



The Christian Index

July 4, 2018 | Reaching the World Through Mission Georgia | www.christianindex.org

Teen loses his leg, but gains a voice

By Scott Barkley
Editor

EURHARLEE — For an hour or more, Garrett Geros laid in his crumpled 2002 Toyota Tundra truck, unsure of where he was, much less how close he was to losing his life.

On the evening of June 2, 2016, Geros wanted to meet a friend at the new Cheeseburger Bobby's that had opened in Cartersville. So, he asked for some money from his folks and left the house.

Barely a week as a licensed driver, he never made it to the restaurant. Instead, Geros ended up in a ditch with severe injuries to both legs. With his foot only connected by soft tissue but keeping him trapped in the wreckage, EMTs made the call for the teen to lose his left leg below the knee in order to save his life.

A different road

Geros was saved at First Baptist Church in Woodstock at nine years old. With his son in the ICU at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Dave and his wife, Savannah, wanted to continue going to church. However, the drive to Woodstock seemed even further coupled with their visits to their son in Atlanta. So, they started attending First Baptist Cartersville, where they remain members.

Having taken a different-than-normal route into town, Garrett had remained in his truck in the dark until a couple driving by spotted him. It was a miracle of sorts, considering he was down in a ditch and the battery had



Dave Geros watches his son, **Garrett**, complete a set of leg presses during a recent workout. **Garrett Geros** lost his left leg below the knee in a car crash two years ago. SCOTT BARKLEY/Index

been destroyed so no lights on his truck worked.

“That couple didn’t normally leave their house at night, but they had to go get milk or something,” remembers Dave. “One of them just happened to look toward where Garrett was and something didn’t seem right.”

Garrett didn’t have a phone, so he couldn’t call anyone. When Dave received a phone call from an unfamiliar number at his house, he almost didn’t take it. Reminded by his wife that Garrett didn’t have a phone and could be trying to reach them, Dave took the call and the Geros family began a different road of their own.

‘Teenage things’

Making a statement of faith already, Garrett admits sometimes he didn’t act like

it. Before the wreck, a rebelliousness had been building in him. His family saw it, as did others.

“We’d been having some rough times,” says Dave. “He went through a lot of teenage things. I didn’t know what was going on or where it was coming from. He’d be disrespectful and very resistant to everything I told him.”

Starting back

“Am I going to be able to play football?”

Garrett made those his first words to his father after waking up at Grady Memorial. It would be a week before they’d tell him his leg was gone. Garrett, who had been considering he may be paralyzed, actually took it at the time with a sigh of relief.

Able to do all things

At one point at Grady, someone handed Dave a bag containing Garrett’s clothes from the night of the wreck. Dave took out the wrestling shirt his son had been wearing that night, now dried and bloody. Printed across it was Philippians 4:13 and a reminder that God will help strengthen his son, helping him do all things through Christ.

Today, Garrett is at a different place with the crash that took his leg. It’s brought him to a different platform, not one he planned for or may have even desired beforehand, but where God’s placed him nevertheless.

“We decided to change our outlook,” says Dave. That began to really take shape with fellow participants alongside father and son in Spartan races – outdoor races that include numerous obstacle courses. It’s not unusual to see teenagers take part; it is unusual when that teenager has a runner’s blade instead of his leg.

“He inspires people at these,” beams Dave. “I tell him how God has made him an elite, now. Everything you do is multiplied by 100 in these peoples’ eyes. This opens doors for him to tell others his story and about God.”

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Georgia's 2018 Christmas backpacks goal set for a record 40,000

By Joe Westbury
Managing Editor

Big things often come in small packages. And that goes double for impoverished children receiving backpacks from Georgia Baptists, regardless if they are for Christmas or back to school.

Those big things result in higher self-esteem and less shame for not receiving Christmas gifts like other friends might be receiving. And the small packages pack an overwhelming amount of items such as toys, school supplies, and warm clothing to ward of the cold winter days and nights with plunging temperatures.

Georgia Baptists are well into their annual collection for the needed items for children in Appalachia, and the second year for distribution to southwest Georgia children, as well. Last year, churches collected 38,246 backpacks for children and their families. This year's goal has been set at a record 40,000.

As last year, Bethel and Summerhill Baptist Associations will be on the receiving end in the state. They are among the state's Top 10 counties with the highest poverty rates among children.

Terrell County in Summerhill is number 8 in Georgia in the number of children under the age of 19 living in poverty. That rate is about 48 percent, but Clay and Randolph counties in Bethel Association are even higher; they have nearly 54 percent.

That is why the distribution will return to those areas rather than rotating among a new mission field, explains Bill Barker who heads up Appalachian Mountain Ministry (AMM).

Whether distribution occurs in the dozen states of Appalachia or rural counties, staying in one location is the best decision



Appalachian Mountain Ministry Director Bill Barker recently spoke at West Acres Baptist Church in Evans, where the church had set a goal of collecting 300 Christmas backpacks. During the invitation all 300 empty backpacks were taken, with each containing instructions of how to fill the backpack with suggested contents BILL BARKER/AMM

in order to reach the population. While new locations will be eventually added, Barker explains the repeat exposure builds relationships among a population that may be suspicious of the giveaways.

Georgia's participation is part of nine states and the WMU partnering through AMM. When all nine states are added together, last year's total reached 74,391. The overall goal for 2019 is a record 80,000.

Many of those big things the children receive, such as self-esteem, are packed with love and care by churches of all sizes. When it comes to small but dedicated churches, look no farther than the two southwest county churches that are on the sending as well as receiving end. Curt Hampton, who serves as director of missions for Merritt and Summerhill, oversees that dual ministry for his impoverished part of the state.

36 small churches with a big commitment to impoverished children

For four years his 36 churches, spread across four counties, have been actively involved in collecting and delivering backpacks for the emphasis. In 2016 they carried about 300 backpacks to Williamsburg, KY for Christmas.

They learned about the distribution site at Mountain Ash Baptist Church which was requesting that number of backpacks. They created a partnership which they have maintained ever since.

But during that first trip at the Christmas season, members mentioned that they would really appreciate having future backpacks for their fall back-to-school emphasis. "No problem," Hampton said. Now each year around the last weekend in July, members

from the association's churches make the five-hour trek to Williamsburg, the first exit from Tennessee into Kentucky.

And in the first weekend of December the Associations will distribute backpacks from Georgia Baptists earmarked for the impoverished children in their communities. Hampton has been well pleased with the commitment from the very small churches in his area of the state. There are only 36 churches in both Associations and about 14 participate, which is commendable based on their size.

The backpacks will be color-coded for boys or girls, with slightly different content such as gifts. For more information, including how to purchase separate items for boys or girls, visit the Christmas Backpacks website at <https://gabaptist.org/backpacks/> and click on the menu on the left.

As you probably are aware, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board recently developed a wonderful relationship with Alliance Defending Freedom Church Alliance. The assistance offered to our churches is plentiful and at a remarkably reasonable price. Securing this level of legal counsel for this minimal cost is unheard of.

I received the below email from Pastor Don Mulkey of Colonial Woods Baptist Church and wanted to share it with you. I believe Don's testimony will help you understand what joining Church Alliance can mean for your church.

*Dr. White,
I hope you are doing well today.
I wanted to thank you for sending the packet about the Church Alliance. After reviewing the information, we determined that this was a "no brainer" and quickly signed up. For our size church, the discounted price (thanks to the GBMB assistance) was \$200 for a year. That's an incredible deal.*

The staff with the Church Alliance has been outstanding! They answered questions, assisted with registration, and even followed up after we registered. I was contacted last week by an attorney, assigned to our church,

who welcomed us and answered questions I had about a current legal issue. We are working on a facilities-use policy and they have already sent us templates to use to guide us through the process. In addition, once completed we can submit our documents to them for review. In the near future, we also will submit our constitution and by-laws to them for review.

I wanted you to know about our experience with the Church Alliance and how grateful I am for your recommendation. This removes an enormous burden from the shoulders of pastors and gives us confidence to stay faithful during these challenging days.



J. Robert White
Executive Director

Thank you for your faithful ministry and support of Georgia Baptist churches and pastors.

*God bless,
Pastor Don Mulkey*

I encourage you at the earliest opportunity to engage with Church Alliance.

EDITORIAL

The culture's subtle approach to driving Christianity underground

For centuries Baptists have been known as a convictive people.

Roger Williams came to America in 1631. His strong convictions and quest for religious liberty kept him embroiled in protracted religious and political controversies and resulted in his banishment from Massachusetts. In fact, a 1645 Massachusetts law specifically banned Baptists from the colony, calling them "the incendiaries of commonwealths."

Nevertheless, Williams fled to the wilderness and established the town of Providence, founded the Rhode Island colony, and planted the first Baptist church in the colonies.

In Virginia Baptist pastors John Waller, Lewis Craig, and James Childs were jailed in Spotsylvania in 1768 for refusing to stop preaching the Gospel. They were cited as disturbing the peace. Some of

the imprisonments of Baptists lasted up to five months.

During the Conservative Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention some leaders were ridiculed and maligned for their stand on Biblical inerrancy as well as other issues. However, deep convictions always come with a price.

Today, it seems that those who want to neutralize the pastors and laity who have deep convictions are aggressively preaching the doctrine of tolerance. The subtlety of their approach is not that tolerance is to be an end itself, but merely an important working principle in moral discourse and inquiry.

And so we are conditioned to hearing things like "Love is more important than having unwavering and stringent moral and Biblical guidelines; and love will ultimately triumph."

The doctrine of tolerance is likely an outgrowth of the

seeker-sensitive, felt needs, consumer-friendly model of church growth. These pastors are not only great communicators, but they are great entrepreneurs. They have a marketing strategy to draw the masses, have colossal websites, and are sucking up all kinds of other pastors and churches into the vortex of their culturally driven self-styled churches.

However, if that is our philosophy or theology are we going to condemn preachers who have an uncompromising allegiance to the Word of God and preach it without fear for favor? Are we going to throw people like Jack Phillips and Barronelle Stutzman to the curb for remaining true to their convictions by not baking cakes or arranging flowers for a same sex marriage?

Has the culture influenced the church more than the church has influenced the culture? Are many congrega-

tions becoming quasi, pseudo churches that please men more than God?

We must not be silenced. We must not cease to boldly share our faith. We must not be driven underground. We must not abandon the culture war. There is a battle we must fight. There is a victory we must win or at least die trying.

Jesus was no shrinking violet, no patsy, and certainly not seeking an easy way out of fulfilling His mission. We must follow his example. It is time for Christians to raise their hands and be identified publicly. We must refuse to be marginalized and stand with our Baptist forefathers who bravely stood firm for the principles they held dear.



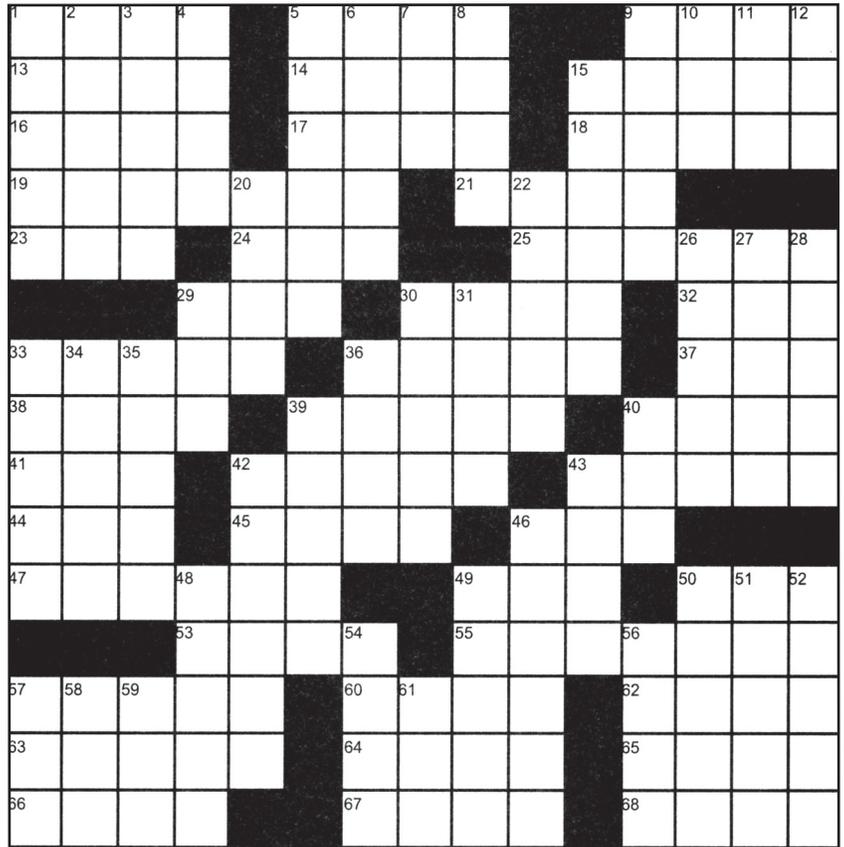
J. Gerald Harris
Senior Editor

ACROSS

- 1. "Abner ___ himself strong" (2 Sam. 3:6)
- 5. Load
- 9. "Reward the doer of ___" (2 Sam. 3:39)
- 13. Winged
- 14. God's words are ___ (2 Sam. 7:28)
- 15. Food group
- 16. Singer
- 17. "Neither let there be ___" (2 Sam. 1:21)
- 18. "Let the young men now ___" (2 Sam. 2:14)
- 19. Zeruah's son (2 Sam. 2:18)
- 21. God's dwelling (2 Sam. 7:6)
- 23. Center
- 24. Half of Chinese principle of harmony
- 25. Plan
- 29. Time zone (abbr.)
- 30. Reduce
- 32. Sun's name
- 33. "How ___ would I have gathered" (Matt. 23:37)
- 36. "The word of the LORD is ___" (2 Sam. 22:31)
- 37. Number of days David was in Ziklag (2 Sam. 1:1)
- 38. Deliberate
- 39. Legumes brought to David (2 Sam. 17:28)
- 40. "As though he had not ___ anointed" (2 Sam. 1:21)
- 41. "___ thou Asahel?" (2 Sam. 2:20)
- 42. Meal David made for Abner (2 Sam. 3:20)
- 43. Legion
- 44. Color
- 45. Evils
- 46. Michal "___ king David leaping" (2 Sam. 6:16)
- 47. Machir's father (2 Sam. 9:4)
- 49. Boxer Muhammad
- 50. Vane direction (abbr.)
- 53. Fly
- 55. Musical instruments (2 Sam. 6:5)
- 57. Quick
- 60. "If the sacrifice of his offering be ___" (Lev. 7:16) (2 wds.)
- 62. Boat movers not allowed on God's rivers (Isa. 33:21)
- 63. Swings wide, as Samuel does the doors of the house of the LORD (1 Sam. 3:15)
- 64. "Bind the ___ of thine head" (Ezek. 24:17)
- 65. Type of matter to be judged (Deut. 17:8)
- 66. Fishing tool (Hab. 1:15)
- 67. "Out of the ___ of the Philistines" (2 Sam. 19:9)
- 68. See

DOWN

- 1. Lady
- 2. Defense
- 3. Israel's second king (2 Sam. 2:4)
- 4. Long time periods



- 5. "I am in a great ___" (2 Sam. 24:14)
- 6. Queen of Sheba "came to Jerusalem with a very great ___" (1 Kings 10:2)
- 7. French "yes"
- 8. "Watchman ___ up to the roof" (2 Sam. 18:24)
- 9. What Hushai had on his head (2 Sam. 15:32)
- 10. Number of years David reigned in Hebron (2 Sam. 5:5) (Rom. num.)
- 11. Government agency (abbr.)
- 12. Used to make soap
- 15. "David ___ before the LORD" (2 Sam. 6:14)
- 20. Religious song (Matt. 26:30)
- 22. Painter Richard
- 26. Banana oil e.g.
- 27. Cut the lawn
- 28. "If he be ___, there is tidings in his mouth" (2 Sam. 18:25)
- 29. "Lest he ___ him fenced cities" (2 Sam. 20:6)
- 30. Shiny metal (2 Sam. 8:10)
- 31. Am not
- 33. City in Nebraska
- 34. Roman marketplace (Acts 28:15)
- 35. Emblem
- 36. Duck
- 39. Southern girl
- 40. Archer's weapon on Israelites were taught to use (2 Sam. 1:18)
- 42. Large grassy areas where soldiers camped (2 Sam. 11:11)
- 43. Absalom's great head covering (2 Sam. 14:26)
- 46. Delayed
- 48. Frosting
- 49. Oak seed
- 50. Seven closures (Rev. 5:1)
- 51. Throat infection
- 52. Writing
- 54. City David's enemies were coming from (2 Sam. 15:18)
- 56. Uh-uh
- 57. "Chasten him with the ___" (2 Sam. 7:14)
- 58. Spring month (abbr.)
- 59. Pod vegetable
- 61. Travel term



The Christian Index is a publication of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, 6405 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097. Our editorial office can be reached at (770) 936-5590. J. Gerald Harris serves as Senior Editor.

This special edition of The Christian Index is distributed online the first and third Wednesday of each month at www.christianindex.org to provide additional content to readers who prefer a print version of the publication. To read additional stories of how God is working through Georgia Baptists, visit the website daily for stories that inspire and inform.