

# The Alabama Baptist



UM photo

## Digging deeper

Claudia Hixon (front row, third from right), student ministry associate at Valleydale Church in Birmingham, was part of a team of more than 100 ministry leaders who gathered for Super Summer Alabama 2024.

### ‘More than a youth camp’: UM partners with SBOM for Super Summer Alabama

When she was 15 years old and in the ninth grade, Claudia Hixon attended her first Super Summer Alabama, a week-long leadership and discipleship camp organized by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

The experience changed her life. “Super Summer was where the Lord began to reveal Himself to me in a way that had never happened

before. It was three years later at Super Summer where the Lord called me into full-time ministry,” Hixon said.

Hixon, student ministry associate at Valleydale Church in Birmingham, was part of a team of over 100 Alabama Baptist ministry leaders from across the state who gathered on the University of Mobile campus July 8–12 for Super Summer Alabama 2024.

Their focus is to create a unique experience that challenges and motivates students in grades 8–12 to dig deeper into the Word of God and be the leader God has called them to be.

#### ‘Hearts burning for Christ’

Daniel Atkins, senior pastor at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery and a 2007 alumnus of the University of Mobile, served as

camp pastor for Super Summer Alabama 2024.

“My prayer for students this week is that they would love the Word of God and love the Son of God,” Atkins said.

Along with Josh Meadows, student ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and Super Summer camp director, Atkins planned and prayed (See ‘Super,’ page 12)

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# ‘Alone with God’

## Public prayer garden offers spot for quiet time near Phil Campbell

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Several years ago, Mountain View Baptist Church in Phil Campbell had a special speaker that Terry Pounders wouldn't forget.

Not only that — he felt like he had to do something.

“Terry Long came and spoke about his book, ‘100 Days at the Cross,’” Pounders said. “His stories inspired me.”

Long, associational missionary for Choctaw Baptist Association, visited Mountain View Baptist after their pastor, Sammy Taylor, read Long's story in The Alabama Baptist. Long retold that story at Mountain View — the story of how in 2012, he put up a cross on a busy roadside in Mississippi and simply did one thing: prayed.

When word got around that someone was praying for people at the cross, people pulled off the road all day long to ask for prayer. Long would pray for them, write down their prayer requests and have them nail them to the cross, and then he would ask them if they knew Jesus.

In that 100-day period, more than 1,500 people came to the cross to share their prayer requests, and around 30 put their faith in Christ for the first time.

### Selecting the location

After hearing that story, Pounders and his wife decided to drive to Mississippi to see the cross, then they decided to put one up in their



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist  
Terry Pounders, a member of Mountain View Baptist Church in Phil Campbell, led the effort to create a public prayer garden at the top of Spruce Pine Mountain.

area too. They asked about putting it at Mountain View Baptist, but Taylor suggested they put it at the top of Spruce Pine Mountain where it might get more traffic.

So Pounders started working toward that.

The owner of that property agreed to let him put a cross there, and Pounders decided to make it into a public prayer garden. A group got together and helped him get everything done, from drilling the hole for the cross to designing the sign.

“Anyone who wants to can come and pray,” he said. “We’ve got a bench there for people to sit on and

a box with tracts, books, bracelets and coins that all share the gospel message.”

### Pinning requests to cross

In the several years since Pounders started the garden, he said many people have gone by and spent time with God and pinned their prayer requests to the cross.

“[One time] a windstorm came through that knocked down big trees, but all the requests stayed on the cross — not a one blew off,” Pounders said.

He said he'd like to see others make spaces like this “because people need a place to be alone with God.”

## SHOUT OUT

The TAB Media Group team sends a shout out to web manager James Hammack, who has served during a vital period of our digital platform development.

Hammack filled the role full time for five and a half years and in a contract position for several years prior to that. He now shifts back to a contract role as he enters a new career phase in web and digital product development.

Hammack's humor, eagerness to continue growing and deep compassion for others earned him respect, appreciation and value from fellow team members.

“We always knew someone would scoop James up one day, and we are cheering him on as he takes this next step,” said Jennifer Davis Rash, president and editor-in-chief



HAMMACK

of TAB Media Group.

“We also are extremely grateful for his willingness to stay connected to our media ministry and help manage our digital offerings as we continuously assess where we need to be and how we go about it,” Rash said.

“Thank you, James, for caring for us so well.” (TAB)

## The Alabama Baptist

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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)  
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is published every other week by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.

Website: [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org)  
Email: [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org  
Periodicals postage paid at Baton Rouge, La.

### ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Includes print, digital, app and full web access

Group Rate per subscriber per year — \$16.25

Individual — \$34.95 per year (26 issues)

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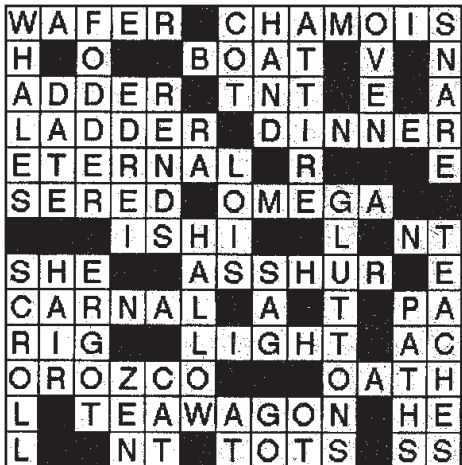
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### TAB Media Group among top in nation

The newspapers, online content and other media offerings produced by TAB Media Group continue to be honored among the top in the nation in the Christian market and in the state's general market. Best in Class, Awards of Excellence and other top awards have been earned by team members every year for nearly 30 years.




The crossword puzzle  
can be found on page 15.





# Rashional Thoughts

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

 [jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)

 @RashionalThts

## Taking others at their word, choosing candor removes loads of stress

**T**he caller thought she hung up when her son didn't answer, but that was not the case. Her next conversation about peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and what she forgot to pick up at the grocery store landed in her son's voicemail for him to find later.

It's a fun story to tell about my mother-in-law, and, believe me, Jason (her son, my husband) has shared the story far and wide, but it also reminds me of how easy it is for any of us to be overheard in this age of "hot mic" technology.

I've had moments of regret through the years for what I said or how I said it, and it's worse when it's something that was overheard instead of shared directly.

Other times, it's more of an embarrassing discovery, such as the time a few years ago when I hit record for a podcast interview before we were ready to do the official interview.

Our pre-interview banter and random comments remained intact at the beginning of the version teased on social media. It was quite embarrassing.

Fortunately, a good friend alerted me to our mistake, and we corrected it quickly. We were grateful only a handful of people had heard what we thought was a private conversation.

### Put to the test

A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to listen in on a discussion when the caller failed to hang up after we said goodbye.

It most likely would have provided good insight about how the person on the other end of the line genuinely felt about a specific situation, which had been the topic of the phone call.

I'll admit it was tempting, but in the end, I hung up the phone before I could hear what was said. After all, what would I do with what I heard anyway?

A week or so after that experience, a friend texted to tell me I had accidentally called her and she hung up as soon as she realized what must have happened.

My accidental "pocket dial" took place a couple of days after I wrote the original version of this editorial.

I thanked her for alerting me and for choosing not to listen in, even though the conversation would not have been super interesting anyway.

"You passed the test," I joked in my reply text as I told her about what I had written and how comical the timing turned out to be.

The reality is live microphones, recording devices and open phone lines are all around us, so it's important to be consistent with what we say publicly versus what we share privately.

While processing difficult news and information can result in a need to "vent" as part of working through frustrations, the key is whether the information we verbalize is fact-based.

### Are we being fair?

After our initial response to a situation, are we able to sort out the various aspects, and, if faced with having to publicly defend what we are saying, are we being fair in our assessment?

More than a decade ago, I made a decision to take people

at their word (while keeping a fact-checking step for news coverage reports, of course).

I try to choose trust over spending unnecessary energy wondering if they are saying they are OK with a situation or decision when they actually aren't — or if they are leaving out important details.

That move has been incredibly freeing and reduces the mental stress that comes with guessing or overthinking.

We can only work with the information we have, so if someone chooses anything other than accurate and thorough details, then that's not on us.

It also gives the other person time to work through the situation however they process best before dealing with it publicly.

In the meantime, we can work toward always choosing a kind form of candor from our end of the conversation.

When others know we are being real with them while also meeting them where they are emotionally, mentally and physically at the moment, it removes loads of stress for all involved.

# Your Voice



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

## My summer internship with TAB Media Group

By **Tucker Massey**  
The Alabama Baptist

For just over the past two months, I have had the privilege to work with The Alabama Baptist. In every way, this experience has allowed me to grow and excel. I know what I have gained here will stick with me as I move closer to graduation and into the workforce.

Admittedly, however, I was concerned after my first day. As I talked with my fiancée and my family that night, I complained about how boring that first day was. They all told me it was probably because it was orientation day, and I shrugged their suggestions off because I just like to complain sometimes.

However, the second day and beyond proved them right and me wrong. I was too quick to complain because as soon as I was given the chance to do the job I have grown to love so much, my entire mindset turned around.

I loved going to the office, getting a story assignment (or being given the room to pursue my own stories) and editing. In the mix of school and student journalism, the journalism portion can oftentimes get drowned out. But with the focused time at TAB, I was able to rediscover how much I loved journalism and writing and editing.



MASSEY

I was blessed to meet and speak with some of the most wonderful people this summer and write about them. Even though I have never quite had social prowess, meeting new people and hearing their stories is inspiring, and it is something I have always enjoyed about this line of work.

Each day, I was given my space to work freely and at my own pace, and I am grateful for that. I was given deadlines and expectations for my work, but I never felt lorded over or belittled because I was just an intern. I was respected and encouraged every day by my boss and coworkers.

Through this experience, I have higher expectations for my work. I have been taught (or reminded) the power of telling a story as opposed to simply saying something happened. My eyes are more trained to see both simple errors as well as larger revisions that bring clarity and impact through their correction.

This internship was not easy by any means. I was pushed into new territories and given the same opportunities as my coworkers. But I knew through it all that the work I was given was for the glory of God and the informing of His people, not for myself or TAB.

I am beyond grateful for this experience, and I will treasure the people I've met and the lessons I've learned for years to come.

Members of **Bethesda Baptist Church in Crawford, Mississippi**, are in the process of updating their history and are trying to locate **former pastor J.D. Davis**.

If you can help, then email [Gypsybgray@icloud.com](mailto:Gypsybgray@icloud.com) or call The Alabama Baptist at 800-803-5201, and we'll pass along the information.

The gift of service/ministry (Romans 12:7) comes from the word *diakonia*, which is kin to the word for "deacon" (*diakonos*). [You do not have to be a Greek scholar to see the similarity of these two words.] This gift refers to various forms of practical service and/or assistance to those in need: mental, emotional, physical, social, spiritual. In other words, it refers to binding up the wounds of the wounded; care for the physical body; material ministration; not passing by the one who has fallen among thieves. Therefore, any forms of attentive service and ministry to others are referred to in this gift.

**Morris Murray Jr.**  
Jasper, Ala.

Many pastors don't stay 10 years because at the 10-year mark you can no longer blame the previous pastor for your problems.

**Brian Croft**  
@PastorCroft on X

## Addressing 'bloody ear' passage

In the days following the July 13 assassination attempt on former president Donald Trump, an application of Scripture made the rounds on social media and drew concern from ministry leaders in the process.

The information focused on Leviticus 8:22-24 and 14:28 and seemed to indicate that Trump having blood on his right ear is significant from a spiritual standpoint.

"The concept of blood on the right ear serves as a visible mark of consecration, signifying that the person is dedicated to God's

service and has been set apart for a specific purpose," stated the post that was being shared without an author or source attached.

Several pastors across the state and nation responded by requesting believers not spread the post around and asked them to remove the post if they had shared it.

They also walked through the scriptural meaning of the passages and pointed out how the meaning was different from what was being insinuated.

To read the concerns outlined, visit [thealabamabaptist.org](http://thealabamabaptist.org) for the full story. (TAB Media Group)

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)



# Letters to the Editor

It's challenging to have words adequate to fit the occasion ... and the historical moments from the past few weeks. We are undoubtedly living in unprecedented times as a nation and in the world.

As a pastor in the local church, I practice preaching through books of the Bible ... as a Bible expositor ... and am amazed at how applicable the Scriptures are to our lives today.

I'm currently preaching through the book of Ruth. One of the pressing tensions within the book is how God governs and rules through what seems like silent sovereignty and providence.

Much like in the book of Esther, God is not at center stage; instead, He is seen moving behind the scenes through the characters of Ruth and Boaz, in whom His kindness and character are displayed for those who have eyes to see.

I believe the same thing is happening in our world today. God is not absent. He is very much present.

We should not mistake the mystery of God's ways for silence. Nor should we mistake what seems like an absence from God for a lack of sovereignty.

Perhaps we got a glimpse of the Lord's presence in the form of rain that fell during the opening ceremony of the Olympic games in Paris.

Two reasons why:

1. Our world is broken, but Christ is our hope.

While we ought to be outraged at the defiance and mockery of the Lord Jesus Christ and the image of (what seemed to be a representation of) the Last Supper ... I bet if you were willing to be honest, just past the feeling of indignation is a feeling of brokenness and sorrow. You cannot believe this is the world we are living in. You have difficulty understanding the distortion of "love" presented by our world today.

Further, know this: God will not be mocked (Gal. 6:7). Those who scheme and practice evil will eventually be judged. On that day, they will cry out for mercy from the very one they despised with contempt.

Yet, my prayer is they would do that sooner rather than later — that they would turn from their sin, rebellion and pride to Christ as their only hope. Such a hope is not a distant

reality but near and present. The same Lord they defile in their pride is the same God who gives grace to the humble. And that reminder was subtly present in the drizzle of rain throughout the ceremony in France.

2. Our world is sin-filled, but God is kind.

In the Sermon on The Mount (Matt. 5:44–45), Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

Before you say I'm attempting to make something out of nothing, let me point you to the reality that God controls the seasons and the weather as a means of mercy as well as judgment. That's part of Jesus' point in Matthew 5. The sun and the rain are intended to signify His grace on the earth for the just and the unjust.

Throughout Scripture, God is seen governing and guiding earthquakes, floods, famines, the scorching sun, rain, hail, snow and frost.

I'm always amazed at God's patience. It is perhaps the most overlooked attribute of the Lord. It's easy to miss and, even worse, to explain wrongly.

The Lord is patient and very present in our world. He is patient because Christ's finished work on the cross has satisfied His wrath toward sinners. And He is present in every waking moment when His wrath should be administered, but instead, in utter mercy, God extends compassion and grace, much like the rain that fell at the opening ceremony.

Oh, that we might have eyes to see the Lord at work and His patience exercised. May it move us to consider our sins, repent and cry out to the Lord for grace.

**Parker Smith**, pastor  
GraceLife Church, Decatur

Regarding the current election season ... my temptation to panic is real and my sporadic anger over today's political realities reveals an uncomfortable inconsistency in my faith.

Yet, even during a divisive season like this, the Spirit continually pulls me back to the reality that God is hardly intimidated by that which

causes me anxiety. With that in mind, we can hold on to two certainties no matter the election outcome:

1. God is sovereign over all governments, no matter who leads them.
2. This world is not our home.

**Adam B. Dooley**, pastor  
Englewood Baptist Church  
Jackson, Tennessee

I am concerned about our nation and where it is headed. It is very important to protect our young children's minds. They should be taught the basics in school and about our Creator at home and in church so they can grow up to be the kind of person our Lord wants them to be.

I grew up in a Christian home and was taught right from wrong. I registered to vote when I turned 18. I feel that God wants us to help vote our elected leaders in office and pray they will make the right decisions to create a godly nation.

I love our country with all my heart. I belong to a Baptist church in Alabama, and I take The Alabama Baptist newspaper with me. I love reading it each week.

I am trying to reach young folks turning 18 and above who have never registered to vote. Every one of every race ... I encourage you to register to vote. Find out where your local voting station is and go vote.

**Eleanor Loveless**  
Reader of The Alabama Baptist

Regarding your article "Pastors address 'gross scriptural misinterpretation' of blood on ear" (see summary of the article on page 4), the pastors stating to be careful about applying the word of God to political leaders and situations was troubling to me.

It is very clear that President Trump is not a Jewish priest, a cleansed leper nor a Jew living under the Mosaic covenant.

However, God speaks to His children through Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, not just to Bible scholars/pastors, but yes, even to us untrained and uneducated believers.

It is quite obvious the literal interpretation of the Leviticus Scripture does not apply in this situation, and some other explanation could have been given.

We all need to be applying the

Word of God to ourselves and our situations, as well as to our political leaders and their situations, as they have the God-given responsibility of governing this country.

These pastors could have addressed this without brow beating my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I am confident, at least for the majority of them, who posted (the information shared on social media) that blasphemy was not their intent. God knows their hearts.

**Randy Harvey**  
Reader of The Alabama Baptist

Thank you for your article regarding blood on the right ear of Donald Trump (see summary of the article on page 4). Some are espousing this false interpretation of Scripture as biblical proof that Donald Trump is the next political Messiah.

**Karin Silverthorn**  
Raleigh, North Carolina

I have a burden to keep churches alive and functioning. Fifty SBC churches a week are closing their doors (according to recent statistics).

According to specific statements of Jesus and Paul, the Church is the body of Christ. Only born again believers are members of His body. The unsaved members of the congregation are not members of His Body. A church will stay alive and function by participating in the ministry of Jesus — that is intercession.

Regardless of the age and size of a church, if the saints know the ministry of intercession, they continue to be a power for the Lord.

A church without intercessors like that of the Lord Jesus will come to repose and to its demise.

At age 93, I continue to promote to pastors the ministry of intercession. At age 30, I became the pastor of a church that was going under like a sinking ship.

The Lord began to honor my burden of the ministry of evangelism and discipleship, and in a few years, we became the fastest-growing church in the state. During my 17-year tenure there, the church averaged 115 baptisms a year.

**Sam Wolfe**  
Huntsville

# 3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of Mamie Moore

Leaders of West Central Baptist Association recently named its building in honor of Tom Stacey (left), retired director of missions. Stacey served the association for 25 years and oversaw the combining of Selma and Cahaba Baptist associations into West Central Association. Lee Tate is the current associational mission strategist. Stacey is shown here with his wife, Teresa, and Mamie Moore (right), West Central Association's ministry assistant. (TAB)

## *Fight to free imprisoned ministry leaders continues*

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has mandated that the government of Nicaragua release 11 pastors and ministry leaders imprisoned on alleged false convictions of money laundering.

Alliance Defending Freedom International, which supported the legal defense of the 11, said the court told the government to release the group immediately and put the individuals in contact with their families and legal counsel.

The group not only has been incarcerated more than six months but also was denied communication with family and counsel.

Although no evidence of illicit activity was produced, the 11 were convicted March 19, stated ADF International. They were sentenced to 12–15 years and fined more than \$80 million per person. (TAB)

## *ERLC's Leatherwood in the news a lot lately*

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission president Brent Leatherwood attended a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 23.

The meeting occurred the day before Netanyahu addressed a joint session of Congress.

Leatherwood's presence at the meeting with Netanyahu also took place while confusion regarding Leatherwood's status at ERLC was the subject of media attention.

Reports swirled the evening of July 22 indicating he had been "removed" from office, but within hours ERLC clarified the initial report — Leatherwood had not been fired. Then board chair Kevin Smith, a pastor in Florida, had acted without proper authority. Smith apologized for his action and resigned from the board. (TAB, BP)

# Persecuted church

## *Congregants in India attacked; future worship services on hold*

HYDERABAD, India — After Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer service in India on June 1 and beat congregants, future gatherings of the house church are on hold.

About 20 villagers stormed the home of Madia Damor, pastor of the house church, where about 50 church members were meeting in Thuvadara village of Madhya Pradesh state, reported Morning Star News.

Damor said the assailants took Bibles from children and beat other members.

One man was pushed from the house and then pelted with stones as a warning to others about attending future prayer services. The extremists also threatened Damor's life if he conducted more prayer services in the village, the pastor said.

Ranapur Taluk police questioned church members after the attack was reported, Damor said.

Extremists previously attacked the congregants in 2012, 2015 and 2019, Damor told Morning Star. Damor's daughter-in-law was wounded so badly in the 2019 attack that the church met virtually for a year.

He said this house church is the only place in the village for Christians to gather and worship.

India is No. 11 on Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian.

## *One evangelist slain, two beaten for sharing Christ in Uganda*

KAMPALA, Uganda — One Christian evangelist was killed and two others beaten for pro-

claiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in Uganda.

Richard Malinga was killed in Akisim A village in Butebo District on June 17, Morning Star News reported. Sent by a Baptist church in Pallisa District on an outreach mission, Malinga had visited homes in Butebo District to tell people about Jesus Christ.

He had received death threats from extremists in several places after a group of Muslims put their faith in Jesus.

In a separate case, Tenywa Herbert and Mukisa Siraji decided to do street preaching in a location where they had ended up after taking a wrong turn May 28 in Iganga town. Siraji told Morning Star that an imam demanded a group beat and flog the men. Both men required hospital treatment.



Commons.wikimedia.org



# Finding joy and purpose

## Stroke survivor spreads hope through ministry despite pain and daily challenges

By Blair Moore  
The Alabama Baptist

Through hope rooted in Christ, Katherine Wolf is on a mission to help others find purpose in their pain through her ministry, Hope Heals.

On April 21, 2008, at the age of 26, Katherine nearly died.

As a young wife and mother of a 6-month-old baby boy, Katherine suffered a catastrophic brain stem stroke. Miraculously, she survived a 16-hour brain surgery, 40 days in the intensive care unit, a year in neurological rehabilitation and 11 operations. She still continues her recovery today.

Katherine relearned to walk, talk and swallow — and she didn't stop there. She and her husband, Jay, started Hope Heals to disrupt the myth that joy can only be found in a pain-free life.

"At Hope Heals, we're creating spaces and resources that help people find purpose in their pain, together," Katherine said.

"We are following the example of Jesus, who proved that suffering doesn't have to be the end of the story for us. In fact, suffering could form us into more whole and healed versions of ourselves."

Katherine and Jay have written several bestselling books, including "Hope Heals: A True Story of Overwhelming Loss and an Over-

coming Love" and "Suffer Strong: How to Survive Anything by Redefining Everything."

Katherine's latest book, "Treasures in the Dark: 90 Reflections on Finding Bright Hope Hidden in the Hurting," released earlier this year, is the guide she wishes she had during her darkest times.

### Making sense of suffering

"When I was in the early days of recovering from my stroke, I was desperate for some kind of guide for making sense of my suffering from a trustworthy Christian voice," she said.

"My literal years of searching turned up very few resources, so I wanted to write the book I needed in the aftermath of the worst day of my life."

This devotional-style book is made up of 90 short, readable reflections that speak very frankly on pain, death, loss and disappointment.

"I'm praying my readers are able to access at least a glimmer of

hope by the time they've finished."

Katherine and Jay also had a vision to offer face-to-face hope for others with disabilities. That's why they dreamed up Hope Heals Camp.

"We quickly realized our family was the exception, not the rule. Our unusually supportive network of friends and family combined with



Photo courtesy of Meshali Mitchell  
Katherine Wolf has experienced deep pain, and she faces challenges every day. Through hope rooted in Christ, she has found purpose in her pain.



Photo courtesy of Ashley Monogue  
Hope Heals Camp was founded in 2017 and offers intergenerational, week-long retreat experiences to entire families affected by disabilities.

an abundance of spiritual resources gave us a shot at 'suffering strong' rather than being completely overwhelmed by our pain," Katherine said.

With that in mind, the Wolfs founded the camp in 2017 to offer intergenerational, week-long retreat experiences to entire families affected by disabilities.

Since then, more than 4,500 people have attended Hope Heals Camp. Four sessions were held this summer at Camp McDowell in Nauvoo, Alabama.

### 'True hospitality'

The Wolfs wanted to foster the spirit of Hope Heals Camp year-round, so they dreamed up Mend, a unique type of coffee shop where people of all abilities can connect.

"True hospitality has to include accessibility, so we've designed the space to be universally functional no matter your mobility style or

sensory considerations," Katherine said. "Think about it — once a person with disabilities ages out of the school system, their social circle often shrinks to their aging parents and paid caregivers," Katherine said.

With God's help, the Wolfs want to change that trajectory by offering dignifying employment and a fully accessible customer experience at Mend, located in Atlanta.

The Wolfs said that being a part of the disability community has shown them what a gift people with disabilities are to the world.

"God has used the story of disability to renew my mind and to redefine what it means to have worth, to surrender and to find peace outside of circumstances," Katherine said. "Our sacred spaces blur the line between who is giving and who is receiving because we all have so much to teach one another."



# Alabama news

## OBITUARIES

### JIMMY JACKSON

Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor Jimmy Jackson died July 19. He was 84.

Jackson served as pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, for 40 years until his retirement in 2018. Before coming to Whitesburg in 1978, he served as pastor of three other churches — Union Baptist, Grand Bay; First Baptist Key West, Florida; and First Baptist Merritt Island, Florida.

A native of Mississippi, Jackson earned his bachelor's degree from Mississippi College in Clinton. He also earned a master's degree and doctorate from New Orleans Seminary.

Through the years, Jackson served in several leadership positions, including president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (2009–2010) and first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention (2006–2007).

"Jimmy Jackson was a statesman among Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists," said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Greg Corbin, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, and previous chair of the SBOM trustees, served under Jackson at Whitesburg earlier in his career.

"Through my tears, I give thanks to the Lord for his impact on my life," Corbin said, noting how he often quotes the various phrases Jackson was known for saying.

Jackson is preceded in death by his son, Randy.

He is survived by his wife, Bobbi; daughter, Rhonda; son, Russell; and seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

### BARBOUR ASSOCIATION

► **Clyde Hancock** retired as pastor of **Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Eufaula**, after more than 11 years of service there and 54 total years in ministry as a bivocational pastor.

Hancock grew up at Corinth Baptist Church, Clayton, where he was saved, licensed, ordained, married and served two separate tenures as pastor. He also served as pastor of Pea Creek Baptist Church (now closed), Louisville; Mount Enon Baptist Church, Midland City; Enterprise Baptist Church, Ashford; Union Baptist Church, Clayton; Sykes Creek Baptist Church, Clio; Western Heights Missionary Baptist Church (now closed), Eufaula; and Salem Baptist Church, Ariton.

Hancock attended Baptist Bible College (now Baptist University of Florida), Graceville, and Sparks State Technical College (now Wallace Community College), Eufaula. The church honored Hancock and his wife, Maxine, during its homecoming service Aug. 4. Special guests included Jackie Palmer, Tommy Knight and Ricky McGilvary. The Hancocks have four children, 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He is available for revivals and to supply preach.

► **Barbour Baptist Association** is hosting a senior adult celebration Aug. 27, 10:30 a.m., at Cross Baptist Church, Eufaula, concluding with lunch. Guest speaker will be retired pastor Greg Aman preaching "The Potter's Sermon." Special music will be provided by Marcia Hudson, member of Corinth Baptist Church, Clayton. The association will provide meat, drinks and rolls. Please bring a covered dish. Don Hatcher is director of missions.

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### BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► The Seasoned Adult Ministry of **First Baptist Church Trussville** with the **University of Alabama at Birmingham** Division of Memory Disorders and Behavioral Neurology is hosting David Geldmacher, director of the UAB Division of Memory Disorders and Behavioral Neurology, Aug. 18, 2 p.m. He will present a seminar about memory loss, brain aging, Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Preregistration is not required but appreciated: fbctrussville.org/memory. Buddy Champion is pastor.

### CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

► **Gary Wright** is the new worship and discipleship pastor of **First Baptist Church Saks, Anniston**. He is also the itinerant speaker and worship leader for Liveglad. Wright's home church is FBC Trussville, where he was saved, called, licensed and ordained. He previously served as pastor of worship, discipleship and students of FBC Glencoe; worship pastor of FBC Fernandina Beach, Florida; lay pastor of The Station Church, Bessemer; pastor of Lifesong Church (house church); and worship and college pastor of Clearbranch Church, Trussville.

Wright holds a bachelor of music degree from Samford University and is pursuing a master's degree in expository preaching from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, have three children. Joey Hanner is pastor.



Photo courtesy of Clyde Hancock

### CAREY ASSOCIATION

► **Bruce Willis** retired June 30 after 16 years as associational director of missions of **Carey Baptist Association**. During his tenure, Willis began 10 ministries that include the Carey Baptist Thrift Store, ramp ministry for the elderly, Christ-centered counseling and a monthly pastors' pancake breakfast. Willis was saved and called into ministry as an adult. He served as interim pastor of West End Church, Alexander City; Calvary Baptist Church, Dadeville; Zion Baptist Church, Woodland; River Road Baptist Church and Comer Memorial Baptist Church, both in Alexander City; Coaling Baptist Church; First Baptist Church Ashland; and Calvary Baptist Church, Wetumpka.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Willis

Willis holds an associate's degree from Central Alabama Community College, Alexander City; a bachelor of arts degree from Samford University; a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary and additional study in counseling from Luther Rice College and Seminary, Lithonia, Georgia. Willis is available for supply preaching and counseling. He can be reached at 256-276-1213. Willis and his wife of 50 years, Kathy, have three children and seven grandchildren. The association honored the Willises with a celebration event June 30.

► **Richard "Richie" Farrow** is the new associational missionary for **Carey Baptist Association**. He previously served as bivocational pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church, Wadley; High Pine Baptist Church, Roanoke; and Olive Branch Baptist Church, Ashland. Farrow, who taught high school agriculture for 36 years, has led missions trips to South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Ecuador. He holds bachelor and master degrees in agriculture education as well as a master's degree in educational administration from Auburn University. He also has a master's degree in pastoral studies from Covington Theological Seminary, Ringgold, Georgia. Farrow's wife, Donna, is the ministry assistant/treasurer for Carey Association. They have three children and three grandchildren.



FARROW

### CLARKE ASSOCIATION

► **Jean Ball** has retired after 70 years as church pianist for **Peniel Baptist Church, Jackson**. She began playing the piano in church when she was 18 years old. Ball was honored with a special service July 7 followed by a celebration luncheon. Fred Odom is pastor.



BALL



WRIGHT



## NEWS

## COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **David Crowe** is the new pastor of **Bon Air Baptist Church, Childersburg**. He previously served six years as associational mission strategist for Central Baptist Association. He also served as pastor of First Baptist Church Brecon, Talladega, and Hughes Memorial Baptist Church, Pinson. He holds a bachelor's degree from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, and two master's degrees, one from New Orleans Seminary and another from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia. Crowe and his wife, Miriam, have two children and one grandchild.



Photo courtesy of David Crowe

## ELMORE ASSOCIATION

► **Kenneth Garner** is the new pastor of **Mitts Chapel Baptist Church, Deatsville**. He was licensed by Rigby Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, where he served a stint as youth minister, and was ordained by Wares Ferry Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, where he previously served as pastor. Garner went on to serve several churches in the area and spent a year serving in orphan ministry in Ukraine. Garner and his wife, Rachel, have two daughters.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth Garner

► **Johnnie Wood** is the new pastor of **New Hope Baptist Church, Deatsville**. He previously served as music leader and deacon at Antioch Baptist Church and New Home Baptist Church, both in Titus. He started a ministry called Turkey Talker, birthed out of his love for turkey hunting and the gospel, and through this ministry began supply preaching for several area churches. After retiring from 35 years working with a local steel company, Wood was ordained by First Baptist Church Montgomery. He has two children and five grandchildren.



WOOD

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

► Churches of the **Lookout Mountain Baptist Association**, through Water of Life outreach, participated in the World's Longest Yard Sale Aug. 1-3. The goal of Water of Life is to provide bottles of ice water, Christian tracts and prayer to the hundreds of people who visit one of the three mission locations along the Alabama portion of the 690-mile yard sale route, which begins in Gadsden and follows Lookout Mountain Parkway. Lloyd Borden is the associational missionary.

## MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Fernando Vera** is a new staff member at **First Baptist Church Albertville**. He will serve as the Hispanic pastor/church planter. Vera and his wife, Maria, have two children. Chris Johnson is pastor.

## MOBILE ASSOCIATION

► The fourth annual "Singing at the Steeple" is set for Sept. 12 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., 251 St. Francis St., Mobile, featuring the Hill Brothers quartet from **Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile**, and the Amazing Greys choir from **First Baptist Church Tillman's Corner, Mobile**. For information about costs as well as to make reservations, call 251-660-2425 by Sept. 9. Free parking is available.

## SALEM-TROY ASSOCIATION

► **Bethel Baptist Church, Banks**, celebrated its bicentennial anniversary and homecoming July 14. Special music was provided by Molly Jordan and Jerry Harrell. Jane Hughes (left), a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a



Photo courtesy of Ellen Dewberry

plaque to church members Charlotte (center) and Bryant Brown (right), followed by a presentation from Anna Jordan, constituent services policy correspondent from Gov. Kay Ivey's office. The guest speaker was Harry Meadows, interim pastor.

## SAND MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

► **New Home Baptist Church, Pisgah**, will honor first responders Aug. 18, 10:30 a.m. Phillip Dendy will speak. David Smith is pastor.

## SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► Members of **Pleasant Site Baptist Church, Sterrett**, recently celebrated pastor Eric Brasher and his wife, Jackie, for their 20 years of service to the church. Family, friends and church mem-

bers gathered June 23 for a special service and anniversary luncheon honoring the couple.



Photo courtesy of Judy Churchwell

## WINSTON COUNTY ASSOCIATION

► **Larry Dover** is the new pastor of **New Hope Baptist Church, Haleyville**, where he has been serving as interim. Previously he served for 25 years as the director of missions for Franklin County Baptist Association, Russellville, and before then as pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church and Sunny Home Baptist Church, both in Haleyville. He also served as pastor of several other churches in north Alabama. Dover holds a bachelor's



Photo courtesy of Larry Dover

degree in education from Florence State University (now University of North Alabama) and a master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Janice, have two children, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

► **Mike Tidwell** has retired from the pastorate after 12 years as pastor of **Bethel Baptist Church No. 1, Arley**. He previously served as pastor of Fairview Baptist Church No. 2 and interim pastor of Sardis Baptist Church No. 2, both in Ad-dison. He served eight years in the U.S. Army reserves and serves as a chaplain for the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children and three grandchildren.



Photo courtesy of Mike Tidwell

## FBC Demopolis student earns special honor

**Marleigh Williams**, a student from First Baptist Church Demopolis, capped off her fifth year of Super Summer Alabama by earning college credit and a scholarship to the University of Mobile.

The daughter of FBC Demopolis senior pastor Carl Williams plans to enroll at UM this fall, where she will major in mathematics and sing in the university's worship choir.

A partnership between UM and the Ala-



UM photo

bama Baptist State Board of Missions provides a \$2,000 visit scholarship and three hours of college credit to students who attend SBOM's Super Summer Alabama for at least four years and enroll at UM.

Marleigh was presented the scholarship by Steve Bowersox, director of special projects and ministry relations in the UM office for advancement.

It's not too late to enroll for fall semester at the University of Mobile. (UM)



# Hunter Street hosts prison ministry volunteers

By Michael J. Brooks

The Alabama Baptist

**B**uddy Gray, pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover, says he began his preaching ministry in jail.

"I grew up in Prattville and preached at the Autauga County Jail as a 16-year-old," Gray told prison ministry volunteers at a June 25 training event.

"What you volunteers do is making a difference in lives that we might not fully see until eternity. We thank you for caring for those in jails and prisons."

Mitch Haubert led the training. He is chaplain of the Bibb Correctional Facility in Brent, pastor of Brent Presbyterian Church and executive director of Jump Start Alabama.

Haubert called the Bibb Correctional Facility prison ministry "noncompetitive."

"We work and serve together, and our reflex is to say 'yes' when new groups ask about helping," he said.

## 'Fortunate'

"We have 192 volunteers, and in the first five months of 2024, we registered some 25,000 contact hours that we define as a volunteer spending one hour with an inmate. We're fortunate to have so much help in this work."

Volunteers are required to attend training each year, reviewing basic rules about conducting oneself as a prison guest.

Hunter Street member H.R. "Rick" Hudson, prison ministry director for Hunter



Photo by Michael J. Brooks/The Alabama Baptist  
Buddy Gray (right), pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover, and Rick Hudson (left), prison ministry director for the church, serve as hosts during the prison ministry volunteer training.

Street, served as one of the hosts for the day. Hudson oversees the congregation's work at Bibb, the Federal Correctional Institution in Talladega, the William E. Donaldson Correctional Facility in Bessemer and the Hoover City Jail.

Hudson, a Jasper native, explained that he became interested in prison ministry while working for the American Cast Iron Pipe Company in Chicago.

"We had the chaplain for the Cook County Jail (in Chicago) speak at our church one Sunday, and my wife and I invited him home with us for lunch," Hudson said. "His story was amazing, and his testimony was inspiring as a former inmate who now ministered to inmates."

"He invited me to come to a service at the jail, and I enlisted 10 people from our church to go. God touched my heart for this work."

Hudson, now retired, returned to Birmingham

in 1995. He joined Hunter Street and began his current ministry shortly thereafter at the Jimmie Hale Mission in Birmingham.

## Changing hearts

"I was involved in this work for seven years, and it continues at our church," he said. "Our members conduct worship and provide food for the residents."

Hudson said his church now conducts worship services in Brent two Sunday afternoons each month from

noon until 2 p.m. He's seen how God changes the hearts of lay people when they're invited to share their faith.

"Some who've never talked about their faith get the opportunity, and it helps them become better witnesses," Hudson said.

## Testimony to grace

"Some volunteers share their own backgrounds as a testimony to God's grace. Some of their stories are remarkably similar to inmates' stories. These are intimate parts of their lives that they'd perhaps not share with others, but God uses this to encourage inmates."

Hudson said his congregation sponsors a project each Christmas to deliver 2,000 bags of cookies to Bibb and 1,500 bags to Donaldson.

"We give bags of five home-baked cookies to everyone — inmates and employees alike," he said. "The bags are welcomed gifts, and we include a word of witness in each one."

Hudson admitted prison ministry is not for everyone.

He spoke of taking a relative to death row at a facility years ago where Hudson had occasion to visit with four inmates. The relative regretted his decision that day. Hudson was unsure whether to call it discomfort or oppression, but the relative wanted to leave as quickly as possible.

## God-given passion

"God gives passion for whatever ministry He's chosen for us," Hudson said. "We have passion or we don't for prison ministry."

"Some went with us to prison worship services and then decided it wasn't for them. That's fine. Other ministries abound. We all must determine our gifts and use them for the Lord."

Hunter Street's website is [hunterstreet.org](http://hunterstreet.org). Haubert can be reached at Mitchell.haubert@doc.alabama.gov or by calling 205-926-5252, ext. 300.

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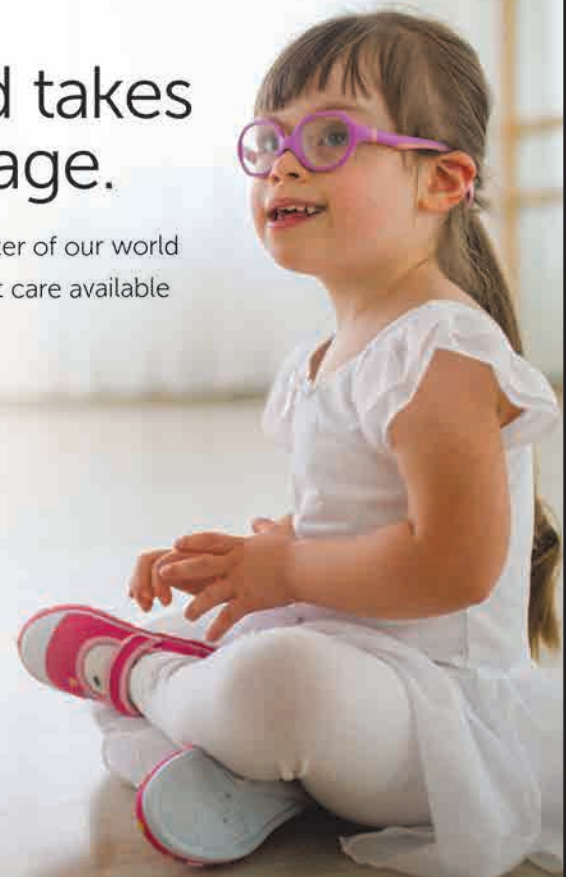


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# USED BY THE LORD

**Former addict turned singer-songwriter, worship leader shares how God radically changed his life**

**By Tracy Riggs Frontz**  
The Alabama Baptist

**S**tephen McWhirter underwent a radical conversion to Christ, and now the former meth addict is reaching audiences as a singer-songwriter and worship leader.

McWhirter's "Come, Jesus, Come" was nominated for the 2024 K-LOVE Fan Awards Breakout Single and Song of the Year.

Though McWhirter considered it an honor to receive the nominations and the invitation to be part of the Emerging Artists Showcase and Awards show, what the song has done for God's Kingdom is much more important to him.

## 'Longing for Jesus'

"Honestly, the thing about it is, it's four years old. It's not like a brand new song. We put it on Tik Tok and Facebook and Instagram, and it went viral. But it was people who were longing for Jesus to return. It didn't feel

like just a cool song.

"We started going live ... and I would worship Jesus," McWhirter continued. "It wouldn't be like, 'I'm an artist, go check out my music.' I would just worship Jesus, share the gospel and share my testimony [about] going from a meth addict to a worship leader."

He always asked if anyone wanted to give their lives to Jesus and would pray on the livestream with them.

McWhirter had moderators who connected viewers with resources on his website and helped them find churches in their area.

To date, some 39,000 people have told McWhirter they accepted Christ during livestreams.

Brought up as a preacher's son, McWhirter saw his father physically abuse his mother. He decided early on that if God was real, He wasn't good. Both McWhirter's earthly father and heavenly Father became villains in his story, and he

hated Jesus and Christians. If he heard someone mention the name of Jesus, he would either "cuss you out or knock you out," McWhirter admitted.

## Answered prayers

As a young teenager, McWhirter used and sold all types of illegal drugs. By the time he was 17, he was a crystal meth addict, using every day for more than six years.

Many were praying for him, and one day those prayers came to fruition.

Someone gave him the book "The Case for Christ" by Lee Strobel. It was a miracle he accepted the book and another that he read it, McWhirter said.

"Fast forward — it's three in the morning, there are drugs on the side table next to me. No one's playing the harp softly in the corner. It seems like the most impossible place to get saved.

"And I just know He's in the room; I just know He's there. I have these thoughts that I know are not my thoughts. I'm like, 'God, I want to give You all of my life. I want to put [away] all this addiction, all this darkness, all this anger, depression I've known for so long. But there is no way I can do it. I can't imagine being someone else.'"

Then McWhirter felt the Holy Spirit say, "Stephen, you won't do it. I'll do it."

He decided to believe Him, just "like I believe I'm breathing air right now," McWhirter said.

He fell to his knees and gave his life to Jesus.

Quitting everything immediately and becoming a new person was not easy — his



Photo by Tracy Riggs Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

Singer-songwriter and worship leader Stephen McWhirter performs at the 2024 K-LOVE Fan Awards. He was nominated for the Breakout Single and Song of the Year, "Come, Jesus, Come."

friends left him and some even said his conversion wasn't real.

About a year later, someone suggested he should try out for a job as a worship leader. He had been in heavy metal bands throughout his teens but couldn't imagine being chosen.

## Open door

"What doesn't look good on a job resume is 'ex-meth addict,'" McWhirter joked, "like they're going to want to hire me."

"But never underestimate how badly a pastor needs a worship leader," he laughed.

McWhirter is grateful the door opened for him to sing about Christ. As a musician, his main message is, "Worshiping Jesus + Leading

Others to Him." McWhirter was very intentional in both word choice and order.

"Most people go, 'This is just another guy talking about Jesus.' But when I worship Him, typically the Lord uses that to draw people in. Then I share my testimony, and we see a lot of people come to Jesus."

"He uses it and draws people, and then I'm able to share the gospel and see people come to Christ."

"We come back to what's important: What is it that matters here and now toward His return? ... How many people are actually being drawn to Jesus through what you do? That's been probably the most encouraging part of this whole journey."

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# Super Summer Alabama changes lives ‘for eternity’

(continued from page 1)  
for the 225 students from 32 churches across the state — including one church from Louisiana — converging on the campus.

“Daniel and I have been praying for months now that the students’ hearts would burn for Christ, that they would love Jesus and His Word in a way they never have before,” Meadows said.

Students took classes on topics ranging from apologetics to discipleship. They learned how Christians should lead in the marketplace and in faith-based ministries. They studied the doctrine of the church, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of salvation.

Morning and evening worship was led by college students in UM’s Ignite Worship ensemble, and campers’ days included Bible studies, prayer time

and fun events like spikeball tournaments. They lived in college residence halls and experienced a taste of college life on the Christian campus.

## Deepening faith

Super Summer Alabama is “more than a summer youth camp — it is a highly academic, intense biblical studies course,” said Steve Bowersox, director of special projects and ministry relations in UM’s office of advancement.

Other states have Super Summer camps, but none are like Alabama’s, said Denis Tanner, associate pastor for students at Shades Crest Baptist Church in Hoover.

Students return year after year to Super Summer, progressing in their studies, deepening their faith and building a network of like-minded friends across the state who share the desire to



UM photo  
Super Summer Alabama 2024 took place on the campus of the University of Mobile on July 8–12.

grow in their walk with the Lord while learning to lead and disciple others.

Student ministry leaders, pastors and college students who serve as mentors and teachers throughout the week also return year after year, developing their own network of colleagues throughout the state who can encourage and support one another.

“The reason I love Super Summer is I have seen kids’ and adults’ lives changed not just for a week or two but, it seems like, for eternity,” Tanner said.

## Answering the call

Coleman Windle, student and young adult pastor at First Baptist Hazel Green, said he has seen students

from all over the state give their lives to Christ at Super Summer.

Many have answered the call to ministry through the program, and many return to serve in leadership roles, continuing the legacy of leadership and spiritual growth, he said.

Hixon agreed. When she made her decision at Super Summer to answer the call to ministry, “I was able to talk with ministers and pastors at Super Summer about next steps and how to honor God in that.

“Almost 10 years later, I have the privilege and honor to serve at Valleydale Church, and each summer, we bring students to Super Summer,” she said. “It has been such a blessing to watch the Lord work in the lives of students the same way He began such a work in my life many years ago.” (University of Mobile)

## Faith Moments

*Remedy for roller coaster of life — embracing our identity as children of God*

Perhaps your life is like mine, with many ups and downs.

In my own Christian walk, at times I feel discouraged, and other times I am on top of the world.

If we are honest, sometimes the turmoil and emotions of life are like a rollercoaster.

What is the remedy for these constantly changing feelings?

The gospel.  
Because of Christ, you and I are adopted into God’s family; we are children of God.

This amazing truth does the following:

**1. Curtails the yo-yo between pride and despair (Rom. 6:17–18).**

We are first and foremost chil-

dren of God. This truth brings freedom and stability.

**2. Puts our “failures” in perspective (2 Cor. 4:7).**

We have this treasure in jars of clay so that the power is seen from God, not us.

We cannot take credit for victories or despair over our flops. Instead, our life is about Him.

**3. Focuses on God’s great love for us (1 John 3:1–2).**

In love, He called us as His children. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more. Wow!

**4. Gives us a better view of God (Heb. 4:15–16).**

God is not a harsh taskmaster waiting to crush or punish us.

Instead, He is a loving Father

who understands our temptations and frailty and wants all of us to run to Him and receive His peace.

**5. Gives us a better view of ourselves (Rom. 12:3).**

All God’s children are equal. We have different roles in the body, but no one is “better” than the other. Each role is vital to the body of Christ.

**6. Assures us He is working for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).**

There will be good, bad and ugly in life. But God is working in and through us for good.

**7. Grants confidence that we will persevere until the end (Phil. 1:6).**

Let this thought sink in.

We are His children, and He is the one who will ensure that all of His children finish our race for His glory.

We have a human responsibility, but the guarantee is that we will persevere until the end.

## Our vital anchor

Embracing these truths helps us navigate the highs and lows of our lives, anchoring us in God’s unchanging love and purpose.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Rob Jackson serves among a team of state missionaries who seek to resource churches, pastors and staff for whatever need they face. Reach out at 800-264-1225.*

**By Rob Jackson**  
Director of evangelism and church revitalization, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions





# Lass WORDS

**BY KEN LASS**  
The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

## Let snoring dogs lie

I've been keeping my daughter's dog while she and her family are off on vacation.

He is a cute little Boston terrier with that classic black-and-white color pattern.

He has black ears and eyes, the white stripe running down the center of his forehead through his snout and a black body with white paws.

And he is old. Really old.

Age has taken its toll on this loyal family member.

He can't see out of one eye, can barely hear and has trouble walking due to arthritis.

He struggles to chew his food because his teeth are wearing out.

Worst of all, he snores.

I mean he really snores — like a drunken sailor on a park bench. All night and most of the day, he rattles the window shutters and vibrates the dishes with his buzz-saw breathing.

### Caring with compassion

I lie in bed listening to the roar and wonder how such a little animal can emit such a thunderous noise.

When I've had enough, I get up and approach him, thinking maybe I can jostle him, wake him up or turn him over in such a way so as to stop the snoring.

Do they make a CPAP machine for dogs? But just as I get ready to give him a gentle poke, I can't help but notice he looks so peaceful and content when he is zonked out.

It's probably the only time, I think, when he is not aching and feeling the afflictions of his many years.

I can't bring myself to disturb him.

Maybe deep down inside I feel as though one day that will be me — elderly and infirm, longing just to sleep for relief from pain and the erosion of my body.

### Respect your elders

Psalm 71:9 says, "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent."

We really need to love and respect the oldest among us.

They have run a long and hard race and are just trying to cross the finish line the best they can.

It's easy to become impatient and frustrated with them, but we're all headed there, and we're going to need all the grace we can get.

I've decided to just put up with the dog's snoring.

Besides, my daughter will be back in a few days to take him back in — just as, one day, she may have to do the same for me.

## MEET THE AUTHOR

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

# Someone You Should Know

**DONNA HOWARD**

By Leigh Pritchett  
The Alabama Baptist

Teaching people and telling about Jesus Christ are two missions of Donna Howard, 73, of LaFayette. For two years, she was a physical education teacher and then an English teacher for 31 years. Even now, she sometimes leads special unit studies in schools. Each week at her church, she teaches lessons to adults, young adults and children. For 30 years, she also volunteered in her church's Awana program.

**Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.**

A: I have been a pastor's wife for 52 years. I feel that I still continue to focus my greatest ministry efforts on caring for the needs of the members of our congregation.

**Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?**

A: My husband (now a retired pastor) is the most influential person in my faith life. Serving alongside him in his ministry for 52 years has been the greatest blessing of my life. Growing up, I would have never dreamed that this was what God had planned for me. I am so thankful for the life that we have shared serving the Lord.

**Q: Tell about a "turning point" in your life and how God was involved.**

A: When I graduated from the

### MINISTRY:

I currently teach the college and career Sunday School class and the adult discipleship class. I also give a children's lesson right before the sermon in the Sunday morning worship service.



**CHURCH NAME:** Lafayette Heights Baptist Church, LaFayette, in East Liberty Baptist Association

**LIFE VERSE:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

University of Alabama in 1972, I had a hard time finding a job as an English teacher. I received a call from the principal of LaFayette High School. He asked me if I would be interested in teaching physical education, which was my minor. I immediately said, "Yes." I moved to LaFayette and met Paul Howard in September. We were married on Dec. 16, 1972. We have no doubt that God was involved in this from the very beginning.

**Q: What has God been teaching you lately?**

A: The biggest thing that God has been teaching me lately is that I am not God. I have a tendency (as do so many mothers and women) to want to fix every unpleasant situation. It has taken me a long, long time to realize that I cannot fix everything and every situation. I have even come to realize that the very things that I want so badly to fix to avoid heartache or trouble are the very things that God will often use to work in a person's life.

**DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS  
Someone You  
Should Know?**

Send their name, a contact number and the reason you think they should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

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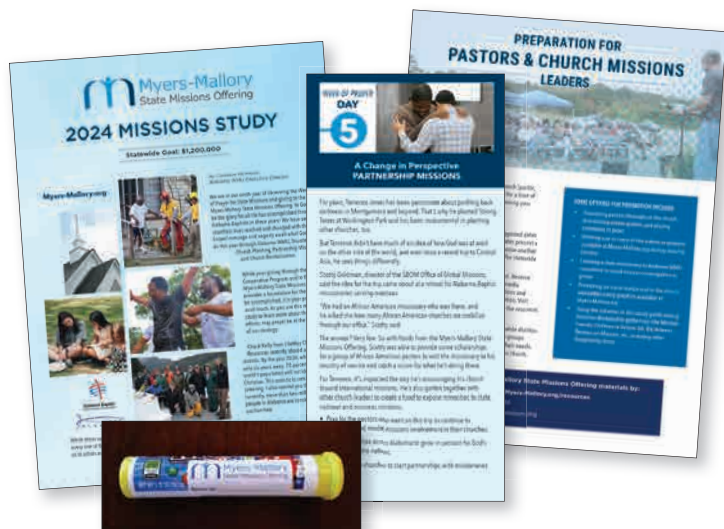
# Week of Prayer for State Missions is one month away!

Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering planning guides and sample packets have been mailed to every Alabama Baptist church.

The packets include a sample prayer guide, poster, offering envelope and missions study; information about the offering itself, including how your 2023 gifts continue to make a difference in a variety of

ways; a planning guide with suggestions about how best to use the materials; and an order form to request free materials for the offering and the Week of Prayer for State Missions (which is Sept. 8-15, so mark your calendar!). Remember also to visit Myers-Mallory.org to access downloadable print and video resources, along with clip art and social media icons.

**Myers-Mallory**  
State Missions Offering



## Get Acquainted Day

Are you new to Alabama or new to your church staff? Or would you just like to learn more about ways to partner together for ministry and missions?

Get Acquainted Day is the perfect opportunity to find out how the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions can partner with you to fulfill the Great Commission. Hear about all the

ministries, meet your state missionaries and tour the SBOM facility in Prattville. You'll also receive a report with information about the people who live within a five-mile radius of your church.

Get Acquainted Day will be Sept. 5, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with lunch provided.

To register, visit [alsbom.org/gad](http://alsbom.org/gad).

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad below for \$1 per word.

For more information, call 205-870-4720, ext. 200, or email [ads@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:ads@thealabamabaptist.org). To place an online classified ad for \$9.99/month, visit [thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds](http://thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds).

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### SENIOR PASTOR

Hueytown Baptist Church has an opening for senior pastor. Contact us for additional information at [office@hueytownbaptist.com](mailto:office@hueytownbaptist.com).

#### PASTOR

Tates Chapel Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Tates Chapel Baptist Church, P.O. Box 38, Centre, AL 35960. Email: [tateschapeloffice@gmail.com](mailto:tateschapeloffice@gmail.com).

#### PASTOR

Lakeview Baptist Church, Montgomery, is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: [amanda@lakeviewbaptist.cc](mailto:amanda@lakeviewbaptist.cc) or 9225 Atlanta Hwy, Montgomery, AL 36117.

#### PASTOR

Shadow Lawn Baptist Church, Eight Mile, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor and spiritual leader for our church. Education requirements: graduate of a seminary college or Bible college. Interested individuals with some experience in pastoral ministry and knowledge and agreement with the Southern Baptist Faith & Message are invited to apply. Please submit all cover letters, resumé, sermon links and letters of recommendation to: [T\\_hagler@bellsouth.net](mailto:T_hagler@bellsouth.net). For additional information, contact Judy Robertson at 251-422-8716.

#### PASTOR

Pinckard Baptist Church, Pinckard, Alabama, seeking full-time or bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: [mark.b.ivey@gmail.com](mailto:mark.b.ivey@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Northside Baptist Church, Selma, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please submit resumé to: [Northsidebaptist2021@gmail.com](mailto:Northsidebaptist2021@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Fairview Baptist in Samson, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please email resumé to: [fairviewbaptist.samson.al@outlook.com](mailto:fairviewbaptist.samson.al@outlook.com) or via USPS to: 3159 N State Highway 87, Samson, AL 36477.

#### MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Church in Selma, Alabama, is seeking a minister of music to be responsible to the church body and for working alongside the pastor, assisting the church in the preparation, conveyance and evaluation of a comprehensive music ministry. Contact Dr. Tim Mathis: [tmathis@fbcselma.org](mailto:tmathis@fbcselma.org).

### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Pinckard Baptist Church is hiring for a bivocational music minister. If interested, please contact our committee chair for this search, Joni Smith, at [jonismith@yahoo.com](mailto:jonismith@yahoo.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 resumé to: [tiedeinal@aol.com](mailto:tiedeinal@aol.com).

### PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

South Luverne Baptist Church, Luverne, AL 36049. [southlunernebc.com](http://southlunernebc.com). Provides overall direction and vision of the worship and music program and provides spiritual leadership to the music staff and volunteers. Submit resume to: [jnorsworthy1141@gmail.com](mailto:jnorsworthy1141@gmail.com). Call 334-335-6885 for detailed job description.

### 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 resumé to: [newmarketbaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:newmarketbaptistchurch@gmail.com).

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Thorington Road Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, is seeking a part-time/full-time children's ministry director. We are a growing church in east Montgomery that needs someone to lead our kids on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Please send resumé to: [michael@trbaptist.org](mailto:michael@trbaptist.org).

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Mobile Baptist Association is seeking a full-time director of missions. To view the full job description: <https://bit.ly/4cGsOqE>. Please send resumé before Aug. 30 to: [DOMsearchMACK@MobileBaptists.org](mailto:DOMsearchMACK@MobileBaptists.org).

#### CHURCH SECRETARY

Pathway Baptist Church in Dothan, Alabama, is seeking a church secretary. Hours will be 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday-Thursday. Compensation will

be based on experience and expertise. Person must be an active Christian of a local church. Must also have skills at using QuickBooks and Microsoft Office. Please send resumé to: Pastor, Pathway Baptist Church, 3551 Flowers Chapel Rd., Dothan, AL 36305.

### SIGNS

#### CHURCH SIGN

Signs are your first impression. What kind of impression is your church sign making? Call us to replace/update yours with either digital or traditional. Statewide since 1994. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955. [www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com)

### BUSINESS

#### CLEAN COMEDY

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### TRAVEL/VACATION

### NORTH CAROLINA VACATION HOME

Beautiful home on the crystal clear Hiwassee River in historic Hayesville, North Carolina. Vacation inquiries, call Tina 334-296-3930.

### AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS

Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Efficiencies, 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms and 3 bedrooms are available. Lowest prices on the beach for over 30 years. Call Don: 251-752-2366 or [www.gulfshorescondos.com](http://www.gulfshorescondos.com).

### LOG CABIN RENTAL

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to [www.paradisevista.net](http://www.paradisevista.net) to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

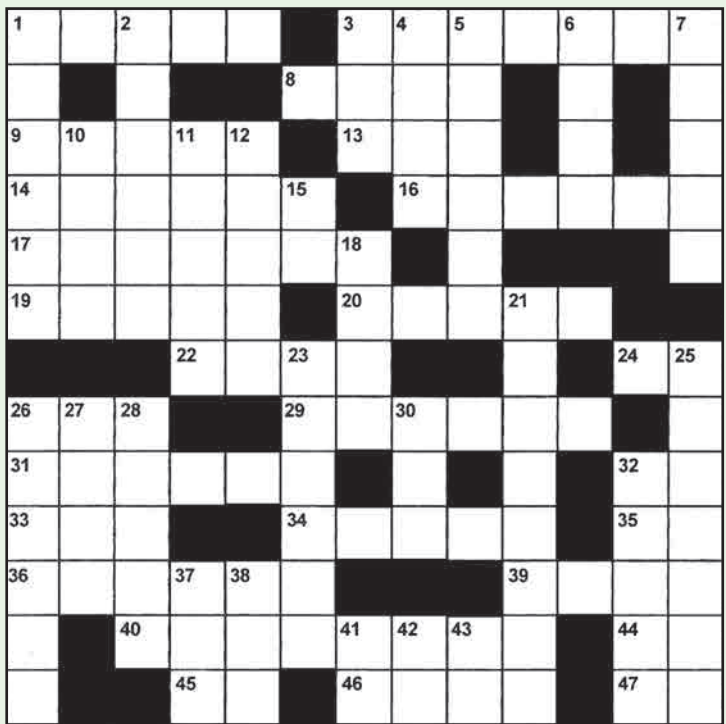


# CHRISTIAN Crossword



**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
*sponsored by the State Board of Missions*

**ACROSS**  
1. A cake. (Ex. 16:31)  
3. Mountain sheep. (Deut. 14:5)  
8. A skiff.  
9. A snake. (Ps. 140:3)  
13. Trinitrotoluene. (abbr.)  
14. Portable steps.  
16. An evening meal.  
17. Perpetual. (Rom. 1:20)  
19. Son of Zebulun. (Gen. 46:14)  
20. Greek word signifying "the last." (Rev. 1:8)  
22. Son of Appaim. (1 Chron. 2:31)  
24. New Testament. (abbr.)  
26. Feminine case pronoun.  
29. Grandson of Noah. (Gen. 10:11)  
31. Of the flesh. (Rom. 8:7)  
32. Another name for father.  
33. Truck driver's vehicle.  
34. Not heavy.  
35. Alternating current. (abbr.)  
36. Mexican painter Jose Clemente \_\_\_\_\_.  
39. A promise. (Luke 1:73)  
40. Same as tea cart.  
44. Masculine pronoun.  
45. Northwest Territory. (abbr.)  
46. Small ones.  
47. Secret Service. (abbr.)



By Glenn G. Luscher Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

**DOWN**  
1. Sea monsters. (Gen. 1:21)  
2. Food for animals.  
3. Collapsible bed.  
4. Used for gripping.  
5. What you put on. (Prov. 7:10)  
6. A furnace. (Ps. 21:9)  
7. A net. (2 Tim. 2:26)  
10. Fruit of the palm.  
11. Where Og fought a battle. (Num. 21:33)  
12. Cuts out. (Hosea 13:8)  
15. Symbol for radium.  
18. The grandmother of Timothy.  
21. Those who are greedy eaters.  
23. To set apart. (Ex. 40:9)  
25. Gives instruction.  
26. A book or roll. (Rev. 6:14)  
27. John was clothed with camel's \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 1:6)  
28. Used to make alkaloids.  
30. To hang loosely.  
32. All her \_\_\_\_ are peace. (Prov. 3:17)  
37. Buddhist sect developed in India.  
38. A feline.  
41. A preposition.  
42. To move or proceed.  
43. Old Testament. (abbr.)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

## Empowering Church Revitalization

Could your church use a boost? Join us for Empowering Church Revitalization on Aug. 13, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions in Prattville.

Mark Clifton, a revitalization specialist at the North American Mission Board, draws from his rich experience as a pastor to impart invaluable, hands-on wisdom and proven strategies for breathing new life into any church.

Ray Jones from Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Dothan will be sharing along with Clifton. Jones is a proven leader with experience in leadership, evangelism and church revitalization.

The cost is \$10, which includes lunch. To register, visit [evangelizeal.org/events](https://evangelizeal.org/events).

To register, visit [evangelizeal.org/events](https://evangelizeal.org/events) or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



## Upcoming Senior Adult Leadership Training events

Want to be more effective involving senior adults in your church and reaching those in your community? The Senior Adult Leadership Training can provide basic ways to expand the scope of your church's senior adult ministry. Senior adult ministers and lay leaders are invited.

SALT offers two dates and locations — Aug. 20 at Northbrook Baptist Church in Cullman and Aug. 22 at Evergreen Baptist Church in Evergreen, both from 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Both events are free, but registration is required for the included boxed lunch.

To register, visit [alsbom.org/salt](https://alsbom.org/salt), or for more information, contact State Missionary Frank Jones, [fjones@alsbom.org](mailto:fjones@alsbom.org), 334-613-2221.

## 2024-25 Resource Directories

It's time to order your 2024-25 Resource Directory! This 16-month calendar has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events. It also includes an alphabetical listing of ministries and services along with directories of associational, state and SBC contacts.

Order yours by visiting [alsbom.org/rd](https://alsbom.org/rd) or contacting Melissa Tolar at 334-613-2249 or [mtolar@alsbom.org](mailto:mtolar@alsbom.org). Please limit to 20 copies per church.



# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Sunday School Lessons

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



### For August 11

#### HEALING Acts 9:32–43

Acts is the unfolding story of the people of God filled with the Spirit of God engaging in the mission of God. Fellow Baptists, we exist to glorify God by making disciples through the gospel while in community and on mission. This week, we see that Jesus is working through His people to accomplish His mission. God saves us to be instruments of His power.

#### Make Your Bed (32–35)

Peter, as chief apostle to the Jews, was traveling around visiting the Jewish communities into which the gospel had spread. He arrived at Lydda, about 10 miles southeast of Joppa. Today, it is the location of Israel's international airport.

While in Lydda, Peter providentially met a man named Aeneas who was paralyzed and had been unable to walk for eight years. He was completely dependent on others to survive. Peter called him by name and declared that Jesus Christ was healing him. Right then, at that moment, Jesus healed Aeneas of his paralysis.

Jesus worked through Peter to heal Aeneas. Peter was a simple man, a Galilean fisherman by trade. He was dependent on the power of Christ. Notice how Peter declared, "Jesus Christ heals you." Jesus was the hero of this story. Peter told Aeneas, "Get up and make your bed."

Aeneas immediately responded to Peter's command, and many people saw Aeneas standing and believed in the Lord. A healed Aeneas testified to a resurrected Jesus. This same Jesus works through believers today to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of the nations.

#### Do Not Delay (36–38)

There was a woman in Joppa named Tabitha — her Greek name was Dorcas — who was a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. She was known for doing good works and acts of charity in the city. She became sick and died.

Her friends performed the ritual and sanitary act of washing her body and then placed her in a room upstairs.

News of the miracle in Lydda had reached Joppa. Hearing Peter was so close to Joppa, the disciples sent two men to find Peter and bring him to Joppa.

*"Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."*

Acts 9:41–42

#### Arise (39–43)

Peter got up and returned to Joppa with the men. As he entered the room, grieving widows stood around him showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made to help the poor and needy.

These widows were familiar with grief. They were the women who cus-

tomarily mourned for the dead. As they mourned over Dorcas' lifeless body, they testified to the kindness she exhibited to others.

As Jesus had done at the home of Jairus, Peter sent all of them out of the room. He knelt down beside the bed, prayed and told Dorcas to get up. She immediately responded to Peter's voice. She opened her eyes and sat up. Peter took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.

Peter called for the saints and widows to come back into the room, and he presented her to them alive. Proof of God's miraculous power stood before their eyes.

This news spread throughout Joppa, and many more people believed in the Lord. What happens in the Church isn't supposed to stay in the Church. We have a lost world to reach with the gospel.

### For August 18

#### INCLUDING Acts 10:34–48

Acts 10 is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Acts because it tells how a gospel that was thought of in exclusively Jewish terms came to be understood as a gospel for the whole world.

Today, Gentiles do not have to come to church wearing head coverings. They do not have to eat kosher food. They do not have to make yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the required feasts.

Acts 10 is of crucial importance for the way in which Christianity has become not a Jewish religion but a world religion.

#### Offered to All (34–36)

Before God arranged for a Jewish Christian and a Gentile soldier to meet together, He worked in both of their hearts. God communicated for Cornelius to send for Peter, and God instructed Peter to go with the Gentiles.

After arriving in Caesarea and hearing Cornelius' testimony (vv. 30–33), Peter understood why the Lord had directed him to these Gentiles. God had sent him to share the message of Jesus with them. This was a revolutionary concept for Peter. He was so prejudiced against Gentiles that he did not believe a Jew should associate with them at all. In this incredible story, we see God transforming Peter's heart before he ever saved Cornelius.

The peoples of the world will be in heaven worshipping Jesus (Rev. 5:9–10; 7:9–10). The big question for us is will we be a part of what God is doing to save a people for Himself? Beloved, these are our marching orders given by Jesus Himself (Matt. 28:18–20).

God had sent the message of salvation to the Jews first so they would declare that glorious message of hope to all the peoples of the

world. Peace — reconciliation with God — is found only through Jesus Christ.

#### Through Faith (37–43)

Cornelius knew about Jesus but did not know Him yet as Savior and Lord. As a Roman officer, he was aware of reports about Jesus and how God had been with Him and empowered Him to do good deeds and heal the sick.

Peter quickly moved to his main point about Jesus: The Jews crucified Him, but then God resurrected Him on the third day.

The Anointed One of God was killed by crucifixion but declared to be the Son of God by power in His resurrection. After His resurrection, Jesus spent time with His apostles, eating and drinking with them.

He who had paid the penalty of sin and defeated death for all who believe in Him commanded them to preach to all people that He had been appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. The Promised One whom the prophets had testified about has come and offers forgiveness of sins to everyone who believes in Him through faith.

#### Acceptance Found (44–48)

As Peter was preaching, he was interrupted by a special working of the Holy Spirit. God saved Cornelius and the people in his house.

Peter and the other Jewish believers who had accompanied him were amazed that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit and were speaking in other languages just as the Jews had done on Pentecost. It was important for the Jews to understand that the Gentiles and Jews were on equal ground.

The new Christians were baptized. The baptism did not save them but did identify them as Christians to be welcomed into the Church. The gospel is for all people who will repent of their sins and believe in Christ.

*"While Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word."*

Acts 10:44



# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Sunday School Lessons

Executive Director, Ministry Training Institute/Assistant to the President for Church Relations, Samford University

By Kevin Blackwell, Ph.D.



### For August 11

#### JONATHAN 1 Samuel 18:1–4; 19:1–4; 23:15–18

As David stood before the king after his defeat of Goliath and the Philistines, he was not only welcomed in the king's court but was essentially adopted into Saul's family (18:2). This status is further emphasized when Saul gives his daughter Michal to David as his wife later in the chapter, though he does this for a deceitful purpose.

Saul's son Jonathan was present as David presented himself to the king, and it immediately seemed that there was a covenantal bond of friendship between the two.

#### Don't stumble over role expectations. (18:1–4)

As Saul's firstborn son, Jonathan was the rightful heir to the king's throne. His actions in these verses, however, reveals his immediate understanding that David — not he — would be the next king of Israel. Jonathan gives David his robe, his armor, his sword and belt as their souls are knit in friendship. The giving of the robe symbolizes the handing over of Jonathan's rights to the kingdom.

Though this is the first time Jonathan has seen or met David, he sees him as Israel's future. His giving away of all his royal items reveals not only Jonathan's commitment to David but also his spiritual understanding of God's plans for Israel.

He is to be commended because although he was the rightful heir, he chose humility and acceptance of God's plan for David's life.

#### Correct unwarranted accusations. (19:1–4)

Saul had bad intentions toward David because he "was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had left Saul" (18:12). Saul tried to murder David with a spear (18:11) and

developed a deceitful plot against him (18:22). When these plans failed, his anger became more direct. "Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David" (19:1).

Saul's words to his son placed Jonathan in a difficult position. Does he obey his father and remain loyal to his family, or does he warn his best friend of the murderous plot? Jonathan decided to stand for what was right and warned David of his father's plans against him.

Not only did Jonathan warn David and seek more information from Saul to better protect David in the future, but he also began to speak well of David to his father.

In verse 4, he urges Saul to reconsider his plans toward David and reminds him of David's innocence, helpfulness and loyalty to Saul and eventually warns him of potential sin against God.

#### See your role from God's perspective. (23:15–18)

As David was hiding from Saul in the Wilderness of Ziph, his soul must have been greatly troubled. In times when life is uncertain, God is faithful to send us encouragers. For David, God sent Jonathan to be a blessing to him through close friendship.

"Jonathan came to David in Horeh and encouraged him in his faith in God" (v. 16). He encouraged David by reminding him of the promise that God had made: "You yourself will be king over Israel" (v. 17).

May we all be like Jonathan today and find a discouraged friend to remind them of God's promises to them.

There are more than 7,000 promises toward believers found in Scripture, and each assists a follower of God to overcome fear, doubt and frustration.

While the enemy seeks to discourage, God has a better plan. Jonathan knew it, David was reminded of it and you can follow their example.

### For August 18

#### HAMAN Esther 3:1–9; 6:10–14

The Book of Esther is a remarkable story of the resilience and courage of a young Jewish woman who risked her own life to save her people.

The book is a historical narrative set in the context of the Jewish people's exile and eventual return to Judah under the reign of the Persians. The story is the tale of the prideful and the humble.

We meet King Ahasuerus, who at the beginning of the book throws a six-month party in his own honor. We also meet Haman, the head noble who would seek to use his position for evil.

These two men stand in comparison to the humble Esther and Mordecai, who sought to honor God and do what was best for others.

We can learn much from the prideful and the humble in this book, but Haman stands as the greatest example of what not to do!

#### Accept any honors or achievements with humility. (3:1–5)

The king gave Haman a prominent position. He was basically the assistant to the king and second in charge of the kingdom. Haman is listed as an Agagite, which means that he was a descendent of the Amalekites, the enemy of the Jews. This might explain his hatred toward the Jews and Mordecai's hesitancy to bow down to him.

Haman became filled with pride and eventually anger toward all who did not recognize his new prominence.

Humility is not only seen during times of struggle, but perhaps it is most authentically displayed during times of success. Haman did not handle his professional success well, and it was ultimately his downfall.

#### Don't leverage your position for personal gain. (6–9)

When Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, it incensed Haman to the point that he not only wanted to destroy Mordecai but all of Mordecai's people, the Jews. He used his relationship with the king for a personal vendetta and used hyperbole to describe the Jews as those who "do not obey the king's laws."

The king was a person who was easily swayed by the opinions of others, and he did not show prudence and wisdom in his decrees. When we are in a position of authority, we must always use it to bring glory to God through humility in our posture and wisdom in our decisions.

#### Pride can lead to humiliation and destruction. (6:10–14)

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride comes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before a fall." Haman would not have known of this proverb, but he certainly could have benefited from it. Haman assumed that the king sought to honor him, and he walked into the king's court filled with arrogance. His arrogance led to a lack of proper judgment, leading him to give his boss foolish advice. His heart must have fallen as the king told Haman to do just what he had suggested to honor Mordecai instead of himself. Ouch!

In God's economy, the prideful will always suffer loss while the humble will always experience gain. God had placed Esther in a key position to save His people from destruction. Haman would eventually be killed due to his foolishness, while Mordecai and the people of God were honored and saved.

Like Esther, Jesus humbled Himself to save His people from death. We are called to emulate their example to serve those around us and not abuse our positions of authority for our own sake.

***"And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down ... to him, Haman was filled with fury."***

Esther 3:5



# WORD search

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APOSTLE	DAMASCUS	PETER
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COMMAND	LIGHT	VISION

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

*“All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”*

ACTS 10:43



## You Gotta’ Hear This!

*Glimpses of God in the everyday moments*

### Vocabulary lessons

My granddaughter had attended a seminar at her church on “True Love Waits,” a program that encourages teens to stay pure and refrain from sexual activity before marriage. At the end of the seminar, parents and families were invited to the last session where the participants signed their pledges. Her parents and 10-year-old brother attended. On the way home, my grandson told his parents, “I signed that pledge to-night.”

“You did?” his mom asked. “Do you understand what it means?” “I think I do,” he replied, “but I do have one question. It’s okay to commit adultery after I’m married, isn’t it?”

An explanation of what adultery meant ensued. Aren’t we grateful for Christian parents who help their children to understand spiritual principles?

#### Explanations

I taught English for over 35 years. I often chose words from the class novels we read for students’ vocabulary lists. I was surprised when I was called to the principal’s office one day where I encountered an irate mother. After listening to the lady’s complaint, my principal knew I could alleviate her confusion. The lady said, “I’m incensed that you would use the word ‘adultery’ in eighth graders’ vocabulary list. It has the word sex in the definition.”

I explained I had taken the list from the novel the class was read-

ing, and asked her if she had read the book, “Jacob Have I Loved.” She said she had not.

I continued to explain the word’s context. The grandmother in the book was senile and often quoted Scripture at random. One she repeated often was from the Ten Commandments — “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

When the woman realized “adultery” came from Scripture, it took some of the steam from her complaint.

#### Sin’s consequences

Not only do we get this word from the Ten Commandments, but we also find the negative results adultery brings from other passages of Scripture. David succumbed to temptation and committed adultery with Bathsheba. As sin always does, it leads to more sin. In his case, to murder (2 Sam. 11:1–3, 14–15).

Regardless of whether young people learn about adultery from their parents or at church, they need to understand God’s directions to abstain from it.

### MEET THE AUTHOR

*Barbara Eubanks of Albertville is an author, conference speaker, Christian humorist and retired English teacher. She is the widow of Baptist pastor Steve Eubanks.*





# Difficult conversations

## Retired physician shares personal experience, practical tips for caregiving

By **Tucker Massey**  
The Alabama Baptist

**R**enée Brown Harmon, a retired family care physician from Birmingham, spent most of her adult life working alongside her late husband, Harvey. However, when Harvey's demeanor and reasoning posed a noticeable shift during a vacation in 2010, Renée had several questions.

Just nine months following Harvey's initial cognitive impairments, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at age 50. This diagnosis proved difficult, as Harvey was forced out of his practice and into the care of others, care that only increased as his condition worsened.

Harvey died in 2018 at the age of 58 after years of continued cognitive decline. Through these eight years, Renée turned to journaling because she was no longer able to express her hopes, fears and anxieties to her soulmate.

Not only did Renée journal — she also wrote about Harvey and his condition, noting how he was changing over time. In the end, she had filled up half a dozen journals with content that would become her memoir, "Surfing the Waves of Alzheimer's: Principles of Caregiving That Kept Me Upright."

### Dealing with dementia

Renée now speaks about caregiving and addresses the three difficult conversations that all families dealing with dementia will have to have.

#### 1. It is time go to the doctor.

While many may be inclined to dismiss cognition-related concerns as simply the effect of aging or minor occurrences, Renée advised that it is best to act sooner rather than later — it is better to be safe than sorry when it comes to dementia.

She also said the person possibly dealing with dementia may refuse



Photo by Tucker Massey/The Alabama Baptist

Renée Brown Harmon gives a presentation on dementia caregiving June 6 at a gathering at Oaks on Parkwood, an assisted living neighborhood in Bessemer.

to go to the doctor out of fear or a stigma surrounding mental health.

Renée told the audience to be gentle with your loved one. Be kind and suggestive of potential measures that could be taken.

Along with this, she said it is possible to go into a loved one's online patient portal and enter concerns prior to a doctor's visit to put them on the physician's radar ahead of time.

#### 2. It is time to stop driving.

Renée said that as a caregiver, it is crucial to pay attention to a loved one's driving capabilities. Oftentimes, driving skills dwindle, and there are telltale signs to look for that mean it is time to keep your loved one away from the wheel.

Scratches on cars and forgetting how to navigate familiar areas are common in people with dementia. However, Renée encouraged caregivers to ride with their loved ones experiencing cognitive decline to gauge their driving skills.

#### 3. It is time to hand over your finances.

While it may seem intrusive or

disrespectful to suggest that a loved one with dementia hand over their finances, Renée said you must remind them that you are in the fight together.

Their condition will worsen, and someone has to take care of them and all they own, Renée said. Begin with asking questions about their finances and belongings, and do not

have this conversation all at once, she advised. It is too big to handle in one sitting.

She also said bringing in a professional of sorts in — a financial adviser or attorney — can be helpful in sorting through things and getting other assets in order.

### Form a care team

Forming a care team — a group of family members or friends who are in place to help through the dementia process — is vital, she said.

People often ask what they can do to help, and it is OK to have a list of things that they can help with during this difficult time. Things like preparing dinner, lawn care or getting the children somewhere they need to be are all OK to ask of others.

Adjacent to this, she said when becoming a primary caregiver to someone with dementia, alert your place of employment so they are prepared for the unexpected situations you may face.

For more information on Renée Harmon and her dementia resources and memoir, visit [reeneharmon.com](http://reeneharmon.com).

For other dementia or Alzheimer's resources, visit [alz.org](http://alz.org).

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# Finding purpose

By Tracy Riggs Frontz  
The Alabama Baptist

## Beacon People helps women grow Kingdom with unique abilities

A woman born with a significant birth defect. A prognosis of speech issues. A God who ends up using this woman to minister to thousands.

These are the experiences of Anna Nash, founder and director of Beacon People and author of “pathFinder” and “wayMaker,” resources that help women find their purpose through whatever talent or skill God has given them.

“People need others to come alongside them, to hear the song in their hearts and remind them of it, to help them understand what exactly the Kingdom of God is on earth, how they play a role and how they feel purpose and fulfillment through that. Then God is ultimately glorified and His Kingdom grows because of them being responsive to the call,” Nash said.

### Unique abilities

Beacon People started as a group of women who wanted to find out how to grow the Kingdom of God through their unique abilities. During their monthly meetings, Nash developed a discussion related to the women’s experiences and callings.

“Then they started bringing friends who would say something like, ‘This is so encouraging and inspiring and all these women have their “things.” How do I know what my “thing” is? How do I align who I am with my work on earth for fulfillment in God’s glory?’” Nash recalled.

Nash’s next step was finding a book to address this question. She and the leader of a second Beacon People group found some good, related resources but they weren’t satisfied.



Photo by Tracy Riggs Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

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So Nash developed the first edition of “pathFinder: A Journey Towards Purpose.”

“As people worked through ‘pathFinder’ more and more, I saw their hunger for God grow because their lives were created by design, and they had a Creator who cared enough about them to give them an assignment on earth to grow His Kingdom,” Nash said.

“The more they found out about themselves as God’s children and being commissioned by Him through love and grace, the more questions they had about God.”

### Perspective

After realizing that many questions were about God’s character and the feeling that God is distant, Nash developed “wayMaker: To See and Experience God Like Never Before.”

“Recognizing the pivotal signifi-

cance of how individuals perceive themselves in relation to God, I embarked on a quest to present the narrative of God in a fresh, impactful light,” Nash said.

“Delving into His Word, I saw 10 defining characteristics that served as the foundational framework for this enlightening journey within the pages of ‘wayMaker.’”

All of the material and details for “pathFinder” and “wayMaker” are very purposeful — even the capitalization of the names.

“I wanted it to be more about the Finder and the Maker than the path and the way,” she said.

“So at the end of ‘pathFinder,’ you’ll hear me say purpose is not found in a mission, a vision, a calling, a new idea. Purpose is found in your purpose Giver. Focusing on Him will clear the path.

“The same with ‘wayMaker’ in that the Maker is the One we focus

on. It isn’t only finding our way, but following the One who has made the way.”

Beacon People is a networking support group where women can share what God is currently doing in their lives and callings and can get feedback and assistance where they may be having roadblocks. Though the main group is based in Birmingham, groups have popped up in other areas.

### Helping refugees

Karen Williams is using homemade candles to share about God’s healing power. Melissa Loudon brings community to refugee women through activities like a knitting group, complete with child care. Dawn Davis-Courtney helps people sell their homes and property by effectively staging them.

When it comes down to it, Nash simply wants to help others become confident and find fulfillment in God’s callings in their lives.

“It’s just so beautiful to watch God speak to them and use them and empower them to just go do what they were made to do and love so much.

“It’s just the best ever for me. I’m so honored and humbled that I would get to be one who walks with them on their journey and makes it happen with God’s help and equipping them and giving them resources and connection.

“When I do that, I feel like an artist who’s just presented the most beautiful painting. It’s an unbelievable feeling.

“I point people to connect with Him, to hear from Him. And He’s so faithful to do that when they do that.”

For more information, visit [beaconpeople.org](http://beaconpeople.org).



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# Josh Wilson hopes to encourage, inspire audiences by pointing them to Christ

By Leann Callaway  
The Alabama Baptist

After graduating from Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, singer/songwriter Josh Wilson released his debut album, “Trying to Fit the Ocean in a Cup,” in 2008 and quickly began receiving critical acclaim from media outlets as he was hailed by Christian Retailing as “the future of Christian pop.”

Before Wilson received his first guitar, he made a promise to his father to use it for God, keeping that promise by leading worship for his youth group.

At Belmont, Wilson won the Christian Music Showcase during his junior year and sensed God leading him into a full-time itinerant ministry.

It has been a journey of both success and struggles.

Through his life experiences Wilson has seen the Lord’s faithfulness on display.

“God has taught me that this life really does come in seasons,” Wilson told The Alabama Baptist.



Photo courtesy of Josh Wilson

## JOSH WILSON

“There are ups and downs, and our constant through all of it is the Lord. We’re not always going to have good days and our circumstances won’t always be preferable, but I think we can find true joy and contentment in the Lord, even when things aren’t going well.”

Wilson recently performed on

“The God is Good Acoustic Tour” with Brandon Heath and Natalie Layne.

During his concerts, Wilson hopes to inspire and encourage audiences by pointing them to Christ.

“I hope that my songs will encourage people and will also challenge them and make them think

about what they believe in,” he said.

“I find that the more honest I am in a song, the more people can connect with it. If people are still searching for the truth when they come to a concert, my prayer is that the songs will point people closer to Jesus. It’s my desire ... for people to realize that Jesus is the answer to what they are searching for, and He is the only one who can fill the void in their life and mend all the broken pieces.”

## Personal experiences

Wilson often uses personal experiences as inspiration for songs.

“I keep a journal and put thoughts down for when I can sit down and write a song,” he said. “When I’m writing, I have the church in mind.

“Our hope is in Christ, and we need to consistently be pressing into the gospel to learn what it really means to be a Christian.

“I want to encourage believers to hang on through the struggles, because life isn’t always good when we’re living in a fallen world.”

# Schultz inspires audiences to open their hearts, homes to adoption

By Leann Callaway  
The Alabama Baptist

As the father of three children, singer Mark Schultz realizes the importance of his music, message and mission being centered on God’s word.

At his concerts Shultz often shares his own personal story of being adopted and adopting his daughter, hoping to inspire others to take action and respond to God’s call to open their hearts and homes to children in need.

“It must have been so hard for my biological mother to give birth to a baby and say with tears in her eyes: ‘There’s so much I want to give you that I can’t. So I’m going to love you by giving you to someone who can take care of you,’” Schultz told The Alabama Baptist.

“That’s amazing to me, and every day I’m grateful for the parents who adopted me when I was two weeks old and helped me to become the person I am today.”

## Making a difference

Through the years his music and message have been well received. Shultz has sold 2 mil-



Photo courtesy of Mark Schultz

## MARK SCHULTZ

lion records, garnered 10 No. 1 hit singles and received multiple Dove Award nominations. But the accolades and achievements aren’t what

motivate him — he is propelled by the love of Christ and desires to make a positive difference.

Having his songs featured on various television programs Schultz hopes will open doors for conversations with non-Christians and lead them into a relationship with Christ.

After the adoption of his daughter, Schultz recognized that his own personal story of adoption and testimony of being adopted into God’s family took on an even greater meaning.

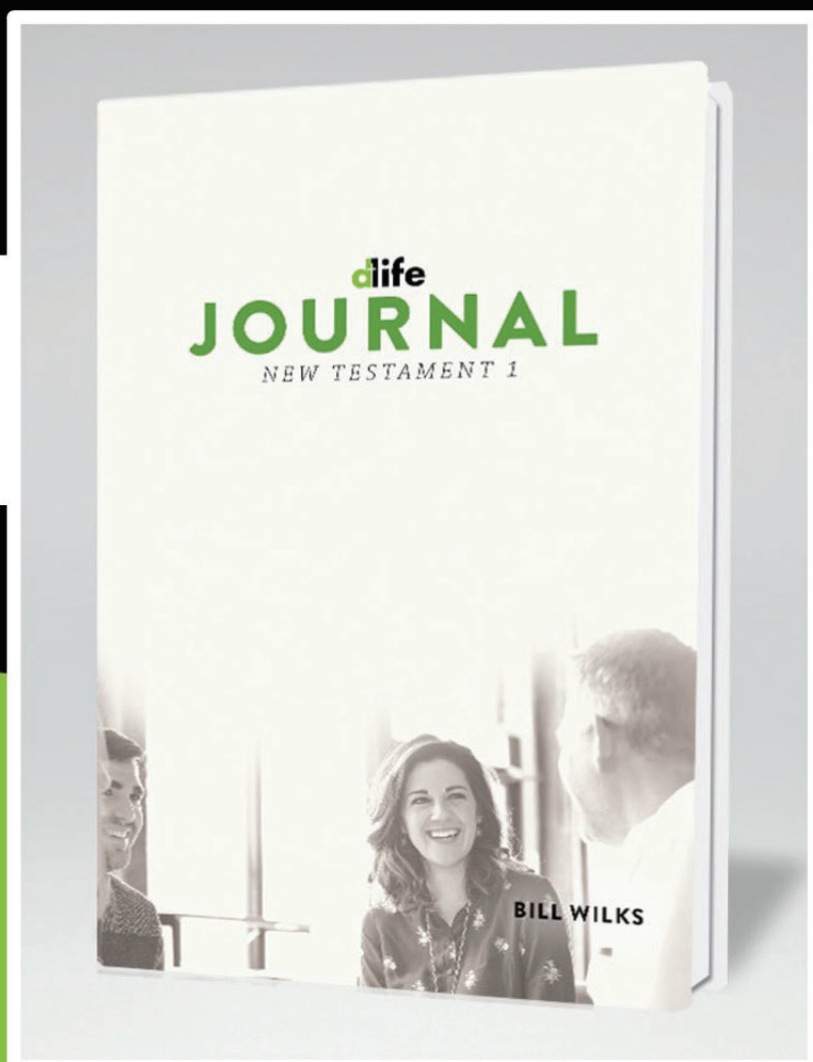
## ‘Called to love’

“As Christians we are called to love,” Schultz noted. “I would hope that as people listen to these songs and identify with the struggles, that they would know that God is the same through the struggles as He is during the triumphant moments. God’s love and faithfulness never change. I grew up wanting to make my parents think they made a good choice when they chose me, so I wanted to be good at singing or be a good athlete. When my wife and I adopted our daughter, I realized there’s nothing she could do to make me question our decision. Love is what makes the difference.”

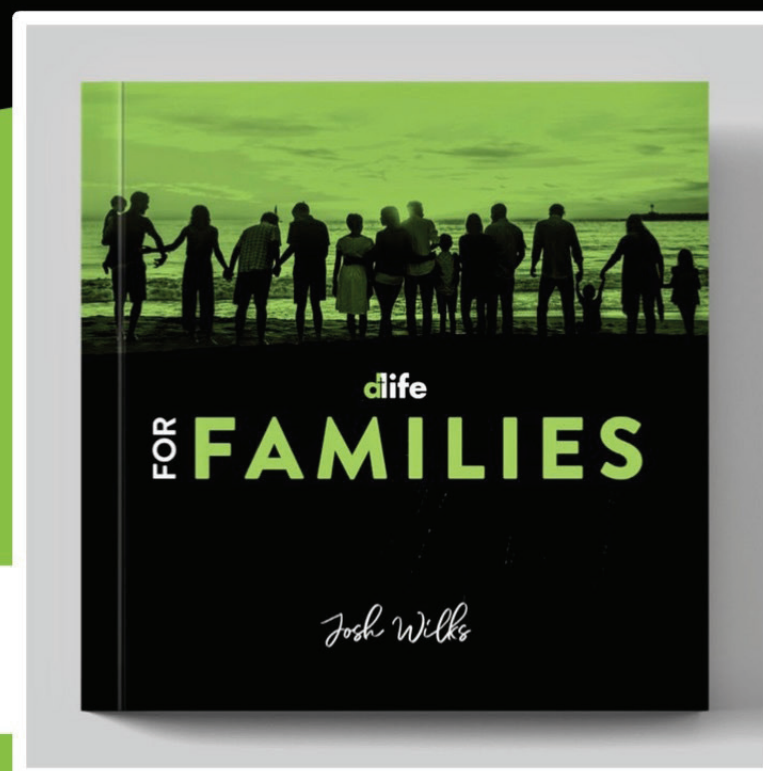


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# 'Broken bondage'

By Tracy Riggs Frontz

The Alabama Baptist

## Author turns family abuse experience into hope for others

To all the women who desire to be free from the bondage of abuse, may they draw courage from this passage: 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us,' Psalm 2:3," writes Carmen Peone in the dedication of "Broken Bondage," her second book in the three-book "Seven Tine Ranch Romance" series.

Though "Broken Bondage" is a work of fiction, it's based on an incident that hits close to her heart. Peone, author and domestic violence awareness advocate, had a family member who died as a result of domestic abuse, and she "doesn't want anybody to go through what my family went through."

"I wanted to write a story not only to help me heal from the violent crime, but to help women who are in destructive relationships," Peone writes in "Broken Bondage."

"Abuse — whether emotional, mental, physical, financial, sexual or spiritual — is never love," she continues.

"Violence is selfish manipulation. It steals the victim's self-worth and isolates them from family and friends. It lies, deceives and betrays."

### Raising awareness

Peone was already an author with several published books geared toward young adults before she felt God's leading to use that platform as one way to raise that awareness.

Then she had to decide how to proceed.

Though there were already a lot of movies about this subject, there was not a lot of material in print. The true crime genre brought back flashbacks and the trauma of her family tragedy. However, nonfiction can be too clinical.

But one thing she was sure about. She had to do something.



Photos courtesy of Carmen Peone  
Carmen Peone used her platform for writing novels to spread awareness about domestic abuse.

After a lot of prayer, Peone decided to use the genre she was already experienced in — fiction. Knowing that the rate of murdered and missing indigenous women is much greater than in most other groups, she used her personal experience of marrying into the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation as a key aspect of the book.

With the setting at a working ranch on a Native American reservation and with the main characters' experiences centered around horses and rodeos, "Broken Bondage" is also an interesting peek into another culture.

But above all, Peone wants the book to be focused more on what can happen through a relationship with God than on the tragic circumstances of abusive relationships.

Though Peone's hope is that the topics addressed in "Broken Bondage" will help those experiencing domestic abuse and violence escape their abusers, it's also relevant to those who aren't in that situation.

As one who didn't experience the violence herself, she recognizes

that healing is important for not only those being abused, but also for those who love the one being abused.

"It's nice to know, to have that message, that yes, God can heal. God is our healer. He wants to give us hope and a future. All of this from the enemy — it's not from God because God is good."

"God walks us through healing, and He restores faith. He restores trust."

"These three women (in the series) find their happily ever after with a nonabusive man — one filled with God, filled with love," Peone said.

In Peone's own journey, she still struggles with hating the man who was the abuser of her family member. She'll release him and then realize she's back to hating him and has to ask for forgiveness — again.

### 'God is in control'

"But really, God is in control. That's what both Rita (the main character in "Broken Bondage") and I together have to learn. It's just to completely let go and let God deal with it. That is the true meaning of forgiveness," she said.

Though Peone is in no way thankful for what happened, she acknowledges that through it all she has experienced a deeper reliance on God, learning to "rely on Him for everything."

It took a lot of prayer, crying while down on her knees, to work through all that happened in real life and to write "Broken Bondage" and the other two books in the series — "Captured Secrets" (Book 1) and "Renewed Hope" (Book 3).

"I know God is such a loving

*"I wanted to write a story not only to help me heal from the violent crime, but to help women who are in destructive relationships."*

Carmen Peone

God. He doesn't wish abuse on anyone.

"He really does walk us through those storms, even if we can't feel Him, even if we're just in the thick of it. We know from His Word that He is with us."

"He doesn't ever leave us or forsake us, even through times like this," Peone said.

Even beyond the lessons shared in her books, Peone is dedicated to helping those who need it.

On her website, carmenpeone.com, she has a resources page under the tab "Connect with Carmen" that addresses topics such as:

- ▶ "How to Recognize the Signs of Mental and Emotional Abuse."
- ▶ "What is Abuse and How to Call for Help."

▶ "Get Help! Get Out! — Resource Page for Escaping Domestic Violence."

▶ "Ways to Self-Care."

▶ "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women — MMIW."

She also has a bibliography with outside resources.

In addition to spreading the message of how God can heal, Peone wants to spread awareness that there is help through the National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org or 800-799-SAFE (7233).

