

IN THIS ISSUE: SBU Selects New President

# WORD & WAY

AUGUST 2018, VOL. 155, ISSUE 8

SERVING MIDWEST BAPTISTS SINCE 1896

GLOBAL BAPTISTS MEET IN

*Switzerland*



## BAPTISTS PROTEST SEPARATING CHILDREN FROM PARENTS

By Brian Kaylor  
Word&Way Editor

**A**s news emerged earlier this summer about the U.S. separating more than 2,000 migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border, Baptists from across the ideological spectrum raised their voices in opposition. After the criticism from Baptists and many others nationwide, the U.S. government started changing its policies in late June. Most of the children remain separated and legal challenges continue.

"There's definitely a groundswell of opposition from virtually every corner of the Christian community," Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told the Washington Post. "People are able to understand immediately the drive of parents to protect their child and to understand the horror of splitting up vulnerable children from their parents."

Franklin Graham, who leads Samaritan's Purse and his late father's evangelistic organization, told CBN, "It's disgraceful. It's terrible to see families ripped apart and I don't support that

one bit."

Other Baptist leaders not only criticized the policy but also condemned efforts to quote the Bible to justify separating children from their parents. As U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions defended the policy in June, he proclaimed, "I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13 to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order."

Suzii Paynter, executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, voiced her disagreement with such an interpretation — as well as the policy Sessions defended.

"The policy of ripping children from the arms of parents is outrageous, and quoting Scripture in its defense is heinous," Paynter said. "While it is necessary to control the flow of immigrants and refugees into the country, the use of tactics meant to traumatize and inflict irreparable harm to children and their parents is un-American and certainly do not appear anywhere in the Bible I read."

Paynter joined two rallies at the border to protest the separation policy. She first gathered with other CBF leaders and pastors, and then returned for a rally with other Christian women clergy.

"In Exodus, the midwives are ordered by Pharaoh to destroy children, and they say, 'No!'" Paynter said during the second rally. "It is not in our faith, it is not in God's heart to separate families. Today, remember the wailing of mothers and the cries of their children."

Lee Spitzer, general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, penned an open letter to Sessions urging a change to the separation policy, which Spitzer called "unjust" and "unconscionable."

"As a fellowship of Christ-followers who recall the trials of the child Jesus and his parents, who fled from persecution in their homeland to another country (Matthew 2:13-18), we adamantly oppose separating children from their relatives,"

*Suzii Paynter speaks at border wall near McAllen, Texas. (Faith in Public Life)*

he wrote. "A just society can fulfill its fidelity to its own laws and border security without resorting to such unwise and harmful practices; instead, we urge that compassion, fairness and family-affirming policies characterize our response to the plight of families on our borders."

Spitzer also pushed back on Sessions invoking Romans 13 to justify the policy, a move Spitzer called an "erroneous appropriation of the New Testament (in particular, Romans 13) to justify inhumane and unjust governmental actions."

"No responsible Christian theologian would assert that Romans 13, or any other passage in the Bible, supports the horrific separation of children from parents that we are witnessing at the present time," he added. "In fact, both the Old and New Testaments call those who believe in God to welcome refugees and immigrants with open arms and friendship, with loving care and concern and with the willingness to assist others in enjoying the prospects of a future based on hope and opportunity."

Shortly after a halt to the separation policy, Baptists from 47 nations meeting in Zürich, Switzerland, for the annual gathering of the Baptist World Alliance, passed a resolution affirming the importance of "preserving the primacy of family in immigration." The resolution noted the BWA "laments" the recent moves separating more than 2,000 children and "urges the U.S. government to work toward reuniting each family and prevent such separations in the future."

Additionally, the resolution expressed the BWA's rejection of claims "by some U.S. government officials that the Bible justifies a policy of forced separation of families." The BWA also said it "encourages all Baptists to prophetically challenge immoral policies that seek to undermine the rights and dignity of immigrants, migrants and refugees." **WW**

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# LETTER

from the editor

Brian Kaylor

## GLOBAL HOPE

In the U.S. context, we often hear laments about the decline of Christianity, how younger generations are walking away from faith and about our culture's increasing embrace of immorality. If we hear such stories of doom and gloom enough, perhaps we start to believe them. But what if there's more to the story?

Last month, I attended the annual gathering of the Baptist World Alliance. It's inspiring and convicting to hear Baptists from nearly 50 nations testify about their work and their challenges. One cannot stay at such gatherings long before realizing that God is at work in the world. Rather than accept the stories of decline — which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy — we should instead press forward with a spirit of biblical hopefulness.

Here are some statistics that capture the big picture. While BWA Baptists in North America have declined over the past 25 years and those in Europe have plateaued, we see a global revival in other regions. BWA General Secretary Elijah Brown explained why he's excited about what's happening right now among Baptists globally.

"In the 400 years of the Baptist movement, the last 25 years have seen the greatest expansion of the Baptist faith around the world — unprecedented growth," Brown said. "In the last 25 years, Baptists in the Caribbean have grown 76 percent, in Asia-Pacific they've grown 119 percent, in Latin America 190 percent and in the last 25 years, Baptists in Africa have grown 800 percent. And the good news? In many of these areas, the revival is just beginning."

What Brown noted in overall statistics

matches what I've seen firsthand in numerous contexts, such as among Baptists in Cuba, Guatemala, India and Turkey. Baptists are planting new churches, sometimes so quickly that there's a critical need for more pastors with theological training. Even in contexts of persecution — like in Turkey — Baptists are baptizing new believers and planting new churches. If there, why not here? If them, why not us?

Those of us in the U.S. should pay attention. We need to pray for the faithful witness of our Baptist brothers and sisters,

**“Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies.”**

that God would continue to bless their ministries and fuel their zeal. And we need to support them, not to direct their effort but to join hands where God is already working.

But beyond praying and supporting, we also need to listen. As Brown noted, “The BWA is critical for Baptists in North America who often perceive that their faith community is shrinking.”

That's why we must remain connected with the global Church. Not for them. They don't need us to save them for they already have a Savior. (They could, of course, accomplish more with our support

as long as we don't try to take over and mess up their work.) No, we need to remain connected for us.

We need them. We need their passion. We need their faith. We need their hope. To paraphrase Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, “The American cannot say to the feet, ‘I don't need you!’” God has put us together and, as Paul reminded us, we “should have equal concern for each other.”

If we keep telling ourselves the same story, eventually we believe it and live it out. If we see our faith as dying, we will add to the decline. But if we are willing to see ourselves as part of a greater story — and humbly recognize those in other nations who are leading the way — then that spirit of hopefulness can renew our own passion for missions there and here. That's the power of hope. Or, as Isaiah reminded us, it is that hope in the Lord that transforms us from fainting while walking to soaring on wings like eagles.

That's why I agree with the line in the movie “The Shawshank Redemption,” which tells the story of a Joseph-like character wrongly imprisoned and yet a blessing within prison to all who befriend him. That character, Andy Dufresne (played by Tim Robbins), tells his good friend Red (played by Morgan Freeman), “Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies.”

Brian Kaylor is editor & president of Word&Way.



brianKaylor



# “YOU HAVE HEARD” THAT IT WAS SAID

“ **This is a declarative law created by a narrow nationalistic agenda that doesn’t change anything on the ground except for the exclusive rhetoric, hate speech and feelings of marginalization and added alienations of the Arabs in the homeland that they and their ancestors have been living in for centuries.**

— Botrus Mansour, director-general of the Nazareth Baptist School in Nazareth, Israel, on a new Israeli law that declared national self-determination is “unique to the Jewish people.” Like Mansour, most Christians in Israel are Arab.

“ **We’re going to have it built very quickly and inexpensively. ... We’re actually doing it for about \$250,000, so check that out.**

— President Donald Trump in March about the cost of the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Federal spending reports in July put the actual cost at \$21.5 million for the facility, which is just a temporary one until another a permanent facility is built.

“ **Vladimir Putin ruthlessly persecutes those who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, holds orphans hostage from waiting families for his political purposes, murders dissidents and journalists, attacks democratic institutions and nations. Morality is not relative.**

— Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, in a July 16 tweet after President Donald Trump held a press conference with Putin.

“ **We want to empower local church pastors to respond in real time to the great needs of our current generation.**

— Lee Spitzer, general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, in episode 18 (July 17) of the Word&Way podcast “Baptist Without An Adjective.”

## LETTER TO THE Editor

Dear Editor:

The July issue of the Word&Way had several articles that peaked my interest.

Page 18, CBF General Assembly news. Especially concerning Greg Long, Navajo pastor. It was my pleasure to assist and affirm Greg in starting the Buffalo River Baptist Church for Native Americans in the Baylor community and larger Waco area. He has a pastor’s heart and a willingness to work.

Page 20, “The Role of the Interim Pastor.” As I began the class on Intentional Pastoring I felt that much of what was being discussed I did as a traditional interim. All three men interviewed were good, but I felt that both Verlyn Bergen and Michael Olmsted were on target.

Page 29, “Seminary Education” by Doyle Sager brought back memories of a kind and strong leader in Dr. Milton Ferguson. After graduating from Midwestern I found myself visiting campus whenever I was in the area. Dr. Ferguson would see me and invite me in for a cup of tea. Over tea we talked about a variety of issues and events. He was a gracious and kind man. I, too, along with Doyle remember the illustration of God’s love being like rich, fresh cream being poured over his hot oatmeal. If God permits I will be 90 years of age this coming July 31st. Seminary values stick.

Fond memories were triggered!

Bill Wehmeyer  
Kansas City, Kan.

**Got an opinion? Send your letter to the editor:**  
editor@wordandway.org or  
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## NEWS BRIEFS

### PROTESTS IN HAITI IMPACT MISSIONS GROUPS

Three days of deadly protests in the streets of Haiti in early July stranded multiple U.S. missionary teams, including some Baptist groups. Protests and transportation strikes started in the capital of Port-au-Prince after the government announced a plan to raise fuel prices by up to 50 percent. The government responded by canceling the planned price hike.

During the couple of days of protests, many flights were canceled and the U.S. Embassy urged Americans to remain in shelter. Those stranded for a couple of days included many youth teams from the U.S. on annual missions trips to the Caribbean nation. Among the Baptist groups impacted were teams from churches in Neosho and Springfield, Mo.; Bradenton, Fla.; Douglas and Hartwell, Ga.; Baton Rouge and Clinton, La.; and Mt. Juliet, Tenn.; as well as Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. All teams — which included more than

200 total people — made it home safely, mostly after just slight delays.

### SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS U.S. TRAVEL BAN

With a 5-4 split ruling in *Trump v. Hawaii*, the U.S. Supreme Court on June 26 allowed President Donald Trump's third version of the travel ban mostly on Muslim-majority nations to remain in place. The conservative majority of the Court ruled that broad presidential powers allow such actions. Trump created this version of the travel ban on Sept. 24 after court challenges to two earlier versions.

The majority, in an opinion authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, dismissed claims that the ban demonstrated “religious hostility” despite repeated promises by Trump and other administration officials that he would implement a ban on Muslims. The majority argued those statements were not relevant, insisting the issue involved “the authority of the Presidency itself.”

In a dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor emphasized not only those anti-Muslim statements as proof of religious hostility, but also criticized the five justices in the majority for an inconsistent application. She argued the travel ban “runs afoul of the Establishment Clause’s guarantee of religious neutrality” as Trump offered “an unrelenting attack on the Muslim religion and its followers.” She noted that the same justices who said anti-religious remarks by administration

officials did not impact the policy assessment had just weeks earlier claimed a couple of remarks against the religious beliefs of a baker in Colorado was sufficient to overturn the case. She argued that such inconsistency “erodes the foundational principles of religious tolerance that the Court elsewhere has so emphatically protected.”

In response, Amanda Tyler, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, said she remains “deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court’s refusal to repudiate policy rooted in animus against Muslims.” She added that “preserving American religious freedom requires the active involvement of all citizens to denounce religious bigotry in all its forms.”

### OKLA. VOTERS APPROVE MEDICAL MARIJUANA

On June 26, voters in Oklahoma approved a ballot initiative legalizing medical marijuana, making it the 30th state to do so (while nine states have also legalized marijuana for recreational use). By a 57-43 percent margin, the initiative passed, though controversy continues as the state’s Board of Health has since passed limits on medical marijuana. These limits include banning smokable products at dispensaries and requiring licensed pharmacists at the dispensaries.

Many Baptists in Oklahoma campaigned against the medical marijuana ballot initiative.

“The rising popularity of marijuana in America is a major concern,” argued Hance Dilbeck, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. “While we understand and agree with the desire to find ways to alleviate suffering through medicine, medical marijuana is an unproven and unwise method, especially the way this state question proposes it be used and distributed.”

Brian Hobbs, editor of Oklahoma’s Baptist Messenger lamented that the vote “gives marijuana a dangerous foothold in the Sooner State.” He argued that “Christians need to re-double our efforts on warning people — especially young people — about the spiritual and physical ramifications of these mind-altering, addictive drugs.”

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## PAYNTER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM CBF

After more than five years leading the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Suzii Paynter, 67, announced on July 18 that she would retire as executive coordinator. She assumed the role as the third executive coordinator in the organization's 26-year history in March 2013.



"CBF is at a great place and poised for even greater impact," Paynter said. "Thinking of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes that 'to all things there is a season,' I have been led to explore the options available to me as I plan my

retirement from the CBF executive coordinator position."

Gary Dollar, CBF's moderator, praised Paynter as "the right leader at the right time for CBF." He added, "We will miss her phenomenal leadership and energy, but we are optimistic about the future because we know Suzii built a solid foundation that will give our next leader an exciting opportunity to expand on our mission."

Paynter will remain in the role until a successor is chosen. Prior to leading CBF, Paynter served as director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

## ARK. JUDGE CONTINUES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FIGHT

Wendell Griffen, a Baptist pastor and Arkansas judge, continues to press his religious liberty case even as a federal court recently ruled against him. As a Pulaski County Circuit Court judge, Griffen on Good Friday in 2017 issued a temporary restraining order blocking the use of a drug used in the lethal injection protocol just before the state planned to execute eight men in 11 days. He then joined members of New Millennium Church, a Cooperative Baptist congregation where he serves as pastor, to protest against capital punishment in a vigil outside the Arkansas Governor's Mansion.

Due to his participation in a vigil, the state's Supreme Court overturned his judicial ruling and gave him a lifetime

ban from hearing capital-punishment cases. On Oct. 5, Griffen filed a federal lawsuit against all seven members of the Arkansas Supreme Court, arguing his religious freedom rights are being violated when his actions as a pastor outside the court are used against him at his place of secular employment.

On July 2, the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 against Griffen, overturning a lower court ruling that allowed his lawsuit to proceed. Judges Steven Colloton of Iowa and Duane Benton of Missouri approved of the ban on Griffen hearing cases involving the death penalty. Benton is also a Baptist, having served multiple years while on the bench as a parliamentarian for the Missouri Baptist Convention. A third judge, Jane Kelly of Iowa, dissented, arguing the majority went too far in entirely dismissing the case.

On July 16, Griffen filed an appeal, alleging a "clear procedural error" in the appellate ruling. Echoing the arguments of the dissenting judge, he argued the majority took a "drastic and extraordinary" move of directing a lower court judge to dismiss the case instead of returning the case to the lower court to address procedural complaints.

## EPA HEAD RESIGNS AMID NUMEROUS SCANDALS

After months of controversy involving alleged misuse of public funds, Scott Pruitt resigned on July 6 as head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The former attorney general for Oklahoma is a member of First Baptist Church in Broken Arrow. He also served as a trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., until he took the EPA position in 2017.

Initially controversial because of his rejection of climate science and his numerous lawsuits against the EPA as attorney general, Pruitt started receiving more attention due to his spending habits once in office. Among the controversies: flying first or business class or on military or chartered private jets, spending \$70,000 for two desks for his office, spending \$43,000 for a sound-proof booth, staying in high-end hotels while traveling, dramatically increasing his security detail despite a lack of greater

security threats, asking his security detail to use their emergency lights and sirens to get through Washington, D.C. traffic to a restaurant (and then the lead agent was reassigned after refusing), using his official position to try to win favors for his wife and daughter and dismissing multiple employees who questioned his spending.

In his resignation letter to President Donald Trump, Pruitt said Trump is president "because of God's providence" and that the "same providence" had led Pruitt to lead the EPA. Pruitt added, "I pray as I have served you that I have blessed you and enabled you to effectively lead the American people."

Another Southern Baptist in Trump's cabinet also resigned after scandals about how he spent taxpayer money. Tom Price, who served as secretary of Health and Human Services, resigned in September amid allegations of wasteful expenditures on using private charters and military aircraft for travel.

## LONGTIME TRUSTEE LELAND MAY PASSES AWAY

Leland May, 84, passed away on July 12. A longtime trustee of Word&Way, May left the board for health reasons in 2017. He pastored multiple churches in Missouri and also served on the board of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, he also received a Master's degree from the University of Missouri and a Doctorate in English education from Oklahoma State University. He taught at several schools, including Southwest Baptist College (now University), before spending 30 years as an English professor at Northwest Missouri State University.

He is survived by three children and five grandchildren. His wife preceded him in death. Funeral services were held on July 17 at Arnhart Baptist Church in Purdy, Mo.

The family requested contributions in May's memory be made to Word&Way.



# OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS CROSS DENOMINATIONAL, RACIAL LINES

By Marv Knox

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship



Quinton Roman Nose, Waylan Upchego and Steve Graham.  
(Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)

A cluster of Native American congregations and the CBF Oklahoma are writing a new script for race relations in the Sooner State. Churches affiliated with the Oklahoma Indian American Baptist Association and CBF Oklahoma have brought Native American, African American and Anglo Baptists closer together. Leaders hope they will write a harmonious story that extends far into the future.

That story describes “a natural partnership,” said Steve Graham, coordinator of CBF of Oklahoma. The Baptist groups’ mutual commitment to ministry in under-served communities and their passion for binding wounds inflicted by ugly history and decades of neglect provide a strong platform for building enduring bonds, he said.

The partnership supports the ministries of three congregations in western Oklahoma — All Tribes Baptist Church in Geary, Native American Baptist Church in Canton and Watonga Indian Baptist Church in Watonga. As they work alongside CBF of Oklahoma, they are reversing a storyline with a sad and painful past.

Quinton Roman Nose, a statewide leader in Indian education and a prominent layman in the Oklahoma Indian American Baptist Association, recounted the story of his great-grandfather, Henry Roman Nose, a legendary Cheyenne chief. As a young boy, Henry survived the Sand Creek Massacre in southeastern Colorado, when the Colorado Militia destroyed a Cheyenne-Arapaho village, slaughtering up to 500 people, mostly women and children.

Years later, U.S. troops captured him at Fort Sill, Okla., and transported him to Fort Marion, Fla., and then Carlisle, Penn., where he endured the forced cultural assimilation of Capt. Richard Henry Pratt, famous for his motto: “Kill the Indian; save the man.” Along the way, Henry became a Christian, a legacy he passed down to his family back in Oklahoma. But “Kill the Indian; save the man” resonated across those generations and echoes still today, his great-grandson noted.

“It’s applicable to how Christianity presented itself to Indians, especially the Cheyenne-Arapaho,” Quinton Roman Nose explained. “Christianity brought Jesus, but the way they brought it was wrong. The implication was that, to be a Christian, Indians must give up their culture, their language. That didn’t work out well.”

Even today, and even among Christians, many Native Americans often refer to Christianity as “white man’s religion,” Roman Nose said. Besides reflecting racism and cultural superiority, “Kill the Indian; save the man” is bad theology, he added.

“Jesus didn’t do that,” he said. “He met people where they were. Look at the Scriptures. He took people’s culture where they were and showed them love and acceptance.”

Roman Nose dreams of — and has spent most of his life working toward — racial reconciliation in the name of Jesus.

“If Jesus is for everybody, why do we have white churches, Indian churches, black churches?” he asked. “If you believe in

Jesus Christ, you should have one church.”

Of course, the races’ cultures differ, and that impacts their worship, he acknowledged. The Watonga congregation’s liturgy features a blend of hymns familiar to white churches and also tribal hymns.

“But why are we different — separate?” he wondered.

Baptists in Oklahoma have been trying to bridge that chasm of separateness.

American Baptist Churches founded the Native American churches in Oklahoma more than a century ago and has provided support for their pastors. More recently, a grant from the New Baptist Covenant — a broad movement of racial inclusion — has been important for building relationships in Oklahoma. Most NBC grants support church-to-church endeavors, Graham explained. But in Oklahoma, the grant covers relationships between the American Indian Association, CBF of Oklahoma and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, an African-American group.

The partnership has been life-giving for All Tribes Baptist Church in Geary, Pastor Waylan Upchego reported. He was chief of police in the community for seven years, and he and his wife, Nikole, served as bivocational youth ministers in an Assembly of God church before they felt divine leadership to reopen the Baptist congregation.

They encountered a mess. The church met in a decrepit building across the street from the elementary school. It shuttered about six years ago, when the former pastor retired and the members felt they could not go on.

“When we walked in, we saw a vision,” Upchego said, agreeing they also saw run-down facilities and filthy mountains of trash. “We didn’t know how we were going to do it, but Quinton introduced me to Steve.”

That led to help from CBF congregations. Last summer, a team of 75 students came from Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., and worked in all three western Oklahoma churches. In Geary, they opened up the building and removed the trash.

This summer, two mission teams from Kentucky are helping. Youth from St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville continued the cleaning process, knocked out walls and also painted the outside. Soon, craftspeople from First Baptist Church in Middleton will hang sheetrock.

All Tribes Church, which has been meeting in a community center, soon will come back home. From that base, the congregation hopes to honor its Baptist partnership by helping others, Upchego said. Perhaps soon the Native American churches will conduct an associational mission trip to help other churches elsewhere, he mused.

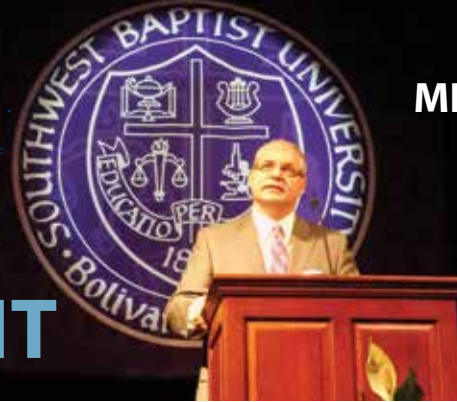
“The relationship can only develop and get stronger,” he said. “Hand-in-hand. Mutual.” **WW**



# SBU SELECTS

# 25<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT

## MIDWEST NEWS



On July 24, Southwest Baptist University announced as its new president Eric A. Turner, who will replace the retiring C. Pat Taylor. Elected as the 25th president of SBU by a unanimous vote of SBU's trustees on July 20, he will start as president-elect on Aug. 6 and assume the presidency on Sept. 1.

"At Southwest Baptist University, it is no secret that we are unapologetically Christian in our approach and mission of being a Christ-centered, caring academic community preparing students to be servant leaders in a global society," Turner said during the announcement ceremony on July 24. "Equipping students to have a biblical worldview and a responsiveness to the world they encounter is the most important thing we do to accomplish our mission."

"This is the time for SBU to be the exemplar Christian university not only throughout the Midwest and beyond, but to be the university of choice for Missouri Baptists," he added

Turner, 46, has served as president of Black River Technical College in Pocahontas, Ark., since 2014. Before that, he worked in fundraising, academics and accreditation at Williams Baptist University in Walnut Ridge, Ark., for 17 years. Turner has an Ed.D. in higher education administration from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. in history from Arkansas State University and a B.A. in history and English from Williams Baptist.

"Our world desperately needs a biblical worldview education," Turner told Word&Way in his first media interview as president-elect. "SBU is poised. We do a great job at that already. As we [he and his wife] voiced our prayer to the Lord: 'We want to be part of this greater call.'"

He is active within Southern Baptist life as a member of First Baptist Church in Pocahontas and a board member for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. He is involved in the community through local chambers of commerce and economic

development efforts, as well as being a member of Rotary International. He and his wife, Barbara, have been married for 23 years. Barbara has worked at Williams Baptist for 21 years, currently as the director of financial aid. They have a 15-year-old daughter, Emma, who will be a sophomore at Bolivar High School.

"Eric has proven to be a principled leader within our board, denomination and state," said Bobby Thomas, president and CEO of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. "His leadership has been thoughtful and thorough in moving toward our established vision and mission. Along with natural gifts and talents, Eric has always shown commitment to the task at hand. He has been a true team player and has managed to foster positive discussions, which have

led to the best possible outcomes."

The presidential search started after Taylor announced his planned retirement in January. The nationwide search resulted in 25 potential candidates, with four selected for in-person interviews with the search committee. Turner came to campus July 16-17 as the sole finalist, meeting with many faculty and staff before the trustee vote later that week.

Taylor will retire on Aug. 31 after 22 years of leading the school. The trustees voted to name him as president emeritus upon his retirement. [WW](#)

*Note: Turner's interview with Word&Way can be heard in episode 20 (July 26) of the Word&Way podcast "Baptist Without An Adjective," [tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast](http://tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast).*

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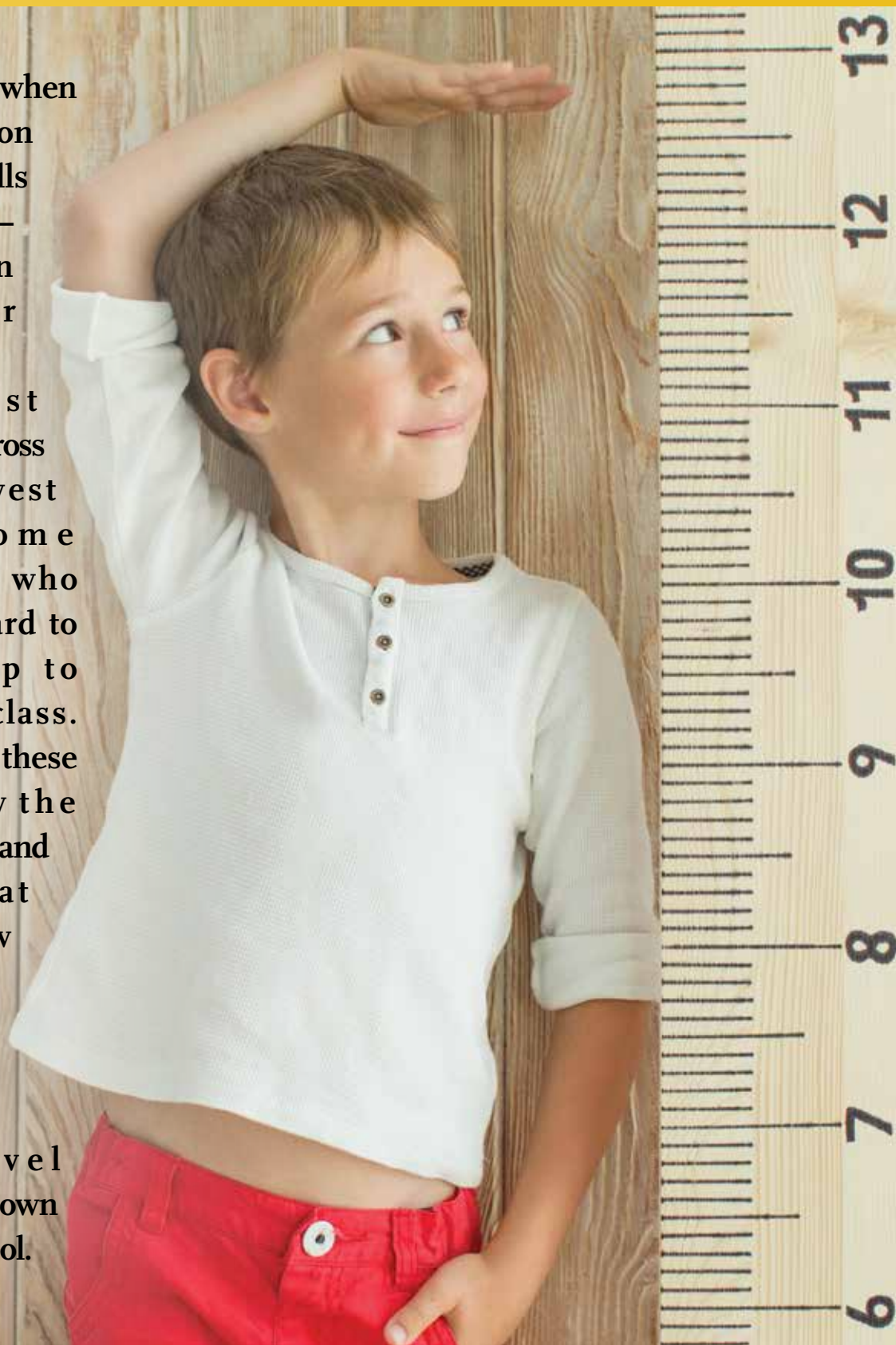
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# CHALLENGES OF Promotion Sunday

By Carolyn Tomlin  
for Word&Way

**E**ach year when promotion Sunday rolls around — usually in August or September — Baptist churches across the Midwest have some members who look forward to moving up to another class. Granted, these are usually the children and youth that yearn to grow older. Being recognized as being in the next level provides its own status symbol.





And, then there are those, usually adults, who want to remain in their comfort zone. Translation: everything stays the same. Members, who are now friends, remain in a close tight-knit group. Both approaches have merit — as well as disadvantages.

Richard Wakefield, a retired pastor and associational leader in Missouri, said he likes adding emphasis to the importance of moving up, though he added that as an interim pastor now he usually continues with the same program the church used before.

“I’ve served as pastor of churches where the Sunday School teacher would tell the children, ‘next Sunday you will go to a new class,’” he said. “The children seem to like this, as they don’t want to disappoint the new teacher.”

“However, I really like a formal promotion service where the children are recognized and presented a certificate,” he added. “Parents and the extended family members are in attendance. This is a good time to acknowledge children for their attendance and participation, also.”



Sandi Barlow, associate minister of family and Christian education at First Baptist Church in Bloomington, Ill., explained how promotion day, which occurs the first Sunday of September, works at her church.

“Our Church School is a smaller program than our intergenerational programming on Wednesday evenings,” she noted. “Children, including special needs children, are promoted according to their incoming grade in the fall. School begins about mid-August for us, so the children are ready to move up to their new grade in September.”

“Our Church School program is widely divided by grades 1-3, 4-5, 6-8 and 9-12,” she added. “So, promotion Sunday effects very few children, most of them are promoting to the same grouping. There are always two teachers in each class, so one teacher takes the children to the new room, while another waits to receive new ones.”

Barlow says one of the biggest challenges for their program is that members are declining in Church School and there is resistance to looking at a new model. She added that more Christian education now occurs on Wednesday evenings.

In researching the idea of promotion, several pastors and education directors raised these questions while sharing answers that may prove useful in your church.

**QUESTION:** In a local church, an 11-year-old boy has matured faster than his friends. His voice has become deeper, facial hair appears on his face and his body has developed the physical characteristics of an older teen. While his parents think that he would feel more comfortable with older students, emotionally and mentally, he is an eleven-year-old.

**ANSWER:** Early development can present a concern for both parents and children. If he stays with his age group, he will be using the literature for his age level. By moving up to an older group, the materials and activities may be above his cognitive level of development. Being physically mature does not mean that the boy is socially and emotionally ready to handle issues of the older class.

Ask the 11-year-old what he would like to do. Will this create a problem with other parents? Think of the pros and cons and remember that people are more important than programs.

**QUESTION:** What is another way to group members in classes?

**ANSWER:** “Our church is loosely organized and we have no strict policy on promotion,” stated one pastor. “Often the teacher selects the literature and subject matter. People are free to attend any area of interest in Bible study. Some teachers write their own lessons, focusing on the needs of the class members. However, about 75% to 80% of our children are either homeschooled or attend Christian schools. Ours is a family-oriented church. We provide separate classes for middle school and high school students because of such a wide range of interests. With our attitude toward organization, there is never a problem with promotion.”

**QUESTION:** Research shows that much of the growth of the church comes through the Sunday School. Most churches today do not require adults to change classes as they become older. How can churches follow the Great Commission by bringing in new members while still having the same classes?

**ANSWER:** “Churches are meant to grow!” says one pastor. “I believe we should be

more like the Jordan River, which is flowing, than the Dead Sea.”

Starting new units is one approach to growth. New units attract new members more than older ones do. There are four stages to building a class. First is the infant stage, where members are given basic Bible beliefs and taught the Scripture. Next is the ministry stage, where members begin to look for ways in the church and community to serve others.

Then, there is relationship building. This stage can be both positive and negative. On the positive side, people form strong friendships and bond with one another. They may visit in each other’s homes, go out for coffee after Sunday evening church and plan social events together. On the negative side, if you are looking for a church home, you may not fit in with an already organized group. When this happens, the class has reached the stagnant stage. By building new units within an already established class, you prevent stagnation from happening.

**QUESTION:** How could cell groups operate within a Sunday school and deal with the concerns of promoting people to another class?

**ANSWER:** If you have four couples in a cell group that have been together for a period of time, and you either add a new couple or a couple leaves, it changes the dynamics of the group.

Small groups help Sunday Schools grow. Unless people are brought into these more tight-knit groups, they never experience the full fellowship of the congregation.

Pastors and education directors have many views on promotion. And what works in one church may not work in another congregation. Pray and seek God’s guidance as you deal with determining what will work best for in your ministry. **WW**



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# GLOBAL BAPTISTS CONSIDER PAST, PRESENT PERSECUTION



**Story & photos by Brian Kaylor**  
*Word&Way Editor*

As Baptists from around the world prepared for Sunday morning worship on July 1 at the start of the Baptist World Alliance's 2018 annual gathering, they left behind the bustling city of Zürich, Switzerland, and hiked up a quiet hillside near the community of Bäretswil about a half-hour drive away. Once up in the cave hidden back in the woods off a dirt path, their words echoed through the chamber — the same words that have bounced off those dark walls for hundreds of years.

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*

In 1526, early Anabaptists found themselves persecuted in Zürich. Many fled the city after facing imprisonment and threats of death for refusing to practice infant baptism and for refusing to submit to the dictates of the city's intertwined religious and political leaders. These members of the "radical Reformation" instead insisted on following the teachings of the scriptures and on holding Jesus as the highest authority. Thus, they quickly found themselves at odds with the powerful Reformation leader in Zürich, Huldrych Zwingli.

Some Anabaptists, like Felix Manz, were executed by drowning (as a perverse take on rebaptism) in the Limmat River that runs through the heart of old Zürich. So, Baptists gathering in that city in July met in the Täuferhöhle cave where some of those martyrs worshipped nearly five hundred years ago. The worship time honored those who were part of — as the opening passage read during the service noted — "such a great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1).

*Praise God all creatures here below.*

Karen Bullock, professor of church history and director of the Ph.D. program at the B.H. Carroll Theological Institute in Irving, Texas, offered a historical reflection during the service. She noted that given the powerful "union of church and state" in Zürich, "it was very dangerous, insidious, rebellious for people to question that authority, but these young men did." Despite the opposition of religious and political authorities, she said, Manz and others revived the practice of believer's baptism for the first time in perhaps more than a millennium.

Bullock said that standing in that cave provides a way to remember the faithfulness of those early Anabaptists. As she spoke while standing at the opening of the cave with the congregation deeper inside the ground, her voice mixed with the sound of water falling over the mouth of the cave and spattering behind her. That sound of water, she added, provided some security for those early rebaptizers, helping drown out the sounds of their preaching and singing inside the cave.

*Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.*

Elijah Brown, general secretary of the BWA, also reflected on the importance of remembering those "around the world who even now may be gathered in caves and places like caves as they seek to be faithful to their courageous conviction of faith in Jesus Christ." He urged global Baptists to act on behalf of those facing religious persecution today.

"When the faithful are forced to the caves, how will we respond?" Brown asked. "This

morning as we gather to worship and we feel the weight of all those who have worshipped here before and we feel the weight of all those around the world who even now are in such situations, would we also feel the weight of the question: When the faithful are forced to the caves, how will we respond?"

*Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

After a responsive reading of scriptures about persecution, another hymn and times of quiet reflection and prayer, the group of Baptists slowly descended back down the hillside to return to Zürich. Throughout the week, the topics of the heritage of Swiss Anabaptists and the persecution of contemporary Baptists around the world continued to find prominent space on the program.

Perhaps the words of the special worship service will not just echo off the walls of that cave, but will also continue to resonate well into the future.

*Amen.*

## PAST PERSECUTION OF ANABAPTISTS

As more than 300 Baptists from 46 nations attended the BWA annual gathering in Zürich, meeting in that location represented an opportunity to learn from the history of the Protestant Reformation.

"Our gathering in Zürich, Switzerland, is of great significance in the history of Baptists," BWA President Paul Msiza said. "This is the time to do a reflection on the movement of Reformation as we mark its 500th anniversary."





*Carol McMillan leads worship at the BWA gathering.*

While Zwingli played a significant role in the development of the Protestant Reformation, some of his students and friends grew frustrated by his pace of reforms and what they saw as his unwillingness to fully implement what he preached. As Catherine McMillan of the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich — the denomination that emerged from Zwingli's work and the group that invited the BWA to come to the Zürich during the anniversary year of the Reformation — noted during a presentation at the BWA gathering, "The Anabaptists were friends of Zwingli who didn't think he was moving fast enough." In particular, they pushed him to reject infant baptism, a practice he admitted he doubted at one time but refused to undo.

Ultimately, Zwingli would wield the power of church and state to persecute his former students. And while he tore down the statues from the Grossmünster (the main church in Zürich) and other churches — viewing them as idolatry — he is today memorialized outside a church he led in Zürich with a statue. Even more problematic for Anabaptists, who practice nonviolence, Zwingli in that statue holds a Bible and a sword. And with the sword, he died in battle fighting Catholics.

Just a few hundred feet from the Grossmünster where Zwingli started his

German translation of the Bible and led the church-state coalition, a group met on Jan. 21, 1525, at the home of Manz. They walked outside and held a public baptism. In less than five years, the three leaders — Manz, Conrad Grebel and George Blaurock — and many other Anabaptists were dead. The charges and verdict against Manz were read from a bridge just a quarter-mile away from his home where they had practiced believer's baptism. With his hands bound behind his knees and a pole placed between them, the executioners rowed him out into the river where, in sight of the Grossmünster, they threw him into the water after he sang out, "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit."

While thousands of Anabaptists who fled to other lands kept the faith alive — as evidenced today through the Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites and others — the persecution in Switzerland left the Swiss Anabaptists nearly extinct. Recognizing this history, about 14 years ago some Swiss Reformed leaders started making public amends for how their early leaders treated the first Anabaptists. In 2004, the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich issued "a statement of regret" to apologize for the treatment of the Anabaptists, a document also passed out and read from during the BWA gathering.

"The persecuted do not forget their history; the persecutors by contrast would prefer to do so," the statement continued. "We — representatives of the Reformed State Church of the Canton of Zürich — acknowledge that our church has largely suppressed the story of the persecution of the Anabaptists."

In the statement, the Reformed Church confessed the persecution was "a betrayal of the Gospel and that our Reformed forefathers were in error on this issue." Additionally, the statement recognizes Anabaptists "as our sisters and brothers and their churches as part of the body of Christ." It also calls on Reformed members to honor "the radical

approach of the Anabaptists movement" as "a free community of committed believers putting into practice the message of the Sermon on the Mount."

In a similar spirit, the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich collaborated with the BWA during the BWA's gathering, including a presentation and short worship liturgy led by McMillan, a forum and a press conference with Baptist and Reformed leaders talking about the importance of religious freedom, and a special service at the Grossmünster with Baptist and Reformed leaders preaching and praying.

### PRESENT PERSECUTION OF BAPTISTS

The BWA gathering did not focus merely on the past. References to the present persecution of Baptists and others around the world today also frequently appeared in presentations and prayers. Like other speakers, Msiza connected the past in Zürich with the present need of advocating for religious liberty for all.

"The challenge for the church in the past and even today is that in most we do not perceive the move of the Spirit of God," he added. "If the Catholic Church had recognized the move of the Spirit they would not have persecuted Martin Luther and, in the same manner, the Reformed Church would not have persecuted the Anabaptists. It is important for us to take the journey into the past and thank God for the faith and commitment of those first Anabaptists who responded to the move of the Spirit of God, those men and women whom God used to stand for the church at the time when it was dangerous to speak about religious liberty."

Msiza mentioned specific countries where Baptists faced challenges to their religious freedom over the past year, including Bolivia, India and Russia. Other sessions during the week included presentations on the BWA's advocacy work at the United Nations, the



*Karen Bullock speaks during worship in Anabaptist cave.*



*Fountain outside house of Felix Manz at the site of the first Anabaptist baptism.*



*The BWA's banner celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

ongoing persecution of Baptists and others in Russia following a 2016 anti-missionary law, persecution in some Central Asian nations and issues of religious freedom in the treatment of migrants and refugees across Europe. Attendees also signed their names to a banner noting the BWA celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that includes a recognition of religious liberty for all.

Brown, a religious liberty activist before assuming the BWA position earlier this year, urged Baptists to pray for believers suffering in North Korea. He spoke about standing at the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas earlier this year and hearing from Christians in South Korea as well as those who fled from the North. He paused his presentation to ask Baptist leaders from around the world to huddle together and pray for religious liberty in North Korea and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Igor Bandura of the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian-Baptists spoke about an emerging threat to religious freedom in eastern Ukraine. After Russian-backed separatists took control of part of eastern Ukraine in 2014, they declared themselves an independent nation they call the Lugansk People's Republic. Although the state remains globally unrecognized, the leaders of the region have passed a new law requiring all churches to register by Aug. 7. Yet, the LPR government is not registering Baptist churches, so 43 Baptist churches in the region will be threatened with closure once that deadline passes.

Bandura said "we assume persecution will come" after Aug. 7 beyond the persecution by armed militants already experienced by Baptists in the region. He urged Baptists to "keep our brothers and sisters there in our prayers, and encourage them with our words." Following Bandura's presentation, Baptists were encouraged to write letters of encouragement to Ukrainian Baptists. Those present were also encouraged to write letters to the Russian Embassy in their own nation to urge Russians to use their influence to ensure all churches and places of worship remain open.

Later, the BWA's general council passed a resolution to express the BWA's "concern that the situation for religious communities is precarious" in the so-called LPR. It criticizes the law for requiring churches "to prove their loyalty to LPR authorities through a re-registration procedure in order to maintain their legal status" and for requiring "all religious organizations to report in detail

their activities."

"This law violates universal human rights, restricts religious freedom and threatens the existence of existing religious groups and organizational networks," the resolution notes. "These limitations and regulations are violating Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights and Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights."

The resolution calls on the LPR to change the law, encourages Russian leaders to influence the LPR to change the law and urges the UN's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief to visit the region and pressure LPR leaders to change the law.

In the heart of a city where the first Anabaptist leaders — but not the movement — were drowned, global Baptists continued to push for believer's baptism, the authority of Christ and religious liberty for all. And as Martin Rothkegel of the Theologische Hochschule Elstal, a Baptist seminary in Germany, said in a presentation at the BWA gathering about those early Anabaptists, despite the persecution, the early Anabaptist ultimately won. After all, he noted, nearly all of Christianity now believes it is wrong to execute those with different religious beliefs, and many nations now enshrine religious freedom rights in their constitutions and laws.

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.* [WW](#)



Grossmünster

*Note: The BWA worship service in the Anabaptist cave can be heard in episode 17 (July 10) of the Word&Way podcast "Baptist Without An Adjective," [tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast](http://tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast).*





# Midwest Baptists Reflect on BWA GATHERING



Mitch Randall (middle) interviews BWA General Secretary Elijah Brown (right) for an *EthicsDaily.com* video. Cliff Vaughn (left) films with help from his son, Jack, on the ground with the microphone. (Brian Kaylor/Word&Way)



Doyle Sager (left), lead pastor at First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., and Churchnet Executive Director Brian Ford in the Grossmünster before worship with the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich. (Brian Kaylor/Word&Way)

**B**aptists from Missouri and Oklahoma who attended the annual Baptist World Alliance annual gathering in Zürich, Switzerland, found it inspiring—and shared their own voices in presentations.

Brian Ford, executive director of Churchnet, said he left the gathering “reflecting on and assessing my views of the world (political and social), my views of ministry in God’s kingdom and my views on ministry in the North American context.” He was particularly excited to see how “Baptist churches are exploding with growth in the global south.”

“We have much to learn from the movement of God in the global south, as well as important insights to share from our contexts regarding church re-imaging and renewal,” Ford added. “All this has to do with finding God in our own neighborhoods and joining the transformational work already in progress through the Holy Spirit.”

Mitch Randall, an Oklahoma Baptist who serves as executive director of *EthicsDaily.com*, found the BWA annual gathering inspiring, especially because of “the variety of voices that I have heard — from Ghana to Canada to Great Britain to South Africa.”

“We have heard the Baptist voice in a variety of languages and a variety of contexts, and it makes you proud to be a Baptist,” he added.

Randall also noted how the meeting impacted him as he heard reports about how Baptists in other countries welcome refugees and immigrants. He said that through such efforts, “our Baptist brothers and sisters in

Europe and in Canada and other places are stepping up and doing Gospel right.”

Doyle Sager, lead pastor of First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., noted several things he found particularly meaningful during the annual gathering, including “delightful conversations with new friends over coffee or tea and a pastry.” He also mentioned the “thrill” of “gathering in the Grossmünster of Zürich, celebrating our common faith in Christ with the Evangelical Reformed Church as our host.”

“The Baptist World Alliance is equally passionate about evangelism and social justice, demonstrating our Savior’s concern for the total person and all persons,” he added. “I’m convinced I’m a better Christian and a better Baptist because of my time at the BWA Annual Gathering. I’m equally certain that I never read the Bible the same way after spending time with global believers.”

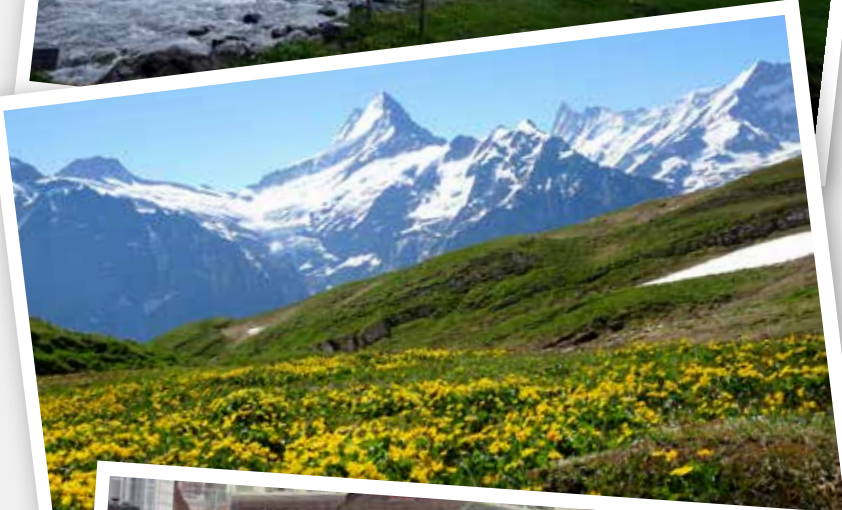
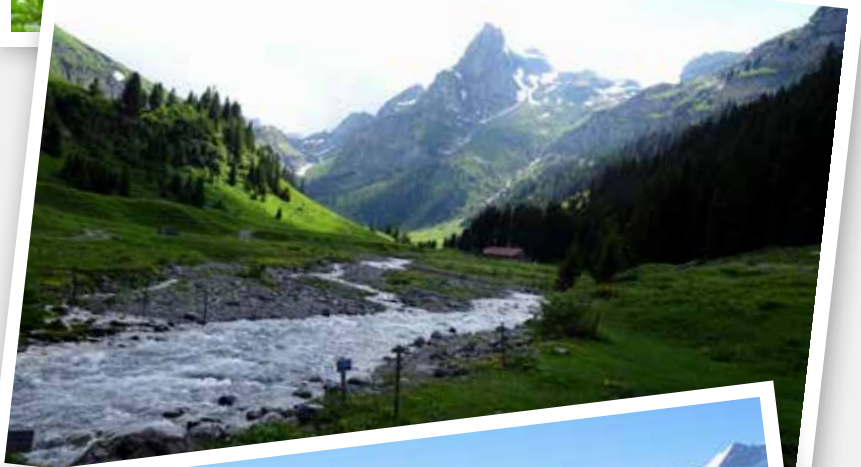
Sager presented during a session of the Commission on Social and Economic Justice on biblical perspectives of children in light of concerns about justice for all creation. *Word&Way* Editor Brian Kaylor also presented during the BWA gathering, leading a communications seminar on using social media, speaking to the Commission on Christian Ethics about communication ethics and evangelism, speaking to the Commission on Ministry about creating print and digital media and addressing the meeting of the North American Baptist Fellowship on issues of renewal and culture. **WW**

*Worship in the Grossmünster.*









# Q&A

# Interview:

**with Christer Daelander,  
European Religious Freedom Advocate**

*Interview by Brian Kaylor*



**Christer Daelander, a Baptist leader in Sweden, who also serves as a religious freedom representative for the European Baptist Federation,**

**received the Baptist World Alliance's 2018 Denton and Janice Lotz**

**Human Rights Award. Daelander received the award, given each year at the BWA's annual gathering, for his advocacy for religious liberty for all in Europe, Central Asia and elsewhere. Word&Way Editor Brian Kaylor interviewed Daelander during the 2018 BWA annual gathering in Zürich, Switzerland.**

**I've heard reports from you for several years at these BWA annual gatherings. So, I'm not surprised that you were given this award because it's been fascinating to hear the work that you and others with EBF and BWA have been doing on the topic of international religious freedom. Could you share a little bit about what that looks like in your position?**

First of all, I started to work with the EBF, and I became their representative for religious freedom. And actually I'm [also] working for the Uniting Church in Sweden, and part of my work is for human rights and [as] part of that I can work for the EBF and Baptist World Alliance. So, that has made it possible

for me to work on this.

And the strategy we have is actually to work on different levels. First of all, we are in the unique situation that we have sister churches and believers and members all over the world. And they live out the real situation of discrimination and violation of freedom of religion and belief.

And we are able to meet with them. We're able to hear them, their voices and their situation so we can go and encourage them. And when we meet with them — and that's one of the objectives, to meet with them — to encourage them to see that they belong to [a] big family. They're not alone.

And they want us to pray for them. They believe in prayer, and they can inspire us to pray for them and for us. So, we need intercession at the local level, to encourage the locals as much as possible.

And many of them, they don't know about their rights, so then we have developed programs, conferences and seminars that we try to have in their contexts with people from these countries who are oppressed — especially in the Central Asia and Caucasus where we work as EBF.

We have trainings about their rights, so they will know about their rights so whenever they are discriminated or whenever they have police coming [and] raiding them, they know that they are not the criminals but actually that the police and the authorities they are criminals. That can give them courage. That's the local level.

And then when it's possible, we go with [a] delegation from the Baptist World Alliance [and] EBF into these countries. Together with the believers, accompanying them toward

the authorities, the [state] religious committees ... or the international community in the country, like embassies.

As a world body — as Baptist World Alliance — these [government] offices will open the doors and believers can come in direct contact. We can advocate on the national level.

The third level is the international level where we can work together with other churches and church bodies ... to advocate for religious freedom in conferences and actually send reports to governments.

And we also have the possibility through the United Nations system because Baptist World Alliance has access to all the different departments in the United Nations, especially in Geneva [Switzerland] where we have the Human Rights Council. We can be there and we can make contact with the diplomatic missions from the different countries, give reports to the reviews they have and be present. And then these missions will bring recommendations to the countries that we can follow up.

**One of the things you said with both the local and national level is talking about the importance for these Baptists in countries where there are violations of religious freedom, that they are part of a larger body, part of a larger family. It's encouraging for them to hear that and it also empowers them to meet with these national leaders to know that it's not just this minority community that is concerned but that there are millions of Baptists around the world who are also concerned. Could you talk about that power that we have in the broader family together?**



Yes, it's very strong. I had a very strong experience when I was in Uzbekistan ... and we took part in a service in a Baptist church.

We told them about Baptist World Alliance. And they were so touched by this knowledge — to belong to this body — so they decided that the offering that Sunday would go to the Baptist World Alliance.

It wasn't much compared to the American standards, the European standards, but it was a sign of love and belonging. So, that's very important.

**You've mentioned one story, but I wonder if there's another story of one of your visits — particularly I know you've done a lot of visits to the Central Asian region where there are several countries where Baptists have been struggling with persecution — that would help us understand what Baptists there are suffering.**

“ **It's about not just religious freedom or human rights. It's about the gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of liberation.**

Of course, some of the stories I cannot mention the names of the countries and the persons. But there is one person I met, a woman. She's witnessing about Jesus Christ in her context, but it's not possible to do that openly.

The church she belongs to cannot meet any longer because the neighbors complained and the police come and arrested. She has a very hard time, but she's still talking about Jesus Christ.

And she's also passionate about helping people with problems. She knows about a hospital with mentally-sick persons. The director of that

*BWA President Paul Msiza presents the 2018 Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award to Christer Daelander. (Brian Kaylor/Word&Way)*

hospital is terrible because he doesn't let the patients, the clients have their clothes on. So, then she gathered clothes together with friends and brought them to the hospital to clothe these clients. But the next time [she went], the director had taken those clothes and sold it, so they were still naked. So, the third time [she and her friends] had destroyed the clothes with holes and needled it together and gave it. These clothes were in condition that the clients could use but the director couldn't sell it. So, they could keep it.

And that is in a situation in Central Asia where she was testifying about Jesus Christ. Now, we try to connect with her to see how we can support her work in a better way as she continues the work.

I hope and I pray that they will get registration — the possibility to meet as believers — and this abuse of power from that director of the mental hospital will be shown officially so they can have justice, these clients in the mental hospital.

**When you received your award you also made a point in your remarks [that] you really wanted to focus on inspiring the rest of us to get involved. What can the average Baptist do to join and walk alongside you and others who are advocating for international religious freedom.**

First of all, it's about not just religious freedom or human rights. It's about the gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of liberation. Liberation of the spirit, liberation of the body, liberation of the socio-economical situation. And that touches it all.

In most parts of the world, you have limitations, and we need to stand up



to it. We can, first of all, be involved with the people around us: immigrants coming, migrants coming. Or even [fighting a] regulation like in many western European countries as well where it's not allowed any longer the religious schools, or when the courts start to stop you from teaching religion to the kids. So, we need to stand up for religious freedom and human rights wherever we live.

Secondly, you can get informed about the situation in the world, and pray for that. As our friends, sisters and brothers in these persecuted situations, say, “We believe in prayer. God will answer us.” We can get informed and pray.

And, of course, we can sponsor the Baptist World Alliance, European Baptist Federation or others who work so we can actually be the voice, take the voices of the voiceless to these seats in the United Nations, to the international community.

So, there are multiple ways to be involved. **WW**

*Note: A longer version of this conversation can be heard in episode 21 (July 31) of the weekly Word&Way podcast “Baptist Without An Adjective.”*

*Additionally, other interviews recorded during the BWA annual gathering include: Lee Spitzer of American Baptist Churches USA (episode 18, July 17), Thomas Klammt of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (episode 19, July 24) and Mitch Randall (episode 22, August 7).*

*Find the show at [tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast](http://tinyurl.com/BWAApodcast) or search for its title in iTunes.*

## P A S S I O N A T E L Y

## P U R S U I N G

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**By Leroy Seat**  
for *Word&Way*

**T**he first half of August is a difficult time for many Japanese people, especially for those middle-aged or above. There are so many painful memories, from direct experience or first-hand accounts, of August 1945: the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6 and of Nagasaki on August 9 and then on August 15 the Emperor's announcement on radio to the startled and grieving Japanese public that Japan had lost the war. (The actual surrender papers were signed on September 2 aboard the USS Missouri.)

The great suffering caused by Japan's warring activities from 1931 to 1945, in what the Japanese refer to as the Fifteen-Year War, has since the end of that war motivated many Japanese people to be strong advocates of world peace. That is especially true for Japanese churches and individual Christians, for there was oppression of churches and persecution of some Christians during that terrible time. Because of that painful past, the first half of August is a time when many, perhaps most, Baptist churches in Japan strongly emphasize peace.

In this country, by contrast, there has often been considerable glorification of war, or at least of what is seen to be the

fruits of war. Southern Baptists have often been among the most ardent supporters of the war efforts of the U.S. government, including the Iraq War of 2003-11. While there was considerable opposition to that "preemptive" war by various Christian organizations and many individual Christians in the U.S., as well as some of us Baptist missionaries in Japan, the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention were among the most vocal supporters of the Iraq War from the beginning. And at the 2003 meeting of the SBC in Phoenix, the messengers approved a resolution titled "On the Liberation of Iraq," which lauded the war efforts of the U.S.

Still, through the years there have been Baptists who have worked diligently for peace — and some who are passionately pursuing peace at the present time. One of the first Baptist peace groups was the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship, formed in November 1939. After two other name changes, in 1974 that organization became known as the American Baptist Peace Fellowship. It was active under that name for the next ten years.

In December 1980, some Baptists in Louisville, Ky., began publishing Baptist Peacemaker. By October 1989 it was

being sent free of charge to some 13,500 individuals with another 4,000 being sent to local churches, seminaries and Baptist Student Unions.

The American Baptist Peace Fellowship and others joined in forming the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America in March 1984. Its original purpose statement began: "The purpose of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America is to unite and enable Baptist Christians to make peace in our warring world." Ken Sehested, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, was elected as executive director. During the first year, more than 500 people sent in membership dues.

In October 1989, the final decision to merge the Baptist Peacemaker and BPFNA was made — and the latter continued to publish that quarterly periodical. The first three issues of Vol. 38 have already been published this year. BPFNA also sponsors a "Peace Conference" each summer. The 34th such conference was held last month in western New York state. In July 2019 the annual conference will be merged with the Sixth Global Baptist Peace Conference to be held in Cali, Colombia.

In May of this year, Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee,



Kan., marked the launch of the Buttry Center for Peace and Nonviolence. That significant new Center is named for Dan and Sharon Buttry, Global Peace Consultants for International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches, USA. From August 7-16 the Buttrys will be co-facilitating a 10-day intensive Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers at Central Seminary. This will be the first major program for the new Center for Peace and Nonviolence.

In addition to the organizations mentioned above, there have been many notable individual Baptist peacemakers. An excellent source for learning about both Baptist peacemaking groups and individuals is Canadian Baptist Paul R. Dekar's 1993 book "For the Healing of the Nations: Baptist Peacemakers." Among well-known Baptists of the past whom Dekar highlights as peacemakers are Roger Williams, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Walter Rauschenbusch and Howard Thurman.

Throughout his book there are also many references to Edwin Dahlberg, who is perhaps not so widely known but who was one of the leading Baptist peacemakers of the twentieth century. Dahlberg (1893-1986) was an American Baptist pastor and a passionate peacemaker. He spent his last 12 years as a pastor at Delmar Baptist Church (now Dayspring Baptist Church) in St. Louis, Mo.

He was a co-founder of the Baptist Pacifist Fellowship in 1939 and was a staunch advocate of pacifism during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The Gandhi Peace Award, established in 1960, selected two peacemakers to receive the awards that inaugural year: Dahlberg and Eleanor Roosevelt.

In 1964, the American Baptist Churches established the Dahlberg Peace Award, and its first recipient was Martin Luther King, Jr. (That was the same year MLK also received the Nobel Peace Prize.) Other notable Baptists to be honored with the Dahlberg Peace Award include Jimmy Carter in 1979 (23 years before he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize), Ken Sehested in 1995, Marian Wright Edelman in 1997 and Congressman John Lewis in 2003.

I was particularly happy that my friend Ken Sehested was given that Award. He

was deserving of that recognition because of his stalwart work as founding executive director of BPFNA.

During BPFNA's first few years, they published *PeaceWork*, a bimonthly newsletter. In a 1987 issue, Sehested wrote, "We do not wish to be viewed simply as an anti-war group. ... We understand violence to be the opposite of shalom — not just war making, but also child abuse, hunger, civil and human rights abuses." He added, "If Baptists had saints, then Martin Luther King Jr. would be the patron saint of the BPFNA."

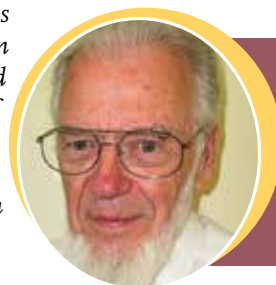
In the more than 30 years since then, BPFNA has continued to work passionately for peace and justice; it is not possible to have the former without the latter.

The initial impetus for this article came when earlier this year I saw the list of 2017 contributors to the work of BPFNA, listed by state. In contrast to the numerous donors in many other states, there were only six units (individuals or couples)

in Missouri and seven in Kansas who contributed and only one Kansas church in the two states that financially supported the work of BPFNA last year.

Surely there are many other Baptists in Missouri and Kansas who can and will join in the important endeavor to work for peace — or at least to support with their financial gifts and prayers those who are passionately pursuing peace here in this country as well as in Japan and in other countries around the world. **WW**

*Leroy Seat served as a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan beginning in 1966. Upon his retirement in 2004, he became professor emeritus at Seinan Gakuin University and pastor emeritus of Fukuoka International Church. He and his wife, June, now live in Liberty, Mo.*



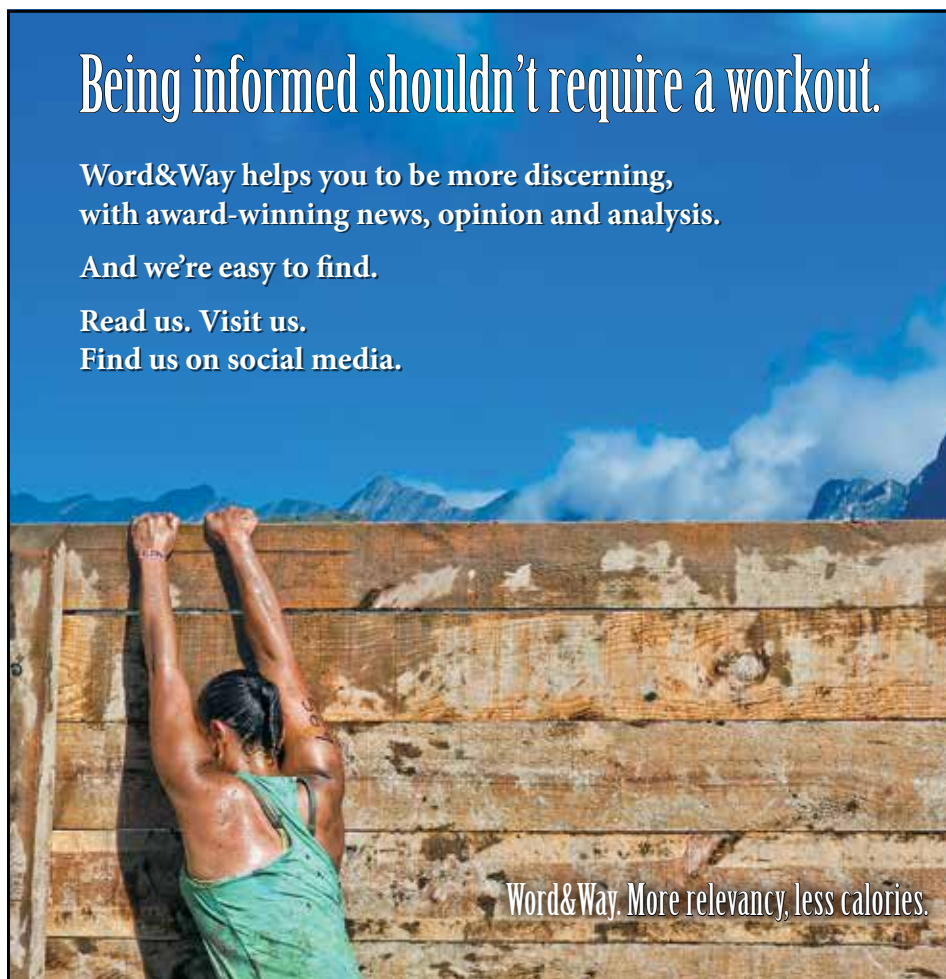
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# MANY EGYPTIAN CHRISTIANS FELT LEFT OUT OF WORLD CUP

By Hamza Hendawi  
Religion News Service

**E**gypt's first World Cup in 28 years captivated the soccer-crazy nation, with intense focus on the squad and the broader game. The nation lost all three matches, falling 1-0 to Uruguay, 3-1 to their Russian hosts and 2-1 to Saudi Arabia. Despite the losses, the love and respect enjoyed by the team and the players remained intact.

Yet, it was not an entirely unifying experience. For the country's Christians, about 10 percent of the population, the composition of the team and the way the squad was perceived highlighted what they believe is a problem with the sport in Egypt. No Christian has been on the national soccer squad for more than a decade, and just one played for any of the 18 top-flight clubs last season.

Egyptian coaches and officials dismiss any suggestion of discrimination, but Christians disagree. Egypt's Christian spiritual leader has broken the church's silence on the issue by publicly complaining about their disproportionate representation in the sport.

Egypt's all-Muslim World Cup squad is known for being pious. The team even chose to make its World Cup base in Muslim Chechnya. The national squad has been nicknamed the prostrators because the players offer a Muslim prayer when they score. They regularly pray together when in camp and read the opening verse of the Quran before kickoff. Some perform the Muslim ritual wash before games. Generally, they frame competition, wins and defeats in religious terms.

Hassan Shehatah, one of Egypt's most successful coaches, said nearly a decade ago that, to him, a player's religious piety

was as important as his skills. Hassan led an all-Muslim squad to win three of Egypt's seven African titles between 2006 and 2010. When goalkeeper Mohamed Elshenawy was named man of the match against Uruguay, he refused the Budweiser-sponsored award on religious grounds.

The perceived exclusion of Christians from top flight soccer and the national team is at odds with the outreach to the ancient community by Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, Egypt's general-turned-president who led the military's 2013 ouster of an Islamist president. El-Sissi has emphatically and repeatedly spoken about inclusion and sectarian harmony. However, his government, critics and some Christians say, has failed to shield the community from the day-to-day discrimination, particularly in rural areas with less state authority and religious tolerance.

Pope Tawadros II, head of the Orthodox Coptic Christians and a close el-Sissi ally, rarely speaks publicly of discrimination, but has recently waded into the issue with uncouth bluntness.

"It's extraordinary that all of Egypt's football teams don't have a single Copt who has good legs and who kicked a ball on the streets when he was little," he said.

Ahmed Hossam, a retired striker — and a Muslim who played for some of Europe's biggest clubs — was more blunt. He claimed in a recent television interview that youth team coaches were driving Christians away.

"Regrettably, there's a lot of people in Egypt who are bigoted over color, religion and ethnicity," Hossam, better known as Mido, said. "We must confront them and not bury our heads in the sand. Can you believe it that in the history of football in Egypt, only five

Christians played at the top level?"

As the only Christian on his soccer youth team, Ramon Zhery says he tried everything he could to blend in with his teammates. At the end, it was not enough. Zhery, now 28, plays for a third division club in southern Egypt. He says discrimination against his faith kept him from rising further.

Speaking to The Associated Press, Zhery recounted how he tried to establish harmony with his teammates and reassure them that, though a Christian, he was just another player like them. When they huddled before kickoff to recite the Quran's opening verse — a ritual meant to serve as a plea for divine help — he whispered a Christian prayer to himself. When at camp, he woke up before everyone and went about rousing them to perform the dawn prayers, one of five that Muslims offer daily.

The Christians' response to their perceived exclusion from domestic soccer has been "church football" — a nationwide league of five-a-side teams that is played mostly on church grounds or rented pitches. Andrew Raafat, a physical education teacher who tried his luck in club soccer before he settled for a coaching job at a Cairo Church, says some of the better young players he works with want to play at the top level.

"I cannot tell them that they will never be selected," Raafat said. "They get selected sometimes, but they are later let go."

Not everyone agrees. Retired international midfielder Ismail Youssef, soccer director of Cairo's Zamalek club, dismissed suggestions of discrimination.

"I don't think they are deliberately excluded, the better ones among them get to play," he said. "There is no nepotism in football." **WW**

Fans outside a 2018 World Cup stadium in Russia. (Jerry Barnwell/Baptist Press)





# THE SURPRISING SUCCESS AND — FAITH — OF WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Fred Rogers, left, with Francois Scarborough Clemmons on the show. (John Beale/Focus Features)



**By Emily McFarlan Miller**  
*Religion News Service*

**T**here is a moment near the beginning of the documentary film “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” — as the trolley that transported millions of children to the Neighborhood of Make Believe is taken out of its box and Fred Rogers’s familiar sneakers are set next to a bench — when Margy Whitmer muses on the success of the show she produced for many years.

“We had a director who once said to me, if you take all of the elements that make good television and do the exact opposite, you have ‘Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood’: low production values, simple set, an unlikely star,” she said. “Yet it worked, because it was saying something really important.”

The same might be said of “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” itself. In mid-July, the film topped the \$18 million mark at the box office, becoming the highest-grossing documentary of the year and 14th of all time.

Celebrities from Dan Rather to Korie Robertson of “Duck Dynasty” have tweeted about “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” Moviegoers in Tampa, Fla., threw a Mister Rogers block party in front of a theater, collecting sweaters and sneakers for children. Presbyterians sang along to the show’s iconic theme song as the trailer for the film rolled at the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s denominational meeting. Prominent pastor Mark Batterson’s National Community Church in the Washington, D.C., area is in the middle of a sermon series titled “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” The Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago hosted a private screening for its JUF Young Families group.

Filmmaker Morgan Neville said he has screened the documentary now for “every possible kind of audience.” Neville, who also wrote and directed the Oscar-winning documentary “20 Feet from Stardom,” had

hoped to make a film that would find common ground, but “Won’t You Be My Neighbor” has “exceeded any expectation,” he said.

“This has only happened to me once or twice in my career, where a film hits a nerve where it no longer feels like your film,” he added. “The audience takes ownership of it and feels that it says something personal to them. It’s kind of magic when it happens.”

Perhaps the success of a documentary about a slow-paced children’s show hosted by a kind, soft-spoken Presbyterian minister should not be a surprise. After all, the success of the children’s show was itself a surprise and its host, an unlikely celebrity.

So unassuming was Rogers that it is surprising to see how strongly his faith comes out in the film. Yet it is there, sometimes in sarcasm, as when Rogers’s son John muses about the difficulty of growing up with the “second Christ” for a dad. It is there in Fred Rogers’s ordination as an evangelist for television, which was “way out there for the Presbyterian Church,” according to his wife, Joanne Rogers. It is there in the title of the documentary — and the show itself.

“This word ‘neighbor’ wasn’t something Fred came up with out of nowhere. It was biblical,” said the Rev. George Wirth, a friend and fellow Presbyterian minister who called Rogers “a man of deep faith.”

“He was a community builder,” Wirth explained. “The neighborhood was symbolic of Fred Rogers’s desire for people to live together in peace, with respect and love and affirmation, and when things go wrong, forgiveness and reconciliation.”

“I think the bottom line for him was he believed all people are created in the image of God. He saw everyone in that light: created in the image of God,” Wirth added. “That crosses all the religious boundaries, all the race, all the ethnic boundaries — all of God’s

children are created in God’s image.”

Growing up in a wealthy Presbyterian family in Latrobe, Rogers learned a Protestant work ethic and frugality that he carried into his work on “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” according to Junlei Li, co-director of the Fred Rogers Center at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa.

Rogers’s parents also modeled the importance of giving — his mother often bought presents for hundreds of people in town at the holidays, and though his father kept a ledger of every towns person and employee who had borrowed money from him, he never collected any of it. For Rogers, Li said, that came to mean “recognizing everyone has something worth giving. You could go to the lowest and the least and the youngest, and you fundamentally respect they have something to give.”

Ultimately, “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” was a show about hope and reconciliation, a word Li said meant a lot to Rogers. He wanted to mend broken relationships: between people, between humans and the environment, even — though he never made it explicit — between humans and their creator.

“That breaking of a relationship between each of us with our creator, in Fred’s world, would be that you no longer believe that you are worthwhile,” Li said.

Viewers of “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” which ran from 1968 to 2001, now range in age from their 20s to 50s and many express a feeling of kinship, not to say neighborliness, with Rogers. Filmmaker Neville is one of them.

“We need to look out for each other. United we stand, divided we fall. These are very basic ideals that I feel like nobody is advocating for anymore,” Neville said. “That’s why we need Fred Rogers.” **WW**

# BAPTISTS REACT TO SUPREME COURT NOMINEE

President Donald Trump's nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh, sparked responses from various Baptists engaging in religious liberty advocacy. Trump nominated Kavanaugh on July 9 to fill the seat of retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, who on June 27 announced his plan to leave the high court.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, immediately hailed Kavanaugh as "a tremendous choice" and "a brilliant judge with a career of intellectually robust conservatism." Moore

added, "I pray that Judge Kavanaugh will serve for decades to come with a firm and unwavering commitment to our Constitution's principles."

The ERLC also released a letter signed by many Christian leaders backing Kavanaugh and urging the U.S. Senate to "work diligently to confirm his appointment without obstruction." The Baptist signatories to the letter included SBC seminary and university presidents, several ERLC employees, current SBC President J.D. Greear and several former SBC presidents.

Unlike the ERLC, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, which represents 15 Baptist bodies, does not endorse or oppose candidates for the Supreme Court.

However, Holly Hollman, the BJC's general council, told Baptist News Global, "We are carefully looking at his record." She said that there are signs suggesting "he is sympathetic to religious claims." But she added, "that is not the same as upholding a vision of religious liberty for all." **WW**

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### Across

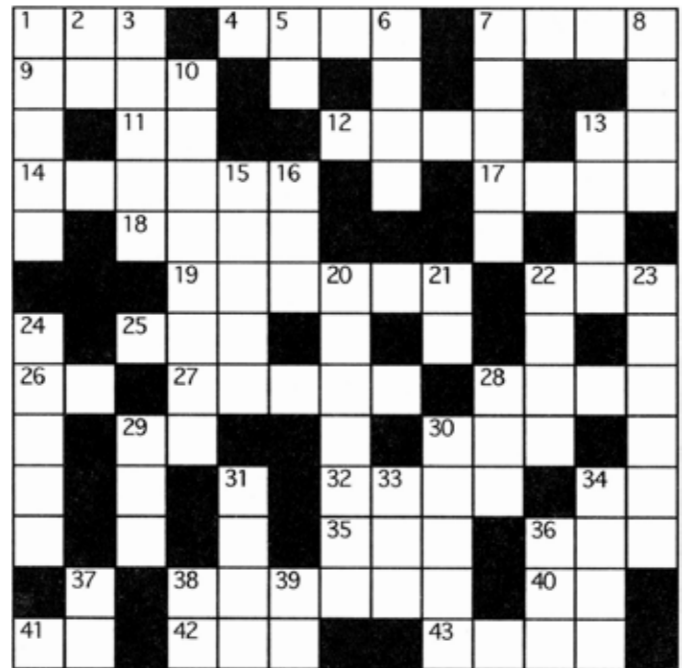
1. "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not \_\_\_\_\_ that he should live" (Acts 22:22)
4. "The joy of thy \_\_\_\_\_" (Matt. 25:21)
7. "Do thyself no \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 16:28)
9. "A feast of wines on the \_\_\_\_\_" (Isa. 25:6)
11. "Believe also in \_\_\_\_\_" (John 14:1)
12. "And so wickedness, \_\_\_\_\_ the same" (Job 14:1)
13. "Called to be \_\_\_\_\_ apostle" (1 Cor. 1:1)
14. A son of Benjamin (Gen. 46:21)
17. "Seeing he giveth to all \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 17:25)
18. "Chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man \_\_\_\_\_ him" (Mark 5:4)
19. "His life a \_\_\_\_\_ for many" (Matt. 20:28)
22. "Hath the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:38)
25. "Because Judas had said unto him" (John 13:29)
26. "\_\_\_\_\_, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37)
27. "Wash his feet with \_\_\_\_\_" (Luke 7:38)
28. "And stamp with thy foot, and say, \_\_\_\_\_ for all the evil abominations of the house of

Israel!" (Ezek. 6:11)

29. "That where I am, there ye may \_\_\_\_\_" (John 14:3)
30. "Let him \_\_\_\_\_ the death" (Matt. 15:4)
32. "Whose shoes I am not worthy to \_\_\_\_\_" (Matt. 3:11)
34. "Be ye not as the horse, \_\_\_\_\_ as the mule" (Ps. 32:9)
35. "Do ye not therefore \_\_\_\_\_, because ye know not the scriptures?" (Mark 12:24)
36. "I \_\_\_\_\_ in Sion, a chief cornerstone" (1 Pet. 2:6)
38. Blew trumpet before ark of God (1 Chron. 15:24)
40. Preposition
41. Forefather of Jesus, Elmadam was the son of him (Luke 3:28)
42. "Simon \_\_\_\_\_-Jona" (Matt. 16:17)
43. 11th letter of Hebrew alphabet

### Down

1. "His eyes were as a \_\_\_\_\_ of fire" (Rev. 19:12)
2. Same as, or that is, Lat. abbr.
3. "Thou shalt not \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7)
5. "Whose \_\_\_\_\_ have I taken?" (1 Sam. 12:3)
6. "Might in \_\_\_\_\_ and word" (Luke 24:19)
7. "That they should seek the Lord, if \_\_\_\_\_ they might feel after him" (Acts 17:27)
8. "Is not \_\_\_\_\_ to give" (Mark 10:40)
10. "Who shall \_\_\_\_\_ us from the



See answers on page 30

- love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35)
13. "But having seen them \_\_\_\_\_ off" (Heb. 11:13)
15. "Whose is this \_\_\_\_\_ and superscription?" (Matt. 22:20)
16. "Honor all \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Peter 2:17)
20. "The pen of the \_\_\_\_\_ is in vain" (Jer. 8:8)
21. First Gospel, abbr.
22. "Believe ye that I am \_\_\_\_\_ to do this?" (Matt. 9:28)
23. "Thou shalt forget thy \_\_\_\_\_" (Job. 11:16)
24. "And being in an \_\_\_\_\_ he prayed more earnestly" (Luke 22:244)
28. "The prince of the power of the \_\_\_\_\_" (Eph. 2:2)
29. "To \_\_\_\_\_ I am ashamed" (Luke 16:3)
30. Gold coin used in Palestine (Ezra 2:69)
31. "The troops of \_\_\_\_\_ looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them" (Job 6:19)
33. Period of time
34. "Neither by any other" (James 5:12)
36. "Lot is cast into the \_\_\_\_\_" (Prov. 16:33)
37. Greek, abbr.
38. Hebrew 5th month
39. "Pass over through \_\_\_\_\_, the coast of Moab" (Deut. 2:18)



***Reconstructing the Gospel: Finding Freedom from Slaveholder Religion***  
by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (InterVarsity Press, 2018)



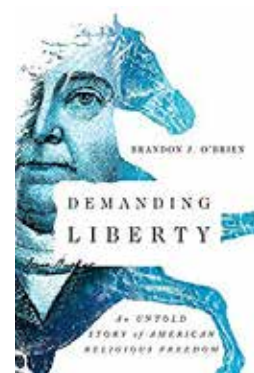
A white Baptist in North Carolina, Wilson-Hartgrove urges his fellow white Christians to move away from a version of Christianity that too often preaches and practices racism. He recounts times of preachers using the Bible to justify slavery and other evils, as well as moments of Christians even marking Easter by massacring blacks. He fears most Christians have not considered the implications of this heritage.

“Christians in America must come to terms with how institutional racism has infected us,” he wrote. “The gospel that was twisted to accommodate America’s original sin must also be reconstructed if we are to experience the healing that Jesus wants to bring.”

Wilson-Hartgrove, who lives in a mostly black neighborhood and serves at a historically-black church, weaves together past proclamations, current events and his own personal journey. He confesses his mistakes and shortcomings as he has grown by learning from black preachers and neighbors. Now he hopes other Christians will also seek to overcome racial blindness. Many readers will find the book uncomfortable. But that is better than remaining comfortable with the status quo. — reviewed by Brian Kaylor

Learn more: [amzn.to/2NBPrjI](https://amzn.to/2NBPrjI)

***Demanding Liberty: An Untold Story of American Religious Freedom***  
by Brandon J. O’Brien (InterVarsity Books, 2018)



This book explores the legacy of Isaac Backus on the development of religious liberty in the United States. A Baptist preacher during the last 18th century and early 19th century, Backus led the struggle against state-established churches in New England and against the persecution of Baptists by those state churches. With his preaching and advocacy occurring during the founding period of the U.S., his influence impacted the ideals and laws of the new nation.

“Backus played a special role in the movement, and his experience as part of a marginalized religious community in America ran counter to the narrative Americans tell about our consistent commitment to religious liberty,” O’Brien wrote. “More than two hundred years later, Backus’s influence can still be felt in the America he helped shape.”

Although the book demonstrates much research into the life and writings of Backus, it is not a traditional biography as O’Brien references some personal moments and connects the story to current issues and debates. This book tells the story of a revolutionary Baptist preacher who deserves — perhaps even demands — more attention. — reviewed by Brian Kaylor

Learn more: [amzn.to/2uE7nDE](https://amzn.to/2uE7nDE)

## Formations Bible Study Commentaries

Each week, Word&Way posts free Bible study commentaries online for use in Sunday School or small groups. Written by Michael Olmsted, the lessons follow the Formations curriculum by Smyth & Helwys. Here is a summary of the August unit. A longer commentary will be posted each week on our site under “Resources.”

### Jesus’s Priorities

Jesus demonstrates his priorities by his choices. The four gospels are a treasure of examples of what it means to live in the security of God’s love.

When I became a Christian, my first major concern was what to do with my career and life goals. A high school classmate gave me sound advice: “Ask God to lead you each day to serve him and God will guide you to the answer one step at a time.” It worked, but not with my expected conclusion!

Watch and listen as Jesus interacts with his disciples, and you will learn what it means to live by godly priorities.

### August 3 — Work and Rest (Mark 6:6b-13, 30-32)

Living a balanced life is hard to learn. You have ideas about all you should do to become a strong Christian. But what about your priorities when you face challenges and opportunities? Stress registers on three levels for all of us: physical, mental and spiritual.

### August 12 — Saying No (Mark 1:32-39; Luke 12:13-15)

As a follower of Jesus, when is it permissible to set boundaries and say no? Crowds followed Jesus, wanting to hear his wonderful teaching and see his miracles. But he never surrendered to popularity or allowed people to use him as their miracle worker.

### August 19 — Setting Goals (Luke 9:51-62)

Every motivational speaker focuses on the importance of goals and not allowing yourself to be sidetracked by tempting distractions. But you are tired.

There must be an easier way! Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, knowing the pain he was facing, but also knowing the promise of God would come true.

### August 26 — Striving for the Kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34)

The future, unknown or imagined, can make a shambles of your faith. But examine the life of Jesus and witness the transforming hope he brought to people. You begin to understand God offers you a life found nowhere else! How well does worry stand up against the love, compassion, healing and hope Jesus offers?

► Retired after almost 50 years in pastoral ministry, Michael Olmsted enjoys family, supply preaching and interim work, literature, history, and the arts.



michaelOlmsted

» Faith in Action

## WORKING TOGETHER



christopherDixon

The politics of Jesus can be messy. We may wish there were no politics involved in Kingdom work. And, yet, there most always has been and likely always will be.

In other countries, pastors are often ridiculed or openly persecuted for the work of sharing the news of Christ and his love, even after they have been assured they can work in safety. Pastors, missionaries and other ministry partners often

work in conditions that are not only less than ideal, but they would make most of us cringe at the danger.

The politics of Jesus — and the difficulties that come along with those politics — is what helps make alliances and conventions so important. And that is why we as Christ-followers should care and pay attention to where we align ourselves within a local church.

The Baptist World Alliance is one such example of churches around the world voluntarily aligning themselves together for the cause of Christ. Of course, there are others, including state and national conventions, that allow our voices to be heard when it comes to issues and supporting missions on a collective scale.

In the last few years, and certainly in recent months, there has been much criticism of some of these alliances/partnerships by Christians who are concerned that the “politics of Jesus” has become just that — far more political than outreach focused.

While those criticisms may have merit, it doesn’t mean that we should lose heart. A good friend of mine, local Director of Missions Mitch Fisher, reminds me, “We remain part of these alliances and partnerships because it allows us to remain part of the conversation.” In other words, just because conventions and alliances aren’t perfect doesn’t mean they don’t serve a greater purpose.

It’s likely a fair argument that alliances like the Baptist World Alliance — along with national, state and county conventions and associations — do far more good for the cause of Christ than they cause controversy or harm.

But what is not up for debate is that Kingdom work is hard, and sometimes dangerous work. As summer begins to wind down, may we continue to support the men and women throughout the world who work tirelessly and fearlessly to share the good news of Christ with others.

» Christopher Dixon is the Chief Operating Officer of eLectio Publishing ([electiopublishing.com](http://electiopublishing.com)) and the pastor of West Finley Baptist Church near Fordland, Mo.

» The Shepherd Calls

## WIND BLOWN



wadeParis

In the July 15, 2018, Kansas City Star, Daryl Levings tells the story of William Thomas, who built a sail wagon in 1853. It was 25 feet long with wheels 12 feet in diameter. It sported a large sail, complete with a “handler” high above. He proposed to use this vehicle to transport goods over the Santa Fe Trail and to find Spanish silver.

Thomas is to be congratulated for being among the earliest pioneers of wind power. The wind, however, did not cooperate; and suddenly the craft was being pushed violently backward. The “ship” was wrecked, as was Thomas’s Overland Navigation Company.

Sometime later, a smaller version was built. It was hauled to Shawnee, Kan., wheels greased with bison tallow, and loaded with provisions. The tired entrepreneurs retired to Westport to spend the night. In their jubilation, they forgot to lower the sail. When they returned, the ship had blown away — never to be found.

A scripture came to mind as I read that story. The Apostle Paul advised the Ephesians not to be “blown about by every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). False principles and deceit are easily covered up by cunning cleverness.

Years ago, I worked on a construction crew with many co-laborers. We gathered under the shade of a lean-to for lunch. Knowing I was a preacher, the discussions sometimes turned “theological.” I was amazed at what some of these men believed. Most believed you got to heaven by being good; but none thought they were good enough to make it.

There was one guy in the bunch who liked to tell about going to church with his wife. The preacher preached on tithing, and my friend wasn’t going to let any (expletive deleted) preacher tell him what to give, saying, “I give what I want to.” Then, in the same breath, he added he didn’t go to church anymore.

When he told that story for the third time, I asked, “If you don’t attend church, how can you give what you want to?” It got a good laugh, but I’m certain it didn’t change anything.

From the beginning of time, people have been searching for truth. Often people believe what is cunning or convenient rather than what is true. Joining the Apostle Paul, I advise, don’t be blown about by every wind of doctrine. You might wake up and discover your ship has blown away.

» Wade Paris writes a weekly syndicated column, “The Shepherd Calls.”



# ERECTING MONUMENTS ON THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND

What are the ways you or your family recognize significant accomplishments that occur in life? If you are like my grandmother, there is a mantle in your home where athletic trophies and academic ribbons and plaques stand. This was her way of collecting small monuments to her son's and grandson's athletic achievements. They served as reminders of what we were able to accomplish when we put our minds and backs into something.

Joshua 4 deals with God's command to Israel to erect a stone monument as a symbol to remind them that God allowed them to overcome a tremendous challenge to enter the Promised Land.

In Joshua 3, God told the people that it was time for them to enter the Promised Land. The problem the people faced in entering the Promised Land was the Jordan River, which was at flood stage and was nearly impossible to cross at that time of year. God told the people that they would make it across the river if they followed behind the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant. The priests and the people were obedient to God's command and did exactly as they were told. Due to an event that occurred upstream, the waters were blocked, allowing the Hebrew people to cross on dry ground, just as God promised.

Can you imagine the surprise the people felt upon seeing this happen? They had heard their parents and grandparents tell stories about how God had parted the Red Sea so they could flee Egypt. Now, God was performing a similar miracle

for them.

This time, unlike when their parents and grandparents fled Egypt, God tells them that they are to build a monument memorializing the event. After the waters stopped, and the people had crossed over, 12 stones were to be taken from where the priests were standing in the riverbed and were to be used to build a memorial at

“  
**What are the memorials or monuments that serve as reminders of God's power and love in your life?**

the place where they would set up camp later that day. A second set of stones were piled up at the location where the priests stood in the middle of the river.

These stone monuments served multiple purposes. First, they helped them remember what God has already done for them in the past through answered prayer.

Second, they would serve as object lessons for their children and future generations. As the people in Joshua 4 had heard stories from their parents and grandparents, they too would have a similar story to share with future generations of how God parted waters and allowed them to cross over unhindered.

Finally, I think they were also used to show people who had not yet come to trust in the God of the Israelites that

Israel's God truly was God. Multiple times throughout Israel's history, things that served as symbols of God's covenant relationship with the people of Israel also showed rival nations that God's power was real and formidable.

What are the memorials or monuments that serve as reminders of God's power and love in your life? What do you have that you can lean on to be reminded of God's love for you?

I hope that each of us can identify memories and accomplishments that remind us of God's unconditional love towards us, as well as God's ability to do above and beyond anything we expect.

And when things don't look exactly like we thought they would in life, I pray that we can draw strength from these memories, have our faith renewed and faithfully assert that God is still with us.

Amen. **WW**

*Terrell Carter is assistant professor and director of contextualized learning at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kan., and pastor of Webster Groves Baptist Church in Mo.*



terrellCarter

» Media & Faith

# SHARING THE RIGHT 1,000 WORDS



ken **Satterfield**

Back in 1911, newspaper editor Tess Flanders was first credited with “Use a picture. It’s worth a thousand words.” While that may not be literally true, pictures are important.

Retention of information three days later when accompanied by pictures is 65 percent, as opposed to 10 percent with just hearing information. Visual content is three time more likely to be shared on social media. People did 323

percent better following text directions when an illustration was included. Color visuals are 80 percent more likely to be read.

So, the solution is to fill up your church communications with lots of visuals, right? Not so fast. Studies show that people ignore images merely added for flourish and show a 34 percent increase in memory retention when revisions were made that included removing unnecessary images.

What kind of images communicate? I grew up in a time of clip art, which Brady Shearer, creator of church creativity resource Pro Church Tools described as generic, impersonal and “just plain tacky” ([tinyurl.com/MAF-July2018-2](http://tinyurl.com/MAF-July2018-2)).

Stock art is another option. The images are higher quality, add color and are easier and cheaper than hiring your own photographer. There are scads of places where they can be found. Some are free, such as Pixabay.com and Unsplash.com. Hootsuite has an annotated list of free sites at [tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018-3](http://tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018-3). But are stock images the answer? Not always. People tend to ignore certain images, particularly stock photos included as decorative artwork.

The key is to be genuine and natural. Pictures populated with Eskimos or mountains won’t help a church in Kansas! Match your people and location. Would it communicate your message without reading the text? Evoke emotions. Tell a story.

Taking and using your own church photos with good quality and composition is another option. But there is the danger of dated pictures as members move or die. Brotherhood Mutual advises that, in general, when a person is not identified and is inoffensive, you can include their image from a public event.

Be careful of pictures of minors without parents’ permission, foster children or “do not photograph” agreements. You can find Brotherhood Mutual guidelines and a sample photo use agreement at [tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018-1](http://tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018-1). More details and a link to churches sharing their practices are at [tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018](http://tinyurl.com/MAF-Aug2018).

Regardless of how many words your pictures are worth, make them effective ones that further your message.

» Ken Satterfield is a former media specialist and current marketing coordinator for Word&Way. Find more content and links online.

» 55+ Adults

# GET IN SHAPE



frank **Fain**

*“Dear Friends: You are never too old to get in shape.”*  
— Senator John Glenn

Many of us are planning to invest our retirement years in making a positive change in society. These plans may include doing mission work, volunteering in church or community, mentoring young people and being the best grandparent the world has ever seen.

Our great plans can be cut short if we do not take care of our body, the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our aging plan MUST include getting into good physical shape. Can you say “exercise”?

Research is showing that physical inactivity, not aging, is the primary reason so many people experience “inevitable” decline in health in later years. The lack of physical exercise and poor dietary habits are the second largest cause of death in the U.S.

In our fifties, we should start a physical fitness program. But, we are never too old to start a balanced program to regain lost physical fitness.

We all need to have a medical examination before starting a fitness program. You definitely need a medical exam if you have any of the following factors: a history of heart problems; a close relative who died from a heart attack before age 50; cigarette smoking; diabetes; high blood pressure; high cholesterol levels; hip or knee problems; obesity.

Researchers and physicians have found these benefits to a well-balanced exercise program:

- Assists in personal weight loss or maintaining a healthy weight
- Helps prevent type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some forms of cancer
- Combats the decline in brain function and increases cognitive performance skills
- Improves the body’s resistance to diseases and illness
- Lowers the potential of falls and broken bones if one does fall
- Lowers high blood pressure
- Provides more energy for daily living
- Raises the “good” cholesterol while reducing the “bad” cholesterol in our blood system, lowering the risk of heart attack or stroke
- Helps us feel better, look better and enjoy life more

The National Institute of Aging will provide a free book to help us design a well-balance personal fitness program. “Exercise and Physical Activity: Your Every Day Guide From the National Institute on Aging” can be ordered at [nih.gov/nia](http://nih.gov/nia) or by calling 1-800-222-2225.

» Frank Fain is director of educational services at The Baptist Home in Arcadia Valley, Mo.



# PREACHING ON #MeToo and #ChurchToo

Back in August of 2017, I made a commitment to preach a series of sermons on rape, abuse and assault. Little did I know that two months later, the #MeToo movement would explode all over social media as women courageously stepped forward to tell their stories.

In the months leading up to the sermon series, I grew more nervous. What if this approach is too much? Not enough? What if the sermons trigger unanticipated responses? But gut-wrenching personal stories and pervasive data persuaded me to stay the course. One in every four girls will be sexually abused or assaulted by the age of seventeen. Sixty-three percent of all rapes go unreported. Estimating the size of my congregation, I did the math.

My pastoral instincts told me that the issues needed to be addressed, and that words like *sexual abuse*, *sexual assault*, *rape*, *bullying*, *domestic violence* and *harassment* needed to be spoken from our pulpit (in later feedback, this proved to be among the most liberating and helpful things).

To prepare the congregation, we sent letters to the parents of all children, birth through high school, explaining the upcoming worship emphasis and its rationale. We also provided parents a resource list of books, online sites and state and national hotline numbers, encouraging them to read ahead and to have conversations with their families. This same resource list was available on our church's webpage and in our lobby throughout the sermon series.

As an added layer of support, we enlisted several ordained clergy who are members of our church, all trained in clinical pastoral work and with years of experience, to be in the lobby during the most difficult sermon, which recounted the rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13. I announced that if anyone became uncomfortable during worship, counselors were in the lobby, available to listen and offer support.

The sermons, preached on three Sundays in May, explored the tragic sexual abuses of King David and his family (the sermons may be found at [fbcjc.org/sermons](http://fbcjc.org/sermons)). Sermon one, focusing on David's adultery with Bathsheba, addressed bullying, harassment and domestic abuse. Let's be clear. Anytime a power differential exists between people, the sexual act is abusive. Bathsheba was not King David's equal — politically, socially or legally. This was not a sexual tryst between two consenting adults of equal status. David held all the power and privilege. What the king wanted, the king took.

“  
**My pastoral instincts  
told me that the issues  
needed to be addressed.**

But wait, wasn't David known as a man after God's own heart? Yes, but I reminded the congregation: People are never just one thing. And, sometimes, the abuser/rapist/controller is the nicest person in the neighborhood — or in the palace.

As I mentioned earlier, sermon two was by far the most difficult to preach: Amnon's rape of his half-sister Tamar. All the familiar elements are there — after he raped her, Amnon predictably used shame and blame to make himself the victim. Neither Tamar's brother Absalom nor her father David lifted a hand to help her. She was all alone, with no one to hear her story and no one to whisper in her ear, “This wasn't your fault.”

Sermon three addressed society's conspiracy of silence regarding sexual misconduct. Like a cancer, the poison from the unaddressed sexual sins of David's court grew and grew. No one spoke a word about Tamar's rape. But that didn't make it go away. The King discovered what

we all do: Keeping family secrets can be deadly. Finally, in a rage, Absalom killed his rapist-half-brother Amnon. Eventually, civil war broke out and hundreds, perhaps thousands, died. All of this reminds us that our lies, cover-ups, excuses and foot-dragging do not make the national blight of sexual misconduct go away. Unaddressed sexual sins are our nation's unpaid bills and the interest continues to compound in deadly ways.

Not surprising, the #MeToo movement has prompted the #ChurchToo movement. I am so thankful that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has taken steps to address these issues. See, for instance, Baptist Women in Ministry and CBF websites ([bwim.info](http://bwim.info) and [cbf.net](http://cbf.net)) and check out a new kit of materials to assist congregations in dealing with clergy sexual misconduct. Several years ago, Churchnet set aside funds to assist victims of sexual assault, especially church-related cases ([churchnet.org](http://churchnet.org)).

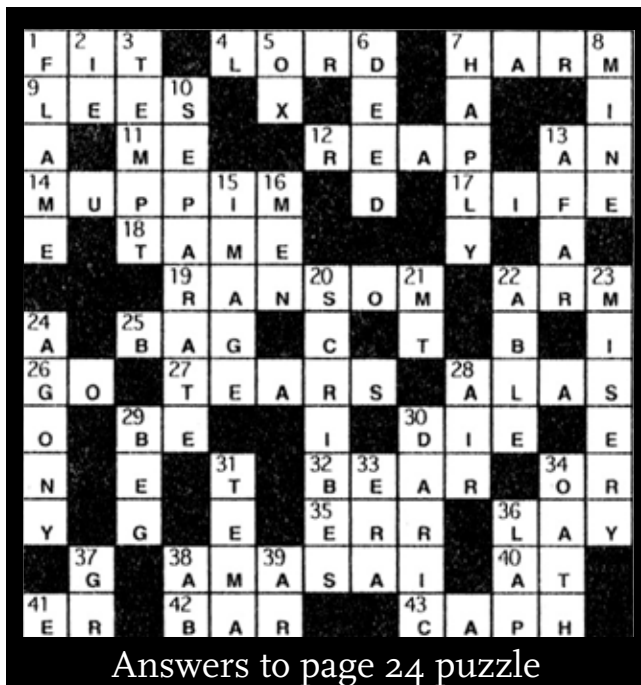
Our congregation's response to the worship emphasis has been encouraging. People have quietly come forward to tell me their stories.

Judith Herman, author of “Trauma and Recovery,” writes that rape and assault victims all need three things: 1) Safety; 2) Space to remember and mourn; 3) Reconnection with life. What a coincidence. These three also sum up what the church is called to offer a hurting world. **WW**



doyleSager

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Answers to page 24 puzzle

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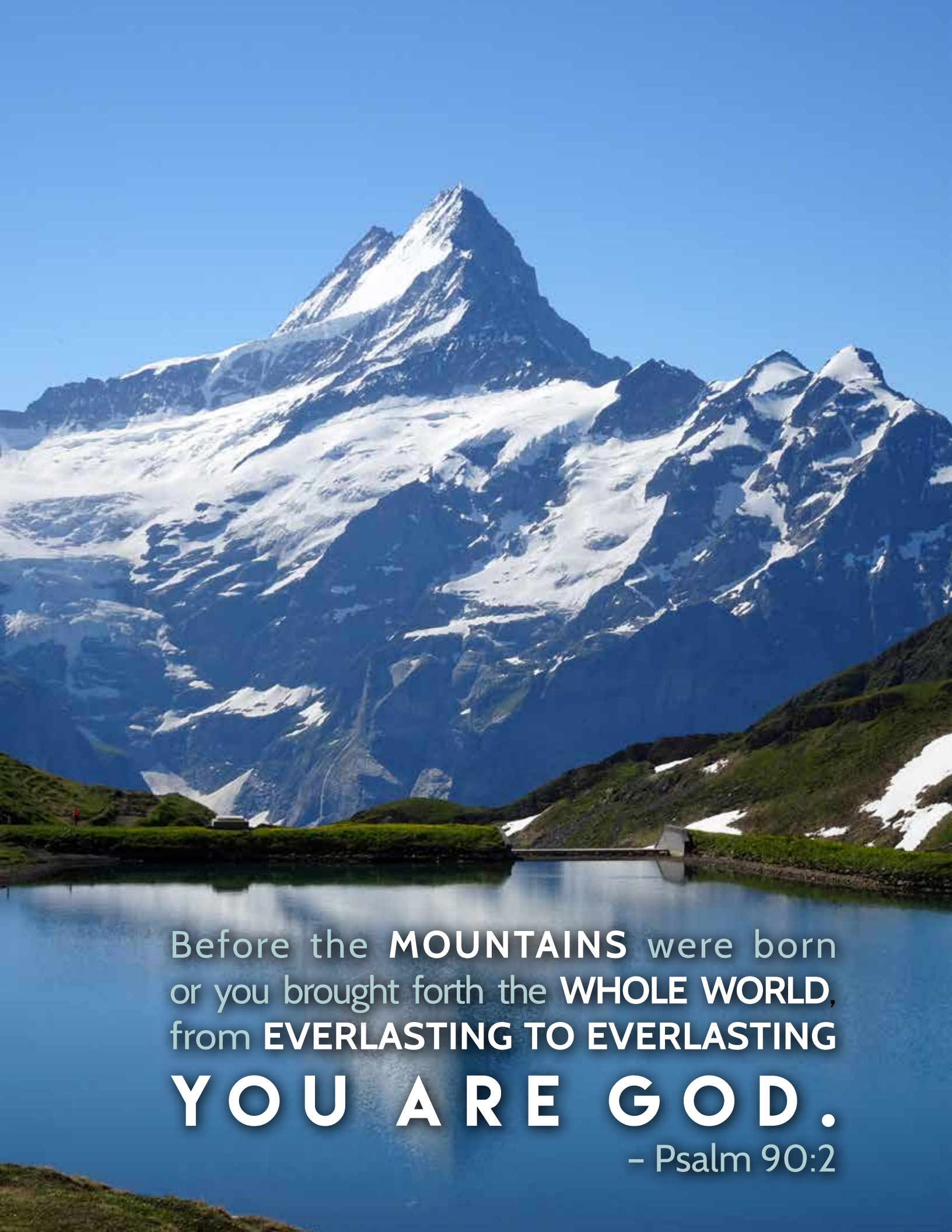
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Before the **MOUNTAINS** were born  
or you brought forth the **WHOLE WORLD**,  
from **EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING**  
**YOU ARE GOD.**

– Psalm 90:2

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MAY ALL THE PEOPLES  
OF THE EARTH KNOW  
THAT THE LORD IS GOD.  
THERE IS NO OTHER!  
— 1 Kings 8:60



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