

INSIDE



Parents, leaders, teachers should be on lookout for possible warning signs in students

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'Taken aback'

BCM students leverage spring break for powerful missions experiences

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Lee Dymond said that when his team of students arrived in Puerto Rico to do spring break missions, they found a man running on overdrive. "We were going to do mostly disaster relief, but what happened was we kind of focused on one church and its pastor instead," said Dymond, campus minister for Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM). That church was Iglesia Misión Urbana in Mayaguez, a large city on the island's west coast still struggling to get back on its feet six months after Hurricane Maria. The church had been adopted by Montgomery, Autauga and Elmore Baptist

associations as part of a nationwide effort to get the island's pastors back on their feet.

"The pastor there, he's been in that community for 27 years, and he's a rock star," Dymond said. "Everybody knows him. He walks everywhere he goes."

And in the aftermath of the hurricane, Pastor Carmelo Jimenez and the rest of his church had just been giving and giving and giving, Dymond said.

"It became really clear that we needed to encourage our brothers and sisters who had been in the thick of it," he said.

For the first couple of days, the team of students from Baptist

(See 'Life-changing,' page 3)

IN LOVING MEMORY

Judson's David Potts dies following serious illness

David E. Potts, chancellor of Judson College in Marion, died March 28 following a serious illness. Judson officials reported he "passed away peacefully at home."

The 67-year-old Potts served as Judson's president from 1990 to early March 2018 when he announced his transition to chancellor.

Known for his mild manner and calm demeanor, Potts was a president who led by serving.

Charles Dunkin, chairman of the Judson board of directors, recalled one hot summer day when he pulled into campus to find Potts out in the hot sun in a "perfect white shirt and beautiful tie changing a tire on one of the students' cars."

"His whole focus was on the students," Dunkin said. "It was always about them and not him."

"He knew every student by name and could carry on a conver-

sation with any student about their family and something about them. He was a father and grandfather figure to so many of the students," Dunkin said. "He probably was the most selfless person that you would ever find."

Scott Bullard, who is currently serving as Judson's interim president, added, "Dr. Potts had a deep understanding of educational, health care and religious institutions that informed his service, but he also had the ability to relate to people on a personal level, meeting them where they were with the love of Christ."

Born in Birmingham on July 1, 1950, Potts graduated from Samford University in 1972 and began serving his alma mater as an admissions representative. He would go on to become financial aid director while earning a master's degree from Samford.

(See 'Potts,' page 4)



POTTS



Students from Auburn University at Montgomery serve in Puerto Rico over spring break, encouraging a local church and doing disaster relief work.

Photos courtesy of Lee Dymond



COMMENT

Chaos and Despair

EDITOR'S NOTE — This year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of my wife, Eleanor, who died from injuries suffered in an automobile accident in South Africa as described in the editorial below. For all of those 20 years I have tried to support people walking the grief journey as I was supported in that crisis time.

In 1998 and 1999, I shared a few initial thoughts from that experience through this column. However, it is only in the last few months that I have been able to write something I can share with others about the many crises of that experience and what I learned about God in the midst of grief.

This week's editorial is the first of a six-part series. The following five pieces will be shared as weekly articles elsewhere in the paper.

I pray they will be helpful to others walking the grief journey.

Did I die?" I asked to no one in particular. The last thing I remembered was riding in a taxi through dark downtown streets well before the Saturday morning sun broke. We were on our way to the airport after leading training sessions for Baptist communicators as part of a Baptist World Alliance meeting in Durban, South Africa.

Now all around me was light, bright white light. I could make out two fussy dark objects that seemed to be moving toward me and muffled sounds like voices that I could not make out. I was confused. I felt no pain and my senses were not working properly.

"You have been in an accident," said a voice above the two dark objects approaching me. "We are waiting for an ambulance."

The voice belonged to a Durban policeman. So did the two dark objects. They were his legs. The bright light came from the morning sun, now well above the waters of the Indian Ocean. In short South African English sentences the policeman explained the taxi had been broadsided by a speeding car and that Eleanor, my wife, and I had both been thrown from the car. I had been propped up against a light pole but Eleanor still lay among the debris on the street.

Everything was dark again

I looked toward where he pointed and only glimpsed the caved-in Toyota SUV in which we had been riding. Then everything was dark again.

How long before I came to I do not know. This time I was lying on a hospital gurney. People were buzzing around. Years before I had worked as an emergency room chaplain for a metropolitan hospital and instinctively knew I was in an emergency room.

When I spoke nurses immediately responded. This time my first question was about Eleanor. She was lying on a gurney next to me. I reached



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

toward her and she reached toward me. Our hands touched.

Our first words came out almost simultaneously. "I love you." We assured each other we were OK and that all would be well. Then darkness.

The next time I regained consciousness Eleanor and I had been moved to a treatment area of the emergency room.

Leaders of Baptist World Alliance came in but only for moments. I remember Jimmy Draper, former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president and then president of LifeWay Christian Resources, asking how to contact family members back in the United States. I was in and out of consciousness a number of times, never conscious for very long.

What I did not know until much later was the hospital refused to admit Eleanor and me until a \$5,000 down payment on our treatment had been made. Draper refused to allow the hospital to ask me for payment given my injured condition and put the total amount on his own credit card.

The last thing I remember from the day of the accident is hearing that Eleanor was in surgery and I would have surgery after her.

The next morning, a Sunday, I awoke in a six-bed ward. This time I did have pain and my other senses were working — at least a little. I quickly recognized I had no clothes and was covered only by a bed sheet. It would be Tuesday before the hospital would find the bottom half of a pajama set I could wear. No one seemed to know what had happened to our luggage.

Late Monday evening a Christian shopkeeper of Indian heritage from whom we had purchased souvenirs came to see me on the ward. I was surprised at his thoughtfulness. He left to visit Eleanor who was on another ward. A few minutes later he was back. He told me that Eleanor had asked him to tell me that she loved me and always would.

That was the last message I got from her. She went into a coma that evening from which she never awoke. We had not seen each other since

holding hands in the emergency room and saying, "I love you." We had both been restricted to our beds. Later I learned Eleanor had a premonition of her death and told a nurse she "was not going to make it." I always wondered if Eleanor knew the shopkeeper was bearing her final message.

On Tuesday I was moved to a private room and twice during the day allowed to go to the intensive care area for a few minutes at a time. I was told to tell Eleanor goodbye because she could die at any moment. Those were precious minutes. I tried to extend my stays but was always taken back to my room in a wheelchair.

Tuesday evening after visiting hours, a nurse came in and asked to pray with me. Later I learned she was a Zulu, which is the largest ethnic group in South Africa. I tried to be polite but was not overly enthusiastic. My physical, emotional, mental and spiritual trauma was extreme. The nurse shared several psalms with me and

then began to pray. Honestly, I have never experienced anything like that before or since. With a passion I have seldom experienced, she interceded for Eleanor, for me, for our family and for the medical team. Her prayer was filled with praise and anguish, with hope and confidence, with intimacy and otherness.

I don't remember much of what she prayed that night or on Wednesday when she returned to read Scripture and pray, but I remember the sense of God's presence in the midst of her prayer. Like the biblical story of the lame man lowered through the roof by four friends (Mark 2), she laid me before the feet of Jesus.

When I could not help myself, others carried me. Southern Baptist missionaries whom I had never met came to see me. When my children arrived in Durban later that week, the missionaries cared for them and guided them through the red tape of claiming our luggage from the police and other details. I even had a visit from a local Rotarian who had been contacted by a member of my Birmingham Rotary Club and came to offer help while I was in the hospital and afterwards, if needed.

And there were others. Many, many others who helped in unexpected ways. But perhaps the point is clear. God ministered to Eleanor and me in unexpected ways. He used a SBC executive who knew of me but did not know me. He used an Indian Christian shopkeeper and a Zulu nurse. He used missionaries and others to remind me a child of God is never alone — not even on the other side of the world.

Most importantly, God never left me, not even in the midst of chaos and despair. He will never leave you either. He promised, "I am with you always," and you can trust the promises of God. 🌈

LEARNING ABOUT GOD:

A Personal Story

Part 1 of 6



"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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'Life-changing experience'

Campus ministers pray trips will change students' perspectives

(continued from page 1)

Campus Ministries (BCM) focused on ministry to the church itself, organizing its clothes closet — a big room stacked floor to ceiling with donated clothes.

"The area is very poor, and when they invite people in, they give those clothes away," Dymond said. "We helped organize everything into plastic tubs bought with state disaster relief funds."

They also did community outreach, walking around the community with the pastor and meeting the neighbors.

"Some of our groups would be talking to somebody in their home and they would start weeping because they felt like they had been forgotten," Dymond said. "For the students it was humbling. They were kind of taken aback by everything they saw there."

Across the United States

The AUM team was one of two that went to Puerto Rico for spring break — and one of 14 BCM teams that served in different locations across the United States. Students did disaster relief in Houston; served alongside church planters in New Orleans, Indianapolis and Phoenix; did beach outreach in Panama City and did community ministry in New York City.

"Spring break is a time when students have an opportunity to give back," said Chris Mills, SBOM student missions mobilizer for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. "Reports are still coming in, but the teams have had large numbers of opportunities to engage with people. It changes those people's lives, and it is a life-changing experience for the students too."

The AUM group came back with a "real-life picture of the devastation" and some powerful experiences sharing with those affected, Mills said. And in New York, students had some "unique experiences" and walked away with new knowledge about human trafficking, he said.

Kim Andrews, campus minister for the University of Alabama, said that was definitely true for her students.

Her group served with Passport New York, a weeklong missions effort that gathers students from across the country to experience ministry in the city and give them a chance to consider coming back and planting their life there for a longer period of time.



Photo courtesy of Craig Hawkins

Halie Nozolino (left) and Josie Pelham from the University of Alabama at Birmingham sort food at the Casa de Amore food pantry in Phoenix, Arizona.

During the week, students serve in different ways, such as with Let My People Go, an organization that fights human trafficking by caring for the vulnerable.

"The experience with Let My People Go made a lasting impression on our team," Andrews said. "We left challenged and more equipped to love the vulnerable on our campus and in our city."

Craig Hawkins, campus minister at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), said his team's experience in Phoenix also challenged students to be courageous in sharing their faith when they got home.

"On one day of our trip, we joined Christian Challenge, their version of BCM, to do evangelistic surveys on campus," Hawkins said. "That was great for our students. It encouraged them to start doing that kind of outreach here at UAB."

While in Phoenix, they also worked alongside a North American Mission Board church planting strategist, serving in the poorer parts of town and helping promote Easter services.

"For some of the students, this was their first time to encounter church planting in unreached areas," Hawkins said. "It challenged them to think about how they could

possibly support that or be a part of that with their lives in the future. One of our students had some conversations about the possibility of him finding a job in that area and joining those churches in their ministry after he graduates."

David Sumner, campus minister for the University of North Alabama in Florence, said he prayed his group's trip to New Orleans would similarly open doors for future ministry.

'Desperate need'

"What I'm hoping is that I can get my students to see the vision to possibly plant their lives in New Orleans," Sumner said. "It's in desperate need of church planters."

His group worked alongside students from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, canvassing neighborhoods and helping with community ministry.

"Our students have already seen what all takes place here in New Orleans," Sumner said. "There's a definite need and a definite darkness. I'm praying this will change their lives and prompt them to see ways they can spend their lives for the sake of the gospel." ✝

"We left challenged and more equipped to love the vulnerable on our campus."

**Kim Andrews, campus minister
University of Alabama**



Photo courtesy of Beth Gardiner

Lauren Cowart, a junior at USA, writes a note to place inside Bibles given to women who work on Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

'Richly' blessed

Country church experiences incredible growth

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Earl Goode said if he understood exactly how it was happening, he'd be happy to share it.

"But I don't know why it's happening," he said. "It has to be God."

Goode, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Warrior, in Sulphur Springs Baptist Association, has watched his country church grow to bursting at the seams over the past two years.

"I'm an old school kind of guy," said Goode, who is in his mid-60s. "But somehow our ministry attracts younger to middle age couples."

His church, which he described as "traditional, but a little bit country traditional," has a southern gospel praise team and has its seats packed full every Sunday. It's got a building program underway, with more than \$256,000 already raised.

'God is blessing them'

Dan Nichols, director of missions for Sulphur Springs Association, said God "is just richly blessing" the church.

Potts' memorial service set for April 8 at Judson College

(continued from page 1)

In 1980, Potts began serving as Judson's vice president for development. He briefly returned to Samford in 1985 before rejoining the Judson staff as executive vice president for administration in 1987. Potts earned a doctor of philosophy in the administration of higher education from the University of Alabama in 1989 prior to his appointment as president of Judson in 1990.

Potts was an active member of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion,

"It seats about 130 or so, and most Sundays they can't bring the children over from Sunday School because there's no space for them," said Nichols, a member of Calvary Baptist. "[The Barna Group] research would tell you that age of the leader and the location would be two detriments to growth. But he is a good solid

preacher and has encouraged those folks, and God is blessing them."

The biggest growth is not in numbers, Goode said — it's in spiritual depth. "I was out for 10 weeks (for health reasons), and the church didn't miss a beat — it kept growing and functioning as a church ought to function. To try to explain what

God is doing in the congregation is impossible. I just preach and believe that God is going to give the increase."

He does something else, too — he takes visitors to lunch.

"If someone comes to visit a second time, my wife and I will take them out for a meal to get to know them," Goode said. "Many times when people visit a church like ours, they are looking for a place. They are looking for something. So we try to make our-

selves available to answer their questions and see what it is they are looking for."

Goode said he is a strong believer in personal evangelism.

"I think a lot of the time we depend on the church facility and its programs to do the job," he said. "God is depending on us as Christians to be the message bearer. If we fail to do that, we're missing our calling."

And members of Calvary Baptist are living that out. They consistently invite friends and family to come to church with them, he said. They've seen many people saved, including some out of drug and alcohol addiction.

Taking care of each other

And for many years, they have taken care of the people around them.

When the pastor before Goode declined in health after 20 years serving the church, the congregation continued to pay his salary after he retired. Then after he passed away, they continued to provide housing and other needs for his widow.

They've "loved on" Goode as well as he's faced major health issues in the past few months, he said.

"This is a special church, as far as just being together. They want to help and try to be faithful to Scripture and dynamic in their faith," Goode said. "I wake up every morning grateful to get to be a part."

"God is depending on us as Christians to be the message bearer. If we fail to do that, we're missing our calling."

**Pastor Earl Goode
Calvary Baptist Church
Warrior**

majority of these churches have registered for D-Life and several have scheduled boot camp training for their ministry."

The central and southern boot camps were held in Birmingham at Samford University in January and at University of Mobile (UM) in February.

Co-sponsoring the boot camps were Passion Tree Resources (passion-tree.org), Samford's Ministry Training Institute (samford.edu), UM (umobile.edu), Birmingham Baptist Association (bbaonline.org), Mobile Baptist Association (mobile-baptists.org) and *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper. (TAB)

Disciple-making resource D-Life gains exposure

Life Bible Study's D-Life disciple-making resource continues to grow among Alabama Baptist churches.

Regional boot camps held in January and February allowed representatives from churches in five other states to learn more about how it works.

Bill Wilks, D-Life author and presenter, said, "Both boot camps were a tremendous success.

We were able to equip over 70 people for a lifestyle of disciple-making.

"More than 20 churches were represented including churches from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas," he said. "The ma-

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Identifying potentially violent children



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Parents, leaders, teachers should be on lookout for possible warning signs in students

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

He looked like a typical high school student.” That’s what the officer said who arrested Nikolas Cruz, the teen who killed 17 people in the deadly school shooting in February in Parkland, Florida.

In the weeks since that shooting, countless Americans have vocalized grief, terror and outrage at the way schools seem to be growing less and less safe. They have taken to Facebook, organized school walkouts and asked for gun reform.

And they have pored over ways to identify potentially violent children and teens and reach them before they ever pull the trigger.

As these conversations swirled nationwide, Alabama wasn’t excluded from the pain or the cry for a response. On March 7, a 17-year-old girl was shot to death and another student was wounded at Huffman High School in Birmingham.

Smart on Safety Initiative

The shooting came one day after Gov. Kay Ivey unveiled her Smart on Safety Initiative, a strategy she said will help to secure Alabama’s schools in the future.

“In announcing a four-pronged approach to school safety, we will build on the foundation already in place and allow all

available state resources to be focused on efforts to keep our children safe,” Ivey said. “Ensuring safety in our schools is a bipartisan issue, and we must do all we can to prevent violence and be sure we are ready to respond in the event such violence does occur.”

According to the governor, the four prongs are:

► Secured Schools.

Alabama will support local school officials to meet safety needs and will use the Education Advancement and Technology Fund for this purpose.

► We Know Our Kids.

Schools will work to identify students who are at risk of acting violently and intervene before it happens.

► Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).

Schools will work with law enforcement and first responders to provide a coordinated response when an emergency happens. This will include training of school personnel.

► **Governor’s Securing Alabama Facilities of Education (SAFE) Council.** Ivey named a council to get a strategy together quickly and set it in motion. The governor’s SAFE Council will propose a plan by the end of April.

In the meantime, what can Alabama’s

teachers, parents and youth leaders do to keep their students safe?

Kristin Lowrey, clinical director of child and adolescent counseling at Pathways Professional Counseling, said they can watch for warning signs themselves.

“The more connections that a child has, the better off they are.”

**Kristin Lowrey
clinical director of
child and adolescent
counseling, Pathways
Professional Counseling**

“Hindsight certainly is 20/20, and I think that in all the cases that I have read about, there were warning signs, but it often doesn’t all add up until after the fact unfortunately,” Lowrey said.

Not every warning sign is an indicator that something bad will happen, but that doesn’t mean it should be ignored, she said.

She encouraged parents, foster parents, youth leaders and teachers to be conscious of the following behavioral issues and think of them as yellow lights — signs that they should slow down and be more vigilant and aware:

- Verbalizing violent intent
- Obsession with violence and/or weapons
- Showing no empathy
- Blaming everyone else for their problems and not taking responsibility for themselves
- Having no hopes and dreams

- Experiencing depression
- Social isolation
- Animal cruelty
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts

“For parents it is important to be connected with your children,” Lowrey said. “Talk to them often, but most importantly listen to them and know what is going on in their world.”

Monitor social media use

Know their friends and their friends’ families, she said. Monitor their social media use. And seek help if you see that a child is showing some of these traits.

“Connect with your child’s school to find out how they are acting at school — the school may have concerns as well,” she said. “In some cases, starting with counseling could be beneficial.”

If a child is making suicidal or homicidal comments, it’s best to go straight to a counselor and/or medical personnel who can help, Lowrey said. “And if a child has made comments about violent intent, it is important to notify the authorities to ensure that everyone remains safe.”

Teachers and youth leaders also can connect with children, she said.

“The more connections that a child has, the better off they are,” Lowrey said. “It is important to talk with parents if concerns arise, as the parents might have other concerns that help to clarify what the child’s needs are.”



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BUTLER

▶ **Allen Winn**, who has served as director of missions for **Butler Association** for the past 10 years, will retire June 30. He plans to remain in the area.

CALHOUN

▶ **First Church, Weaver**, will hold revival services April 15–18. Sunday services will be at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday–Wednesday services will be at 6 nightly. Joey Hanner, pastor of Union No. 3 Church near Gadsden, will be the guest evangelist and worship will be led by the First Church, Oxford, praise band and First, Weaver, choir. Johnny Pruitt is interim pastor.

CHOCTAW

▶ **Cullomburg Church, Silas**, ordained Robbie Whigham (right) as a deacon March 4. Chairman of deacons Joseph “Bud” Worsham (left) presented Whigham with his ordination certificate. Sammy Taylor is interim pastor.



Photo courtesy of Choctaw Association

COFFEE

▶ **County Line Church, Enterprise**, will celebrate the 20th anniversary of **Pastor Danny Wiggins** on April 8. The celebration will begin after the 11 a.m. worship service. A covered dish lunch will be served in the fellowship hall. For more information call 334-347-6082.

COOSA RIVER

▶ **Westview Church, Sylacauga**, and its Relay for Life team will host a Cruise-In on April 14 at Noble Park in Sylacauga from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is open to classic cars and trucks, hot rods, motorcycles and new cars and trucks. All proceeds will help fight cancer. For more information visit www.wherefriendsbecomefamily.com or call 256-487-1410. Jimmie Roberts Jr. is pastor.

DEKALB

▶ **Will Ramage** is the new pastor of **Second Church, Fort Payne**. He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University. He previously served as interim pastor for the church. Ramage and his wife, Meagan, have one child and are expecting their second child soon.

ELMORE

▶ **Antioch Church, Titus**, will hold revival services April 15–18. The Sunday service will be at 11 a.m. and Monday–Wednesday services will be held at 6 nightly. Ray McKenzie, director of missions for Elmore Association, will be the guest speaker and worship will be led by Bill Lee, worship minister at Thelma Church, Wetumpka. Dinner will follow the Sunday service. Donny Barber is pastor.

GENEVA

▶ **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host its monthly 39ers CLUB on April 10, 11 a.m. Jim and Debbie Grimes will speak. For reservations call 334-684-9617. Steve Wegmann is pastor.✠

SBC leader Frank Page resigns over ‘personal indiscretion’

Frank S. Page has resigned as president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee, effective March 27 over what is described as “a morally inappropriate relationship in the recent past.”

Following the announcement, Page released a statement: “It is with deep regret that I tender my resignation from the SBC Executive Committee and announce my retirement from active ministry, effective immediately. As a result of a personal failing, I have embarrassed my family, my Lord, myself and the Kingdom.”

“It is my most earnest desire in the days to come to rebuild the fabric of trust with my wife and daughters, those who know me best and love me most.”

Florida Pastor Stephen Rummage, chairman of the Executive Committee, said on behalf of the committee's officers, “My

heart is broken for Dr. Page, his family and everyone affected.

“In keeping with our Executive Committee bylaws, we will be working on a plan to provide for interim transition in the wake of Dr. Page's immediate departure and also to conduct a search for the next president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee,” Rummage said.

“I am personally counting on the prayers of Southern Baptists, as I know are all who serve on our SBC Executive Committee.”

Page, 65, as EC president, has held a key role in coordinating the work of the SBC's national ministries, encompassing two missions boards, six seminaries and other entities, overseeing a Cooperative Program budget of nearly \$200 million yearly.

Page's work also included building relationships with 42 state and regional Baptist conventions and 47,000-plus Southern Baptist churches in all 50 states. (BP)



PAGE



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

What's in a Name?

Christ, the Son of the Living God

By **Jerry Batson, Th.D.**
Special to The Alabama Baptist

What Jesus knew about Himself all along, His disciples only came gradually to grasp. On the occasion of the great confession recorded in Matthew 16:16, Peter voiced for the disciples what they had come to realize: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” As far back as the age of 12, Jesus had some degree of realization about being God's Son. When Mary asked Jesus why He had stayed behind in the temple when she and Joseph had begun their trip back to Nazareth, Jesus gave His famous reply, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business” (Luke 2:49)? Apparently, Mary had not fully grasped what the angel Gabriel told her when announcing that she would miraculously conceive a son, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32).

Devil and his demons

Amazingly what Mary and the disciples came to understand with the passing of time was already known to the devil and his demons. Approaching Jesus in the wilderness the devil referred to Him as the Son of God (Matt. 4:3, 6). During His public ministry Jesus exercised power over unclean spirits. On one such occasion, the demons cried aloud, “You are the Son of God” (Mark 3:11), an insight that Jesus warned them sternly not to publicize. On another occasion a demon possessed a man and used his voice to cry aloud, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God” (Mark 5:7)?

What is strikingly even more significant is the testimony that God the Father bore concerning Jesus at His baptism: “This is My beloved Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). Again on the occasion of Jesus' transfiguration in the presence of three of His disciples, Matthew 17:5 tells that a voice from a cloud was heard to declare, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” We also read that what Jesus had

said about God at age 12 was repeated during His adult ministry as He referred to God as “My Father” (Matt. 11:27). The designation “Son of God” carried clear overtones of Jesus' divine nature, just as His preferred self-designation as “Son of Man” carried undertones of His human nature.

Divine nature

The record of Jesus' earthly life contains many evidences pointing to His divine nature as the Son of God. Among these we might list His authority over unclean spirits; His miracles and teaching; His practice of referring to God as His “Father” and His sinless life. However, the crowning evidence of His divine nature as the Son of God was His resurrection from the dead. Romans 1:4 expresses this by saying He was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” What Jesus was as to His divine nature was given lasting and convincing declaration by the resurrection.

Part of the significance in Jesus being the Son of God is that He is the agent whereby the Father is revealed to us. Jesus put it, “Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). Later He declared to the disciples, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). As God's Son, Jesus not only reveals the Father, but also brings people to God, as He said, “No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).✠

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



Alabama Baptist STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Focus
on

ONE MISSION

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions | (800) 264-1225 | alsbom.org

A ROLE MODEL WORTHY OF EMULATING

Like so many others, I have been positively influenced by the life and ministry of Billy Graham.

The night before the passing of Billy Graham I was in Yazoo City, Miss., leading revival services at the First Baptist Church in that historic city.

During the invitation, we sang "Just As I Am," a popular hymn used prominently by the famous evangelist as he preached in evangelistic crusades over the decades of his long ministry.

When I took my seat before the close of the worship service, I asked myself, "Isn't this the year Billy Graham becomes 100 years old?"

I Googled his name and discovered that his date of birth was November 7, 1918. Had he lived to this date in November, he would have indeed been a century old.

Life is not measured by duration but donation. Billy Graham was a contributor to the cause of Christ. He lived to preach the Gospel of Christ and to exemplify the love of our Lord.

When former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee heard the news that Billy Graham had died, he said his first response was, "That is fake news. He is more alive now than ever before." That assessment depicts the kind of life Billy Graham lived.

I was privileged to be a part of his last two evangelistic crusades—in Los Angeles in 2004 and in New York City in 2005.

David Spencer, a friend of mine from my Tuscaloosa days, and I

attended the L.A. Crusade. It was supposed to be the last one for the renowned evangelist who was facing declining health.

Billy surprised the audience with the words, "People have said this is my last crusade. Well, it is not my last one. Lord willing, I am going be in New York next year." At that point, my friend leaned over to me and said, "You are on your own next year!"

In 2005, my wife and youngest daughter made our way to the Big Apple for the last evangelistic crusade led by Billy Graham.

In Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens, we gathered with thousands of people from all backgrounds to hear the well-known preacher lead his last crusade.

During his message the first night, Dr. Graham said again, "People are saying this is my last crusade. I am not sure that is true. I have been asked to do one in London next year."

The next night, reluctantly, Billy Graham did say that this was his last major gathering for his preaching ministry.

In the last few years, Billy Graham was featured on social media and video offering his message of hope to a new generation of people.

His resonant voice was weakened by his medical condition and the effects of age. His speech was slower

but his thoughts were just as clear as when he first began his preaching ministry in the 1940s. He preached Jesus Christ as The Way, The Truth and The Life.

Like so many others, I have been positively influenced by the life and ministry of Billy Graham. His **fidelity**, or faithfulness, in preaching the clear and consistent message of Jesus Christ, despite all the cultural changes so often described as being a part of a post-Christian age, was always evident. That fidelity impressed me, and it reminds me to remain faithful as well.

The **integrity** of Billy Graham is a major part of his legacy too. He was not a perfect man.

During the Nixon years, he was recorded on tape expressing some uncharacteristically biased sentiments in a conversation with the controversial president.

However, as so many other Christian leaders fell by the wayside due to theological fallacies or moral failures, Billy Graham remained an icon of theological orthodoxy and moral purity. His integrity speaks loudly and clearly to those who desire to be used of God in their time of service.

Billy Graham was not only known for his fidelity and integrity, but his life and ministry were also characterized by **humility**. A man who spoke to large crowds all over the world which numbered beyond 200 million, he was always a humble man who knew that his Lord was

the focus of his ministry, not him.

Billy Graham remembered his upbringing. His childhood

home is now located at his library, a facility

which honors Christ, not his life. Pam and I visited that library several years ago. I was overwhelmed with the aura of simplicity and humility which is so apparent in that setting.

Billy Graham was an adviser to 12 presidents. However, he often said, "I don't advise them, I pray for them."

Yet, those presidents often called upon him in times of need. President Eisenhower, as he lay in his hospital bed facing death, wanted to see Billy Graham.

Months before his assassination, President John F. Kennedy spoke

continued on page 10

By Rick Lance
State Missionary



continued from page 9

with him, and that conversation made a lasting impression on the famous evangelist.

Ronald Reagan called upon him on several significant occasions.

George H.W. Bush sought his counsel before the first Gulf War.

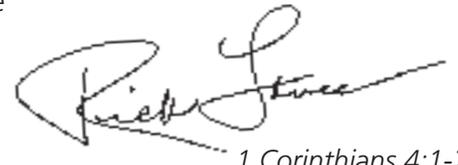
George W. Bush credited Billy Graham with helping him overcome his alcohol problems early in his life. Later, President Bush invited him to speak at the National Cathedral after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In his book, *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham detailed his life's walk with his Lord.

He always knew that we come to Jesus just as we are. Not as we want to be, but just as we are. It is at this point the Lord makes us into what we need to be.

Billy Graham came to Christ just as he was, a young man who needed salvation. The Lord then made him into what he wanted him to be. He

became a person of fidelity, integrity and humility. Billy Graham is a role model worth emulating!



1 Corinthians 4:1-2

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommission **ONEPROGRAM:**TheCooperativeProgram **MANYMINISTRIES:**GreatCommissionMinistries

Join us for
OPEN HOUSE at the new **SBOM Office Facility on any Tuesday and Thursday during April!**



Step 1: Choose a day that works for you and a time you'd like to come (10-11:30 am or 1:30-3 pm).

Step 2: Let us know when you're coming and how many are in your group by calling (334) 613-2249 or emailing Sheila Rikerd at srikerd@alsbom.org.

Step 3: Come have a great time being our guest in our new home!

Due to space limitations, sessions are limited to 50 people so reserve your space early.



ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO, I received a call from Pastor Tom Campbell of Shady Grove Baptist Church in Danville. He stated that his church building had recently been hit by a tornado, and three local schools volunteered to let them meet in their facilities.

It turned out that the damages were not as bad as first thought. However, he decided to take one of the schools up on their offer, so they began TeamKid at the school on Sunday evenings.

The numbers increased to 40-50 children. Then Pastor Tom noticed there were about 30-40 parents just hanging out waiting for their children.

He started a Bible study for the parents. He called to tell me that he thought he wanted to start a church. My response was that it sounded as if he already had. We have been working together over the past couple of years to see where the Lord is working in this area.

By Lamar Duke
State Missionary



They have started three new Sunday School classes that have gained 25 new people in attendance, and they plan to start 12 new classes adding 125 new people in the next 12 months.

Expanding the reach has resulted in a "win-win" for both the existing church and the new one.

Incidentally, Tom has been sharing with friends at the local car dealership these same principles. They are selling more cars than ever before. Truth is God's truth, no matter where we apply it!

For more information about church planting among and by Alabama Baptists, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke (lead church planting strategist) at **1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.**

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Working together through the Cooperative Program allows us to do and fund



alsbom.org/cp

so many more ministries together. We usually think first about all the work we do together on a national level such as seminaries, missionaries, church planting and so on. I am proud to be an Alabama Baptist and of our generous contribution to these worthy ministries and so many more.

What we often overlook is what we are able to do together right here Alabama. Since I have been involved with the State Board of Missions, I have become more informed and far more appreciative of the work going on through Cooperative Program giving.

state, ministering to our young adults as well as others from all over the world.

- schools we support – University of Mobile and Judson College.
- our work with other missionaries in our state and with church planters.
- our work with senior care in our assisted living facilities in Alabama.

These are just a few of the many ministries that we do together as Alabama Baptists here on a state level that are funded through CP giving.

Southern Baptists, to me, have had the greatest impact in our modern time in ministering to others in the name of Jesus, because of the faithful, generous giving of our people.



Jesse Reeder

You might be surprised how your gift reaches not only the furthest part of the world but also right into your neighborhood and your life.

– **Jesse Reeder**, senior pastor, Moulton Baptist Church (Muscle Shoals Association)

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- disaster relief teams and equipment deployed after fires in Tennessee, floods in Arkansas and Missouri, and hurricanes in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.
- Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, ministering to families and children all around us who are in difficult circumstances.
- campus ministers on college and university campuses in our

INTER link

YOUTH MINISTERS
RETREAT

APRIL 26-28
COST: \$50
SHOCCO SPRINGS



ALLEN JACKSON
MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT



GARY PERMENTER
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

YMLINK.ORG/YOUTHMINISTERSRETREAT

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



Spring Senior Adult Retreat

Monday - Wednesday,
April 9-11 • Shocco Springs

The 2018 Spring Senior Adult Retreat, April 9-11 at Shocco Springs, is new and refreshed. Come and play, laugh, relax and, most importantly, worship the Lord together with friends old and new! Hear inspirational messages from Hal Habecker from Finishing Well Ministries, Dallas, Texas. You will not want to miss Darrell Jennings and his light painting! Darrell serves as minister of music at Coosada Baptist Church (Elmore Association).

There will also be many different sessions led by knowledgeable speakers on topics that will especially relate to senior adults' lives.

To register, please call 1-800-280-1105 or go online to shocco.org. For other information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

2018 REGIONAL AND STATE BIBLE DRILLS

THEME: MARVEL IN HIS WORD
— PHILIPPIANS 4:13 —

REGIONAL BIBLE DRILL SCHEDULE

(check individual drills for registration and start times)

Required Online Registration:
alsbom.org/bibledrill (CLICK THE EVENTS TAB THEN CHOOSE THE DRILL IN YOUR AREA)

Regional Drills Registration Deadline: Monday, April 16, 2018

April 19
NORTH: East Highland Baptist Church, Hartselle
SOUTH EAST: Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan

April 22
NORTH CENTRAL: Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham
SOUTH CENTRAL: Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery

April 23
SOUTH WEST: Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile
WEST CENTRAL: First Baptist Church,

Livingston
April 24
NORTH EAST: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Alexandria

STATE BIBLE DRILL AND SPEAKERS TOURNAMENT
Saturday, April 28, 2018
Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

Registration: 12:30 p.m.
aDrill: 1 p.m.

Visit alsbom.org/bibledrill to find resources and other information. If you need more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Julie Smith at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 255, or (334) 613-2255, jsmith@alsbom.org.



GET ACQUAINTED DAY

AT THE NEW SBOM OFFICE FACILITY,
1404 FAIRVIEW AVENUE, PRATTVILLE
1.5 miles west of I-65, exit 181
on the corner of Highway 14 and Jasmine Trail

Thursday, May 3, 10 am-3:30 pm
9:30-10 » Check-in and refreshments

Meet your state missionaries » Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission
» Tour the new SBOM facility » Spouses welcome
» Lunch provided

Ideal 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**

Register by calling or emailing Sheila Rikerd, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 249, or (334) 613-2249, srikerd@alsbom.org, or go online to alsbom.org/gad.

Can You Recognize the Signs?

At some point, every church will face decline. The first phases of decline often go unnoticed and as each new phase lingers, the further a church declines. Reaching the Summit is designed to help leaders learn to recognize the five phases of decline as well as learn the principles and practices to help reverse or even avoid decline within their own church.

Partnering with our church revitalization task force, George Yates is bringing the Reaching the Summit conference to your area. Please register online at alsbom.org/reachingthesummit/



Reaching the Summit

CONFERENCE
with **GEORGE YATES**

Dates & Times for Each District:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Districts 1 & 2 | Marshall Association, GUNTERSVILLE |
| Districts 9 & 10 | Fayette Association, FAYETTE |
| Districts 3 & 4 | Tallapoosa Association, JACKSON'S GAP |
| Districts 11 & 12 | Shelby Association, COLUMBIANA |
| Districts 5 & 6 | Covington Association, ANDALUSIA |
| District 7 | Mobile Association, MOBILE |
| Districts 7N & 8 | Choctaw Association, BUTLER |

| | | |
|----------|------------|----------------|
| April 16 | Marshall | 9:30 a.m.-noon |
| April 16 | Tallapoosa | 6:30-8:30 p.m. |
| April 17 | Shelby | 9:30 a.m.-noon |
| April 17 | Fayette | 6:30-8:30 p.m. |
| April 18 | Mobile | 9:30 a.m.-noon |
| April 19 | Choctaw | 9:30 a.m.-noon |
| April 19 | Covington | 6:30-8:30 p.m. |

The cost is \$10 per person. Morning sessions will be followed by a Chick-fil-A lunch and evening sessions will be followed with snacks.



EQUIP

Leadership Training of Alabama WMU

FRIDAY-SATURDAY
JULY 27-28

SHOCCO SPRINGS

For all leaders/directors of any WMU age-level group, Women's Ministry, Girls Ministry and Royal Ambassadors.

FEATURES:
In-depth training for new and experienced leaders. Personal and leadership enrichment conferences. Testimonies of North American and international missionaries. Bible study and worship. Equipping for missions, ministry and life.

REGISTRATION/PRICING: Shocco.org or 1-800-280-1105

OTHER ONLINE INFO: AlabamaWMU.org/training

For more information, please contact Kathryn Helms at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, or (334) 613-2325, khelms@alsbom.org.

Reaching the top requires training, patience and endurance.

It means taking the time to strengthen your skills so you'll be further along tomorrow than you were yesterday. It's knowing that each step you take gets you that much closer to **THE SUMMIT.**

Are you a leader in your church? Do you want to be a leader in your church? If your answer is yes, then you probably don't need to be told that all good leaders need training. So, where can a Sunday School director or teacher, a deacon or a discipleship director find training?

Every church member has some responsibility to lead in some way. Maybe you need to come discover where you may best be able to serve.

Learn about different areas of service and leadership. Hear others discuss some of the responsibilities and rewards of different areas of ministry.

Almost any church leader, including pastors and staff, can find training and encouragement to enhance their church ministry at The Summit for Church Leaders!

ONLINE INFO:
alsbom.org/summit

To register, please call Shocco Springs at (256) 761-1100. For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

The Summit for Church Leaders
Friday and Saturday,
August 3-4, 2018
Shocco Springs



Myers-Mallory
State Missions Offering

**THANK YOU,
Alabama Baptists**

for giving more
than \$1,140,000 to the
2017 Myers-Mallory
State Missions
Offering!

*Be watching for 2018
materials, available this June.*



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS



Myers-Mallory.org

ACTS 1:8 Connections Celebration

Thursday, July 12 • 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

Global Missions invites you to join us at the **Acts 1:8 Connections Celebration**. Missionaries who serve in Alabama, missionaries from Alabama who serve in the U.S. and missionaries from Alabama who serve internationally will be with us to share.

- Participate in seminars with missionaries who are from Alabama and serve all over the world.
- Learn how to connect with these friends to help with their work.
- Meet others who are interested in fulfilling the Great Commission.
- Lunch included with \$10 per person registration fee.

For more information about registration, please go online to a18c.org/connectconf or contact State Missionary Scotty Goldman at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 387, or (334) 613-2387, sgoldman@alsbom.org.



GLOBALMISSIONS

Senior Adult Evangelism Conference May 7

FREE
No Registration
Required



Joel Carwile



Rick Evans



Paid in Full



Charles Roesel

**Dalraida Baptist Church,
3838 Wares Ferry Road,
Montgomery**

For further information, please contact
Ministry Assistant Lori McGough at
1-800-264-1225, ext. 245, or (334)
613-2245, lmcgough@alsbom.org
~ alsbom.org/saec ~

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Upcoming Worship & Music Leadership Enrichment Events

**Children's
Choir Summit
Friday and Saturday
• July 13-14 • Shocco
Springs**

COST: \$125 per person (3-4 people per room, includes three meals), \$20 per person deposit at registration. **This is the training event that you've been needing for your Children's Choir Leaders.** Experience the fun of teaching music to any age of preschooler or child. Discover new ways to make choir or music time a favorite for kids. Watch the love for worship come alive. Mingle with others in similar

NEXT
BEST PRICE:
Deadline
May 14

situations. Learn to use games and toys to add more excitement in your music time, plus more hands-on learning and fun in children's choirs. Plus it's a great conference for your daycare workers and can be used for CEU credits. Cost includes interactive sessions from top-notch clinicians and breakout times to interact with choir workers just like you. A Pine Lake music vendor will be available so you can purchase whatever you might need for your choir, and so much more.

Register online and get more info at alsbom.org/children-summit or please contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

children's choir
summit

**OneVoice
Friday through Sunday
• April 27-29**

OneVoice is a group of auditioned

singers and instrumentalists who are in grades 7-12 and actively participate in their local church's youth music ministry. This year's tour will include a concert at First Baptist Church, Jemison. Lodging will be at Shocco Springs. The cost of the tour is \$225 and includes lodging, meals, local transportation, music and shirt. Students must provide their own transportation to Shocco on Friday and home from First Baptist Church, Jemison, on Sunday after the 11 a.m. worship service.

Deadline for submitting the online application and audition is April 6. You will be notified of selection by April 12. Those who are members of the Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir, Newsong or OneVoice are automatically selected. No audition is necessary, but the online application is still required.

Register at alsbom.org/onevoice or contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at

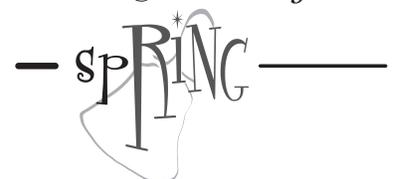
1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

onevoice

SpringRing Handbell Workshop 2018 • Saturday • April 21, 9-3 • Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

SpringRing is a handbell gathering workshop. We meet, greet and ring together with handbell favorites of the groups participating. We will learn new music, perfect it together and then end our day with a Worship Ring Celebration.

Register online and get more info at www.alsbom.org/springring or please contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.



CENTRAL ALABAMA SPRING LIBRARY WORKSHOP

**THEME:
REACH FOR THE
FUTURE**

In this library training event, classes will be offered in all areas of library work. Anyone involved in any type of library work is invited (church, Christian school, public school or private school, even public library). The information provided will help your library grow.

THE COST WILL BE \$5 PER PERSON TO HELP WITH THE COST OF THE NOON MEAL.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., and the workshop will conclude at 3:30 p.m.
A swap table will be available.

To register or for more information, please contact Marty Woodall
at (334) 569-3854, martybooks1@juno.com.

SATURDAY, MAY 5
SHOAL CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH,
13214 HOLTVILLE ROAD, DEATSVILLE

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Transitional Pastor Training

Monday-Wednesday
April 23-25

Alabama Baptist
State Board of Missions
1404 Fairview Ave.,
Prattville

MONDAY, 1-9 P.M.
TUESDAY, 9 A.M.-4:30 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, 9 A.M.-NOON

Special Guest: Dan Garland

Cost: \$100 (includes dinner on
Monday, lunch and dinner on Tuesday)

This event is for Pastors/DOMs who are interested in working with churches during a transitional period to provide wise counsel and experienced leadership through the stages of transition between the end of one pastor's ministry and the beginning of another's.

To register, go online to alsbom.org/tpt2018. For other information, please contact State Missionary Mike Jackson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 210, or (334) 613-2210, mjackson@alsbom.org.



**LeaderCare
+ Church Health**

JULY 20-21
2018

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS PRESENTS

Speak

Tell Your Story

Eastmont Baptist Church
MONTGOMERY

YOUTH CONFERENCE

worship with
Ryan John Band

messages from
Adam Robinson
Ismael Pruitt
Sean Emory

in concert
Rend Collective

REGISTER ONLINE
SPEAK.YMLINK.ORG

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

2018 MISSIONS ADVENTURE CAMP

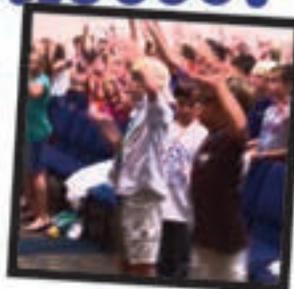
WorldSong's Missions Adventure Camp (MAC) is an overnight camp that focuses on the adventure of living on mission with God. Nestled at the base of beautiful Bald Mountain, WorldSong offers campers time away from the distractions of everyday life where they can connect with God in the midst of His creation. MAC features Bible study, time with missionaries, adventure recreation including ropes courses and ziplines, canoeing, archery, outdoor cooking, arts and crafts, hiking, overnight tent-camping and so much more!

| | | |
|-------------|-------|--|
| JUNE | 7-9 | Mom & Me (one-night or two-night option) - NEW |
| | 11-15 | MAC for Girls |
| | 11-15 | MAC for Teen Girls |
| | 18-22 | MAC for Girls |
| | 18-22 | MAC for Teen Girls |
| | 25-29 | MAC for Girls |
| JULY | 2-4 | Family MAC - NEW |
| | 5-7 | Mini MAC for Girls and Boys |
| | 5-7 | Mini MAC for Teen Girls - NEW |
| | 9-13 | MAC for Girls and Boys |
| | 16-20 | MAC for Girls and Boys |
| | 23-27 | MAC for Boys - NEW |
| | 23-27 | MAC for Teen Boys - NEW |
| | 27-28 | Lad & Dad - NEW |

— REGISTRATION NOW OPEN! —
 For girls and boys completing grades K-12 (Alabama Baptist Boys Adventure Camp now with expanded options at WorldSong).

For more information or to register, visit WorldSongRetreat.com or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223.

MIX MusiCamp@Shocco! Monday-Friday, July 16-20 Shocco Springs



For grades 3-5, 6, 7-10. **NEXT BEST PRICE DEADLINE: Monday, May 14.** **Cost** (best rate!): \$310 per person with \$80 per person deposit at registration. If being at music camp isn't enough, here are a few more things we'll be doing: Wet Willie Super Slide • Putt-Putt Golf • Basketball • Aqua Jumps • Pedal Boats • Bazooka Ball • Disc Golf • Rock Wall • Ropes Course • Paintball • Drift Bikes • Swimming!



Register online and get more info at mixmusiccamp.org or please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, cparrish@alsbom.org.

super summer ALABAMA

focuses on two major themes: Leadership and Discipleship. Students who participate will be challenged to deepen their faith and stand out as the leader God wants them to be.



July 9-13
 Samford University,
 Birmingham

\$250 before April 9
 \$280 after April 9

The camp is open to any student in the state of Alabama who has completed the 8th-12th grade and exemplifies solid spiritual leadership in his or her church.

For more information or to register, visit supersummer.ymlink.org or contact Lauren House at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 262, or (334) 613-2262, or lhouse@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION: TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM: TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES: GreatCommissionMinistries

ADVENTURE CAMP

BOYS // GRADES 1-6

The greatest adventure in life begins at the cross of Christ

-David Jeremiah

July 9-13
 Earle Trent Assembly Camp, Florence

Boys will be involved in campcraft, mission classes and outside activities like canoeing, fire building, swimming, etc.

For more information, visit alsbom.org/adventurecamp or contact Monica Thompson at (334) 613-2227, mthompson@alsbom.org.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information about placing a classified ad, contact the advertising department of The Alabama Baptist at 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or ads@thealabamabaptist.org. Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Hughes Memorial Baptist Church seeks bivocational person for the position of pastor. Mail resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, Hughes Memorial Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1672, Pinson, AL 35126, or email resumés to: hughesmbc@att.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Mount Hermon Baptist Church, Baileyton, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a bivocational pastor. Please email resumés to: mthermonbaptistal@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR

Brownsboro Baptist Church in search of a bivocational music director for traditional/blended worship. Fax or email resumés to: ATTN: Music Committee 256-776-0573, bbch@bellsouth.net.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR YOUTH & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Babbie Baptist Church is seeking an associate pastor for youth and children's ministry. Please send resumé to: Babbie Baptist Church, 19863 Babbie Road, Andalusia, AL 36421, or email to: babbiebaptist@centurylink.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Walton County Baptist Association in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, is seeking resumés for a full-time director of missions. Please email resumés to: wbaptistassoc@panhandle.rr.com.

TEACHERS & CAREGIVERS

Deerfoot Baptist CDC is seeking teachers and caregivers both part time and full time. Dedicated, Christian ladies seeking a great work

environment with benefits, contact us at 205-919-4476 or dkovacich@deerfootbaptist.org.

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ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Palmer marks 60 years in music ministry

Don Palmer, of Alabaster, recently marked 60 years in music ministry.

Serving initially at First Baptist Church, Bessemer, while a student at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, Palmer has served in full-time,



PALMER

bivocational and interim roles through the years.

His first full-time position was with Roebuck Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, and his most recent role

was a two-year interim stint with Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster.

Palmer — who has a church music degree from Samford and a master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas — said the mission of music ministry has not changed over the years, though the technology has.

"We used to 'bang it out' on the piano because that's all we had," he said with a laugh. "Now we have great technology with sound and projection. I've also seen the addition of more instruments in our churches and this is good."

Palmer said his first church had classical worship, as did many churches, but he's seen more

churches move to blended and contemporary styles.

"My only regret is that I think we sometimes have lost the sense of reverence and dignity in worship in our quest to reach a new generation," he said.

Palmer, an Army veteran, has been a widower for 10 years. He has three adult children. His daughter, Melonie, recently celebrated 20 years as pianist at Siluria Baptist.

Palmer is available for interim and supply ministry and may be contacted at 205-999-9866. (Michael Brooks)

DOM Long expands role, serves regionally

Terry Long, director of missions (DOM) for Choctaw Baptist Association, was named an as-



LONG

associate in the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions recently. In this role, he serves part time as the evangelism strategist for

the state's southern region while continuing to serve Choctaw Association.

"I feel so humbled by the opportunity to serve alongside Dr. Sammy Gilbreath, Phil Winningham and the evangelism office,"

Long said, noting that he will assist pastors and churches "in developing and implementing effective evangelism strategies to reach the state of Alabama for Jesus."

Gilbreath, director of the evangelism office, said Long "fits like a top" on the evangelism team.

"He is a blessing, he's sincere and he has a passion for reaching people for Christ. The pastors love him too," Gilbreath said. "He's had such an impact in Choctaw Association. We're excited about him putting that DNA on his work all across the southern part of the state."

Long said he is thrilled as well.

"I am very, very excited about serving my Lord and Alabama Baptists in this new capacity," he said. (Grace Thornton)

Culver honored for 25 years at Capitol Heights

Capitol Heights Baptist Church, Montgomery, recently honored Pastor J. Warren Culver and his wife, Paula, for their 25 years of service to the church.

This year marks 47 years of ministry in total during which Warren has served several churches in Alabama and Mississippi. Congregations he has served include Central Baptist Church, Phenix City; First Baptist Church, Leroy; White Pond Baptist Church, Marbury; Chestnut Creek Baptist Church, Verbena; and Samaria Baptist Church, Clanton.

Culver holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife,

Paula, has served in both the children's and women's ministries of Capitol Heights Baptist.



CULVER

The couple was honored on March 25 during a fellowship

meal that followed the morning service. Several members shared words of encouragement and Montgomery Baptist Association Director of Missions Neal Hughes presented a commemorative plaque to the couple.

The Culvers have been married 42 years and they have three children. (Hannah Muñoz)

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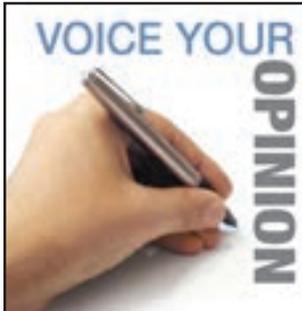
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New VBS resource helps churches 'Go & Tell Kids' in any culture

LifeWay Christian Resources has a new Vacation Bible School (VBS) program called "Go & Tell Kids" to serve as a gospel presentation tool that's easy to transport to the missions field and works anywhere.

"Go & Tell Kids" is themeless, meaning people don't have to drag a bunch of stuff with them halfway around the world," said Melita Thomas, VBS and kids ministry specialist at LifeWay.

The idea came from churches who were already adapting LifeWay's VBS for the missions field.

Back to the basics

"Churches who were taking VBS overseas were telling us they needed content that begins with the very basics of Christianity for kids with absolutely no Bible foundation," Thomas said. "These churches are serving kids who don't know who God is, much less that He has a Son — and that through the Son, God has a relationship with people."

Ernestina Gonzalez, an editor for LifeWay Global, has been taking VBS resources outside the U.S. for the past four years. She

remembers the impact of one early trip in particular.

"I traveled to Mexico with my two boys in 2014," she said. "We saved up money for a year to make our dream possible."

Gonzalez took the VBS theme "Saddle Ridge Ranch" to a rural community in Tamasopo, Mexico. The first day, only six children showed up.

"The next day, 36 students came. The children from the first day enjoyed the stories, crafts, music, games and snacks so much, they invited everyone at their school."

Gonzalez was overjoyed when all 36 students made professions of faith in Christ at the end of the VBS experience.

"We couldn't have been happier," she recalled. "We reached our goal of taking the gospel to those who hadn't heard it. It was just us, God's love for those seeking Him and a VBS kit."

LifeWay hopes "Go & Tell Kids" will capture more stories like Gonzalez's by focusing on the basics of the gospel narrative.

"Go & Tell Kids" begins with the story of creation and traces

God's redemptive plan to Christ's resurrection and the Great Commission.

The content is divided into five 30-minute Bible study sessions for children and five 30-minute sessions for preschoolers. The entire program can fit inside an airport carry-on bag.

Portable and adaptable

The "Go & Tell Kids" kit comes with group visuals and teaching plans preloaded on a flash drive that also contains more than 100 game ideas, crafts, coloring pages, director's helps and large group presentation ideas and skits.

It comes packaged in a backpack with extra room for transporting supplies to the missions field. "Go & Tell Kids" also can be purchased as a purely digital resource from LifeWay.com.

"We tried to create a resource to really fit the missions trip context," Thomas said. "You can take 'Go & Tell Kids' to Africa and into the rainforest or to a Backyard Bible Club. It's the core of the gospel that fits neatly into a suitcase. It doesn't get any more basic than this." (LifeWay)

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Explore the Bible By Robert L. Olsen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

REMEMBERING THE SACRIFICE 1 Corinthians 11:17-29

With Worship (17-22)

One of the things Paul had to correct in the Corinthian church was how they practiced Communion. The Lord's Supper was established by Christ the night He was arrested during the Passover meal. Christ showed the disciples what the Passover meal was prefiguring — His own death. As they ate together, Jesus told the disciples that the bread and wine in the Passover meal were representations of His body and blood which would be shed for all believers. Jesus told the disciples to "do this in remembrance of Me."

However, what was supposed to be a meal of solidarity had become in the Corinthian church a meal of divisiveness. In the days of the early church, Communion was an entire meal. Some were eating their food before everyone had been served without care or concern for those who had not yet eaten. In some instances believers went without food altogether because of the selfishness of others. Some even were getting drunk. Paul's response was for the believers to eat at home if they were going to be so ravenous and gluttonous.

As believers today, we need to heed the advice of Paul and put away anything that hinders us from worshipping during the Lord's Supper. We need to stop worrying about things such as what to prepare for lunch or other distracting events and instead focus on Christ who died on our behalf, rising again to defeat death and guarantee our salvation.

With Remembrance (23-26)

Paul related to the Corinthians what happened at the Last Supper — that Christ told the disciples to remember His sacrifice on our behalf.

This is a solemn time for believers and

it is done in the presence of the congregation.

Christians differ as to what the meaning of "this is My body" and "this is My blood" actually mean. Some Christians actually believe that the bread and wine physically become the body and blood of Christ while maintaining their bread and wine characteristics. Others believe Christ is somehow spiritually present in the bread and wine. Most Baptists believe that the bread and wine (or grape juice) are representations of Christ's body. We are called to remember what Christ has done and the bread and wine (grape juice) represent this adequately without the need of changing into Christ in some way.

With Examination (27-29)

Some in Corinth had made light of the Lord's Supper in how they approached it and as a consequence had suffered physically. In some cases, they actually died.

Communion is a solemn time for a believer. Believers ought to reflect on what Christ has done and because of what He has done, we need to examine our lives before partaking of the bread and wine.

Those who have not accepted Christ as their Savior should not take Communion. Neither should those Christians who have unrepented sins in their lives, sins like holding a grudge or having an unforgiving spirit. We need to have a repentant spirit in approaching Communion and allow God to convict us and show us our sins so that we can repent.

Communion is a time of serious inner reflection and a time of joyful celebration of the forgiveness that we have in Christ. Approaching the Lord's Supper in a flip-pant manner shows a lack of respect for Christ and His sacrifice. It is better not to take Communion and pray for a proper attitude toward sin than to take it in an unworthy manner. ✠

Bible Studies for Life By James Riley Strange, Ph.D. Associate Professor of New Testament, Samford University

OUR SHEPHERD Psalm 23:1-6

Many passages in the Bible talk about God as Shepherd (see Ps. 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Isa. 40:11, Ezek. 34:11-16), but none has captured our hearts so securely as this psalm. Surely it inspired Jesus to talk about Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18). It must have become part of Jewish and Christian worship very early, and early Christians depicted Jesus as the Good Shepherd before the cross became a common symbol.

Composers know it well. Three of my favorite settings are John Rutter's "The Lord Is My Shepherd," Albert Hay Malotte's "The 23rd Psalm" and the hymn "O Thou, in Whose Presence." The psalm states in individual terms Israel's experience of God in the wilderness (see Ps. 78:43-55 for another example). Notice the two distinctive ways of talking about God: as Shepherd (1-4) and as Host (5-6).

Our Shepherd gives us the guidance we need. (1-3)

The psalmist begins by telling his readers about God's goodness. Sheep can be driven or led, and they can be trained to come when a shepherd they trust calls them. This is the image our psalmist uses: a shepherd who herds by leading. Of course, he is not giving us a lesson in animal husbandry but supplying a parable of God's guidance. The Bible's authors often use the image of walking to talk about living righteously. Although this passage refers to material rewards for following God, surely we can understand "green pastures" and "waters" as further images of God's presence. If God is our Shepherd, what else do we need? We might reverse the first verse and say, "If anyone besides the Lord is my shepherd, I will have nothing that I truly need."

Our Shepherd walks with us in our difficulties. (4-5)

The psalmist now addresses God directly. Unlike what we find in many other psalms, he does not ask God to punish adversaries. The valley remains dark. The enemies still lurk.

This psalm expresses what many of us experience: as threats remain, God walks beside us, comforting us, soothing our fears. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" also may help us with the famously misquoted Proverb 13:24. If the sage and the shepherd agree on the use of "rod," then the parent who "spares the rod" withholds comfort and therefore "hates his child." The rod is not a tool to punish but to protect. All of the images are of abundant blessings — a table laden with food, a head glistening with oil (see also Ps. 133), an overflowing cup of wine.

Our Shepherd gives us security. (6)

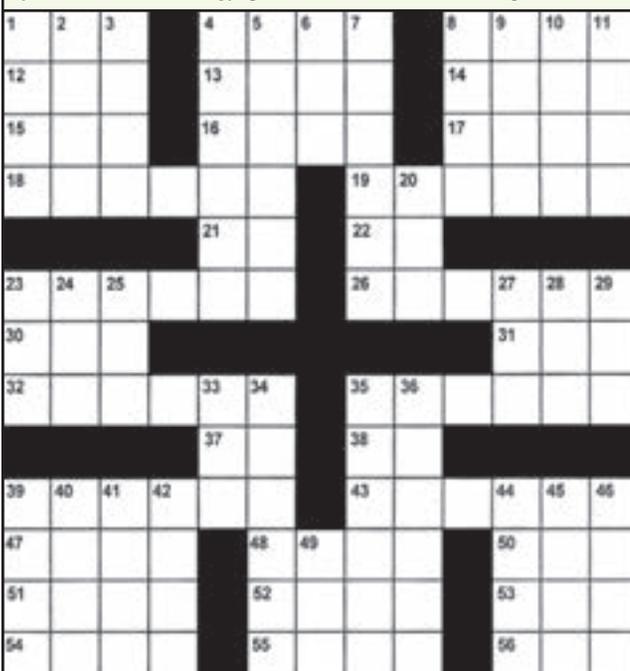
The psalmist addresses readers again. The "house of the Lord" refers neither to the Jerusalem temple nor to church but is another image for God's enduring presence. The word often translated "forever" is elsewhere translated "for a long time." Our psalmist is talking about dwelling with God his whole life long, as he does in the first half of the verse.

I sometimes lead Sunday School classes to make lists of things they want and things they need. It takes little prompting to produce a long want list and a short need list. Sometimes the need list looks like the lowest of Maslow's hierarchy; only such things as air, food, drink and shelter appear. But after thinking about it, people begin to cross these off too, replacing them with one word: God.

If we have God, we need not in this life. Often we do not truly learn this lesson until life is at its end. May none of us wait that long. ✠

Christian Crossword

By Janet W. Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Brought him to an _____. (Luke 10:34)
- The house was filled with the ____ of the ointment. (John 12:3, American spelling)
- Clip.
- Deliver thyself as a _____ from the hunter. (Prov. 6:5)
- This is now _____ of my bones. (Gen. 2:23)
- Greek letter.
- Of birds. (prefix)
- Very. (French)
- Went by plane.
- Lunatic.
- Again he _____ the same sacrifices. (Heb. 10:11, NIV)
- Iowa. (abbr.)
- Rhode Island. (abbr.)
- We remember the leeks, and the _____. (Num. 11:5)
- Leah was _____ eyed. (Gen. 29:17)
- Teachers organization.
- And Bezaleel the son of _____. (Ex. 38:22)
- God shall send them _____ delusion. (2 Thess. 2:11)
- And John bare _____,

Down

- A duke of Edom. (Gen. 36:43)
- Suddenly bright star.
- No. (German)
- For whoso findeth me ... shall _____ favour of the Lord. (Prov. 8:35)
- Also called Tabitha. (Acts 9:36)
- First number.
- My strong habitation whereunto I may continually _____. (Ps. 71:3)
- Spat.
- Part in a play.
- To do again and again: _____ ate.
- They shall give unto the priest the shoulder ... and the _____ (pl.). (Deut. 18:3)
- Response of disgust. (archaic)
- Belonging to a son of Peleth. (Num. 16:1)
- Let his _____ that he hath hid catch himself. (Ps. 35:8)
- Adjective suffix.
- A pair.
- If any of you do _____ from the truth. (James 5:19)
- I will _____ evil beasts out of the land. (Lev. 26:6)
- Born.
- The Lord God planted a _____ eastward in Eden.

- (Gen. 2:8)
- Distant.
- Delete.
- My _____ cometh from the Lord. (Ps. 121:2)
- Jacob's twin.
- Woman's name.
- Or if he finds lost property and _____ about it. (Lev. 6:3 NIV)
- But the tongue can no man _____. (James 3:8)
- Man's name.
- Because thou didst _____ on the Lord. (2 Chron. 16:8)
- For I am _____ strait betwixt two. (Phil. 1:23; 2 words)



Billy Bob Bohannon goes to prison

Tuskegee Lee DOM King takes persona to Kentucky prison, ministers to inmates

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon shows up in his trademark mismatched clothes and red and white dress shoes to entertain at a church, he normally does so with a wagonload of props.

"I have a ukulele that looks like a watermelon, a guitar made out of a commode seat and several harmonicas," said Bill King, who started entertaining under the Billy Bob persona years ago.

But when he checked in to Green River Correctional Complex in Central City, Kentucky, on Feb. 22, he had to strip his show down quite a bit.

"I was only allowed to take

one guitar, one banjo and one harmonica inside," said King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association. "That limited me a little bit. And the performance was supposed to be 30 minutes longer than what I usually do."

He was a little apprehensive about the venue too — he had been in a prison before to do

research for a novel but never to perform.

But he loved it, he said, and at the end, "pretty much every inmate there" came by to shake his hand and thank him for brightening their day. "It was a good experience for me and for (them)," he said.

King started performing as Billy Bob Bohannon unintention-

ally 16 years ago, he said.

"We were having a Valentine's Day banquet at the church in Mississippi where I was pastoring, and the person who was supposed to come entertain canceled the week before," he said.

So the person in charge of the event asked King if he could bring his guitar, sing some funny songs and tell some jokes.

"I said yes, and I decided to throw on some mismatched clothes to do it," he said.

The rest is history

And Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon, humorist and musician, was born. He thought it would be a one-time thing, but another church asked him to come perform for them too.

The rest is history.

Hundreds of performances later, he got asked to entertain at a banquet for pastors and church



BRO. BILLY BOB BOHANNON

leaders in Kentucky's Liberty Baptist Association.

"The chaplain of the prison was surfing the internet and came across my site and saw that I was going to be in his area," King

said. "So he got in touch with me and asked if I could visit the prison."

King had to have a background check done in order to come, and inmates had to have a clear conduct report to be able to attend.

'Rare edition'

And then, of course, the "rare edition" commode seat guitar had to stay behind.

"But it was the first time an event like that had been held for the inmates," King said. "And it was definitely a first for me."

Chaplain William Kizziar said a prison definitely isn't a normal venue or audience for a Christian comedian.

"Billy Bob Bohannon exuded confidence and hilarity in bringing forth a bit of levity to an otherwise dreary existence," he said. "Thank you, Mr. King." ✝



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— Jon Erwin, Erwin Brothers Entertainment

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David Phelps, Voctave to be part of Samford shows

Vocalist David Phelps will star in "Children of Eden," a two-act musical based on Genesis and produced by the Samford University School of the Arts.

The play tells the stories of creation and the flood from the Book of Genesis. Along the way, it deals with the universal themes

of family, love, greed and anger.

Phelps, a popular solo recording artist and winner of numerous Dove and Grammy awards for his work with the Gaither Vocal Band, will lead the cast in performances April 26–29 at Samford's Wright Center. Evening performances April 26–28 will be at

7:30. The April 29 show is a matinee. Group rates are available.

And on April 26, Voctave, an 11-member a cappella group based in Orlando, Florida, will be in concert as part of Samford's annual Scholarship Celebration, sponsored by the Legacy League. This is the 10th year of the annual event that raises funds for scholarships that benefit Samford students with significant financial needs and challenging personal circumstances.

Voctave's 90-minute concert will feature Broadway show tunes, Disney favorites, contemporary Christian songs and other genres of popular music.

Guests at the event will enjoy a reception with Voctave members and a seated dinner.

For more information or tickets to "Children of Eden," visit tickets.samford.edu or call 205-726-2853. For reservations and information about the Scholarship Celebration, visit samford.edu/legacyleague. (TAB)

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Journey of faith

Faith in Christ guides Phoenix Suns players' careers, lives

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alan Williams wears a necklace with three silver crosses. He says it's more than jewelry — it's symbolic of his journey of faith.

"It's everything. I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior," said Williams, a forward for the Phoenix Suns. "I truly believe in Him and in everything He has brought for me. I am extremely thankful."

He's not alone. Several players on the Suns' roster claim a faith in Christ that guides their basketball careers and their lives.

Suns point guard Tyler Ulis, a first-team All-American and SEC Player of the Year at Kentucky in 2016, said they owe everything they have to God.

"We understand that without God we wouldn't be in this position that we are in," Ulis said. "God is where our blessings come from. That is why we have the gifts we have."

He has a tattoo of Proverbs 3:5-6 on his left arm — "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."

At Kentucky, Ulis helped lead the Cats to a 38-0 record during the 2014-15 season before losing to Wisconsin in the Final Four semifinal. He was drafted by the Suns in the second round, 34th overall, in 2016. This season he averages 6.6 points, 1.6 rebounds and 3.9 assists.

A reflection of God's gifts

Williams made it to the Suns by way of a different path. The 2014 Big West Conference Player of the Year at the University of California Santa Barbara, Williams led the NCAA in rebounding for the 2014-15 season his senior year.

After becoming the Gauchos' all-time career leader in rebounds (1,125 over four years) and second in scoring (1,732 points), Williams was not selected in the 2015 NBA draft. He played the 2015-16 season in the Chinese Basketball Association, the first-tier professional men's basketball league in China, and led the league in rebounding with 15.4 per game.

Then he moved to the NBA. Playing for the Phoenix Suns in spring 2016, Williams had the highest rebound average in NBA history (30.3 percent in 48 minutes played in a minimum of 10 games). He was signed to a multiyear contract by Phoenix in 2016. He became one of the most prolific NBA big men of the bench during the 2016-17 season.

He attributes his success to God, saying he always knows "anything that I do is a reflection of what God has given me."

Devin Booker, a Suns shooting guard, agreed, saying he relies on prayer throughout his career.

"I wouldn't be in this situation that I am without it," he said. "I pray every day."

Booker, 21, played one season at Kentucky, winning the Southeastern Conference Sixth Man of the Year award in 2015. This season he was the fourth youngest player in NBA history to score 3,000 points, joining LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony and Kevin Durant.

Power forward Jared Dudley said he also has to put faith in God at all times — not only in the bad but also in the good.

The Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year at Boston College in 2007, Dudley has played on four NBA teams and is with Phoenix for a second time. He played for the Suns from 2008 to 2013 and rejoined the team in 2016. In March 2017 he scored his 500th three-

pointer as a Sun — the seventh player in team history to do so.

Dudley started his career at Horizon Christian Academy in San Diego and went to Horizon Christian Fellowship. Now 32, he said he gave his life to the Lord at a youth ministry meeting.

Horizon was "a big basketball school but created for Jesus," he said. "That was basically their main focus. When we broke the huddle it was '1-2-3 Jesus.'"

He attended Bible classes and grew in his knowledge. High school friends continue to be accountability partners.

Horizon won two state basketball championships before it closed in 2017.

Dudley's wife, Christina, also is a Christian, something Dudley said has been so important to his life.

"This lifestyle we live in is difficult at times," he said. "There are a lot of temptations. It's good to have your faith."✠



Alan Williams

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RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

College student's First Amendment rights upheld

INDIANA, Pa. — A student kicked out of a Christianity class for saying there are only two genders has been reinstated to the class.

Lake Ingle, a religious studies major at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), was removed from the class "Christianity 481: Self, Sin and Salvation" by feminist theology professor Alison Downie after stating in class that he believes there are only two genders and disputing the existence of "white male privilege." Ingle's remarks followed a presentation by transgender ex-pastor Paula Stone Williams.

IUP President Michael Driscoll announced at a press conference March 19 his decision to go against Downie's request to ban Ingle from class for "disruptive behavior." Not finishing the class would have postponed his graduation.

In an email sent to the entire campus community, Driscoll expressed disappointment that "in the presence of a test of our devotion to the First Amendment and to the IUP Way, we fell short as a community." Ingle told Fox News he was surprised but happy with the president's decision. (TAB)

Report wants to address clergy substance abuse

NEW YORK — A report by the Episcopal Church's Commission on Impairment and Leadership says the church has failed to adequately address alcohol abuse among the ranks of clergy.

The study was commissioned after the 2015 conviction of former bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Heather Cook for the death of a 41-year-old bicyclist in a drunken hit-and-run incident. An appointed commission was asked to "explore the canonical, environmental, behavioral and procedural dimensions of matters involving the serious impairment of individuals serving as leaders in the church, with special attention to issues of addiction and substance abuse."

The report said that despite efforts to address the "culture of substance abuse in the church, a lack of education and awareness continues regarding alcoholism and addiction."

The report calls for better training and stronger policies to address clergy substance abuse, including spiritual practices as a means of prevention and healing. (TAB)

US Navy rejects application of atheist chaplain

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy has turned down the application of an atheist chaplain to serve in the Navy Chaplain Corps.

Jason Heap, a secular humanist and the national coordinator for the United Coalition of Reason based in Washington, first attempted to become a chaplain under the Obama administration. His application was denied in 2014 and a lawsuit failed.

Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker said the Navy Chaplain Appointment and Retention Eligibility Advisory Group recommended the Navy approve Heap's application. Wicker and other members of Congress called on the Navy to reject the application, however, and the Navy complied. Wicker and others argue that the Navy has authority to create programs for atheist service members but chaplains are for religious members. (TAB)

Marriage more likely among religious adults

WASHINGTON — Roughly half of all American adults (48 percent) say they are married, and members of certain U.S. religious groups are more likely to say they are married than the non-religious.

The 2014 Pew Religious Landscape Study found that fewer U.S. adults say they are living with a partner (7 percent), are divorced or separated (13 percent) or are widowed (7 percent). A quarter of Americans say they've never been married.

Among Mormons, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Southern Baptists and Episcopalians, a higher-than-average share of adults say they are married (6 in 10 or more). By contrast, fewer than 4 in 10 atheists, agnostics and those who say their religion is "nothing in particular" are married. (TAB)