy I am when the ruptures in relationships are dealt with and repaired.

The longer we avoid the difficult conversations and choose not to work through conflicts, the more likely it is that those hurts will grow into bitterness.

As a result, our hearts may become calloused. Our energy level, ability to focus and capacity to handle other difficult situa-

tions also becomes depleted with unresolved conflict.

We always know when things aren’t exactly right, and as people of peace, we know Scripture points to our responsibility related to contentious situations.

Romans 12:18 reminds us, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

But knowing what the Word says doesn’t mean the steps toward resolution are easy.

A commonly used movie scene shows an authoritative figure preparing those under his or her leadership for an upcoming dangerous or difficult mission.

‘Clear eyes, full hearts’

The leaders are confident the months and years they’ve spent training have their troops physically and mentally ready for what’s coming, but emotional distractions have the leaders concerned.

They send the individuals home to handle any unresolved conflicts, clear up confusion and find peace, so when they return for the mission they will be focused and prepared.

In the TV show “Friday Night Lights, for example,” Coach Eric Taylor (Kyle Chandler)

urges his players to be ready for the game: “Clear eyes, full hearts, can’t lose,” he says.

Ephesians 4:26 says, “... Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”

The more unresolved issues we have in our lives and the longer they remain unresolved, the less productive and more self-absorbed we become.

Making the effort

Working through the issues is never easy but always worth it.

From long embedded painful memories to minor irritations, acknowledging they exist is the first step. Lots of focused prayer time is the next step.

Consider reaching out to a trained counselor or therapist for help and make it a goal to clear the board.

How long the exercise will take depends on how many items are on the list and how deep the pain goes.

In the meantime, commit to an intentional effort to prevent adding to the list going forward. Apologize quickly and often when you are in the wrong and be gracious and forgiving when others share their regrets.

Your Voice



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

3 ways to respond well to anger in pastoral ministry

By Jay Sanders

Lifeway Research

There's a part of pastoral ministry that isn't often spoken about in seminary classes. Pastors don't usually mention it when they meet up at conventions or for coffee once a week. But that doesn't make it any less real.

Anger will play a significant role in your ministry.

More specifically, the way you choose to deal with the people and situations that make you mad will have a tremendous impact.

Your control over difficult circumstances is limited. Your control over how you respond is not.

Pastoral ministry gives you the

unique opportunity to be with a variety of people in both their happiest and most devastating moments.

You can see lives changed in such a way that no one other than Jesus can get credit for the transformation. You'll baptize kids and, a decade or so later, perform their weddings. You'll be strengthened by some of the most encouraging and uplifting people on the planet.

But that's not all there is to ministry: There'll be things that make you angry.

You'll make decisions that won't be supported. Some of the people you baptized will turn around to say mean things about you.

There'll be rumors about you that

have no basis in reality. Some of your dearest friends might even help to spread them. And there'll be people who, regardless of how nice or faithful you are, just don't like you.

Unchecked fury

If our fury toward the person who's hurt us goes unchecked, it'll define our ministry. A ministry defined by anger can't simultaneously be defined by the holiness of God.

One has to give. But how? How can we keep heartache, backstabbing, gossip and unmet expectations from derailing us?

1. We must be quick to forgive.

Forgiveness is the heart of the gospel we proclaim as Christians (Matt. 18:21–35). To preach this foundational doctrine and yet not live it is peak hypocrisy.

Conversely, the gospel shines brightest when those who proclaim it live it as well. Forgiving those who've wronged you is a great way to underscore the forgiveness about which you preach.

2. We must move toward the conflict.

I didn't say we must look for the conflict, create the conflict and destroy the source of the conflict.

But when we know where the problem is, we must move toward it in love for reconciliation. If we've contributed to the problem in any way, we must repent.

3. We must be honest about our anger.

Being honest about our sinful anger means we don't deny its ex-

istence. We must live in a state of continual, hopeful self-examination (Col. 3:1–10).

When demons asked Jesus to let them stay in the country of the Gerasenes, just before He cast them out of a man (Mark 5:10), the implication is that the demons felt somewhat welcomed.

We must be careful that the same can't be said of bitterness in our heart. If we don't proactively seek to address our anger and forgive those at the center of it, we roll out the welcome mat at our heart's door where bitterness is sure to accept the invitation, put his dirty shoes on the couch and eat up all of the food in the refrigerator.

So if you'd like your preaching to become more bullyish, your joy to become less obvious and the Spirit to become less evident, do nothing about your anger.

Before long, unresolved anger will bleed into other areas of your life and ministry where it'll work as a fertilizer for other sins.

If you choose to crucify your sinful anger, growth will come.

Those who don't like you might not ever end up being your best friends. They may even grow entrenched in their opposition to you.

But because you're addressing your anger with a humble, prayerful and repentant spirit, you'll be able to say along with Joseph who was all too familiar with difficult people, "You planned evil against me; God planned it for good" (Gen. 50:20).

'Experiencing God' request

Are you currently working through the "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" study?

Maybe you worked through it earlier this year or in recent years, or even many years ago.

No matter the timing, we would love to share about your experience with "Experiencing God" in an upcoming issue.

- ▶ What motivated you to go through the study?
- ▶ What did God show you through the exercises?
- ▶ Which of the seven realities stands out to you the most?

▶ Are there specific points with which you connected personally?

▶ How are you different on the other side of the study?

▶ How would you describe the study to others?

▶ Would you encourage others to give it a try?

These questions are simply designed to spark thought. Please feel free to share any additional information or thoughts about the study.

Email us at news@tabmedia.group or write to: The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jay Sanders is the pastor of Towaliga Baptist Church in Jackson, Georgia.

“Before prayer changes others,
it first changes us.”

BILLY GRAHAM

Late evangelist

In addition to the lack of determination to stay married, there is also a significant lack of understanding between marriage partners. Therefore, divorce is relatively easy and actually preferred to the efforts it takes to avoid it.

It is certainly true that the tendency in marriage is to isolate, separate and drift apart. Marriage cannot and will not grow if efforts to turn the tide are not addressed, adopted and/or adapted to fit each particular situation.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper, Ala.

“We’re all in this together from the little girl baking cupcakes to the rescue people,” said **Tommy Reed**, pastor of **Fitzpatrick Baptist**

Church, Prestonsburg, Kentucky, of flood relief efforts in the state. “It’s awesome how people in the mountains have responded. Pray the Lord will send the rain somewhere else.”

When Jesus says I can do nothing on my own, He reminds me that each day, each second and each breath comes from Him.

God guides our steps in every long moment of waiting and stepping into the unknown. We don’t have to put life on hold as we wait, and whatever your season looks like, it can be fruitful if you abide in Christ as the source of growth and hope.

Megan Harris
the-scroll.com

“When we all got together, we all just looked at each other, knowing this is really hard. This is really, really hard,” said **Marybeth Slabbert**, who reflected on gathering with other **church planter wives in Wyoming**. “That’s the reality of what it’s like to pick up your cross. It’s not sad; it’s joyful.”

“I started drawing before I did anything else, but I’m mostly a pastor. I want people to know, ‘You don’t have a comedian as your pastor. You’ve got a God-called, heaven-anointed man of God as your spiritual leader. Along the way, as a secondary ministry, I will be drawing people,’” said **Joe McKeever**, longtime **pastor, missions leader and storyteller**.

The call to faithfulness, not success

Isaiah 6 is the awe-inspiring, epic scene of Isaiah’s commissioning as a prophet. ...

I think if I had been Isaiah, I might have thought, “Wow! God has pulled out all the stops to call me. He must have something AMAZING for me to do! I’ll bet I’m gonna fill stadiums like Billy Graham. I’ll bet God wants me to be the catalyst for the next great awakening! Thousands of people — no, TENS of thousands! — are going to repent and turn to God when they hear me preach!”

Instead, God commissions Isaiah to a career of ineffectiveness. Over the next 40 years, spanning the reigns of four different kings (see Isa. 1:1), Isaiah will preach to a people that will be ever hearing but never understanding. Ever looking and not perceiving. ...

Isaiah gives me the reminder I so need. God does not call any of us to success and effectiveness. He calls us to obedience and faithfulness. It is significant that the three prophets with the longest ministries (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) also had the most frustrating ministries.

But it is also significant that the more frustrating the call was, the more clear it was. Isaiah had his vision in the temple. Jeremiah had the assurance that God had called him from the time he was in his mother’s womb (Jer. 1:5). Ezekiel had the vision of God’s glory on the bank of the Chebar canal (Ezek. 1).

To all my brothers and sisters in ministry, hear this: God doesn’t call us because we are awesome. We follow the calling because God is awesome.

Pastor James Jackson
Glynwood Baptist Church
Prattville
jamesjackson.blog
Day 191

From the *Twitterverse*

@nathanafinn

The @SBCCP exists to fund the cooperative missions endeavors of Southern Baptist churches. But we must remember the currency of the Cooperative Program is trust, not dollars. The greater the degree of trust, the more likely churches will give generously and even sacrificially.

@TAndrewBrown

The whole framework of Scripture rests upon two realities: incarnation and resurrection.

Through incarnation, God brings himself close to man. Through resurrection, man is brought close to God.

@CatherineRenfro

If God puts someone on your mind today, it’s not by accident or coincidence.

Pray for them, text them, call them or write them a note.

And Jesus will encourage them as only He can.

@brocraigc

“A frequent hearer is likely to become a fervent believer.”
—Spurgeon

@DustinBenge

7 prayers for this week:
“Teach me Your statutes.”
“Fix my eyes on Your ways.”
“Teach me good judgment.”
“Give me understanding.”
“Put false ways far from me.”
“Incline my heart to You.”
“Enlarge my heart.”
(Psalm 119)

@richardblackaby

Be sure of this: God will not grant you a difficult assignment without also providing all the resources necessary to succeed.

@bobgoff

I keep putting things in the mi-

crowave, and God keeps putting them back in the crockpot. Whatever is distracting you today, give it a little more time.

@MichaelCatt

You can talk about the past. You can build on the past. You can learn from the past. But you must not worship the past.

@DanielRitchie

The weight of comparison is more than we can withstand, yet the gift of grace lifts that burden by the saving work of Jesus.

@drggrobinson

My mantra: We communicate what we cherish. We will never communicate the gospel broadly until we cherish the gospel deeply.

@shane_pruitt78

Our opinions don’t change the Bible; the Bible should change our opinions.

3 stories you should know



Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

P.B. Hatcherson, pastor of Birmingham's 23rd Street Baptist Church South, speaks at a Sept. 8 revival meeting at Olivet Monumental Baptist Church in Birmingham. The Sept. 6–8 revival focused on the excessive gun violence occurring in the city this year. Birmingham clergy hoped the three-night revival would inspire a solution. Writing at medium.com, Mayor Randall Woodfin noted "homicides in Birmingham have increased in seven of the past 10 years."

Faith-based agency wins federal lawsuit

A U.S. federal judge on Sept. 6 ruled in favor of faith-based adoption provider New Hope Family Services, who argued its First Amendment right to only place children in the homes of families with a married mother and father.

The New York Office of Children and Family Services had threatened to shut down New Hope if the agency didn't place children in homes with same-sex parents.

New Hope sued, alleging the state violated its First Amendment rights, and U.S. District Judge Mae D'Agostino agreed.

D'Agostino issued a permanent injunction prohibiting the state from closing New Hope or from forcing it to place children in same-sex homes or the homes of cohabitating couples. (TAB)

Leatherwood named ERLC president

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission named Brent Leatherwood as its president Sept. 13.

Leatherwood has served as the acting president since September 2021. He had previously served as vice



LEATHERWOOD

president of external affairs and chief of staff. He follows Daniel Patterson, who served as acting president after Russell Moore's resignation in May 2021.

Leatherwood previously led the Tennessee Republican Party.

Brent and his wife, Meredith, have three children and are members of The Church at Avenue South in Nashville, where Brent serves as a deacon. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Christian couple arrested, detained in notorious Iranian prison

TEHRAN, Iran — A Christian couple arrested for being part of a house church is being held in an Iranian prison known for abusive treatment of prisoners.

Homayoun Zhavah and his wife, Sara Ahmadi, were summoned Aug. 13 to the administrative office of Evin Prison, reported the relief group Barnabas Fund. The couple thought they were going to retrieve items taken when they were arrested, but they were imprisoned instead.

Homayoun has advanced Parkinson's Disease.

In June 2019, they were arrested and eventually charged with being part of an "illegal organization." At that time Homayoun was put in Evin for a month, and Sara was in the prison 67 days, 33 of which she spent in solitary confinement.

In November 2020, Homayoun received a 2 year prison term and Sara was given an 11-year sentence (eventually lowered to 8 years). When they reported to the prison to begin serving their sentences, they were told to go home, Barnabas Fund reported.

Iran is No. 9 on Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

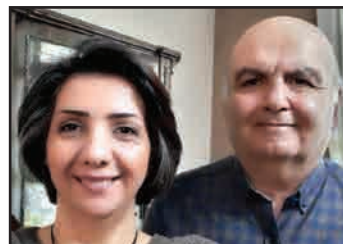


Photo courtesy of Article 18

Nigerian Christians killed, kidnapped in relentless attacks

ABUJA, Nigeria — Islamic extremists this summer killed more than 50 people and kidnapped nearly 40 in relentless attacks upon Ni-

gerian Christians and their communities. Seven individuals — four of them children — were killed in Danda Chigwi village in Plateau State, reported Morning Star News. Just days prior to that, herdersmen raided Fusa village, killing five Christians.

Islamic extremist terrorists also killed more than 30 people in Takum Local Government Area and Ussa Local Government Area. Both areas are predominantly Christian. Two people were later slain in Taraba's Kujwean, and terrorists killed at least nine Christians in Jenuwa Nyifiye village.

In Kaduna State, Islamic extremists have also recently abducted 36 people from Keke B Community, Morning Star reported.

Nigeria has led the world in the number of Christians killed or kidnapped. It is No. 7 on Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Betty Earle Slaughter Stringfellow** of Haleyville died Aug. 9. She was 88.

A native of Birmingham, she was a graduate of Howard College (now Samford University) and the University of North Alabama. She was an educator for 33 years mostly in Haleyville, where her husband, T.B. Stringfellow Jr., is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church and where the couple were members.

She is survived by her husband of 70 years, three children, two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

► **Southside Baptist Church, Monroeville**, will host its homecoming service Oct. 2 at 10:30 a.m. The speaker will be Glenn Eubanks. Mike Crowe is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Ronald (“Ron,” “Ronnie”) L. Hilburn**, a native of Alabama, retired Sept. 11 as minister of music of **First Baptist Church Hoover**.

He was born in Birmingham but grew up in Tuscaloosa. He studied engineering and music at the University of Alabama for one year, then transferred to Howard College (now Samford University) to focus on music. At Samford, he is credited with beginning the first Step Sing on the steps of Renfroe Hall and was president of A Cappella Choir.



HILBURN

A graduate of Southern and New Orleans seminaries, he and his wife, Lillian, have two adult daughters, two grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

His 72 years of music ministry span several part time music positions while in college and seminary.

He served as full-time minister of music five years at Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, and 31 years at Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, receiving the title of minister of music emeritus upon retirement. He then began serving as interim music minister to several churches in the Birmingham area. His interim position at FBC Hoover became part time and lasted 21 years.

He was a member of the Alabama Singing Men for several years and taught music classes during Shocco Music Week.

BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

► **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will host a Sunday night singing Sept. 25 at 5 p.m. featuring Children of the Promise from Cedartown, Georgia.

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

► **West End Baptist Church, Clanton**, recently celebrated two of its ministers for 25 years of service. Associate pastor **Eddie Lightsey** and minister of students **Kenny Martin** were recognized during its Sept. 4 worship service.



LIGHTSEY

Lightsey is a native of Centreville and has served churches in Alabama and Louisiana since 1987. He served as minister of music at West End (1997–2013) and transitioned to associate pastor in 2013. He and his wife, Sharon, have two children.

Martin also began his ministry at West End in 1997. He leads Crossroads Student Ministries and works with the church’s media in graphics, video production and web design. He serves as chaplain to the Chilton County High School football team and shares devotions with all the athletes weekly at CCHS. He and his wife, Jessica, have one child.

James Watkins is pastor.



MARTIN

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Pleasant Home Baptist Church, Andalusia**, celebrated its 125th anniversary Aug. 28 with guest speaker Jim Kelley, who was raised at the church.

Ashley McKathan wrote and presented the history of the church. George Kelley, who joined the church in the 1940’s, shared his memories.

Special music was provided by Gracyn Martin, Hailey Ward and Judy Godwin. A Sacred Harp song was led by Brian Kelley.

Lonette Berg (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to longtime church member James Kelley



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

(left). Leroy Cole represented the Covington Baptist Association, where he serves as director of church and community ministries.

“It was humbling for me as a pastor to be part of the 100th and now the 125th anniversary of the church,” said pastor Fred Kelley. “It was a blessing to look back and see how God has blessed. We look forward to many more years of service to the Lord.”

Lunch was served in the fellowship hall.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz**, will host a tent crusade Oct. 2–5. The evangelist will be Tim Williams, and Ken Patterson will lead music. Nightly services begin at 6:30 p.m. The tent will be behind the church.

MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► **Semmes First Baptist Church** celebrated its 150th anniversary Aug. 28 with former interim pastor Don Boone as guest speaker. Mark Gatlin, minister of music, arranged for special music: duet by Justin LeJesse and Tanner Byrd; trio with Eric Sexton, Mark Gatlin and Phillip Dodd; the choir also sang a special.

Jerrol Hare (right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to Pastor Eric Sexton (left). Semmes



Photo courtesy of Jerrol Hare

Mayor Brandon Van Hook brought greetings.

An anniversary quilt was presented by the church’s quilt ministry, and commemorative ornaments were distributed to those in attendance.

“The anniversary celebration encouraged our members to appreciate that the church has survived for 150 years,” said Carolyn Owens, event organizer. “God has given us the courage to continue and celebrate.”

Lunch was served following the service.

MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

► **Trinity Memorial Baptist Church, Montgomery**, will host homecoming Sept. 25 and revival Sept. 26–28. Rick Evans, pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, will preach all services. The homecoming service starts at 11 a.m., and each nightly revival service is scheduled at 7 p.m.

WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Eldridge Baptist Church** will celebrate its 152nd homecoming service Oct. 2, 10 a.m.

Former members and the community are invited. Blake Courington, former pastor, will deliver the message, and a fellowship meal will follow the service.

OTHER

► The 16th **University of Mobile Leadership Banquet** featuring Emmy Award winner and former FOX & Friends co-host Elisabeth Hasselbeck will be held Oct. 25 in downtown Mobile.

A VIP reception will be held at 5:30 p.m., and the banquet starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center. For more information about tickets and sponsorships, visit umobile.edu/banquet or call 251-442-2913.

Alabama family takes different approach with NYC church

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Steve Chambers said when he and his wife, Toni, started taking their family on missions trips to the Bronx, they “fell in love with the city.”

Not too long afterward, his congregation, Calvary Baptist Church in Dothan, sent the couple to talk with church planters in New York City so Calvary could partner with one of them.

But as they interviewed planters, one thing became more and more clear.

“In the process of that week, my wife and I both said, ‘Do you think God could be calling us to plant a church here?’ That was in early 2017,” said Chambers, who at the time was Calvary’s minister of worship.

They couldn’t shake the feeling. After praying about it, they started making plans to relocate.

And they couldn’t shake something else either — the feeling

they were supposed to be in a specific neighborhood, one they didn’t expect.

“When we came up here and started walking through neighborhoods, the Upper West Side just kept sticking out for all the wrong reasons,” Chambers remembered. “It’s very expensive to live in, and



Photo courtesy of Steve Chambers

Steve Chambers leads a Bible study at Neighborhood Church, a church he and his wife, Toni, moved from Dothan to plant on New York City’s Upper West Side.

it’s not inner-city like the Bronx.”

The people who live there are career focused, often waiting to start families until their 40s. It’s a very socially and politically liberal neighborhood, Chambers said, and

people are skeptical of the church as an institution.

The couple knew it would be a difficult place to start a church, but they saw it as an opportunity.

“We wanted

to do life right alongside people and plant our family in their lives first and foremost,” he explained. “The challenge for us is to live alongside them and demonstrate what it means to be a Christian.”

When they moved in, they started having dinners in their apartment and in-

cluding their neighbors. They used the time to discuss spiritual things.

“We’ve had lots of people come, people who would not come to church,” Chambers recalled. “I’ll say, ‘OK, what [are your] questions?’ And they will ask things from deconstruction to gender identity to sexuality.”

Starting small

The couple started with a small group in their apartment and grew to four small groups before they held their first church service. Sometimes planting a church can look like launching a business, but “that’s just not the way

this neighborhood works,” Chambers said. “We’re all about relationships.”

He hasn’t had one person come to Neighborhood Church because of a flyer, he noted, but as they got to know their neighbors, people grew to trust them and accepted an invitation.

Equipping people

“That’s how we do outreach,” Chambers said. “We’re Christians, and we try to equip people to live a Christian life so people will notice. A big thing of ours is 1 Peter 3:15 — to be ready to give an answer for the hope inside you when someone asks.”

The way they’re doing ministry is slow, he admitted.

“It is relational, and you have to build those relationships, build trust with people,” he explained.

“If they think you’re trying to get them on your team, they don’t have any use for you.”

As North American Mission Board-sponsored GenSend students served alongside them this sum-

mer, they took a different approach than standard outreach, Chambers said.

“In other neighborhoods you can hand out bottles of water or flyers for VBS. In our neighborhood, none of that flies. Once they hear you’re a Christian, they’re skeptical,” he said. “The kids who come and serve with us, I plug them into the community. We have some sport leagues here. I tell the students to join what is already happening in the city. There’s no need for us to clump up as a church. Go serve next to your atheist neighbor serving soup at the soup kitchen.”

Chambers said New York may seem different from Alabama, but people are growing more skeptical of institutionalized Christianity in the South too.

“There are many cultural barriers between the gospel and a lost person.

The call for

us is to figure out how we cross those cultural barriers,” Chambers said. “We are the church, the people. So let’s get out there and live that way.”

For more information, visit neighborhoodchurchuws.com.

“It is relational, and you have to build those relationships, build trust with people.”

Steve Chambers
church planter

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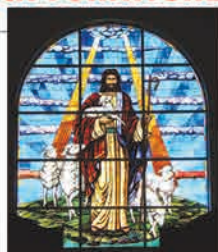
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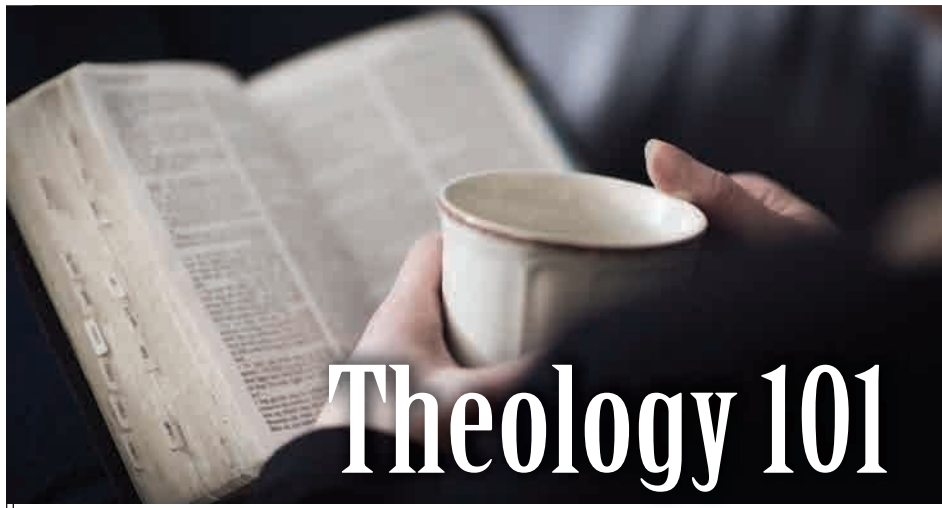


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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Spiritual Blessings

The Christian Pilgrimage

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

This week we continue our look at biblical images that serve as windows into aspects of the Christian life by looking at the imagery of the Christian pilgrimage.

Psalmists of long ago looked upon a godly life in terms of a pilgrimage. For example, in Psalm 84:5, the writer declared, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage.”

For ancient Jews, a highlight of life was one of the annual religious pilgrimages that took them to Jerusalem for special times of worship and celebration.

For those whose hearts were devoted to these observances, special blessings awaited them in the holy city. Psalm 119:54 records a religious pilgrim’s testimony of the glad devotion he felt to God’s law while in the temple: “Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”

Strangers in the land

Some of us spent our early years as members of Royal Ambassadors in our local church. That experience introduced us to the RA hymn, “The King’s Business,” which opens with the words, “I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;/ My home is far away, upon a golden strand.” Behind this imagery is the idea of being a pilgrim in a land not our own.

Similarly, the gospel song “This World is Not My Home” opens with the imagery of pilgrimage:

“This world is not my home, I’m just a-passing through./ My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue./ The angels beckon me from heaven’s open door,/ And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

Seeking the ‘city to come’

After listing the faithful saints of the past in Hebrews 11, the writer makes the summary declaration, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (v. 13). The next verse (v. 14) implies the Christian life is a pilgrimage, declaring, “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.”

Two of the basic premises of this “spiritual pilgrims” imagery are the implications about what we are and how we are to live. By faith, we live with a firm grip on God’s promise of an eternal future of blessedness. At the same time, we keep a loose grip on the things of this world as we pass through on our way to “the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

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.



Ministering well to widows, widowers in the local church

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Alabama Baptist

When Marica’s husband died after a long illness, she thought she was prepared to handle living alone. She never imagined the loneliness she would face, or the physical, emotional and spiritual changes that would occur.

Rita had a similar experience. A widow at 55, she thought she was coping and dealing with the emotional part of losing her husband, but she learned emotions are unpredictable.

“It really hit me when I was filling out a questionnaire, and I had to check the correct box: married, single, divorced or widowed,” she recalled. “Somehow I drove home through tears streaming down my face.”

The emotions individuals face after the death of a spouse are intense. Loneliness, anger and disappointment are all part of the grieving process.

‘A forgotten group’

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are some 15 million widows and widowers in the U.S. Most, 11.4 million of them, are women.

“Although some churches have programs specifically for widows, this is one area that may be the weakest part of the church program,” one widow said. “We are a forgotten group in many congregations.”

The Southern Baptist Convention

has a special emphasis Sunday each year in November to recognize widows and orphans — this year, it falls on Nov. 13. The Bible mentions the welfare of widows more than 100 times, including 1 Timothy 5:3–16, James 1:27, Deuteronomy 24:17, Isaiah 1:17 and 1 Kings 17:9.

Close to God’s heart

Some widows gain a fresh perspective on Scripture as they seek assurance that they are not invisible to God. The Bible says widows are close to His heart.

For that reason a church’s ministry to widows is important. Data shows 50% of widows leave the church they attended as a couple, which means a second loss for the church family.

A ministry for widows can start as a small group. When it grows, it’s usually best to start another group since a small group has advantages over larger groups.

The group can plan a monthly luncheon at a favorite restaurant; transportation to medical appointments, church and community events; or an afternoon of board games or crafts.

There is no limit to a ministry to widows, but it should include physical, emotional and spiritual support that meets the specific needs of widows and widowers.

Churches can help by walking beside widows and widowers in their grief and helping them find their way forward.



Photo by Laura Lee Leathers/The Alabama Baptist



Rosalie HALL HUNT

By Laura Lee Leathers
The Alabama Baptist

Missionary, writer sees God's hand guiding each step

Rosalie Hall Hunt will tell you it was not her intention to be an author: She is a talker, not a writer. But God had a different idea.

In His time, she would be called

to write about men and women who were forerunners on the international missions field and those who supported them.

God would allow her to reflect and write about her life as a missionary kid and serving on the mis-

sions field with her husband, Bob.

Hunt's writing experiences began when she and Bob were missionaries in Taiwan. Her spoken and written words continued to touch lives as she worked with Chinese churches in Taiwan and Woman's Missionary Union groups, wrote teaching plans for her university students and organized and taught children in Girls in Action, WMU's missions discipleship group for girls in grades 1-6.

In August 1986, one of Hunt's articles appeared in WMU's "Royal Service" magazine. In the short piece, "My Missions Vision," she wrote about her love for the Chinese people. She ended with: "My vision of missions must be daily internalized, and then externalized in the daily walk. 'Please, God, help each smile, look, touch and word to articulate the message.'"

First book

Hunt wrote her first book, a children's missions study book, in 1975. The history bug bit during a July 1999 trip to Myanmar (also known as Burma), where she and Bob were connecting with missionaries and their work in the country.

She embarked on a six-year deep

dive into the lives of Adoniram and Ann Judson. In 2005, Hunt's book, "Bless God and Take Courage: The Judson History and Legacy" was published. The book brought an unexpected opportunity: establishing a foundation that would provide funds for missions endeavors around the globe.

It also revealed her passion for research and opened the door for more writing opportunities.

Read more about Hunt's writing career and books at tabonline.org/remember.

Seeking the 'will of God'

Rosalie Hall Hunt is grateful for the heritage of faith passed to her from her parents and shared in stories and treasured artifacts handed down through the generations.

One of her favorite stories involves her father, Harold Hall.

During a checkup a doctor noticed Harold had a rough callous on his right knee but not his left.

When the doctor asked why, Hall responded, "That's the knee I kneel on when I pray." It was a revelation the doctor said he would never forget.

Hunt also cherishes a family

Bible her mother, Alice Wells Hall, used on the missions field.

Inscribed inside are these words in Alice's handwriting, spoken during a sermon by Harold Hall:

1. Life's greatest quest: to seek the will of God.
2. Life's greatest discovery: to find the will of God.
3. Life's greatest achievement: do the will of God.

Hunt made a bookmark with a picture of

an orange blossom and the three statements to help her remember the lessons shared by her father. (Laura Lee Leathers)

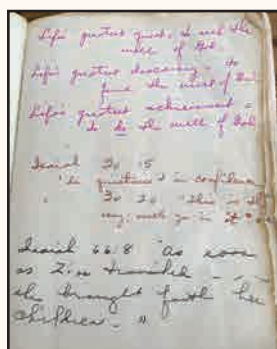


Photo by Laura Lee Leathers
Hunt cherishes notes written in her mother's Bible.

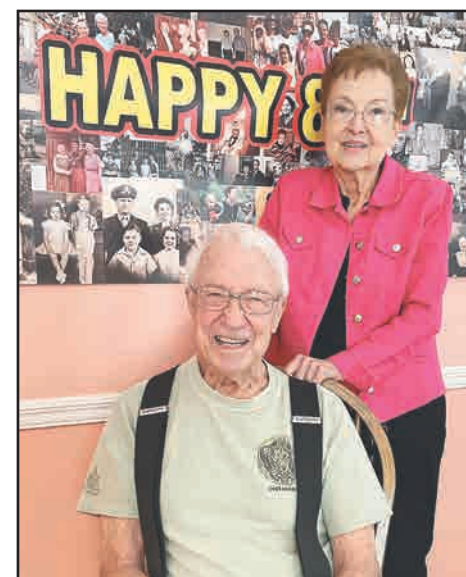


Photo by Laura Lee Leathers/The Alabama Baptist
Bob and Rosalie Hunt celebrate her 80th birthday in June.

‘The power of His call’

Rosalie Hall Hunt shares memories of missions field in part two of memoir

By Laura Lee Leathers
The Alabama Baptist

One small blue enamel cup might seem insignificant when you’re called to serve around the globe, but if it was possible for Rosalie Hall Hunt’s blue cup to talk, it would overflow with stories about people and places.

Today that cup sits on her computer desk, a daily reminder of her missionary experiences as a child and adult. She received the cup on her first birthday in Yangzhou, China. In 1962 it was packed in her suitcase again.

In her new book, “The Blue Enamel Cup,” part two of her memoir, Hunt writes, “This would be the blue cup’s third time across the Pacific Ocean, symbolizing for me a tangible piece of my first home that was returning to its roots.”

The book picks up where part one, “6 Yellow Balloons,” leaves off. As the book opens, the Hunts — Bob, Rosalie, 3-year-old Alice and 6-month-old Jody — are ready for takeoff on a flight that would take them to their first country of missionary service, Taiwan.

The Hunts would work with the Taiwan Baptist Mission, attend Grace Baptist Church and teach at Tai Da, Taiwan’s most prestigious university.

Taiwan was where their international missions work began. Eventually, they would go to Hong Kong, mainland China, the Philippines, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, India and back to the Philippines before finding a new home in Alabama.

In the U.S., the Hunts served 8 years at First Baptist Church Boaz,



During a 1983 visit to China, Rosalie Hunt (left) visits with Pastor Wu Ji Shao, pastor of the Yangzhou church and a former ministerial student of Rosalie’s father, Harold Hall. Pastor Wu had not seen a missionary in 35 years, Rosalie said.

where Bob was youth minister and associate pastor. They traveled extensively, speaking, attending missions conferences and visiting family. The blue enamel cup survived packing and unpacking, a tornado, earthquakes, typhoons and even robberies.

But thoughts of China, where Hunt had grown up with her missionary parents, were always close.

“I wondered if I would ever be able to go [back] to China, that land printed so deeply on my heart,” she recalled.

She eventually did return, and the trip is one of Hunt’s most cherished memories. She returned in 1983 with a friend, Hong Kong missionary Elena Petty, a former International Mission Board Journeyman in Taiwan.

Their trip began in Beijing, where they visited several historic land-

marks. The Temple of Heaven had been Hunt’s mother’s favorite spot in 1932, so she snapped a picture and weeks later was able to share it with her mother.

Childhood home

The women applied for tickets to travel to Zhenjiang, 600 miles riding in a packed train.

Arriving again after 35 years, Hunt stood at Yin Shan Men (Silver Mountain Gate). She describes the moment: “We turned the corner — and there on the side of the hill were the two missions houses, standing much as they had for a century. I stood there, a grown woman in the midst of a busy throng of passersby,

tears streaming down my cheeks. I was finally home after 35 years. For some reason my little blue enamel Chinese cup that had been with me

since 1939 came to mind, and I thought, ‘Surely, in this moment, my cup runneth over.’”

As she climbed the steps of her former home, Hunt thought about “the power of His call” on her life.

Treasured history

Hunt and Petty also found the cornerstone of the Yin Shan Men church, organized in 1885. The building is now a factory. Hunt choked up as she recalled treasured memories of worship services.

When the time came to board the train back to Shanghai, Hunt vowed, “I’ll be back,” and it would happen just a few years later.

“I had never questioned my call to missions service,” Hunt writes. “Neither had Bob.

I must admit that my concept of ‘God’s call’ was something I could not easily define.

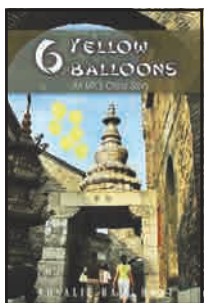
I still can’t. In my thinking, God called and that was it. Many years

and a number of experiences needed to occur for me to clearly understand that God’s call is not in the past tense, but it is an active, living precept by which His children live.”

Reflecting on the completion of her two-book memoir project, Hunt said gratitude is the word that comes to mind.

“I am thankful to have told the story,” she said. “But I am also very aware of things left undone during those years, and I am amazed at how God could bring good things out of feeble, inept and imperfect people like we were and are!

“But then, I have renewed in my thoughts that Bob was so right when he says, ‘I just wish we could do it all again!’”



To read more about Rosalie Hunt’s life of missions adventure and to see a video, go to tabonline.org/rosalie-hunt-memories.

Samford's adherence to 'mission, vision, core values' draws fire

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

A group of ordained Samford University alumni serving in a variety of denominations have joined the recent pushback efforts over the school's longstanding guidelines related to guest ministry organizations.

The specific item being questioned states a guest ministry "should have and observe a statement of faith and theological perspective that is consistent with the mission, vision and core values of Samford."

Campus minister Bobby Gatlin applied the guideline to a group in late August, and those opposing his decision are now speaking out.

At press time, more than 75 alums had signed an open letter released Sept. 16 "to ask for an immediate reversal" of what the group describes as a "new interpretation" that excludes "religious congregations, communities and partners whose definition of the beloved community proves too expansive."

The specific concern centers around churches with a pro-LGBTQ+ stance.

School officials state the guidelines have been in place for many years and are reviewed annually.

'May be denied'

Item No. 2 of the seven points listed states: "Guest ministries organizations are reviewed by the campus pastor, no less than annually. Campus access by a guest ministry may be denied or terminated by the campus pastor and the vice president for student affairs."

However, when Gatlin chose not to invite the Presbyterian Church USA's Ukirk campus ministry to an Aug. 31 event for area churches to showcase their college ministries, a repre-



Photo courtesy of Samford University

sentative of Ukirk allegedly attempted to find a way to be present.

Ukirk had not been a guest ministry on campus in previous years, but the representative reportedly called a friend who is a minister with Trinity Commons, which is affiliated with the U.S. Episcopal Church, to inquire about sharing her table at the event. While specific details about what happened next are still being clarified, it has been confirmed Ukirk was not allowed to display promotional material.

The ukirkbirmingham.org website states it seeks to be a "theologically reformed and socially progressive" community of faith and uses a rainbow-themed logo.

The site also includes a section noted as "LGBTQ+ affirming" under its Humanitarian Resources tab and reports Ukirk participated in Birmingham-area LGBTQ+ pride events earlier this year.

The situation has ballooned into a potential public relations crisis for the 181-year-old Christian university that holds steady to traditional biblical ethics on sexuality and marriage.

While Samford, nurtured by Alabama Baptists in various ways since its birth, has expanded its reach well beyond the South and the Christian faith, President Beck Taylor and other leaders contend they are com-

mitted to maintaining a Christ-centered culture amid the diverse student body.

"At Samford, we strive to provide a nurturing environment for students to learn and live the Christian faith," Phil Kimrey, vice president of student affairs, wrote in a Sept. 14 email to students.

Engaging students

"In addition to worship and ministry opportunities offered by the office of spiritual life, we welcome approved churches and organizations as guest ministry organizations to engage students by sharing, teaching and modeling the gospel of Jesus Christ," he said.

"Within this context, a goal is to connect students with local congregations and ministry organizations for corporate worship, spiritual development and personal relationships with other believers.

"Samford University is a Christ-centered university welcoming students from many theological and ecclesiastical traditions, including students who profess no faith background," Kimrey wrote. "We endeavor to provide all students with an education that thoughtfully integrates Christian faith and learning. We are welcoming of all denominations and have no policy or plan to restrict any denominations from our campus."

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CHURCH POSITIONS

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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

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.

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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 &

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'Thirsty for more'

All Nations Youth Camp sees God build community across cultural lines

(continued from page 1)

Sandoval added it was amazing to see the way God built community across cultural lines, noting when many of the students are in the U.S. they feel like they are not entirely American, but when they are visiting their parents' home countries they are seen as Americans.

It's easy for them to embrace the fact that they belong to a family of like-

minded people through their faith in Jesus, Sandoval said.

'Open to unity'

"They're so open to unity," she added. "It's so easy for them to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. This is just the beginning."

Jacobo Morales, also part of the intercultural ministries team, said it was beautiful to see relationships form. He's heard

some students have kept in touch even though they are in different cities and have planned get-togethers.

"They have this fire — they are thirsty for more activities," he reflected.

During the All Nations Youth Camp, students heard messages from Robayna as well as Theron Hawkins, pastor of Next Level Church in Tuscaloosa.

Hearing testimonies

They also heard two missions testimonies. Jackie Rodriguez, youth leader at Center Point Baptist Hispanic Church in Birmingham, shared about her experience in Senegal this summer serving with other Hispanics from Alabama. And Clarke Skelton, a retired pastor and former International Mission Board missionary to South Korea who also is on SBOM's intercultural ministries team,



SBOM photo

A student studies his Bible during All Nations Youth Camp, a four-day event aimed at preparing students from a variety of cultures to be strong in their faith as they grow into adulthood.

spoke about his calling and ministry in Korea.

Robayna said he and his team are making plans now for next year's camp, and he's thankful for the generous support of Alabama Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program, which makes a camp like this happen.

"We are taking this initiative to show all the cultures represented ... in our Baptist churches that we can partner together for the Great Commission," Robayna said.

"We're starting with the youth, but we are also working on initiatives to involve the adults."

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Sharing the hope of Christ

Partnership from Alabama to Oklahoma births ministry of Christmas bags for Chickasha children

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

For Buck Brown, the road between Leatherwood Baptist Church in Anniston and the Fellowship of American Indians Mission in Chickasha, Oklahoma, is well-worn. Since 1999, he's gone annually, sometimes multiple times a year.

And every December he makes the trip loaded down with more than 100 bags packed with Christmas presents for children in the Chickasha community.

It's a partnership that started with a vision and a phone call.

Led to help

"My husband received a call from Buck Brown, and [Brown] shared that he had a vision that he was supposed to help [a Native American] church," said Tewanna Edwards, whose late husband, John, was FAIM's pastor at the time. "He said, 'This is where the Lord is leading me, and I wondered if there was anything I could do at your church to help, whether it's repairs or anything else.'

"My husband said yes, and he said, 'When could I come?' My husband said, 'You can come anytime you want to come.'"

Obeying God

Brown came the next week, and Edwards said she and John didn't realize at the time that he had never flown in an airplane or been away from his family for long.

"He was just obeying what God told him to do," she said.

When Brown got there, he realized the couple did need help.

The area where they served was coping with a lot of issues. The church had no paid staff. Five adults were attempting to keep a ministry going that was primarily aimed at reaching children. Edwards remembered seeing tears in Brown's eyes when she asked what he'd noticed about the people in the area.

He said, "I just see that they feel there's no hope."

So in the coming months and years, Brown found ways he could plug in, like supporting the church financially on a monthly basis and returning with teams from Leather-



Photo courtesy of Buck Brown

Tewanna Edwards, widow of John Edwards, the late pastor of Fellowship of American Indians Mission in Chickasha, Oklahoma, sits by Christmas bags packed for children in the community.

wood Baptist to lead Vacation Bible School and revivals and help with renovation projects at FAIM.

And one day a children's ministry leader at Leatherwood asked, "If we do something similar to the Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes for the kids in Oklahoma, will you carry it out there?"

"We've been going ever since," Brown said.

The people of Leatherwood collect and assemble the bags, and Brown and others deliver them. They're given out to families in Chickasha on the Sunday before Christmas.

"We're hugged to death that Sunday," he said.

'A blessing'

Edwards noted Brown and the other volunteers from Leatherwood have "just been a blessing."

She said they've seen lives changed, and they've seen the chil-

dren impact their parents as their faith has grown.

"[The volunteers from Leatherwood] just don't know how many

lives they touched, and to this day, we still have kids that come back and tell us how much that church meant to them with the giving and the love and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ," Edwards said, "feeding them something when they were hungry, learning about fruit because they'd never eaten fruit before ... They'll never know how much they

gave to that community, because that was our ministry — the children."

Joe Lucero, who currently serves as pastor at FAIM, agreed.

"We've been able to reach out to a lot of unchurched families," he said. "I know the community really has been blessed and always expressed their gratitude toward us and Brother Buck for what he has done."

"We've been able to reach out to a lot of unchurched families. I know the community really has been blessed."

**Pastor Joe Lucero
Fellowship of American
Indians Mission**



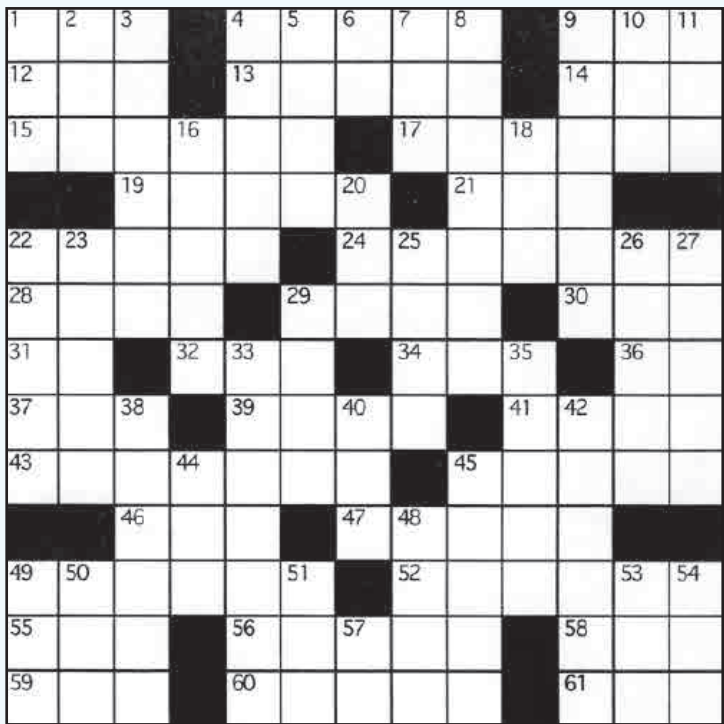
Photo courtesy of Buck Brown

Chickasha children hold Christmas presents provided by Leatherwood Baptist Church in Anniston. Every December, Buck Brown makes the trip with more than 100 bags packed with presents for children in the Oklahoma community.

CHRISTIAN crossword

ACROSS

- 1. Spending limit.
- 4. Drilled.
- 9. Scottish topper.
- 12. Eskimo knife.
- 13. Speak pompously.
- 14. Inlet.
- 15. Cyrus, king of ____.
(2 Chron. 36:22)
- 17. "We are of the truth,
and shall ____ our
hearts before Him."
(1 John 3:19)
- 19. Becomes boring.
- 21. "Y" pluralized.
- 22. Passageways.
- 24. Stolen.
- 28. Dill herb.
- 29. C. Bronte heroine.
- 30. Steamer. (abbr.)
- 31. British 'bye.
- 32. "And he said in the
sight of Israel, ____,
stand thou still."
(Josh. 10:12)
- 34. Of vegetable origin.
(suffix)
- 36. Pronoun.
- 37. Alphonso's queen.
- 39. No coins are needed
to operate its meter.
- 41. Grad. degrees.
- 43. "Their laws are ____
from all people ..."
(Esther 3:8)
- 45. "And though my skin
____ destroy this
body." (Job 19:26)
- 46. Some vowels.
- 47. To be stationary with
the head of the wind,
as a ship.
- 49. Carries.
- 52. Explorer.
- 55. Assist.
- 56. "Thou shall not
oppress an ____
servant."
(Deut. 24:14)
- 58. Historical period.
- 59. Affirmative answer.
- 60. "His enemy came



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DOWN

- 1. "Remove this ____ from
me." (Luke 22:42)
- 2. Ginger ____.
- 3. Lydia's color.
- 4. "And smote Job with
sore ____." (Job 2:7)
- 5. Spoken.
- 6. Egyptian sun god.
- 7. Greek letter.
- 8. "He shall give thee the
____ of thine heart."
(Ps. 37:4)
- 9. Has faith.
- 10. ____ mail.
- 11. First name of life
preserver vest.
- 16. Seasons.
- 18. "Siddim, which is the
salt ____." (Gen. 14:3)
- 20. Case out, clandestinely.
- 22. "The Lord saw that
Leah was ____ ..."
(Gen. 29:31)
- 23. Seventh son of
- and sowed ____ among
the wheat." (Matt.
13:25)
- 61. "He is a ____ creature."
(2 Cor. 5:17)
- Elioenai.
(1 Chron. 3:24)
- 25. One of the dukes
of Edom.
(Gen. 36:43)
- 26. City just across the
Red Sea. (Ex. 13:20)
- 27. Attire.
- 29. Son of Seth.
- 33. "Stand ____ on thy
feet." (Acts 14:10)
- 35. Describe
dramatically.
- 38. Eludes.
- 40. Slippery one.
- 42. "I have ____ the
bands of your yoke."
(Lev. 26:13)
- 44. Poetic p.m.
- 45. "The ____ were
wrapped about my
head." (Jon. 2:5)
- 48. Words of
understanding.
- 49. ____ of Fundy.
- 50. Primitive species
of wheat. (KJV)
- 51. Assembly. (Heb.)
- 53. Before. (poet.)
- 54. Harsh.
- 57. Union Pac. was one.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

4 ways to minister to a new pastor and his family

When a new pastor and his family follow God's call to a church, it can be a scary time for them — they don't know anyone, and they may have left their family to follow His direction.

At the very beginning, a church is usually over the moon about the new arrivals, planning a welcome party and offering many gifts and warm hugs.

There might be a fellowship or a "pounding" for the family.

These acts of love are kind and greatly appreciated.

But people in the church may forget the amount of time it takes to transition into a new ministry.

The ministry can be a lonely life.

These four tips will help your church minister well to your new pastor and his family.

Pick at least one of them this week and show God's love to your new pastor and his family.

These acts of love will mean the world to them.

1. Eat together

Jesus regularly ate with His disciples for times of fellowship, teaching and building friendships.

Find ways to minister to your new pastor and his family by eating together.

Take him out to lunch; invite the family to your house for dinner.

2. Engage

Let them know you are part of their team by engaging in what they are doing.

If your new pastor is pitching a new goal for the church or teaching a new Bible study, jump in and get involved.

Show your appreciation by being present.

3. Encourage

Moving comes with all sorts of stresses and tasks.

There are boxes to unpack, decorations to be hung and mishaps in the new home that will need attention.

On the flip side, the pastor must get acclimated to his new church.

Spiritual warfare often occurs when a pastor begins a new ministry.

All of this normally happens behind closed doors, so find ways to encourage the family via text messages, letters, emails, etc.

4. Expectations

Have no expectations and zero agendas outside of the gospel. Simply love and care for them.

Show God's love and gratitude every time you see them or speak to them. This will go further than you think. (TAB)



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PROGRAM

OCTOBER IS COOPERATIVE PROGRAM MONTH!

FUELING THE GREAT COMMISSION

October is a great time to raise awareness of the Cooperative Program in your congregation. You might consider using a CP bulletin insert, showing a video in your service or inviting a state missionary to come speak about the Cooperative Program. Then have a time of prayer for the Great Commission Ministries supported by the Cooperative Program.

For FREE RESOURCES to help you have a Cooperative Program emphasis in your church, visit AlabamaCP.org or contact State Missionary Jay Stewart, jstewart@alsbom.org, (334) 613-2283.



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

Americans view suicide as mental health epidemic

Almost 4 in 10 Americans have experienced the death of a friend or family member by suicide.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month in the United States.

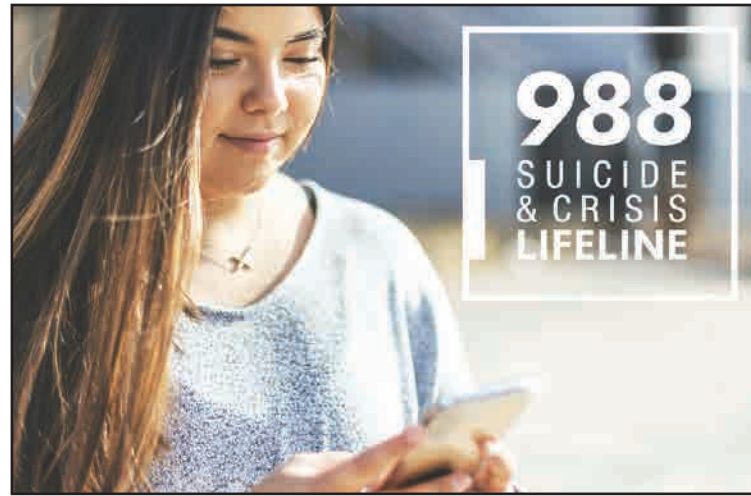
According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 45,979 people died by suicide in the U.S. in 2020, which amounts to one death every 11 minutes. For people 10–34 years old, suicide is a leading cause of death. Additionally, 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide in 2020.

According to a Lifeway Research online survey, most Americans (77%) believe suicide has become an epidemic in the U.S., with 34% strongly agreeing and

44% somewhat agreeing. This number is larger than the 56% of Americans who agreed in a 2014 survey.

“It appears that some who are more distant from those who have taken their own lives are quicker to judge these actions,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. “But it may also be true that those who have consequential views of suicide are less likely to be in communities that consider it.”

The number of Americans who have a friend or family member who died by suicide has increased slightly since 2014. Those in the South are among the most likely to say they have a friend or family member who has committed suicide (43%) and to say suicide is an



Samhsa.gov

toward suicide. Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely than those without evangelical beliefs to say suicide is selfish (48% vs. 35%) and automatically leads to hell (39% vs. 18%).

Lifeline

The 988 Lifeline, which debuted nationwide July 16, is one way to help those in distress due to mental health issues.

Like the 911 dialing code for emergencies, the 988 dialing code connects callers immediately to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. People also can text 988 or chat with someone at 988lifeline.org.

The Lifeline is staffed 24/7 with care and support professionals. In 2021, it received 3.6 million calls, chats and texts. (Lifeway Research, Carrie Brown McWhorter contributed)

epidemic (81%). White Americans are among the most likely to have a friend or family member who has committed suicide (42%) and to identify suicide as an epidemic (79%).

Few survey respondents believe people who commit suicide are selfish (38%) or are automatically going to hell (23%).

Those numbers have remained relatively steady

since 2014 when 36% said suicide was selfish and 23% said someone who commits suicide automatically goes to hell.

Education level

Younger Americans and those with lower levels of formal education are more likely to say suicide is an epidemic in the U.S. But religious beliefs and practice also play a role in attitudes

For more information on the 988 mental health crisis line, visit [tabonline.org/988](https://www.tabonline.org/988).

ALABAMA CITIZENS ACTION PROGRAM

represents our values as Alabama Baptists across the state by not only speaking out at the Statehouse, to civic groups and in local churches, but also in the media at large. Greg Davis and Dr. Joe Godfrey often are called upon for an “opposing view” that television, print and radio media outlets desire. We are always ready to share the biblical worldview and common sense approach to the moral issues of our day. Thank you, Alabama Baptist churches, for your support!

For more information, visit alcap.com.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 25

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



HOPE IN GOD Amos 9:5–15

The Introduction (5–6)

This chapter begins with a prophecy of God's inescapable judgment and affirms God has the power to carry out His judgment. Since God created the universe, He can control what happens in it. For those who have rejected God and mocked His commands and statutes, there will be a reckoning.

Of course, God's standard hasn't changed, and He still judges people today for their lack of obedience. It is common to believe God is solely a God of love, who will forgive sins just because He is loving. While it is true God is a God of love (in fact, God is love; see 1 John 4:16), He is also a holy God. A holy God cannot tolerate sin and will punish sin and those who sin.

However, God has provided a remedy for sin: Christ's work on the cross on our behalf. Because we must be righteous to be in the presence of God and not be condemned, believing in Christ and trusting in His work gives us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). Since He is perfect, Christ's righteousness being applied to us allows God to see us as righteous as well, even though we have sinned.

The Shaking (7–10)

The Israelites disregarded Amos' message because they knew God had chosen them and brought them out of Egypt. God had orchestrated their escape from slavery, which meant they had a special place in God's eyes. Therefore, they thought God would not judge them. In spite of this, Amos points out God orchestrates the direction of all nations, even the Philistines and Arameans, two of Israel's main enemies. God had chosen Israel, but that did not mean He would not bring judgment upon them. God punished disobedience whether it came from the Philistines, Arameans or Israelites.

Even today, people believe they are in good standing with God because of their attendance or membership in a church. Many people

are cultural Christians — the idea that I am a Christian because I hold to Christian ideas of morality or because I go to church. But our physical position or mental posture is not what saves us from God's wrath. Belief and trust in Christ identify us as Christians.

It is important for Christians not only to live as God tells us but also to help others see what the gospel really is. It is not about church attendance or morality, but it is about trusting in Christ and His righteousness for our salvation. This salvation will result in church attendance, godly morality and ethics.

The Restoration (11–15)

God was going to carry out His judgment upon Israel, which ultimately took place in 722 B.C. for the northern kingdom and 586 B.C. for the southern kingdom. Even though God would judge Israel, throughout the Bible He promised there would be a remnant. God would not forsake Israel. The punishment He was going to bring against the Israelites was to turn their hearts back to Him. This was God's discipline, and the purpose of discipline is to change behavior.

The new kingdom God was going to set up would be eternal. Amos uses language to reflect how wonderful the new Kingdom would be: Crops would be so abundant and plentiful they would continue to be harvested while new ones were being planted.

We see this reflected in the New Testament. Hebrews 12:7 says, "Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?" The goal is for us to live like Christ, and when we fall short, God convicts us to help us get back on track. If we ignore the conviction, it may be that, like the Israelites, we are not true followers of God. We need to pay attention to God's will by reading His word and doing what it says, repenting when we fall short and asking God for forgiveness.

Bible Studies for Life

By Rony Kozman, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Samford University



FAITH ON DISPLAY IN YOUR CONVERSATIONS James 3:1–5a, 9–10, 13–18

There is power in our words. (1–5a)

In this chapter, James focuses on the power of our words. Before this discussion about words, he has discussed the important connection between faith and works (2:14–26). And after James discusses our words (3:1–12), he returns to the theme of works (3:13).

The discussion of the tongue in 3:1–12, then, may not be a departure from the concern of works, but it is rather a focus on certain kinds of works — the works of our words.

We see the power of our tongues. Even though the tongue is small, it boasts works of enormous power. The tongue boasts a power that far exceeds its size. A horse's large body is controlled by the small bit in its mouth. Large ships are steered left and right by the small rudder. So it is also with the tongue; although the tongue is much smaller than the body, if we can control this small part, we will be able to rule and direct the whole body.

The person who can control his or her tongue is "perfect," and this reminds us of the persevering person who becomes "complete, lacking in nothing" (1:4).

Our speech can be inconsistent when controlled by self instead of God. (9–10)

Even though the tongue is such a small member, it is very difficult to control, and for such a small member, the damage it causes is great. It can destroy the whole body.

James likens this small member to an animal. Humans have been able to tame just about every kind of animal. But this one small animal — the tongue — has proven untamable. This beast is particularly evil and dangerous since it is "full of deadly poison."

Because the tongue is evil and so difficult to master, it results in

our doing evil works that are inconsistent with how we ought to live.

We use our tongues to both worship God and to curse our brothers and sisters, who are made in the image of God, whom we bless. We use our tongues to do evil. We use our tongues in ways that violate their intended use for good works.

We need God's wisdom to direct our speech. (13–18)

James now returns explicitly to the theme of good works, which he had addressed in Chapter 2. These good works come from wisdom. If we are going to use our tongues for good, then we need wisdom that comes from God.

This wisdom is not a matter of knowing what to do when faced with difficult ethical decisions. Rather, to be filled with God's wisdom is to be filled with the moral character that comes from God and that God requires of us.

James identifies the wisdom from above with virtues such as being peaceable, gentle and merciful. If you recall, James 2:1–13 called us away from partial judgment toward the rich.

Now we are reminded that if we have the wisdom that comes from God, we will be impartial. If we are filled with God's wisdom, we will rule over our tongues; then we will rule our bodies in a way that is in keeping with God's will so we do the good God requires of us. We will reap justice and peace as we bring justice and peace with our tongues.

Here, James echoes the words of Jesus: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matt. 5:6, 9).

If our tongues seek impartial justice, peace and mercy that do not favor the rich, we will receive justice, peace and mercy from God.

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Michael Foust
The Alabama Baptist

CCM artists reaching new audiences with collaborations

You don't have to be a fan of contemporary Christian artists to have heard Christian music in recent years.

Thanks to a wave of collaborations between CCM groups and those of other genres, you could be a fan of country music. Or pop music. Or even hip-hop and rock.

In 2019, For King and Country partnered with hip-hop artist Timbaland and pop singer Sydney Sierota of Echosmith for a new rendition of "God Only Knows."

Knocking down walls

TobyMac followed with a collaboration with folk/rock singer Sheryl Crow on "Promised Land." Chris Tomlin teamed up with country artists Thomas Rhett and Florida Georgia Line on "Thank You Lord," then with Jimmie Allen, also a country singer, on "Love People." Other collaborations include Matthew West and country singer Carly Pearce on "Truth Be Told," Zach Williams and Dolly Parton on "There Was Jesus" and Lecrae with singer/songwriter John Legend on "Drown."

"[With collaboration] you are knocking down societal and genre walls, brick by brick," said Joel Smallbone of For King and Coun-



Photo courtesy of K-Love Fan Awards
CCM groups like For King and Country (above) collaborate with musicians from other genres to reach new audiences.

try. "I think that's part of the reason people love it."

The collaboration often involves mainstream artists who already were fans of CCM.

"I love Christian music," Jimmie Allen, 2021 CMA Awards New Artist of the Year, said. "I listen to K-Love and Air1 all the time."

Collaborations have multiple benefits, Smallbone and his broth-

er, Luke, say. For starters, they open a door to a new audience, a way for Christian artists to reach a new set of fans.

Listening to others

"When you've got a different voice on your song, there are people who follow that artist and then [they] start listening to your songs," Luke explained.

Other songs naturally lend

themselves to collaborations — "God Only Knows," for instance.

"We had this song that felt universal," Joel said. "And it felt like it was bigger than our two voices. And so what do people respond to? They respond to rhythm. So Timbaland was just so magnificent in bringing his own beat."

Different voices

Music fans also "respond to the beauty of different voices," Joel added.

That's where Dolly Parton enters the picture. In December 2019, she teamed up with For King and Country for another version of "God Only Knows."

"Dolly was a long shot," Joel admitted. "We were going for a hole-in-one there. And by the grace of God, she loved the song, and she came back and put her heart into it."

New voices can give a song new meaning, Luke said.

"That's a lady who has been in entertainment for 60 years," he marveled. "So when she says 'God only knows,' you can hear her going, 'I'm thinking through what I've been through.'"

"That's part of the charm of it: You take the same song, and someone else can sing it, and it can mean something different to you.

"I think that's the power of a voice."

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.

"That's part of the charm of it: You take the same song, and someone else can sing it, and it can mean something different to you. I think that's the power of a voice."

Luke Smallbone
For King and Country

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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Trusting God

By Myriah Snyder
International Mission Board

After surviving attack, IMB missionary boldly proclaims gospel in South Asia

Alexander Traverston followed someone he thought was a friend into a building. He sat down and was offered water.

Then eight men entered the room with angry faces. They deadbolted the door behind them. Alarmed, Traverston asked why the door was locked.

“Because we are about to beat you,” the men replied.

“What is this?” the missionary called out. “I thought we were friends.”

One of the eight men replied, “You are no friend.”

Traverston serves in South Asia with the International Mission Board.

He had been threatened multiple times before, as had his wife, Lillian, his IMB teammates and their national partners.

But this time wasn’t an empty threat. This was reality.

Blow after blow

The missionary stood up and walked toward the door. That’s when the first blow came to his back.

As he struggled to move about the room, blow after blow came.

Someone broke a bottle over his head. He made his way to the still locked door before being pulled back and beaten again.

His crime? Boldly proclaiming the gospel to people in a South Asian city in desperate need of God’s saving grace.

“I thought of my children and my wife,” Traverston recounted.

His wife was one street over, discipling new believers alongside a national partner.

Another IMB partner was with their children, leading a Bible club.

A tremendous peace passed over



IMB photo

Traverston. He knew God would take care of his family.

“Lord, I can trust You,” he thought to himself as the first blows came to his back and head. “God, this is for You. I love You. I trust You.”

The second time he made his way to the door, it was unlocked. Another group was waiting for him outside. They threw him in a vehicle and took him to the police station.

A mob of over 100 people was waiting there. They shouted false accusations to the police.

The police took him in for interrogation. Lillian joined him for the interrogation as soon as she could get to his side.

The police wanted to know why the Traverstons insisted on sharing their faith.

“Thankfully I was able to tell the reason for the hope that I have in Christ,” Traverston said.

After he was released, he spent a night in the hospital. None of the injuries were life-threatening.

These events happened several

years ago. Instead of returning to the United States to minister to a people more receptive to the gospel, the Traverstons ultimately decided to stay in South Asia.

The family was confident of God’s leading, despite hardships like emotional trauma for both Alexander and Lillian and anxiety in their daughter, who was old enough to understand and remember.

They continued to work and sow seeds of the gospel in the South Asian city where they lived boldly for the sake of the gospel.

Opened doors

The work just outside their city grew exponentially. Through this steadfast presence, they saw churches planted and growing. The Lord opened new doors, and the team began working among various people groups where new churches were planted.

God allowed the Traverstons the favor to stay. Their team was strengthened and emboldened.

Much of the motivation to remain in that city came from Scripture and their team of nationals, he affirmed.

“Part of local ownership is when you’re asking your partners, ‘What should we do in this?’ And they’re continuing to say, ‘Let’s keep going.’ You go too,” Traverston said.

‘I’m dead already’

In fact, Traverston shared that shortly after the incident, one of the team’s national partners led a training.

When it came time to go out and share the gospel, one of the trainees asked, “Are you crazy, man?”

The leader replied, “You can stay if you want.”

The man at the training questioned, “Don’t you worry about your life with what just happened?”

The leader’s words to him were, “I’m dead already.”

Did Traverston and his team experience fear? Yes. But God gave them “the strength to move beyond it, to not be paralyzed,” he explained.

The couple has been asked if they would do it all again.

“I think Lillian and I and our teammates would all tell you, the answer is profoundly yes!”

Traverston added, “I still can’t think of a more fun and fulfilling time in my life than in that year of broad proclamation.

“There’s a greater joy for the church for us to have to really step out in boldness and proclaim this message throughout all such lost communities.”

He continued, “The gospel must be preached among all peoples, throughout the whole world anticipating His return.”

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

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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Women enjoy being together at the Mom's Connection luncheon at Wise Choices Pregnancy Resource Center in Decatur, Texas.

Photo courtesy of Wise Choices Pregnancy Resource Center

Texas pregnancy resource center loves 'no matter what'

By Carolyn Tomlin

The Alabama Baptist

When Brandie Hayden, CEO of Wise Choices Pregnancy Resource Center in Decatur, Texas, comes to work each morning, she knows there will be many opportunities for sharing the love of Jesus.

"No day is the same," she said. "Every day is different."

Opened in 2001, the center's mission is to save babies and proclaim Jesus Christ. They are part of a national group of pregnancy resource centers, but function autonomously.

Data shows that 170 girls who visited the center last year were "abortion vulnerable." But when they have an ultrasound and hear the baby's heartbeat, "everything changes," Hayden said.

Of the 170, 163 (95.9%) chose life.

Focusing on strategies

For 2021, statistics show 933 total client visits, 312 new clients, 328 pregnancy tests and 288 ultrasounds. More importantly among those numbers, however, 28 made professions

of faith in Christ, five rededicated their faith and the gospel was presented 251 times.

Laurie Perkins, Wise Choice client services director, said the center allows clients to earn coupons to purchase baby items, and services are provided for mothers and their babies up to 3 years of age. They earn the coupons by participating in and completing classes, both in-person and virtual. Class topics range from parenting and budgeting to Bible study and nutrition.

"Clients are encouraged to call and talk with a staff person for a complete listing of all the ways we stand ready to help care for their babies now, while also preparing for their future," Perkins said.

One strategy at Wise Choice that is different from some centers is treating the baby's father like a patient and helping him stay involved.

"We have male mentors who meet

with the fathers and educate them as to the importance of being a dad," Hayden said. "Mentors help the fathers deal with fears of being a dad, the excitement and the resources available. The mentor also provides spiritual leadership and shares the gospel."

The center offers free programs to clients:

- ▶ Pregnancy tests
- ▶ Ultrasound
- ▶ Peer counseling services
- ▶ Adoption information
- ▶ "Earn While You Learn"
- ▶ Parenting classes
- ▶ Referrals for social service agencies

- ▶ Pregnant/parenting teen program
- ▶ Abortion pill reversal protocol
- ▶ Testing for diseases spread through sex.

Another ministry offered by the center is an abortion recovery program, which helps women come to terms with their choice and allow

the Lord to heal and restore them. It is conducted by trained staff in one-on-one counseling, to help women walk in freedom and wholeness after an abortion.

Churches in Wise County, Texas, support the center with Baby Bottle Boomerang fundraisers and observances of Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in January.

"We are just wrapping up the 2022 Baby Bottle Boomerang and this year's total raised exceeded \$22,000," Hayden said. "We are so grateful to all who contributed as we have had several unexpected expenses this year."

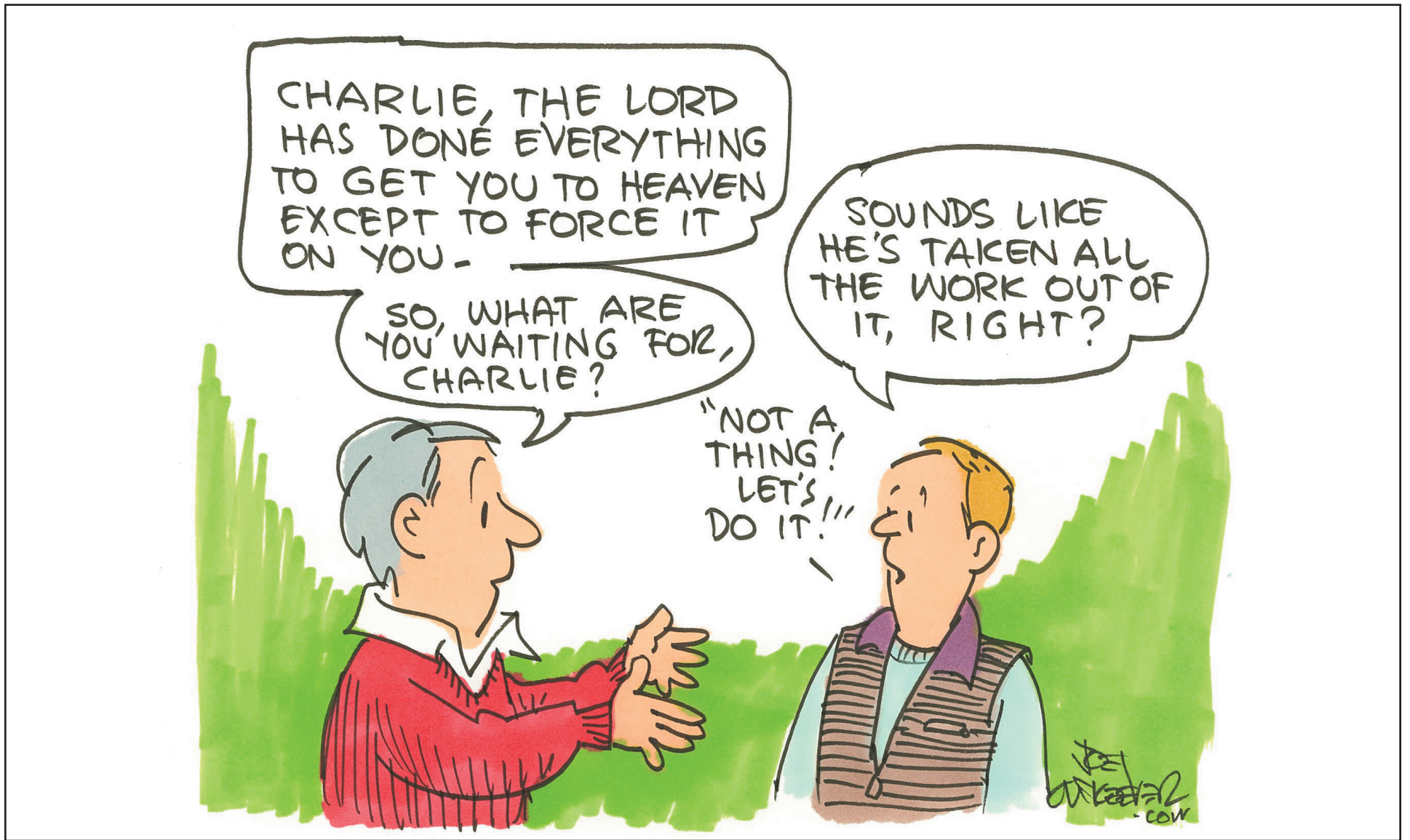
Volunteer opportunities

"In 2021, we gave out over 12,000 diapers, boxes of wet wipes, baby food and formula," Hayden said.

Hayden expects the number of clients to increase since Roe v. Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court.

"It is our goal to educate our clients and love on them no matter what choice they make," she affirmed.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON
VOLUNTEERING OR
DONATING, CALL 940-
627-6924 OR VISIT
MYWISECHOICES.COM.

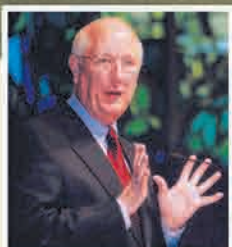


STRUGGLING TOWARD HOPE:

LIFE AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE

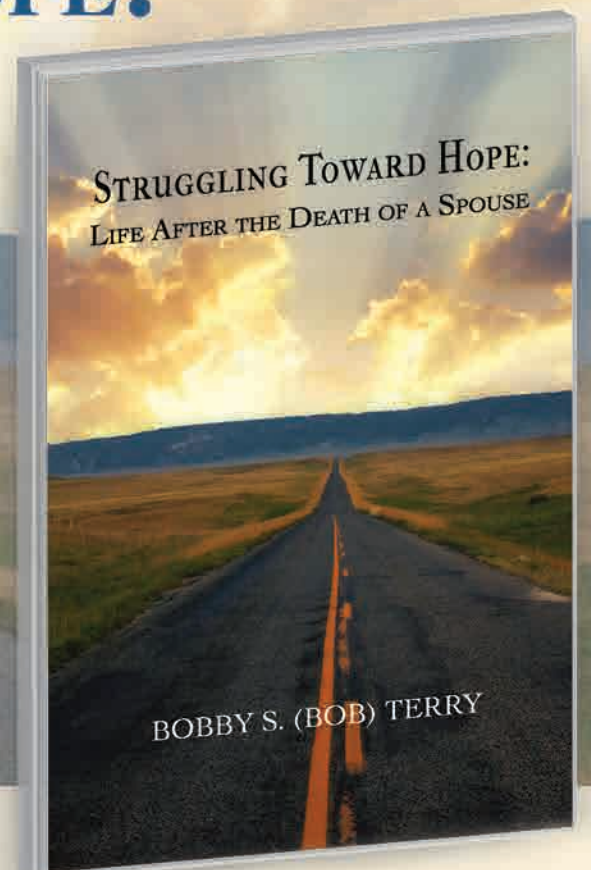
A powerful, beautiful and very helpful account of working through the loss of a spouse. Dr. Terry describes the deep sense of loss he felt and then the process of building hope. This is not a "how to" book on grief, but one that allows the reader to follow the journey and then engage on several levels. As I read the book, I wish that it had been available when as a pastor I struggled to minister to church members who were going through this process. I firmly believe that this book needs to be in every pastor's library to read with extra copies for folks to read as they go through their own grief journey. Dr. Terry's background as a journalist allows him to unpack his own story with unique insights along the way. It is a must read for pastors and counselors.

DR. GARY FENTON
 RETIRED SENIOR PASTOR OF DAWSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.



BOBBY S. (BOB) TERRY

As a Christian minister Bob thought he understood grief. He had done special studies about death and dying and walked with numerous families through the loss of loved ones. But when his wife died from injuries suffered in an automobile accident while the couple was on a mission trip, Bob learned the difference between studying grief academically and knowing grief personally. In this book, Bob relates his own struggles about putting life back together after the death of a spouse. He examines issues related to the changes that death brings and questions about religious faith, about the grief journey and about finding a new hope-filled sense of life.



AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT
SONCOASTPUBLISHING.COM
 OR ON AMAZON.



‘Stay active’

By Carolyn Tomlin
The Alabama Baptist

Meldra Panchelli, age 100, continues to serve her community

It's not unusual for senior adults to volunteer with Meals on Wheels, but what is amazing is that volunteer Meldra Panchelli celebrated her 100th birthday July 2.

Not only does she help feed people, she continues to serve at First Baptist Church Milledgeville, Georgia, as well as numerous centers in the city.

No one in her family has ever lived this long, so Panchelli didn't expect to either. But each day is special, she said, and she is grateful to wake up each morning and thanks God she is able to still serve.

Hundreds of hours

Since 1974, Panchelli has volunteered hundreds of hours, especially at the hospital in Milledgeville.

However, her volunteerism didn't begin in 1974.

This centenarian has been helping people deal with health and other problems, sometimes just listening and being their friend, all her life.

First, she volunteered at the Baldwin County Hospital (renamed several times), today known as Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin.

For the last 12 years, she has



Photo courtesy of the Union-Recorder

100-year-old Meldra Panchelli volunteers at First Baptist Church Milledgeville, Georgia, and numerous centers in the city. “I believe the secret to longevity is to not sit around and feel sorry for yourself,” she says.

been an active volunteer at Harriet's Closet, supporting women recovering from breast cancer. Panchelli understands their needs because she is a 60-year cancer survivor herself.

Love and support

The Milledgeville Union-Recorder reported that Panchelli started working with cancer patients in the mid-1970s.

It was there she helped with the

American Cancer Society's Reach to Recovery Program.

“I liked it because I could help people who had had breast cancer,” Panchelli said.

“I tried to help them understand that they could live like I had lived having had breast cancer.”

As she has been there herself, she helps breast cancer patients obtain items they need to feel more comfortable. Each patient also receives her love and support.

Panchelli tells the patients it is important to remain positive when battling cancer and to surround themselves with positive people. Having a deep faith in God is a big part of her life she shares with others.

Continuing involvement

Besides volunteering at the hospital, she is involved in other projects.

Still driving her car with a driver's license valid through 2027, she delivers Meals on Wheels to her fellow senior citizens who are unable to purchase and prepare their own meals. She also checks on the seniors and brings a smile with each delivery.

As a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, Panchelli has helped build 18 houses in Baldwin County. Her job wasn't easy — she was the one who crawled under houses and put in insulation.

Advice to others

Stay active, Panchelli tells seniors. As quoted in The Union-Recorder, she said, “I believe the secret to longevity is to not sit around and feel sorry for yourself.”

Instead, she believes wholeheartedly that seniors should work and do things for as long as they can. In 1954, Panchelli joined FBC Milledgeville, where she has assumed various teaching and ministry roles.

“Stay active every day. Being a couch potato is not the way to live your life.” Twice a widow, Panchelli keeps her own house and loves to garden.

And if she wakes in the night and can't sleep, there is always a book on her nightstand — her Bible and probably a mystery novel.

“I LIKED [VOLUNTEERING] BECAUSE I COULD HELP PEOPLE WHO HAD HAD BREAST CANCER. I TRIED TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT THEY COULD LIVE LIKE I HAD LIVED HAVING HAD BREAST CANCER.”

MELDRA PANCHELLI