

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

Derek Allen (right) visits with Jamie McGlaughn, president of Alabama WMU, prior to the Aug. 11 State Board of Missions meeting in Prattville during which he was named executive director-elect.

‘Deep sense of calling’



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

Allen named incoming leader of Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Derek Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church Tillman’s Corner in Mobile, has been named executive director-elect of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He was approved Aug. 11 during the regularly scheduled SBOM

board of trustees meeting in Prattville.

The Executive Director Transition and Search Team, which presented Allen as their unanimously approved candidate, began their work in February after current SBOM executive director Rick Lance announced he planned to retire in January 2027.

Lance has served in the position for nearly 30 years, coming to the executive director-elect role in July 1998 and then taking the helm in February 1999 after then-executive director Troy Morrison’s retirement.

The call to state missions is “a life-changing experience,” Lance said at his 20th anniversary in the role. As he looks toward his retirement date, he said he is committed to working with SBOM leadership to ensure a smooth and seamless transition.

“This is my commitment to the State Board of Missions and the Alabama Baptist family,” he said. “I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to serve the Lord with Alabama Baptists throughout all these years. I embrace the words

of the Apostle Paul speaking to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:24, ‘I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.’”

Transition and search team

The transition and search team, chaired by Buddy Champion, pastor of FBC Trussville and a past president of the state convention, said they spent months praying, evaluating and seeking the Lord’s direction. The team did not report how many people applied but said they received resumes from “many highly qualified candidates.”

Search team member Neal Hughes noted how smooth the process moved along and how touching it was to experience the consistent presence of the Holy Spirit.

“We were bathing every aspect in prayer, and we could tell Alabama Baptists were praying too,” he said. (See ‘I am deeply humbled,’ page 8)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

Pam and Rick Lance (left) congratulate Derek and Lindsay Allen (right) following the Aug. 11 State Board of Missions meeting in Prattville. The handoff transition period is set for Aug. 31 through Jan. 31.

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Golden anniversary

Felder still going strong after five decades with TAB 'family'

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

A few days after I was named editor-elect of The Alabama Baptist, my friend and co-worker Thomas Felder chased me down to congratulate me — and to remind me that he came with the building. We had a good laugh about how he phrased his desire to continue working with TAB, but he was, and continues to be, right about that. Aside from the first few weeks of its existence, the building at 3310 Independence Drive in Homewood has only known Thomas in the areas of maintenance and janitorial services. In fact, he's the only TAB team member to have served with the past three TAB editors — Hudson Baggett, Bob Terry and yours truly.

When the building opened in the spring of 1976, Thomas interviewed for the position but was not the first choice, at least not for Baggett. However, the office manager at the time had picked Thomas out as her favorite. When the initial hire didn't work out, she quickly called Thomas back.

Little did nearly 28-year-old Thomas know he would be gaining a lifetime family in the Baggetts, as



Thomas Felder remembers polishing the 16-foot board room table for more than 40 years. He's also seen the transformation of that area in the building twice since it was removed.

well as a variety of extended family members with TAB staff members who would come and go through the years.

50 faithful years

As Thomas reached his 50th anniversary with TAB during the summer of 2026, he did so with a new twist to the story — the building was sold to a new owner May 1.

TAB continues to operate out of the second floor of the building that truly is a second home to Thomas, and he continues to take care of the building and grounds.

As the property negotiations were being finalized, I recalled Thomas' words to me a decade ago and made sure to mention to the new owner that Thomas came with the building.

"It's family. You all are family," Thomas shared with me recently. "I don't know what I would do if I wasn't coming by here every day."

And I don't know what we would do without Thomas. He's lived a lot of life with us — joyous moments, tragedies and everything in between.

Thomas encourages us with his laugh, his supportive words and his tenacity. Whether he's three stories high on a ladder, pressure washing the sidewalk or tackling the latest plumbing complication, Thomas



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist
Thomas got tickled when editor-in-chief Jennifer Davis Rash jumped when she looked up and saw him cleaning the outside of her second-story window.

always takes time to check in on us, even while maintaining his no-nonsense, go-getter work style.

He's spent many a midnight hour chatting with whichever one of us he found working late on any given night. He and I have solved a good bit of the world's problems, just like he and another longtime staff member Johnnie Sentell did.

Happy anniversary, Thomas! Thank you for caring so well for all of us at TAB — and the property that houses us — these past 50 years.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist
Thomas wraps up final touches around The Alabama Baptist property April 30, the day before the building was sold to its new owner May 1. He and TAB are still part of the building.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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JENNIFER DAVIS RASH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 15.



GUEST EDITORIAL

for this week's edition of **The Alabama Baptist**

By Chris Crain, BMBA executive director

Birmingham Metro Association marks 20 years of Adopt-A-Station ministry

There are moments in history that shape a generation. For many of us, Sept. 11, 2001, is one of those moments. We remember where we were when we heard the news. We remember the courage of firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel and countless other first responders who ran toward danger while others were running away. Their sacrificial service has never been forgotten.

Five years later, on Sept. 11, 2006, the Birmingham Baptist Association launched Adopt-A-Station as a way for churches to continue remembering those heroes — not simply with words, but through ministry. Today, we are known as Birmingham Metro Baptist Association, and we continue that tradition of service by encouraging churches to adopt police and fire stations in their own communities and intentionally share the love of Christ with those who faithfully serve us every day.

The focus takes place Sept. 6–12, and it doesn't have to be elaborate. A visit with homemade cookies or baked goods, a meal, handwritten notes of encouragement, children's cards or simply taking time to pray with those on duty can make an eternal difference. These public servants often carry tremendous responsibility

and stress, frequently witnessing situations that most of us never experience. A simple act of kindness reminds them they are seen, appreciated and prayed for.

Gospel relationships

Because most stations operate around the clock, consider including every shift in some way. Your church may even discover that a one-week ministry becomes the beginning of a year-round relationship. Some congregations continue visiting throughout the year, providing meals, praying for prayer requests, encouraging families or even beginning Bible studies with interested personnel. What starts with appreciation can grow into genuine gospel relationships.

This is also a wonderful opportunity to involve every generation in your church. Children can create thank-you



Photo courtesy of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association

North Highlands Baptist Church in Hueytown supports a local fire station through the Adopt-A-Station ministry. Michael Wallace (second from left) is pastor.

cards and banners. Student ministries can assemble gift bags. Small groups and Sunday School classes can prepare meals or treats. Senior adults can write notes of encouragement. The entire church family can participate in expressing Christ's

love to those who faithfully protect our communities. For some churches, coordinating with local first responders to cater a meal or bring in pastries is a great way to show thanks.

Jesus taught that even a cup of cold water given in His name matters. This September, let's once again demonstrate the love of Christ through simple acts of gratitude and encouragement. Together, our churches can remind the men and women who serve our communities that they are deeply appreciated — and that the people of God are praying for them.

It's one special way to honor our first responders and shine the light of Christ, especially during this 25th anniversary year of the 9/11 tragedy.

Collecting testimonies, memories from 9/11

As we look toward the upcoming 25th anniversary of the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, The Alabama Baptist team is collecting testimonies, memories and photos from that day and the weeks that followed.

If you have a story to share — were in New York City that day, helped with recovery efforts, served in chaplaincy ministry or

are connected in other ways — please share those with us. Your submissions will be considered for an upcoming print or digital publication.

Email those to news@thealababaptist.org or upload to the submissions portal at tabonline.org. You also may mail your submission to: 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. (TAB Media Group)

Your Voice



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

First person: TAB intern reflects on experience

By Taylor Inmon

The Alabama Baptist

This summer I've been so blessed to intern at TAB Media Group, and it wouldn't have happened without my new church's subscription making me aware of TAB's existence.

My father recently became the senior pastor at Cropwell Baptist Church in Pell City. When I expressed to my parents the difficulty in finding a publishing internship in New York, they suggested reaching out to TAB, whose issues came like clockwork into his office. I am so glad I listened.

Background

I'm currently earning a master's of fine arts in creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. After a year of New York, exciting and enriching as it was, I was looking forward to exploring the greater Birmingham area and spending time with my family this summer.

Though I spent my undergraduate years at the University of Mobile (go Rams!), I consider myself a native of Mississippi and new to this state.

The interesting people I've been able to interview have made me proud to be in such a hub of missions. Hearing their stories, I'm realizing Alabama is filled with churches that are on fire with a vision to reach both their communities and the nations with the good news of Jesus our Savior!

The experience has also opened



Photo courtesy of Taylor Inmon

TAB summer intern Taylor Inmon stands outside Slonim House, the historic graduate studies building at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York.

my eyes to the differences between my primary genre of writing (speculative fiction, short- and long-form) and journalism.

First feature story

In writing my first feature, I waxed lyrical about a minister I had interviewed. We had a great conversation, and I instinctively sought to sway my audience in his favor with emotional and inspirational language.

Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Rash gave me some simple but solid advice: "You don't actually know him, or

if he's earned this subjective praise. Keep to the facts."

I've also begun to learn, very slowly, economy in my writing. Through the aid of Jennifer and director of content Shawn Hendricks, I learned to ask: Does this sentence further the point? No? Then get rid of it, even if it's a fun detail and even if it was emphasized by your interviewee.

I have a long way to go yet in this skillset. But I'm certain that even in my fictional prose, these principles will serve me well.

Welcoming environment

The TAB office environment was welcoming and fun, even with the massive facelift taking place. Shingle-rain and sawdust were staples at the historic TAB building this summer, but everyone kept good attitudes and rapport.

Maggie Evans, director of operations, graciously shared her office with me, and I already consider her a dear friend and valued mentor. With her, I don't have to be the stereotypical, tech-savvy Zoomer! Though she would deny it, she can fix anything.

The workload was balanced and satisfying; I always had something to do but never felt too overloaded. That suited me well and is a credit to the thoughtful delegation skills of our editor in chief.

I recommend this experience to any young writer, no matter their genre. I'm honored to know the good people at The Alabama Baptist.

"In the end, changing your church's name isn't really about changing a name. It's about removing unnecessary barriers so more people understand who you are, what you believe and why your church matters in their lives. That's why it needs to partner well with your thread. The best church names aren't the most creative. They're the clearest," said church branding strategist **Mark MacDonald**.

"From youth sports to fast cars to social media platforms to politics, humans can turn virtually anything into a focus of worship. What we live for becomes our gods. The practices we build to honor these things become our religion. And, as the psalmist said in Psalm 115, we will see ourselves in the image of whatever it is we worship."

John Stonestreet and
Timothy D. Padgett
Colson Center

"When I practice the presence of Christ, seeking to commune with Him through the day, my questions don't always disappear, but I experience "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). The closer I am to Him, the better I can sense His voice and hear His wisdom for my mind and heart."

Jim Denison
Cultural theologian

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“Every adversity is a seminar on the grace of God.”

DAVID L. ALLEN

@DrDavidLAllen on X

“Pray about what God wants you to do,” said **Sandra Pettit**, one of the mentors in the Titus 2 ministry at the EaglePoint campus of First Baptist Church Jacksonville. The ministry seeks to bridge the generation gap by connecting college students at Jacksonville State University with senior adults. “Let Him know you are available. ... You will have to make adjustments in your life to follow God in His work — late night talks, boyfriend breakup consoling, future life counseling, opening your home to meals, parties, sleepovers and spiritual advice. ... One student told us she had prayed for something like this when she started school.”

Senior adults are “looking for fellowship,” said **Scott Morton**, pastor of connections and generational ministries at Westwood Baptist Church in Alabaster, about the church’s senior adult Vacation Bible School. “They’re inviting their friends from other churches. They’re looking to reminisce. ... Our end goal is for them to have memories and to glorify God.”

“Statistically speaking, (Gen Z is) attending church, connecting in small groups and serving as much or more than other generations,” said **Chuck Peters**, director of next gen ministries at Lifeway who oversees Lifeway Students and Lifeway Kids. “But there is a significant gap in theological understanding, spiritual confidence and obedience to God.”

“Jesus treated Judas so well that none of the disciples knew he was the one who betrayed Jesus. That is what loving your enemy truly looks like.”

Benjamin Watson

College football analyst
via Facebook

“I’ve been addicted to worry most of my life. (But now) I’ve been practicing for the past 10 years, saying, ‘Jesus, you have my attention. If I were king, this is how it should go. But ... I’m not the king. ... You are,’” said **Tim Timmons**, a singer, songwriter, podcaster and author of the recently released “Waking Up Again: A Journey of Grief and Gratitude.”



Jamfff

Lass WORDS

BY KEN LASS

The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

Evidence that God is not done with you

I have vivid memories from my childhood and teenage years of my parents taking me along on various vacations and trips. We would attend shows and attractions, all of which were geared to their age group.

I recall scanning all the old folks around me at these functions. All the gray hair, facial lines, loose-fitting clothing, canes, walkers and lots of coughing.

All of them were very kind and friendly, but I remember feeling so out of place among this crowd. I was a young kid. I had nothing in common with these people.

Facing ‘weird’ reality

Those memories came back to me recently. Sharon and I were on a trip out west. We stayed at a large hotel, and when we came down for breakfast in the morning the dining room was quite crowded.

I took a moment to look around as I was eating my scrambled eggs and oatmeal. It dawned on me that I was seeing those same faces.

The gray hair, the facial lines, loose-fitting clothing, canes, walkers and yes, still lots of coughing and throat clearing. Then I came to a sobering realization. These aren’t my parents’ peers. They are mine.

When I got back to the room, I

glanced into the mirror. I looked just like them. Weird. I don’t feel inside as though I should. I’m not ready, but time can’t be stopped. It runs behind your back, silently, without drawing attention. Then one day it jumps out in front of you and takes you by surprise.

Blessings of getting older

I thought about James 4:14, which says, “What is your life? You are a mist that appears for only a short while before it vanishes.”

So true. All of those old folks I saw in my childhood have vanished, as have my parents. It’s my turn now. The gray hair, the lines in my face — I see now they are blessings.

They are evidence that God is not finished with me. He’s not ready to turn me into mist. He’s allowing time for me to be the kind and friendly senior, to smile, to encourage, to support, to comfort.

Your cycle of life is running as well. Probably faster than you comprehend. The face in your mirror can be a good reminder of where God has you in His plan.

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

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

► **Dustin Hammond** (shown here with his wife, Cecilia) is the new pastor of **Uriah First Baptist Church**. He previously served as youth leader at Perdido Baptist Church. He also serves as a chaplain at William F. Green State Veteran's Home, Bay Minette.



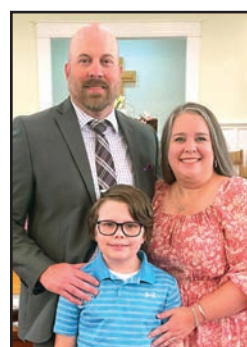
Submitted photo

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

► **Tim McFather** is the new pastor of **West Point Baptist Church, Jackson**. He most recently served as associate pastor of Hill Crest Baptist Church, Anniston. He and his wife, Rhonda, have two children.



Submitted photo



Facebook photo

DEKALB ASSOCIATION

► **Nick Sharp** is the new pastor of **Fyffe First Baptist Church**, where he has been serving as interim pastor. Sharp previously was pastor of Flat Rock Baptist Church, Dawson. He and his wife, Beth, have two sons.



Submitted photo

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

► **Jerry White** is the new pastor of **Coosa Valley Baptist Church, Rainbow City**. White is a salesman and entrepreneur in his community. He and his wife, Kelly, have two children.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Joey Cannady** recently retired as pastor of **Solitude Baptist Church, Albertville**, where he served 28 years. Before Solitude, Cannady was bivocational pastor of Victory Hill Baptist, Albertville. He and his wife, Karen, have two children and two grandchildren.



Facebook photo



Facebook photo

► **Lynn Darnell** is the new pastor of **Solitude Baptist Church, Albertville**, where he has been serving as associate pastor for more than a year. Previously he was pastor of Life Church, Boaz. He and his wife, Lori, have three children.

MOBILE NETWORK

► **Eric Sanford** is the new associate director/church specialist of **Mobile Baptist Network**. Originally from Huntsville, Sanford is experienced in church planting, church revitalization, leadership development and church administration. He will work alongside churches to encourage renewal and revitalization with a special focus on strengthening rural churches and supporting bivocational pastors. He and his wife, Amanda, have two children. Kevin Blackwell is executive director.



SANFORD



Submitted photo

SAND MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

► **Chris Guinn** is the new pastor of **New Home Baptist Church, Pisgah**. Guinn had been serving as transitional pastor of the church. He also was Sand Mountain Baptist Association's director of missions for more than 10 years. He and his wife, Angela, have two daughters and two grandchildren.

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **Keith Frederick** (right) is the new senior pastor of **Son Rise Baptist Church, Odenville**. He and his wife, Wendy, have



Facebook photo

served in many areas of ministry. He was licensed to the ministry 37 years ago at 66th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham.

► **Norman Medders** (left) recently retired as senior pastor of **Son Rise**



Facebook photo

Baptist Church, Odenville, and was named pastor emeritus. He now serves as assistant pastor. Keith Frederick is pastor.

► **Terry Barksdale** is the interim minister of music of **Central Baptist Church, Trussville**. Paul Brasher is pastor.

WEST CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

► **Lee Tate** is retiring as associational missions strategist for **West Central Baptist Association** on Aug. 31. He has been in ministry for 22 years and has served as the associational missionary for the past four and a half years. Tate also is pastor of Benton Baptist Church. He will continue to provide devotions with students at Selma High School as well as teaching Bible lessons at Carver housing development. He and his wife, Sondra, have three children and nine grandchildren.



TATE



Submitted photo

► **Jonathan "JB" Brown** is the new associational missions strategist of **West Central Baptist Association**. Brown previously served as youth and education pastor of Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma. He and his wife, Summer, have three sons.

OTHER

► Members of **The Way, Argo** (formerly **Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville**), held their final worship service June 21 before closing. Members had been renting property, but contents the church owned, such as chairs, pulpit and sound equipment, were donated to a Hispanic church plant and other nearby churches. Deerfoot had been a member of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association, and The Way intended to become a member of St. Clair Baptist Association.

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS

Please send news items to news@thealabamabaptist.org. Submissions that include the following are appreciated:

- complete details of the event, celebration or honor;
- at least one high resolution photo of the event or honoree;
- the name and phone number of a contact person at your church.

Moulton's Old Town Creek Baptist Church clears debt

Members of Old Town Creek Baptist Church in Moulton continue to celebrate the God story they experienced around Easter and highlighted during their May 24 homecoming service. Toward the end of 2025, Ronny Jones, who had only been pastor of Old Town Creek about six months, challenged the membership

to focus on reducing their outstanding debt. Founded in 1818, Old Town Creek's facilities were ready for an upgrade a few years ago, so in 2023, church members took out a loan to cover the remaining amount they needed to build a new worship center with multiple classrooms and a modern kitchen. In late 2025, the debt still owed

hovered around \$130,000. Jones thought if everyone would double their tithes for a few months, then it could be significantly reduced by Easter, which was April 5 this year. Church members heard the challenge, responded and didn't merely reduce the debt — they paid it in full. And, thus, the homecoming theme was born — Paid in Full.

The church celebrated with an old-fashioned Sunday worship service and a note-burning ceremony that afternoon. The celebration included former interim pastor Tim Keenum as the guest preacher and dinner on the grounds.

"We are so blessed with many faithful believers and givers," Jones said. Old Town Creek members watched God work and are excited to share the story of what He has done and what He will do through them as they anticipate how the freed-up funds can be used for missions and ministry efforts. (The Alabama Baptist)



Photo by Brianne Roberts

Burning the final mortgage note of Old Town Creek Church are (l to r) deacons Barry LouAllen, Daniel Duke, Wendell Mitchell, Kenneth Hanvy and Johnny Riggs, along with pastor Ronny Jones (holding microphone).

**"We are so blessed
with many faithful believers and givers."**

Ronny Jones
Pastor, Old Town Creek Baptist Church



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Calling 'clear' for Allen's family too

Derek Allen's wife, Lindsay, said she and their five children have realized the Lord working in their hearts regarding Derek's call to serve Alabama Baptists as executive director of the State Board of Missions.

"The Lord has graciously made this calling clear to me for some time now as I have witnessed both Derek's leadership and his burden for our state to grow," she said. "The Lord has given him a voice of

influence with pastors, and he has stewarded that voice well and with integrity by encouraging Alabama Baptist pastors.

"In our life and ministry, we have been in the habit of asking God to do things in our lives that can only be explained by His hand at work so that we could never be tempted to take credit for it," Lindsay added. "I believe this is another one of those times." (Jennifer Davis Rash)

'I am deeply humbled by the opportunity,' Allen says

(continued from page 1)

Allen, who is a native of Etowah County and served as a church planter in Miami prior to joining the staff of FBC Tillman's Corner in 2019, said, "I am deeply humbled by the opportunity to be considered for this assignment.

"Over the past several years, the Lord has worked in my heart and life to create a deep sense of calling to serve as the next executive director of Alabama Baptists," he said. "I accepted the nomination because I believe it would be disobedient for me not to pursue the opportunity. At the same time, I did not go into the (State Board) meeting presuming upon the outcome.

"I trust the Lord's wisdom and sovereignty over this process, and I receive the

decision with gratitude and confidence in the Lord's direction for our family of churches," Allen shared with The Alabama Baptist.

"I have a deep love for Alabama Baptists because this convention has played such a significant role in my own

life and ministry," he said. "Alabama Baptists invested in my family, taught me the gospel, helped prepare me for ministry and supported us when the Lord called us to plant a church in Miami."

A Jacksonville State University alum, Allen holds



Photo by Doug Rogers/Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Jennifer Davis Rash of TAB Media Group interviews Derek Allen on Aug. 11 about his faith journey and his anticipated first steps in the new role, which includes "a lot of coffee visits and listening."

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“With a deep commitment to the local church, a love for Alabama and a passion to see the gospel reach the nations, I seek to serve Alabama Baptists by strengthening churches, equipping leaders and advancing cooperative mission efforts across the state and around the world.”

Derek Allen
SBOM executive director-elect

multiple advanced degrees from three Southern Baptist seminaries — New Orleans, Southern and Midwestern — including two doctor of philosophy degrees.

Next steps

“With the State Board affirming my nomination, I will step into the role with tremendous humility and a deep sense of responsibility,” he said. “I believe our primary task is to strengthen Baptist churches in Alabama and faithfully steward the

cooperative missions giving of Alabama Baptists so that we can advance the gospel in Alabama, across North America and around the world.”

The Allens were presented first to the SBOM executive committee and then to the full board for a time of discussion prior to the vote.

The SBOM executive director is elected by SBOM’s board of trustees and does not require a vote by the messengers at the state convention annual meeting.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

Rick Lance leads the Transition and Search Team in prayer over Derek Allen and his family following the Aug. 11 vote naming him executive director-elect of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Allen will operate under the title executive director-elect for the next five months as he and Lance shift into transition mode.

By nature of the position, SBOM’s executive director also serves as treasurer of the state convention. Lance

will retain the treasurer role through his retirement date of Jan. 31, 2027.

Read more about Allen and the election process on pages 10 and 11.

A podcast interview where Allen shares about his faith journey, how he

realized the calling to this position, what he sees as his biggest assignment the first few months and a God story about one of the obvious confirmations he and Lindsay received can be found at youtube.com/tabmediagroup.

FREE
2026

SINGFEST

Senior Adult Singin'

SEPTEMBER 8 - Parkway BC, Auburn

SEPTEMBER 15 - Gilliam Springs BC, Arab



For more information contact State Missionary Frank Jones at (334) 613-2221 or (205) 393-7020, fjones@alsbom.org. Event is FREE, registration is preferred, visit alsbom.org/singfest.



These events are made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



From the Executive Director Transition and Search Team

For the past several months, the Transition and Search Team for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has diligently pursued the significant responsibility entrusted to us. We have met for countless hours, sought wisdom from trusted leaders across the nation, received resumés from many highly qualified candidates, and listened carefully as they shared their hearts regarding this ministry opportunity. It would be difficult to calculate the number of emails exchanged, the miles traveled, or the hours invested throughout this process. More importantly, however, it would be impossible to measure the countless hours spent in prayer — individually, personally, and together through our weekly Zoom meetings — as we sought to discern God’s good and perfect will. Throughout this journey, we have been deeply encouraged by the exceptional quality of the men who expressed an interest in serving in this role. We are convinced many of these candidates possessed the gifts and character necessary to provide outstanding leadership and to build upon the remarkable legacy of this ministry. Yet we also recognized the Lord has already prepared one man for this assignment. That realization made our task both more difficult and more dependent upon prayerful submission to His leadership. Early in our process, we identified the qualities we believed should characterize the next Executive Director. We agreed our next leader must be a man known for:

- ▶ A love for Jesus and His will
- ▶ Humility
- ▶ Ability to lead, develop others

- ▶ Deep commitment to CP
 - ▶ Integrity
 - ▶ Servant-hearted leadership
 - ▶ A sterling reputation
 - ▶ Develop, cast vision
 - ▶ Effective communication skills
 - ▶ Administrative wisdom and organizational acumen
 - ▶ A long-term perspective
 - ▶ Freedom from political agendas
 - ▶ Grace toward all people
 - ▶ The ability to unite others
 - ▶ Wisdom in addressing challenges and opportunities
- After months of prayer, careful evaluation, and seeking the Lord’s direction, the Transition and Search Team is united in our

recommendation to present **Dr. Derek Allen** as our unanimous recommendation to serve as the next Executive Director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. We believe Dr. Allen possesses the biblical character, proven leadership, and God-given vision necessary to lead Alabama Baptists into the future. We commend him to you with confidence and ask that you prayerfully join us in seeking God’s continued blessing and direction. Sincerely,

Executive Director Transition and Search Team

Buddy Champion, *Chairman*
Neal Hughes, *Associate Chairman*
Ben Hayes, *Secretary*
Jim Cooley
Chad Hess
Allen Singley
Derek Staples
Ben Stubblefield
James Watkins

Voting Ex-Officio Members:
Jarman Leatherwood, *Convention President*
Craig Carlisle, *Immediate Past President*
Jamie McGlaughn, *Alabama WMU President*
Jim Graham, *SBOM Chair*

“Our Search Team is presenting Dr. Derek Allen as our recommendation to serve as Executive Director, with our confidence that the Lord will use his godly leadership to guide Alabama Baptists into a future generation of Kingdom service.”

Dr. Jim Cooley
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Birmingham



Photo by Doug Rogers/Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Derek Allen selected as executive director-elect

Since 2019, Derek has served as senior pastor of First Baptist Tillman’s Corner in Mobile, where he is passionate about making disciples, preaching and teaching the Word of God, and helping people grow in missional living. Born on August 7, 1980, and raised in Etowah County, Derek made a profession of faith in Christ in 1986. He sensed a call to ministry in 1996 and has spent his life serving the church through preaching, leadership development, and missions. Before coming to Tillman’s Corner, he served as a church planter in Miami, Florida, where he spent seven years making disciples and developing leaders in a diverse urban context. Derek holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Jacksonville State University (2003), a Master of Divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (2006), a Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (2011), a Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2025), and a Master of Theology in Research Language from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2026). He and his wife, Lindsay, were married in 2003 and are the grateful parents of five children: Jackson, Meredith, Sawyer, Elizabeth, and Marshall. Outside of ministry, Derek enjoys dating his wife, spending time with his children, reading and writing, running, and playing basketball.

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Tillman’s Corner, Mobile, Ala., 2019–Present

- ▶ Developed a comprehensive missions strategy
- ▶ Led the church to engage in local church planting and replanting
- ▶ Served as the sending church for a church planter
- ▶ Recruited, funded, and oversaw a church planter for a Spanish-speaking congregation
- ▶ Began a Spanish-speaking church planter residency in partnership with the new Spanish congregation, which resulted in four additional church plants
- ▶ Adopted a dying church, trained and sent 50 adults to lead a replant effort, and recruited a pastor, resulting in a healthy and growing congregation
- ▶ Created long-term partnerships with NAMB church planters in Atlanta and Miami and long-term international partnerships in Indonesia, Chile, and Toronto
- ▶ Restructured the staff to include a full-time Missions Pastor
- ▶ Designed and implemented missional strategy for neighborhoods and workplaces
- ▶ Started Mission Mobile, an annual week of concentrated mission work across Mobile County
- ▶ Saw significant increases in missions giving, involvement
- ▶ Led the church through the COVID-19 crisis
- ▶ Experienced record levels of budget and missions giving and 20% attendance growth in the past two years

Planter and Lead Pastor, Christ Centered Church, Miami, Fla., 2013–2019

- ▶ Experienced steady, healthy growth and witnessed hundreds of professions of faith and over 100 baptisms (mostly adults)
- ▶ Helped launch four additional churches during the first 4 years and managed 2,000 short-term mission volunteers



DEREK AND LINDSAY ALLEN Photo by Nathan Griffin

Executive Pastor, Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Warrior, Ala., 2010–2013

- ▶ Led a revitalization process, and the Lord blessed with new life and substantial growth (35% in one year)
- ▶ Established a mission partnership with an unreached people group in West Africa
- ▶ Reduced staff costs from 54% to 39% of the budget while increasing missions and debt retirement

Senior Pastor, Riverbend Baptist Church, Gadsden, Ala., 2007–2009

- ▶ Led local evangelism and mission efforts, including a weekly backyard Bible club at a local apartment complex
- ▶ Led North American mission trips to New Orleans and Bloomington, Indiana
- ▶ Led an international mission trip to Ukraine

Bivocational Pastor, Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Gadsden, Ala., 2004–2007

- ▶ Led a revitalization effort that resulted in a 30% increase in attendance and saw 25 people make public professions of faith, the first in over 4 years, and 18 people baptized, the first in over 8 years
- ▶ Hosted the first VBS in several years, engaging 130 children and youth from the community

In addition, as a teenager and college student, served as a summer missionary (Etowah Baptist Association), pastoral intern (Ivatee Baptist Church), student minister (Union #3 Baptist Church), and interim pastor (Mt. Carmel Baptist Church).

DENOMINATIONAL EXPERIENCE
Leadership Roles at Each Level

- ▶ Associations, State Board of Missions, state convention, and North American Mission Board

ENDORSEMENTS

“Having served alongside Derek Allen for many years, I have seen him demonstrate excellence as a leader of leaders resulting from ministerial and pastoral experience that includes associational and state level experience in Baptist Campus Ministries, church planting and revitalization, administration, disaster relief, and global missions outreach. Dr. Allen leads by example, and his commitment to his family and to others through Great Commission Ministries is eclipsed only by his personal devotion to Christ as his Savior and Lord.”

REV. MEL JOHNSON

Retired State and Associational Missionary and Pastor

“I could not be more excited to see Dr. Derek Allen elected as the next Executive Director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Derek is a man of deep faith and unwavering conviction whose love for Christ, His Church, and the lost has shaped a lifetime of faithful ministry. His exemplary service as a faithful church planter and pastor, his steadfast devotion to his wife and family, and his genuine love for pastors across the Alabama Baptist Convention have uniquely prepared him for this important calling.”

DR. CHARLES SMITH

President, University of Mobile

“I have had the privilege of knowing Pastor Derek Allen for many years and serving alongside him as a fellow church planter in Miami. Derek is a gifted teacher, a visionary leader who faithfully develops other leaders, and a man with a deep passion for the nations. Most importantly, he is a man of proven character, a devoted husband and father whose life is marked by humility, maturity, and integrity. I am confident that, by God’s grace, he will faithfully and effectively serve Alabama Baptists.”

PASTOR JOSÉ ABELLA

Vice President, Send Network Español, North American Mission Board

Shelby Baptists partner with Alaska church

By Taylor Inmon

The Alabama Baptist

Shelby Baptist Association, led by mission strategist Ric Camp, ministered to the people of Alaska this summer in an ongoing partnership with Greater Friendship Baptist Church, Anchorage.

This marked the association's third project with GFBC, which is widely recognized as the first African American church incorporated into the Southern Baptist Convention and the first African American church in Alaska. This year the church celebrated its 75th anniversary.

Vision clinics

The team of 27 Shelby Baptists, four Sand Mountain Baptist optometrists and five representatives of Vision Service Plan set up free vision clinics in the community from June 24 to 27.

Sonja Bennett from North Shelby Baptist Church in Birmingham recalled opportunities for gospel conversations while people



Missions volunteers from Shelby Baptist Association partner with Vision Service Plan, serving the Anchorage community with free eye exams and glasses.

waited their turn to receive an eye exam. When finished, VSP and the optometrists had seen a total of 338 patients, and more than 200 new pairs of glasses were distributed.

Other teams in the group constructed quadplexes, transitional homes for low

income families in need. GFBC and the Shelby Baptist team also held a Friendship Day block party in a park near the church building.

Additional projects

Throughout the earlier parts of the week, the team

provided some light landscaping, repairs and cleaning at Greater Friendship's building in preparation for the anniversary celebration.

Camp preached during the July 28 Sunday service, and the team and congregation worshipped together. Later in the afternoon dur-

ing the anniversary party, pastor Michael Bunton and his wife Nathalie received plaques on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, the North American Mission Board and the SBC.

'God's blessing'

GFBC's greatest obstacle is having enough space, Camp noted.

"Through God's blessing, they've outgrown their current facility [but] they make a small building work for them," Camp said.

Reflecting on the state of missions in Alaska, Camp describes the Last Frontier as "right on the line of being an unreached people group in our own nation."

Thirteen states the size of Alabama could fit within the borders of Alaska, Camp said. The entire state has approximately 80 Baptist churches, while Shelby County alone has 63. One fruit of these trips, he said, is the greater awareness Alabama Baptists now have of the needs of Alaska Baptists.

New foundation will offer faith-based student loans

The Covenant Scholars Foundation has officially launched as an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to faith-based higher education.

In a news release, the foundation said it seeks to provide "innovative financing solutions" to students and families seeking "high-quality, values-driven education."

CSF said its loan funding is structured with an emphasis on transparent terms, strong stewardship, competitive interest rates and more favorable borrower terms than GradPLUS, ParentPLUS and many traditional private loans.

"At a time when many students face increasing financial pressure and uncertainty, CSF introduces a model that aligns financial support with institutional mission," the Foundation said. "The Foundation's structure emphasizes access, sustainability, stewardship and partnership with institutions committed to student success and integrity."

CSF loans are available immediately for students attending an eligible institution during the fall 2026 semester.

For more information, go to covenantscholars.org. (Covenant Scholars Foundation)



EQUIP
Youth Apologetics Conference 2026



Erik Reed



Ted Kluck



Journey Worship Co.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

 **UNION UNIVERSITY**

Jackson, Tennessee
Carl Grant Events Center
9:00 am – 3:00 pm



\$25
registration,
lunch
& t-shirt

Voice to the persecuted

'Pure human trafficking': 1.6 million children stolen from Ukraine since 2014

In Russia's catalog of kidnapped Ukrainian children, prospective guardians can choose preferred hair and eye color. Teenage girls are photographed in seductive attire.

"It's pure human trafficking," said a representative of Save Ukraine, the leading organization working to rescue Ukraine's missing children.

Typically, young boys are trained as Russian military to likely fight against their own country, and girls are prostituted — forced into marriages — as early as age 13 to produce large Russian families.

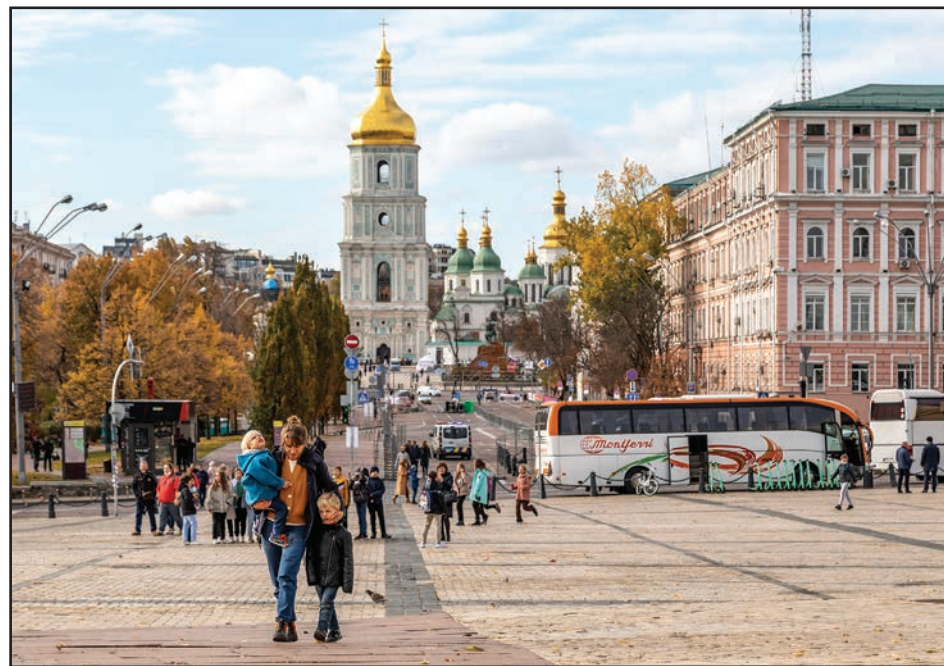
Russia's war on Ukraine has ushered in a war on Ukrainian children and families, encompassing the kidnapping and "Russification" of children to alleviate a decreasing birthrate in Russia, where there were nearly 400 abortions for every 1,000 live births in 2020.

The kidnappings amount to genocide, advocates said, citing the Genocide Convention and the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Documentary series

The atrocity is among many Russian crimes explored in the new five-part documentary series "Faith in War," produced and directed by The Fourth Sign founder Colby Barrett along with Steven Moore, who together have documented Russia's persecution of Christians in Ukraine.

"The Stolen Children: The Search for Ukraine's Abducted Children," tells the individual stories of several children Save Ukraine has rescued from Russia, detailing emotional and physical abuse including beatings and electrical shock, forced indoctrination



IMB photo

of Russian values and coerced repudiation of their Ukrainian citizenship.

"It's really hard to find these

kids. We still desperately need information ... and Russia refused to give information to Ukrainian authorities or anyone. Where are our children? Because 1.6 million children we lost due to occupation of territories for 11 years of war, and only 20,000 have been identified," Save Ukraine Founder Mykola Kuleba said in "The Stolen Children."

Save Ukraine and other Ukrainian authorities have documented the kidnapping of 19,546 Ukrainian children from occupied territories and cities Russia has invaded since February

2022, but scores of others have likely been abducted with no credible paper trails.

Stolen Children also spotlights

the advocacy of Meaghan Mobbs, a combat veteran and West Point graduate who is investigating the stories of kidnapped Ukrainian children as president of the R.T. Weatherman Foundation that has provided humanitarian aid in Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion.

"Rather than improve lives for Russians and increase birthrates, Putin's plan is to steal

Ukrainian children and force them to bear large Russian families," Mobbs said in The Stolen Children.

Other episodes in the series are "Safe Ground," focused on ef-

orts to remove deadly landmines in Ukraine, rebuild communities and rehabilitate veterans; "Even in the Ruins," following chaplain Mark Sergeev's efforts to rebuild his father's church and home that Russia destroyed; "No Surrender," spotlighting pastor Yuri Babinets' struggle to continue ministering in Kyiv amid the war; and "Soldiers of Light," the story of U.S. Special Forces veteran and missionary Christian Hickey, who has ministered on Ukraine's frontlines.

Unshaken faith

"These episodes are about far more than war. They're about people whose faith has remained unshaken in the face of extraordinary adversity," Faith in War series producer Barrett said in a press release announcing the series. "Vladimir Putin and the Russian military are trying to break their spirit. Instead, their faith gives them the strength to endure and to serve.

"Whether it's a pastor rebuilding after losing everything, a family answering a call to serve or parents fighting to bring stolen children home, these are stories of courage, sacrifice and hope that deserve to be seen around the world."

Moore, executive producer of the series, said the series gives a valuable voice to the persecuted.

"For too long, Russia's campaign against people of faith in Ukraine has unfolded largely out of public view," Moore said. "This series gives a voice to the pastors, families and volunteers who continue to stand firm in their faith despite extraordinary persecution."

The series is available on the Faith Under Siege YouTube channel and at FaithatWar.com. It is also available for streaming on TBN+. (Baptist Press)



Photo courtesy of The Stolen Children
Russian soldiers kidnapped Illya, rescued by his grandmother Olena, after Russian soldiers killed his mother and injured him in an airstrike in 2022.

UPCOMING EVENTS
sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering

The legacy of two spiritual giants. Two periods of time. Two lives well lived for one mission — the Great Commission. These two women — Kathleen Mallory and Dr. Martha Myers — are the namesakes for the offering that helps support these five Great Commission Ministries of Alabama Baptists: Alabama WMU, disaster relief, church planting, partnership missions and church revitalization. The goal for this year’s Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering is \$1.2 million, and the Week of Prayer focus for the offering is set for Sept. 13–20.

For resources, visit myers-mallory.org or scan the code below with your smartphone’s camera.



Mallory — who served as leader of Alabama WMU from 1909 to 1912 and then head of national WMU for 36 years before she died in 1954 — lived a humble lifestyle so she could give as

much money as possible to missions, said Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU. Myers, who grew up in an Alabama Baptist church, served 25 years as a medical missionary in Yemen before being killed by an extremist there in 2002. The offering honors their legacy by funding these five strategic priorities that strengthen missions and ministries in Alabama and beyond. For more information and resources, including recently added Week of Prayer videos and a downloadable missions study for all ages, visit myers-mallory.org.

Special Needs Roundtable

Don’t miss this great online training opportunity designed for anyone who has a role in special needs ministry. The Special Needs Roundtable Via Zoom will be Sept. 10, 7–8 p.m., online. The event will be led by Sandra Peoples, a recognized

leader in the area of special needs ministry. In addition to her academic work, she serves as disability ministry consultant for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, helping churches across the state start and strengthen disability ministries. Sandra’s commitment to dis-

ability inclusion is primarily shaped by personal experience: she grew up with a sister with Down syndrome and is the mother of a son with level 3 autism. To register for this significant event, please visit alsbom.org/special-needs-roundtable.

Church Personnel Workshop set for September 3 in Prattville

The Church Personnel Workshop will be held Sept. 3, 9 a.m.–noon, at the State Board of Missions in Prattville. This free workshop will cover all aspects

of the work of a church personnel team, including staffing and compensation considerations, personnel policies needed and basic employment law.

For more information or to register, visit alsbom.org/personnel. You will have the option of attending in person or via Zoom.

WORD search

- BLESSINGS

COMPASSION

CONTENTMENT

EQUITY

ETERNAL

FAITHFUL

FAVOR

FORGIVEN

FOUNTAIN

GENEROUS

GENTLE

HONEST

HOPEFUL

INTEGRITY

JOYFUL

JUSTICE
- KINDNESS

LIFE

LOVE

MERCY

MODERATION

OBEDIENCE

PATIENCE

PEACE

REFUGE

RIGHTEOUS

SALVATION

SHIELD

STRENGTH

TREE

TRUTH

UPRIGHT

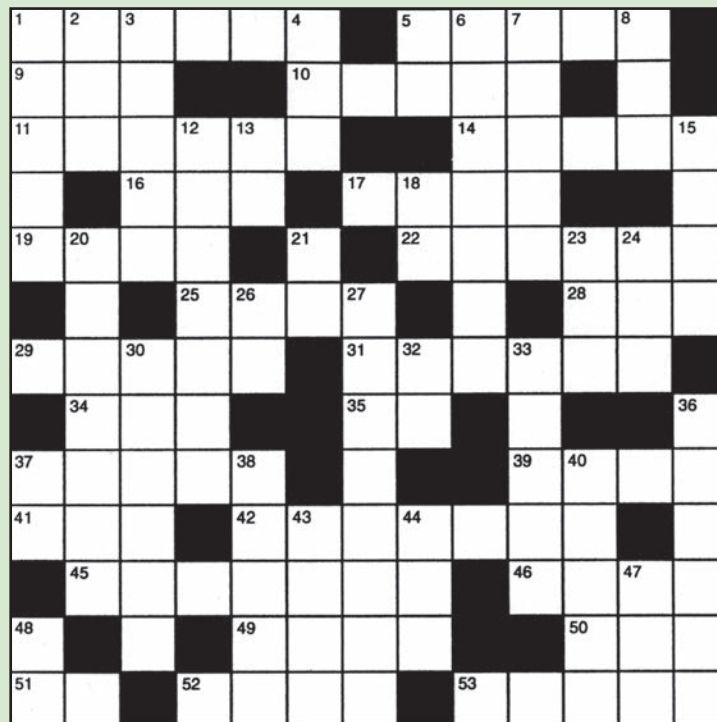
Q T D L U F Y O J X Z B L N K
D M G E N T L E E N M T H I S
B C E R G W D V Z S F C E A T
T R C E Q L O T U A I C D T R
H T I F F L D O I N N N Z N E
G L T U W J R T T E N H S U N
I M S G Y E H E I Z E A V O G
R S U E N F G D L R L F I F T
P G J E U R E Z H V R S I R H
U N G L I B T H A O S R I L H
B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

“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.”
PROVERBS 25:28

CHRISTIAN Crossword

ACROSS

1. Their ____ shall continue forever. (Ps. 49:11)
5. They went up into an ____ room. (Acts 1:13)
9. There was no room for them in the _____. (Luke 2:7)
10. He kept him as the ____ of his eye. (Deut. 32:10)
11. Behold, it is a stiff ____ people. (Ex. 32:9)
14. Peter, Peter, Pumpkin ____.
16. A cover or top.
17. For we have seen His ____ in the east. (Matt. 2:2)
19. The ____ is the Word of God. (Luke 8:11)
22. As they sailed he fell _____. (Luke 8:23)
25. Thou art not a ____ of the law. (James 4:11)
28. A large vessel for dyeing quantities of fabric.
29. Sticky, yellowish sap from pine trees.
31. Resurrection Day.
34. Joshua, the son of _____. (Ex. 33:11)
35. Frequency Modulation. (abbr.)
37. Under His ____ shalt thou trust. (Ps. 91:4)
39. Whosoever shall compel thee to go a _____. (Matt. 5:41)
41. The beginning and the _____. (Rev. 21:6)
42. ____ believed God. (Rom. 4:3)
45. The angel ____ was sent. (Luke 1:26)
46. Why do the heathen ____? (Ps. 2:1)
49. Measurement of the surface of a closed figure.



By Jeanne McDougall

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50. Precious stone. first day. (Gen. 1:5)
 51. Before Christ. (abbr.)
 52. Baby goats.
 53. Learn first to show ____ at home. (1 Tim. 5:4)
- ## DOWN
1. He maketh my feet like ____ feet. (Ps. 18:33)
 2. I and my father are _____. (John 10:30)
 3. Your mother's brother.
 4. Opposite of "happy."
 5. Opposite of "down."
 6. The one who ____ God will escape her. (Eccles. 7:26, CSB)
 7. He had found one ____ of great price. (Matt. 13:46)
 8. The loving hind and pleasant _____. (Prov. 5:19)
 12. Joking, teasing.
 13. Edward's nickname.
 15. Attentive.
 18. Thank you in bank talk. (abbr.)
 20. ____ and the morning were the
 21. ____ ye kind. (Eph. 4:32)
 23. Adam's wife.
 24. Incline thine ____ unto wisdom. (Prov. 2:2)
 26. Opposite of "off."
 27. Sports officials.
 30. The Lord's Day.
 32. Morning. (abbr.)
 33. Judah's daughter-in-law. (Gen. 38:11)
 36. That which was spoken by ____ the prophet. (Matt. 2:17; variant of name)
 37. You and I.
 38. The name of Abram's wife was _____. (Gen. 11:29)
 40. God created man in His own _____. (Gen. 1:27)
 43. Flee as a ____ to your mountain. (Ps. 11:1)
 44. Alabama. (abbr.)
 47. ____ thee behind me, Satan. (Luke 4:8)
 48. Tuberculosis. (abbr.)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.



UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Pastors' Wives Retreat

This year's Pastors' Wives Retreat will take place Sept. 18–19 at WorldSong Missions Place in Cook Springs.

Trish Jackson and her sister-in-law Judi Jackson will lead on the theme of "Beautiful." Judi's husband Allen just retired from pastoring Dunwoody Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Pastors' wives carry both visible and invisible burdens. Come away for personal time with the Lord, reflection, and spiritual refreshment with other women who understand your unique challenges.

Together we will strengthen skills for navigating conflict with grace; reinforce identity in Christ over role in ministry; process pain in a healthy,

To register, visit **AlabamaWMU.org/ministerswives**, or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



Biblical way; and learn to guard hearts without building walls.

For schedule and pricing information and to register, visit **AlabamaWMU.org/ministerswives**.

Questions? Call 334-613-2224 or email tjackson@alsbom.org.

Get Acquainted Day is September 1

Don't miss this opportunity for pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their

position or who have never attended a Get Acquainted Day to meet your state missionaries and become familiar with all the ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions as well as our larger convention family.

The day will also include time to hear from Executive Director Rick Lance and meet Executive Director-Elect Derek Allen. Lunch will be served. The day begins at 9:30 a.m. with check-in starting at 9 and will conclude no later than 3 p.m. Register today at alsbom.org/gad!

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



JOIN US FOR *Preview Day*



NOBTS: Oct. 23 | Leavell College: Sep. 4

Preview Day at New Orleans Seminary and Leavell College is a great opportunity to visit campus, meet our professors, and experience New Orleans firsthand.

Scan the QR code to register!



TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Central Heights Baptist Church in NW Lauderdale County, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Please send resumé to: duane.keener@lcschools.org.

PASTOR

Brent Baptist Church in Bibb County, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a part-time pastor (up to 20 hours a week) who has a heart for missions, outreach and growing disciples. Please email resumé to our church office at brentbaptist.office@gmail.com.

PASTOR

First Baptist Church-Boyle, Mississippi, is searching for a full-time pastor. A resumé may be sent to: fbcboyle1@outlook.com addressed to Pastor Search Committee.

PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Shell Banks Baptist Church on Fort Morgan Road is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: shellbanks7136@yahoo.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama, is seeking experienced bivocational pastor for congregation of about forty. Conservative with traditional worship and music. Respond to: Search Committee, 3301 Spring Ave. SW, Decatur, AL 35603.

MUSIC MINISTER

Part-time music minister position. Montevallo First Baptist Church, Montevallo, Alabama. Blended service. For more information, contact pastor@montevallofbc.com.

INTERIM MINISTER OF MUSIC

Hillwood Baptist Church is currently seeking an interim minister of music. Send resumé to: Melodie Valentine, Chairman of Personnel, 15126 Balsam Drive SE, Huntsville, AL 35803.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER

The Hueytown Baptist Church is a mid-sized congregation located in the Birmingham metro area. We are in search of a bivocational youth minister to join our staff, and work with our youth team and volunteers to help the youth of our church and commu-

nity become, grow and engage as disciples of Jesus Christ. Interested applicants may reply to: office@hueytownbaptist.com.

CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR OR MINISTER

First Baptist Church of Remlap is seeking a part-time children's director or minister. If you or someone you know may be interested and would like more information, please contact our committee chairman, Lamar Wilson, at klwilson1950@gmail.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

FBC Birmingham is seeking a full-time staff member, with experience in Shelby Next systems preferred. Duties include, but not limited to, accounts payable, payroll, general ledger and processing contributions. Please send resumé and cover letter to: Cyndy James, cjames@fbcbm.org.

REMOTE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Carlos M Consulting is seeking a motivated remote administrative assistant to provide administrative support, manage emails, coordinate appointments and prepare documents. If you are organized, responsive and possess strong communication skills, we'd love to hear from you. Flexible hours, remote position, immediate consideration. Part-time, \$640 weekly. Apply now. Resumecarlosconsulting@gmail.com or text 662-276-1267.

BUSINESS

STEEPLES, ETC.

No job too big or too small. Call for free on-site consultation. Toll-free 1-888-699-9679 or Alabama local 205-699-9679. Ask for the owner, Terry Barnes. Visit gallery at leedsstainedglass.com.

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~A resource for congregational vitality~

Launching a new congregation, part 2 — the deacons say, 'No'

Brian was disappointed, but not surprised. "It was not totally unexpected," he told Trip. "When I was pastor of another congregation where we talked about launching a new congregation, we got the same first response."

Trip was not yet rational about it. "I could not believe what I heard expressed in that room!"

"It was an uninformed response," Brian said, "but it was the first time many deacons had thought about this. They had no background for the discussion. If we want to revisit this, we will need to set a foundation for it."

Still unsettled about what happened with the deacons, Trip asked, "What would that mean?"

Trip and Brian brainstormed several approaches. One held great promise.

Igniting spiritual passion

Annually, the deacons as a group engage in a missions project. They help a struggling congregation or a smaller membership congregation do things they cannot do for themselves. Often it is some type of repair or renovation project. At times it is to help them conduct an event for which they do not have enough people to serve as volunteers.

It can be something for children, youth or adults. It can be as simple as handling the meals for a church event, such as a retreat, homecoming or senior adult banquet.

But they have never done something with a new congregation during its preparation and launch phases. Thus, many of them did not know what it was like to experience the spiritual passion present in people launching a new congregation. They did not realize it can be positively contagious.

Trip and Brian both thought engaging in a hands-on experience with a launching congregation might be the perfect next step.

Brian suggested Trip contact the missions strategist for their association and see about the possibilities. At the last association executive board meeting, the missions strategist had talked about launching one new congregation each year in their association of 42 congregations. The thought was to select a setting where the population was steadily growing.

It turned out when Brian contacted the

associational leader, an opportunity was coming up the next month. A core group for a congregation ready for their public launch had secured a temporary meeting place.

However, it was going to take a lot of volunteer work to get the facilities in shape: cleaning up, some repairs, painting the entire building inside and out, decorating the worship center and classrooms, setting up furniture, landscaping around the building and many other things.

Enlisting volunteer help

The dozen households launching the new congregation needed a lot of volunteer help, including prayer walking the community and organizing community events in the four weeks before the first worship service.

It was a rush to get the deacons to approve the project and get organized for this missions effort. The deacons included people with exceptional skills needed by the new congregation. Many of their spouses also got involved.

The best part of the experience was the people they met. Several deacons and spouses commented they had never seen a group of people so spiritually passionate about the good news of Jesus.

Hearing this, Trip and Brian looked at one another and smiled. They could not wait to hear the deacons debrief this experience at their next meeting.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George Bullard spent five decades in Baptist congregational and denominational ministry. His min-

istry roles included three churches, three associations, three state conventions and one national entity. In 2022, he began writing as a columnist for TAB Media Group's publication The Baptist Paper. Bullard continues to serve as a strategic thinking mentor for Christian leaders through his ForthTelling Innovation ministry. TAB Media Group is the publisher for his ForthTelling Innovation book series — available on Amazon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.
Professor of Historical Theology and Director of Intercultural Studies, University of Mobile



For August 30

REDEMPTION Ruth 3:8–13; 4:13–17

The story of Ruth beautifully depicts the complexity of God’s providence. From an uncertain future to a future secured by the redeeming grace of God, Ruth’s story affirms that God’s promises and love are immeasurable.

The story of Ruth foreshadows God’s redemptive plan through Christ. We learn that sin from your past doesn’t dispel hope from your future.

Future Unclear (3:8–10)

Encouraged by Ruth’s days in Boaz’s field, Naomi instructed Ruth in the way she should go to ensure a brighter future. Ruth carefully followed Naomi’s directions to solicit redemption by Boaz, while the Lord had prepared Boaz to redeem Ruth.

Naomi instructed Ruth to put on her best appearance and to propose marriage to Boaz by using an ancient Near Eastern custom. Since Boaz was a generation older than Ruth (2:8), this overture would indicate Ruth’s desire to marry Boaz, which the older, gracious Boaz would not have initiated with a younger woman.

Ruth righteously appealed to Boaz using the language of Boaz’s earlier prayer (2:12) to marry her according to the levirate custom (Deut. 25:5–10).

This custom stated that when a husband died without children, the nearest brother-in-law might be asked to marry his brother’s widow to give her security in the name of the deceased brother.

Since both of Elimelech’s sons were dead, Ruth couldn’t ask a brother-in-law. So she asked Boaz, another kinsman redeemer in the family, to serve as her redeemer.

Boaz commended Ruth for her loyalty to Naomi and to the Lord. Ruth demonstrated moral excellence by not engaging in sexual immorality or remarrying outside of the family, but by appealing for levirate redemption

to an older, godly man. Boaz understood the situation and the trust Ruth was placing in him.

Future secured (11–13)

Boaz assured Ruth of his desire to help her. He and everyone in Bethlehem knew Ruth was a woman of noble character. But there was a potential obstacle in the way. There was one kinsman redeemer closer to Ruth than himself. This closer family redeemer had the right to redeem the land and Ruth.

Boaz responded to Ruth’s request with tenderness and compassion. He told her the truth about the other redeemer, but he assured her he would take care of the situation in the morning. Ruth could rest at peace because God was at work in her life. Boaz guaranteed Ruth that one way or the other, she would be cared for and had no need to worry.

Future Redeemed (4:13–17)

Boaz found the closer family redeemer, described the situation and explained the details of the transaction. Upon hearing that he would be required to marry Ruth, the other family redeemer declined his right of redemption.

Boaz pledged to redeem everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon, including taking Ruth to be his wife. He exercised his legal option before the appropriate witnesses.

God blessed the marriage and enabled Ruth to conceive and bear a son named Obed. It is beautiful to behold God’s providence restoring Naomi’s fortunes and reminding us that God has not abandoned us.

EDITOR’S NOTE

— This lesson was written by Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D., professor of Systematic Theology, at the University of Mobile.



For September 6

TRUE POWER Romans 1:13–25

Gospel Power (13–17)

The Book of Romans has been influential in transforming the lives of countless Christians — from Augustine to Martin Luther to John Wesley — motivating them to turn to God and away from their sinful lives.

One often hears that the Book of Romans is the closest Paul comes to writing his systematic theology because in it, Paul presents a clear presentation of God, man, sin and salvation.

Interestingly, Paul had not yet been to Rome, so he is writing to lay out the gospel clearly, making sure that he is not misrepresented. The reason Paul is so intent upon the gospel is that it is the only means by which people can be made right with God.

Paul indicates that the gospel is for both Jew and Gentile. This means all people — every person on earth! There is no other way for people to be saved.

This is a difficult truth in modern times as many believe that God saves people through their own chosen religion — that Muslims are saved through Islam, that Hindus are saved through Hinduism or Mormons are saved through the teachings of Joseph Smith.

But Paul is clear: People are only saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ. And this salvation is by faith, not by works — there is nothing anyone can do to make themselves right with God.

In verse 17, Paul quotes Habakkuk to prove his point, which he also refers to elsewhere in his letters — notably Galatians 3:11, with echoes in Ephesians 2:8–9.

Salvation has always been by faith, both in the Old Testament and the New. This is not a new development.

Divine Revelation (18–20)

We often hear people ask about “the man on the island” or “a good pagan” or “a good atheist.” How can God punish someone who has not heard the gospel?

While many denominations argue that God saves people apart from hearing the gospel, Paul makes it clear that there is no excuse for those who have not heard the gospel.

God has revealed Himself generally — that is, people can understand some things about God just by looking at nature and the world around them — but they need God’s special revelation — a clear presentation of the gospel — in order to be saved. This is the driving force behind missions.

We need to share the gospel with people so that they can hear a clear exposition of salvation. This is how they can be awakened by the Holy Spirit to realize their need for atonement, repent of their sins and trust in Christ as the sacrifice for their sins.

Worthless Thinking (21–25)

Everyone is evil. This is a core biblical truth that shows that apart from God, man will not choose Christ. Once people choose to ignore God, their views and actions lead to destruction.

One need only look back 60 years to see the attacks against traditional Christian norms and where this has led — a society that cannot correctly define marriage, gender or what is good and evil. Without the gospel, the morals of a nation become distorted and lead people away from God.

We should not be surprised when we see people around us doing things that are harmful both to themselves and society. It should motivate us more to share the gospel with them so they can see the Light and come to Christ!

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”

Romans 1:16

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sunday School Lessons

Associate Professor and Executive Director of Christian Ministry, Samford University

By Scott Guffin



For August 30

A LOVE FOR OTHERS 1 Corinthians 13:1–13

In a “Peanuts” comic strip from 1960, an anxious Charlie Brown plucks petals from a daisy and repeats, “She loves me; she loves me not,” until he reaches the sad conclusion: “She loves me not.” He’s heartbroken until his sensible friend Linus comments, “It’s difficult for me to believe that a flower has the gift of prophecy.”

Love is often portrayed as elusive or fleeting — mere emotion that can change on a whim — but early Christians like Paul saw it very differently. The most common term for love in the New Testament is “agape.” Christians did not invent this word, but they did elevate it from an ordinary term for affection or esteem to one that denotes self-sacrifice and unconditional devotion, even describing the character and disposition of God.

Love is foundational to everything we do. (1–3)

Paul powerfully punctuates his teaching on spiritual gifts and service in our churches when he says that love must be the motive for everything that we do.

Spiritual gifts are given for the good of the entire congregation, not for the pride or prestige of those who have them. In fact, gifts used without concern for others are worthless. Speaking with eloquence or even proclaiming a supernatural message is unintelligible if it isn’t done with love. It’s just loud and obnoxious, like a crashing cymbal.

Even noble acts of self-sacrifice can be performed for our own fame and vanity rather than for the sake of others. Self-centeredness diminishes the value of service to others, robs God of His glory in our lives and negates any blessing we might’ve received.

When we start with love, our gifts function as designed to bless others and glorify God.

Love reflects the character of Christ. (4–7)

The love Paul has in mind requires some definition. He explains that love is patient and kind, relational qualities that seek the best interest of others.

Love is not envious or boastful, focused on possessions rather than people. It is not arrogant or rude, twin attitudes that we dislike in others and must not tolerate in ourselves.

Love is not self-seeking and does not react to things that are irritating about others. In fact, love doesn’t keep a record of wrongs, building a case for retaliation. It doesn’t rejoice in the failures of others but holds on through everything in the light of God’s great promises.

It’s a simple but profound exercise to replace the word “love” in verses 4–7 with the name “Jesus.” This is His disposition toward us and, by His grace, it can be ours toward others.

Love does not diminish, fade or go away. (8–13)

Finally, Paul points to the enduring quality of love. He lists a few controversial spiritual gifts and then reminds his readers that these things are temporary, a means to an end. The real task is to love well because love never ends.

He commends to us three virtues: faith that relies on God and not our own perspectives and schemes; hope that holds confidently to His promises of good for His people; and love, the proof that we are being made more like Jesus and the way that we glorify the One who is Love (1 John 4:16).

EDITOR’S NOTE

— This lesson was written by Scott Bush, D.Min., executive director of the Ministry Training Institute at Samford University.



For September 6

GOD SPEAKS TO HIS PEOPLE Exodus 3:1–6, 11–15; 4:28–31

I was recently speaking with a fellow believer who was struggling with doubts. Central to her issues was the fact that most of her life she has begged God to reveal Himself to her in some clear, undeniable way or to speak to her audibly — a request that in her estimation God has never answered in a positive fashion. I urged her to consider that God has indeed revealed Himself and that while He hasn’t spoken to her in an audible way (although He may have spoken to her through other believers), He has indeed spoken to her with loving and gracious clarity.

In his classic book “Knowing God,” evangelical theologian J.I. Packer notes, “God has spoken to man, and the Bible is His Word, given to us to make us wise unto salvation.”

What an amazing truth! While it may not be in the manner that this dear sister in Christ hoped for, God has spoken to us extensively through Scripture, revealing to us His character, His deeds, His ways, His righteous commands and the path to a saving relationship with Him through faith in Christ.

God initiates the conversation with us. (3:1–6)

In the Exodus 3 narrative, Moses is going about his business watching his father-in-law’s flocks when God addresses him through the famous burning bush episode. It is worth noting that God is always the initiator in our overall interaction with Him.

Scripture indicates in Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 1 that God knows us and is actively engaged with us even before our birth. In John 6:44, Jesus declares that God is the initiator in our coming to Him for salvation. God is always the preemp-

tive actor, reaching out to us with His love, grace, mercy, compassion and kindness.

We must acknowledge God’s voice. (11–15)

The problem comes when we fail to acknowledge Him. In verses 11–15, we see Moses responding to God — albeit from a standpoint of question and objection — as he seeks to deflect God’s call to go back to Egypt to facilitate the release of the people of Israel.

In the end Moses obeys, but it is only after an intense back-and-forth with God.

Moses’ faithful wrestling with God is still better than God often receives from us, as we fail to acknowledge that He has spoken to us — and continues to do so — through His Word.

Our need to hear from God is one reason every Christian should be an ardent student of Scripture, seeking God’s face, voice and direction in its truths.

We must respond to what God says to us. (4:28–31)

Hearing and listening are not the same thing. We certainly hear from God as He speaks to us through His Word, but we can only listen by engaging — and sometimes even wrestling — with the text.

When we truly listen and receive what God is saying to us, it is then necessary for us to respond. In these verses, Moses tells Aaron everything God has said to him, and they set out to do what God has asked of them.

Today, however, we have no need for a burning bush to declare God’s intentions for our lives. It’s all there in the Bible, written in its pages for all Christians of all time to believe and obey. We will respond one way or another — either by rejecting Him or obeying Him. Which will you choose?

**“And the angel of the LORD appeared to [Moses]
in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ...”**

Exodus 3:2



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