

# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Photo by K Brown/North Carolina Baptists on Mission

Roger Bailey, a member of FBC Athens, moves concrete mix at a disaster relief job site in North Carolina. Bailey spent April through August there helping disaster relief efforts.

## ‘Rewarding’

Alabama volunteer says disaster relief is ‘great way to spend a vacation,’ spends 4+ months in NC

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**R**oger Bailey said when she told him what the kiddie pool was for, he couldn’t believe it. He had gone to her family’s home in North Carolina — a trailer half crushed by a fallen tree — to see how he and other disaster relief volunteers could help.

“The couple had three young chil-

dren, and the father had done what he could to demolish the half that got crushed, and he covered the end with a tarp,” Bailey said. “So they were living in half a single-wide trailer — a living room, dining, master bedroom and master bath.”

And as he looked around their home, he saw a lot of damage, but the question that rose to the top was this — why was it so hot?

“The mother told me that their air

conditioner was out,” Bailey said. “It was 100 degrees in that trailer, and I said, ‘How do you live? How do you go to bed at night?’ And she said, ‘Late at night, I fill up that kiddie pool, and the kids can cool off in it.’”

### ‘A beautiful sight’

With tears in his eyes, Bailey told her that he and other volunteers would be able to get them a new air conditioner. The next day, he bought

it with disaster relief-funded gift cards and sent some electricians to hook it up.

“I talked to her the day after that, and she said it was a beautiful sight looking over and seeing her babies covered up in blankets,” he said.

Her family was one of several that Bailey — a member of First Baptist Church Athens — was able to help recover from Hurricane Helene,

(See ‘Roger,’ page 17)

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# Civil discourse

## Young Alabamian launches campus speaking tour for 'hard conversations'

By Rachel Seale  
The Alabama Baptist

Interested in the intersection of faith and politics since the fourth grade, Auburn University freshman and Tuscaloosa native Brilyn Hollyhand, 19, recently launched his "One Conversation at a Time" college campus tour in partnership with Turning Point USA.

The tour began Sept. 25 at the University of Arkansas and has made four stops in Alabama — Troy University, Samford University, Auburn University and University of Alabama.

During his Oct. 9 presentation at UA, Hollyhand shared how his faith and background shaped his interest in becoming a political commentator who motivates younger generations to create change by becoming politically active.

Hollyhand and his family are members of First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa, but he attends FBC Opelika while at Auburn.

### Jesus at the center

Hollyhand said he strives to keep Jesus at the center of his political beliefs, as well as the conversations he has with teens and young adults.

Though he promotes and works within the Republican Party, he said, "I'm a Christian first, and I'm a Republican second. The day my party steps away from Christian



Brilyn Hollyhand (left) visits with students and others who attended his Oct. 9 presentation at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

roles and values, I step away from the party."

Challenging those in attendance at the UA event, Hollyhand said, "It's been hard conversations (that promote change). This tour wasn't titled on accident.

"I saw the divisiveness but instead of running away and hiding in fear, I said our generation is the one that can have those hard conversations to bring down the temperature ... to bring civil discourse back to America today, and I still believe that," Hollyhand said.

He said he reads articles from

conservative, liberal and moderate viewpoints and then forms his own opinions without blindly following party beliefs.

Laurel Thompson, a sophomore majoring in microbiology at UA, said she saw Hollyhand's campus tour advertised on Instagram and decided to attend. She said she likes how Hollyhand balances faith and politics in his discussions.

"It's important to have both," Thompson said. "I like that he said Jesus first and then his party."

Hollyhand has four more stops before the tour ends in November.

## IMB's residency program equipping young adults

When Marlee Jenkins felt God nudging her to cross-cultural missions, she wondered what that looked like long term. International Mission Board's new Missions Residency program was an ideal way for her to find out.

Missions Residency focuses on giving young adults the global experience of living life on mission while being mentored by IMB missionaries. For Jenkins, this means spending four months as a strategic part of a missionary team in Thailand.

The 45 young adults ages 18–29 in the inaugural group are sent from churches in 17 different states. They



Missions residents learn to share the gospel using the Three Circles tool.

will serve four months to a year in various locations across the globe.

While in Virginia for training, the young adults collected data on

where people gather, cultures and if any were open to gospel conversations. Many had conversations about their beliefs for the first time with Muslims, Hindus and atheists.

Residents also developed competencies in teamwork and intercultural communication, equipping them to collaborate effectively in diverse ministry contexts and with the IMB missionary team they will join. A key advantage of the new program is that it allows residents to complete essential steps for future service with the IMB.

Learn more about Missions Residency at [imb.org/students](http://imb.org/students). (IMB)

### The Alabama Baptist

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

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The crossword puzzle  
can be found on page 13.



# Rashional Thoughts

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

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

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## Sharing a little sweetness might truly make someone's day

**E**xtrême excitement on top of sheer disbelief at his new personal mound of candy — the photo of my nephew from more than a decade ago always makes me smile.

Receiving the gift of so many tasty treats definitely made him beam, and knowing they were the result of his hard work left him with a sense of pride.

The look on his face not only reminds me to appreciate the special moments we get to have with family and friends but also to take time to invest in others along the journey.

Helping stuff those pumpkin buckets to the rim will certainly add a sparkle to the little ones' eyes. Sharing a smile and commending their costume adds an extra layer of encouragement for both the child and parent.

If only we could find a way to share something sweet — even if simply a kind word — every day with everyone who crossed our paths.

Of course, it would need to be genuine to be effective. Authenticity carries a lot of weight,

while an insincere act can hurt more than help.

It really comes down to giving Jesus full control of our hearts and lives and letting Him shine through us.

We'll still have difficult days, and we may sometimes experience feelings of discouragement,

frustration, disappointment or even anger, but even in those moments we can maintain a loving spirit.

The third verse of the hymn "They'll Know We Are Christians" says, "We will work with each other; we will work side by side ... And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride."

The hymn is based on John 13:35, which says, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

A quick search for how many Scripture verses specifically focus on how we should love one another will pull up more than 30 options.



Photo courtesy of Jack Mitchell



# Your Voice



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

## Look for 'golden calf' when winning matters more than integrity

By Peter Demos  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The recent Auburn–Georgia football game troubled me as a Christian. In full transparency, I have been an Auburn fan since the early 1980s, so I know there are times where my bias on what happened in the game is obvious. But it revealed in me a greater problem we have in the U.S. in how we approach sports, both as fans and as Christians.

The Oct. 11 game between the Tigers and Dawgs was filled with questionable officiating, but what happened that Saturday was not just about one bad call or one missed review. That's part of the game. A clear Auburn touchdown was ruled a fumble. A targeting call and roughing the passer call was debatable and repeated clock stoppages seemed to hand Georgia extra opportunities.

### Look to the coaches

One of the most talked about moments came when Georgia head coach Kirby Smart made what looked exactly like a timeout signal.

Officials honored it, but Smart later insisted he was clapping to alert the referees to get back his timeout and not be penalized with a delay of game penalty.

(In my opinion) ... his actions were completely different as he explained it to the officials afterwards. ... (I'm concerned his explanation) was not just evasive, (but possibly even) dishonest.

A few weeks earlier, in Auburn's

game against Oklahoma, a player feigned leaving the field to score on a wide-open pass. SEC officials later admitted the play was illegal, and it should have been caught. Yet the Oklahoma coaching staff never corrected it publicly.

These may seem like small things in the bigger picture of sports, but the bigger picture is the point: What are we teaching when winning matters more than integrity?

Sports in America have long been more than games. They have become cultural idols. Coaches are hired and fired based on their record, fans pour out money and have emotional breakdowns, and parents rearrange family schedules around youth leagues and tournaments. I have seen Christian parents and fans chase officials into parking lots and hurl racist insults at high school players. I have seen Christian families skip church multiple weeks for Sunday games. We say faith matters most, but our calendars and our tempers often tell a different story.

When Christians excuse "doing what it takes" to win in sports, we are really bowing to the idol of winning. Scripture is clear that all of us fall short, but repentance requires truth. If a coach lies to cover a questionable timeout, that may seem minor compared to other sins, but the message it sends to young athletes is major. If a player cheats by

deception and the coach stays silent, the silence speaks louder than any sermon. Kids notice.

Some may argue that sports are just games, and games have always involved pushing the limits of the rules. There is some truth to that.

Baseball once allowed spitballs until the rule changed. Football once tolerated far more contact before pass interference was defined. There is a difference between exploiting a loophole in the rules and outright cheating. But the line matters, and Christians especially ought to know when it is crossed.

The pressure to win at all costs is not confined to college stadiums. In 2005, Colleyville High School in Texas saw nine players admit to using steroids, and in 2013, ESPN reported a clinic distributing performance-enhancing drugs to high schoolers. When parents are willing to risk children's health or even human life for trophies, something has gone terribly wrong.

### Can still be tough

I have acted wrongly (especially before I was a Christian), in playing and coaching sports myself, and as a Christian, I had to repent and turn from that. I will continue to push my players to be tough and fight through adversity, but who they are in Christ is more important now.

We must be honest about what this is: idolatry. It is no different from

the ancient Israelites fashioning a golden calf. The object of worship has changed from statues to scoreboards, but the heart problem is the same.

### Be honest no matter what

So, what should we do? Fans need to be honest even when it hurts. Georgia fans should admit the officiating was poor. Oklahoma fans should pressure their program to address a cheating play. Auburn fans like myself should acknowledge our own program's history of scandals.

Coaches should speak truthfully, even when it costs them credibility. Programs should discipline players who cheat, even if it means a game lost.

And Christian parents should reconsider what message they send when they push youth sports above church or threaten officials in the name of their child's success. We should be more concerned with teaching kids to follow Christ than teaching them to hit a curveball.

Winning at all costs is not winning at all. True victory is found in honoring God, even when the scoreboard says we lost. Our children, our culture and our witness depend on it.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Peter Demos, president and CEO of Demos' Brands and Demos Family Kitchen, is the author of three books, including "On the Duty of Christian Civil Disobedience," where readers are invited to think critically about their decisions to act or remain silent in the face of unjust policies. He's also the host of "Uncommon Sense in Current Times."*



DEMOS

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“I believe in Christianity as  
I believe that the sun has risen:  
not only because I see it, but because  
by it I see everything else.”

C.S. LEWIS

Don't wait for the light at the end of the tunnel ... be the light inside of the tunnel for others who are around you. Instead of having this passive, "wait and see," how can you make a difference for the people around you today? How can you be a light for Jesus today? ... This is where we came to accept (the mantra of) "don't waste a crisis." You can make a difference in the life of someone around you.

#### Leaders of Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

The issue of baptism and rebaptism, I really don't know that you can have a blanket policy. Yeah. You got to be careful with that. I think it is a one-to-one context for every person, and you as the pastor need to sit down with that person and have a very meaningful conversation where you hear about their conversion experience and their be-

liefs and how and when and where they got baptized, and then you as a pastor, you make that decision after you've interviewed the person.

**Andy Taylor and Todd Fisher** discuss re-baptism and baptism in the church on their podcast Feeding and Leading, which is published through Oklahoma Baptist University

The world will inevitably color and distort your view of God. Worship refocuses your vision so you see God clearly as He is.

#### Richard Blackaby

"We aim to use our recreation ministry as a training center to reach the nations around the world," said **Alejandro Lopez**, recreation director for First Baptist Church Kissimmee, Florida. "We believe that sports are a gift from God to reach others."



# Lass WORDS

**BY KEN LASS**  
The Alabama Baptist



## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

### An encouraging trend spotted while watching football

The talented young quarterback led his team down the field and into the end zone for the winning touchdown, just as time expired. The excited crowd cheered wildly. Some of them rushed onto the field, creating chaos as players, coaches and officials tried to make their way to the locker room.

In the midst of the pandemonium, the sideline reporter worked her way through the fans to get to the star of the game, the quarterback. She grabbed him by the arm, pulled him in front of the camera and caught her breath as she asked, "What does it feel like to win such an important game?"

The young athlete flashed a wide smile and replied, "First of all, all honor, glory and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

#### Vast audience

And there it was. A Christian witness to a television audience of millions. A public profession of faith uttered boldly and unabashedly. It takes a certain amount of courage for a public figure to do this.

Among the vast audience who watched, there will, no doubt, be objectors. Some will be public with their criticism. "Leave religion out of sports," they will say.

They don't get it. A Christian's relationship with Jesus is not

compartmentalized. At least it shouldn't be. All we have, all we are and all we can be are in Jesus' hands. It is entirely appropriate to thank Him for our blessings and to give Him first priority.

#### Christian witness

I am a huge football fan. I watch many games. I have noticed that acknowledging Jesus has become a bit of a trend in post-game interviews. I'm seeing it more and more. That's incredibly encouraging, and it should be inspiring for all of us. If these players can have the courage to put their faith on display in front of millions, surely we can find the resolve to witness to those around us who need to hear it.

We'll probably never be on television with an audience of millions, but if one witness can lead one person to salvation, the angels will sing and, most importantly, God will be pleased.

Who would have thought it? Christian witness is becoming trendy. It's time to join in!

### MEET THE AUTHOR

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



# Alabama news

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **Lt. Col. Daryl Hamaker** is the new pastor of **Eastern Valley Baptist Church, Bessemer**. He serves as a full-time Air Force chaplain endorsed by the North American Mission Board. Hamaker and his wife, Pam, have one adult daughter and five grandchildren.



HAMAKER

## ► Berney Points Baptist Church, Hoover, celebrated its centennial anniversary Sept. 21. A special duet was sung by Elizabeth Fourie, church pianist, and Paul Sutton, minister of music. The church was honored with a presentation by Sarah Walters, a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Pictured from left: Neal Montgomery, deacon; Walters; Anton Fourie, pastor. Following the service, a barbecue lunch was served and a video of the church's history was shown.



Photo by Anita Bolton

## CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► October marks 40 years in ministry for **Jeff Fuller**. Over the years, he has served as a youth minister, full-time evangelist and pastor to churches in Fort Payne, Geraldine, Dadeville, Alexander City and, most recently, as pastor of Rockford Baptist Church. He also has served as chaplain for police and fire departments and works with Samford University's Ministry Training Institute. Fuller has written seven books and hosts two podcasts. He and his wife, Tina, have one adult child.



FULLER

## CHEROKEE ASSOCIATION

► **Dailey Street Baptist Church, Piedmont**, celebrated its centennial anniversary Sept. 21. Former pastor Terry Smith was the guest preacher. Special presentations were made by Wendell Dutton (left), director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association and a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Pastor Ted Anderson (center) and Edna Trammell (right), chair of the anniversary planning committee, accepted the plaques on behalf of the church. Jean Howell, the oldest living member, shared her memories of the church's ministry through a



Photo by Ivan Ray

prerecorded video. Music was provided by former church members and local singers. Photos showcasing the church's history were on display, and attendees received a small gift.

## COFFEE ASSOCIATION

► **The Park Church, Enterprise**, held an elder ordination service Sept. 21 for three church leaders. Pictured left to right are Greg Swim, congregational elder; Sawyer Whittaker, worship pastor/elder; Michael Davis, co-pastor/elder, already ordained; and William Pless, co-pastor/elder.



Photo courtesy of The Park Church

## COLBERT-LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

► **Leighton Baptist Church** recently paid off its multipurpose worship center that was built in 2015 and cost approximately \$2.5 million. The congregation celebrated with a note-burning ceremony at the conclusion of the annual Friend Day Fish Fry. Pastor



Photo courtesy of Dusty Medlock

Mark Mayfield (left) and deacons (l to r) Wesley Burden, Perry Bumgart, Frank Crosswhite (deacon emeritus), Larry Lee Underwood and Ron Brumley.

## ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

► **Geoffrey Garrett**, minister to students for **First Baptist Church Atmore**, was ordained into the gospel ministry Sept. 21. He has served in youth ministry for 15 years and plans to enroll in New Orleans Seminary. He is married to Sydney. Kevin Garrett is pastor.



Submitted photo

## ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

► **Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Gadsden**, celebrated its 150th anniversary Sept. 14. Pastor Roger Beshears was honored for his 65 years in the ministry, with 15 of those years as pastor of Mount Carmel. Guest preacher Gary Williams, pastor of Fairview Baptist Church, Gadsden, was a former member who was saved and baptized at Mount Carmel. Additional guests included former pastor Jackie Bentley. The service began with special music provided by



Submitted photo

pianist Gloria Campbell, and Terry Southern, Lee Omoso and Jonathan Beshears (left). The church history was shared by Brenda Southern. Historical photos and memorabilia were displayed along with two commemorative plaques from Etowah Baptist Association and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission that were presented earlier in the week by Craig Carlisle (right), president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and director of missions for Etowah Association.

## FAYETTE ASSOCIATION

► **Fayette First Baptist Church** celebrated its 125th anniversary Sept. 21, beginning with a church remembrance at 9 a.m. led by three speakers, Carol Walker Engel, daughter of former pastor, Jimmy Walker; Ken Hindman, a former member who was called to full-time ministry while attending FBC; and T.B. Stringfellow, a former pastor. Video messages from former pastors and staff also were shown.



Submitted photo

Anthony Counts, a former music minister and now a retired pastor, was the guest preacher. Special music was provided by the choir.

David Nelson, a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a commemorative plaque to the church. Pictured with the plaque are members of the anniversary planning committee and staff: (front row, left to right) Wendy Canterbury, Judy Godfrey, Pat McCabe, Sharon Wallace, Tonya Freeman and Tracy Hollingsworth; (back row, left to right) Rex Canterbury, Greg Crane, Corey Baker, Tommy Smith, Pastor Scott Davis Sherry Settle and Brenda Walters.

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

► **Lookout Mountain Baptist Association** is having its annual Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries benefit concert, featuring The Parker Three, Nov. 1, 6 p.m. at New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville. Jesse Parker is pastor. Lloyd Borden is director of missions.

## MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

► The property once owned by **Highland Gardens Baptist Church, Montgomery**, has been transferred to **Nueva Vida en Cristo Baptist Church**, and the remaining members of Highland Gardens will continue to worship on the campus.

## MORGAN ASSOCIATION

► **Central Park Baptist Church, Decatur**, celebrated its 75th anniversary Sept. 21 with two services. The remembrance service at 9 a.m. included a panel discussion on God's goodness to Central Park led by four longtime members, Steve Stovall, Jackie Derrick, Bucky Brown and Larry Waddell. The second service began at 10:30 a.m. The church received commenda-



tions from Morgan Baptist Association and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission by Ken Blackwood (right), a commissioner and director of missions for Morgan Association. Pastor Matt Haines (left) accepted the honors. Recognition of former and present staff members was made by Haines who also shared the church's history through a slideshow, referencing the historical timeline printed in the commemorative bulletin. Additional guests included former member Steve Tucker and former pastor Jackie Kay. Special music was provided by the men's chorus, Faithful Men, in both services along with the sanctuary choir in the second service. A catered meal was served.



Photo by Alison Blackwood

### NORTH JEFFERSON ASSOCIATION

► **Steve Loggins** (center), director of missions for **North Jefferson Baptist Association** for more than 32 years, will retire Dec. 31. A graduate of Samford University and Southwestern Seminary, Loggins felt called to missions service, thinking it would be overseas. Ten years and two churches later, he became an associational missionary, the youngest in the state at that time. He has led overseas missions trips through the association and more than 25 state-



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist

side missions trips with North Jefferson Builders for Christ. He has served in Disaster Relief in various areas of responsibility. Mike Jackson (right) of the State Board of Missions presented Loggins with a certificate at the association's fall meeting. He and his wife, Kellye (left), have three adult children and six grandchildren. Loggins will be available for preaching, pulpit supply, interim work and consultations and can be contacted at 205-602-6934 or swloggins@gmail.com.

► **Chris Weide** is the new director of missions for **North Jefferson Baptist Association**. He has been in ministry for nearly 40 years, serving churches in Georgia and Alabama. Most recently, he served as pastor of Beechwood Baptist Church, Mount Olive. Weide holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Brewton-Parker Christian University, Mount Vernon, Georgia, and a master's in theology from Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife, Lynn, have two children and three grandchildren.



Submitted photo

### RANDOLPH ASSOCIATION

► **Levens Baptist Church, Wedowee**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sept. 14. Robert Eason, Sunday School director, shared highlights of the church's history. Annie Lee Nelson Whaley was recognized as the oldest living member and Bill Nelson, a relative of one of the charter families, as the oldest visitor. Lee Knight, pastor of Cavers Grove Church, Woodland, and members also joined in the worship. Pastor Jason Messer and family provided special music. The church received a commemorative plaque from Wendy Westerhouse (center), executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Pictured from left: Knight; Messer; Eason; and Nelson. A luncheon followed the service.



Photo courtesy of Levens Baptist Church



Facebook photo

### TALLAPOOSA ASSOCIATION

► **Eric Miller** is the new worship leader of **Wayside Baptist Church, Alexander City**. He and his wife, Whitney, are both musicians and have three children. Will Baker is pastor.

### WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Jasper**, celebrated its 125th anniversary Sept. 28. The service included a historic photo slideshow and videos from Randy Johnson, the first youth pastor; long-time members and leaders; and a family representing four generations. Special music was provided by a multi-generational choir and a concert by RamCorps Band from the University of Mobile. Pastor Josh Mayes recognized

former ministers and their spouses who were in attendance. The church received special recognitions from David Miller, director of missions for Walker Baptist Association; state Senator Matt Woods; and Jimmy Austin (right), a commissioner with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, who presented a commemorative plaque to Mayes (left) accepting on behalf of the church. Former pastor John Gates and Mayes together shared the sermon.



Photo courtesy of Misty Mayes

### WEST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **Ebenezer Baptist Church, Vinemont**, celebrated its 150th anniversary Sept. 21. Justin Olvey, director of missions for West Cullman Baptist Association, was the guest preacher. Additional guests included Lowell Vann, a former pastor, who painted the mural behind the baptistry. Pastor Dennis Trimble (center) and deacon chair Ray Poe accepted a commemorative plaque presented by Joyce Peters (left), a commissioner of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. During the service, church members Enoch Morris; Stefanie Floyd Salter; Junior Jones; and Poe shared what the church has meant to them. Trimble served as the pianist for the celebration and played a special offertory "Jesus Keep Me Close



Photo courtesy of Francis Jones

to Thee," written and composed by Dewey Lee Bricsoe and Shelby Jones Wynn, former members who grew up at Ebenezer. Photos and historical mementos were displayed in the fellowship hall.

## Scott Bush named director of Samford's Ministry Training Institute

Samford University has appointed Scott Bush as director of its Ministry Training Institute.

Currently serving as senior pastor of Southcrest Baptist Church in Bessemer, Bush will lead the university's initiative to provide affordable, accessible theological education for church leaders across the Southeast.

Bush's appointment follows a season of record growth for the institute. This year, MTI's Shelby/Helena extension site, saw its highest enrollment to date, reflecting a growing demand for bibli-

cally grounded, practical ministry training.

Scott Guffin, executive director of the Christian Ministry department at Samford, said, "I'm excited about Dr. Scott Bush becoming the new director of MTI. Scott has been a longtime leader in the program, and we're greatly anticipating how he will build on the successes of Dr. Kevin Blackwell's years of leadership."

Bush said his goal as director is to continue building on that momentum while strengthening the institute's connection to local churches. (Samford University)



BUSH



# Information on state convention officer nominees available for messengers to consider prior to voting at annual meeting

State convention officer elections will take place Nov. 11–12 during the annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Those attending as a messenger from their church will have opportunity to vote for president, first vice president, second vice president and the secretary positions.

Debbie Oliver and Mike Jackson, who serve with the State Board of Missions, have served as the state convention's recording secretary (Oliver) and statistical/registrar secretary (Jackson) for several years. They are expected to be re-elected to those positions during the November meeting.

Of the other three officer positions, only the first vice president election had more than one candidate announced at press time.

## Candidates for first vice president

► **Kenneth Wells**, bivocational pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Scottsboro, will be nominated by Josh Smith, pastor of Edgefield Missionary Baptist Church in Stevenson.

Smith said Wells has “faithfully



WELLS

served as a bivocational pastor at Shiloh for six years, a church averaging fewer than 50 in attendance, (and has served) in leadership roles with the Tennessee River Baptist Association.”

“Ever a champion of encouraging and building up other bivocational pastors, he has led as the secretary/treasurer and president of the Alabama Baptist Bivocational Pastors Association, and he recently retired from a long secular career in the property insurance industry,” Smith added.

► **Ryan Whitley**, founding pastor of the 20-year-old CrossPoint Church in Trussville, will be nominated by Daven Watkins, pastor of First Baptist Church Pelham.

“Ryan is a pastor who loves pastors,” Watkins said. “He is a shepherd-hearted leader who encourages men to



WHITLEY

keep preaching the Word and leading well.

“He knows, believes and stands for the values and convictions of Alabama Baptists,” Watkins added. “He is a faithful, gifted preacher of the gospel who lives what he preaches. Ryan has already served our state convention the last two years as second vice president. Ryan is prepared for such a time as this, and he will serve our state convention well as first vice president.”

## Second vice president and president

► The only announced nominee for second vice president is **Mat Alexander**, pastor of First Baptist Church Gadsden. He will be nominated by Daniel Atkins, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery.

“Mat has served faithfully as senior pastor of First Baptist Church Gadsden for 13 years and has been actively involved in many different roles within Alabama Baptist life,”



ALEXANDER

Atkins said. “Mat is a proven leader, and I know will continue to serve Alabama Baptists well.”

► **Jarman**

**Leatherwood**, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, will be nominated for president by Robert Mullins, executive director of Madison Baptist Association.



LEATHERWOOD

“Jarman faithfully uses his God-given gifts to serve. He is a powerful preacher and teacher of God’s Word who lives what he proclaims. He empowers others to follow Jesus and lead others to do the same. His support has equipped and encouraged numerous church plants and church planters,” Mullins said.

Read more about each nominee online at [tabonline.org](http://tabonline.org) (type their name in the search bar to pull up their nomination announcement).

Other nominees could be announced prior to the annual meeting; if so, their information will be available online. Nominations also are allowed from the convention floor. (The Alabama Baptist)

## Alabama Baptists help place ultrasound machine in Alaska

The Psalm 139 Project, a pro-life ministry of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, has donated an ultrasound machine to a pregnancy resource center in Anchorage in partnership with the Alaska Baptist Resource Network and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

The Sept. 24 ceremony at Community Pregnancy Center was attended by Bobby Reed, ERLC’s chief financial officer; Rick Lance, executive director for Alabama Baptists; and Randy Covington, outgoing executive director of the Alaska convention.

“The Scriptures tell us

that every life is a sacred gift, and we’re honored to stand alongside the Community Pregnancy Center in this vital work,” Reed said. “We’re grateful to support CPC’s decades-long commitment to serving women and families in Anchorage with compassion and truth.”

### Standing for life

Lance praised the partnership between ERLC and both state conventions that made the ultrasound placement possible.

“Alabama Baptists — by conviction and without reservation — are among those who stand for the sanctity of all human life,” Lance said.

“We have done so in linking arms with the Psalm



Photo by Mitchell Bruce/Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions  
Representatives from the Community Pregnancy Center joined those from ERLC and the Alaska and Alabama Baptist conventions to commemorate the placement of a new ultrasound machine at the center in Anchorage.

139 Project to help provide ultrasound machines to pregnancy centers in our own state. Now, because of our state convention’s missions partnership with churches in

the Alaska Baptist Resource Network, we have the privilege of placing a machine at the Community Pregnancy Center in Anchorage. To God be the glory as the

Psalm 139 Project, Alabama Baptists and Alaska Baptists continue to advocate for the protection and care of those who are the most defenseless among us.”

This latest ultrasound placement marks nearly 100 donations made through the Psalm 139 Project, which began in 2001. The nonprofit provides ultrasound equipment and necessary training to pregnancy resource centers.

It does not receive Cooperative Program dollars but is fully funded through donations, 100% of which go toward ultrasound placements and subsequent trainings. (BP)



# 'FROM SALVAGE TO SALVATIONS'

**Gardendale FBC member says God answered prayers to relocate hospital cross to Arizona**

**By Grace Thornton**  
The Alabama Baptist

**A**n unusual text disrupted Richard Bradley's work-out one morning at the family life center at Gardendale First Baptist Church.

"I was with Phil Jones, and he got a text from a friend who said his neighbor had a huge cross on a trailer behind his house," said Bradley, a member of GFBC.

The 16-foot cross had come from the side of the Women's and Children's Center at St. Vincent's Hospital, where it had been hanging 10 stories up until UAB Hospital purchased St. Vincent's and removed the

formerly Catholic hospital's religious artifacts.

Bradley and Jones — who serves on the GFBC staff in pastoral care, prayer and restoration ministries — drove out to see the cross and immediately thought of a congregation that GFBC had been helping in Cornfields, Arizona. A team from GFBC had helped the small Navajo church — Cornfields Community Baptist — replace its 100-year-old adobe building, and Bradley and Jones thought the cross might be perfect for the new facility.

## **Coordinated effort**

They brought the idea to a men's Bible study group. Group member Tony Camardella said he and his



Photo courtesy of Tony Camardella  
Tony Camardella (second from left) and members of Cornfields Community Baptist Church in Arizona unload the 16-foot cross that used to hang on the side of the former St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham.

wife, Veronica, have an RV ministry and had been wanting to travel to Arizona. Another man offered a trailer. Others stepped in to help,

including refurbishing the cross at a discount and creating a base for it to stand in. The Camardellas made it to Cornfields with the cross

on July 8. The following week, Bradley and a team from GFBC arrived to pour a concrete walkway and secure the base of the cross.

He said they had six guys lift it, and "with God's grace it slid right into the base."

"We were absolutely awestruck at how everything went so smoothly," Bradley said. "God worked out all the details."

He said they owe a "heartfelt thank you" to Ted Cook, who first texted about the cross in his neighbor Quinn Sutherland's yard.

Veronica Camardella said the cross "went from salvage to salvations."

"Now it has a new life, it's standing and it has a permanent home," she said.

## COMPELLED

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14

*Make plans to attend the*

**202<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the  
Alabama Baptist State Convention**

**NOVEMBER 11-12, 2025**

Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville

For a complete schedule and more, visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention). To download the State Convention Annual Meeting App, scan this QR code or visit [my.yapp.us/ABSC2025](http://my.yapp.us/ABSC2025).



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STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

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Serving with you*

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Alabama Baptists!*



**TUESDAY EVENING MISSIONS CELEBRATION**  
*Jeff Iorg, President, SBC Executive Committee  
and featuring the Whitesburg  
Worship Ministry*



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



# Being anchored in CHRIST



## Alabama football players say game gives them opportunity to serve, 'be a light'

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**T**y Simpson said he remembers a day when he didn't feel like himself. He was fighting for the job of quarterback at the University of Alabama, and he wasn't playing his best. He felt like he had lost his way.

"I remember coming home one day to my apartment ... I just came in and started crying," Simpson said.

His dad was there, and he started asking Simpson questions: How's your faith? How are you with God? Are you in the Word? Are you trusting Him? Simpson admitted he hadn't been. But that changed that day. He knew he needed the anchor that God had been in his life ever since he was an 8-year-old kid tugging on his dad's khakis and telling



SIMPSON

him he wanted to walk down the aisle at church. "No matter if I start a game for Alabama, go to the NFL, throw



Photo courtesy of Alabama Athletics Photography  
University of Alabama wide receiver Germie Bernard picks up yardage during the University of Wisconsin game on Sept. 13.

however many touchdowns, break however many records, none of that matters," Simpson said. "Our job on this earth is to change people's lives and introduce them to Jesus, so if I do that and don't throw a touchdown pass, that'll be OK because that was my job."

**'He never left my side'**  
Simpson shared this story on a recent podcast by The Walk Foundation, which aims to provide a platform for athletes to share their faith stories.

He said when he goes out on the field, the most important thing is to be who he is in Christ. His teammate Wilkin Formby said the same thing.

"Early in the season I had some struggles in a game, and I was really down on myself," said Formby, who plays offensive tackle. "A lot of people were upset with me, and that got to me at first."

But anchoring himself in his iden-

tity in Christ changed everything. "As the season went on, going through those low lows just made my relationship with God so strong," Formby said. "You hear people say you have to lean on the Lord, but until you actually experience that, it feels like everyone's against you except Him, and He never left my side. ... I would be in a middle of a game, and I'm just having a conversation with God — just praying, trying to stay calm —and that would help me stay calm."

### 'Just growing each season'

Formby said he meets often with team chaplain Jeremiah Castille to help him stay grounded. "He's a huge mentor to me," Formby said. "And building a church community, me and Germie Bernard and a couple of others, we go to the same church. And every Sunday after church we meet with the college pastor there and we get to fellowship and spend time with each other, so that's been a big part



Photo courtesy of Alabama Athletics Photography  
University of Alabama offensive lineman Wilkin Formby plays against the University of Georgia on Sept. 27.

of my walk with the Lord this year."

Bernard, a wide receiver for UA, also shared his story in a recent podcast with The Walk Foundation.



BERNARD

He said he felt like a year ago he was walking in his faith, but now he feels like he's "jogging a little bit." "I'm just growing each season, and I'm just excited to be on this path and understand Him more and more and seek after what He wants me to do with my life," he said. "There's always going to be trials, but when you're seeking Jesus and you have that intimate relationship with Him, you know that the

bad things are things that He wants you to go through so you can learn and understand why He put you through that."

He said for him, being a Christian on the UA football team means "being a leader, being [vocal] about my faith, letting people know that you don't have to feel ashamed about coming to God. ... God loves you where you are, who you are, so don't be afraid to just come to Him."

### Helping others succeed

Bernard said he wants to be "a light to other people" and help them seek after Jesus, noting that it's about "serving other people and giving back, serving my teammates however I can."

Formby said for him, it's also about serving.

"When you play O line, you're a servant ... you're serving your teammates," he said. "I don't score touchdowns. We're trying to help other people succeed, and I take joy in that."

He said he wants to emulate Jesus' servant nature as he spends time with his team.

"He was a leader, but He was a servant at the same time," Formby said. "Being able to have that meekness and be humble but be able to serve your teammates and the people around you, a lot of people don't think of that as leadership, but it still is."



FORMBY



The Walk Foundation screenshot  
Germie Bernard (left) and Isaiah Horton talk about their faith on a podcast with The Walk Foundation.



Photo courtesy of Alabama Athletics Photography  
University of Alabama starting quarterback Ty Simpson passes the football during the game against University of Louisiana Monroe on Sept. 6.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

# First person: Beyond the call of duty

**By Rick Lance**  
Executive director, State Board of Missions

Over the years, I have known numerous friends and acquaintances who regularly go “beyond the call of duty.” Some have been extraordinarily compassionate friends of households with loved ones who are sick or injured. Others have been those in vocational or bivocational ministry as well as laypersons who “minister to ministers.” I can think of other examples as well.

As one who leads a ministry organization, I value a strong work ethic in those who work at your State Board of Missions. Since 1998, when I was called as executive director, I have seen countless examples of state missionaries and other staff going beyond the call of duty. For this, I am thankful.

Many who go beyond the call of duty are “compelled” with something embedded in their personalities and hearts and souls to do just that. And yet the act of “service beyond” is a choice often borne out of love, responsibility, kindness, mercy and other such positive qualities.

As we approach the Annual Meeting of the State Convention, I am mindful of the theme for this year — the singular word “Compelled.” It is based on 2 Corinthians 5:14, in which we find this phrase: “The love of Christ compels us.”

For the past two years, one who has served beyond the call of duty is our State Convention president, Craig

For more information, visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention) or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



Carlisle, director of missions for the Etowah Baptist Association.

Craig has generously and selflessly made himself available well beyond his Etowah County homebase to Alabama Baptists through preaching, attendance at board meetings where ministry plans were being discussed, pastors and ministers conferences, and many other contexts. I am so grateful for his Kingdom leadership in our state.

**This year, the Annual Meeting will be at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville on Nov. 11–12.** Whitesburg is also hosting the meeting of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on November 10.

I am grateful for Whitesburg, extraordinarily so this year, because they are in the process of making upgrades to their facilities and yet — under the leadership of their senior pastor, Darryl Craft — are once again opening their doors to our Alabama Baptist family. Please come to this annual

family reunion of Alabama Baptists. We hope many churches will send elected messengers, but the doors are open to guests as well.

Notably, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Cooperative Program. I am thankful for our Baptist forbears who created this remarkable way that any local church — large or small — may have a part in going into all the world, all the time, at the same time. After all, Acts 1:8 is a simultaneous — not sequential — command of our Lord.

There will be many times of worship throughout the Tuesday and Wednesday sessions. A special time will happen on Tuesday evening when the Whitesburg Worship Ministry will lead us to the throne through music and Jeff Iorg will preach a message titled “Compelled to Live as Ambassadors



LANCE

for Christ.” Andy John King will preach the Convention sermon, and Craig Carlisle will provide the President’s Address.

In other worship times on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Alabama Singing Men and Women and also the First Baptist Gadsden Choir will glorify our Lord through music.

We will hear reports from our family of Alabama Baptist entities and Convention committees. In addition, messengers will be asked to approve a Great Commission Ministries budget.

So join us, if you can, in the Rocket City. We hope to see you there!

# WORD search

- BELIEVE

BLESSING

COURAGE

CROWD

DAUGHTER

DELIVER

ENDURE

FAITH

HEAL

HOPE

JAIRUS

JESUS

JOSEPH

JOURNEY

LISTEN

MIRACLES
- PATIENCE

PEACE

PERSEVERE

POWER

PRAY

PROMISE

PURPOSE

REFUGE

RESCUE

REWARD

STRENGTH

SURRENDER

TOUCH

TRIAL

TRUST

WAIT

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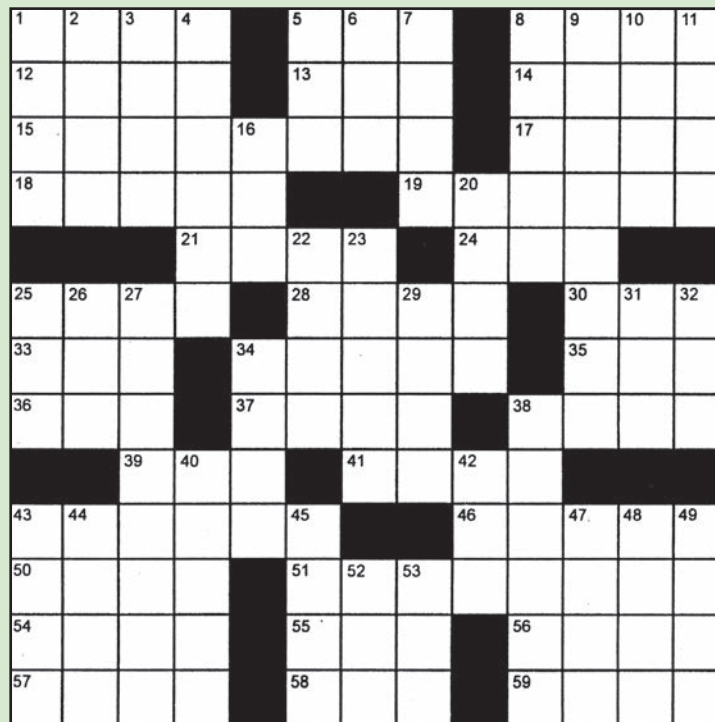
“So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.”  
EXODUS 2:24



# CHRISTIAN Crossword

## ACROSS

1. To plop.
5. There is a \_\_\_\_ here, which hath five barley loaves. (John 6:9)
8. Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 8:30)
12. Then shall the \_\_\_\_ man leap as an hart. (Isa. 35:6)
13. Age.
14. A solo.
15. The high and lofty One that inhabiteth \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 57:15)
17. They passed through the \_\_\_\_ea as by dry land. (Heb. 11:29)
18. Thick.
19. Spatter.
21. Indebted to.
24. Whatsoever ye shall \_\_\_\_ in My name, that will I do. (John 14:13)
25. Ship's direct steering.
28. Soon.
30. From the beginning of the year even unto the \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut. 11:12)
33. Where \_\_\_\_ the men which came into thee this night? (Gen. 19:5)
34. Let us lay \_\_\_\_ every weight. (Heb. 12:1)
35. Pekoe.
36. In a place where two ways \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 11:4)
37. In the first year of Darius the \_\_\_\_\_. (Dan. 11:1)
38. The love of God is \_\_\_\_ abroad in our hearts. (Rom. 5:5)
39. \_\_\_\_ art thou, Lord? (Acts 9:5)
41. Revise.
43. \_\_\_\_ you this day whom ye will serve. (Josh. 24:15)
46. What thou \_\_\_\_, write in a book. (Rev. 1:11)



By Evelyn M. Boyington Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

50. Gentleman (German)
51. Turn back thine hand as a grape \_\_\_\_ into the baskets. (Jer. 6:9)
54. Annoys.
55. Antelope.
56. Pro \_\_\_\_.
57. The smell of thy \_\_\_\_ like apples. (Song of Sol. 7:8)
58. Droop.
59. Break.
20. Window glass.
22. Woe to them that are at \_\_\_\_ in Zion. (Amos 6:1)
23. Sly.
25. Eccentric wheel.
26. Unrefined rock.
27. They that weave \_\_\_\_, shall be confounded. (Isa. 19:9)
29. The prophet of the Lord ... whose name was \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Chron. 28:9)

## DOWN

1. They \_\_\_\_ before the men of Ai. (Josh. 7:4)
2. The Jews of \_\_\_\_ sought to stone thee. (John 11:8)
3. Sign.
4. There was not one feeble \_\_\_\_ among their tribes. (Ps. 105:37)
5. Hawaiian garland.
6. Where \_\_\_\_ thou? (Gen. 3:9)
7. All the \_\_\_\_ of my life. (Ps. 23:6)
8. British noblemen.
9. No man \_\_\_\_ it unto them. (Lam. 4:4)
10. Helps.
11. To whip.
12. I make all things \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 21:5)
31. Born.
32. Mom and \_\_\_\_.
34. Minor prophet.
38. Cattle.
40. I saw, and behold a white \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 6:2)
42. Adjective suffix.
43. Part of the face.
44. Champion.
45. As the partridge sitteth on \_\_\_\_\_. (Jer. 17:11)
47. Of \_\_\_\_, the family of the Eranites. (Num. 26:36)
48. Bristle.
49. A \_\_\_\_ for him in the way. (Job 18:10)
52. American Newspaper Association. (abbr.)
53. Pull.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

## Convention-related meetings of interest

### Join us at the Youth Minister Luncheon

If you're a youth minister, we would love to see you at the annual Youth Minister Luncheon on Nov. 11 at the Baptist Campus Ministries of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

From 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., come enjoy a free Taco Mama lunch, swap stories and build a stronger network. It's the perfect chance to kick back, fellowship and discover how Ymlink and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions can help you supercharge your ministry.

To register, visit [tabonline.org/youthministerlunch2025](http://tabonline.org/youthministerlunch2025).

Don't miss out, and be sure to also attend the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting held Nov. 11–12 at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville. For more information, see page 12.

To register for the Youth Minister Luncheon, scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



### Alabama Church Planter Network dinner

It's that time again — time for church planters from across Alabama to gather and celebrate what God has done in the past year.

The Alabama Church Planter Network will hold its annual dinner Nov. 9 at Essential Church in Huntsville from 5–9 p.m. There will be recognitions and testimonies of what God is doing throughout Alabama church planting. Church Planters and wives are welcome to attend, as well as anyone interested in Kingdom Expansion.

The dinner is free, but registration is required.

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

### Compassion Ministries meeting

This year's Compassion Ministries meeting will be held in Huntsville on Nov. 10 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Come join us in learning about Lincoln Village Ministry, which works toward holistic transformation in the community where it serves. We will have lunch together, hear from the founder and executive director and then take a tour.

Register at [alsbom.org/compassion-ministries-meeting-2](http://alsbom.org/compassion-ministries-meeting-2).

### College ministry leaders

Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders will be held Nov. 10 at the Baptist Campus Ministries of the University of Alabama in Huntsville from 4–8 p.m.

Clayton Bullion of Via Students will speak on the topic of developing leaders.

Register at [bcmink.org/unite-2025](http://bcmink.org/unite-2025).

To register for the Unite gathering, scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.





# Gibson to film sequel to 'Passion' movie

Filming has begun in Rome on “The Resurrection of the Christ,” Mel Gibson’s sequel to his blockbuster biblical drama “The Passion of the Christ,” Variety first reported.

The long-awaited sequel, produced by Gibson and Bruce Davey under Icon Productions with Lionsgate, is expected to be released in two parts — the first on Good Friday, March 26, 2027, and the second on Ascension Day, May 6, 2027, according to media reports.

## Box office success

Released in 2004, “The Passion of the Christ” portrays the last 12 hours in the life of Jesus, on the day of His crucifixion in Jerusalem. The film earned over \$610 million worldwide, making it the highest-earning independent movie ever

made, according to Movieguide.

The film continues to resonate with audiences across the globe, and a sequel has been the point of much speculation.

Among the latest details of the sequel, Finnish actor Jaakko Ohtonen will replace Jim Caviezel as Jesus. Other changes include Mariela Garriga as Mary Magdalene and Kasia Smutniak as Mary, according to Variety.

Entertainment Weekly reported that Caviezel, 57, and others would have needed to be de-aged for the movie, which is set three days after Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday, so it was easier to recast.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — This story was compiled from media reports by The Baptist Paper.*



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## CHURCH POSITIONS

### PASTOR

Full-time pastor — Jasper, Alabama. Pastor retiring. Prayerfully seeking a pastor to preach the inerrant word of God and shepherd our flock. (SBC) Resumé: [northsidebaptistchurchjasper@gmail.com](mailto:northsidebaptistchurchjasper@gmail.com)

### PASTOR

Cypress Shores Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please email resumé to: [cypress9631@comcast.net](mailto:cypress9631@comcast.net) or mail to: 4327 Higgins Road, Mobile, AL 36619.

### PASTOR

Shell Banks Baptist Church on Fort Morgan Road is seeking a pastor. Please Send resumé to: [shellbanks7136@yahoo.com](mailto:shellbanks7136@yahoo.com).

### PASTOR

Pintala Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. The candidate should be a self-starter, enthusiastic about the Word of God, and excited for opportunity to bring new members to the church. Pintala Baptist Church, which is located in the southwestern portion of Montgomery County, has a loving church family that is here to share the good news of Jesus Christ to serve our community (and beyond) in His love. We are genuine in our atmosphere and enjoy supporting one another. For more information, please go to: <https://pintalabaptist.com/ministry-position-open>.

### PASTOR

Bell Lane Baptist, Clanton, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking our next full-time pastor. The successful candidate will assume a range of responsibilities. You can view the full job description by visiting the link: [www.belllanebaptist.org/about](http://www.belllanebaptist.org/about).

### PASTOR OR BIVOCATIONAL

Snow Road First Baptist Church, Semmes, Alabama, seeking experienced, seminary trained man. Contact Douglas Kaul: 251-591-5525, or church office: 251-649-7722. Send resumé to: [drkaul7100@gmail.com](mailto:drkaul7100@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

Clanton First Baptist Church

(Clanton, Alabama) is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music. This position will be asked to lead both choir and congregational worship and oversee all aspect of music in the life of our church. A degree and/or formal training in music is preferred. Candidates should have experience with digital sound equipment, ProPresenter and live-streaming services. Clanton FBC is an active, mission-minded church in a growing area. Additional information about the church may be found at [clantonfbc.org](http://clantonfbc.org). Resumés may be emailed to: [justin.nelson@clantonfbc.org](mailto:justin.nelson@clantonfbc.org).

### ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP MINISTRY

Mexia Baptist Church of Mexia, Alabama, is seeking a part- or full-time associate pastor of worship ministry to lead all aspects of the church worship ministry. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in a related field, though seminary degree is preferred. Please submit resumé to: [office@mexiabaptistchurch.com](mailto:office@mexiabaptistchurch.com) or call 251-575-4398.

### MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER

Cedar Bluff First Baptist Church in search of a music/worship leader, bivocational. Email resumé to: [CBFBC@tds.net](mailto:CBFBC@tds.net) or mail to: Cedar Bluff First Baptist Church, 3500 Old Hwy 9, Cedar Bluff, AL 35959.

### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

New Center Baptist, Hartselle, Alabama, ([newcenterbaptist.org](http://newcenterbaptist.org)) seeking bivocational music minister for blended services, leading choir and coordinating volunteer musicians. Email resumé to: [raykballew@gmail.com](mailto:raykballew@gmail.com) or contact pastor at 256-221-6880 for more information.

### PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES

First Baptist Church of Tallassee, Alabama, is searching for a full-time pastor of worship and equipping ministries. For more information and to send a resumé, please see [fbctallassee.com/jobs](http://fbctallassee.com/jobs).

### YOUTH MINISTER

Seeking youth minister at The Baptist Church at McAdory (McCalla). Candidate must be SBC member with passion for discipling students and leading Christ-centered ministry. Submit resumé: Personnel Committee, 4954 Eastern Valley Rd., McCalla, AL 35111 or [tbcam.bcm@gmail.com](mailto:tbcam.bcm@gmail.com).

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## TAB EXTRAS

### TAB HIGHLIGHTS EMAIL NEWSLETTER

TAB Highlights is an email newsletter delivered every Monday-Wednesday-Friday at noon with the day's top stories from the world of faith-based news. To sign up, email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org).

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In addition to the print edition, The Alabama Baptist also releases a weekly digital edition of the newspaper to every subscriber's email. The digital edition comes in PDF form and is included with all subscriptions. To update your email address, contact [subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org).

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# Persecuted church

## Captor of Pakistani girl sentenced to life

A man convicted in the kidnap and rape of a 12-year-old Christian girl in Pakistan has been sentenced to life in prison.

The girl was rescued by police in October 2023 after a month of captivity. Hanif Hameed, a Christian attorney who represented the girl, told Christian Daily-Morning Star News four men abducted the girl at gunpoint in September 2023.

The abductors forced her to convert to Islam and forged a marriage certificate to cover their crime, he said. Only one captor was arrested and sentenced.

In July 2024, a family court voided the marriage, Hameed said. While he is grateful for the life sentence, he expressed disappointment that the judge ignored the matter of forced conversion and fake marriage.

Pakistan is No. 8 on Open Doors' 2025 World Watch List of the 50 places most difficult to be a Christian.

## Conflict, violence in Nigeria continues

Attacks by extremists in Nigeria have claimed dozens more lives across several states, reported Christian Daily International-Morning Star News.

Violent attacks have been reported in several villages, including Tse Orkpe, Angwan Rimi, Uikpam, Gadanaji, Ekati, Yelwata, Wakeh and Gumel. Many of those killed have been Christians.

Among the kidnapped is James Audu Issa, pastor of Evangelical Church Winning All in Kwara state.

The U.S. State Department says violent crime is common in Nigeria and advises Americans to recon-

sider travel to any parts of the country.

Nigeria is No. 7 on Open Doors' 2025 World Watch List of the 50 places most difficult to be a Christian. The country has led the world in the number of believers kidnapped or killed for their faith.

## Christian in Pakistan released on bail

A Christian arrested on a false charge of blasphemy in Pakistan was quickly granted bail in what a source called a "rare" decision.

Christian Daily International-Morning Star News reports that Maan Shaukat Masih of Nishat Colony in Lahore voluntarily sur-



MASIH

rendered himself to police Sept. 7 and was granted bail the next day — a move one legal aid group said was "made

possible only by the grace of our Lord who answered the prayers of Masih's family and other Christians of the neighborhood."

## Pakistani Christian rescued from captor

A 16-year-old Pakistani Christian who said she was kidnapped, forced to marry her Muslim captor, raped and then sexually trafficked has been returned to her family temporarily by a judge, Christian Daily International-Morning Star News reported.

Upon seeing the teen's declining health situation, the judge released the girl into her parents' custody to receive medical care.



# Lottie, Annie giving exceeds \$278 million

Last year, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions totaled \$207.2 million and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions totaled \$71.1 million — a testament to the unified generosity of Southern Baptists.

The Annie Armstrong offering supports more than 3,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving throughout North America.

## Reaching the lost

The Annie offering helps to fuel church planting through the North American Mission Board's Send Network, compassion ministry in North America through Send Relief and the creation of evangelism resources.

The Lottie Moon offering supports nearly 3,600 International Mission Board

missionaries and their families serving around the world in evangelism and church planting.

Missionaries serving with Send Relief, the SBC's compassion ministry arm, also are funded through the two offerings.

Each year, the national goals for both offerings are set in partnership with the respective missions boards and Woman's Missionary Union, who created the Lottie offering in 1888 and the Annie offering in 1895.

The goal for the upcoming Lottie Moon offering is \$210 million. For the 2026 Annie Armstrong offering, the goal is \$80 million. One hundred percent of these offerings directly supports missionaries.

Churches can learn more by visiting [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com) and [lottimoon.com](http://lottimoon.com). (IMB)

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# Roger Bailey aims to be hands and feet of Jesus

(continued from page 1)  
which devastated North Carolina in September 2024. Bailey had a long career in construction and knew he could help, so he joined the effort in April and worked

alongside North Carolina Baptists on Mission Disaster Response Ministry until late August.

He said when he first left for North Carolina, he didn't expect to be gone that long,

but he just couldn't stop.

After a cancer diagnosis in 2015, Bailey said the prayers and cards he received during four years of chemotherapy led to a commitment to serve others whenever he could.

"It is unbelievable what a rewarding experience it is to help folks," Bailey said.

He said God blessed him with a career that gave him a special skill set he can use in disaster relief and rebuilding work.

"I just really, really want to be His hands and feet as much as I can," Bailey said.

He said more volunteers are needed to fill a variety of roles from construction to landscaping to helping people clean and organize their homes.

"The tools are there, they just need people to come and use them," Bailey said. "You will not believe how rewarding it is to hear their heart, hear their testimonies. It's a great way to spend a vacation."

Addie Bruening, assistant construction coordinator

for one of the work sites in North Carolina, said Bailey "really made a difference to all of us, and he is missed."

## Blessing others

"Roger worked tirelessly using his incredible knowledge, talent, skills and his love for the Lord to bless all those he served with as he worked on their homes,"

Bruening said.

Bailey said he plans to return next summer.

"If God gives me the health I enjoy today, I plan on being back," he said.

"There's so much need out there right now."

And by then, it's possible the family now living in half a trailer will have a new home, thanks to North Carolina disaster relief. Construction should start on the house within the next couple of weeks.

**For more information about getting involved in disaster relief, visit [sldr.org](http://sldr.org).**

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# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Sunday School Lessons

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### For November 9

#### UNDIVIDED WORSHIP Deuteronomy 12:1–11, 29–32

##### Remove Idolatry (1–7)

As the Israelites prepared to go into the promised land, Moses told them how they were to approach the religions of the peoples around them. They were to destroy all of the sacred stones and idols. Everything that was a part of pagan religion needed to be destroyed. The fact that they did not do this would be a thorn in the side of Israel for years.

A question we have to answer today is how to approach the beliefs of those around us. Many Christians do not know the difference between Christianity and other religions.

I have heard Christians say they believe that we do not need to send missionaries because God reaches each religion differently. This is a dangerous and extremely unbiblical idea.

Christianity requires that we understand God according to how He has revealed Himself to us. Christians need to know what the Bible teaches and also what other religions teach.

Back in the 1990s, the Mormon church got many of their converts from among Southern Baptists because so many Baptists did not know the teachings of Mormonism.

Christians need to be familiar with the beliefs of those around them and know how those beliefs differ from Christianity so we are not led astray.

##### Worship God (8–11)

Once the Israelites were in the promised land, they were to bring all of their offerings to a designated place. God still expects us to give our offerings to Him through churches, where they are used by God to accomplish His purposes.

Pastors and church staff are used by God to minister to His people and to send the gospel to the nations. We need to support

them as they help preach the gospel and carry out their duties on a regular basis.

Missionaries also need to have support that provides for day-to-day living as they dedicate their lives to preaching the gospel around the world. By supporting missionaries, we take part in the missions work that they are doing.

However, we can all be involved in ministry on a regular basis. God calls us to minister to the body of believers daily. We can do this by taking care of others, helping share their burdens. We can also love our neighbors, giving us a chance to share the gospel with them.

##### Stand Firm (29–32)

God told the Israelites to get rid of all vestiges of the Canaanite religion so they would not be tempted to worship God incorrectly. This is still an issue today in areas where Christianity is not taught clearly.

In some parts of Latin America, for example, Roman Catholics have blended some of their Catholicism with elements of indigenous religions, a process called syncretism. Syncretism is when parts of two or more religions get blended together.

We need to take stock of our surrounding culture to make sure we do not incorporate any parts of it that are not biblical. Many mainline denominations in the U.S. have a form of syncretism in which they embrace parts of Jesus' teachings and then ideas like transgenderism creep in, blending a cultural teaching with biblical teaching.

This is one of the major challenges we face today. Are we willing to take a stand against the culture for the sake of the gospel, or will we cave into cultural pressure and teach a false gospel?

*EDITOR'S NOTE — The Sunday School lesson outlines are provided by Lifeway.*

### For November 16

#### COVENANT RELATIONSHIP Deuteronomy 28:1–6, 15–19

##### Faithfulness (1–6)

God had established a covenant with His people. If they obeyed Him, they would prosper. God lists all the ways the Israelites will prosper if they are obedient to God's commands.

In the Old Testament whenever the Israelites obeyed, they were successful in their endeavors. However, when they did not obey, all of their activities failed.

These principles that God established are excellent guidelines for us today. Keep in mind that this is not teaching a type of prosperity gospel, which is no gospel at all. The prosperity gospel teaches that if you do certain things, you are guaranteed to be blessed with financial gain or success.

This is a distortion of the real gospel because the focus is on material possessions, not on spiritual blessings. We have to remember that God says that He works "for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Even if things appear to be hopeless, we need to look at things from God's perspective (2 Cor. 4:16–18). However, if we obey God's commands we are likely to benefit from those decisions. For example, one can look at the societies that came out of the Reformation and see how they prospered because of their belief that they were to do all things for God's glory.

##### Disobedience (15–19)

After God told His people the blessing He would bestow upon them if they obeyed His commands, God says what will happen when His commands are not followed. Those people will suffer loss and lack of prosperity. This is seen clearly in the Old Testament. Be-

ginning from the time of the conquest of Canaan, the Israelites fail over and over again to obey God's commands and they suffer for it. The Book of Judges is a testament to this failure. Every time they disobeyed, they were punished by God until they repented and called out for help.

On a personal level, when we sin against God, the Holy Spirit will convict us. Not only that, but sinning is never beneficial. It may feel good at the time, but it always ends up pushing us further away from God and further from His spiritual blessings. Repentance is a wonderful experience.

When we turn away from our sin and to God we experience reconciliation. God's love and grace are so wonderful that every time we sin and then repent, He takes us back and forgives us. This does not mean there will not be consequences for our actions. For example, selfish behavior ruins relationships with others, breaking the law can result in jail time and sexual immorality can ruin marriages. However, God forgives us and gives us new life.

This has a cultural impact as well. When a society turns away from God, the society is doomed to experience negative consequences. This is evident in our country today. When people turn away from God and toward their own reason and sensibilities, society is harmed. Laws are not followed, people are allowed to act in ways that harm themselves or others and society begins to fall apart.

Christians need to live out their beliefs so they can love their neighbors in action by seeing laws passed that benefit each person and society as a whole. Our beliefs are not to be kept to ourselves. They are to be lived so that God's blessings may be experienced by those around us.

*"And all these blessings shall come upon you  
and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD ..."*

Deuteronomy 28:2



# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Sunday School Lessons

Chair and Professor, Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at Samford University

By Adam Winn, Ph.D.



### For November 9

#### WHEN WELL-MEANING PEOPLE INTERRUPT YOUR PLANS Luke 8:40–50, 54–56

##### Seize the opportunities God gives you to serve Him by serving others. (40–42)

In these verses, Jesus has returned from the region of the Gerasenes, which would have been largely Gentile territory. Reference to His return implies a return to predominantly Jewish territory. Upon His return, He is greeted by a large crowd that is waiting for Him. In this crowd is a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue.

Such a position means this man has an elevated social status and likely above-average means. That he falls on his knees before Jesus expresses his humility as he recognizes that Jesus possesses a greater status than himself. The man asks Jesus to come to his house to heal his daughter, a 12-year-old girl who is on the verge of death.

##### See interruptions as opportunities to serve. (43–48)

The Jairus story is quickly interrupted. The text introduces a woman who is described as having suffered from hemorrhages for 12 years. Her condition is best understood in terms of an issue related to menstruation. This condition would make her ritually unclean and prevent her from attending the synagogue or going to the temple. She has sought the help of doctors who have not been able to help her but have instead depleted her of all her resources.

The woman approaches Jesus in the crowd and touches the fringe of his clothing. (See Mark 5 where it clearly communicates that she believes such an action will heal her.) The moment she touches Jesus' clothing, her hemorrhage stops and she is healed. Jesus feels the healing power leave Him and asks who

has touched Him. The woman eventually comes forward and reports what had happened. Jesus then declares that her faith has healed her.

Two important points should be made. First, the cultural expectation is that when the woman touches Jesus, she would make Him ritually unclean. Instead His power, accessed through touching, makes her ritually clean.

Second, it is noteworthy that in this story, Jesus does not make a choice to heal her, but her faith is depicted as the conduit that activates a healing power that resides in Jesus. This does not mean faith guarantees healing, but it does depict faith as a divinely chosen conduit for accessing God's healing power.

##### Don't let interruptions keep you from returning to your original assignment. (49–50, 54–56)

As Jesus continues on His way to heal Jairus' daughter, a messenger comes to report that the girl has died and there is no need to trouble Jesus any longer. However, Jesus tells Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved."

The Greek word translated here as "believe" is the verbal form of the Greek noun for "faith." Thus, in these two intertwined stories, the theme of faith as a conduit for accessing the divine power of healing is greatly emphasized.

Jairus expresses his faith by bringing Jesus to his daughter. Jesus then takes her by the hand and declares, "Child, get up!" At once the girl comes to life and obeys the command.

Again, we should note that as a corpse, the girl is ritually unclean, and anyone who touches her would become temporarily unclean. Yet again Jesus' touch does not result in ritual impurity; it results in life and a state of ritual purity. A common theme is seen again in these intertwined stories.

### For November 16

#### WHEN A TIME OF INACTIVITY SLOWS YOU DOWN Acts 1:4–8, 12–14; 2:1–4

##### Sometimes God places us in a season of waiting. (1:4–8)

After Jesus' resurrection, He instructs His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the promised gift from the Father.

The disciples ask Jesus if this is the time when He will restore the Kingdom to Israel. The restoration they refer to is the long-awaited final age — what Jesus refers to as the Kingdom of God. It is the age spoken of by the prophets in which God will not only restore the fortunes of Israel, but He will restore His entire creation, bringing a new or renewed heavens and earth.

The disciples do not yet understand that God is working in a way radically different from what was expected. Instead of God's Messiah fully bringing about the final age now, He will only inaugurate or begin the final age. Additionally, He will not fully eradicate the present evil age. Thus, these disciples (along with us) live in the reality of both the inaugurated final age and the still-ongoing evil age.

It is only at Jesus' second coming that the evil age will completely end and the future age of restoration will be completely established. Jesus' disciples (along with us) will be witnesses of this final age in the present world, and they will invite people to come live as God's future-age new creations now! This will happen when the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

##### A time of seeming inactivity can be a time for prayer and drawing close to God. (12–14)

After Jesus' ascension, His disciples return from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. The group included the remaining 11 apostles; Jesus' mother, Mary; other women

and Jesus' brothers. During this time of waiting, this group of people devoted themselves to prayer, which offers us a good example of what we should devote ourselves to when God has us in a season of waiting.

##### God will do His work through us in His timing. (2:1–4)

These disciples pray together until the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. This was a Jewish feast that Israel was commanded to celebrate seven weeks after the Passover. The feast commemorates God giving the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the firstfruits of Israel's harvest are given to God. On this day, God gives His Holy Spirit to the Church.

The gift of the Spirit comes with the sound of a violent wind filling the house and divided tongues of fire resting on each believer. The Holy Spirit fills them, and they are able to speak in different languages. The details of this event bear striking parallels to extrabiblical Jewish traditions regarding the giving of the law to Moses, including the sound of a roaring wind, the presence of flames and the law being spoken in languages familiar to multiple groups of people.

The parallels between the two events is significant, as the two gifts represent two covenants. On the day Israel remembers the establishment of the first covenant through the law, God establishes His new covenant through the giving of the Spirit.

This new covenant is not established by the blood of animals but by blood of the Messiah Jesus. It is not facilitated by obedience to the law but rather through life as new creations empowered by God's very Spirit. This new covenant is the covenant of the newly inaugurated final age, and these first believers are the firstfruits of the covenant.

*"He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.'"*

Acts 1:7

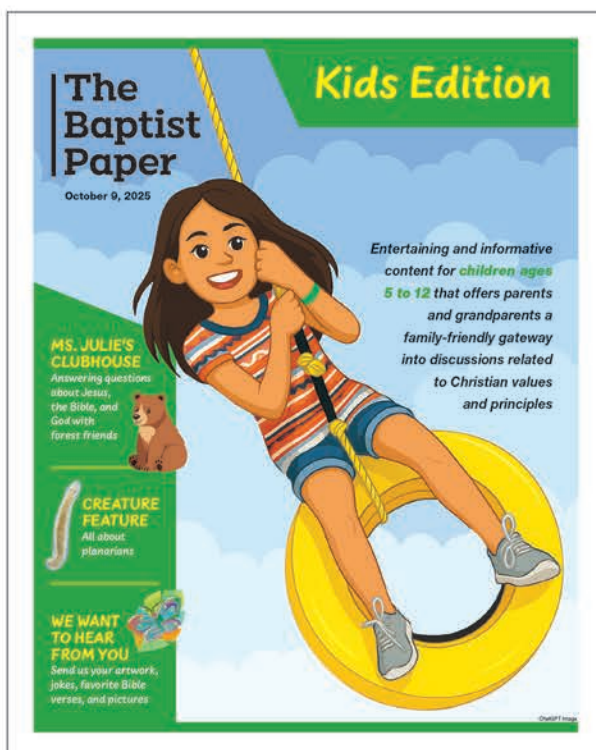


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