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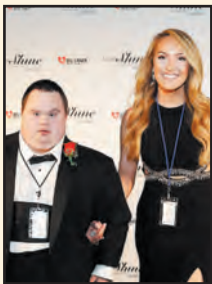
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# 'Safety net'

## Faith-based groups blaze innovative trail to reach homeless, meet needs

Faith-based groups are the backbone of the nation's charitable response to the homeless, according to a recent study by Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Sixty percent of all emergency shelter beds, which are considered to be the "safety net of all safety nets," were found to belong to faith-based ministries in the 11 cities surveyed, according to The Christian Post.

Three Southern cities included were Atlanta, Houston and Jacksonville, Florida. The rest were outside the "Bible Belt" — Baltimore, Denver, Indianapolis, Omaha, Phoenix, Portland, San Diego and Seattle.

Byron Johnson, director of Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, rolled out the study in early February, along with co-author William H. Wubbenhorst. The study, "Assessing the Faith-based Response to Homelessness in America: Findings from Eleven Cities," shows the socio-economic impact that Christian organizations belonging to other faiths have on the United States' homeless, according to the Post.

It also shows that faith-based

groups lead the way in innovative methods of reaching the homeless, meeting their needs and changing their lives, according to Baptist News Global (BNG).

Those group's programs, the Baylor report found, "are at the forefront of program innovation ... for improving positive outcomes for the homeless individuals ... served."

*"It wasn't until I was really able to embrace faith, my relationship with Jesus, that everything changed in my life."*

**Tonier Cain  
former homeless person**

Some of those programs include addiction recovery, education, health care and job training, all of which are considered vital for the homeless to achieve long-term independence, according to BNG.

One person impacted by these types of services was Tonier Cain, who spoke as part of a panel at the report's unveiling. She said she believes "it's almost impossible to even think that somebody can get healed and do better in their life without faith," according to the Post.

Cain, who lives in Annapolis, Maryland, lived on the streets for nearly two decades and survived sexual abuse, 83 arrests and 66 convictions for crimes committed.

She now leads two nonprofit groups, something she credits to help



123rf.com

from a faith-based organization that intervened and helped her heal.

"I've been in over 30 programs — traditional, secular programs," she said. "They didn't help. It wasn't until I was really able to embrace faith, my relationship with Jesus, that everything changed in my life."

If she had been given money without Jesus, she said, she would have spent the money on the wrong things and not gotten any better.

That's why other panelists involved in the discussion said that their organizations are unwilling to compromise the out-loud proclamation of their faith — and why there is often tension between them and government agencies that

could provide financial aid to them but ask for a downplaying of faith in return.

But Johnson said he doesn't believe that means faith-based groups don't "play well" with others. "I think our preliminary study shows that's a myth," he said, according to the Post. "(Faith-based organizations) are ready, but they are not going to give up their faith."

The report also found that for every \$1 spent by the government, taxpayers saved \$9.42

— a total of \$119 million in the 11 cities surveyed — as a result of the work done by faith-based groups in ministering to the homeless, the Post reported. (TAB)

**Email Kristy Kennedy at the State Board of Missions for resources on community ministries — [kkennedy@alsbom.org](mailto:kkennedy@alsbom.org).**



Coming next week ...

## Spring cleaning, home update tips

# COMMENT

## Blessed But Not Popular

Jesus called peacemakers “blessed.” He said they would be called “children of God” (Matt. 5:9). But He never said peacemakers would be popular.

A study released by Pew Research Center on Feb. 23 provided another illustration of how unpopular it can be to work for reconciliation and how popular it can be to take verbal shots at those with whom one differs.

The study was on the Facebook postings of every member of the 114th Congress. The time frame examined was from Jan. 4, 2015, to April 30, 2016. More than 100,000 postings were analyzed for content and evaluated by response. For every 100 likes received by a Facebook post a point was given.

The results were clear. The more disagreement with the opposing party a post displayed the higher the rating. The more bipartisan the post, the less it was liked.

The pattern was consistent across the ideological spectrum. For example Republican posts against “Obamacare,” former President Barack Obama’s health care law, got nearly 27 points as did Democratic posts regarding approving a Supreme Court nominee following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

Likewise posts about senators’ cooperation to pass a bipartisan energy bill received an 8.6 rating. A post about an anti-genocide resolution passed unanimously by the House of Representatives received a 7.7 rating.

To see in the study the reactions of Americans to strong words, strong opinions and strong disagreement with the opposition was disappointing. Evidently statements that reflected one’s own positions drew hardy endorsements.

It was disheartening to see how little support was given to efforts by both Republicans and Democrats to work together for the good of the



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

nation. It seemed there was little interest in working across political divides to solve national problems. Winning appeared to be the most important value.

Perhaps the pattern should not have been a surprise. There used to be a standing joke that a speaker could get more “amens” from a congregation by preaching against certain sins than he could ever get when sharing about “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” — the elements of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

### Types of preaching

It seems we Baptists sometimes like preaching that condemns things we are against more than affirms the directions our lives should be lived.

And who has not seen the results of church members falling into disagreement with one another? The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions offers resources for churches in conflict. Associational directors of missions often attempt to mediate these disagreements. Unfortunately most of the time the lines are too firmly drawn by the time a church reaches out for help.

The result is like trying to break up a fight between two friends. The one trying to stop the fight gets hit from both sides.

Baptists have never been good about reconciling differences. Instead church splits have been a major reason for the high number of church starts among us.

Yet Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.” If Jesus holds peacemakers in such high regard imagine what He must think about those who foment disagreement by their words and actions.

According to Jesus’ own saying, the phrase “children of God” should equal “peacemaker.” That is true in the Church and in the world. Our God is a God of Peace (1 Cor. 14:33). Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Peace (Gal. 5:22). At Jesus’ birth, the angels proclaimed “peace on earth” (Luke 2:14). There is no question that God is on the side of peace.

A peacemaker works to preserve peace before it is broken. That means being alert to things that threaten peace such as sinful actions and sinful positions. It means taking initiatives before disagreements become critical.

A peacemaker works to recover peace that is broken. That may mean listening to proposals for peace offered by others as well as presenting one’s own proposals for peace and working together for the goal of peace.

Repairing peace is a hard, often thankless, task. It necessitates clear thinking, critical reasoning and careful communication. In the midst of disagreements when emotions are high, all three can be in short supply.

Consider for example that Baptists are known for their advocacy of religious liberty. Many scholars call it Baptists’ greatest contribution to religious thought. Today Baptists are working to ensure that religious liberty applies to Christians in the public square so believers cannot be forced by government to engage in conduct which violates their strongly held religious convictions.

At the same time some Baptists are angry with fellow believers for saying in a public forum that Muslims have the same religious liberty rights in this nation as Baptists and other Christians.

Historically Baptists contended that religious liberty was a gift from God for all. Yet in the midst of high tension one might be tempted to forget that early Baptists wrote, “Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure.”

When tensions are high and disagreements abound, one may be tempted to act as if religious liberty is for “me and mine” but not for those with whom we differ.

Still, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.” Blessed are the peacemakers in the Church, in the Congress and in the world.

Peacemaking may never be popular but it is always of God. †

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### DEALING WITH GRIEF

I agree with the lady from Madison (in the March 2 “Letters to the Editor” section) that Bob Terry’s editorial, “Companion the Grieving,” in the Feb. 9 issue was very thoughtful and compassionate.

Having experienced the grief of losing three family members in three years, I too struggled. I lost my oldest son to leukemia in August 2011. In November 2011, I lost my loving husband to Alzheimer’s. We had been married 59 and a half years. I was his caregiver 24/7 for five years. In June 2014, I lost my youngest daughter to cancer.

I often wondered why God left me here and took my loved ones, especially my children. I said this to a lady and she pointed to my two granddaughters standing there and said “for them.”

Without God, my family, my pastor, my church family (who prayed for me every day) and my friends, I would not have made it through those trying times. God has been my refuge and strength and I still call on Him every day for help. The Bible tells us Jesus said, “Come all who are heavy burdened and I will give you rest.”

When my two other children and I get together or just talk on the

phone, we talk about our happy memories and the good times we had together.

We still miss them terribly and always will but we have the assurance that they are no longer suffering and, best of all, we will see them again one day. And my husband, who got to a point where he did not know me, will know me when we meet again in heaven.

L. Summerlin  
Montevallo, Ala. †



# TAB

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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# Working together

## Disaster relief teams deploy after deadly storms hit South, Midwest

**E**arly March storms in the South and Midwest left at least four people dead, damaged church buildings and led to deployment of Baptist disaster relief workers in four states.

The storm system killed three people in Illinois and one in Missouri, with at least 10-15 injured in Arkansas, according to media reports. At least seven states were affected Feb. 28-March 1.

An overnight thunderstorm in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, downed trees and power lines at Williams Baptist College, damaging at least three vehicles, the *Arkansas Baptist News* reported. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention-affiliated school received assistance with debris cleanup from a state convention disaster relief team.

In Kentucky at least four churches were damaged by storms March 1, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Kentucky Today news service reported. In northern Kentucky, First Baptist Church, Walton, saw its 35-foot steeple lifted off a building and thrown onto a busy highway during the early morning commute.

Illinois Baptist disaster relief teams are being deployed to four separate regions of the state — one in the north and three in the south, said Dwayne Doyle, director of men's ministry and missions for the Illinois Baptist State Association. Disaster relief efforts are focused largely on debris removal and could include more than 100 volunteers by mid-March.

Working in the southern Illinois town of Vergennes, disaster relief volunteer Don Kragness told local television station WSIL, "We are here basically because we love Jesus and we want to serve Him and the best way we know how to serve Him is to help people when they're in need."

Approximately 55 Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) Disaster Relief volunteers have deployed to Perry County, Missouri, some 80 miles south of St. Louis, where a person



Photo courtesy of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention  
Arkansas disaster relief volunteer Greg Hutchison cuts a tree off a car in Conway, Arkansas, after a recent overnight thunderstorm hit the area.

was killed and at least eight to 10 homes were damaged, according to The Associated Press.

The bulk of the disaster relief work in Missouri is cleanup and placing tarps on damaged roofs, said MBC disaster relief specialist Dwain Carter.

### Community support

There is "a lot of community support" in Perry County, Carter said, "neighbor helping neighbor, friends helping friends. ... They just have a 'let's work together' attitude to get it all done."

Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Disaster Relief teams were deployed to five areas of the state, with work at one site unfinished at press time. A total of 30 volunteers have completed 16 chainsaw cleanup jobs and placed tarps on 14 damaged roofs, according to ABSC.

One person in Arkansas professed faith in Christ as a result of the disaster relief ministry.

Randy Garrett, ABSC disaster relief director, said, "We don't go out just to cut the trees and feed people. We go out to minister to people and share the Word of Christ."

Southwest Indiana experienced minor damage from a tornado, leading to deployment of some 10-15 disaster relief volunteers near Owensville.

Rick Hillard, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana's director of missional coordination, said the Hoosier State was "really fortunate. If it would have been a little stronger and stayed on the ground a little longer, it would have been more of a devastating tornado."

Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief leaders assessed damage but determined no volunteers were needed in their state. (BP)

## Widespread wildfires spur disaster relief teams to action

**W**ildfires from Colorado to Florida have burned more than 1 million acres since March 6, killed at least seven people and led to Southern Baptist Disaster Relief activity in four states.

In the Texas Panhandle five deaths have been reported and 325,000 acres burned, CNN reported, while Oklahoma and Kansas each have seen one death and 400,000 acres scorched. Colorado saw 30,000 acres burned with an additional 6,000 acres ablaze in southern Florida.

Baptist state conventions in

Oklahoma and Kansas-Nebraska are engaged in active disaster relief ministry while volunteers in Texas and Colorado are preparing to deploy if necessary.

### 'One of the worst fires'

Sam Porter, disaster relief director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, said the blaze is "probably one of the worst fires I've ever seen as far as endangering people and livestock because the winds were 60-70 miles per hour with about 10 percent or less humidity."

Dry conditions and strong winds increased the risk of fire in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado, The Associated Press (AP) reported. Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback both declared disaster emergencies.

Nearly 6 million people nationwide live in areas "at risk of critical wildfire conditions," AP reported March 8, including Tulsa, Oklahoma; Oklahoma City; and Kansas City. Thousands of people have been evacuated.

Florida fires forced state officials to close a 25-mile segment of In-

terstate 75 near Naples and evacuate some residents of Naples-area Collier County, Fort Lauderdale's *Sun-Sentinel* reported.

In Kansas disaster relief volunteers have been assisting around the clock with meal distribution in coordination with the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

No Kansas-Nebraska Baptist churches appeared to be in immediate danger from the fires at press time but First Baptist Church, Hutchinson, Kansas, "may be threatened" if the blaze continues its path toward Hutchinson. (BP)

— THE MEANING OF —

# St. Patrick's Day



**St. Patrick's Day  
is March 17.**

## Parents can teach children the Christian meaning of St. Patrick's Day

By Carolyn Tomlin  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**S**t. Patrick's Day is celebrated March 17, the date of Saint Patrick's death in the fifth century. In Ireland this is both a national holiday and a holy day. As the patron saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick was credited as the person who brought Christianity to the Irish. Although not a legal holiday in the United States, the day is recognized as a celebration of Irish and Irish-American cultures. It is estimated that about 39 million U.S. residents claim Irish ancestry. The day has been celebrated in North America since the late 18th century.

Born to Christian parents in Wales, Patrick grew up on a wealthy family farm.

But at age 16 he was kidnapped by Irish pirates, carried off to Ireland and sold as a slave. There he took care of livestock. As a slave he prayed and committed his life to God. Patrick escaped after six years in slavery. He left Ireland, becoming a priest and later a bishop. Then he returned to Ireland to spread the Christian faith.

### Wearing green

Many customs and traditions are associated with this day. Wearing green is one way people celebrate. This color reminds people of the beautiful green countryside of Ireland. The ancient Irish burned green leaves and boughs each spring to make the soil richer.

Cities with a large Irish population often

have parades with marching bands.

Many legends exist about St. Patrick. One is that he used the little green shamrock that grows all over Ireland to explain the mystery of the Trinity — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This plant has three leaves, St. Patrick would explain, and yet it is one. Today when people see a shamrock they can be reminded of God.

Legends credit St. Patrick with many miracles. It is said he was able to drive the snakes from Ireland (but the country actually had no snakes). As Ireland is an island and separated from other land, the snakes would not survive in the frigid waters. However, these stories are probably a metaphor for bringing Christianity to the land and driving out pagan religions. ✠

## Irish pudding recipe

**1 serving**

### Ingredients:

- 1 heaping tablespoon vanilla instant pudding mix
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 drop blue food coloring
- 1 drop yellow food coloring

### Directions:

Put the pudding mix and milk in a small jar with a top.

Add the food coloring.

Place lid on jar.

Shake the jar 50 times.

Wait five minutes.

Open the jar and eat.

*Explain to the children that mixing blue and yellow changes the pudding to green. When God comes into our lives and we accept Him as our Savior, our lives are changed.*

## St. Patrick's Day activity

### Golden Thoughts Chain

1. Cut strips of green construction paper into eight-inch by one-inch lengths.
2. Write kind words and loving thoughts on the strips.
3. Form the first length into a circle.
4. Overlap ends and tape or staple.
5. Loop the second into the first, repeating step 4. Continue until all strips are connected.
6. Talk about how the words we say make a difference in our lives and the lives of others.
7. Display the completed chain as part of the dining table decoration on St. Patrick's Day.

## St. Patrick's Day craft idea: shamrock placemats



### For each placemat you will need the following:

- Green construction paper
- Felt-tip marker
- Copy paper, 8.5" x 14"
- Glue

### Directions:

1. Make a heart-shaped pattern from cardboard.
2. Trace around this pattern for each section of the shamrock, making three leaf shapes for each placemat.
3. Form a shamrock by gluing each leaf on a sheet of copy paper. Cut a stem from the paper and glue in place.
4. Write these words on each Shamrock section: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
5. Talk with your child about the Trinity, that in the one God there are three divine beings. Read The Great Commission together, found in Matthew 28:16–20.

Photo courtesy of Carolyn Tomlin



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Soteriology

# Doctrine of Salvation

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

Around the church we often hear a family of terms, such as “saved,” “salvation” and “Savior.” Those who are not familiar with church terminology may wonder what we mean when we freely use these words in our sermons and songs.

The preaching of the gospel urges people to “be saved.” They hear us sing, “Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me” or “Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care.”

What exactly do we mean when we speak often and freely about salvation or being saved by a Savior? For a few weeks Theology 101 will be seeking to look at the biblical doctrine of salvation.

The theologians’ term for the doctrine of salvation is “soteriology.” This formal way of referring to the study of salvation is formed on the Greek root term for “Savior.” While thinking about the doctrine of man in recent weeks, we have noted the fall of man and its subsequent impact on every human being. We inherit a sinful nature and we choose to commit acts of sin.

The result is what we usually refer to as being lost. The opposite of being lost is being found. To that end, Jesus Christ came into the world “to save that which was lost” (Matt. 18:11). That’s why we commonly use the idea of salvation to express the mission on which Christ came.

## Range of meanings

As used in the Bible, “salvation” has a range of meanings or references. For example the term sometimes speaks of a physical deliverance such as saving a person from death. That is what Jesus referred to in Mark 3:4: “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”

Similarly this would be the meaning of the words from one of the criminals crucified alongside Jesus: “Are you not the Christ? Save Yourself and us” (Luke 23:39).

“Being saved” also is used in the Bible to speak of national deliverance from a natural calamity or an enemy nation. As an example, God’s mighty deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt is summarized in Exodus 14:30 in these words: “So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.”

National deliverance was the meaning of the prophet Jeremiah’s saving message to Israel, “Do not fear, O My servant Jacob,” says the Lord, “nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity” (Jer. 30:10).

## Eternal deliverance

The meaning that is most glorious is that in the Bible salvation has to do with spiritual and eternal deliverance that God has provided fallen humans through His provision in Christ. This is salvation by which God salvages sinful humankind and ultimately restores us into His image and likeness.

The doctrine of salvation begins with where we are in our lostness and does not stop until it takes us into full, final and glorious restoration.

Spiritual salvation is so full and far-reaching that the Bible looks at it from a variety of angles and uses a wide range of analogies by which to help us grasp what it means to be saved by grace through faith in Christ.

Some of these ways the Bible describes salvation will be the focus of Theology 101 in coming weeks.✠

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



# Alabama LEGISLATURE U P D A T E S

Bills TAB is following this session include:

## Gambling

Legislators have put the following four bills on hold until Gov. Robert Bentley’s Advisory Council on Gaming releases its report presenting various gambling plans for Alabama. The report is expected sometime in April.

► **HB 6** (sponsored by Rep. Alan Harper, R-District 61) — Constitutional amendment authorizing Legislature to provide lottery by general law.

► **HB 10** (sponsored by Rep. Craig Ford, D-District 28) — Constitutional amendment directing portion of lottery revenues for college scholarships. Related to and dependant on HB 11.

► **HB 11** (sponsored by Rep. Craig Ford, D-District 28) — Constitutional amendment establishing lottery and regulatory commission. Allows gambling at racetracks “where pari-mutuel wagering is currently legal.” Allows governor to negotiate a compact with Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Creates Lottery Trust Fund.

► **HB 16** (sponsored by Rep. Barbara Boyd, D-District 32) — Constitutional amendment allowing a tribal compact for gambling.

► **SB 28** (sponsored by Sen. Tom Whatley, R-District 27) — Fantasy Sports Contests Act; authorizes the creation and operation of fantasy sports contests through licensing to be administered by the secretary of state. Also creates Fantasy Sports Fund.

According to Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, “Rumor has it that this bill is not the one that the daily fantasy sports companies want. So two new bills have been introduced in both the Senate and the House” (see below).

► **SB 270** (sponsored by Sen. Paul Sanford, R-District 7) — Fantasy Contests Act; requires registration of fantasy sports operators and promises consumer protection procedures. Exempts fantasy sports from prohibition against gambling. Partner bill is HB 354.

► **HB 354** (Rep. Alan Boothe, R-District 89) — Same as SB 270.

## Church security

► **HB 36** (sponsored by Rep. Lynn Greer, R-District 2) — Alabama Church Protection Act; establishes church security program and authorizes designated members to carry firearms. (Passed out

of committee with one amendment March 9, waiting consideration by the full House.)

## Immigration

► **HB 100** (sponsored by Rep. Phil Williams, R-District 6) — Americans First Act; requires colleges and universities to comply with immigration laws or face fines. (Passed by the House on Feb. 14, waiting consideration by the Senate.)

## Prisons

► **SB 59** (sponsored by Sen. Cam Ward, R-District 14) — Alabama Prison Transformation Initiative Act; authorizes the funding and construction of new prison facilities as well as the demolition of existing prison facilities (Passed out of committee with some revisions March 9, waiting consideration by the full Senate.)

## Public restrooms

► **SB 1** (sponsored by Sen. Phil Williams, R-District 10) — Alabama Privacy Act; states that public restrooms be gender appropriate.

## Abortion

► **HB 98** (sponsored by Rep. Matt Fridy, R-District 73) — Constitutional amendment that affirms Alabama’s commitment to the right to life of unborn children. (Passed out of committee Feb. 9, waiting consideration by the full House.)

## Doctor-assisted suicide

► **HB 96** (sponsored by Rep. Mack Butler, R-District 30) — Assisted Suicide Ban Act; prohibits anyone from providing aid in dying and enacts penalties under certain conditions. (Passed out of committee Feb. 9, waiting consideration by the full House.)

## Civil rights

► **HB 74** (sponsored by Rep. Chris England, D-District 70) — States the right of a person to be free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or familial status.

## Alcohol/Drugs

► **HB 269** (sponsored by Rep. Patricia Todd, D-District 54) — Lower penalties for marijuana possession.

► **HB 164** (sponsored by Rep. Thomas Jackson, D-District 68) — Allow for Sunday sales of alcohol in Thomaston. (Passed out of the House, waiting consideration by the Senate.)

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org) or call 205-870-4720, ext. 112, at least three weeks prior to the event.

## BESSEMER

▶ **Justin Massey** is the new student minister at **The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla**. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree from Leavell College in New Orleans. He is engaged to Brittany Boyd. Bill McCall is pastor.



MASSEY

## BLOUNT

▶ **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will host its third Sunday night singing March 19, 6 p.m. with musical guest Southern Heritage. Randy Burtram is pastor.

## COFFEE

▶ **County Line Church, Enterprise**, will host a community kite day March 18, noon to 2 p.m. with kite flying demonstrations provided by the Emerald Coast Kite Flyers Club. There will be a hot dog lunch, face painting, bubbles and more. For more information call 334-347-6082. Danny

Wiggins is pastor. ▶ **Calvary Church, Enterprise, and First Church, New Brockton**, will host joint revival services March 19–22. The Sunday service will be held at 6 p.m. and the Monday service will be held at 7 p.m., both at First, New Brockton. Services Tuesday and Wednesday, held at 7 p.m., will be at Calvary. Guest evangelist will be Shawn Bentley, pastor of First Church, Gantt. For more information call 334-894-6216. Kerry Mitchell is pastor of Calvary and Nathan Sims is pastor of First, New Brockton. ▶ **New Hope Church, Brundidge**, will host gospel singing group 11th Hour in concert March 24, 7 p.m. For more information and directions call Joe Wilson at 334-735-3343. Lanny Shepard is pastor.

## MADISON

▶ **Murphy Hill Church, Toney**, will host a spring gospel singing March 19, 6 p.m. featuring Canaan's Crossing and The Journeyman Quartet. For more information call 256-693-7381. Mike McFarlen is pastor.

## MARSHALL

▶ **Dick Spybey** is the new director of recreation outreach

and men's ministry of **Gilliam Springs Church, Arab**. He will begin the position July 1. He and his wife, Mary, have one son. Jamey Pruett is pastor.

## MOBILE

▶ **Union Church, Grand Bay**, will host a revival March 19–22 with guest speaker Dwight Smith. Sunday services will be at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday services will be held at 7 nightly. David Walley is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY

▶ **Trinity Memorial Church, Montgomery**, will hold a singing March 18, 6 p.m. Dixie Echoes will perform special music. Stan Holt is pastor.

## MORGAN

▶ **Walnut Grove Church, Decatur**, will host Jason Runnels in concert March 19, 11 a.m. John D. Bain is pastor.

## MUD CREEK

▶ **Dennis Smith** is the new pastor of **Bayview Church, Mulga**. He previously served as pastor of Snowtown Church, Dora. He has two children and five grandchildren. †

## Hacoda Baptist holds ground-breaking ceremony



Photo courtesy of Hacoda Baptist Church

Hacoda Baptist Church, Samson, in Geneva County holds a ground-breaking ceremony Feb. 12 for the expansion of its fellowship hall, scheduled to be completed by the end of May. The hall is used in various community outreach events and is in need of expanding, according to Pastor Bob Cox. The church hosts a fourth Sunday dinner that is a 'great community outreach' and the expansion will more than double the hall's current seating capacity, according to deacon Steve Simmons, who is the director and chairman of the building project. The church also hosts Jeep Sullivan's Outdoor Adventures for Wounded Warriors events, civic clubs, wedding receptions, banquets and more for families in the area. Pictured here are church members and deacons, along with Cox (third from left).

# Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

## Former RTVC president Johnson dies at 82

HENDERSON, Nev. — Jack B. Johnson, the last president of the former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Radio and Television Commission (RTVC), died March 5 in Henderson, Nevada. He was 82.

Johnson was RTVC's president from 1990 to 1997 when the broadcast ministry became part of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in an SBC restructuring. After NAMB's formation, he served as special assistant to the president for development and special projects until his retirement in September 2000.

Before his election as RTVC president, Johnson had been executive director-treasurer of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention for 11 years. Prior to that role he served as a pastor for nearly 25 years in churches in Oklahoma and California. He was elected as president of the California's state convention in 1975.

The history of RTVC dates back to the formation of a Radio Committee at the 1938 SBC annual meeting. Later called the Radio Commission, it became RTVC in 1955, according to "The Southern Baptist Convention: A Sesquicentennial History" by the late Jesse C. Fletcher. (BP)



JOHNSON

## Gateway Seminary president emeritus dies

ONTARIO, Calif. — William O. (Bill) Crews, 81, president emeritus of the Southern Baptist Convention's Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, died March 1 after a brief illness in Vancouver, Washington.

Crews became the sixth president of Gateway Seminary (formerly Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary) in December 1986. He transitioned to the role of chancellor in 2003 and retired from the seminary in 2005. He subsequently was elected by the Northwest Baptist Convention as executive director-treasurer in 2007, serving until his second retirement at the end of 2012. During the late 1970s, Crews served as the convention's director of communications and



CREWS

editor of the *Northwest Baptist Witness*.

Crews was pastor of eight churches over a span of 32 years. He also was elected as president of the California Southern Baptist Convention and, earlier, the Northwest Baptist Convention. (BP)

## Year-to-date SBC CP giving above budget

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) are 4.86 percent above the year-to-date budgeted projection and are 0.86 percent below contributions received during the same time frame in 2016, according to a news release from EC President and CEO Frank S. Page. The total includes receipts from state conventions and fellowships, churches and individuals for distribution according to the 2016–17 SBC Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget.

As of Feb. 28, gifts received by EC for distribution through the CP Allocation Budget through the first five months of the SBC's fiscal year totaled \$82,575,921.81. This total is \$3,825,921.81 above the \$78,750,000 year-to-date budgeted amount to support the convention's ministries globally and across North America and is \$717,637.76 below the \$83,293,559.57 received through the end of February 2016.

Designated giving of \$87,947,343.09 for the same year-to-date period is 9.72 percent, or \$9,464,315.04, below gifts of \$97,411,658.13 received at this point in 2016. (BP)

## How pastors, churches can help stop substance abuse

► Speak/preach often about the increasing rate of substance abuse in your church and community. From your pulpit, promote the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday Emphases, such as Substance Abuse Prevention Sunday on March 19. Plan a special service, talk about the problem, invite a guest speaker to give information or ask a former abuser to give a testimony.

► Educate your church members on the most abused substances in your community/state. Teach them how to recognize the physical, emotional and behavioral signs of substance abuse and encourage them to report a possible abuser to church leadership.

► Plan separate church events or programs for youth/parents that expose the dangers of a variety of drugs and alcohol and offer insights into understanding commonly used drugs, addictions and the health/emotional consequences of illegal drug/alcohol abuse (see “Signs of drug abuse/addiction,” this page).

► Research, check out and make a list of qualified health care providers and drug/alcohol treatment centers in your area. Keep the information available and updated in order to contact them in case of an emergency. Enlist help or recommend treatment to abusers and/or family members who care for them. Search the Internet for state and national information, recording and sharing helpful websites and available resources with church leadership and members (see “Helpful resources,” below).

► When you encounter a church or community member overdosing on or abusing drugs, take immediate action. Call 911 and get emergency help quickly.

(Compiled by Denise George)

## Helpful resources

► Alabama Treatment Programs by county can be found at [www.drug-abuse.org/treatment-programs/Alabama.htm](http://www.drug-abuse.org/treatment-programs/Alabama.htm). 1-855-378-4228.

► For the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) website that recommends drug treatment programs for addiction and substance abuse by state, visit [www.drugtreatmentprogram.net/tag/southern-baptist-convention/](http://www.drugtreatmentprogram.net/tag/southern-baptist-convention/).

► For the SBC website with recommendations specifically for Alabama Drug Treatment Programs and Rehabilitation Centers, visit [www.drug-treatmentprogram.net/state/alabama](http://www.drug-treatmentprogram.net/state/alabama). Call the 24-hour help line at 1-866-923-1134 to talk to a counselor.

(Compiled by Denise George)

# DEADLY PROBLEM

**Substance Abuse  
Prevention Sunday  
is March 19.**

## Churches can help stop Alabama’s exploding drug use

By Denise George  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

In January 2016, Alabama couple Mary Ann Landers, 31, mother of two, and her husband, Wesley Landers, 32, both of Trinity, shot up heroin in their seven-month-old baby’s hospital room at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Ohio. Their daughter, Lucy, had had surgery for tracheal reconstruction to correct a birth defect. Medical staff found Mary Ann Landers on the floor dead beside her daughter’s bed, the needle still in her arm. Wesley Landers was unresponsive but survived. The Landerses attended Family Baptist Church, Trinity.

“This is a sad statement on our society when it is becoming ... commonplace ... hearing about victims ... overdosing in all sorts of public locations,” said Lakshmi Sammarco, the Coroner of Hamilton County, Ohio.

In the early hours of Nov. 11, 2016, Cassidy Aspen Cochran, a 22-year-old Alabama resident and bride-to-be, died from a heroin overdose. In her obituary Cochran’s family revealed her secret heroin addiction and wrote: “We write this not to dishonor her memory but to shine some light on an illness that is taking the lives of far too many. If we allow shame, guilt or embarrassment to cause this illness to become a dark family secret, hiding in the shadows, everyone loses.”

Former Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange, now a U.S. senator, said, “We’re seeing a huge uptick in heroin leading to deaths. ... [It’s] a silent killer but it’s very important that we get ahead of it.”

Heroin, most often transported from Jamaica, is cheap to buy and readily available in Alabama.

Walker County District Attorney Bill



123rf.com

Adair said, “The cheap availability of heroin ... has contributed to the issues we’re having now.”

### Synthetic opioid

Some drug dealers are adding Fentanyl to heroin to amplify its impact. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, much more deadly than heroin, often prescribed by physicians to relieve severe pain. It is 100 times more potent than Morphine and 50 times stronger than heroin. It can quickly cause unconsciousness and death.

Hueytown Police Chief Chuck Hagler said, “The heroin market appears to be here to stay. And the addition of Fentanyl has brought a deadly new problem to the table.”

Hoover Police investigative services captain Gregg Rector agreed, adding, “Fentanyl is certainly much more deadly than heroin

and it’s occasionally sold and consumed in its pure form. The scary part of that scenario is that addicts don’t [have] a clue what they’re injecting or snorting.”

Some dealers also are adding the dangerous Carfentanil to heroin. Carfentanil is an elephant tranquilizer used to subdue 13,000-pound African bush elephants. It is approximately 10,000 times more potent than Morphine and 100 times more potent than Fentanyl.

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Denise George, author of 30 books, is co-author of the new Penguin Random House book, “The Lost Eleven: The Forgotten Story of Black American Soldiers Brutally Massacred in World War II.” She is married to Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham. †*

## SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE/ADDICTION

**There are many physical and behavioral signs of drug abuse/addiction including:**

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Hyperactivity
- Lethargy
- Unpredictable mood swings
- Tremors
- Shakiness
- Red eyes
- Runny nose
- Problems with coordination
- Constant need for money
- Poor work or school performance
- Unexplained confusion
- Unusual weight gain or loss
- Physical withdrawal symptoms when not taking the drug
- Changes in attitude or friends for no reason

(Source: addictionblog.org)

Participants enjoy Night to Shine's prom event hosted by Big Sandy Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, on Feb. 10 at Big Sandy Elementary School in Moundville.

# Night to Shine



**Alabama Baptist churches that participated in the 2017 event:**

- ▶ Bethel Baptist Church, Dora
- ▶ Agape Baptist Church, Scottsboro
- ▶ Big Sandy Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa
- ▶ Community Baptist Church, Maylene
- ▶ Central Baptist Church, Decatur
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Huntsville

Photo courtesy of Big Sandy Baptist Church

## Alabama Baptist churches share love of Christ through special needs event

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Churches from around the world recently hosted Night to Shine, an annual prom event for those with special needs ages 14 and older.

The Feb. 10 Night to Shine, with more than 70,000 worldwide participants and 150,000 volunteers, is a Tim Tebow Foundation event.

Among the 375 churches that hosted this year's event were several Alabama Baptist churches, including Big Sandy Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa. It was Big Sandy Baptist's first year to participate in the event and they held their prom at Big Sandy Elementary School in Moundville.

"We chose to do Night to Shine as a way to be relevant in the community, and we could not think of

anything better than to show God's love to individuals with special needs the weekend before Valentine's Day," said Rhonda Walker, Big Sandy Baptist secretary. "We were unsure of the number of individuals in the community, but we wanted to offer this to Tuscaloosa."

Ninety-four guests came to Night to Shine and more than 75 church members participated as volunteers and "buddies" — volunteers who spend time with the guests at the event. There were an additional 150 volunteers and buddies from the community who were a part of Night to Shine, ranging from teens to professionals

in the special needs field.

"Guests and volunteers came from as far as two or so hours to attend and we've heard so many great stories come from this one night already," Walker said. "Parents have told me that it is the one night that their child is 'the norm.' To be a part of something done on

a worldwide scope is great, but knowing that we can do something that changes the way individuals may view others with special needs and seeing the faces of everyone is really priceless."

Big Sandy Baptist immediately began planning to be part of the 2018 Night to Shine event.

Community Baptist Church,

**For more information about Night to Shine or the Tim Tebow Foundation, visit [timtebowfoundation.org](http://timtebowfoundation.org).**



In Feb. 23, 1916, B.D. Gray, corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board), reported to *The Alabama Baptist*, "Our work in Cuba grows steadily and encouragingly."

The mission focused on four western provinces of the island and the majority of missionaries were in Santa Clara. The quickly growing Cuban population was a difficult challenge for missionaries. The ratio at the time was 1 missionary to every 50,000 people. (TAB)



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Famous Christians from previous centuries

# Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



## 2017 marks 250 years since birth of first female missionary to India

**H**annah Marshman was the first female missionary to India. Serving diligently for 47 years in Serampore, she outlived the famous Serampore Trio — Joshua Marshman, William Ward and William Carey.

This year is the 250th anniversary of her birth.

She was born Hannah Shepherd on May 13, 1767, in Bristol, England, to John Shepherd, a farmer, and Rachel Clark Shepherd. Her parents died when she was young.

Hannah Shepherd moved to Wiltshire to live with her grandfather, who served as a pastor for 60 years at the Baptist church at Crockerton. Her grandfather educated her in both secular and biblical knowledge.

### Profession of faith

When she was 15 she knew she was a sinner who needed Christ. For the next few years, her health was poor. Years

later she said those years of suffering were the happiest of her life because she experienced mercy. Soon after her recovery, she made a public profession of faith and was baptized.

In 1791 she married Joshua Marshman. In 1794 they joined Broadmead Baptist Church, Bristol.

The couple had 12 children but several died as infants.

Known as the father of modern missions, William Carey arrived in India in 1793, working under the Baptist Missionary Society. After several years laboring in the Malda district, Carey sent an urgent request to England for more missionaries.

The Marshmans and their two children answered that call. On the perilous journey Hannah Marshman made a steadfast commitment to God, which never wavered.

The family arrived at the Danish colony of Serampore (near Calcutta) on Oct. 13,

1799. Carey joined them in January 1800. With him was John Fountain, a teacher. Soon printer William Ward and missionary William Grant came. Grant and Fountain died soon after arriving.

In addition to her many duties, Hannah Marshman became “mother” of the mission. She ran the large communal household and cared for many in addition to her family: Carey’s mentally ill wife, Dorothy; the widow and children of Grant; and the pregnant widow of Fountain.

She also had to discipline the four unruly Carey boys. Their mother couldn’t raise them and their father was occupied with his numerous activities. The Marshmans and Ward offered not only discipline but also instruction and companionship to the boys. They grew up to be successful citizens.

In May 1800, Hannah and Joshua Marshman opened two boarding schools for English children and one free school

for Indian children. The income they received from the boarding schools helped make the Serampore mission financially independent.

From the time she stepped off the ship, Hannah Marshman had a burden for Indian women. She established and operated a school for young women around 1800. It became a model in India and by 1926 there were 14 other schools in the country.

### A tribute

Hannah Marshman died March 5, 1847, 10 years after her husband. John Clark Marshman, who wrote a history of the Serampore Mission, wrote this tribute to his mother:

“A woman of feeling, piety and good sense, of strong mind ... fitted in every respect to be an associate in the great undertaking to which the life of her husband was devoted — and withal so amiable a disposition that nothing was ever known to have ruffled her temper.”



MARSHMAN

## REFLECTIONS

“SINCE OUR CHURCH DOES NOT BELIEVE IN COUNSELING, IF ANYONE ASKS, YOU’RE INVOLVED IN PERSONALIZED EXPOSITORY PREACHING.”



## Maxwell to be featured at University of Mobile’s annual scholarship banquet

**T**he University of Mobile (UM) will bring leadership expert, speaker and author John C. Maxwell to Mobile for the 12th annual UM Scholarship Banquet on April 27.

The annual banquet brings a speaker of national prominence to the Mobile area to raise funds for scholarships for deserving students at the university.

Previous speakers include Fox News Channel’s chief political anchor Bret Baier, neurosurgeon and presidential candidate Ben Carson, former President George W. Bush, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow, Col. Oliver North, presidential candidate and Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, presidential candidate and Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, former Speaker of the U.S.

House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, Georgia Governor and U.S. Sen. Zell Miller and *New York Times* best-selling author Andy Andrews.



MAXWELL

Maxwell is a *New York Times* bestselling author, coach and speaker who has sold more than 26 million books in 50 languages.

In 2014 he was identified as the top leader in business by the American Management Association and the most influential leadership expert in the world by *Business Insider* and *Inc.* magazine.

### Training leaders

As the founder of The John Maxwell Co., The John Maxwell Team, EQUIP and the John Maxwell Leadership Foundation, he has trained more than 6 million leaders.

He also has been the recipient

of the Mother Teresa Prize for Global Peace and Leadership from the Luminary Leadership Network.

Maxwell speaks each year to Fortune 500 companies, presidents of nations and many of the world’s top business leaders.

Tickets are available now, with special pricing for church groups and nonprofits. (UM)

For more information about Maxwell, visit [JohnMaxwell.com](http://JohnMaxwell.com).

For ticket information about the event, visit [umobile.edu/banquet](http://umobile.edu/banquet) or call 251-442-2917.

# Seminarians disagree with church escrowing CP funds

Former SBC President Jack Graham was greeted by students wearing "I Love CP" T-shirts and an open letter voicing concern about his Texas megachurch's decision to temporarily withhold funding for the denomination when he spoke in chapel March 7 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Scheduled months ago, Graham's visit came two weeks after reports that Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, was holding \$1 million in funding for CP in escrow because of "various significant positions" taken by the leadership of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

In response to the concern raised by Graham and others the SBC Executive Committee launched a study into "the current

reality in Southern Baptist life" of churches withholding or discontinuing support of the unified budget plan that has driven funding for state and national denominational bodies since its creation in 1925.

The student letter said registering protest by withholding funds sends a message that "money talks" and diminishes the voice of smaller churches unable to pony up amounts comparable to a 40,000-member multisite church like Prestonwood Baptist.

"These actions set a precedent that puts the Cooperative Program at risk," the students said. "If such a method of escrowing money proves popular, a dangerous precedent will have been set for our denomination.

"Megachurches may withdraw their funds from CP when they

become disgruntled with the convention, spurring smaller churches to follow suit," the letter continued. "Amidst such a climate, more missionaries may have to return

home, church plants could close their doors and young pastors may have to seek their theological training elsewhere, or even withdraw from classes." (BNG)

## Alabama Baptist GIVING



Year to date through Feb. 28, 2017

### FEBRUARY

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$3,333,333
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$3,111,804
Under Goal for Month.....	\$221,529

### YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$6,666,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$6,834,840
Over Goal for Year.....	\$168,174

The monthly and year-to-date totals include CP base, CP state causes and SBC causes.

## TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### PASTOR

Parrish First Baptist Church (SS avg. 100) is currently accepting resumés for a senior pastor. Please email resumés or inquiries to: [searchcommittee@parrishfbc.com](mailto:searchcommittee@parrishfbc.com) or mail to: P.O. Box 49 Parrish, AL 35580.

#### PASTOR

Saraland Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumés to: P.O. Box 749, Saraland, AL 36571 or contact Autrey Key at 251-675-6681.

#### PASTOR

Southside Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 1101 Cherry St., Talladega, AL 35160 ([www.southsidetalladega.org](http://www.southsidetalladega.org)).

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Hepzibah Baptist Church is seeking a full-time student pastor to join us in our mission of connecting people to God, to each other, to ministry and to the world. Please send resumés to: [hbcjcbapp@gmail.com](mailto:hbcjcbapp@gmail.com).

#### YOUTH MINISTER

Seeking part-time youth minister. If interested please send resumé to: [fbcchalkville@att.net](mailto:fbcchalkville@att.net) or mail to: FBC Chalkville at 2100 Old Springville Road, Birmingham, AL 35215.

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama. Accepting resumés for full-time student pastor. Send to: [\[hillbc.org\]\(http://hillbc.org\) or to: Student Pastor Search Committee, 8790 Highway 43 N. Northport, AL 35473.](mailto:jnichols@chapel-</a></p>
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#### BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

West Weaver Baptist Church, Weaver, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumés and inquiries to: [macj11@att.net](mailto:macj11@att.net).

#### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Silver Run Baptist Church, Seale, Alabama. Submit resumés to: Cheryl Boutwell at [justshert@gmail.com](mailto:justshert@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER

Friendship Baptist Church in Springville, Alabama, is accepting resumés for a bivocational music/worship leader. Email resumé to: [friendshipbaptist411@gmail.com](mailto:friendshipbaptist411@gmail.com) or contact Alicia at 205-629-5402 for more information.

#### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP PASTOR

Dwight Baptist Church of Gadsden is accepting resumés for a part-time bivocational worship pastor. Please send resumé to: [dwrightbaptistchurch@comcast.net](mailto:dwrightbaptistchurch@comcast.net), Attn: Matt Raines, Chairman Personnel Committee.

#### BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

Community Baptist Church in Maylene, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational music minister/worship leader. Please send a resumé to: [CBCSearchComm@gmail.com](mailto:CBCSearchComm@gmail.com).

#### BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP MINISTER

Mineral Springs Baptist Church,

located at 8316 Co. Rd. 51, Clanton, is currently searching for God's candidate to lead our worship ministry. The position is bivocational, with the expectations of weekly preparing a choir to assist in leading Sunday morning worship and the ability to lead both traditional and contemporary styles of music during truly blended worship services. The ideal candidate would have the ability to also play one or multiple instruments. The candidate must be a team player with a heart for service and ministry, maintaining a consistent personal walk with the Lord. Experience preferred. No calls please. Candidates should email their resumés to: [pastorjasongreen@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorjasongreen@yahoo.com). Please type "worship minister position" in the subject line.

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### ASSOCIATION MISSIONARY

Beech River Baptist Association is seeking an associational missionary who will assist 42 churches, located in three West Tennessee counties, to partner together in order to impact the world for Christ. Email resumés to: [richard.reb@gmail.com](mailto:richard.reb@gmail.com) or send them to: Associational Missionary Search Committee, P.O. Box 498, Lexington, TN 38351. Resumés will be received until April 30.

#### ASSOCIATION MISSIONARY

Rural West Alabama association seeking associational missionary. Send resumés by May 1, 2017, to Pickens Baptist Association, P.O. Box 206, Carrollton, AL 35447 or [pbassn@centurytel.net](mailto:pbassn@centurytel.net).

### BUSINESS

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### FOR SALE

#### BUS

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(augmented reality)

## Follow these instructions

**1** Download the Aurasma app from your app store.

**2** Choose the "ALBaptist" profile under channel and tap "Follow." You will only have to do this one time. (Any ALBaptist options will allow you to follow *The Alabama Baptist*.)

**3** Tap the [ ] icon at the bottom of the screen.

**4** You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.

**5** Hold your device over a page or image in *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life.

**6** If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.

**7** Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.



## World of RELIGION

Compiled from Wire Services

### Russia deports first foreigner for 'missionary activity'

NABEREZHNYE CHELNY, Russia — The first known deportation of a foreigner for allegedly violating a new religion law (commonly called the "law on missionary activity") in Russia occurred in February.

Seven months after the law was introduced confusion still surrounds its implementation — primarily around whether and how people may share their beliefs as individuals. The law includes harsh restrictions on anyone involved in "missionary activity" without written permission from an officially recognized religious organization.

Indian Protestant Pastor Victor-Immanuel Mani was the first known deportation under Administrative Code Article 5.26 Part 5, according to news sources. Mani was fined more than \$500 for the "offense" of advertising religious gatherings on social media and allegedly giving religious literature to a nonmember of his church. He plans to appeal against his deportation.

Nizhny Tagil Evangelical Christian Church in Sverdlovsk Region was convicted twice in February and fined more than \$1,000 for "conducting missionary activity" and distributing literature without "indicating its official full name." Among items ordered to be destroyed were editions of the Bible. (TAB, F18)

### US Democrats urge Romania to support gay 'marriage'

BUCHAREST, Romania — Thirty-seven Democrats in the U.S. Congress have told Romania's parliament not to allow a referendum supported by 3 million of its citizens that would instate a constitutional amendment protecting the traditional view of marriage.

More than 3 million Romanian citizens have called for an election to define marriage as a man and a woman and have taken the appropriate steps to require Romanian lawmakers to decide whether to open it up to the public for a vote, according to The Christian Post.

But the 37 Democrats in U.S. Congress sent a letter Feb. 22 to Romania's Senate president and the president of the Chamber of Deputies urging them not to let the effort progress. The letter also warns that excluding the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community from benefits and rights could incite a violent response. (TAB)

### Cross on hill represents hope for village in Iraq

MOSUL, Iraq — A giant cross now stands on a hill near Mosul, Iraq, to celebrate a village that is being rebuilt after

its liberation from the Islamic State (IS) terror group.

Louis Sako, the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Baghdad, called the cross in the village of Telekuf-Tesqopa "the first spark of light shining in all the cities of the Nineveh Plain since the darkness of IS," according to The Christian Post.

During a mass in the village, the first in two and a half years, Sako said the cross announces to the world "that this is our land, we were born here and we will die here." To celebrate, local Christians set off fireworks and cheered.

The area was reclaimed by Iraqi forces working in concert with United States air strikes. (TAB)

### Archaeologists uncover palace of biblical king in Iraq

NINEVAH, Iraq — Archaeologists in Iraq recently uncovered the ancient palace of biblical King Sennacherib, buried for millennia underneath Jonah's tomb in the city of Ninevah.

The discovery was made by those surveying destruction left behind by the Islamic State (IS) terror group, according to The Christian Post. Those researchers reported that they believed IS had been tunneling to find artifacts like statues, coins and jewelry that they could sell on the black market to fund their war.

One tunnel led the team of archaeologists to the marble cuneiform inscription of King Esarhaddon of the Assyrian empire, who ruled from 681 to 669 B.C., and renovated the palace built for King Sennacherib, the Post reported.

In 2 Chronicles 32:1, Sennacherib is described as invading Judah after the reign of Hezekiah. (TAB)

### Stampede at prayer meeting leaves 8 dead, 28 injured

LUSAKA, Zambia — At least eight people died and 28 were injured in a stampede for free food at a Church of Christ prayer meeting March 5 in Lusaka, Zambia.

The meeting, which attracted 35,000 people, was organized by Lesedi Seven, a group associated with the Church of Christ. It had advertised on Facebook that it would be giving away free food parcels, according to The Christian Post.

Among the dead were six girls, an adult male and a young boy. Five of them died at the scene, with the others dying later at the hospital. Some of them died still clutching the food they had grabbed after arriving early for the event, local activist Mwansa Chama said.

According to the World Food Programme, the nation is landlocked and has serious problems with food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. (TAB)

# ALABAMA

## UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

### East Gardendale Baptist Pastor Allen Davis retires

Pastor Allen Davis retired effective Feb. 26 from East Gardendale Baptist Church, Gardendale, after serving for more than 17 years.

In 1978, while serving as youth director at Fellowship Baptist Church, Birmingham, Davis was called into the gospel ministry. His first pastorate was bivocational in 1981 at Warrior's West Side Baptist Church. In 1984 he began serving at Gardendale First Baptist Church in the adult education department under then-Pastor David Dykes and later Pastor Steve Gaines.

Throughout the years, Davis continued his education at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary through Samford University in Birmingham. Davis was called to serve as interim at East Gardendale Baptist in September 1999 and then as pastor in January 2002. He and his wife, Donna, celebrated 45 years of marriage March 3 and have been blessed with three children and three grandchildren. (Cathy Edwards/East Gardendale Baptist Church)



DAVIS

### Danny Wood celebrates 20 years at Shades Mountain

Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, recently celebrated his 20-year anniversary at the church.

Prior to being called to Shades Mountain Baptist in 1997, he served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Ruston, Louisiana, for eight and a half years.

Wood graduated from Auburn University in 1975 and entered the business field where he worked for South Central Bell Telephone Company (now AT&T) in Birmingham for more than eight years. At South Central Bell, Wood felt the Lord call him into full-time vocational ministry, he said.

"In the summer of 1983 God began to change my interests and desires," he said. So he left the company and went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he received his master of divinity degree in 1986. He later earned his doctorate from Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham in 1999.

Reflecting on his 20 years at Shades

Mountain Baptist, Wood said, "The most rewarding part about preaching at Shades Mountain is that the people here have a hunger for the Word of God and they have a strong desire to learn about it and live it out."

Because of this hunger for the Word, Wood said he is excited about the future of Shades Mountain. Over the past few years the church has finished constructing and refurbishing church facilities and has been heavily involved in equipping members of the church for missions.

Shades Mountain has conducted ministry in all 50 states, 80 countries around the world, supported more than 30 church plants in the United States and around the world and has seen 190 members go into full-time missions work.

"With all this we are now debt free and have a blank page for God to do miraculous things through our congregation," Wood said. "For the future we want to continue having an emphasis on engaging the community, church planting and missions involvement."

Wood said he has grown a lot in his spiritual walk in the last 20 years and offered the advice that "dependence on God through adversity in life" is crucial for growth in one's spiritual walk.

Wood and his wife, Janice, have one daughter. (Caleb Jones)

### Alabama Baptist pastor retires after 72 years of ministry

It's been a full 72 years of ministry, according to C.L. Langford, who retired March 12 from his role as pastor of Enon Baptist Church, Atmore.

Langford, who grew up in Pensacola, Florida, and was called to the gospel ministry at age 16, said he'd continue to preach at Enon Baptist when needed because, "You never really retire as a preacher."

For several years Langford served as a bivocational pastor while he worked for the U.S. Postal Service. He retired from the Postal Service in 1992 after a little more than 26 years.

During his ministry he served Atmore Baptist Temple; Pensacola Baptist Temple, Pensacola, Florida; and helped plant Calvary Baptist Church, Atmore. For 12 years he worked in Phoenix, Arizona, at an aluminum company and served two churches as bivocational pastor while there.

Enon Baptist held an afternoon reception March 11 to honor Langford for his years of service.

He and his wife, Lenna, were married for 68 years before she died. Langford has five children, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. (Neisha Roberts)



LANGFORD



WOOD

# Renew 2017 examines what it looks like to live, love like Christ every day

By Neisha Roberts and  
Debbie Campbell  
The Alabama Baptist

At Renew 2017, women from across the state gathered to learn about what it looks like to follow Christ daily.

About 700 women participated with 115 churches represented at the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union-sponsored conference held Feb. 25 at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Author Katie Orr shared from Hebrews 10, speaking on how to draw near to God.

"We draw near by faith," Orr said. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. ... And we draw near with a true heart. Our heart's desire should be to just be with God. ... Faith is not about proving ourselves to others."

North American Mission Board missionary Lorna Bius shared from Galatians 5:6 about what it looks like to follow Christ and live out one's faith every day.

"As people live out their faith, the result is transformed lives which equals transformed communities," she said. "What matters most is faith that expresses itself in love."



Photo by Debbie Campbell

Worship leader Shelly E. Johnson, of Woodstock, Georgia, leads about 700 women in song during the Renew 2017 conference held Feb. 25 at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Through faith, Bius said, lives are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Speaker and author Page Hughes called every woman at Renew to "be equipped" with a "Christian toolbelt," referencing Romans 12:9-13.

Hospitality is one of the tools we can use to reach people, she said. "Let love be genuine. Love

sincerely. Love honestly. Love generously."

A former International Mission Board missionary shared about the power of prayer and work of God she witnessed while overseas.

Orr closed the conference with a challenge not to let anyone or anything "steal your peace."

"Remember, God will guard your heart with peace." ✠

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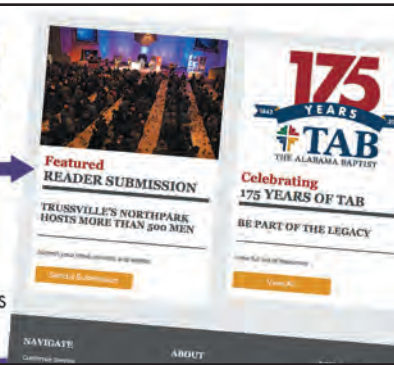
—Emily Hanrahan, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama



## DO YOU HAVE A PHOTO you would like to share with TAB readers?

Send in your submission and it could appear on TAB's website

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**MAIL TO:** 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209; or  
**VISIT:** www.thealabamabaptist.org/submissions/reader-submissions  
and fill out the form.



# 40 Days for Life campaign urges prayer to end abortion

With a goal of turning hearts and minds “from a culture of death to a culture of life,” the pro-life campaign 40 Days for Life (March 1–April 9) is impacting cities across the nation, including in Alabama, as people focus on prayer, fasting, sharing the hope of the gospel and reaching the community to end abortion.

The global campaign, which started in Texas in 2004, has seen 725,000 volunteers give of their time to host and participate in 4,535 local campaigns. Through campaign efforts 40 Days for Life reports 12,719 lives have been saved, 143 abortion workers have quit their jobs and 83 abortion centers have closed.

### Power of prayer

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, said, “40 Days for Life is a testimony to the power of prayer and what can happen when we’re consumed by a magnificent obsession, namely that life is sacred and every baby at every stage of development deserves to be protected under law.”

In total 675 cities in 40 countries are involved in the cam-

campaign, including four Alabama cities where 24-hour vigils are currently taking place. According to Guttmacher Institute, about 8,020 abortions occurred in Alabama in 2014, representing 0.9 percent of all abortions in the United States.

### State campaigns

Alabama cities involved in campaigns include:

▶ **Huntsville** — held outside Alabama Women’s Center at 4831 Sparkman Avenue.

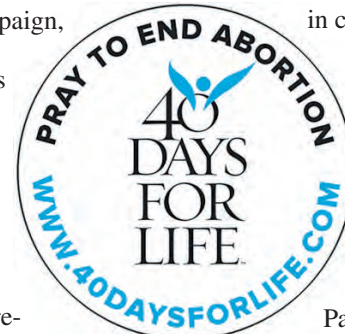
▶ **Birmingham** — held outside Planned Parenthood at 1211

27th Place South. Contact Ed Carrick at 205-305-0950 or birmingham40dffl@att.net.

▶ **Montgomery** — held outside Reproductive Health Services at 811 South Perry Street. Contact Michelle Rowe at 334-233-4682 or 40dfflmontgomery@gmail.com.

▶ **Mobile** — held outside Planned Parenthood at 717 Downtowner Loop West. Contact Mae Rehm at 251-554-2032 or maemouse@aol.com.

For more information about the global or local campaigns, visit 40daysforlife.com. (TAB)



40 Days for Life graphic

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 19

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

### WHAT IS REQUIRED? Matthew 19:16-26

#### Standard Defined (16-20)

This story begins with a question that is of eternal significance — what must I do to have eternal life?

One of the themes throughout Matthew is the idea that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures; He is the awaited Messiah who is God in flesh.

When the man calls Jesus “good,” Jesus responds by asking him why he calls Him good?

After all only God is good. Some see this as Christ’s denial of His divinity.

A better reading which is consistent throughout the gospel is that Jesus is in fact asserting that He is good and thereby is God.

It is a rhetorical question Jesus asks, saying in effect, “You call me good and since God alone is good do you recognize Me as divine?”

In response to the man’s question Jesus points to the commandments of God, of which the young ruler claims to have obeyed.

However, we know from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that just following the external form of the law is not enough because we need to be concerned with our internal motivations.

After all God judges the heart not just our actions.

#### Impossible to Keep (21-22)

Since this man had many possessions Jesus knew right where to convict him.

He told him to sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor, a thing the man refused to do.

The man put his money before God, making it his god and thus breaking the first commandment.

He also was not loving his neighbor by

giving his money to the poor. Instead he chose his wealth and comfort over helping others.

We may see the man’s short-sightedness and think he is a fool for choosing wealth over eternal glory but we often are in danger of doing the same thing.

Most of us don’t have the wealth he had but Jesus calls all of us to give up that which we treasure the most — be it wealth, comfort, family, jobs or security.

The point of Jesus’ response is not that we all need to give up our money but rather all of us need to give up that which we place before God.

It is crucial we count the cost of following Jesus, which costs us everything. But it is worth it.

Pray and ask God to help show us the areas of our lives that need to be given over to Him.

#### Provision to Accept (23-26)

In the end Jesus reveals there is no work that can save us; only God can.

This is what separates Christianity from all other major world religions.

Christianity is a religion of grace — Jesus Christ died for us to pay the price we could not.

If we believe this and make Jesus our Lord and Savior, we have eternal life.

It is not about what we can do — it is what Christ does for us.

All other religions say we have to do something — we have to be good enough or we have to give money or possessions in order to have eternal life.

But in Christianity we give nothing because Christ gave everything.

And this is a wonderful thought, to realize the God of the universe loved us so much that He sent Christ to die for us so we can be reconciled to God.

Our rightful response is to bow down and worship this kingly Savior. †

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

### VICTORY OVER SIN Romans 6:4-14

Although we begin with verse 4, start reading at verse 1 and continue through verse 23. In his letters Paul talks about sin in two ways. Sometimes he talks about sins or transgressions as wrongs that people commit. At other times he talks about sin as a power that controls us and that we are helpless to do anything about it on our own.

When he talks about sin in this way, he usually links it to another power: death. Those under the powers of sin and death access Jesus’ victory over these powers by participating in His death — and in His resurrection — through baptism. That is what Paul is talking about in today’s passage.

#### Jesus frees us from our slavery to sin. (4-7)

For Paul there is only slavery. We are either enslaved to sin or, through our participation in Christ’s death and resurrection, we are free from sin’s power.

But to be free from sin is to be a slave of Christ. Paul indicates this when he introduces himself to the church in Rome as “a slave of Jesus Christ,” as he also does in Philippians and Titus.

“Death” for Paul is not merely the death of the body, but a state in which one lives here and now. It is a state of slavery to sin and of disobedience to God. Likewise “life” is not merely physical but another mode of existence in which we are enslaved to Christ and obedient to God.

#### Jesus makes us spiritually alive. (8-11)

“We believe” is probably better translated “we trust,” with the implication that because we trust, we obey. That is the rich sense with which Paul often uses the verb “believe” and the noun “faith.”

In verse 8, Paul makes it sound as if new life lies in the future and indeed he might be referring to the resurrection as he did in verse 5. But in verse 11 it is clear this new life has already begun (see also v. 13).

We understand Paul to say that for the believer Christ’s death and resurrection have already made him or her alive in a new type of existence.

Paul expresses this idea in 2 Corinthians 5:17 when he talks about “a new creation.” But the fulfillment of this new life remains in the future when Christ returns and there is no longer any separation at all between Christ and His body, the Church.

#### Our lives are to reflect what we are in Christ. (12-14)

Paul has already said we “walk in newness of life” in verse 4. In the Bible “walk” often refers to how one lives, meaning new life requires a new way of living.

From our own life experiences we know Paul is right: even though the power of sin no longer has ultimate control over us we still can allow it temporary victories.

We “present [our] members to sin” (v. 13). “Members” refers to parts of the body, both as a euphemism for genitals and as a reference to anything from mouth (what we say) to hands (what we do) to feet (where we go and how we live) — whatever can become an “instrument” or “weapon of wickedness.”

By contrast, our whole selves belong to God as instruments of righteousness. No “member” is exempt from this complete dedication to God.

Paul calls this new life living “with Christ” and being “alive to God in Christ Jesus.” It is neither an emotion (“feeling alive”) nor a physical state but a new state of being that persists whether a person is physically alive or dead. †

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Pick up your \_\_\_\_\_. (John 5:8)
- Go \_\_\_\_\_ to thy friends. (Mark 5:19)
- Mary hath chosen that good \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 10:42)
- Many \_\_\_\_\_ called. (Matt. 22:14)
- A garden eastward in \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 2:8)
- The Eranites came from \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 26:36)
- Likened unto \_\_\_\_\_ virgins. (Matt. 25:1)
- Part of necklace.
- The veil ... was \_\_\_\_\_ in twain. (Matt. 27:51)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tots. (brand name)
- Turn and \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 22:18)
- For the sky is \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 16:2)
- The third day he shall be \_\_\_\_\_ again. (Matt. 17:23)
- Who Matthew would work for today.
- Harder to be \_\_\_\_\_ than a strong city. (Prov. 18:19)
- The Lord added to the church \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 2:47)
- Lament.
- My \_\_\_\_\_ shall supply. (Phil. 4:19)
- Thy \_\_\_\_\_ is as the tower of Lebanon. (Song of Sol. 7:4)

- Scourge a man that is a \_\_\_\_\_? (Acts 22:25)
- In the beginning \_\_\_\_\_ the Word. (John 1:1)
- Nickname for Edward.
- That I may \_\_\_\_\_ unto you. (Rom. 1:11)
- Your yea be yea; and your \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. (James 5:12)
- Call me not Naomi, call me \_\_\_\_\_. (Ruth 1:20)
- Goodness and \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 23:6)
- In \_\_\_\_\_ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
- \_\_\_\_\_ was a cunning hunter. (Gen. 25:27)
- International Labor Organization. (abbr.)
- Worthy to \_\_\_\_\_ the book. (Rev. 5:2)
- Ireland.
- Country northeast of India. (abbr.)
- Belonging to Rachel’s youngest son (nickname). (Gen. 35:18)
- \_\_\_\_\_, why persecutest thou me? (Acts 9:4)
- The light of the body is the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 6:22)

### Down

- Gospel name. (abbr.)
- Length times width.
- Enlarge the place of thy \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 54:2)
- Nurse of the \_\_\_\_\_ women. (Ex. 2:7)
- Poem.
- Strong \_\_\_\_\_ belongeth to them. (Heb. 5:14)
- A familiar spirit at \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 28:7)
- Cyrus the \_\_\_\_\_. (Dan. 6:28)
- Ye \_\_\_\_\_ the branches. (John 15:5)
- Esau \_\_\_\_\_ to meet him. (Gen. 33:4)
- Explosive.
- A son of Judah. (Num. 26:19)
- He was \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 10:22)
- A living \_\_\_\_\_ is better than a dead lion. (Eccles. 9:4)
- I lay in \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Pet. 2:6)
- Children, or \_\_\_\_\_ I die. (Gen. 30:1)
- Bring rams’ skins \_\_\_\_\_ red. (Ex. 25:5)
- Father of Omri. (1 Chron. 9:4)
- No \_\_\_\_\_ for them. (Luke 2:7)
- Corn Mush.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:2)
- Belonging to the captain of the king of Syria. (2 Kings 5:1)
- Bilhah’s first son. (Gen. 30:5-6)
- National Rifle Association.

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## Want to know GOD?

By Jenni Ingram  
Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

As I write this column my community is dealing with the tragic loss of a young man who was well loved in the area.

Looking at news online I see stories of alcohol addiction that led to a vehicle running straight through a group of people, including children and teens.

I also see stories of Christians being persecuted and killed in foreign countries. I see devastating reports of volcanoes erupting, massive weather events and deadly hostage situations. It's enough to make me revel in my despair and keep my family cloistered around me for protection. What we have to realize as we seek God is that He told us these things were going to happen.

Just look at the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 24. It tells us in great detail about what is going to happen and, make no mistake friends, it is happening.

People much more intelligent than I have studied and made it their life's work to understand this Scripture and are convinced Jesus is returning soon. We are to take comfort in the Lord and in His greatness.

He promises us in Psalm 30:5: "For His anger lasts only a moment but His favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night but rejoicing comes in the morning."

The Creator of the universe, our Lord and Savior, our Redeemer and friend is always by our side.

Isaiah 55:6 tells us to "seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near."

A time is coming when He will turn His glorious face from all those who have not accepted Jesus. He is right beside you, friend, right in front of you. Please answer His knock and accept Him. †



# Media reviews

## Telling It On the Mountain: 52 Days in the Life of an Improbable Missionary

Connie Pearson. Athens, Alabama: CreateSpace, 2016. 220 pp. (Paperback).

I beg to differ with the title of this book: I always thought my friend, Connie Pearson, and her husband, Steve, were missionary material. After all they went on missions trips, were eager to share their faith, taught Sunday School and Bible studies — all the things you expect missionaries to do. The improbability, for me, was that they waited until they were in their 50s and their children were all grown and married to go to the missions field full time.

But go they did and while serving as an International Mission Board missionary in Ecuador, Connie Pearson began sharing her gift of writing as she kept her friends and family informed, entertained and inspired with accounts of the situations she and her husband encountered. This book is a collection of those stories. From an amazing story

of poverty-stricken women confessing to the sin of materialism to a sweet story of holding hands and sharing with a nun, to the frustrating experience of being robbed, she writes honestly and from the heart. The vignettes in the book are engaging; the messages are convicting. Here is a sample:

*Those years in Ecuador were hard, stretching, amazing and wonderful. I learned lessons high in the Andes Mountains that have forever altered how I view my relationship with the Lord and His love for people. God humbled me in ways that were uncomfortable and ministered to me in ways that were transformational.*

The Pearsons remained in Ecuador for four years and have since returned from the missions field. They live outside Athens and are members of First Baptist Church, Athens, in Limestone Baptist Association.

## God & Churchill

Jonathan Sandys and Wallace Henley. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale Momentum, 2015. 268 pp. (Paperback).

I wonder how many books have been written on Winston Churchill. Quite a few — I looked on the Internet and gave up on trying to count them all. Why would anyone want to write another one? I guess if you are Churchill's great-grandson you might feel you have something to add to the volumes already written. I am not a student of Churchill but my guess is that the approach in this book

does reveal new information about the prime minister — or at least presents it in a different way.

This book, which was co-authored by journalist and pastor Wallace Henley, is described as a "spiritual biography," designed to explore the

role Churchill's beliefs played "in his leadership and on the world stage" with emphasis on World War II. Sandys believed his great-grandfather had a sense of divine destiny from an early age and set out to find whether the prime minister's references to God and his spiritual beliefs were sincere or just "political platitudes."

There was an overwhelming amount of evidence pulled from Churchill's writing and speeches and from reports of others, all pointing to a consistency of belief and cor-

responding actions. No attempt was made to paint Churchill as a saint but the picture is pretty convincing.

The book was a good read, well written and interesting. I think history buffs will love it and nonhistory buffs are likely to enjoy it as well.

## The Lights Went Out in Dixie

Joel Cobbs. Atlanta, Georgia: JNCobbs, 2016. 251 pp. (Paperback).

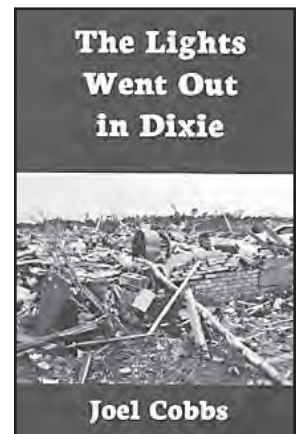
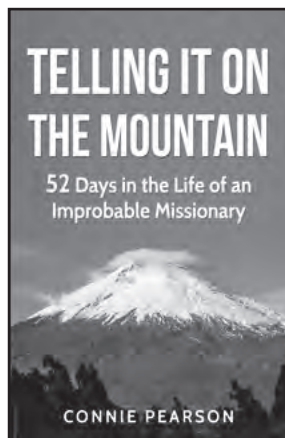
Who can forget the massive tornado outbreak of April 27, 2011? Large numbers of us lost power and phone communication, and many even lost loved ones on that day.

This book is a fictionalized account that covers the outbreak from Madison County to Tuscaloosa and points between.

The Alabama Baptist reader who was in the state at the time will recognize places and scenarios from the book, and memories of that day will likely be triggered. The book traces several people and families from just before the tornadoes hit to the horrible aftermath, especially in Tuscaloosa.

The book is well written but perhaps a little too busy, switching from one scenario to another every few pages. Cobbs did put the person or family's name as a chapter title whenever the focus switched, but there were too many switches for me to keep up with. I kept losing people.

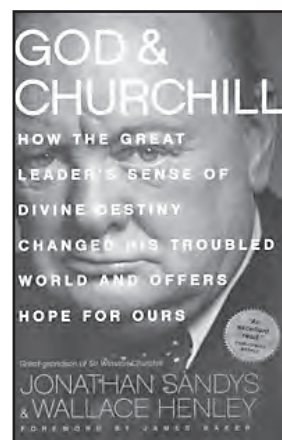
In the end, just as in the actual tornado, there is hope and a sense that life goes on. †



## WHAT ARE YOU READING?



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## Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Fairbanks, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for The Alabama Baptist. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.



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Taylor Edmonds (center, yellow sweater) receives concerted prayer on her behalf as she is appointed as a Southern Baptist missionary. Sent by The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina, Edmonds will share the gospel with European peoples.

IMB photo by Roy Burroughs

# Wide open doors

## IMB holds Sending Celebration for 29 missionaries

God is providing unprecedented opportunities to serve Him among the nations, and “with a degree in fibers, fabrics and handcrafted textiles, along with a desire to take the good news of Jesus to the ends of the earth, the Lord is allowing me to literally and figuratively weave the gospel of Jesus Christ into the hearts of Central Asians,” said Carter Finley, who was sent by her church in North Carolina, during an International Mission Board (IMB) Sending Celebration on March 1.

Twenty-nine Southern Baptists were approved and appointed as missionaries to the nations during IMB’s trustee meeting Feb. 28–March 1 near Richmond, Virginia. The new missionaries celebrated during the service are being sent by churches in 11 state conventions. They’ll take the gospel to peoples in Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Americas.

Aaron Stormer, who is sent by Hilldale Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tennessee, to the American peoples, said, “We are going because we know that God’s heart is for all people to know His name.”

### God’s heart for the nations

Melissa Stormer said she realized God’s heart for the nations while sharing the gospel in a small mountain village in Haiti. “I felt Jesus whispering, ‘I died for them as well as you,’” she said. Her husband felt God calling him to the missions field while walking stone-lined streets surrounded by blue tiles and the lost people of Porto, Portugal.

Jim and Pam Smith expressed thanks that Southern Baptist churches work together through the Coopera-

tive Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to send and support missionaries. Jim Smith said it was as a Royal Ambassador at a church in Virginia that he became aware of God’s heart for the nations. From Panama to China, short-term missions trips were formative in turning his heart toward the nations.

Growing up as a pastor’s kid in Colorado and Virginia, Pam Smith felt God used short-term missions trips from the bush of Kenya to the busy streets of

Turkey to awaken her desire to go from short-term to full-time missions. The family is sent to share the gospel in South Asia.

David Platt, IMB president, said, “We are living in a day of wide open doors here and around the world, and it is high time for Southern Baptists not to divide, but to join together — not to be distracted, but to be resolutely focused on the purpose for which we came together in the first place: the

spread of the gospel in a world of urgent need.”

Sharing a video story about Abuk, a young refugee from Africa who obediently answered God’s call to return to Africa to make disciples, Platt praised God for a Southern Baptist church in Amarillo, Texas, that reached out to the immigrant family.

“We hear those words [refugee, immigrant] today, and they’re so politically charged and if we’re not careful we can start to picture immigrants as problems to be solved, not people to be loved,” Platt said.

“This is a story of a refugee turned IMB missionary. And that’s possible why? Did you see the news headline in that video? ‘Baptists come together despite barriers.’ Oh may that be the commentary on our cooperation in this day of wide open doors.” (IMB)

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Names changed for security reasons.*

## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Islamic extremists attack Somali family

AFGOI, Somalia — Islamic extremists in Somalia identified as Al Shabaab rebels shot and killed a Christian woman and her son while seriously wounding her husband in February.

The family was asleep in their home in Afgoi about 19 miles west of Mogadishu when at least four armed men attacked them at dawn. The assailants killed 35-year-old Faduma Osman, a Christian, and the couple’s 11-year-old son, Ahmed Suleiman.

Osman’s husband, Suleiman Abdiwahab, who is recovering from gunshot wounds to the chest, said the gunmen broke down the door and randomly shot at everyone. He also said they were shouting the jihadist slogan, “Allah Akbar” or “God is greater,” and, “We cannot allow the defiling of our religion with a foreign, Western religion.”

The couple’s two daughters, ages 13 and 7, and 9-year-old son were able to escape out a back door and have found safe shelter in another town, sources said.

Al Shabaab, which has been battling government forces for more than 10 years, has taken control of farming areas surrounding Afgoi, sources said. Since January the rebels have briefly taken over the city three times with Somali government forces driving them out each time.

Somalia is second only to North Korea on Open Doors’ 2017 World Watch List of countries where it is most dangerous to be a Christian. (MS)

### Christians arrested in fight over school

OMDURMAN, Sudan — Police in Omdurman, Sudan, arrested four Christians in February and accused them of destroying the sign board of a Muslim interest trying to take over their Christian school, sources said.

The Christians spent the night in jail and were released on bail for \$1,682 on Feb. 21.

Police arrived at the Evangelical School of Sudan in Omdurman across the Nile from Khartoum on Feb. 20 at the behest of a Muslim businessman who recently claimed ownership of the school property at a complex of the beleaguered Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC), church members said.

“These accusations are false and baseless,” said Anglo, a teacher of Christian education, after his release.

Amid a struggle by SPEC to remove government-imposed leadership of the beleaguered denomination, the arrests came after a Muslim identified only as Hassan approached school administrators and claimed he was the new headmaster of the school, now to be called Education Vision.

On Feb. 18, Muslims claiming ownership of the new school put up an Education Vision sign post. Hassan accused the four members of SPEC of destroying the sign post. They denied it.

The leadership of SPEC remains in the hands of government-appointed committee members even after a court ruled in November 2016 the appointments were illegal, sources said. (MS)

### Islamic State terror group kills 7 in Egypt

EL-ARISH, Egypt — In Egypt’s North Sinai province, the Islamic State (IS) terror group has killed seven Christians in three weeks and hundreds have fled for their lives, according to The Christian Post.

IS released a video recently threatening Christians in Egypt and implying responsibility for the December 2016 bombing of Cairo’s St. Mark’s Cathedral, which is the seat of the Coptic Christian pope. At least 28 people died in the blast.

Then on Feb. 23 when Kamel Youssef was shot in front of his wife and children, it marked the seventh killing in North Sinai since Jan. 30, according to the Post.

An unnamed priest from el-Arish, the capital of North Sinai province, said the number fleeing is unprecedented. “You feel like this is all meant to force us to leave our homes,” he said. “We became like refugees.” (TAB)