

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Students participate in a Middle Eastern market cross-cultural training simulation during REACH weekend.

Photo by Chris Mills

Mobilizing students

Summer missions, spring break trips serve as 'lab' for disciple-making

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Sonali Albus said that for her, planning to spend the rest of 2023 in Chile was a leap of faith.

"I grew up in church and heard about missions," she said, and over the years, she went on short-term missions trips.

But as Albus prepared to graduate from the University of Alabama

this May, a longer missions stay wasn't on her radar.

"I thought I was going to grad school," she said.

Led to commit

As time went on, those plans didn't work out quite like she thought they would, and she found herself praying through what she might do instead. She started looking at student summer missions,

and eventually she felt God leading her to commit not only to spending the summer in Chile but to spending the fall semester there too.

On April 22, she was one of 106 students commissioned at REACH weekend to spend the summer serving in 19 countries and 10 states.

Chris Mills, student missions mobilizer for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he

sensed "an excitement about what they're expecting the Lord to do in their lives and the lives of those they serve this summer."

He said it's a joy to have the time at REACH weekend — held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega this year — to train and encourage summer missionaries and walk with them through logistics.

(See 'Go and make,' page 10)

SPOTLIGHT SPONSOR ...

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief — Running toward the hurting and helping in the crisis thanks to generous gifts provided through the Cooperative Program.



Annual workshop

Four TAB Media staff members recently traveled to Ridgecrest in North Carolina to attend Baptist Communicators Association's 68th annual workshop. BCA is a professional organization of communicators who serve in editorial, public relations, electronic media, photography, management, marketing and graphic design positions principally within Baptist agencies and institutions.



Above: (L to r) Trennis Henderson, Pam Henderson, Dianna Cagle and Carrie McWhorter represent TAB Media at BCA's annual workshop.



Above: BCA members from Alabama pose with Mr. Moon, the mascot of the Asheville Tourists, before enjoying a minor league baseball game together.



Above: The Alabama Baptist and The Baptist Paper won a total of 25 awards at BCA's annual awards banquet April 19.



Photo by Trennis Henderson

Left: TAB Media staffers Carrie McWhorter (right) and Dianna Cagle lead a breakout session on Cross-Training for Success during BCA's national workshop. The session highlighted how cross-training improves workplace productivity and provides a safety net in times of crisis.



Right: Attendees enjoy fellowship around the campfire on BCA's opening night at Ridgecrest.



Above: BCA workshop attendees participate in a special missions project, assembling gift bags for children and senior adults served by Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina and North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

OPINION



RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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



jrash@thealabamabaptist.org



@RashionalThts

Seasonal life changes difficult but manageable with right perspective

Balancing grief with situational awareness, my friend handled the move well. She's thriving in her new home but moments of sadness surface occasionally.

No one questioned the timing, not even my friend because her 85-year-old body gave her no choice.

For various safety and health reasons, downsizing to a place with on-site assistance made the most sense.

As family members helped my friend make the move, Jason and I walked through the maze of boxes learning about the history of the various pieces of furniture.

She couldn't take the majority of the items with her, but the opportunity to share about the origins — some having been passed down through several generations — seemed to be a therapeutic process.

I know it was difficult to say goodbye to so much of what had brought her comfort and connection through the years. Still, she did it with determination, boldness and grace.

Her son shared how grateful he was to know the furnishings held a special place in his mother's heart and noted how well she had taken care of them.

Now it's time for these pieces to bless another family and be part of another important story, he noted as he looked around the room mentally calculating where to start.

Did you catch that? Instead of putting the items in storage or adding to his and his siblings' households, he took a practical, yet sensitive, approach.

The pieces of furniture are special to his family and most definitely provide a visual thread connecting the generations, but they decided the best way to honor the memories is to allow new ones to be made.

As we gave our friend a hug and wished her well, I whis-

pered a prayer over her that God would grant her a rich, new season of sweet experiences and the opportunity for even more precious memories in her new home.

I also peeked in my closets to see what I might go ahead and move along to be loved by a new family.

Do you ever find yourself holding on to things for sentimental reasons? Or maybe out of a sense of obligation?

I sure do — for those two and many more reasons actually.

What about beyond household furnishings, documents, clothing and knickknacks?

Do you ever grip tightly to routines, schedules and traditions, so much so that you find yourself really upset if someone tries to change one of them?

Clearing a path for next steps

It can be hard, and it's fair to acknowledge the grief over those next steps we may not want to face.

What I'm learning, however, is that if we evaluate the situation objectively, look at it from all perspectives and keep our eyes on Jesus, then we will find the strength to clear the path ourselves. We'll also continue to have a voice at the table when decisions are being made.

Recent awards showcase much more than quality of work

It's awards season time for those involved in faith-based professional organizations such as Baptist Communicators Association (see page 2).

Your team serving The Alabama Baptist and its sister publication The Baptist Paper brought home a large number of honors this year. We'll be sharing the specifics soon, but I wanted to let you know how proud I am of them.

They work hard every week to provide fact-based, calm coverage in our reporting. It can be quite difficult following a neutral

path right now, but we strive to present the facts clearly, calmly and in proper context.

Keeping hope alive

The team also spends a tremendous amount of energy looking for and telling the stories of how God is working through His people.

With all that bombards each of us every day, it is vital for our spiritual and emotional health to be consistently reminded how God is moving and to keep hope alive.

We do that for you through the pages of the paper and in a variety

of platforms showcasing our online content. You'll find these God glimpses in every issue.

Remaining tightly connected to other believers also keeps us focused and makes us stronger.

Our team is constantly finding creative ways to help you stay connected, and it's your partnership that actually makes it work.

The recent awards highlight the excellent quality of work our team members are delivering, but even more they showcase the depth of commitment to you.

—Jennifer Davis Rash

Your Voice



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

Helping churches define engagement rather than attendance

By George Bullard
President, The Columbia Partnership

One recent Sunday, my wife and I decided not to attend live, on-site church, so we attended church online. Though we did not attend church on-site, we were engaged in church and were an active part of God's Church that day.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I was the director of a Baptist association of 100 churches. A key issue was counting church participation. I suggested our churches move from counting attendance to counting engagement.

This did not fit some churches' convictions about participation.

For others, it was a relief and an innovation to think about engagement as another way of counting attendance.

Counting engagement is a reframing of participation. It acknowledges that church engagement exists through both live presence and online presence.

Consider a change

In our Baptist tradition of counting attendance only through live presence, we have not changed our counting pattern.

Now is the time.

Once we counted active members as people who attended every Sunday, those who when not pres-

ent brought us a bulletin from the church they attended. Then we lowered the definition of active members to those who attended three Sundays each month — and then two. Some churches finally arrived at a place that any person who attended at least one Sunday each month was considered active.

Questions have also arisen about how to count online worship participants. For example, how do we know if they are really engaged in worship or whether they've just clicked into the online service, but are actually doing something else?



BULLARD

One church with a high percentage of empty nesters and senior adult households asked me to help them think through counting and how to engage people online. They felt they had lost participation. They had not.

They were averaging about 175 in live attendance. We asked the staff — who likely knew the most about those not present on-site — to suggest people who were engaged weekly but not present on-site. They came up with more than 150 additional people on average who had some type of specific weekly engagement with the church.

If they only counted attendance, they were one size. If they counted engagement, they were another size. Their engagement number was their real participation.

Follow up

Every person online for whom you have a name and contact information needs to be on someone's list. They are engaged. Someone needs to proactively care about them. Someone needs to care about their spiritual pilgrimage and their connection with a congregation of Christ-followers.

What can your churches in association do to help one another learn ways to count people who are engaged, minister to them, help them grow as disciples and involve them in the life of a congregation of Christ-followers?

Letters to the Editor

Thank you for your Rashional Thoughts article in the April 6 issue of The Alabama Baptist.

"Unexpected encounters" is definitely causing me to look for ways that I can make a difference for someone in my life this week. It's also making me think about extending grace rather than immediate judgment, as well as reminding me to watch for speed limit signs. Ha!

I so love the gift God has placed in you and the fact that you use it so well.

Robert Smith
Trussville, Ala.

How encouraging to read the article earlier this year in which Isaac Adams, pastor of Iron City Church in Birmingham, addresses the issue of race from his perspective. Thank you.

In our opinion, a personal story is always more meaningful than an academic treatise on a topic.

God, through His Holy Spirit, works in people to change hearts and minds in accordance with His will. He provides guidance to each of us as we confront our guilt of the past and seek His forgiveness.

Pastor Adams' honesty and

transparency in this article is deserving of applause.

The acknowledgement of his initial confusion and struggle with understanding race differences and his arrival at the conclusion that a more positive approach to a solution is to be "a Christian who pursues justice and mercy and love" is profound.

Hopefully The Alabama Baptist will consider publishing similar articles like this one that deal with minorities and their health care.

Brian Johnson/Beverly Smith
Submitted at tabonline.org

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“[God] has never failed to show up and lead my life in a direction that is for His glory.”

HANNAH GAMMILL
University of Arkansas softball player

Far too many Christians think they can't share the gospel until they've built a strong friendship with someone over time and have "earned the right to be heard." They subconsciously have bought Satan's lie that the power to save is in the strength of their relationship with the person they are seeking to reach.

It's not. The power is in the message, not the messenger. This is why the apostle Paul described the gospel as "the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes ..." (Rom. 1:16).

Greg Stier
Evangelist and founder
Dare 2 Share Ministries

It is encouraging and refreshing to see pastors and church leaders from

different places across the nation join in prayer with one another to see God move. I see hunger for God and for Him to reveal Himself to His church.

Luis Lopez
Vice president of Hispanic
relations and mobilization
SBC Executive Committee

Now I have a purpose to go out and share this message of what happened to me, for other people that are probably going through the same thing.

Granger Smith
Musician

The great thing about [the "Jesus Revolution"] film is it touches people and so many are open to the gos-

pel after watching it. We have heard so many stories of people coming to Christ after they saw the film in theaters.

Pastor Greg Laurie
Harvest Christian Fellowship
Riverside, California

More than 3 in 4 American Protestant churchgoers say tithing is a biblical command that still applies today (77%). Giving 10% of your earnings to God is still a widespread standard among churchgoers. The ... decline in considering tithing a command appears to be more from a lack of teaching on the subject than a rejection of such teaching.

Scott McConnell
Executive director
Lifeway Research

From the *Twitterverse*

@pastorjgkell

Christians are not always rewarded the same in this life for their faith (Heb. 11:1-40).

Abel was murdered. Enoch was raptured.

Daniel shut lions' mouths. Others were eaten by lions.

Some are famous. Others are forgotten.

Keep trusting. One day soon God will reward us in full.

@DanielRitchie

Thankfulness is not rooted in a life slam-packed with abundant harvest. Thankfulness is rooted in celebrating where gospel seed has taken root along the rocky soil of my life.

@SEBTS

"You will never know that Jesus is enough until Jesus is all you have left." —Robert Smith Jr. #SEChapel

@macbrunson

What God has done for you in your past becomes the clue, the insight into what He expects from you today.

@kristenpadilla

"Dear friends, let us love one another because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love." —1 John 4:7-8

@sPeytonHill

"There are, in the end, only two ways to read the Bible: Is it basically about me or basically about Jesus? In other words, is it basically about what I must do or basically about what He has done." —Tim Keller

@Dawson_Church

Blessed are the merciful for they

shall receive mercy. —Matthew 5:7 #morningencouragement

@larrydrobertson

Maybe if we didn't make everything political and divided down partisan lines, everything wouldn't be political and divided down partisan lines.

Naïve, I know.

But truth is truth, lies are lies, right is right, and wrong is wrong no matter what your tribe tells you to believe.

@LysaTerKeurst

The pursuit of perfection leads to pretending. Pretending encourages others to chase perfection. And it's just all so very exhausting.

Let's give each other the gift of transparency and grace as we pursue Jesus. Because perfection doesn't exist on this side of eternity.

The SBC Executive Committee

By **Meredith Flynn**
The Alabama Baptist

Established in 1917, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Convention when it is not in session, with a mission to "serve churches as they prioritize, elevate and accelerate the vision of reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation through collaborative partnership, cooperation and generosity."

Under that mission, the EC currently is responsible for seven ministry assignments that have been approved by messengers to the SBC annual meetings through the years.

The assignments are detailed in the entity's ministry statement, which is published in the SBC's organization manual.

In summary, the EC serves as the fiduciary, the fiscal and the executive entity of the Convention in all its affairs not specifically committed to some other board or entity.

The SBC Executive Committee is authorized, instructed and commissioned to act for the Convention ad interim in all matters not otherwise provided for. Among the other ministry assignments of the EC are to promote and celebrate giving through the Cooperative Program; to assist churches in stewardship education, investment management and generosity; and to help churches elevate the ministry of prayer.

Read more about the ministry assignments and ministry statement of the SBC Executive Committee at tabonline.org/ec-duties.

EDITOR'S NOTE — At press time, the SBC Executive Committee was expected to name a new president and CEO on or around May 1. Read more about that announcement at tabonline.org/ec-news.

3 stories you should know



Screenshot

After grossing more than \$52 million at the box office, “Jesus Revolution” was No. 1 (DVD) and No. 2 (Blu-ray) on Amazon’s list of bestsellers in movies and TV following its release on April 25. Based on a book by pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie, the film was released in theaters Feb. 24 and was the No. 3 movie in the country its opening weekend. In a tweet, Laurie said interest in the film shows that “people are hungry in our nation spiritually.” (TAB)

High court declines to halt abortion pill sales

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled April 21 that mifepristone, a drug commonly used to induce a medical or chemical abortion, will remain on the market for the time being while its approval is legally challenged.

In a 7–2 decision, the high court granted stays to lower court opinions that suspended the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s legalization of the drug or restored previous restrictions on its use.

As a result, mifepristone will be available under the same guidelines in place before court decisions the last two weeks. The New Orleans-based Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to hear oral arguments in the case May 17.

Chemical abortions now constitute more than half (53%) of all abortions in the U.S. (BP)

Most churchgoers see imperative of tithing

More than 3 in 4 American Protestant churchgoers say tithing is a biblical command that still applies today. One in 10 say it is not.

The youngest adult churchgoers, those 18–34, are the least likely (66%) to agree tithing is a biblical command that still applies today.

Only half of churchgoers (51%) say they give a traditional tithe — 10% or more of their income — to the church they attend. More than 1 in 5 (22%) say they try to give but aren’t always consistent.

“Believing God wants you to tithe and doing it are two different things,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research, who conducted the study. “Like many exhortations in Scripture, giving your finances to God is not necessarily easy in practice.” (Lifeway Research)

Persecuted church

European human rights court rules Russia discriminated against pastor

STRASBOURG, France — The European Court of Human Rights on March 7 said Russian authorities discriminated against a Christian pastor for hosting a prayer gathering.

Alliance Defending Freedom International, a human rights group, supported pastor Donald Ossewaarde, a native of the U.S., in the case.

ADF International reported that on Aug. 14, 2016, Ossewaarde and his wife held a time of prayer and Bible reading in their home in Oryol, Russia, something they had done regularly.

Anyone was welcome to participate.

Three police officers in attendance questioned other participants in the gathering and took Ossewaarde to the police station.

Ossewaarde was convicted of doing mission-

ary work and fined 40,000 rubles (\$700). The month prior to Ossewaarde’s arrest, Russia instituted an “anti-terrorism law” that made some missionary work a crime and allowed higher penalties to be imposed against foreigners.

After Russian courts upheld his sentence, Ossewaarde appealed to the European Court of Human Rights. That court ruled that missionary work (evangelism) and other acts of worship are protected religious freedoms.

The court held that the punishment, conviction and discrimination violated Articles 9 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Baptist congregations in Uzbekistan raided during Easter services

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Police in Uzbekistan raided two Baptist congregations during their Easter services.

According to Forum 18 News Service, a Council of Churches Baptist congregation in Karshi was raided April 9. Three church members were arrested. The next day, a Council of Churches Baptist congregation in Denov was raided by



Photo courtesy of Forum 18

police, who claimed the meeting was illegal and forcibly dispersed the crowd. Both congregations had sought unsuccessfully to rent local venues for Easter presentations featuring

performances of visiting German Baptist musicians.

Uzbekistan is No. 21 on Open Doors’ 2023 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **Earl Tew**, who invested more than 60 years of his life in Alabama Baptist ministry, died April 26. He was 93.

A graduate of Howard College (now Samford University) and New Orleans Seminary, Tew served as pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, for more than 20 years, then served as director of missions for Birmingham Baptist Association for 12 years. He also served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Dothan.



TEW

In 1997, Tew became interim pastor of First Baptist Church Hoover while still serving at BBA. After he retired from his role at BBA, he became full-time pastor of the church. He led FBC Hoover through a revitalization process and helped them become debt-free before retiring from the pastorate in 2004.

Tew went back to Lakeside Baptist as minister to senior adults in 2007, then retired again in 2010.

In addition to his ministry roles, Tew wrote the Life and Work Sunday School commentary for The Alabama Baptist for nearly 15 years, ending that work in 1995 when he passed it to his son, David.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Juanita, who died in 2022. He is survived by his sons, David and Mark, and daughter, Delane, and their families.

AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

► **Lisa Caton** is the new administrative assistant and financial secretary of **Autauga Baptist Association**. She was previously employed at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions before working as a ministry assistant to a local church for 22 years.

She and her husband, Danny, are members of Prattmont Baptist Church, Prattville, and have one child.

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

► **Jake Ford** is the new youth director of **Angel Grove Baptist Church, Jacksonville**.

He and his wife, Amber, have two children.

CHEROKEE ASSOCIATION

► **Zach Richards** is the new pastor of **Pine Grove Baptist Church, Centre**. He previously

was pastor of York Bluff Baptist Church, Sheffield.

He and his wife, Whitney, have three children.

COVINGTON ASSOCIATION

► **Enon Baptist Church, Florala**, celebrated its 100th anniversary April 9. Pastor Charlie Lennard preached the message, and Randall Holland sang a special song. Lonette Berg (left) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a plaque, and Barbara Powell shared the history of the church. An Easter egg hunt was held at the conclusion of the service before lunch. The oldest member, Eva Rae Norris, age 102, attended.



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

ELMORE ASSOCIATION

► **Mitts Chapel Baptist Church, Deatsville**, celebrated its 100th anniversary March 19. Former pastors Terry Johnston, Roger Singleton and Dave Burns spoke while Scott Griffith, another former pastor, sang a special song. Lonette Berg of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a plaque. Glenn Goggans has been the bivocational pastor for 17 years; he also is a district judge for Elmore County.



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **J. Steven Layton** is the new discipleship pastor of **Double Oak Community Church, Birmingham**.

Layton is a graduate of Samford University and holds a master of divinity degree in pastoral ministries and doctor of ministry degree in leadership and administration from New Orleans Seminary.

He was saved and baptized in 1971 and accepted the call to full-time Christian service in 1982. He received his minister's license in 1984 followed by ordination in 1986.

He previously was the lead strategist for groups at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; pastor of Riverchase Baptist Church, Hoover; discipleship minister of Brentwood Baptist Church (Tennessee); associate pastor of teaching and discipleship of NorthPark Baptist Church, Truss-



LAYTON

ville; Lifeway Church Resources consultant for the south central region of Alabama; minister of Christian education of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham; associate pastor/minister of education and interim pastor of First Baptist Church Alexander City; and minister of education and youth of Fultondale FBC.

He and his wife, Melinda, have five children and five grandchildren.

TUSCALOOSA CO. ASSOCIATION

► **Donnie Payne** retired April 30 from **Forest Lake Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**. Payne has served the church since 1989.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Blue Mountain College as well as a master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from New Orleans Seminary. Payne is a member of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and serves on the executive committee.

He and his wife, Charlotte, have two children.



PAYNE

WEST CENTRAL ASSOCIATION



Facebook photo

► **Frederick Hardy** (left) is the new pastor of **Freedom Baptist Church, Selma**. James Spicer, who served the church for three decades, recently retired.

► **John Braley** is the new minister of music of **Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma**.

Samford celebrates groundbreaking

An official groundbreaking for Samford University's new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex was held April 25.

The \$65 million venture is the largest capital project in the university's history.

When completed in the fall of 2024, the four building-complex will include new training and practice facilities for Samford athletics teams and "will provide students and employees with expanded opportunities to improve physical fitness and mental wellness as well as new spaces for campus events and student gatherings," the university reported. (Samford)

A group of 200 boys, dads and group leaders worship during Adventure Weekend 2023. The two-day retreat was held March 24–25 at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center.

'HEARTBEAT OF MISSIONS'



Photo courtesy of Thomas Garner

Adventure Weekend invests in boys, celebrates generational discipleship

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

At the end of this year's Adventure Weekend, Larry Hyche asked Joe Brothers to come on stage and close the event in prayer.

Brothers told Hyche something he didn't intend for him to share.

"He whispered to me, 'This is my 50th year of working with kids,'" said Hyche, who serves as men's spiritual development specialist at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. "He has been faithfully bringing boys to our events and Royal Ambassadors events for years."

Hyche was encouraged by that story of faithfulness standing right in front of him. So as he introduced Brothers to pray, he shared the story with the 200 boys, dads and group leaders present at Adventure Weekend, held March 24–25 at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center.

Influence

For the past 50 years, Brothers, a member of First Baptist Church Glencoe, has been involved in ministries like Adventure Weekend. It makes sense he'd have a heart for it.

"I had an RA leader in my lifetime — Gerald Smith — who influenced me greatly about coming to the church and eventually led me to the Lord," Brothers said. "He was one of those awesome leaders who took us camping and got us involved in adventure, and that got me involved the most."

So in 1973, when Brothers got out of the Marines, he started leading a Baptist Young Men group for high school boys as well as an RA group for elementary-age boys at another church in Glencoe.

Maury Riley was in that RA group — and he was also in the crowd at Adventure Weekend in March when Brothers prayed. He told Hyche that after the prayer.

"As soon as we dismissed," Hyche said, "a white-headed man approached me with tears in his eyes and with a kid by his side and said, 'I was in Mr. Joe's first RA group. He picked me up every week and made sure I went to church. Now here I am investing in my grandson.'"

Hyche said he grabbed Brothers so he could share in the moment. "They cried and embraced. We were all sitting there crying," he said. "This is what we want for men's discipleship."

Riley said Brothers "has been doing this a long time; he's a great guy."

Brothers also invested in Riley's son, who went to another church but attended some of his RA weekends. Now Riley's grandson, Daylon, is a part of Brothers' group at FBC Glencoe.

Faithful investment

"I know these kids love him. My grandson loves him to death," Riley said. "Joe doesn't want any accolades; he just loves what he does."

Brothers agreed that it's not about him at all.

"It's about the Lord and His Kingdom, but it's also so many people who have helped me through the years through this program," he said. "It's not like I should take the credit. I know how much help I've had throughout the years."

That sort of faithful investment is what Hyche hopes to grow through Adventure Weekend, which used to be called RA Congress. "We have opened it up. It's not just for RAs anymore; it's any first through sixth grade boys and their dads or leaders," he said.

"If it's a kids' minister who wants to bring all the boys in his or her church, that's great too."

The event is growing each year, and Hyche said they're seeing an increase in the numbers of fathers and sons coming together.

"It's encouraging to see how many pairs we had," he said.

The two-day camp involves wor-

ship and camp activities like an obstacle course, a bonfire, a high-ropes course and Bazooka Ball.

It also includes Global Challenge, which is a chance for the boys to rotate through 12 stations on the rec field and learn about different countries and missionaries and play games related to each country.

"It's amazing to see what they absorb in such a fast amount of time," Hyche said. "We have a heartbeat of missions in the event. We want them to get solid discipleship and also to infuse the importance of missions education."

He said he also loves challenging the boys to realize that God can call them to be missionaries.

Used by God

"When I was growing up in a little church in Walker County, I didn't think someone like me could be a missionary," Hyche said. "But we're able to tell them about men from Alabama who are serving on the field now and show them how God is using Alabama people. Some of these boys might be next."

He said another goal is for dads to hear the gospel and commit their lives to Jesus too.

Hyche said a lifelong friend of his came to faith in Christ when he took his son to RA camp, and he prays the same story might be repeated at each Adventure Weekend.

"The gospel was clearly presented and celebrated through the whole weekend," Hyche said.



Photo courtesy of Larry Hyche

Joe Brothers (left) is starting his 50th year of leading ministries for boys. Maury Riley (right) was part of his Royal Ambassadors group years ago, and now Brothers is leading Riley's grandson Daylon's (center) RA group.

The next Adventure Weekend will be March 22–23, 2024.

‘More than just playing basketball’

Birmingham Squadron seeks to be a positive influence in community

By Tracy Riggs Frontz
The Alabama Baptist

Squadron, a G-league professional basketball team affiliated with the New Orleans Pelicans, is more than a group of basketball players trying to win games and move on to the NBA. They are very service- and community-minded.

Leslie Claybrook, Squadron's new general manager, joined the organization in July 2022. The former University of Alabama player has been a coach and athletics director at several colleges — experiences that have motivated her toward community service.

“We’re not just a team that plays 24 games at Legacy Arena. We’re a team that wants to be involved and engaged in the Birmingham community in several different areas — schools, churches, outreaches. We do a lot of community service and engagement,” Claybrook said.

She continued, “Our coaches and players are more than basketball players. They’re young men who want to be a part of the community here in Birmingham and engaged in the community and give back in a meaningful way more than just playing basketball.”

Opportunities

One event that emphasizes this focus is an annual Faith and Family Night. Several churches, including First Baptist Church Leeds, came out this past season for the Squadron's Faith and Family Night.

Matt Robinson, minister of youth at First Baptist Leeds, brought his youth group to the game.

He explained, “I chose the Squadron game because I am always looking for fun inexpensive ideas to spend time together as a youth group. Events like the Bir-



Photo courtesy of Grace Klein Community

Team members and staff of Squadron, Birmingham's minor league basketball team, serve at a drive-thru food giveaway at Liberty Church. Projects and speaking engagements help the team connect with the community all year long.

mingham Squadron basketball game is a fun outing for students to invite their unchurched friends so they can have a laid-back opportunity to get to know our church.”

Claybrook is encouraged by those kinds of stories.

“Having these types of theme nights like Faith and Family provides organizations which we work with in the community to see our guys, not only having worked with them in a service opportunity but also see them participate in their passion and their growth,” she said.

Squadron's head coach, T.J. Saint, is on board with a life-is-more-than-basketball emphasis, Claybrook said.

“[He] is really involved with community outreach. He wants his

players to be involved in community outreach because he wants them to understand that they are part of the community; that there is more to basketball,” she said.

One way Squadron serves the community is by partnering with local nonprofits. One of these is Grace Klein Community, a group who works to “meet physical and spiritual needs both locally and globally.”

Annie Stewart, who works with community volunteer recruitment at Grace Klein Community, has great things to say about the Squadron players and organization.

“The Squadron team and staff have been truly amazing. Not only have they volunteered at our drive-thru (food giveaway), helping make food boxes and passing them out,

they’ve also created personal connections with hundreds of people through caring and encouraging interactions,” Stewart said.

Giving back

Another way Squadron gives back is by providing tickets to community partners, including churches.

Grace Klein has used this promotion to both help their clients and give back to their volunteers.

“These amazing people have also treated many of our hardworking volunteers and food recipients with opportunities to watch their intense and fun-filled games,” Stewart said.

“The long list of joyful, hopeful and thankful stories that come from those blessed with their time with the Squadron, either at the games or at the drive-thru, helps show the amazing impact they’ve had on so many,” she added.

“The example of sharing shows the amazing effort that the Squadrons are willing to put in to help build a community of joy and unity. Grace Klein Community and our food rescue initiative FeedBHM is blessed to partner with them and we look forward to continuing to impact Birmingham together.”

Squadron also has players on the team who share their testimonies. They enjoy speaking to church groups of all kinds, including programs like Upward.

“We just need to know what those opportunities are,” Claybrook noted. “We just need people to ask us, to tell us, ‘Come out and do this.’”

Churches or nonprofits who would like to partner with Squadron can contact Sam Beck at Samantha.Beck@Pelicans.com.

For Squadron's schedule or more information about the team, go to birmingham.gleague.nba.com.

Churches or nonprofits that would like to partner with Squadron can contact Sam Beck at Samantha.Beck@Pelicans.com.

ONE MISSION STUDENTS

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

More than 100 Alabama students will serve on the missions field this summer

(continued from page 1)

And the commissioning service at the end of the weekend is “always a highlight,” he said.

“I also was grateful for all the parents who came, and just the sweet spirit they had,” Mills said. “Looking across the room seeing the family members, I couldn’t help but think of the stories we’ve all heard. There are obstacles that keep students from going on mission, and family is often at the top of that list of things that keep them from going.”

He said he was grateful for the influence these parents had on their children’s lives “even in going to the ends of the earth.”

Ben Edfeldt, director of the SBOM office of collegiate and student missions, said he’s “so grateful to be a part of a ministry that moves students to respond to Scripture by mobilizing them to the nations.”

“I’m so excited to see how these Alabama Baptist students change the world, their campus, their jobs and their churches for the sake of the gospel,” he said. “I’m grateful for the campus ministers, college ministers and pastors who invest much into these students. I’m also grateful to have Chris Mills on my team — he is a fantastic mobilizer, and Alabama Baptists are fortunate to have him leading and serving.”

Mills said it’s a privilege for him and others to “engage the campus and ultimately engage the world through the campus.”

In addition to those headed to

serve on summer missions, 130 students from 10 campuses also served during spring break in March. Some served alongside a church planter in Cincinnati, some served in mercy ministries in Texas, some did beach evangelism in Baldwin County and others served in New Orleans in partnership with the seminary there.

Out of comfort zones

Edfeldt said they’ve heard “story after story of students out of their comfort zones serving people.”

“They shared the gospel all week long,” he said. “One who went was super nervous, but as he became more acclimated, he became more confident and bold.”

Mills said in Cincinnati, students “got it” as they engaged the community and came back ready to use what they learned on their campuses.

“I think that’s one of the advantages of a spring break opportunity — it provides a learning opportunity to come back to campus and be

challenged to apply some of those same things in the most strategic missions field in our state,” he said.

Edfeldt agreed.

“It’s a lab for students to learn,” he said. Not only do students go and share abroad, they “come home and do [missions] at home,” Edfeldt said.

“It’s an opportunity for new believers to go and learn about this call to go, and it’s a chance for our current leaders to practice and share so that when they come back, they’re reaching more people.”

For more information, visit onemissionstudents.org.

“[Missions is] an opportunity for new believers to go and learn about this call to go.”

Ben Edfeldt
director of the SBOM office of collegiate and student missions



Photo by Beth Edfeldt

Above and below, left: Students practice acting out Bible studies in creative ways.



Photo by Beth Edfeldt

Right: UAB students Vinay Kumar and Jessica Wong hand out invitations to The Valley Church in Cincinnati.



Photo courtesy of Edwin Hocutt



Photo by Ben Edfeldt

Left: 106 students were commissioned for summer missions at REACH weekend April 22.



Photo by Beth Edfeldt

Above: Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU, challenges students’ families and friends.



Photo by Beth Edfeldt

Above: Chris Crain, executive director of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association, encourages students at the commissioning service. **Right:** Students from the University of South Alabama learn about needs in New Orleans.



Photo courtesy of Beth Gardner



Photo courtesy of Shannon Hughes

Above: A team of students from Auburn serves in Cincinnati over spring break in March. While there, they served alongside a church planter and gained experience in outreach that they brought back to their campus.

TO VIEW A GALLERY OF PHOTOS, VISIT TABONLINE.ORG/ONE-MISSION-STUDENTS.

UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Pastoral Evangelism Workshop May 16

As a pastor, how do you lead your church to make a greater impact in evangelism? And how do you prepare biblical sermons that have an evangelistic appeal?

The Pastoral Evangelism Workshop — set for May 16 at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions — is designed to address these questions.

“The benefit of attending the Pastoral Evangelism Workshop is that we’ll learn from effective practitioners who are actually doing in their own churches what they will be sharing with us,” said Daniel Wilson, director of the SBOM office



To register, visit evangelizeal.org/pew or scan the code to the left with your smartphone’s camera.

of evangelism. “So this is not going to be a bunch of theoretical ideas. Instead we’ll be getting proven and practical help for becoming better evangelistic leaders and preachers.”

For more information about the Pastoral Evangelism Workshop or to register, visit evangelizeal.org/pew.

Church Tax Conference

Do you need a W2 if the pastor is the only paid employee?

Do you have to complete Form 941?

Can a minister take 100% of his income as housing?

How does a small church of 100 or fewer people differ from a large church when it comes to tax issues?

At the Church Tax Conference for Small Churches, you will learn the answer to these questions and more.

The conference will be held June 8, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., at the SBOM at 1404 Fairview Avenue in Prattville. The cost of this event is \$15, which includes lunch and materials.

For more information or to register, visit alsbom.org/churchtax.



To register, visit alsbom.org/churchtax or scan the code to the left with your smartphone’s camera.

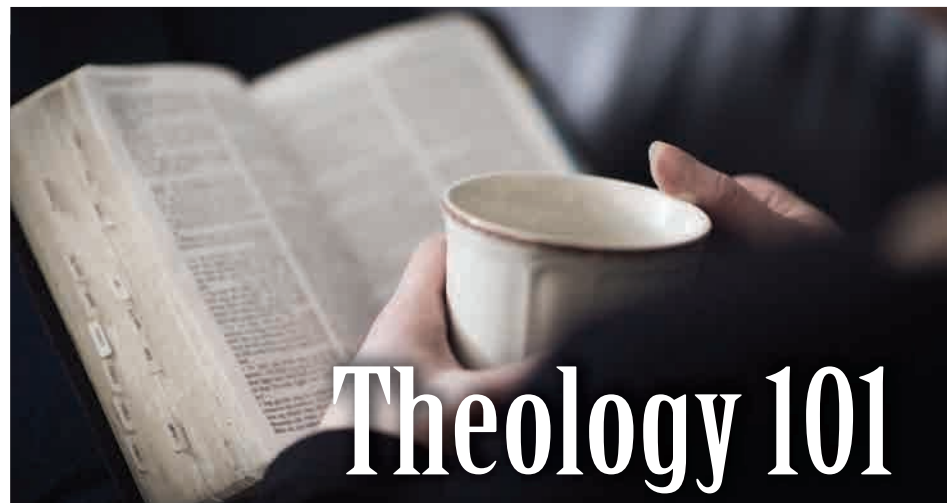
Church Administrative Guidelines workshop June 20

It’s important for a church to know the need for and benefit of proper legal and operating documents. Church Administrative Guidelines covers the process for developing your church’s articles of incorporation, church constitution,

bylaws, policies and procedures.

This workshop will be held June 20, 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m., at the SBOM in Prattville. The cost is \$15 and includes lunch.

To register, visit alsbom.org/churchadmin.



BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Holy Spirit

Divine Spirit and Human Spirit

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
The Alabama Baptist

The Bible bears witness to God as the Holy Trinity — Father, Son and Spirit. The Bible also has much to say about the human spirit.

We humans are more than a physical being with a material body. We are both flesh and spirit. A close examination of the Bible’s witness about the divine Spirit and the human spirit presents a study in contrasts.

Galatians 5:17 puts it succinctly when it refers to the human spirit as flesh: “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

Every believer engages in this conflict: the divine Spirit confronting our human spirit.

Living in conflict

Living in conflict with the Holy Spirit finds various expressions in Scripture. For example, Ephesians 4:30 warns against grieving the Holy Spirit: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Verse 31 then points out several human attitudes and actions that grieve the divine Spirit: “bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking.”

Another warning is given in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, when it says pointedly, “Do not quench the Spirit.” Not only is it possible for the human spirit to grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, but as Stephen bore witness before the Jewish high court, a witness that

led to him being stoned to death: “You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you” (Acts 7:51).

Living in unawareness

Somewhat less vicious than resisting the Spirit is living in unawareness of the Spirit’s presence in our lives.

Such was the case with some Ephesian believers whom the Apostle Paul confronted with the question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

Their response to the question was quite revealing, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2).

Whether due to ignorance about the divine Spirit or due to resisting and grieving the Spirit whom we know indwells every true believer, it is a sad and disappointing outcome when Christian believers live without the Spirit’s power and leadership.

It is one thing to be unaware of the Spirit’s presence in our lives as Christians, but another to know His indwelling presence and still choose to ignore His directions that would guide us into God-pleasing attitudes and actions.

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.



Baptists build homes in Turkey following earthquake

Six volunteers from Dallas-based Texas Baptist Men recently helped build homes for families in Antakya, Turkey, left homeless by a devastating February earthquake.

The simple metal structures will give residents safe places to live for the next several years, empowering them to move out of damaged structures or flimsy tents.

The semi-cylindrical shelters are being built in a place that feels like a scene out of a movie. Electricity is difficult to come by; water even more so. Don't even ask about sewage.

Barely surviving

People — often children — scavenge through the rubble for scrap metal they can sell or reuse.

Emergency tents dot the city, giving a small source of protection for families.

Long lines form daily for food and water distribution, as well as government support checks.

Where does a ministry even start with relief efforts

in such a situation? A TBM team started with the basics.

"Historically, Christians were first called Christians here in Antioch," said team leader Robert Watson. "They were called that because they were 'little Christs.' They were living out the teachings of Jesus. That's what we want to do here."

Volunteers, working alongside an in-country partner, fought supply-chain issues and used the trial-and-error method to devise a custom template for housing, outlining a system whereby the structures — measuring 3 by 9 meters — can be crafted and installed more quickly by future volunteers.

TBM has provided funds for 20 houses in the city, after sending 10,000 blankets and installing 10 community water systems immediately after the earthquake.

That won't meet the needs of everyone — no one team or organization could — but the Texas volunteers sought to do what they could.



Photo courtesy of Baptist General Convention of Texas
Residents of Antakya, Turkey, continue to rebuild following a massive earthquake in February. The quake left more than 300,000 people homeless and damaged numerous structures.

"We're trying to make an impact in individual homes and families," said team member Mike Gillert. "Hopefully it will make a difference for families, and they will know God loves them."

Making connections

Using hand gestures and Google Translate, team members were able to communicate and connect with those they served. In many cases, residents wanted to know everything they could

about the people who traveled around the globe to help them.

After building the houses, the teams gave some of the families water filters and boxes of food.

Conversations led to opportunities to encourage and pray with them.

"They're just as interested in us as we are in them," team member Chris Roberts said. "They want to know where we're from, why we're doing this."

The volunteers were particularly affected by serving a woman in a wheelchair.

After the quake she was unable to return to her upstairs apartment and was living in a makeshift area in a damaged living room.

Gratitude

As soon as the team arrived she rolled out to greet them and expressed appreciation, requesting a photo with the team to help her remember them.

At another home, 8-year-old Amen joined the crew to

help with construction, even in the rain. Seeing his excitement and energy spurred the team along.

Building for Jesus

"That's our job," said volunteer Joe Fuller. "Jesus told us what we do for the least of these we do for Him. As far as I'm concerned, we're building these homes for Jesus and His children."

Hugs and tears were abundant upon the completion of each structure. Families often offered coffee, tea and even sweets from their small supplies.

"They're thrilled," Roberts said. "They're overwhelmed. I'm honored to be able to help give them a place to rest their head where they can get out of the weather."

The experience transformed the team as well as the Turkish people.

Instead of seeing Turkey simply in political and religious terms, they met the people themselves and found it easy to identify things in common — children want to play, parents want to provide for them; they want what's best for their families and community.

"These are folks just like you and me who need help," Roberts said. "I'm glad to see the human side of it. They're just folks like us. We can help them."

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was written and originally published by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.



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Baptist Press photo

Charles Stanley, a former Southern Baptist Convention president and one of the nation's foremost television and radio preachers, passed away peacefully at his home April 18 at age 90.

'Legacy Celebration' held for Charles Stanley

Charles Stanley was remembered April 23 in a "Legacy Celebration" held at First Baptist Church Atlanta, the church he served for more than 50 years.

Stanley died April 18. He was 90.

He became senior pastor of FBC Atlanta in 1971 at age 40 and served until he transitioned to pastor emeritus in September 2020 at age 87.

Stanley developed an extensive television and radio audience through his In Touch Ministries.

In 2007, the ministry also began distributing pocket-size In Touch Messenger solar-powered audio devices that

contain the New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs and several dozen of Stanley's sermons in a variety of languages.

In addition to distributing hundreds of thousands of the units to U.S. soldiers and to missions efforts worldwide, the devices have been adapted for placement at refugee camps and on water towers in various parts of the world for listening by cellphone.

Stanley served as presi-

dent of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1984 to 1986. He presided over the two largest annual meetings in SBC history — 45,531 messengers in 1985 in Dallas and 40,987 in 1986 in Atlanta, presiding during a time of conflict within the convention that is often referred to as the Conservative Resurgence in the SBC.

Stanley held doctorate and master's degrees in theology from Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta; a divinity degree from Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth,

Texas; and an undergraduate degree from the University of Richmond.

Stanley authored more than 60 books, including two stemming from

his hobby of photography, with images from Alaska to Africa that he used in his sermons.

Stanley is survived by his son, Andy, founder and pastor of North Point Community Church, a non-denominational church whose ministry has eight Atlanta-area locations; daughter Becky Stanley Brodersen; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. (Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press)

To view Charles Stanley's "Legacy Celebration" service, visit tabonline.org/charles-stanley.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad below for \$1 per word. For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 200, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org. To place an online classified ad for \$9.99/month, visit thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds.

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Westside Baptist Church in Jasper, Alabama, is in search of a senior pastor. Deadline to apply is May 24. Mail resumé to: Westside Baptist Church, 1101 22nd St. W., Jasper, AL 35501. Email to: wbcjasper@gmail.com.

SENIOR PASTOR

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

PASTOR

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

PASTOR

Elam Baptist Church, Thomasville, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Interested applicants can email resumé to: reid2546@hotmail.com or call Johnny at 334-357-1652 for more information.

PASTOR

Slackland Baptist Church, Leesburg, is seeking a full-time/bivocational pastor. Submit resumé to: SlacklandSearch@yahoo.com or mail to: Rick Little, P.O. Box 278, Leesburg, AL 35983 by May 20.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Paden Baptist Church, 900 Padenreich Ave., Gadsden, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking resumé for bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to church address, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee or to: padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

New Providence Baptist Church, 53080 Rabun Road, Bay Minette, AL is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 503, Bay Minette, AL 36507, or email to: arlene@pfefferflooring.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Silverhill, a growing church in central Baldwin County, is seeking a part-time minister of music. Send resumé or questions to: fbc36576@gmail.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

First Baptist Church Community Ministries, Inc., Montgomery, Alabama, is a faith-based non-profit providing services to the needy in the River Region. Re-

porting to the FBC Community Ministries with guidance from FBC's senior pastor, the executive director provides leadership to the ministries' directors. The current ministries are the Caring Center, Children's Learning Center, Nehemiah Project, Master's Garden, International Ministries and Prison Ministry. For more information or to submit a resumé, contact Ben Kelley at bfkelleyjr@gmail.com.

SUMMER STAFF

Raleigh's Place, Clanton, is hiring summer staff to serve in our Camp 1:27 program. We are hiring counselors, activities director and cook. Camp 1:27 provides free summer camp for children in foster care. Candidates for these positions are young men and women who display mature Christian faith, love for children and willingness to let loose and have fun. Our camp session begins May 30 and ends July 7. These are paid positions. Visit raleighsplace.org for information or contact our executive director, Mike King, at 205-217-0418.

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RETREAT

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT

Montevallo First Baptist Church will be hosting a marriage retreat with the theme Making Good Marriages Better. The dates will be May 19-21. The cost will be \$30 per couple. The leaders for this event are Dr. Ric and Lisa Camp. Dr. Camp is the current associational mission strategist for Shelby Baptist Association. Session 1 will be on Friday, May 19 at 6:30 p.m., with a meal served first. Session 2 will be Saturday, May 20 at 9:30 a.m., with snacks served. It will conclude Sunday, May 21 at 10:30 a.m., with the normal worship service. For reservations or questions, please call 205-665-2566. This event is open to the public to join in as well.

MINISTRIES

STRUGGLING TOWARD HOPE: A RESOURCE FOR GRIEF

Reflecting on the death of his first wife in 1998, Bob Terry wrote, "Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse." This book shares not only the personal lessons he learned along that journey, but also practical tips for survivors as they learn to live after a loved one dies. "Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse," is published by Soncoast Publishing in Hartselle, Alabama, and is available in e-book and print from most major booksellers. Visit his website at drbobterry.com.

SAMFORD MTI

The Ministry Training Institute at Samford University exists to equip Christians to be leaders in their churches and communities through theological education and practical ministry training. Education opportunities exist through the institute's vast extension network and robust online certificate curriculum. Find more information at samford.edu/programs/ministry-training-institute.

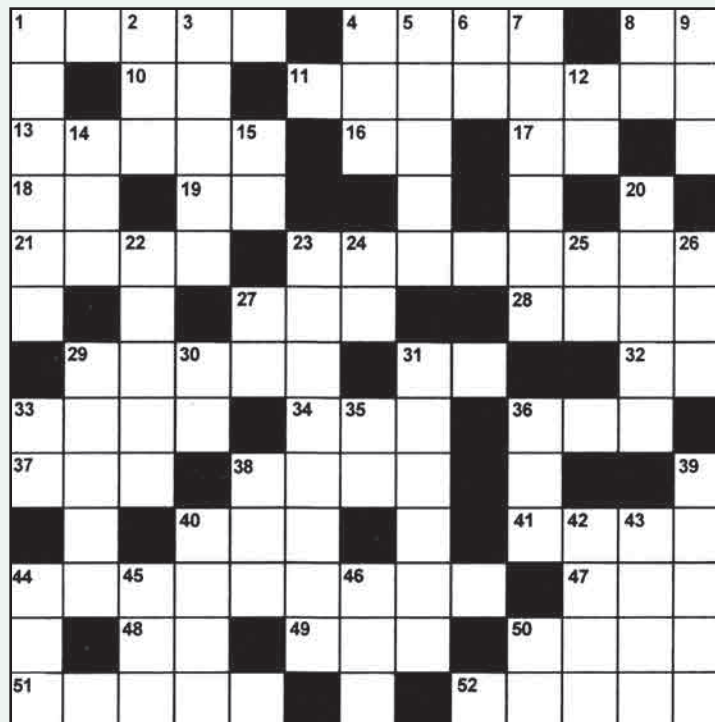
THE DEVILS IN ALABAMA: A SUSPENSE NOVEL SET IN ALABAMA

Bryan Gill's debut novel, "The Devils in Alabama," is a southern suspense novel set in Alabama. It is a story about a dysfunctional family, childhood trauma, crime, love, loss and hope. It is available to purchase on Amazon.

CHRISTIAN Crossword

ACROSS

1. He ... laid each ____ one against another. (Gen. 15:10)
4. ____ for the multitude of Egypt. (Ezek. 32:18)
8. ____ are of God. (1 John 4:6)
10. Bachelor of arts. (abbr.)
11. And the Jews' ____ was at hand. (John 2:13)
13. ____, when camest thou hither? (John 6:25)
16. Right. (abbr.)
17. They fled before the men of _____. (Josh. 7:4)
18. Neither ____ there salvation in any other. (Acts 4:12)
19. Left Tackle. (abbr.)
21. Bring him ____ unto Felix. (Acts 23:24)
23. The number of the army of the ____ were (Rev. 9:16)
27. But the hour cometh, and ____ is. (John 4:23)
28. (Jesus) began to be ____ amazed (Mark 14:33)
29. And ____ in their hands. (Rev. 7:9)
31. Why ____ ye that which is not lawful to do? (Luke 6:2)
32. 400 in Roman numerals.
33. And the swallow a ____ for herself. (Ps. 84:3)
34. Why make ye this ____, and weep? (Mark 5:39)
36. ____ doth he yet find fault? (Rom. 9:19)
37. Let it be ____ with the dew of heaven. (Dan. 4:15)
38. Unknown author. (abbr.)
40. Let us ____ with patience the race ... before us. (Heb. 12:1)
41. To satisfy hunger or thirst.
44. He went before, ascending up to _____. (Luke 19:28)
47. Enemies and my ____, came upon me (Ps. 27:2)



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48. Two in Roman numerals. (Ps. 23:6)
49. I have many things to ____ and to judge of you. (John 8:26)
50. They ... went their ways, one to his ____ (Matt. 22:5)
51. There shall not be left one ____ upon another. (Matt. 24:2)
52. His enemy ... sowed ____ among the wheat. (Matt. 13:25)
22. On our solemn ____ day. (Ps. 81:3)
23. What the people yelled to the son of David. (Matt. 21:9)
24. Expression of pain.
25. Missouri. (abbr.)
26. Nickname for Edward.
27. New Mexico. (abbr.)
29. Pet ____.
30. Left. (abbr.)
31. Animal that is called an ass in the Bible.
33. Compass direction.
35. Learn to ____ well. (Isa. 1:17)
36. There ____ a great earthquake. (Matt. 28:2)
38. Australia. (abbr.)
39. Any among you ____ (plural) to be religious. (Jam. 1:26)
40. But they were the ____ of him. (2 Chron. 28:23)
42. Having seen (the promises) ____ off. (Heb. 11:13)
43. He ____ his hair out.
44. Jesse. (abbr.)
45. City in Brazil.
46. Lay not thine hand upon the _____. (Gen. 22:12)
50. Name of a musical note.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.



UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Children's Music Summit July 7-8

It's back — a hands-on training event for pre-school and children's music leadership to get you excited about teaching these precious children about God through music.

The Children's Music Summit, set for July 7-8, is designed to motivate, inspire, educate and prepare you to lead effectively in your churches, schools, Mom's Day Out or week-day education programs. Watch the love for worship come alive in your pre-schoolers and children!

The Children's Music Summit will be July 7,

To register, visit alabamaworship.org or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



2:30 p.m., until July 8, 4 p.m. at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega. For more information or to register, visit alabamaworship.org.

MIX Music Camp helps students prepare to lead

Does your child or teenager love music? MIX Music Camp is the perfect place for them to spend a week this summer.

The camp, which is three camps in one — MIX for second through fifth graders, MIX6 for sixth graders and reMIX for seventh through

twelfth graders — is set for July 10-14 at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

MIX Music Camp will build lasting friendships and focus on discipleship and worship.

Former camper Lindsay Lyon, now a teacher and counselor, said the camp made a big impact on her and taught her it was "not about the performance."

"It's not about what other people think about you. It's about worshipping the Lord," she said. "And this camp is the one thing that helped me understand that most of all."

For more information or to register, visit mixmusiccamp.org.

To register, visit mixmusiccamp.org or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



7 Mother's Day ideas for your church

By Mark MacDonald
BeKnownBook.com

Mother's Day is one of the most-attended church services of the year. Every church is looking for Mother's Day ideas that appropriately honor moms.

The goal is not to deify mothers but simply to honor them (see Ex. 20:12 and Eph. 6:2-3).

Plan the emphasis accordingly — with emotion, gratitude and purpose.

Keep in mind women who struggle with infertility or the death of a child also will be present. Others will wrestle with negative feelings toward their mothers or anxiety about prodigal children. For many, Mother's Day is a hard day.

Still, Mother's Day is a time family members who do not attend regularly will come to church with their mother. And it gives every

mother or grandmother an excellent reason to invite her children or grandchildren.

Here are seven Mother's Day ideas for your church to try:

1. Post meaningful mother's influence videos. Leading up to Mother's Day, use your social media or website to post short videos highlighting how moms have influenced people. Perhaps share a story from a pastor, deacon or member. Use the videos to invite people to your Mother's Day service.

Biblical examples

2. Highlight mothers from the Bible. A Mother's Day idea for the sermon? Why not discuss how moms in the Bible played crucial roles in many of the prominent Bible stories. Get volunteers to dramatize one of the stories.

3. Mother's Day photo booth. Consider repurposing



Stock.adobe.com

your Easter photo backdrop or creating a new Mother's Day backdrop. Those attending can use their phones to take pictures. You also can have a selfie stick available.

Give them a reason to take a picture that is worthy of a prominent space in a frame or on their social media. Ask them to tag your church or use a hashtag when they post it, and be sure your church or pastor likes or comments on each one.

4. Highlight children in the church service. Some churches have a women's choir on this special day, but you may want the women to sit back and enjoy children singing to them — even those who are adults.

Break from routine

5. Provide lunch. Instead of contributing to the restaurant rush after Mother's Day services when families want to treat their mothers,

consider a potluck dinner for families. Even better? Cater the meal so no one has to prepare and bring food, which only adds to the stress of the day.

6. Say thank you. Mother's Day ideas don't have to be complex. Take time in the service to show gratitude to the mothers and grandmothers. Don't call out people related to their age or number of children though.

Instead, get children to fill out thank you cards for their moms in Sunday School or the children's service. Some churches even provide free cards for forgetful children.

7. Support a mother's community ministry. Consider highlighting a community ministry from the stage by getting its director to share stories or show a short video.

Take up a special offering to help the organization and the moms it assists.

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SERVING GOD BY SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Campers on Mission seeks new generation to help with projects in local areas

By Lizzy Haseltine
The Alabama Baptist

Roger Woodard and his wife, June, sold their home and property in 2017 and bought a camper to serve 24/7 with Campers on Mission.

Since then, the Woodards have served on various projects, including helping repair or expand several churches and campgrounds.

In April, Woodard, a former pastor, became president of Alabama Campers on Mission.

“It’s a new mission for me [in retirement] and I love it,” he said.

Like other state chapters, Alabama Campers on Mission is a group of evangelical Christians who volunteer at various missions projects across the state and nation while mostly staying in campers.

In Alabama, there are more than 100 campers who participate, helping with construction, festivals, backyard Bible clubs, Baptist children’s homes, disaster relief and more in the Southeast.

Much-needed help

“A lot of the churches [we help] aren’t able to afford to build the buildings because labor is a major part of any construction [project],” said Woodard, sharing an example of how he helped add a soup kitchen facility to a church. “We’re able to furnish a much-needed part of something that they desperately need to expand their ministry.”

Woodard recalled meeting one woman at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Enterprise who wasn’t quite sure what to think of Campers on Mission.

“She told us, ‘When we saw all these people come in these nice campers, we didn’t know what to expect. After sitting down and talking and listening, we realized we’re



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs

Alabama Campers on Mission volunteers work on facility updates and renovations at Shocco Springs. Alabama COM members contributed nearly 2,000 volunteer hours during the group’s annual fall project in September 2022.

all just God-fearing, Christ-loving individuals trying to do our best to serve the Lord in whatever way possible,” Woodard said.

When the work was complete, Woodard remembered that “everyone was crying. ... It had become such a family fellowship of loving one another and helping one another.

“You’re torn that you’re leaving, and yet you know that you’ve done what God had wanted you to do there,” he added.

The following year, that church helped Campers on Mission with another local missions project.

“They testified how the fellowship with us had encouraged them and that they were reaching out and growing in a direction they had never expected before,” Woodard said. “It truly opened up new doors for them to reach out to the community and serve the Lord.”

The camaraderie of Campers on Mission exists not just between them and the churches they help but among the campers themselves.

“There are people who come from all walks of life. We have people who have worked on space shuttles, worked in the FBI, people who have been associated as commercial pilots, military helicopter pilots,” Woodard said. “After a while, everyone becomes family.”

Training volunteers

Although some people have no previous construction experience, other campers will train them to help grow their expertise.

They’ll spend every day together on the project anywhere from two weeks to three months, depending on the project size. Some of the women prefer to put their sewing skills to work during projects, sew-

ing for missionaries or other needs.

Ken Conaway, regional coordinator for Alabama COM, noted the generosity of those who serve.

“Everybody in the group has a servant’s heart, a giving mentality,” explained Conaway, who has worked on more than 100 projects since 2005. “If they weren’t givers, why would [many of them] own an RV, travel, pay for fuel, provide tools and expertise — and do all that for free?”

‘Giver’s heart’

“The mentality of America today is what’s in it for me? Well, what’s in it for us is a giver’s heart. Everybody loves the Lord and is appreciative of what the shed blood of Christ has done for us.”

Currently, Alabama campers work on about eight to 10 projects a year.

Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega is a popular work site. It’s estimated the camp has saved millions of dollars through the volunteers’ consistent service since the 1990s, which has kept costs lower for camp attendees.

“We go there twice a year to work with maintenance and repair,” Woodard said. “We just have a wonderful time doing that.”

Going forward, Woodard hopes to see more people volunteer with Alabama Campers on Mission.

“Right now, I’m trying to encourage younger people to join,” Woodard said. “The average age is in the 70s. That’s just tough doing construction work when you have people that age.

“We’re going to try our best to recruit people to come and develop a servant’s heart to try and reach out and serve others,” Woodard continued. “[Campers on Mission] is a necessary part of missions in local areas.”

For more
information, go to
alabamacom.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 7

Explore the Bible

By Ben Stubblefield

Visiting assistant professor of Christian studies, University of Mobile



I FIND NO FAULT
John 18:28–40

The Transfer (28–42)

The Praetorium was a military headquarters in which Roman officials would reside while visiting parts of the empire. They were particularly interested in being in Jerusalem for the feast days to tamp down any potential uprisings among Jews who gathered to commemorate their nationalism and independence. This scene unfolds from within the walls of Pilate’s headquarters.

John lays out the irony of Christ’s accusers. They went to great lengths to avoid ceremonial impurity so they could eat the Passover, while they manipulated the judicial system to crucify the real Passover Lamb. They were clean by the letter of the law but guilty of breaking it all.

Pilate had likely been briefed on the complaints the Jewish leaders had against Jesus, so it is interesting he asked them to provide a fresh hearing of the charges.

Perhaps this was to embarrass Jewish leadership, but more likely it demonstrated he was solely in charge of their legal system.

John portrays a Pilate who presumes he is in control of what happens with Jesus and in Jerusalem. But verse 32 serves as an indicator of God’s sovereign hand in Jesus’ death and in the Lord’s providence which governs all governors.

Perhaps the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to die on the cross and not by stoning, for “anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse” (Deut. 21:23). They didn’t yet understand that their schemes would be turned to salvation, the Lord’s trial turned into triumph. He would absorb the curse so the world might know His blessing.

The Trial (33–38a)

Pilate asks Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?” The question is probably asked with both contempt

and curiosity. He asks with contempt because he disrespects the Sanhedrin and suspects they went to this trouble to serve their own interests.

He knows they are trying to convince him Jesus is attempting an affront to Roman governance, and he will thus order His execution.

He asks with curiosity because he wants to understand the real reason Jesus has raised the Jewish leadership’s ire.

Jesus probes for the motive for Pilate’s question but clarifies in verse 36. Jesus is the king of a kingdom “not of this world.” He poses no direct threat to Rome. He is not engineering a struggle, army or fight. The Lord’s Kingdom affects this world, but His victory will not be won by the sword — it will be won by the gospel.

In verse 37, Jesus affirms His role as King and His mission to bring the truth of the gospel into the world. At the end of verse 37, Jesus, the prisoner, invites Pilate, the judge, to believe and follow Him — fascinating!

Pilate retorts with a curt question, but appears unconvinced of the Sanhedrin’s allegations.

The Trade (38b–40)

Jesus’ exchange with Pilate was enough to convince him that Jesus was a threat to the Sanhedrin, not the empire. He antagonizes the Jewish leaders, referring to Jesus as the King of the Jews, but Pilate grants their wish by offering a trade that appears to have been a custom of Rome during Passover season.

From Rome’s perspective, Barabbas was far more dangerous than Jesus (Mark 15:7). Yet Pilate would deliver him over. How ironic that the crowds call for the release of one who has committed sins while condemning the One who dies for them.

“For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world — to bear witness to the truth.”

John 18:37

Bible Studies for Life

By James R. Strange

Professor of biblical and religious studies, Samford University



THE TEMPTATION TO PLACE SOMETHING ELSE BEFORE GOD
Deuteronomy 6:10–15;
Matthew 4:8–11

This is our third lesson on the temptations of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus provides a model: His temptations were real, yet He remained steadfast in faithfulness.

In the wilderness, as he did in the Book of Job, Satan tries to show that Jesus is not truly righteous and worthy of the status of Son of God — contrary to what God declared from heaven (Matt. 3:17). In Matthew, these aren’t the last temptations Jesus will face in this regard.

Read Matthew 4 and Deuteronomy 6.

We can be tempted to worship things other than God.
(Matt. 4:8–11)

The devil has abandoned his strategy of tempting Jesus to prove His sonship via a self-serving miracle. He simply offers Jesus now all that will be His when the Son of Man returns as Judge (19:28; 25:31–32). That is, he offers Jesus the opportunity to avoid the cross.

Jesus doesn’t challenge the idea that Satan has control of the world’s kingdoms. As we learn in the Gospels, Paul’s letters and Revelation, his control is not complete or permanent.

Jesus gives Satan implicit and explicit responses. The implicit response is that in God’s Kingdom, one rules by serving. This is true even of the Son of Man (20:28).

The explicit response is based in the Ten Commandments and expressed in Deuteronomy 6:13, which Jesus quotes.

Note the implication of Jesus’ reply. He doesn’t say, “One shouldn’t worship the devil. The devil is an evil being and God’s enemy.” While this is true, behind the commandment to worship and serve only the Lord our God stands the idea that nothing belongs in God’s

place. Some ancient rabbis even said that to fear any person too much was to commit idolatry.

Never forget that it is God who is at work in your life.
(Deut. 6:10–12)

Deuteronomy 6:4–8 contains the famous prayer known as the Shema. The Shema’s opening statement can be translated both, “The Lord your God, the Lord is One” and “The Lord is your God, the Lord alone.” The ambiguity may be deliberate.

This declaration stands behind the warning that it is easy to forget God’s constant lovingkindness. The Israelites will benefit from things made by others, and they are to receive them as they do the goodness of the land, as God’s provision.

When we worship God and follow Him, we will do that which pleases Him and blesses us. (13–15)

The starkness of the warning in verse 15, coupled with the reality of what actually happened, stands out in this passage.

Israel did follow other gods, both the gods of the people around them and the so-called gods of self-indulgence and exploitation of the vulnerable. Yet God did not destroy them from the face of the earth. Rather, as Adam and Eve in Eden, Israel endured lesser punishments.

This is why Israel confesses in Scripture that God is a God of both justice and mercy. Did you catch the confession in verse 15? Moses implies the consequences of idolatry. Israel will be tempted to abandon the Lord their God, who is in their very midst.

This looks like a threat, but don’t miss the word of comfort. The God who requires loyalty travels with us to help us remain faithful.

“It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve, and by His name you shall swear.”

Deuteronomy 6:13

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Meredith Flynn

The Alabama Baptist

Country star Granger Smith gives up road life for local church ministry

Citing a “strong desire to pursue ministry,” long-time country musician Granger Smith announced his 2023 tour will be his last.

“I’ve toured for 24 years,” Smith said in an Instagram post April 11.

The upcoming life change is hard, exciting and hopeful, he told fans — and it’s motivated by what he senses God is leading him to do.

“I have felt a strong desire to pursue ministry, and this doesn’t mean I’m going to start a church or a crusade or a revival,” Smith said in the video.

“This means that me and my family are going to serve our local church. We’re going to pour into that church as members and have my pastors and elders pour into me and disciple me and teach me as I sit under their wise teaching. And then, Lord willing, one day they can affirm me into the next steps of what that might look like to glorify God best from my platform.”

Vocation and calling

Smith also noted he is pursuing a master of arts from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

His social media feeds feature posts from his many vocations — music, podcasting, film producing,



Facebook photo

Longtime country musician Granger Smith plans to pursue ministry and serve his local church. Smith announced his new direction in an April 11 Instagram post and said his 2023 tour will be his last. He also is releasing a book Aug. 1.

a clothing line, and, in the last two years, occasional preaching. A 2021 post celebrated Smith preaching his “first Sunday sermon.” Two upcoming tour stops in Ohio and Florida are designated not as performances but as preaching dates.

His tour is the “Like a River Farewell Tour” in honor of the 3-year-old son Smith and his wife, Amber, lost in a drowning accident in 2019. Their son River is also memorialized in Smith’s upcoming book “Like a River: Finding the Faith and Strength to Move Forward After Loss and Heartache.”

Smith told fans on Instagram he hopes to take the book’s message to as many people as possible.

“It’s the most important piece of media that I could ever release, that I ever have released,” he said.

God did a “radical transformation” in his life after the tragedy, Smith told Fox News host Trey Gowdy in a recent interview on

the network’s “Sunday Night in America.”

While he can’t take credit for the change, he has to do something with it, Granger said.

“Now that this gift was given to me, in a time at the darkest tragedy of our life, now I have a purpose to go out and share this message of what happened to me, for other people that are probably going through the same thing.”

The Smiths, who are parents to three children, established The River Kelly Fund to help children in need and support a variety of charitable causes.

Fame and Jesus

In announcing his farewell tour, Smith pointed to the tension between fame and Jesus’ call to deny oneself.

When Gowdy asked Smith why he couldn’t just use his country music platform to share his faith,

the singer quoted Mark 8, when Jesus says whoever wants to follow Him will deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Him.

“That self-denial is something I struggle with in country music, where instead every night I’m getting up on the stage and seeking glory, seeking applause, seeking people to exalt me.

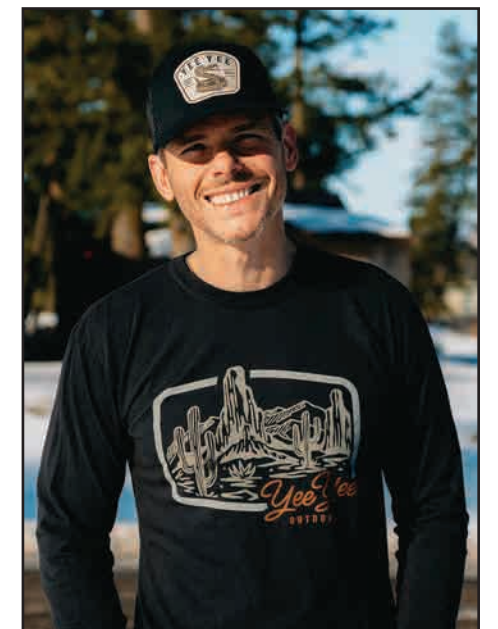
“That’s just not what we’re called to do as followers, and I could not reconcile those two things together,” Smith said.

Personal struggles

Smith added that he only speaks for himself, not others working in entertainment.

“This is something I struggled with internally because I struggled with exalting myself and seeking that praise, and that’s something that I needed to strip, through sanctification, away from me.”

The Like a River Farewell Tour began April 20 and runs through Aug. 26. Smith’s book about his family’s journey through tragedy will release Aug. 1.



Facebook photo

EDITOR’S NOTE

Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.

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December 8, 2022

INSIDE



Missionary couple recognized for decades of service
• Page 9



Pastors working as Santas bring joy, extend ministry to others during holidays
• Page 11



Tips for growing small groups, making most of time
• Page 13

'Something

Ice cream truck dreams turn into ministry

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Michelle Norwood says on a much smaller scale, she might know what it was like. For her it wasn't an ark — it was an ice cream truck. "I had seen one for maybe three minutes in my life," she recalled. "I was visiting my sister in Memphis one summer. We walked out, and I bought the kids an ice cream. But in 2017, Norwood said she woke up right after night at 2 a.m., and God started to speak to her about how to build one. "I'd wake up, and little by little there would be another idea of what I needed to research or figure out," she related. "I made notes and started making connections." It was a new thought, but purpose behind it had been in Norwood's mind and heart for

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Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist
Volunteers unload boxes of frozen chicken at the ministry house of FBC Alabaster. The church has run a food ministry for 20 years.

Food insecurity

Alabama Baptist churches help put food on the table for people in their communities

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Michelle Weaver said people used to associate hunger with homelessness, but from where she sits, she feels that just isn't the case anymore. As community ministry director at First Baptist Church Alabaster, Weaver sees people from all walks of life wait in line every second and fourth Monday to get food from their drive-thru food pantry. "In this day and in this economy, there are families we have met who are nurses, bankers, teachers and college students," she said. "It's a diverse population right now needing food assistance because groceries have gone sky high, medical bills aren't being covered, or they can't afford medical insurance or their hours are being cut at work."

And not only are the lines full of a broad spectrum of people, they're also getting longer, Weaver said. Their ministry has tripled in the last three years and takes between 30 and 40 volunteers to run.

Growing ministry

"We used to start out with 15 to 20 cars in our drive-thru and can get 100 cars now, some with multiple families in the car," she said. "We

feed between 500 and 600 people every Monday we do our food ministry." FBC Alabaster's food pantry started 20 years ago with boxes of food stored in a closet and has grown over the years and adapted to meet people where they are. In years past, people could come to the ministry, talk to the volunteers about their financial need and then receive food. (See 'Hunger,' page 13)

SPOTLIGHT SPONSOR ...

Unforsaken Ministry — Walking with those in addiction and their families through the journey of recovery.

The Alabama Baptist

February 23, 2023

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College students focus of Feb. 23 prayer emphasis

By Carrie E. McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

An annual day of prayer for college students is coming at a pivotal time in the spiritual lives of students throughout the nation and across Alabama. The Collegiate Day of Prayer, which falls this year on Feb. 23, has garnered renewed attention as news reports chronicle the revival happening at Ashbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Livestream

This year's 200th anniversary prayer service will be livestreamed from Ashbury on Feb. 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. Central time.

On Feb. 24-25, hundreds of college students from across Alabama will gather at First Baptist Church Montgomery for Pursue, an annual missions and discipleship conference. Ben Edick, director of collegiate and student ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he is excited to see how God will use the convergence of the day of prayer, Pursue and the Ashbury revival.

"I hope that our Alabama Baptist churches will join the office of collegiate and student ministries on Feb. 23 in asking God to move in an unmistakable way — calling students to repentance, inviting students to

us'

Gifts to Annie Armstrong gifts

In Alabama there are churches everywhere."

That started the couple on a journey toward realizing God was calling them to plant a church there. They started a church planting residency in early 2020, were affirmed in the summer and started growing their launch teams in 2021.

"We launched The Local Church officially in February 2022," McKay said. "We started in one location, meeting on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m."

(See 'Ministry,' page 10)

LIGHT SPONSOR ...

Training Institute at Samford University — Equipping students to be leaders in their churches and communities through biblical education and practical ministry training.

Healthy prayer habits

By Chuck Lawless

chucklawless.com

10 areas of focus for a prayer walk or drive through your community

Many of us regularly walk through our neighborhoods, and almost all of us drive through our communities on a daily basis. What we often fail to do is use those times to pray.

Here are some things on which I focus prayer for my neighborhood:

1. Evidence of children.

Maybe there are toys in the drive or a swingset in the backyard. Perhaps the kids are playing outside. When I see these evidences, I pray for wisdom for the parents and grace that they and the children would know the Lord.

2. For Sale signs.

I pray that the family moving out would experience a gospel witness and find a church home wherever they're moving. I then pray for the family moving in that if they're believers, we could join forces to reach the neighborhood, or if they're not believers, someone — beginning with my wife and me — would be a witness to them.

3. Places of worship.

If it's a church, I pray that the true gospel would be preached there. If the place of worship represents a non-Christian faith, I pray God would turn its adherents to the true gospel — and that Christians in the



Unsplash.com

community would be loving witnesses to them.

4. Homes in apparent disarray.

Often this indicates some kind of chaos in the home, anything from family conflict to unemployment to health issues to aging homeowners — but prayer is always in order. God knows what's going on behind closed doors.

5. Neighbors walking or driving through.

I may or may not know the person, but simply seeing him or her deepens and focuses my burden for my neighbors. Somehow, briefly looking with gospel intentionality

into the face of someone created in the image of God changes my heart.

6. Places of education.

As a Christian educator I know how much we need prayer every day. How much more that seems apparent for administrators, teachers and students in the public school system. I pray particularly that Christians of all ages in that context would be strong witnesses for Christ.

7. Sites of government leadership.

Paul told us to pray “for kings and all those who are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2), and seeing the place where leaders serve reminds

me to pray for them. Frankly, I need this reminder to pray for salvation and wisdom for folks with whom I often disagree politically.

8. Businesses.

I typically pick one place of business as I drive to work and pray for its owners. More recently I've been praying for any business I visit (e.g., grocery store, restaurant, barber, gas station, etc.). The prayer targets are right there in front of me — I just have to be intentional.

9. Places of life and death service, such as hospitals, fire stations, police departments, prisons, funeral homes or cemeteries.

Because I believe Christ and the gospel are the key to abundant and eternal life, I pray for those who deal with life and death issues every day.

10. My own home and workplace.

Sometimes we pray for other people and places but fail to pray for ourselves. I'm still developing this habit, but I now pray for our home and for the seminary where I serve, every time I park in the driveway or in the parking lot.

I hope these ideas encourage and help you to pray.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was originally published by chucklawless.com.

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The Wellness Kitchen

“Nature is God’s Wellness Kitchen where Food is Medicine.”

By Pat Terry
The Wellness Kitchen

WATERCRESS SALAD WITH AVOCADO AND ORANGES

Makes 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

Salad:

4 to 6 cups watercress leaves (or a mixture of watercress and mixed greens), rinsed and dried

1 or 2 oranges (depending on the size), peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces

2 tablespoons dried cranberries, chopped

1 large or 2 small avocado(s), cut into bite-sized pieces just before serving

1 to 2 tablespoons chia seeds

Dressing:

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1/2 teaspoon honey

Kosher salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Tear or cut off the watercress leaves down to the tender part of the stem. Discard the tougher stems or save for smoothies, soups, etc. Add other salad greens, if desired.
2. Prepare the orange pieces and cranberries.
3. Make the dressing in a jar that can be shaken.
4. Prepare the avocado. In a large bowl, combine the watercress, oranges, cranberries, avocado and chia seeds. Toss the salad with the dressing and serve in the bowl or on individual plates.

Adapted from cookedandloved.com

What’s in season right now? Watercress!

Watercress, a member of the mustard family, is an aquatic plant. Commercial watercress is usually cultivated in large ponds but is at its best when found growing wild in springs or streams. The leaves of watercress are dime-sized with a dark green, glossy color. Its peppery taste actually leaves a cool sensation in the mouth.

Watercress leaves were used for medicinal and culinary purposes by the Persians, Greeks and Romans more than 3,000 years ago. It is eaten around the world in many kinds of dishes. Watercress was a known remedy for scurvy in the 1600s. We now know that watercress is extremely nutrient dense and contains an array of powerful phytonutrients.

Peak time: Available year round

Average price: \$3.87 for 4 oz.

Nutritional highlights: Watercress has been called the king of greens! Watercress belongs to the same cruciferous family as Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage, which all contain super nutrients, but watercress seems to use these nutrients and phytonutrients in an unusual synergy with each other.

Scientific studies have shown that the nutritional oxidative power of watercress helps protect against chronic diseases as we age, such as cardiovascular disease, certain types of cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis.



Wikimedia.org

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





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‘Inhale faith’

By Meredith Flynn

The Baptist Paper

Teen’s faithful example continues to lead others to Christ

The example of faith left by 15-year-old Aleya Brooks continues to impact her middle Tennessee community.

Brooks died March 4 from injuries sustained from a falling tree while helping her family clear debris after strong storms. A member of her high school’s cheerleading squad, she was known for sending daily texts to teammates with Scripture verses and encouragement.

“I think a lot of people would see her as a quiet, humble leader, but she was not in any way subtle,” said Grant Allen, high school student pastor at Long Hollow Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee. “Her life was the best kind of convicting for others.”

As a result of Brooks’ memorial service at Long Hollow, Allen said 49 people made personal faith decisions, including 36 students. More young people responded during a spring break missions trip, and the church is following up on those decisions, he said.

Ten people were baptized at Long Hollow on March 26, including eight students and one adult who made decisions after Brooks’ memorial. More baptisms are scheduled in the coming weeks, Allen said.

“Those who knew Aleya knew that she wanted to leave a legacy,” said Robby Gallaty, Long Hollow’s pastor, in his March 5 sermon. “That was the passion of her life. She wanted her friends to know the Jesus that she knew.”

Resiliency in adversity

Gallaty also shared an excerpt Brooks wrote about resiliency in adversity. This “grit,” she wrote, reminded her even in the darkest hours to “inhale faith and exhale fear.”

While she was referencing coming back from an injury, Allen said, the words have been a balm to a grieving community. “The words that she chose to write, that I think the Lord allowed in His kindness, have been ministering to both her family and to us as a church,” he noted.

An expected response to a beloved friend’s death, Allen said, would be



Facebook photo

15-year-old Aleya Brooks is pictured with her parents. A member of her high school’s cheerleading squad, she was known for sending daily texts to teammates with Scripture verses and encouragement.

for people to want to honor her, to stand alongside her in faith.

What makes Brooks’ testimony different, he noted, is that students have looked at the example of her life and recognized something is missing from their own. They see the spiritual fruit she exemplified, her desire to read God’s Word. They are clearly convicted that they need the relationship with Jesus that she had.

‘True encounter’

One example, Allen said, is a high school freshman who went to school with Brooks. The young man has grown up in church but realized he hadn’t yet experienced the God she knew.

“He separated going to church and attendance with the true encounter with Jesus that Aleya had,”

Allen said. The same student is working with Long Hollow’s student ministry to create an Inhale Faith, Exhale Fear bracelet in honor of Brooks’ faithful example.

Long Hollow has a history of experiencing God’s work through grief and loss, Gallaty noted March 5.

“God has chosen in His sovereignty to take students prematurely who were sold out to Jesus,” he said, sharing the names of three young men whose deaths each resulted in people coming to Christ. “After their passing, God sparked a revival in the hearts of students at our church and in this community,” Gallaty said, as people were forced to wrestle with who Jesus really is, and come face-to-face with their own mortality.

“Knowing Jesus doesn’t make the pain go away,” he said of Brooks’ death. But there is comfort in knowing where she is now. “Because she knew Jesus, who was the One who conquered death, hell and the grave.”



Facebook photo

As a result of Aleya Brooks’ memorial service, 49 people made personal faith decisions, including 36 students.