

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

Focused on next steps

Judson College bondholder settles lawsuit with defendants; Chapter 11 process continues

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

The previously pending lawsuit by Frank C. Mann involving the financial challenges and 2021 closing of Judson College has been settled, reports Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

He shared the news May 17 during the quarterly SBOM board of trustees meeting in Prattville.

Mann, a Winston County businessman, filed the lawsuit in July 2022 seeking to recover the remainder of his \$1 million investment in the school. He was part of a group of bondholders who put up \$11,230,000 in 2010 to assist Judson officials with financial needs at the time.

The routine interest payments to bondholders allegedly stopped after the school's closure in July 2021, so Mann targeted a select group of people and entities — including Lance, SBOM and the Alabama Baptist State Convention — for the balance of his interest payments.

Settlement is final

Court documents indicate Mann received \$750,000 from previously restricted endowment funds in the settlement, and the case was dismissed “with prejudice (meaning the decision is final) ... with each party bearing its own costs.”

Judson President Daphne R. Robinson confirmed the suit was settled



Judson College campus in Marion

Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

April 4, 2024, and noted the previously restricted endowment funds were released by Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall's office to pay toward the school's debts.

While she could not release specifics, Robinson acknowledged the funds are being used to pay toward all remaining debt owed by the school, which sat at around \$15 million in 2021 when the school closed.

The Alabama Baptist reported in May 2021 that more than \$6 million was being held in those restricted perpetual trust funds and that the school had a board-operated endowment of \$9.8 million through its Judson Foundation.

The released funds were not enough to clear all the debts, Robinson said, but “we are grateful that we were able to pay toward our debt.”

Continuing to function

She also noted the reorganization bankruptcy process (Chapter 11) continues for Judson.

Requested by the creditors and approved by the school's board of trustees in April 2023, Chapter 11 allows Judson to remain a functioning business while working out a plan to pay creditors over time.

“There have been no definitive plans regarding the future of Judson

as we were very focused on settling the debt with the creditors,” Robinson said.

“The Judson College Foundation is the owner of the campus, and it employs six security and maintenance workers at this time.”

Robinson, along with vice president Charlotte Clements and staff member Traci Foster, also remain employed by Judson.

“Judson was founded to provide a Christian education for women (and) carried out that mission for 183 years,” Robinson added.

“Our prayers are prayers of gratitude and for guidance as we embark on the next phase of our journey.”

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SCAN ME

Thank you

to the 15 senators and 29 representatives who stood against gambling this year

Standing strong against those building and supporting the gambling industry in Alabama was not and will not be an easy task.

Reports indicate the pressure this year was as intense as it ever has been during a legislative session in Alabama, and there was a lot of tension between the two houses.

The session wrapped up May 16 without the anticipated gambling expansion constitutional amend-

ment approved for voters in the state to consider in the fall.

We at The Alabama Baptist, along with Alabama Citizens Action Program, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and other Alabama Baptist entities, associations and churches send our sincere gratitude to the legislators who chose a “No” vote.

While a variety of votes taken throughout the session will showcase different “Yes” and “No”

votes during the process, our team pulled the final set of votes for the list below.

Keep all senators, representatives and their families in your prayers and when you have an opportunity, share your gratitude with those who are consistently standing against gambling expansion.

Let us know if you need contact information.

—Jennifer Davis Rash
800-803-5201

—‘No’ votes on final version of gambling bill—

Senators who voted no:

Sen. Greg Albritton, Atmore
Sen. Gerald H. Allen, Tuscaloosa
Sen. Lance Bell, Pell City
Sen. Tom Butler, Madison
Sen. Josh Carnley, Enterprise
Sen. Chris Elliott, Josephine
Sen. Sam Givhan, Huntsville
Sen. Keith Kelley, Anniston
Sen. Wes Kitchens, Arab
Sen. Arthur Orr, Decatur
Sen. Dan Roberts, Mountain Brook
Sen. Shay Shelnett, Trussville
Sen. Larry Stutts, Tuscumbia
Sen. April Weaver, Brierfield
Sen. Jack W. Williams, Wilmer

Representatives who voted no:

Rep. Alan Baker, Brewton
Rep. Ron Bolton, Northport
Rep. Jim Carns, Vestavia Hills
Rep. Brock Colvin, Guntersville
Rep. Susan DuBose, Hoover
Rep. Tracy Estes, Winfield
Rep. David Faulkner, Birmingham
Rep. Jennifer Fidler, Fairhope
Rep. Danny Garrett, Trussville
Rep. Mark Gidley, Gadsden
Rep. Matthew Hammett, Dozier
Rep. Ben Harrison, Elkmont
Rep. Steve Hurst, Munford
Rep. Jamie Kiel, Russellville
Rep. Bill Lamb, Tuscaloosa
Rep. Arnold Mooney, Pelham
Rep. Kenneth Paschal, Pelham
Rep. Ben Robbins, Sylacauga
Rep. Randall Shedd, Baileyton
Rep. Ivan Smith, Prattville
Rep. Scott Stadthagen, Hartselle
Rep. David Standridge, Hayden
Rep. Shane Stringer, Mobile
Rep. Troy Stubbs, Prattville
Rep. Allen Treadaway, Morris
Rep. Kerry “Bubba” Underwood, Tuscumbia
Rep. Randy Wood, Anniston
Rep. Matt Woods, Jasper
Rep. Ernie Yarbrough, Trinity

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state senator and/or
representative?

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The Alabama Baptist

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

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JENNIFER DAVIS RASH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 19.


OPINION



Rashional Thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash

President and Editor-in-Chief

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 @RashionalThts

Taking the challenge to keep growing opens new doors

You might imagine our staff is a bit sad this week as we prepare to send our teammate Jessica Ingram off to her next big adventure (see story below). It is sad for us but we are extremely happy for her.

Jessica's contributions to the work of TAB Media Group have been widely varied and much appreciated. It has been fun watching her grow professionally, personally and spiritually through the years.

She brings a lot of life and energy to our team and has become a special friend to all of us. She never shies from a task.

We are confident she will excel even more as she steps into her new role and are glad to know she's still nearby so we can catch up from time to time.

Having the opportunity to invest in and help develop young professionals truly brings me joy, and I see it as a major compliment when others come courting our staff members.

"You are welcome," I often say jokingly to the countless employers across the nation who have snatched up our top staff members through the years, but it's still always hard to let them go.

'Teachable spirit'

We are cheering Jessica on and will always be among her greatest supporters.

I count it a personal privilege that she trusted me enough to allow me to invest in her and

took the challenge to walk alongside me as I continue to grow and develop in so many areas myself.

Bringing a teachable spirit to the workplace and any ministry or missions effort truly makes the difference for the individual and teammates as well as everyone impacted by the result of the work being done.

Jessica will no doubt take this spirit with her and will be a tremendous asset to her new employer and teammates.

Ingram says goodbye to TAB Media Group after almost 7 years

As I sat at Chicken Salad Chick across from Jennifer Rash in the fall of 2017, I never would've imagined the story that God was writing for me at The Alabama Baptist. Now, almost seven years later, I have to figure out how to say goodbye to a place that has meant so much to me.

Jennifer graciously offered me a part-time internship that fall. For her and TAB, she was bringing someone onboard to help with some small marketing projects. For me, it was a lifeline.

After applying for job after job and receiving rejection after rejection, I was defeated. I could not understand what God was doing.

But God, in all His goodness and sovereignty, had me exactly where He wanted me.

Marketing intern turned into event intern and eventually into a full-time position as editorial assistant. Then production manager to content manager to event coordinator to project manager and social media manager. My role at TAB has changed throughout the years. But the role that TAB played in my life has remained consistent.

There's no other place that could've shaped me the way TAB has. It has shaped me professionally, by pushing me out of my comfort

zone and challenging me with new responsibilities and projects. But more importantly, the people here have shaped me. We've laughed together, we've cried together, we've prayed together. God knew that working among a community of believers was what my 22-year-old heart needed.

It will be hard to say goodbye to TAB as a workplace. I genuinely loved the work I got to do. It will be harder to say goodbye to the people who make TAB great. I know I've made lifelong friends here, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

It's hard when you feel like God is calling you somewhere else. It's scary to leave all you have known in your career and step into a new job in a new industry with new people. But I step into this next chapter with full confidence in where God has called me.

I can honestly say that I don't know where I would be without Jennifer, The Alabama Baptist and the people this place has brought into my life. I am forever changed because of the time I spent here and will always hold TAB close to my heart.

All because a bubbly, joyful redhead gave this college graduate a shot. —*Jessica Ingram*



Your Voice



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

'Well done' follows a saint's life 'done well'

Christianity involves a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relationship with people.

Romans 12:9–21 sets forth six principles for the latter:

1. Answer persecution with prayer.

"Bless them who persecute you; bless and curse not" (v. 14).

It is the Christian's awareness of the unreasonableness of persecution (whatever form it may take) that is liable to provoke resentment and retaliation. Scripture calls otherwise. The pattern of God's own loving-kindness and beneficence in Jesus is the ethical norm for Christlike behavior.

2. Appropriately respond to every circumstance.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (v. 15).

Weeping with others (in various crises) may be an easier response than rejoicing with others, due to pride, envy or jealousy. But if the Holy Spirit is directing our hearts and minds, then to share in the joy which others experience must be jointly-appreciated as fellow members of the body of Christ.

3. Avoid pride and snobbishness.

"Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. Do not

be wise in your own estimation" (v. 16).

There is no room in the Christian community for vain ambition and grasping for honor and position. Harmony, mutual respect, common hopes, desires, concerns and kindness for one another is the norm. Aristocracy, cliques and pedestals of unapproachable dignity must be aborted. To be meek and lowly in heart is what Jesus manifested and also mandates.

4. Abdicate your right to revenge.

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone ... never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay' says the Lord" (v. 17, 19).

Satan and the forces of darkness are champions of evil. Christians must be on guard against thoughtlessness, spitefulness, jealousy, revenge and inappropriate anger. Vengeance is a divine prerogative, and if we seek to avenge ourselves, the likelihood that we will wind up being soured by it is high.

5. Actively work for peace.

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (v. 18).

This does not mean that Christians are not to take a stand and have no convictions. Plus, this principle is couched in the context of two conditions: (a) "if possible" — it may not

always be possible. Sometimes some form of battle must be fought. And when efforts to do so are not possible, those efforts must be qualified by (b) "so far as it depends on you" — the failure to achieve peace must not be traceable to our own lack of efforts. These two conditions serve as realistic 'guidelines' in seeking to fulfill the biblical mandate for actively working for peace."

6. "Always return good for evil."

"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; and if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v. 20–21).

This is not impractical, platonic idealism. It is the most practical way to overcome evil. Kind replies can conquer bitter criticism (Prov. 15:1). By meeting his 'evil' with our 'good,' the enemy may experience a burning sense of shame which may be used by God to soften and lead that person to repentance. If we are bitter toward others, it may likely do us far more harm than it will them.

The principles involved in this synopsis of this section of Scripture are Spirit-inspired and must be adopted and activated by the saints of God. No "well done" will be heard by those who have not "done well" according to God's prescription.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper

Our God is a God of completion. He makes promises, and then He fulfills them. They may take longer than we'd like, and the journey may be harder than we expected, but we can rest assured that our God will always be found faithful.

Lysa TerKeurst
@LysaTerKeurst on X

The Power of the Resurrection is a call to come. Come, bring Him your chaos and disorder, your wilderness and your battles, bring Him all of your many deaths — dead words, dead deeds, dead thoughts and dead hearts.

Diane Langberg
@DianeLangberg on X

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.

Daniel Ritchie
@DanielRitchie on X

"The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen and support you after you have suffered a little while."

1 Peter 5:10

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“We don’t just go to church; we are the church.”

SAMMY TAYLOR

Pastor, Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell

“We know the biblical mandate for all believers is to go to the nations with the gospel, and going as a middle or high school student will lay a strong biblical foundation for our Alabama students,” said **Ben Edfeldt**, director of the SBOM office of collegiate and student ministries. The SBOM provides ready-made opportunities for students to serve together.

“I pray that you are persistent when the world says ‘just give up.’ I pray that you have passion when the world says ‘just get by.’ I pray you seek and follow God’s purpose when the world says ‘get in line,’” said **Lonnie Burnett** during his final address as University of Mobile president as he urged graduates to dream big, love what they do and pursue God’s purpose for their lives.

“I love that Unless U gives those with developmental disabilities a place to learn — and they learn a lot,” said **Amy Kirby**, special needs ministry director at Shades Mountain Baptist in Birmingham. “It gives adults a place to belong and a community of friends in a Christian setting where they can also grow in their faith. Our church values individuals with special needs, so supporting Unless U as a local missions partner with both financial and people resources is a natural outflow of what we believe.”

The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Ronnie Parrott
@ronniep on X

“It’s never too late to adopt a healthy lifestyle,” said **James Hill**, chair of UAB’s department of nutrition sciences. “Often people who have not had healthy habits can start by making a few small changes in how much they move and what they eat. This will often lead to more changes. No matter how old you are

or how bad your lifestyle habits are, you can benefit from making better lifestyle choices.”

“That’s why we need U.S. churches,” said IMB missionary **Zoe Kim**, thanking Baptists for their support, giving and prayers. “Without you guys, it’s impossible to do all of this. Please think about going one step further and join us.”

“The ‘do-it-yourself’ rage is spreading everywhere, and people are being told that to be happy all they have to do is think ‘happy thoughts.’ Such thoughts might cheer us, but they will never change us.”

Billy Graham

@BillyGraham on X

“Make evangelism and discipleship a priority. When you see people

saved and the waters stirred, a lot of problems that people are focused on go away,” said **Danny Warbington**, pastor of Mulberry Springs Baptist Church near Longview, Texas.

If you’re saved by Jesus, take comfort knowing that ... no matter how bad this world gets, it’s as close to hell as you’ll ever be, because heaven is your home.

Shane Pruitt

@shane_pruitt78 on X

If you grow deeper in theology and become more callous, bitter, judgmental or just plain mean ... something went wrong. The goal is not to showcase what you know, but to share with others how Christ can be known.

Dave Snyder

@davesnyder82 on X

In case you missed these nuggets

Excerpts from the May 23 edition of The Baptist Paper:

As of last count, this year’s Southern Baptist Convention presidential election will feature six candidates:

David Allen

Allen leads the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Preaching at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. Allen previously served in various leadership roles at Southwestern Seminary.

Bruce Frank

Frank is pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina, and led the SBC’s initial Sexual Abuse Task Force.

Mike Keahbone

Keahbone is pastor of First Baptist Church Lawton, Oklahoma, and is vice chair of the SBC’s Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force.

Jared Moore

Moore is pastor of Homesteads Baptist Church in Crossville, Tennessee, and served the SBC as second vice president in 2014.

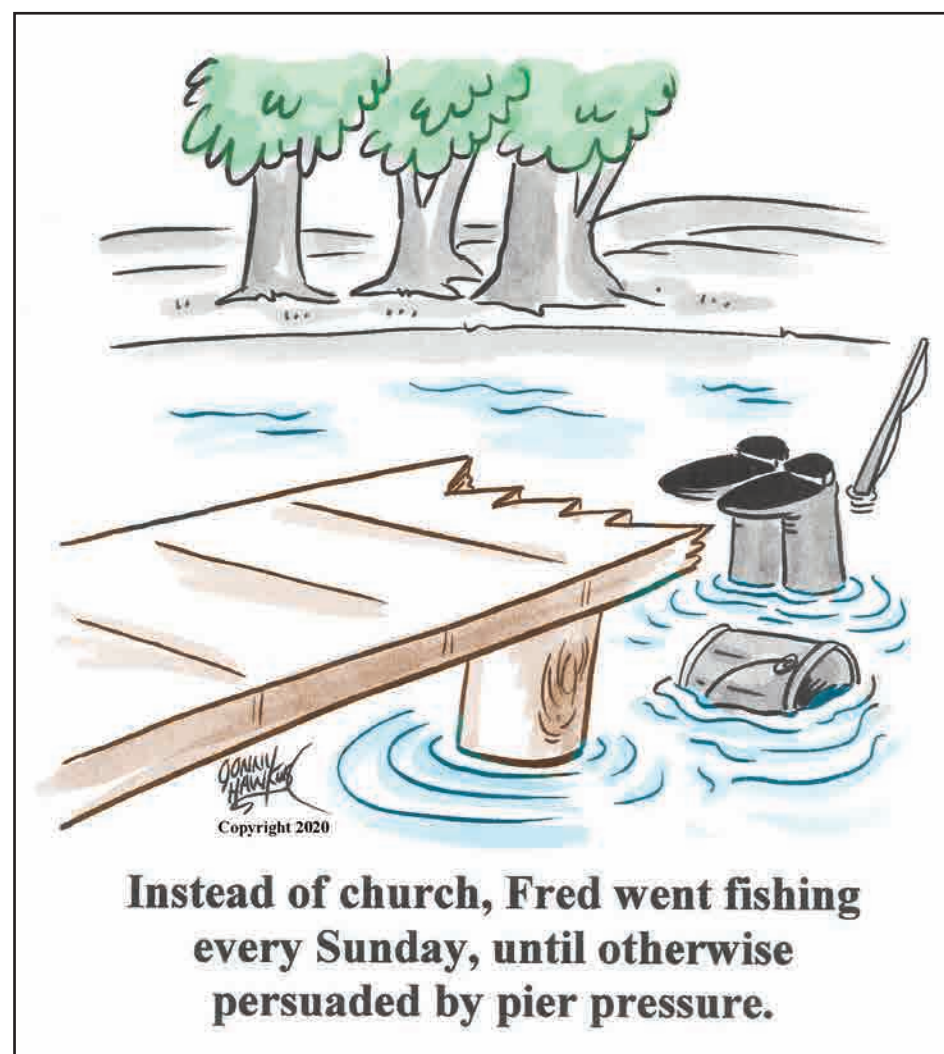
Clint Pressley

Pressley is pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and served as first vice president of the SBC 2014–2015.

Dan Spencer

Spencer is pastor of FBC Sevierville, Tennessee. He preached during the 2001 SBC Pastors Conference and was a member of the SBC Committee on Committees in 2005.

To read more from the SBC presidential nominees, visit tbponline.org or call 800-803-5201 to request a copy of the print edition. The six listed above were the nominees known at press time.



3 stories you should know

Former SWBTS administrator Matt Queen indicted in DOJ investigation of SBC

The Department of Justice has indicted Matt Queen, a former professor and interim provost at Southwestern Seminary, for allegedly obstructing justice in a sexual misconduct case. The information became public May 21.

Queen allegedly provided falsified information to the FBI in 2023 about a 2022 incident involving a student at the seminary's undergraduate-level Texas Baptist College.

This case surfaced following the 2022 Guidepost Solutions report on the SBC's handling of sexual abuse allegations over the past two decades. While some of the

seminaries seem to be the only remaining SBC entities under review, the DOJ investigation remains ongoing.



QUEEN

SWBTS placed Queen on administrative leave in June 2023, and he later resigned after it was revealed he denied knowledge of an executive's instruction to destroy relevant documents. The seminary has committed to cooperate with the investigation and emphasized its dedication to victim care.

Queen recently became pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. (The Baptist Paper)

Gambling legislation dies but 'will' resurface

The highly anticipated gambling expansion package touted during the recently adjourned legislative session came closer to passing than any bills have in 25 years, but in the end 15 solid "No" votes in the Senate kept it from succeeding.

Still, "we can't get comfortable," said ALCAP's Greg Davis. "It will be back and the gambling interest won't stop until they succeed."

"Alabama is better without the vice of gambling and that should be our goal," he said. "We encourage pastors and church leaders to share with their congregations the dangers, addiction and loss that come with gambling, whether legally or illegally. And it's important to share about it now and in an ongoing manner."

This year's gambling bills were sponsored by Rep. Chris Blackshear. (The Alabama Baptist)

Tighter policies set for kids in public libraries

New administrative code changes approved May 16 by the Alabama Public Library Service requires public libraries in the state to remove sexually explicit materials from their children's sections in order to receive state funding.

A group of parents and concerned citizens were surprised to learn the variety of books available to children and youth in some of the state's libraries, so they launched an effort to request changes. Gov. Kay Ivey also got involved. Following discussions from all sides of the issue, amendments were approved to tighten policies related to access by unsupervised children.

In fiscal year 2025, public libraries will receive \$6.6 million in funding from the state. The funding assumes compliance with the new policy that goes into effect July 17. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Slain Christian's family receives death threats during home invasion

LAHORE, Pakistan — Family members of a slain Pakistani Christian report receiving threats upon their lives if they do not drop charges against the suspect. Farhan Ul Qamar (pictured), 20, was fatally shot Nov. 9, 2023, in the presence of his family at their home in Punjab province. Muhammad Zubair reportedly confessed to the slaying but then retracted his statement.



MS photo

Recently six armed invaders entered the Ul Qamar home and threatened family members

at gunpoint. The alleged leader of the invaders was Zubair's father, the news services say. Noor Ul Qamar, father of Farhan Ul Qamar, said he filed a police report on the incident, but authorities released the men hours later.

The November 2023 attack upon the Ul Qamars may have been religiously motivated since Zubair referred to the family as Jews before shooting Farhan Ul Qamar. Pakistan is No. 7 on Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

Three Ugandan Christians killed, three attacked for their faith

KAMPALA, Uganda — Three Christians recently were killed in Uganda for their faith in Jesus Christ, and three others suffered severe attacks.

Family members perpetrated most of these attacks.

Morning Star News articles give these details about some of the separate incidents:

► March 29: The Muslim brother of Namukve Sawuya, 19, killed her in Nawaningi village in Iganga District for becoming a Christian. Her body was discovered in a swamp near River Naigombwa.

► March 30: Ronald Twinomugisha was hacked to death in Busei B village in Iganga District. The evangelist, 32, apparently was targeted for having led four Muslims to faith in Jesus Christ.

► April 9: Sulaina Nabirye's Muslim son is suspected of poisoning her food because she refused to leave Christianity.

This occurred in Kamuli District. Sulaina died April 10. (MS)

Impacting generations

Northport Baptist music minister retires after nearly 6 decades of 'wonderful ministry'

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Telesa Ellison's family joined Northport Baptist Church in 1965, John Hinton had only been there for about three months.

But news of the music programs he'd created there had already traveled.

"When he came in February of 1965, we came that following June, my mom and dad and six children," Ellison said. "The reason was that they had heard so many things about the music program he had started and the children's choirs."

Now, after decades of faithful service, Hinton is retiring as the church's music director, and Ellison said it's going to be a huge change for a lot of people — she, for one, has been in one of his choirs for the whole 59 years.

Ellison said it's emotional for her family "because we've had such a connection."

"He's a pretty phenomenal mentor, guide and friend," she said. "He's taught me so many Scriptures; I sing a lot of the Scriptures after being in the choir for so long."

'God-given musical talents'

Janet McCracken had a similar story, and she said Hinton has impacted her entire family through the choir ministry.

"I am so very honored, blessed and thankful that he has been a major influence in my life," she said. "My parents, all of my siblings, my children, my daughter-in-law and my niece and nephew have all been impacted by Dr. Hinton's God-given musical talents."



Photo courtesy of Telesa Ellison
John Hinton directs the choir at Northport Baptist Church during his last spring program April 21. He came to the church in 1965.

And through it all, Hinton was bivocational — he taught music, was a principal and a supervisor and now he's also the mayor of Northport.

"I did music on the side all those years," he said. "But it's really a calling; this was what I enjoyed so much, being able to serve the Lord that way."

Hinton started playing the piano "very young" when he was growing up at Big Sandy Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa County. Through the years, he traveled with the church's quartet, then at age 19 began to feel a pull toward music ministry. He served at Circlewood Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa for about six

years before moving over to Northport Baptist.

There, Hinton developed choirs and ensembles for all ages from preschool to senior adults and became known beyond the local area for the caliber of the program.

Over the years, he conducted Handel's Messiah several times and led the choir as they performed in several Bill Gaither Homecoming concerts.

Hinton loved it all, but student ministry was one of his favorite parts.

"For me, working with the youth was a real high point," he said. "The choir tours we took over the years were memorable, and seeing the kids grow up

— so many of them are now leaders in the church, and that's really the reward."

McCracken was one of those students.

"My fondest memories of my teenage years are not cheerleading or everything else, it's the choir tours and ensemble tours and everything that we used to do," she said. "It was awesome, it was absolutely awesome."

On April 21, Hinton's last spring program as music director, McCracken's brother, a former member, even came back to sing with the choir.

"If you gathered all of the people who have been under his direction, especially from youth, the stories would go on for weeks from everyone reminiscing," McCracken said.

Hinton said the people at Northport Baptist "have been wonderful throughout the years."

He said they were a rock for him when his first wife, Elaine, died of cancer at age 52.

'A life saver'

"They prayed for and supported us in every way," Hinton said.

"When it came to raising my kids and with my wife in the situation she was in, the church was just a life saver."

He said he and his second wife, Emalyn, have felt the love of the church for the whole of their 30-year marriage also.

"It's been a wonderful ministry; the people have been supportive through the years," Hinton said. "It's just been a real enjoyable time — I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Northport Baptist hosted a special service and retirement reception in Hinton's honor May 19.



Photo courtesy of Northport Baptist Church
John Hinton is retiring as Northport Baptist Church's music director after 59 years.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

JERALD ADAMS

Jerald Adams, who served 45 years as a pastor in north Alabama, died March 1. He was 83.

Adams grew up at Vinemont Baptist Church and met his wife, Joyace, there when he was 6 and she was 2.

He gave his life to Christ at age 10. Later, he was serving as a deacon at Bellview Heights Baptist Church in Cullman when he felt called to be a pastor.



ADAMS

From there, Adams served as a pastor for 45 years in six churches — Panama Baptist and Ebenezer Baptist in Vinemont; Baldwin Heights Baptist and Brickyard Baptist in Cullman; Paden Baptist in Gadsden; and New Friendship Baptist in Union Grove.

He also taught and coached in the Cullman County School System for more than 20 years, spending most of that time at Jones Chapel Junior High School.

Adams is survived by his wife of 61 years; son, Stuart; daughter, Suzaun; and several grandchildren.

JOHNNY “JOHN” LEROY CANFIELD

Johnny “John” Leroy Canfield died March 20. He was 74.

A West Virginia native, Canfield was a veteran of the U.S. Army and obtained his Regents bachelor of arts degree from Glenville State University in West Virginia.

He retired after 32 years of service from the Wood County Sheriff’s Department in Parkersburg, West Virginia.

He was a member and commander of the VFW Post 5850, Eufaula, Alabama. He was involved in several organizations and was a member of Clayton Baptist Church.

Canfield was an interim pastor for many churches, including Anderson Baptist Church, Clio, at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Stephanie; two sons, Michael Wayne and Shaun David; daughter, Stephanie; 10 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.



CANFIELD

AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

► **Robert “Moses” Clark** is the new pastor of **Crestview Baptist Church, Prattville**. He had been serving as interim pastor since January and has a strong tie to the church, which was founded in 1957 by Clark’s father, Garner McLaurin Clark.

Clark grew up at Crestview and started out in ministry there, serving on staff with his father from 1977 through 1986. He also previously served as youth and music pastor of First Baptist Church Pell City and as a worship pastor in Georgia and South



Photo courtesy of Autauga Association

Carolina. In 2018, he considered himself semi-retired, serving as interim and supply for music or preaching.

Clark holds a bachelor of church music degree from Samford University and a master of arts degree in religious education from Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife, Karen, have two children and four grandchildren.

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

► **Little River Baptist Church, Uriah**, celebrated its 200th anniversary April 28. Mike Fountain, interim pastor, recognized former pastors James Henry and Bob Jackson, who was the guest speaker. Additional guests included Hunter Bosarge, who is the new full-time pastor, and Steve Dunn, associational missionary of Bethlehem and Pine Barren Baptist associations.

Church member Susan Hadley shared a summary of the church history, followed by an historical recognition from Jim Lambert, a commissioner of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (pictured l to r: Bosarge; Lambert; Dewayne McMillan, deacon chair; and Fountain). The praise and worship team from Excel Church of the Nazarene provided special music. The celebration concluded with a fellowship meal.



Photo courtesy of Jim Lambert

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church Birmingham** will host a music camp for K–6 grades July 15–19, 9 a.m.–noon. Register at fbcbirmingham.org/kids-music-camp or call 205-870-3888. Jim Cooley is pastor.

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **Danny Branch** is the new pastor of **Ino Baptist Church, Kinston**. While teaching high school and then serving as principal, Branch

served bivocationally as children’s minister of First Baptist Church Samson; pastor of Reese Baptist Church, Samson; and pastor of Piney Grove Baptist Church, Samson. When he retired from education, he became the full-time pastor of FBC Samson.



BRANCH

Branch holds a bachelor of education degree in secondary education, social science, from the University of Alabama; a master of education degree in educational leadership from Troy University; and is pursuing a master of arts in pastoral ministry from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Cricket, have four children and two grandchildren.

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Matt Hilyer** is the new pastor of **Childersburg First Baptist Church**. He previously served as pastor of Mount Carmel No. 1 Baptist Church, Thorsby; Fair Park Baptist Church (now Blackberry Lane Community Church), Talladega; Farmington Baptist Church, Lewisburg, Tennessee; Trinity Baptist Church, Sylacauga; Mineral Springs Baptist Church, Clanton; Five Points Baptist Church, Sylacauga; and Union Grove Baptist Church, Jemison. He also was associate pastor of Collins Chapel Baptist Church, Jemison.



Photo courtesy of Matt Hilyer

Hilyer holds two bachelor of science degrees in sociology and psychology and a master of education degree with a specialty in counseling from the University of Montevallo. He also studied theology at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. Hilyer and his wife, Ginger, have two children.

EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **Mike Allums** is the new pastor of **Lake Catoma Baptist Church, Cullman**. He was called into ministry and ordained at New Temple Baptist Church, Dora, at age 41 and has served as pastor of churches in Walker, Blount, Jefferson, Etowah, St. Clair, Chilton and Cullman counties.



ALLUMS

Allums holds a bachelor of Christian ministry from the Alabama extension of Leavell College, a master of Christian ministry from New Orleans Seminary and a doctor of ministry in applied theology from Southern Seminary. He and his wife, Nita, have three children and 11 grandchildren.

NEWS



SNOW

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

► **Jacque Snow** is the new pastor of **Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Rainbow City**. He previously served as bivocational youth and children's pastor at West Side Baptist Church, Jacksonville; student pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown; and associate pastor at New Hope Baptist Church,

Pell City. Snow holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Meredith, have one son.

MADISON ASSOCIATION

► **Jon Hathcock** is the new associate director of **Madison Baptist Association**. He previously served as children's pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, as well as pastor of East Athens Baptist Church and Fayetteville First Baptist Church, both in Tennessee. Hathcock holds a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary; and a doctor of ministry degree from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, have two sons. Robert Mullins is Madison Association's executive director.



HATHCOCK

SULPHUR SPRINGS ASSOCIATION

► **Harold Donald** is retiring as pastor of **Cane Creek Baptist Church, Warrior**. He previously served as pastor of Dunnivant Faith Baptist Church, Leeds; Oak Grove Baptist Church, Pinson; and multiple churches in the Birmingham Metro, Shelby, North Jefferson and Sulphur Springs Baptist associations.

Donald earned a bachelor of science degree in business from Mississippi State University, Starkville, and attended New Orleans Seminary. Donald and his wife, Merrill, have four children and 12 grandchildren. He is available for interim work and pulpit supply.

SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Southcrest Baptist Church, Bessemer**, will host Redeemed southern gospel group June 8, 6 p.m. Doors open at 5 with food available for purchase. For more information, call 205-425-9991. Scott Bush is pastor.



WHITE

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **Ben White** is the new pastor of **Friendship Baptist Church, Springville**. Born and reared in Cullman, White was saved, baptized, called and licensed at Good Hope Baptist Church, Cullman. He was ordained by Shanghai First Baptist Church (now The Church at

River Mills), Athens. White holds a bachelor of science degree in biblical and theological studies with a concentration in biblical counseling from Boyce College, Louisville, Kentucky, and a master of theology degree with a concentration in pastoral leadership from Campbellsville University, Kentucky. He previously served as pastor of Masonville Baptist Church, Utica, Kentucky.

White and his wife, Jennifer, have two sons.

TALLAPOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **Charlie Horton** has retired from full-time ministry, most recently serving as pastor of Jacksons Gap Baptist Church for the past 13 years.

Horton was saved when he was 15 and called to ministry two years later. He attended Missionary Baptist Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas, and served as pastor of churches in Arkansas and Indiana before serving in Alabama.

He and his wife, Sandra, have five children, 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Photo courtesy of Charlie Horton

TUSCALOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **New Hope Baptist Church, Buhl**, will host a revival June 2-5. Jimmy Garner will preach Sunday, June 2, 6 p.m., and Brian Bridges will preach Monday-Wednesday, June 3-5, 7 p.m. Mike Trull is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

► **Rusty Sowell** (right) recently celebrated 40 years as pastor of **Providence Baptist Church, Opelika**. He previously served as pastor of Mount Sterling Baptist Church, Butler, and Garden City First Baptist Church.

Sowell holds an associate's degree from the

former Clarke College, Newton, Mississippi; a bachelor's degree in biblical studies from Mobile College (now University of Mobile); a master of divinity degree in New Testament and pastoral ministry from New Orleans Seminary; and a doctor of ministry degree from Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

During the special service recognizing Sowell, Rick Lance (left) made a presentation on behalf of the State Board

of Missions. Lance, SBOM executive director, and Sowell have been friends since they served as pastors in Cullman County in 1980.

Sowell's parents also attended the service, as did his wife, Gina, their two children and two grandchildren. Many past and current church members shared and gave gifts and cards. A luncheon was held after church to honor the Sowells and their years of faithful ministry.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Hughes

WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church Jasper** recently celebrated Margaret Carr upon her retirement after serving 40 years in the church's nursery and weekday preschool ministry. Andy Frazier is pastor.

WEST CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► **Jimmy Free** is the new pastor of **New Bethel Baptist Church, Minter**, which meets on alternating Sundays with Braggs Christian Church, Minter, where Free has served as pastor for 16 years. Free, who retired from a career with the fire department and the department of public health, will serve as pastor of both churches. He and his wife, Gayla, have three daughters and six grandchildren.

Thomas inducted into hall of fame for missions work

Cindy Thomas was inducted into the Alabama Sports and Adventure Hall of Fame on April 4.

Thomas was inducted into the ASA Hall of Fame during a ceremony in Dothan along with eight other people. The ASA Hall of Fame was created in 2022 by Mike Schmitz, an avid adventurer, and was designed to honor everyday people who made an impact through their active life.

This is the hall of fame's third class to induct. Thomas' husband John, mission strategist for Southeast Alabama Baptist Association, said he was "proud of her — it's a great honor."

Cindy Thomas took her first missions trip more than 30 years ago as she and her hus-

band were starting their ministry together.

From there, her church partnered with International Mission Board missionaries in Guatemala, and she would travel to other parts of South America. She then went to Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. "I was always ready to go share the gospel and do what I could to help the cause of Christ," she said. She said she doesn't know how many trips she's taken over the years — for her it's never been about the numbers, but she thinks she might have been to Nicaragua around 14 times, somewhere in the teens to Guatemala and then multiple trips to the other places too.

For more information, visit alabamasportsand-adventure.com. (Grace Thornton)



THOMAS

OUTSIDE CHURCH WALLS



Jeremy Lynch (left) and a team from St. James Holt Crossing Baptist Church stand with the Rolling Food Pantry.

Photo courtesy of Jeremy Lynch

Rolling Food Pantry brings nourishment to people in the ‘desert’

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

For four years, Jeremy Lynch has been behind the wheel of the Rolling Food Pantry, a bus designed to provide fresh

food to people in the River Region, an area considered a critical food desert.

Partnerships

“In March 2020, we began partnering with churches to host gospel

food distributions in order to share the gospel, get the church outside the walls of the church and feed hungry people in our community,” said Lynch, who serves as director of Love Loud River Region, the Mont-

gomery Baptist Association ministry that runs the Rolling Food Pantry.

It was a joint effort to get it going, he said — in 2019, MBA received a grant from United Way to buy the bus and remodel

the interior to serve as a food pantry.

And now the ministry has gotten another upgrade — a grant from Feeding America Donors and the Walmart Foundation in partnership through the

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Photo courtesy of Jeremy Lynch

A grant from Feeding America Donors and The Walmart Foundation in partnership through the Heart of Alabama Food Bank has helped purchase a trailer that can serve as a refrigerator and freezer.

Heart of Alabama Food Bank has helped purchase a trailer that can serve as a refrigerator and freezer.

Neal Hughes, MBA director of missions for Montgomery Association, said for a long time, the Love Loud River Region

team has had to transport perishables packed in ice.

"Now they can deliver the produce and meats dry, keep them from being spoiled and deliver the food to the 'least of these' in the River Region," Hughes said. "A big thanks goes out to the ever-faithful team leader Jeremy Lynch and his band of merry missionaries."

The trailer has been on the road with the bus since January, and Lynch said he can already tell it's making a difference.

'More mobile'

He said he's grateful for local churches who have let the ministry use their freezer and fridge space in the past at no charge, but now he and others no longer have to spend time going back and forth transporting perishable items from donors to the refrigerator space.

The trailer "will truly allow us to become more mobile in receiving and picking up and refrigerating and/or freezing food for our rural churches or those that

don't have large enough storage space," he said.

This year, the Rolling Food Pantry has already

distributed more than 130,000 pounds of food through 12 churches in the River Region.

"A huge thanks to the Father for us continuing to be mobile and use the resources of the local church to host these mass food distri-



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Lynch

Volunteers with Love Loud River Region serve food out of the back of the Rolling Food Pantry's new trailer in January. Prior to the new trailer, the team had to transport perishables packed in ice.

butions," Lynch said. "And also our churches are able to receive funding through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Hunger Funds to continue to multiply their efforts in purchasing food and mobilizing it every month."

"A huge thanks to the Father for us continuing to be mobile and use the resources of the local church."

Jeremy Lynch
Director, Love Loud River Region



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Lynch

In 2019, Montgomery Baptist Association received a grant from United Way to buy a bus and remodel the interior to serve as a food pantry.

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Dr. Jonathan Rodgers from Samford University is conducting research to examine current worship practices in Southern Baptist churches in the state of Alabama. The goal is to get a clearer picture of how worship services are being conducted (and by whom), regardless of size, location, or demographic factors. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. **Music Ministers/Worship Leaders/Worship Pastors** (regardless of title) are encouraged to complete this survey, whether full-time, part-time, or volunteer. Your church will be entered into a drawing to receive a **\$100 Amazon gift card**. You are also encouraged to share the link with your own Alabama Southern Baptist worship leader networks.

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'Spreading the gospel ONE CROSS AT A TIME'

NorthPark couple has seen God open 'all the doors' through cross ministry

By Tracy Riggs Frontz
The Alabama Baptist

When Buster and Jean Voss tell someone that they are "spreading the gospel one cross at a time" or "spreading the love of Jesus one cross at a time," they don't mean it in an abstract sense. It started when Buster's father went to the Midwest on a missions trip in the late 1970s. He came back with two small crosses — one for Buster's mother and one for Buster. In 2006, a woodworker friend

Buster and Jean have made more than 8,000 crosses. Though they have received a lot of positive responses from the receivers, they never want this ministry to be about them. "God has provided equipment, supplies, time. It is all to His glory," Buster said.

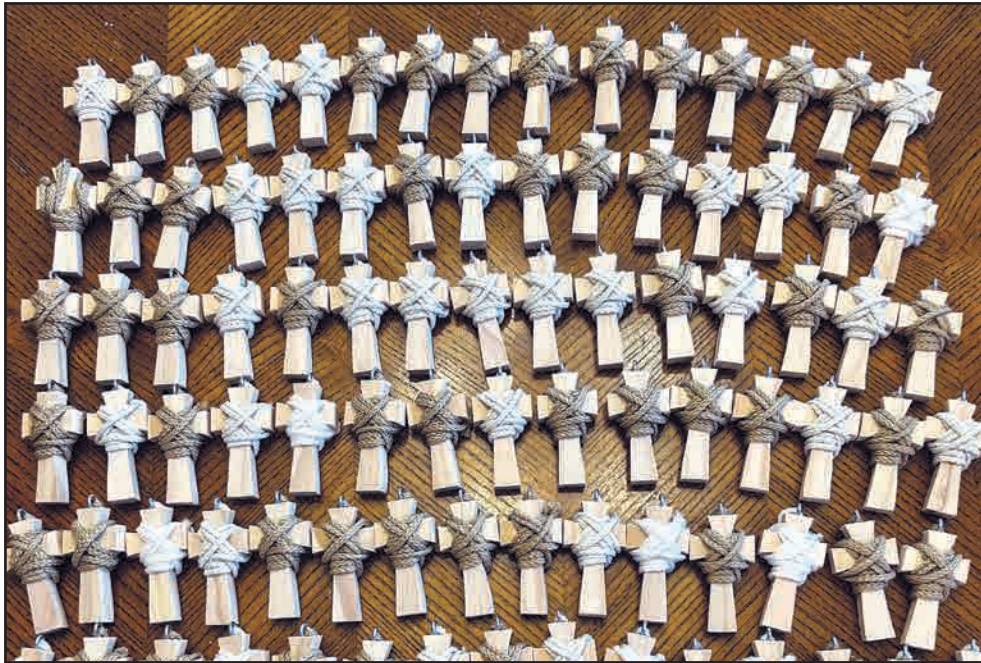


Photo by Jean Voss

asked if he could use Buster's as a pattern to make crosses himself. "I asked him if he would teach me how to make them. He said he would, so I started working with him over at his workshop," Buster said. Jean was still working full time and couldn't help much, but by 2007, Buster really felt God's call to focus on making the crosses.

How it began

"We would make a bunch, and we would maybe give a few to the church. We'd stand out and give them to newcomers. [Buster] would carry them around and just hand them out to people. That's kind of how it began," Jean said.

After Jean retired, they increased their time and resources to make more crosses.

It was still a small-scale operation. But then Buster became so sick that there was a chance he wouldn't



Photo by Wayne Jones

make it. His doctor challenged him to get well so he could make 100 crosses. After moving to northeast Jefferson County to be closer to family, they found new doctors.

"Not only was he healed, but it opened up an entirely new ministry for us with crosses. We became a team," Jean said.

They began giving them to Vacation Bible School programs and soon became overwhelmed with so many potential recipients. They started specifically praying about where to share them and say God told them to concentrate on missionaries and Operation Christmas Child boxes. Their crosses have

been distributed in Guatemala, South America, Africa, Europe, India and New Guinea.



Photo courtesy of Buster and Jean Voss
Buster keeps a dozen or so crosses in his pocket at all times, ready to hand them out.

Many members of their church — NorthPark Baptist in Trussville — know about the cross ministry and love to share their story. Buster also has personally challenged himself to give a cross to every person in Birmingham. Though far from that goal, amazing stories have already come from the effort. "We got such an incredible response from people who received the crosses that it just encouraged us and affirmed that God was blessing it, and it gave us a reason to keep on going," Jean said.

A child in Guatemala shows off her cross that a missions team member gave her. Crosses also have been distributed in South America, Africa, Europe, India and New Guinea.

Buster keeps a dozen or so in his pocket at all times, ready to give them away. They give them to people in restaurants, grocery stores, doctor's offices and anywhere else they may go. Doctors have asked if they could put some in a jar for patients.

Once, at a restaurant, they felt led to give one to a waitress.

"Buster handed her a cross, and she just looked at us and held it really tight. She got tears in her eyes, and she said, 'I needed this today. I needed to be reminded that I wasn't alone. I've been trying to figure out how to pay for my school and my house and all the other things. I just needed to be reminded that I wasn't alone,'" Jean remembered.

Prayer opportunity

Another time, the couple went out to eat. As they were getting in their car, they saw a man adjacent to them and gave him a cross. The man started crying and said, "Thank you so much. Please pray for me. I have a brain tumor. It means so much if you would just pray for me." Buster

and Jean have been praying for him ever since.

But the most amazing account had to do with missing a turn on the way home.

"We were coming back from the Springville Walmart. Never have I done this since or before. We were saying that we probably should go by Publix on our way home," Jean said.



Photo by Jean Voss
Buster and Jean give their crosses to people in restaurants, grocery stores, doctor's offices and anywhere else they may go.

However, knowing they would have to go out of the way, they decided to simply go home.

"We were just talking away, and all of a sudden, I looked around and said, 'Buster, where's our turn?' I realized that I passed right by our turn," Jean recounted.

Because Publix was no longer out of the way, they went by there and got what they needed. While

checking out, they gave a cross to the cashier.

"The lady said, 'Oh, do you have another one? Our manager just lost a close family member and she's really, really upset. Do you think you could give another one for her?'"

"I thought, 'Lord, we never miss our cut-off, and we didn't even know we had missed it until we had gone too far.' Of course, we gave the manager a cross and told her we'd pray for her. It's things like that that blow

my mind and make me so grateful to God that He has allowed us to do this," Jean said.

Though they have received a lot of positive responses from the receivers of the 8,000-plus crosses they have made, they keep pointing to God.

"God has provided equipment, supplies, time. It is all to His glory," Buster said.

"He has opened all the doors," Jean said. "It really is by God's grace, to give us purpose."

"When you are retired, sometimes

you think you have no purpose left," she noted. "This gave us a purpose, and God blessed it."

"He really is a loving, committed and personal God."



Photo courtesy of Buster and Jean Voss



Photo by Jean Voss

Buster recently cut out another 100 crosses to distribute. He also has personally challenged himself to give a cross to every person in Birmingham. Though far from that goal, amazing stories have already come from the effort.

For more information about Buster and Jean Voss' cross ministry, email onecrossatatime@gmail.com.



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AGING WELL

Caregivers, care recipients need support

By Willie Brunetti
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Where do you find strength when your world is falling apart? Where can you find wisdom when there are no rational answers to what is happening at the moment?

When we ask these questions, we are trying to find meaning in our suffering and even our life experience. Nothing quite prepares us for the unpredictable world of caregiving. Caregiving will challenge our beliefs and our faith in ways that we probably cannot imagine.

Both the caregiver and the care recipient need to be refreshed with the spiritual water that only Christ can give: “Jesus said, ‘Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again — ever! In fact, the water I will

give him will become a well of water springing up within him for eternal life.’” (John 4:13-14)

Nourishing our faith

Care recipients often have difficulty maintaining a spiritual life because of the aging process. As their caregivers, we need to be aware of their spiritual needs. Like all Christians, seniors need the fellowship and encouragement of other believers. Faith that is not nourished stagnates. Unfortunately, many of our seniors have lost their mobility and are unable to maintain a relationship with the church and the nurturing of their faith.

Many of our parents have grown up in church, and it was and is a vital part of their lives. They need the comfort and familiarity of church in their lives.

Aging can produce a roller coaster effect to their

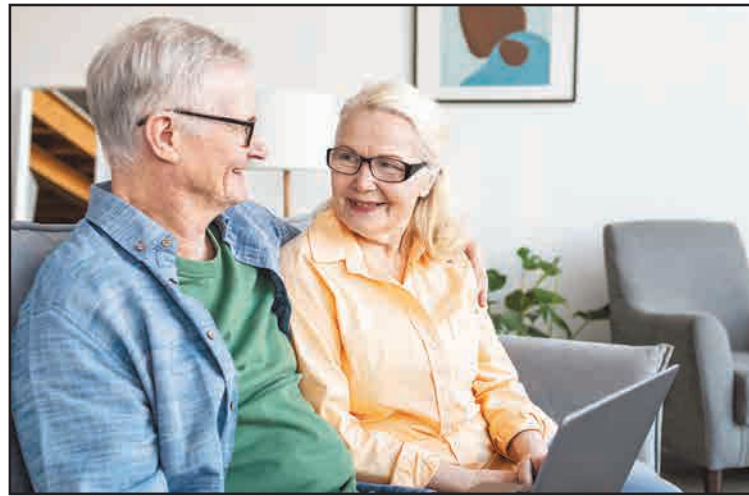


Photo by Freepik

daily lives as they ponder their past and look to the future.

Comfort, stability

As a caregiver, your sensitivity to your parent’s need for spiritual support can provide comfort and stability in a time of uncertainty and change. Some are too feeble to get to church. As their friends die or move away, they may lose their

connection to the community of faith. Failing eyesight and hearing can make it difficult to worship. They may become embarrassed by their condition and need encouragement from you for support.

When your parents can’t get to church as frequently as they want or can’t get there at all, find some creative ways to bring the church home to them. Re-

quest home visits. Watch the church’s worship services on the internet or TV. Provide an audio version of the Bible or literature for their study. A daily prayer time with your parent can help resolve feelings of anger, fear and guilt. Offer a presence, prayer, the Word of God, a gentle touch and a message of hope.

Through it all, the Holy Spirit works through our efforts to glorify God and to bring you and your loved one into the presence of God.

EDITOR’S NOTE —

Willie Brunetti has a long history of being a family caregiver and leads seminars on the topic. He is a retired Air Force officer and holds a doctorate of educational ministry from New Orleans Seminary. He is a member of First Baptist Church Meridianville, Alabama.

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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

Civilla Martin was a Canadian-American hymn writer

Civilla Martin (1866–1948) was a Canadian-American hymn writer. Her most famous songs were “God Will Take Care of You” and “His Eye is on the Sparrow.”

Born Aug. 21, 1866, in Jordan, Nova Scotia, she was the daughter of James and Irene Holden. After teaching music for several years, she married Walter Martin, a Baptist minister. She traveled with him as he evangelized, but because of fragile health, she had to stay at home much of the time.

Civilla and Walter worked together creating hymns. She wrote the lyrics, and he often wrote the music for them. One such hymn of theirs became known around the world — “God Will Take Care of You.”

Gentle reminder

In 1904, the couple were guests at the Practical Bible Training School at Lestershire, New York, where Walter was helping the school’s president prepare a songbook. One Sunday morning, Walter was

invited to preach at a church out of town. When Civilla suddenly became ill, he considered canceling his engagement. Their young son intervened by saying, “Father, don’t you think that if God wants you to preach today, He will take care of Mother while you are away?”

While her husband was gone, Civilla’s health improved. Inspired by her son’s statement, she wrote the words to “God Will Take Care of You.” When her husband returned home, she gave him her lyrics. He sat down at his organ and wrote the music. The hymn was then printed in the songbook he was compiling for the school.

In the spring of 1905, the Martins were staying in Elmira, New York. They developed a deep friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, a Christian couple. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for 20 years, and her husband conducted his business from a wheelchair. Despite their health concerns, they were happy. Civilla wrote later, “One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle’s reply was simple: ‘His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.’”

Civilla wrote “His Eye is on the Sparrow” soon afterward. Charles Gabriel, a leading composer, wrote the music. Many American performers have had success with this song, including Ethel Waters and Whitney Houston.

Civilla Martin spent the last years of her life in Atlanta. She died March 9, 1948, and is buried at Westview Cemetery in Atlanta next to her husband.



MARTIN

By Joanne Sloan

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



Lass WORDS

BY KEN LASS

The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

Finding God on the Freeway

In a recent Sunday School lesson we studied Genesis 28, in which Jacob experiences a dream from God then awakens to say, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.”

Have you ever had that moment?

Every time I hear those words, I think of an incident a few years ago during a car trip from Alabama to Wisconsin. We were driving on Interstate 294, the bypass around Chicago. It’s an intense stretch of freeway — four or five lanes across, bumper to bumper, everybody streaking by at 80 miles an hour. As if that wasn’t treacherous enough, on this day it happened to be pouring rain. The pavement was wet and slick.

Losing control

I was in the far left lane when I noticed some sort of motion to my left. It took me a second to realize that a car, roaring up from behind, had lost control and spun off the road. I glanced over in time to see the vehicle do a 360-degree spin, smash into the retaining wall, then bounce back onto the freeway directly in front of me. I remember thinking there was no way I could avoid crashing into his back bumper.

I hit the brakes and began to skid. His momentum was still propelling him forward as well. Somehow, some way, we both

came to a stop without colliding. There couldn’t have been more than a foot between us when our cars came to rest. Sharon and I sat dumbfounded for a moment, trying to process the surreal event that had just taken place.

Divine providence

Looking back on it now, there had to be at least three acts of divine providence there. Not only was it miraculous that I was able to stop in time, but it was equally miraculous that the cars behind me were able to stop without causing a chain-reaction crash. Then the driver of the wrecked car gave us a wave, indicating he was all right, and was actually able to drive his battered vehicle over to the shoulder, out of harm’s way.

I was shaken and feeling my heart pounding faster than the speeding cars around me. I took the next exit and pulled into a parking lot to calm down.

Surely the Lord was present on that freeway even though I did not know it. But I think next time we’ll take a different route.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Ken Lass is a retired Birmingham television news and sports anchor and an award-winning columnist for numerous publications and websites.

'PASSIONATE ABOUT REACHING THE LOST'

Go Tell Ministries marks 35 years of evangelism through camps, crusades

By Laura Lee Leathers

The Alabama Baptist

Ask Rick Gage about Go Tell Ministries, and the conversation turns quickly to evangelism and seeing people's lives transformed through the power of God's Word. Gage's enthusiasm seems contagious as he shares God's stories of individuals who are now Christ-followers because they attended a camp or a crusade.

Go Tell Ministries works with local church leaders to follow up after a camp or crusade to ensure discipleship opportunities take place once a person makes a decision for Christ.

This year, Go Tell camps are being held in Alabama and Virginia.

The first week is June 11–15 at Shocco Springs Conference Center near Talladega, Alabama.

While camp registration is at capacity, you can put your name on the wait list by calling 770-622-5600.

Camp speakers at the Shocco camp week are Jeff LaBorg, lead pastor of Fairview Knox Church in Knoxville, Tennessee; Cameron Tate, founder of Bridging the Gap Outreach Ministries in Jackson, Mississippi; Jordan Easley, lead pastor of First Baptist Church Cleveland, Tennessee; Tony Nolan, evangelist and lead pastor of Oak Leaf Church, Canton, Georgia; and Gage. Worship leader Jake Holman will lead singing and musical aspects of the camp.

The second week of camp will take place June 24–28 at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Find more information and register



Photo courtesy of Go Tell Ministries

Since 1989, more than 110,000 students and leaders have attended summer camps with more than 40,000 commitments to Christ, according to Go Tell Ministries.

at gotellministries.com/5363-2/.

Gage and his brother Daniel started the Go Tell camps in the summer of 1989 at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center in Toccoa, Georgia.



GAGE

"We didn't have a clue as to what we were doing," said Gage, son of Houston, Texas, evangelist Freddie Gage. "We just knew God had called us to launch a camp ministry that could impact the lives of young people."

Since 1989, more than 110,000 students and leaders have attended summer camps with more than 40,000 commitments to Christ, according to Go Tell Ministries. Roughly 3,000 people also have answered the call to Christian service during a camp, the ministry reports.

Those attending camps through

the years soon sparked an interest in area crusades, which have continued over the years, Gage explained.

Seeing fruit

Last October, the Go Tell America Crusade landed in Brandon, Mississippi, for four days at the Brandon Amphitheater. On Oct. 18 — the final day of the crusade — more than 10,000 people attended. It was the largest attendance in the venue's history, according to coverage by The Baptist Record.

"We recorded over 2,000 spiritual decisions for Christ (in Mississippi)," Gage told The Baptist Paper. "We never know what our attendance will be (at a crusade). We build our campaigns to end on a big, high note. Our team speaks in schools throughout the week. We

build and prepare for a large closing night — youth emphasis night."

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board helped support the event.

"[It] was a well-organized, Christ-centered evangelistic event," said Shawn Parker, MBCB executive director. "Thankfully, we saw some 2,000 people respond publicly. Many of those responses were first-time decisions to follow Christ. ... I'll look forward to seeing the fruit of this effort continue to show in the future."

Gage also has held crusades in Alabama, Arizona, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Countries include Russia, Mexico, Romania, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Argentina.

"The evangelistic outreaches of Go Tell are passionate about reaching the lost," Gage said. "Jesus told us what His mission on earth was, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). There is nothing more godly than rescuing souls from going to hell. There is only one thing that causes heaven to shout, and that's when a sinner repents of their sin and commits their life to Christ

(Luke 15:7, 10). Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance (Matt. 9:13).

"The need and urgency to evangelize the unsaved have never been greater," he emphasized. "Life is brief. Life is uncertain. Death is sure. Christ may appear at any moment.

"There has never been a greater opportunity to reach the lost than now."

For more information, visit gotellministries.com.



UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

ESL workshops this summer

Kristy Kennedy says many of the internationals who live in Alabama have never had their own Bible, and many have never heard of Jesus specifically. A great way to connect with them is to get involved in English, she said. “For me personally and my experience, ESL ministries are one of the best ways to reach internationals with the gospel,” said Kennedy, who leads in the area of community ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. “There’s a huge opportunity here.”

A first step toward getting involved is to attend an ESL workshop this summer:

- First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa, from 1 p.m. July 26 to 4 p.m. July 27.
- Westwood Baptist Church in Alabaster from 1 p.m. Aug. 16 to 4 p.m. Aug. 17.

To register, visit alsbom.org/esl or scan the code below with your smartphone’s camera.



At the workshop, you’ll learn the skills to run an ESL ministry — starting and organizing, recruiting students and teachers, how to teach, how to prepare a lesson plan, how to share your faith with your students and more.

The cost is \$25 and includes materials, dinner Friday and lunch Saturday.

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

SBC salary study

GuideStone and the State Board of Missions need your help to create an extensive, reliable database that will be used by thousands of churches to establish competitive compensation packages for their church staff.

Upon completion, you’ll be entered for a chance to win one of five \$100 Amazon gift cards (rules apply).

For more information or to participate, visit guidestone.org/compensationsurvey.

Going to the SBC Annual Meeting in Indianapolis?

If you’re making plans to be at the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting June 9–12 in Indianapolis, be sure to stop by the State Board of Missions

booth in the exhibit hall. You’ll find us in the front half of the hall between GuideStone and Southeastern Seminary. We’d love to visit with you!

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Alexandria, Alabama, is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Interested candidates should send resumés and correspondence to: Pastorsearch@mzbclife.net

PASTOR

Nolensville First Baptist Church, located just outside Nashville in fast growing Williamson County, is seeking a pastor. We are a traditional Baptist church. We are looking for a strong leader to shepherd our church family and lead us in an effective outreach effort in our community. For more information and responses, send letters and resumés with recent sermon links to: NFBC Search Committee, P.O. Box 635, Nolensville, TN 37135 or email to: psc.fbcnolensville@gmail.com.

PASTOR

FBC Shawmut, Valley, Alabama, seeking traditional pastor. Sunday and Wednesday services. Centrally located between Auburn, Alabama, LaGrange and Columbus, Georgia. Submit resumé to: sfbc.psc@yahoo.com.

PASTOR

Silver Run Baptist Church in Seale, Alabama, located in rural Russell County, is seeking a pastor that the Lord would have to serve here. Resumés may be sent to: P.O. Box 8, Seale, AL 36875, ATTN: Kenny Harris.

PASTOR

Mt. Zion Baptist Church in northwest Chambers County, Alabama is seeking a bivocational or full-time pastor to guide a rural community with an eager variety of age groups. Email resumés to: mtzionpsc24@gmail.com or contact Reid House with questions at reid36862@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

New Life Baptist Church located in Bay Minette, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor who will unashamedly preach the Word of God. Resumés will be received until May 31. Please email resumé/profile to: newlifebaptistch@att.net or mail to: Pastor Search Committee, 15011 Glasgow Lane, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

New Beginnings Baptist Church, a small congregation in Hayden, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send inquiries/resumés to: sonyahumber@gmail.com.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Church, Rogersville, Alabama, is seeking a part-time minister of music for blended services, directing choir, congregation and coordinating volunteer musicians. Request all interested candidates submit resumés to: tiedeinal@aol.com.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER/DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

New Market Baptist Church, NE, Madison County, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational worship leader/director of music. Request all interested candidates submit resumés to: newmarketbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Riddles Bend Baptist Church is located in Rainbow City, Etowah County, Alabama. We are praying for God’s choice for a bivocational music minister. Please forward resumé to: Anita Bedwell, Bedwell3@aol.com, 256-312-3470.

TWO PART-TIME POSITIONS — MUSIC DIRECTOR & PIANIST

Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, Falkville, Alabama, (Massey Community) is seeking to fill two part-time positions: a music director and a pianist. We are a small but growing, traditional congregation. Services Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. Send resumés/inquiries to: gregoryk.compton@att.net.

MINISTER OF MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

West End Baptist Church in Clanton, Alabama, is seeking a leader with a desire to share the gospel through media. The minister of media and technology will manage all aspects of the church’s media, including all services in house and livestream, website and social media. This person needs to be creative, organized and have a heart that beats for people. He/she

will help plan for services and events, create content for services and social media, promote WEBC in our community and unite our church across all ministries with current and future technology and social media platforms. If you feel God is calling you to this position, please email a resumé and a cover letter including your testimony to: media@webconline.org.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER/CHOIR DIRECTOR

East Gadsden Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational worship leader/choir director. If interested, please email at eastgadsdenbaptist@gmail.com.

INTERNS

Oak Bowery Baptist Church in Ohatchee is seeking interns for youth ministry and children’s ministry. 256-892-3711 or email: drsamfordham@gmail.com.

SIGNS

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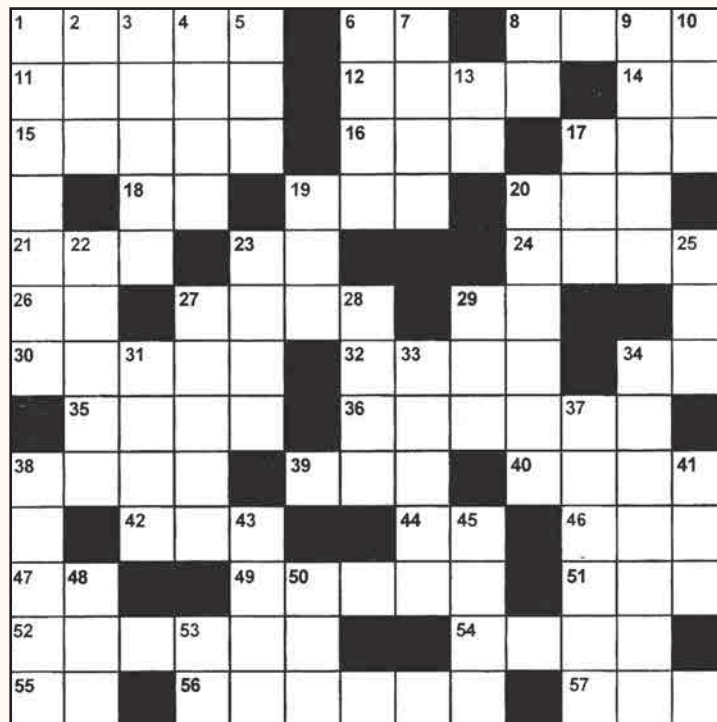
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CHRISTIAN Crossword



ACROSS

1. What the children of Israel ate for 40 years. (Ex. 16:35)
6. There hath _____ temptation taken you. (1 Cor. 10:13)
8. The firstborn of Isaac's twin sons. (Gen. 25:25)
11. Joel and Jehu's great-grandfather. (1 Chron. 4:35)
12. Shuah's second son. (Gen. 38:24)
14. Southern state. (abbr.)
15. ____ and see that the Lord is good. (Ps. 34:8)
16. We were comforted over you in _____ our affliction. (1 Thess. 3:7)
17. The voice of _____ crying in the wilderness. (Matt. 1:3)
18. _____ for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Josh. 24:15)
19. _____ kingdom come. (Matt. 6:10)
20. Herod slew the children ... ____ years old and under. (Matt. 2:16)
21. Even as a _____ gathereth her chickens under her wings. (Matt. 23:37)
23. The fourth tone of the diatonic scale.
24. A prophetess, the daughter of Paniel. (Luke 2:36)
26. A suffix forming the comparative degree.
27. God _____ forth his Son. (Gal. 4:4)
29. Mister. (abbr.)
30. Moses _____ all the words of the Lord. (Ex. 24:4)
32. King of the Amalekites. (1 Sam. 15:8)
34. Street. (abbr.)
35. One of the children of Shobal. (Gen. 36:23)
36. The well, Beer-lahai-roi, is between _____ and Bered. (Gen. 16:14)
38. And Zebadiah, and Arad, and _____. (1 Chron. 8:15)
39. I will punish _____ in Babylon. (Jer. 51:44)
40. At _____ time. (Matt. 12:1)
42. _____ though I walk through the valley. (Ps. 23:4)
44. Stingeth like _____ adder. (Prov. 23:32)
46. Nickname for Isaac.
47. _____, I am with you



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- always. (Matt. 28:20)
49. Abihail was Mordecai's _____. (Esther 2:15)
51. To blend together.
52. These things I will that thou _____ constantly. (Titus 3:8)
54. From everlasting, and to everlasting. _____. (Ps. 41:13)
55. _____ ye then be risen with Christ. (Col. 3:1)
56. Ye call me _____ and Lord. (John 13:13)
57. Abraham ... died in a good old _____. (Gen. 25:8)
- (John 1:11)
19. A yellowish-brown color.
20. Six hundred shekels of gold went to one _____. (1 Kings 10:16)
22. They have _____ from the faith. (1 Tim. 6:10)
23. Suffer me that I may _____ the pillars. (Judg. 16:26)
25. The _____ of violence is in their hands. (Isa. 59:6)
27. They look and _____ upon me. (Ps. 22:17)
28. _____ up thy bed, and walk. (Matt. 9:6)
29. Thou are _____. (Acts 12:15)
31. Children _____ your parents in the Lord. (Eph. 6:1)
33. Abda's grandfather. (Neh. 11:17)
34. There shall be as the _____ of an olive tree. (Isa. 24:13)
37. One of David's sons. (1 Chron. 3:5)
38. Shaphat's father. (1 Chron. 27:29)
41. Short for Texas.
43. A particular quality surrounding a person or thing.
45. He drew _____ to behold it. (Acts 7:31)
48. Put _____ the old man with his deeds. (Col. 3:9)
50. Names. (abbr.)
53. I am. (contraction)

DOWN

1. The apostle who was a tax collector. (Matt. 10:3)
2. Abijam's son. (1 Kings 15:8)
3. The first month. (Esther 3:7)
4. The fishermen ... were washing their _____. (Luke 5:2)
5. A fermented drink.
6. _____ found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:8)
7. The _____ wise God, be honour. (1 Tim. 1:17)
8. There is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at _____-dor. (1 Sam. 28:7)
9. David's firstborn. (2 Sam. 3:2)
10. _____ hospitality one to another. (1 Pet. 4:9)
13. Nickname for Albert.
17. He came unto his _____.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Church finances, preparing for retirement workshops

We've had some date changes for our upcoming Church Financial Issues Check-Up and the Preparing for Retirement workshops at locations around the state. Check out the updated info for the one in your area here:

- July 18 — State Board of Missions in Prattville.
- July 25 — Calvary Baptist Church in Scottsboro.
- Aug. 1 — Birmingham Metro Baptist Association.
- Aug. 6 — Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association in Sheffield.
- Aug. 13 — Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association in Opelika.
- Aug. 15 — Calhoun Baptist Association in Anniston.
- Aug. 20 — Northport Baptist Church.

The Church Financial Issues Check-Up will be held at each location from 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and cover new tax and retirement legislation affecting the church, policies about designated giving and other financial policies needed and how a church could get in trouble with the IRS including fund raising activities.

The Preparing for Retirement workshop will be held from 1–3:30 p.m. It's primarily for those ministers and employees in their 50s and 60s to begin to consider topics such as retirement income, Social Security income and Medicare basics.

If you want, you can attend both in the same day.

To register, visit alsbom.org and search for "church financial issues" or "preparing for retirement."

Next Intentional Leader Series set for July 23

The next Intentional Leader Series, set for July 23, will focus on the Person aspect of the four Ps of leadership: Person, Pastor, Preacher and Pathfinder.

Ken Allen and Rob Jackson will guide you through a transformative journey. During this training, we'll place special emphasis on equipping you to lead not only yourself but also your family and your church with excellence.

The event will be 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the State Board of

Missions in Prattville. The \$10 cost includes lunch.

To register, visit alsbom.org/ils.

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



EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Mobile



For June 2

COMMISSIONED Acts 1:4–11, 23–26

This quarter we will begin an exciting study in the Book of Acts. We will see the gospel advance from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Acts is the unfolding story of the people of God filled with the Spirit of God engaging in the mission of God.

The Book of Acts teaches the Church that she exists to glorify God by making disciples through the gospel while in community and on mission.

The life-changing reality we learn in this Scripture is that Jesus commissions His followers for Kingdom work. Every Christian has been transformed by the grace of God and is to be a witness of the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ.

Stay focused (4–8)

Old habits die hard. Set minds don't change overnight. The disciples who were with Jesus in the days between His resurrection and ascension still had old-fashioned ideas.

One of these ideas was that the Kingdom of God was going to be established by political, earthly power. At this time, Israel was occupied by the Romans, and the Jews were looking for a Messiah who would expel the Romans and restore the earthly kingdom of David.

Their eschatology wasn't biblical. It had been shaped by the popular teaching of Jewish rabbis through the centuries, but it didn't square with Scripture. Their question in verse 6 reveals they were expecting an immediate restoration of a national kingdom for the Jews. Jesus responded to their question by telling them not to be focusing on when He would set up His kingdom.

It wasn't their business to worry themselves with the Father's sovereign timetable. They were to stay focused on being His witnesses.

Jesus didn't answer the question to their satisfaction, but He did promise they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses. His response in verse 8 challenged their presuppositions.

They must have been wondering why they would go to Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Their conception of God's grace and mercy had to be expanded because God was going to redeem peoples from every tribe and language and people and nation.

With urgency (9–11)

After refocusing the disciples on God's plan to redeem not just the Jews but peoples around the world, He ascended to the Father in heaven.

As they stood there amazed, two angels told them that this same Jesus was going to come back to earth one day.

Obediently, they returned to Jerusalem to wait for empowerment from the Holy Spirit. Since Jesus was going to return, they began to sense an urgency to be His witnesses, but they waited for strength from on high. They were being commissioned to reach the nations with the gospel.

The Spirit within them would enable them to proclaim the gospel faithfully. We, too, are commissioned to proclaim the good news of Christ to the nations urgently, empowered with strength from on high.

Through prayer (23–26)

While waiting on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the disciples followed the example of Jesus from Luke 6:12–16 by praying for wisdom as they replaced the fallen Judas Iscariot.

After praying and casting lots, they selected Matthias to be an apostle. We, too, need to be fervent in prayer as we equip others and engage in making disciples for Jesus.

For June 9

EMPOWERED Acts 2:5–16, 36–38

There are moments in your life that change everything: graduation, marriage, parenthood. The same is true biblically and spiritually. In Luke 23, Jesus was crucified. In Luke 24, Jesus was resurrected. In Acts 1, Jesus ascended to the Father.

On the 50th day — Pentecost — the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to take the life-changing message of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts is the unfolding story of the people of God filled with the Spirit of God engaging in the mission of God.

Noticed (5–13)

Throughout the Book of Acts, we see God's desire for the gospel to be taken to all nations. Beginning in Jerusalem at Pentecost, Luke emphasized the fact that Jews from every nation under heaven had gathered for the festival.

When these people heard the sound of a violent, rushing wind, they gathered to see what was happening. The visiting Jews from around the world did not realize that the disciples in the upper room had been filled with the Holy Spirit and were now empowered for gospel proclamation.

They were confused because they heard these uneducated Galileans declaring the gospel in their own native languages. They were witnessing something that defied human explanation.

Luke notes the international makeup of this celebration by mentioning specific nations in the Middle East and the Mediterranean world. Having been noticed because of these miraculous events, Peter stood up to explain what was happening.

Engaged (14–16)

The onlookers were so astounded and perplexed about what they were seeing and hearing that some of them accused the disciples of being drunk.

Peter, standing with the Eleven,

refuted the accusation of drunkenness. He then explained that they were experiencing the fulfillment of prophetic Scripture from Joel 2:28–32.

Peter referred to this text first because it was the clearest and most obvious Old Testament prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Then with clarity and urgency, he linked it to what everyone in Jerusalem was observing — namely, the clear, powerful proclamation of Jesus Christ to everyone in his or her native language. Peter engaged the people with the authority of the Word of God. May the Lord lead us to engage the people around us with the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ.

Invited (36–38)

Peter then preached about the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. He preached one verse on His life, one verse on His death, nine verses on His resurrection and four verses on His exaltation.

The resurrection was the central theme of apostolic preaching. The resurrection proves beyond doubt the deity of Jesus Christ and establishes His credentials as Messiah. It is also the guarantee of our own resurrection. The resurrection is the crowning proof that God accepted Jesus' death for sinners.

When many of the people heard this Christ-centered gospel, "they were pierced to the heart" by the Holy Spirit.

Peter commanded them to "repent and be baptized." Repentance is not just being sorry for your sin. Repentance is a Spirit-wrought change of thinking that leads to a change of living. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. It's an outward expression of an inner experience.

All who repent and believe the gospel will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Every repentant sinner will have an intimate relationship with God and be empowered to proclaim the gospel to others.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sunday School Lessons

By **Bryan D. Gill, D.Min.**
Director of the Office of Faith, Learning and Vocation, Samford University



For June 2

**GOD’S PROMISE
OF FRUITFULNESS**
**Genesis 1:26–30; 2:16–17;
3:16–19**

I get jealous of Adam and Eve when I read Genesis 1. I know jealousy is not an admirable trait, but there is a deep longing in my soul to live in peace with God in a garden. Can you imagine what that might’ve looked like? Peace with God and peace with His creation is what I think we all long for.

A call to return to Eden is embedded in our souls like a distant memory of the way things should be. Is peace with God and peace with His creation possible again?

**God commands us to
be fruitful and serve as
stewards of His creation.
(1:26–30)**

The words used here describing God’s charge to Adam and Eve in relation to creation are “dominion,” “rule over” and “subdue.” It’s important to remember that this is before sin entered the world. To rule over something in a sinless world looks very different than in a world tainted by sin. It is only by looking at the reign of Jesus that we can see how a true, sinless ruler would act.

Ruling over the earth does not mean that we can ravage the land and strip it of all its riches for our own enjoyment. That’s what sinful kings would do. To rule over the earth as stewards of God’s creation, we should subdue it with the fruit of the Spirit. To destroy the earth for our own gain is to destroy something that God called good. If God calls something good, we should do our best to care for it in the way He cares for us.

**God calls for obedience
and loyalty. (2:16–17)**

I never schedule time to weed my garden. I simply walk through

the path and admire the beauty of each plant thriving where I planted it. Occasionally, I will see a tender weed trying to stake its claim in my garden and I pull it up. When I look back after each stroll, the weeds are gone.

While we often focus on the one rule Adam and Eve broke, life in Eden was more about fellowship with God than following rules.

**“So God created
man in His own
image ... male
and female He
created them.”**

Genesis 1:27

If the point was to be better rule followers, God would’ve given us more rules. Instead, He gave us more of Himself by sending Jesus to restore our fellowship. Our obedience to God looks a lot like walking with Him in the garden and listening to His voice. The more we walk with Him, the more He will pluck the weeds from our lives.

Living in obedience to God is achieved not by following a set of rules but by actively seeking fellowship with Him and walking with Him daily.

**Breaking God’s
covenant carries serious
consequences. (3:16–19)**

Tilling the ground is much more enjoyable when the soil is rich than when it is dense and rocky.

Planting a garden is fun, but tending it and making sure the bugs, weeds and rodents don’t overtake it is difficult. For Adam and Eve, they saw the sinless and sinful world. While their circumstances changed from inside to outside the garden, God’s plan for them didn’t. They were still expected to care for God’s creation.

The only difference was that it would be much more difficult going forward. God’s plan for us today is still to care for and watch over His creation in the same way a good ruler would. We often forget this because it’s very difficult, and we feel like our efforts are pointless for an overwhelming task. Nevertheless, we must obey God even when it’s difficult.

For June 9

**GOD’S PROMISE
OF PRESERVATION**
Genesis 9:1–13

In higher education, the one thing everyone is talking about is the looming enrollment cliff that will sweep the nation in the years 2025–2027.

Projections indicate that there will be fewer high school graduates in that time frame because of the Great Recession that occurred 2007–2009. Birthrates plummeted during the recession because people were fearful.

There was a lack of job security and food security, and bringing a new child into this world was overwhelming for a lot of people. Fast forward 18 years from the recession, and that is why there will be a drop in high school graduates projected for 2025–2027. People tend to have babies when they feel secure about bringing a new life into the world in which they live.

**God reaffirmed His
covenant with Adam. (1–3)**

Why is an enrollment cliff significant to our lesson today? Just like during the recession — though on a much smaller scale — people were afraid of their future.

Having babies was out of the question when they didn’t know if they would ever make it off the ark. Can you imagine the fear of the unknown that Noah and his family felt as they boarded the ark and lived adrift for months?

When God told Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply, He was reassuring them that their future was safe and in His hands. His words comforted them, and they were given a sense of hope that the terrifying days of living on a floating zoo were over.

Brighter days were ahead! God’s promise for a hopeful future is the same for us today as it was for

Adam and Eve and Noah and his family.

**God affirms the value
of human life. (4–7)**

God addressed a second fear — the fear of life being taken away. God reassured Noah that human life is valuable, and anyone who takes the life of another will answer to Him. God was reminding Noah of His authority over all creation.

This was the second time God told Noah to be fruitful and multiply in Chapter 9. God knew their fears and addressed them with His authority. How many times do we need reminders that God is still in control?

When we begin to doubt our future or when the world seems to be crumbling and bad news is all around, we don’t need a bigger ark to escape from our troubles; we need to be reassured of God’s authority.

**God promises
to preserve humanity
and His creation. (8–13)**

Can you imagine the fear that Noah might have felt the next time a dark cloud rolled in and rain began to fall? The fear and confusion might have been overwhelming had God not promised to never destroy the earth again with water.

But even as great as the fear of the dark clouds might’ve been, how much more joy would he have felt when he saw the beautiful rainbow hanging in the sky as a symbol of God’s promise to provide for His creation?

He invites us to participate in that promise in how we steward the earth. God always makes a way even when it seems like all is lost. God values life and provided a wooden ark to sustain life during the flood, and He provided His only son, Jesus, to hang on a wooden cross to give us life everlasting.

**“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said
to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’”**

Genesis 9:1

WORD search

- ASHER

BENJAMIN

BLESSING

BURIAL

CANAAN

COVENANT

DAN

DESCENDANTS

EGYPT

EMBALMING

EPHRAIM
- GAD

GOSHEN

HEIR

ISRAEL

ISSACHAR

JACOB

JOSEPH

JUDAH

LEGACY

LEVI

MANASSEH
- MOURNING

NAPHTALI

OATH

PHARAOH

PROMISE

RETURN

REUBEN

SHECHEM

SIMEON

SONS

ZEBULUN

H E S S A N A M X R D Z L H K
G S H E C H E M P T P B O L Z
A Y W G R J O S E P H A G E K
D X R I E H P H R Z R O B B S
G L A J N K G V T A S U N C T
H E H M L A C Y H H L T R T N
M G C K B B D P E U P C U L A
P A A R Q B B N N Y A Z T L D
N C S M F O N N G N F F E R N
R Y S L C J I E A R T V R L E
B T I A C M I A K R I N S M C
V R J J A M N L I P H R O K S
L B O J U E M B A L M I N G E
N E N T W D E T S T F J S X D
E E A M H S A L E I H M M G L
B B B R M E N H P P M P Z Z N
U M U E S Q R F R J H E A G C
E H R H Q I W S B T P R O N Y
R T I S B L E S S I N G A N K
K A A A T N A N E V O C T I B
N O L E S I M O R P G L C Z M
N M M O U R N I N G Y Y K Z L

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God?
You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to
bring about the present result — the survival of many people.”

GENESIS 50:19–20



You Gotta’ Hear This!

Finding humor in the everyday moments

Jesus on stage

My husband, Tim, is a pastor, and that makes me a pastor’s wife.

I’m nothing like the great pastors’ wives I’ve known, so I worried a bit about how church folks would receive me in that role. Fortunately, every church we have served has graciously loved and accepted me just as I am, although I’m sure that has not always been easy.

We once took a group of couples from our church to Atlanta to see a production of “The Young Messiah.” It was a popular stage production at the time, and enthusiastic patrons, excited to see the show and hear the music, had packed the theater.

Straight from Scripture

For weeks before the event, Tim and I had been watching a set of videos about the New Testament Gospels. The actors in the videos quoted straight from Scripture.

Bruce Marchiano was the actor who portrayed Jesus, and his character portrayal was exactly what you want Jesus to be. He was handsome, strong and with a beautiful smile and caring eyes. Those videos had made quite an impact on our lives.

About midway through the performance in Atlanta that night, the four-sided jumbotron descended from the ceiling. Tim and I were delighted to see that they were showing the Gospels video we loved on the screens. But suddenly, the jumbotron

raised back into the ceiling and live onstage was none other than Bruce Marchiano himself, quoting the words of Jesus straight from the Bible.

‘Mesmerized’

I gasped. I was mesmerized. I spoke much louder than I planned, and I said, “It’s him! It’s really him. Look Tim, it’s him.”

Tim looked horrified. Then I noticed that many of the people sitting around us were staring at me, and the church friends with us seemed to be hiding their faces. I had no idea what had caused such a reaction.

Tim said, “Debbie, sit down and hush. They think you think it is really Jesus!”

Suddenly, all the looks made sense. I returned to my seat and remained quiet for the rest of the evening. But that group never let me forget the night I saw Jesus.

I’m so thankful for church families who have loved me despite all my mistakes and messes!

MEET THE AUTHOR

Debbie Childers is a speaker, humorist and author based in Moody. She finds great humor in the fact that all through her school years, she got in trouble for talking and now she gets invited to do it!



MEDIA REVIEWS

By Steve Potts and Tracy Riggs Frontz

The Alabama Baptist

Book reviews: Mental illness, miracles and a culture in crisis

Outta My Mind, Into His Heart: 60 Devotions for Those with Mental Illness and Their Advocates

By Karen Allen and Sharon Atwood

Winged Publications, 2023

Two friends share personal and biblical lessons learned from a 20-year journey through the ups and downs of one helping the other deal with mental illness.

They put together a practical, encouraging devotional that will benefit anyone facing the challenges of friendship, mental and physical illness or simply desiring to be a more understanding person.

Karen Allen is the founder of Ewe R Blessed Ministries, and her friend Sharon Atwood has struggled with bipolar disorder and other issues for many years.

When they met, Atwood asked Allen to become her discipleship

teacher. Allen agreed, and that led to a friendship and many lessons learned. Each devotional is short, relevant and personal. They deal with matters such as needing “strength to overcome” (p. 38), pursuing wisdom “one day at a time” (p. 47) and learning how to break “the cycle of defeat” (p. 126).

The women share honest struggles and how to learn from frustration. Mental illness can be draining for the patient as well as for family and friends, and themes of perseverance and patience mark the journey fleshed out in this book. Each devotional has helpful reflection questions, and there are numerous beautiful drawings throughout that can be colored in along with a section of coloring pages at the back. (Potts)

Every Day a Miracle: Trusting the God Who Heals Us Inside and Out

By Matthew Stephen Brown

Thomas Nelson, 2024

Christians don’t doubt that Jesus performed miracles, but whether or not miracles still happen today can be controversial.

Matthew Stephen Brown, pastor and author, believes miracles still occur and unwraps a holistic perspective in his latest book, “Every Day a Miracle: Trusting the God Who Heals Us Inside and Out.”

Through some life issues, God showed Brown he needed to focus on the solution, not the problem.

He heard one word from God — “healer.” Brown was nervous about where he felt God was leading, so he changed his next sermon series and “saw Jesus change [his] church.”

Brown doesn’t simply write about physical healing but how God’s presence is a miracle in itself.

Analyzing spiritual, emotional and mental healing, Brown also explores why God sometimes says yes to prayers for healing and

sometimes no. He uncovers how to wait for a miracle.

“Every Day a Miracle” is a written form of Brown’s healing series, with exploration of the biblical

basis for each topic, a prayer and a QR code that leads to a related video and discussion questions. (Frontz)

The Evangelical Imagination: How Stories, Images and Metaphors Created a Culture in Crisis

By Karen Swallow Prior

Brazos Press, 2023

Karen Swallow Prior knows English literature well, and she is thoroughly familiar with evangelical Christianity as an insider. The intersection of these two worlds forms the heart of her book “The Evangelical Imagination.”

Prior, who previously taught at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, has a doctorate from the State University of New York in Buffalo. She is the author of numerous books and articles. In this new volume, she points out that evangelicals have sometimes allowed superficial metaphors and imagery to influence their thinking in unhealthy ways. She seeks to help

believers use their imaginations in a more robust and biblical manner.

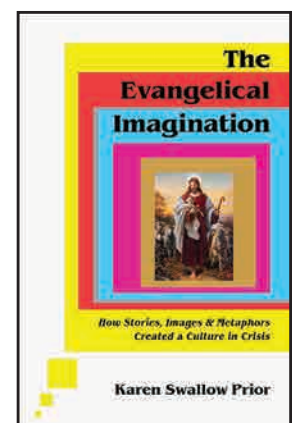
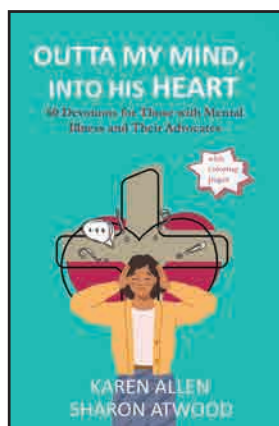
Prior traces the influence of biblical faith in classic English literature and art as well as in modern entertainment. Some of that influence reveals an appreciative view of Christianity, while other instances have pushed against the Christian worldview. Chapters consider how ideas like “awakening,” “conversion,” “testimony” and “sentimentality” permeate literature, Christian thought and contemporary society. She shows that these themes are often warped from their biblical basis and can lead to distortions in how we think.

For example, “born again,” which is rooted in Christ’s description of regeneration in John 3, became a popular theme in politics (p. 56). She also laments the shallowness of some Christian fiction and art (p. 125).

Prior encourages Christians to consider the role of imagination in our thinking rather than simply absorbing the prevailing winds about us. She

warns about how ideas conveyed in a number of popular end-times fiction have influenced some people in their approach to politics (p. 237). This

is a deeply thought-provoking read that merits careful consideration. No one will resonate with every point, but her overall examination of how evangelicals need a more careful and biblically informed imagination is surely on target. (Potts)



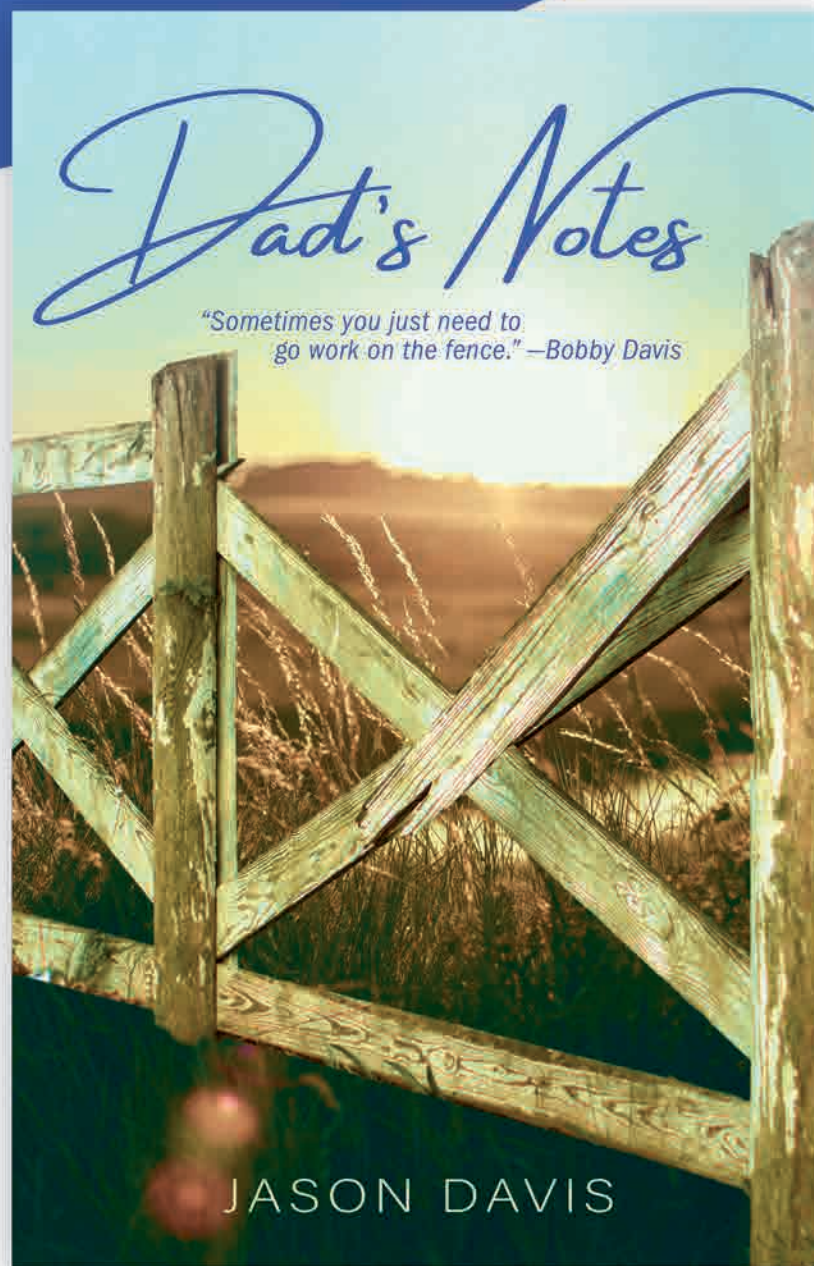
EDITOR'S NOTE

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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Gospel warriors

By Jen Hagen
International Mission Board

Once fierce tribe now spreads good news to others in Philippines

Only a few decades ago, the Bugkalot people were one of the fiercest tribes in the Philippines, known for beheading their enemies. No outsider who contacted the tribe survived, and the people around them lived terrified of them.

Then, in the 1950s, the gospel slowly took root in the tribe after some of the leaders met believers and came to faith. The first believers established churches that grew and multiplied as more and more Bugkalot people chose to follow Christ.

My family was among the missionaries who moved to the Philippines to disciple and train Bugkalot believers. I grew up in a tribal village as the Bugkalot church began to multiply.

When my husband and I joined the International Mission Board and moved to the Philippines in 2005 to work with the Agta, another unreached tribe, God planted the idea in our hearts that the best people to reach the Agta would be other tribal people. We immediately thought of the Bugkalot, and as soon as we could, we hiked back to the village I grew up in to speak with many of the men my Dad disciplined.

Beyond borders

God used that conversation as the catalyst for Bugkalot believers catching a vision to take the gospel beyond their tribal borders.

Over the next several years, we worked together with other partnering missionaries to help the Bugkalot establish their own sending organization. Thus far, they have sent more than 20 believers to serve as missionaries among the Agta.

It's been amazing to watch gos-

pel transformation come full circle. A tribe that used to bring death wherever they went became passionate partners in the gospel.

For a people group that is very family-centered and isolated from the rest of the Philippines, it is a big sacrifice to leave, learn a new language and culture, and be separated from loved ones. God used their sacrifice in powerful ways. More than 20 churches have been planted among the Agta.

As the Bugkalot church grew in their burden for the unreached, God inspired them to reach the lost and neglected in their own community. For example, everyone thought a

village had been completely wiped out by in-fighting within the tribe decades earlier, but church leaders heard a few survivors relocated.

Though the survivors had since passed away, the church sent a delegation to their children and grandchildren. They apologized for the violence and tragedy decades earlier and shared the gospel.

It's been wonderful to see how Bugkalot churches have been strengthened as they focused on the unreached.

Now that work among the Agta is more established, we are working to expand the model of tribal people reaching other tribal people to

other groups. It's been a privilege to be involved in the partnership God has used to build His church in the Philippines.

For so long, the definition of "finishing the task" has been when the local church can stand on its own. But it's not truly finished until they can come alongside and actually be part of reaching other peoples with the gospel, and it's been really exciting to watch the Bugkalot catch that vision.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was written by Jen Hagen and originally published by the International Mission Board.



The Hagen family, IMB missionaries, help disciple and train Bugkalot missionaries to reach other isolated tribes in the Philippines. To reach a Bugkalot village Jen grew up in, the family had to hike in.

IMB Photo

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MAKE DISCIPLES

'The difference'

By Tracy Riggs Frontz
The Alabama Baptist

Christian hard rock frontman chooses to follow God's lead

Though by appearance Seventh Day Slumber seems to be a typical hard rock band, they excel in two very distinct genres: Christian hard rock and praise and worship.

Joseph Rojas, lead singer of Seventh Day Slumber, started his musical journey as a teen who loved heavy metal groups like Metallica. After becoming saved and finding there were Christians playing hard rock, he changed his lyrics but kept his style. Also loving praise and worship, he later added it to his repertoire, though the music industry told him he had to choose.

"I didn't ever want to be put in a box," Rojas said. "God didn't tell me I had to pick one. The industry told me I had to pick one. It's not the industry that elevated me here; God did so. I'm going to go with what God says and not what an industry tells me.

"Whether I'm in Nashville or not, God is the God of the universe, so He's definitely the God of Nashville, so I'm going to do what God tells me I can do."

Rojas was surprised when he approached his record label with the idea of a praise and worship album and they agreed. He got none of the backlash he expected. This led to one of their bestselling albums, "Take Everything."

High cost of living

God has brought Rojas a lot to get to the point of standing up for what he believes. He was a drug addict and a criminal, in and out of jail. At its worst, his cocaine addiction cost him \$400 a day.

He could no longer sell drugs to pay for his personal habit so he started stealing. He lost everything, ending up homeless.



Photo courtesy of Seventh Day Slumber

SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER

However, there was someone who still believed in him — his mother.

"My mother gave her life to Jesus when I was about 18 or so. She would tell me about God and that He could change my life. She would just go and pray for me. She found me on the streets and brought me back home," Rojas said.

Rojas "never felt right" after being back home and decided he would plan to take his life. His mother saved him again — literally.

She walked in during his self-induced overdose and then called the paramedics and prayed.

"God used those paramedics to save my life. While I was in the back of that ambulance, I had an encounter with Jesus. I gave my heart to Jesus. Even though I couldn't really talk or speak, I surrendered my heart to Him," Rojas remembered.

Afterward, he decided to go

to Bible college. There he found Christian rock. It was the perfect mix of the high-energy, heavy guitar-oriented music he loved, but with Christian lyrics.

His songwriting changed from the depression-filled songs he had written before to songs that were God-filled, although his songs weren't the "traditional type of every lyric is Jesus."

Instead, he wrote about "real-life stuff," emphasizing how God had changed him.

But even after finding Christ, Rojas still had struggles, including working through a time of depression that led him to alcohol.

"It got really bad there for a while. I had to be freed from that, even after becoming a Christian. I want to encourage people who are reading this that just because you become a Christian doesn't mean that you're immune to pain or that you don't go through tough times, but it does mean that now you have

a place that you can go for strength.

"That place is in Jesus. That's the difference. There were times I felt like giving up. I had to remember who my God is and I had to remember where He's brought me from. That's what's kept me going.

"People go through difficult times even as a Christian," Rojas said. "It doesn't matter. Pain is universal; we all go through stuff. Sometimes I feel like Christians try to mask it because they feel like they want to portray a holier-than-thou attitude like they don't sin anymore.

"I never did that. I just was as real as I could be, and I wrote that in my music. People related to it. I didn't try to fake a perfect life. Life still hurt, even after I became a Christian."

Hard times

This very relatable theme led to growing a fan base of both Christians and non-Christians.

Once he had a few hard rock albums released, he added his other love — praise and worship — and now releases albums in both genres.

Though Rojas has accomplished a lot — winning a Dove Award, having multiple songs on the Billboard charts, doing big tours — Winter Jam 2024 was a new experience for Seventh Day Slumber.

"They only pick one rock band every year," he said. "After 20 years, it's surreal. We're all so excited to be a part of Winter Jam. We look forward to it.

In 2024, Seventh Day Slumber will release two full-length albums — one hard rock and one praise and worship. To find out more, visit the group's website at seventhday-slumberofficial.com.

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Celebrating alternatives

By Jeff Iorg
Gateway Seminary

Christians should applaud efforts to offer more Christian entertainment

For some believers, Christian entertainment is a source of debate and division.

Productions like “Jesus Revolution,” “Southern Gospel,” “The Chosen” and even “The Nativity,” from a few years ago, receive negative backlash from some Christians.

There are two main complaints: the shows lack theological depth or biblical accuracy; the lifestyles of some of the people involved don’t align with Christian values.

Both complaints have some validity and it’s fair to point out those discrepancies.

Big issues to consider

The larger questions, however, are what you really are expecting from Christian entertainment and how much those issues matter.



IORG

Movies, concerts and other productions are primarily entertainment, not Bible studies or theology lectures.

They are some-

one’s artistic impression about and expression of past events.

They are, of course, shaped by the character, imagination and capacities of the creatives who produce them. Since all people are sinful, everything they create has flaws — but that doesn’t necessarily mean evil — just imperfect. And even then, these productions are significantly more uplifting than most of what is available through other media sources.

Wholesome options

Given the panoramic wasteland



of entertainment options promoted today, it seems we should be celebrating almost any attempt at wholesome alternatives.

Most secular entertainment offers a steady stream of profanity, nudity, immorality and content that contradicts everything Christians stand for.

Artistic expression

While Christian entertainers — including actors, comedians, musicians and other creatives — are far from perfect, their attempts to produce something a family can enjoy together should be celebrated, not denigrated.

Christian entertainment is entertainment.

Keep that in mind as you evaluate and comment on it. The purpose is artistic expression, not replacing sound teaching you receive through church.

Seminary classrooms and church



Photo by Dan Anderson

Jonathan Roumie (above) portrayed Lonnie Frisbee in Jesus Revolution, a movie based on the story of America’s Jesus movement of the 1960s and ’70s. The Jesus Music (left) chronicled the Contemporary Christian music movement. FaithLife TV (below right), along with minno and others, offer believers a place to go to feel safe to share entertainment options with their families.



The Forge (left) arrives in movie theaters in August.

pulpits are places where serious Bible teaching takes place; Regal Cinemas and Prime Video are not. Clarifying those expectations will help you enjoy Christian entertain-



ment and benefit from the positive contribution it makes.

EDITOR’S NOTE — This story was written by Jeff Iorg and originally published by Gateway Seminary where he was president.