



# The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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To watch the videos from this week's issue, visit our YouTube channel "TAB Media."

# Pride & dignity

## Hungry customers get more than a home-cooked meal at donations-only restaurant

By **Martha Simmons**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**A**long the cafeteria-style food line at Drexell & Honeybee's, you'll see plenty of soul-satisfying Southern fare that changes from one day to the next, but two items are always on the menu of this donations-only restaurant in Brewton: pride and dignity.

That's why you'll have a

hard time distinguishing between the patrons who can afford to drop money into the donations box for their meal and those who cannot.

No cash register is present in the restaurant. The metal donations box is attached to the wall in a screened-off section where patrons can either drop in money, a hand-scrawled thank you note ... or nothing at all. There are no prices on the menu,

no suggested donations, no volunteer requirements for receiving free meals. "No strings attached," says proprietor Lisa Thomas-McMillan.

"It's all about two words: pride and dignity," she says. "A lot of folks will die before they give that up."

There's no need for that at Drexell & Honeybee's, located on

109 Lee Street in Brewton, but plenty of local folks think the food is to die for. "Best food in town!" enthuses a regular patron waiting in line one recent morning. "I come all the time."

The parking lot across the street begins to fill well  
(See 'We,' page 11)

Four days each week Lisa Thomas-McMillan and Freddie McMillan serve a meal to anyone who comes to Drexell & Honeybee's. Their donations-only restaurant in Brewton serves about 100 people from all walks of life each day.



Photo by Martha Simmons

# Equip ministry tips

## Abiding in Christ key factor for leaders – Hope Stephens

Christian leaders often hold multiple positions. Abiding in Christ is a key factor in empowering Christians to lead others.

According to Hope Stephens, former consultant and Missions Adventure Camp director for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), to abide is to remain, stay and continue in a place. Abiding in Christ is not a destination or a task to cross off. It is instead the active process of continually seeking God's presence.

"When we abide in Christ, there is a steady presence of peace," Stephens said. "We are constantly

growing. The Lord is teaching and pruning us in that."

By abiding in Christ, the believer will produce fruit, allowing Him to direct his or her prayers, sharing His love and experiencing His joy.

A Christian leader's first priority is to create and protect time and space to abide with Christ, Stephens said. By reading and meditating on God's word while praying

for wisdom and understanding, leaders can receive guidance and courage to be obedient to the will of God.

Abiding in Christ will allow the Christian to lead with peace and confidence, focusing on others with Christ as his or her goal. In this way, leadership becomes a personal and God-centered act of worship. (Lanell Downs Smith)

***"When we abide in Christ, there is a steady presence of peace."***

**Hope Stephens**

**Former consultant and Missions Adventure Camp director, Alabama WMU**

## TAB adds new partners in ministry, adjusts staff assignments

With the turn of the new year, The Alabama Baptist/TAB Media welcomes a new partner in ministry — Michael R. Williams, CPA, P.C. firm.

The Birmingham-based CPA firm began handling TAB's accounting needs on Jan. 1, and Linda Harrison, who has served as financial administrator for nearly a decade, stepped into TAB's role of director of human resources.

Also officially joining TAB's team as a special assignments editor is Margaret Colson, executive director of Baptist Communicators

Association and executive secretary of Association of State Baptist Publications.

TAB's first guest services coordinator position was filled in September 2019 by Annette Brown, who brought more than 25 years experience in Top 500 companies with her but more importantly shines abundantly for the Lord and has a true servant's heart. You'll get to chat with her if you call our main line.

Along with these new faces, we are continuing in ministry partnership with Dogwood Media Solutions, the team that heads up our social media, and Square Core Media, the group that produces our podcasts — which will expand in 2020 by the way.

Shanley and Associates marketing firm also continues helping us discover all the possibilities of TAB going forward. (TAB)

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 17.

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"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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# MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**  
President and Editor-in-Chief

[jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)  
@RashionalThts



## How do we prioritize the issues of most concern in 2020?

**T**he calls, emails, text messages and letters flow through our office weekly, sometimes daily, and on occasion the request is made in person. “This topic is of the utmost urgency and you must address it now with everything you’ve got,” they all say in some form or the other.

For the most part, the issues are real and should be addressed but it always intrigues me how each person determines his or her preferred issue to address is more important than all others.

We see it play out when debating the abilities of those running for political and other elected positions, as well as in every day life among families, communities and work places.

It also surfaces among church leaders and those in denominational roles as they face constant pressure and temptation to fight for various sides related to secondary — or nonessential — issues rather than stay focused on the primary — or essential — issues.

For those of us who follow the Christian faith, we would agree Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected and ascended provides our one and only option for salvation — by grace through faith in Christ alone. That’s an essential of the faith.

Nonessentials include style of music, church government structure and qualifications for ministers.

But so many in church life spend endless energy debating nonessential issues and vying for the presence and dollars of the faithful, forgetting the num-

ber of unreached continues to grow right under our noses.

Along with there being plenty of people available to fill every church building, a solid focus on the essentials rather than nonessentials maps out a smoother path to unity for believers, as well as the opportunity for more people to hear about Jesus.

A unified whole would most definitely shine brighter for Christ than a scattered, fractured sprinkling of people of faith.

The same concept also could work within broader groups of people attempting to coexist on this planet we call Earth.

So how do we determine the most important and most urgent concerns of our time? First, we need to list all the options.

We can certainly jot down the demand for and participation in sex trafficking; drug and alcohol abuse and addiction; e-cigarettes and vaping; acts of terrorism;

shooter attacks on schools and churches; choosing to abort babies; the rising level of mental health issues; and suicide rates.

We might also note the high number of broken homes; the growing division and disunity among Americans as a whole and within smaller pockets of society; the prison system; the violent persecution of people of faith in other countries; and the cultural/societal shunning of people of faith in the U.S.

Other issues listed by many deal with illegal immigration, health care, the environment, what topics and potential agendas are being taught in public schools, the national debt, quality and funding of our military, tax rates and what they are used to fund, government aid programs, the economy, opportunities for high-paying jobs, hunger issues, racism and the value and protection of human life.

Illegal gambling as well as increased forms of legalized gambling also surface consistently

as areas of concern along with a continued expansion of what the laws will allow in relation to legalized drug use, various forms of marriage and what falls in the hate crimes category.

Whew, what have I forgotten to list? I’m sure there are more issues of concern to add but I’m already overwhelmed reading over what I was able to outline here in less than five minutes.

So rather than continually arguing with each other about what we should all be fighting for or against — and wasting lots of energy — what if we all determined our personal priorities and worked on those within our specific areas of influence?

A calmer approach just might bring better results.

And more importantly, what if we maintained our ultimate priority of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourself, above all other concerns? 🙏

## WHAT’S NEW AT TAB?

### New decade brings style revisions, beginning with more commas

**G**ood news for all you English majors and English teachers out there — we are bringing back the comma.

Well, maybe not to the level an English major or teacher would prefer, but the comma will show up more in *TAB* articles going forward.

For at least 25 years, the *TAB* team has worked within the most accepted writing style for journal-

ism — Associated Press — but we also made some customized style adjustments to lessen comma usage anywhere we could that would not affect the readability.

Through the years, staff members responsible for editing copy changed several times and *TAB*’s customized comma rules gradually simplified to a basic rule of thumb: only use commas where absolutely necessary.

While the concept did simplify the

style and assured we didn’t fall prey to an overuse of commas, each writer and copy editor has differing opinions of what “absolutely necessary” means, so consistency quickly became an issue.

Also, the lack of commas has frustrated readers and we want to listen to those concerns.

So, with the new decade comes a revival of the comma. 😊

—Jennifer Davis Rash

# Your Voice



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

## 'Digital Babylon' culture competing for hearts, souls, minds

By David Kinnaman  
President, Barna Research

Many of us today turn to our devices to help us make sense of the world. Teens and young adults, especially, use the screens in their pockets as counselors, entertainers, instructors, even their sex educators.

Why build up the courage to have what will likely be an awkward conversation with a parent, pastor or teacher when you can just ask your phone and no one else will be the wiser?

When it comes to technology, the path of least resistance is not scorn-worthy because it's easy. It's praise-worthy because it's efficient.

Google searches are wonderful benefits, mostly, of life in the modern world. Who hasn't found their life improved by access to the right

information at the right time? Watch a step-by-step tutorial on repairing your dishwasher. Listen to your favorite song. Discover a new recipe.

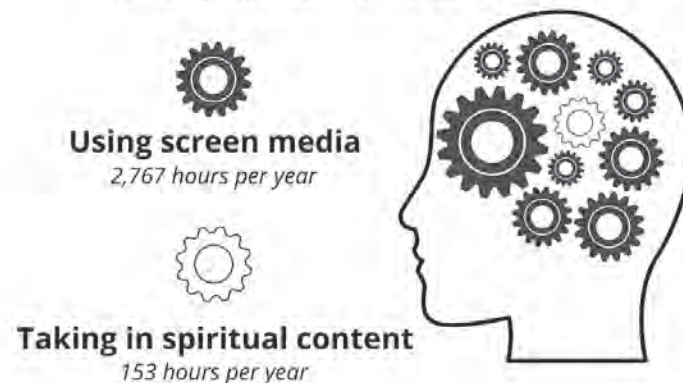
Screens are magical portals to more rabbit holes than Alice could visit in many thousands of lifetimes — and a few even lead somewhere helpful. Yes, there's the rub: instant access to information is not wisdom. How do you find the rabbit hole that leads to real, worthwhile wisdom for living well and following Jesus in an accelerated, complex culture?

We at Barna have adopted a phrase to describe our culture that is marked by phenomenal access, profound alienation and a crisis of authority: digital Babylon.

Ancient Babylon was the pagan-but-spiritual, hyperstimulated, multi-cultural, imperial crossroads that be-

### Digital versus spiritual input

Among "typical" 15- to 23-year-olds



Source: Barna Research

came the unwilling home of Judean exiles, including the prophet Daniel, in the 6th century BCE.

But digital Babylon is not a physical place. It is the pagan-but-spiritual, hyperstimulated, multi-cultural, imperial crossroads that is the virtual home of every person with Wifi, a data plan or — for most of us — both.

The Jewish elite were captured after Babylonia's military conquest of Judah, forcibly taken to the empire's capital and subjected to a cultural conquest nearly as devastating as their military defeat. (The book of Daniel is a vivid account of Babylon's culture-eradication campaign and of how some exiles successfully resisted.)

If a literal Babylon were around today, the internet would certainly be in the imperial toolbox — and insofar as we thoughtlessly consume whatever content comes our way, we'd be cheerful participants in our own colonization.

Websites, apps, movies, TV, video games, music, social media, You-

Tube channels and so on increasingly provide the grid against which we test what is true and what is real. The media and the messages blur the boundary between truth and falsehood. What is real is up for grabs.

The power of digital tools and the content they deliver is incredible, and we are the first generation of humans who cannot rely on the earned wisdom of previous generations to help us live with these rapid technological changes. Instead of older adults and traditions, many young people turn to friends and algorithms.

Much more could be said, but the point is this: we are on the front end of a digital revolution that is tinkering with what it means to be human.

We are all residents of digital Babylon. We are all exiles now.

*Excerpted from "Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon," copyright Baker Books, 2019. Used with permission. BakerPublishingGroup.com.*

## Letters to the editor

I read the article on being generous and it made me really aware of ways to be generous.

One of those happened this morning. I was in a medical clinic and as I was sitting in the waiting room, two people had come in wanting to be seen but had no insurance. They didn't have the \$70 to be seen so they were turned away and had to go to the ER. It broke my heart.

I looked in my wallet and I pulled out some cash I had. I counted a \$20, another \$20, another \$20, then a \$5, and then I started counting the ones. And there was exactly \$70 cash in my

wallet. So I took it to the receptionist and asked her to hold it for the next person who couldn't afford to pay the \$70 to be seen.

She was very appreciative, and I hope that that \$70 blesses someone and gets them quick medical care. Thanks for inspiring generosity, especially this time of year.

**Anonymous**

My wife and I receive *TAB* courtesy of Memorial Baptist Church, Citronelle, and we look forward each week to its arrival. Keep up the good work.

**John McWhorter**  
Deer Park, Ala.

“I wish I followed God as faithfully as I follow my Garmin’s turn-by-turn directions.”

TRAYLOR LOVVORN  
Co-founder of Route1520 and Undone Redone

You don’t want Jesus to be an addition to your life, you want Him to give you the mission for your life.

**Pastor Matt Mason**  
The Church at Brook Hills  
Birmingham

The more experience I have as a theologian and pastor, the more I see the virtue of keeping the gospel message as my focus. One cannot avoid politics, simply because one is human. However, wisdom sometimes calls for silence, sometimes for speech. Knowing the difference in tough.

**Malcolm Yarnell via Twitter**

Can you say, “I know that I have grown in the Lord,” comparing now to the previous year? Do you have

a greater love and appreciation for who He is?

**Larry Vinson**  
Director of missions  
Cleburne Baptist Association

Please pray with me that in the year 2020 our congregation will focus on studying God’s word and sharing the gospel with those we meet.

**Julie Donovan**  
Children’s minister  
North Shelby Baptist Church  
Birmingham

All of you who serve in a role of leadership in the local church have an awesome responsibility. Whether you are the pastor, teacher, director or deacon, the congregation has

placed their trust in you to help equip the church body for service. You cannot possibly do that effectively if you are not consistently sharpening your leadership skills.

When God calls us to serve Him, He also expects us to prepare to do our best. That preparation is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing experience.

**Larry Felkins**  
Retired director of missions  
Chilton Baptist Association

I do not hold onto Jesus’ hand — that would be a perilous way to live. Jesus holds me with His hand and nothing can undo His grip of love, grace and forgiveness.

**Bob Adams**  
Retired pastor

We can do far more together than we can do on our own. We can do better together serving God together.

**Barry Cosper**  
Associational missions strategist  
Bessemer Baptist Association

If we are not careful, sometimes we like to do a good deed here or there, think God is happy with us, feel good about ourselves and then go on our merry way to do whatever makes us happy. Yet God is not interested in our momentary efforts, He wants our hearts!

**Pastor Matthew DeBord**  
FBC Clanton

We like to focus on the far more abundantly part and it’s awesome, but that doesn’t happen without the Father! It’s because of Him and we must keep Him on the throne seat of our life to then experience Him. That’s the far more abundantly that He has for us. Himself.

**Matthew Daniels**  
Baptist campus minister  
University of North Alabama

It is my prayer this year that we become more evangelistic than ever before; that we are willing to do whatever it takes to see that people hear about our Jesus.

**Keith Box**  
Director of missions  
Marion Baptist Association

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @ERLC

We should seek to find fulfillment and delight in the arts, sports, our vocation, ministry and any other good gifts, first of all, for God’s glory; he’s the one who has gifted, enabled and sent us to use our abilities for his mission.  
— @matcrawford

### @MichaelHyatt

The secret to accomplishing what matters most to you is committing your goals to writing. ...

### @scottsauls

We say that people are proud of being rich or clever or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer or cleverer or better-looking than others. ... It

is the comparison that makes you proud — the pleasure of being above the rest. — C.S. Lewis

### @gavinortlund

Some of the difficulties our non-Christian neighbors have with accepting the gospel are more concerned with contemporary evangelical views than with historic Christianity.

### @pjanrn\_c

“Today I shall behave as if this is the day I will be remembered.”  
— Dr. Seuss

### @Franklin\_Graham

God can use each of us to bless someone’s life in different ways, even if it’s not financial. What do

you think would happen if we started each day by asking Him to use us to make a difference in the lives of others? Watch the joy ...

### @myutmost

We want to cling to our natural virtues, while all the time God is trying to get us in contact with the life of Jesus Christ — a life that can never be described in terms of natural virtues. #myutmost, utmost.org

### @ToddAdkins

“Unless your church perceives more danger in maintaining the status quo than moving into this new unknown territory, they’re not going to move forward.” #90SL #LeadershipPipeline

# Securing worship

## 5 steps all churches can take to protect congregants from attacks, violence

By **Doug Wilson**  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**C**hurch safety should be a priority for all churches. With more frequency, there are incidents involving churches around the country where violent incidents occur, resulting in injury and too often, the loss of life.

Churches want to be welcoming, but they also need to be discerning of all who enter their doors.

The most prolific attack in recent years was the Sutherland Springs, Texas, shooting that took the lives of 26 people and injured 20 more. While we tend to think of these kinds of incidents occurring at large churches, Sutherland Springs was a small country church, proving that no church is immune from threat.

Whether from an active shooter event or another act of violence, churches present an easy “soft” target for individuals or groups wishing to inflict harm.

### Rise in church attacks

Deadly force incidents in faith-based settings have risen from 10 in 1991 to 261 in 2017, according to Carl Chinn, president of the Faith Based Security Network.

The total number of incidents for the combined years 1999–2017 is 1,727 and the total number of deaths as a result of the incidents is 821.

Non-denominational churches have experienced the most deadly force incidents (398) during this period, followed by Baptist (375) and Catholic (244) churches.

In almost every case of an active shooter incident or other nefarious

act, there are indicators someone observed that could have been instrumental in preventing the act had they reported it.

“See something, say something” is very important for all members of church congregations to practice. No longer can churches take the stance that “it won’t happen here.”

Vigilance does not need to be interpreted as being unwelcoming. Ushers, the safety team and church members all play a role in awareness by listening and observing.

Churches are constrained by knowledge, budgets, personnel and volunteers, but the necessary investment to make churches safer can no longer be placed on the back burner.

Effective, affordable and easily achieved actions can be accomplished with minimal financial strain on any church

or organization’s budget.

While the threat can never be eliminated, it can certainly be reduced, and a proactive mindset can make a huge difference in reducing or eliminating the loss of life.

Counter Threat Group conducts comprehensive threat assessments and has outlined five key action steps churches should take to reduce risk and improve safety.

### 1. Contact an outside group to conduct a comprehensive threat assessment of the premises.

Any church and organization can take this first and most important step. A qualified outside group that conducts comprehensive threat assessments is much better suited to identify the vulnerabilities of your church than someone from within the church. Counter Threat Group

**No longer can churches take the stance that “it won’t happen here.” ... A balance needs to be struck on being welcoming and being discerning.**



Pixabay.com

has conducted a number of comprehensive threat assessments for churches and businesses, and in every case we identified vulnerabilities that were not obvious to those who worked there.

An adequate assessment should include a complete walk-around, externally and internally of the facility.

The inspection should include lighting, surveillance, infrastructure, alarms, entry and exit points, accessibility, crime statistics for the vicinity of the organization and roadway access. The assessment should include the church’s social media and online presence and how gatherings and events are promoted.

It should also include interviews of key employees within the organization to identify safety concerns, perceived vulnerabilities and people of concern. Often employees won’t reveal concerns internally but will discuss them with professionals from the outside when asked.

### 2. Organize a volunteer safety team.

A safety team is critical and should be addressed while implementing action step No. 1. Any church, business or organization can take this step. The sophistication can vary, but organizing a group of volunteers who are willing to be the eyes and ears for the church is the first step. Former military members and off-duty or retired law enforcement officers are ideal for this.

Safety team members should be scattered throughout the church to provide more coverage and should always be on the lookout for unusual activity or individuals who appear out of place. A reporting structure for concerning activity should also be in place. Furthermore, it has been proven that when a person who is “up to something” is noticed or en-

countered by another person, the likelihood of that person carrying out his or her plan is reduced.

### Concealed carry

In the Dec. 29 shooting at West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, Texas, (see sidebar) a gunman was fatally shot within seconds by armed congregants.

More law-abiding citizens are getting permits to carry concealed firearms due to the concern for their personal and family’s safety.

It is important to note that in the event of an active shooter incident, the first responders’ number one objective is to take out (neutralize) the shooter.

When law enforcement enters the premises where a shooting has or is occurring, any individual holding a gun stands a good chance of being immediately met with lethal force.

While intentions are to defend the innocents and perhaps engage the real shooter, it is a risk everyone who carries a gun must understand.

It is possible armed safety team members could divert law enforcement’s attention to the concealed carrier rather than to the actual shooter. Discuss your safety team’s procedures with your local law enforcement and first responders.

### 3. Develop an evacuation plan.

This step is not only important for active shooter incidents but is useful for natural disasters and fires. Post the evacuation plan in a standard location in rooms, offices and common areas of your facility and encourage everyone within the organization the opportunity to study the plan in advance to know where they should go in an emergency.

In the event of an active shooter, running away from the shooter is the first action everyone should attempt. If that is not an option, procedures

should be predetermined for sheltering in place in an office or room or even the sanctuary. Appropriate exits and meeting points should be identified, all dependent on where the shooting is taking place.

**4. Conduct awareness education.**

Employ some means of training and educating your employees, church members, students and others who regularly use your facilities about the need to adopt a preparedness and proactive mindset.

While none of us want to think it could ever happen to us, it is important that people shift their thinking to “what if it does happen here?”

What would you do if you are sitting in a church pew, an auditorium, a business office, a restaurant or any other public setting and a shooter comes through the door? Do you know where all the exits are? This is where advanced preparedness can make a difference in survivability.

The Department of Homeland Security’s “Run, Hide, Fight” video teaches how to react to active shooter incidents. If you can think through how you will react to a threat scenario in relation to where you are, then you are way ahead of most people in preparation.

**5. Develop a reporting structure for individuals or incidents of concern.**

Develop a mechanism for church members, employees, students or safety team members to report any occurrences or incidents that are concerning or out of the ordinary.

Develop a relationship with local law enforcement and discuss any concerns with them.

Make them aware of individuals who are part of your church or business who might also be participating on your safety team.

Your organization can implement all of the steps above with minimal resources.

By effectively considering these steps as a plan of action for your church, business or school you have made an important commitment to reducing threats and improving the safety of your organization and most importantly your people. (TAB contributed)

*EDITOR’S NOTE — Doug Wilson is assistant vice president of advancement at Samford University and a former career U.S. Air Force intelligence officer. He consults with Counter Threat Group LLC on international travel safety and church safety.* 🇺🇸

# Protecting ‘the rest of us’

## Armed congregants kill gunman who shot 2 at Texas church

**A** gunman who killed two people during a Texas church service was fatally shot within seconds by armed congregants, said Texas officials, who hailed the state’s gun laws that allow weapons in places of worship.

More than 240 parishioners were in the West Freeway Church in the Fort Worth-area town of White Settlement at the time of the Dec. 29 shooting, authorities said.

Jack Wilson, a 71-year-old firearms instructor, fired the single shot that quickly ended the attack and killed the 43-year-old shooter, who reportedly had sought assistance from the church on several occasions.

Wilson said alarms went off in his head the moment the man wearing a fake beard, a wig, a hat and a long coat walked into a Texas church for Sunday morning services.

Security team members kept their eyes on him, and during the service, Wilson and fellow security team member Richard White, 67, had stationed themselves at the back of the church, watching him.

White was killed by the gunman, as was Anton “Tony” Wallace, 64, who was serving communion when he was shot.

As Wilson approached the fallen attacker, he noticed five or six other members of the volunteer security team he had trained with their guns drawn.

### ‘Saving lives’

At a press conference Dec. 29, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said the gunman was killed within six seconds of opening fire.

Patrick hailed the state’s gun laws, including a measure enacted earlier this year that allowed licensed guns in places of worship, unless the facility bans them.



West Freeway Church of Christ/Courtesy of law enforcement via AP  
Churchgoers take cover while a congregant armed with a handgun (top left) engages a man who opened fire (top center) during a service at West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, Texas, on Dec. 29.

Britt Farmer, senior minister of the church, said, “We lost two great men today, but it could have been a lot worse.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Matthew DeSarno said the gunman had been arrested multiple times in the past but declined to give details and said the shooter’s motives are under investigation.

Mike Tinius, an elder at the church told the *New York Times* that White “was trying to do what he needed to do to protect the rest of us.”

“It’s extremely upsetting to see anyone committing violence,” Tinius said.

Tinius said he didn’t know the gunman and that the shooting appeared to be random.

In a livestream of the church service, the gunman can be seen getting up from a pew and talking to someone at the back of the church before pulling out a gun and opening fire.

Parishioners can then be heard screaming and seen ducking under pews or running as papers fly to the floor.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked the state to pray for the victims,

their loved ones and the community of White Settlement, about 8 miles west of Fort Worth.

“Places of worship are meant to be sacred, and I am grateful for the church members who acted quickly to take down the shooter and help prevent further loss of life,” Abbott said in a tweeted statement.

### Religious attacks

It is not the first deadly shooting to take place at a church in Texas. In November 2017, a gunman opened fire on the congregation at a church in Sutherland Springs, killing more than two dozen worshippers, before taking his own life.

And in 1999, a gunman killed seven people in Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth before detonating an explosive device and killing himself.

The Texas shooting was also the second attack on a religious gathering in the U.S. in less than 24 hours. On Dec. 28, a man stabbed five people as they celebrated Hanukkah in an Orthodox Jewish community north of New York City. (AP)

# Hispanic church in Tuscaloosa finds location, ministry partner

Eric Boykin said in his mind both congregations needed a win.

Misión Monte Sinaí, a small Hispanic congregation, was a “sweet, sweet church” that “had a terrible go of it,” he said.

With the help of Hispanic catalyst Benjamin Galindo, Tuscaloosa Baptist Association started the church five years ago in Green Village mobile home park in Northport, but it had never quite found a place to call home.

“They met in a gas station at one point, then in another place and it fell through, and then in a church but it closed,” said Boykin, who serves as the association’s missional strategist.

## ‘Unanimous support’

Later they tried meeting at a location in Vance — 30 minutes away from the mobile home park — and started dropping off in attendance because of the distance.

“But then along comes Cottdale Baptist Church and they’ve got a second sanctuary just sitting there basically empty,” Boykin said.

In recent years, Cottdale Baptist has experienced a lot of challenges, said Pastor David Bailey. Its old sanctuary was only used for some children’s programming.

“Eric mentioned that there was a mission church that really needed a permanent place to meet,” Bailey said. “He asked if we would be willing to sponsor them through the process of joining the association and

state convention, or if at the very least we would consider letting them use some of our space.”

The people of Cottdale Baptist were up for all of it.

“The church was unanimous,” Bailey said. “We thought this would be a great opportunity to help reach Hispanics in the Cottdale community.”

Already they’re seeing that happen. On Nov. 30 — the day before Misión Monte Sinaí held its first service at Cottdale — the two congregations held a joint block party.

“We had a good turnout,” Bailey said.

And at the very first service, the church had two new families visit.

Boykin called it a partnership “that has already had a huge impact on both congregations.”

Cottdale Baptist gave Misión Monte Sinaí some funds to get projection monitors and other items they needed set up, and Tuscaloosa Association provided some money to purchase a sign and complete some renovations.

Then Misión Monte Sinaí painted new lines on the entire church parking lot.

“They’re sharing ministry, sharing vision and sharing fellowship,” Boykin said. “It’s just a beautiful story and it highlights the servant heart of the churches.”

Bailey said they are giving God the glory.

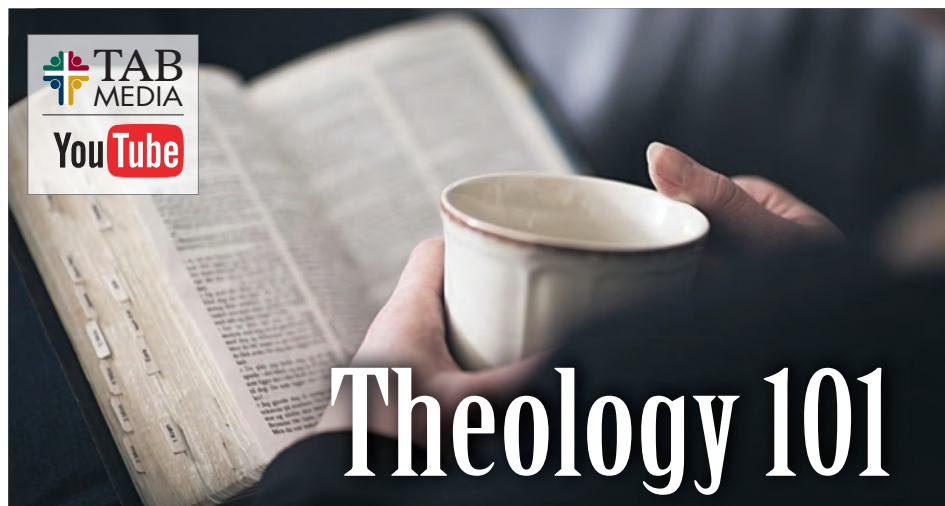
“It’s a very good thing,” he said.

“It was totally unexpected but very much a blessing.” (Grace Thornton)



Photo courtesy of Eric Boykin

Misión Monte Sinaí held its first service at Cottdale Baptist Church on Nov. 31. The Hispanic congregation has found a permanent home at Cottdale Baptist after moving from location to location since it was started five years ago.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## What's New?

# A New Covenant

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

As noted last week, Theology 101 will be focusing on things the Bible labels as “new” as we begin this new year. If we open our Bibles and ask ourselves, “What’s new?” we might come up with “a new covenant” as a beginning topic. Simply picking up a Bible reveals immediately that it is in two major divisions, an Old Testament and a New Testament. The term that translates into English as “testament” also is the term that comes into English as “covenant.” Hence we would not be in error to think of the two major sections of the Bible as the Old Covenant and New Covenant.

As for the Old Testament or Old Covenant, several observations are helpful. Under the Old Covenant, God took the initiative to establish His relationship with Israel, which called for His chosen people to be faithful to Him. In the Old Testament under the Old Covenant, imperfect people came before a perfect God with animal sacrifices. By contrast, the New Covenant’s way of coming to God is based on the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ — a sacrifice which God Himself supplied through the incarnation of His Son.

In a similar way, the Old Covenant animal sacrifices had to be offered repeatedly, while the New Covenant sacrifice was a one-time, perfect sacrifice. People of faith under the Old Covenant understood the blood of animals to effect an atonement or covering

for their sins, a covering that had to be regularly repeated.

People of faith under the New Covenant understand that Christ’s blood does not merely cover sin but as John 1:29 states, His blood “takes away the sin of the world.” Things that are covered remain, needing to be covered repeatedly over time, but taken away is a completed transaction that needs no repetition. Thus, the new covenant has at its foundation one perfect and final offering for sin.

The basic terms of the Old Covenant were inscribed on tables of stone, which we commonly refer to as the Ten Commandments. God has chosen to inscribe the New Covenant on the hearts of those who trust the God-provided sacrifice of His only begotten Son. In addition, the administration of the Old Covenant was entrusted to human priests who officiated at the altar of sacrifice in an earthly temple. The New Covenant’s administration has been entrusted to a perfect High Priest.

In summary, we might say the New Covenant introduced a better priesthood with a better temple and a better altar on which a better sacrifice was offered that effected better results.✠

*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.*



# ‘How big our God is’

## Evangelistic drama presentation results in 340 decisions for Christ

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Choctaw and Washington Baptist associations presented the evangelistic drama Heaven’s Gates and Hell’s Flames on Nov. 3–6 at First Baptist Church, Butler.

Initially scheduled for three nights, the production was so well received and enthusiasm was so high it ran an extra night. Attendance averaged 400 per night, reaching around 1,400 people.

Volunteers registered 340 decisions, most of which were salvation decisions.

“We had people saved from age eight to age 82,” said Terry Long, director of missions for Choctaw association.

Guests who made decisions were asked to complete decision cards which were distributed to area churches for follow up after the production.

“We’ve already heard from some churches where kids and adults

have made professions of faith and they are planning baptism services,” Long said. “It was a wonderful week. I think we touched several counties for Christ.”

According to Long, all four Choctaw County high schools allowed him to present a short video preview and to invite students to attend the performance.

### Community impact

“It was the buzz around the schools,” Long said. “It really impacted our youth and our communities. There’s a lot of excitement and some are talking about doing it again in another part of the county in a couple of years.”

Heaven’s Gates is a production of Reality Outreach Ministries, presented in more than 100 different countries in the last 40 years. The ministry sends a team with everything needed to present the story of salvation. Characters in each scene experience death and discover whether or not their name is written in the book



Photo courtesy of Terry Long

Choctaw and Washington Baptist associations presented Heaven’s Gates and Hell’s Flames in November. Between 30 and 35 volunteers from both associations served on the cast and crew and many more worked behind the scenes.

of life. Local groups may present nine or 10 of the 28 scenarios available, depending on the location and available volunteers.

Long said the Choctaw/Washington production featured nine depictions of circumstances where characters faced death and the afterlife. In each one, characters were either welcomed into heaven or cast into hell.

Each night opened with a clear presentation of the gospel. The audience was asked to stand if they didn’t know Christ.

Long said 90 people stood on the first night. Every night between 70 and 90 people responded to the invitation and were counseled by volunteers, many of whom were members of the cast.

“To see that stream of 90 people coming down the hall, and they were crying, they were moved and it was phenomenal to see,” Long said. “There were big high school football players giving their hearts to Christ.”

Long said many who made decisions returned the next night and brought others to hear the good news. At least three people were later baptized in Washington churches.

### ‘Bathed in prayer’

“I think the strength of this event comes from the fact that it was bathed in prayer from the beginning,” Long said. “Each night before the play we had a full worship service. The team kept us on point. We were there to see souls saved.”

The event steering committee, led by Steve Marcereau, planned the production for more than a year.

Between 30 and 35 local volunteers from both associations served on the cast and crew. Long said many more worked behind the scenes to plan, construct the set, provide child care and feed volunteers.

“Sometimes we think we are loners in all this,” said Larry Thompson, Washington’s associational missionary. “Our associations are not that far apart. We want to try to do more things together to encourage churches in both associations.”

### ‘Team effort’

Thompson said some Washington volunteers traveled almost 100 miles to help out.

“It was a team effort with both associations working together to win souls and bring glory to God,” Long said.

Both associations have seen a lasting impact in the lives of the volunteers.

“We are a small rural association,” Long said. “People see this and realize it’s not how small our association is, it’s how big our God is. Now we know God can do great things in small rural places. It has impacted the way we see lostness in our community. Who knows where it will end? Jesus will return one day and we don’t want to be sitting idly by. We want to be busy bringing folks to God.”

Thompson said the production lit a spark in the lives of Washington Association church members.

“We see the need in a new light. It opened our eyes that we need to do more in our communities to share the gospel.”



Photo courtesy of Terry Long

Attendance at Heaven’s Gates and Hell’s Flames, hosted by FBC Butler, averaged more than 400 people per night. The evangelistic drama was originally scheduled for three nights but enthusiasm was so high it ran an extra night.

# U.S. makes moves to support religious freedom globally

Two federal government actions shortly before Christmas are vital to protecting international religious liberty, according to Travis Wussow, vice president for public policy with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced Dec. 20 the redesignation of Burma (Myanmar), China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as “countries of particular concern” (CPCs), a category reserved under federal law for governments that have committed or tolerated “systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.”

## USCIRF reauthorized

On the same day as Pompeo’s announcement, a bill was signed reauthorizing the U.S. Commission on International Freedom (USCIRF), a bipartisan panel that researches and makes recommendations on religious liberty conditions overseas.

The measure — part of a spending bill approved by Congress — reauthorizes the commission through Sept. 30, 2022.

“The State Department’s CPC announcement and Congress’ bipartisan reauthorization of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom are critical first steps for the defense of this fundamental human right,” said Wussow.

## Sudan moves off list

The CPC list did not include Sudan, marking the first time the east African country has been absent since the State Department began making the designations in 1999.

However, Sudan was placed on a “special watch list” (SWL) for countries that have engaged in or permitted “severe violations” of religious freedom.

Redesignated to the SWL list were Comoros, a group of islands off the east coast of Africa; Russia; and Uzbekistan. New additions to the list were Cuba, Nicaragua and Nigeria.

“We believe that everyone, everywhere, at all times, should have the right to live according to the dictates of their conscience,” Pompeo said in a written statement. “We will continue to challenge state and non-state entities that seek to infringe upon those fundamental rights and to ensure they are held to account for their actions.” (BP)

# Someone You

# Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett

Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

## Danny Brooks

Danny Brooks of Deans Chapel near Henagar was a truck driver for 30 years. A vehicle accident in 2009 left him with permanent injuries. Five years ago, Brooks heard a preacher say that missions can be as simple as taking the neighbor’s garbage can to and from the roadside. Since then, Brooks has done that for as many as 16 households a week. He also uses that time to minister to elderly, sick and homebound people. Healed of alcoholism as a teen, Brooks seeks to help others know that Jesus is there to heal them too.

**MINISTRY DESCRIPTION:** Neighborhood missions

**CHURCH NAME:** Happy Home Baptist Church, Henagar, in Sand Mountain Baptist Association

**LIFE VERSE:** “But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, ‘With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.’” (Matt. 19:26)



BROOKS

**Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life? Why?**

A: One of the biggest ones was my wife’s uncle, Elder J.C. Ball. He lived the way he preached. He would give a man the shirt off his back in a snowstorm. I was wandering, not really understanding. He was showing me how to treat people. He said to read your Bible and you will know how to treat everyone. Right now, our pastor, Brother Dustin Henshaw, does a real good job of keeping me interested and pointed in the right direction.

**Q: Tell about a “turning point” in your life and how God was involved.**

A: In 2009 when I had my wreck, I laid in ICU for 28 days and couldn’t speak a word. The only person or entity I could talk

to was the Lord. He kept telling me to “take it easy,” “calm down,” “you’re in My hands.” That was the only way I could sleep. He helped me through all the turmoil. We had a lot of long talks about the things I had done in my life too.

**Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?**

A: There’s one song that I love to hear — “Just a Closer Walk with Thee.” It tells the way you should lead your life: walk with God; talk with Him; listen to what He tells you and everything will come out okay. You can’t do things on your own; if you do, it’ll turn out to be a mess. ✝

## DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS Someone You Should Know?

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o *The Alabama Baptist*, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

## Guntersville FBC Pickers celebrates album release



Photo by Tracy Riggs

The Guntersville FBC Pickers bluegrass gospel group celebrates its new Christmas CD release with a concert. The concert was held at FBC Guntersville on Dec. 8. The group played a mix of traditional, funny, spiritual and folk Christmas songs to a packed house.

# ‘We feed the need’

## Drexell & Honeybee’s welcomes everyone in community regardless of ability to pay

(continued from page 1) before the red neon open sign is switched on. Open 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, the restaurant feeds some 100 people daily from all walks of life.

The restaurant is the culmination of Thomas-McMillan’s decades of feeding the hungry in the Brewton area — first by

traveling 100 miles per day delivering hot breakfasts and food boxes to shut-ins, and then by starting a non-profit — Carlisa, Inc. — to support a food bank.

Lisa gained a partner in her journey eight years ago

when she married Freddie McMillan, a retired U.S. Marine who knows his way around the kitchen. “I always cared about people,” he says. “I saw what she

was doing and I thought, ‘That’s where I’m supposed to be.’”

Between Lisa, who spent most of her early years working in and around restaurants,

and Freddie, whose grandmother taught him to cook, Drexell & Honeybee’s began to take shape.

“We started talking about having a nice place that people could come in, sit down and eat a hot meal,”

Lisa says. The dream came true when the couple bought the brick building, paid off the note as they renovated it and opened Drexell & Honeybee’s on March 26, 2018. The name of the restaurant is just something Lisa dreamed up about 30 ago, she says, when she once toyed with opening an ice cream shop.

### ‘Especially grateful’

Starting early in the morning, the couple works shoulder-to-shoulder in the small, efficient kitchen.

“Freddie’s a good cook,” Lisa says proudly as she helps prepare the dishes and move trays of food from the stove to the glass-enclosed serving line out front. A volunteer shows up just before opening to help serve their guests.

Within 15 minutes of the restaurant opening, the

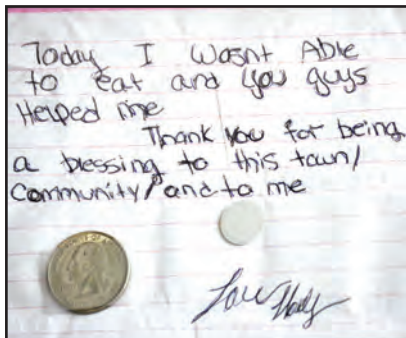


Photo by Martha Simmons

Drexell & Honeybee’s customers express their thanks through notes and donations.



Photo by Martha Simmons

Lisa Thomas-McMillan serves hunger-satisfying Southern fare to customers at Drexell & Honeybee’s in Brewton.

tables begin to fill and it’s apparent that Drexell & Honeybee’s is more than just a lunch place. It’s a community gathering spot for young and old, rich and poor, spry and disabled.

Patrons choose from entrees such as turkey and dressing, meatball-stuffed peppers, ribs, spaghetti and meat sauce, and sides like greens, mac and cheese and black-eyed peas. Each plate is loaded with an entrée, two sides, a cornbread fritter and dessert, and customers receive a bottle of water to drink.

On this day, the tables are filled with silver-haired retirees, business professionals, blue-collar workers, high school basketball players and an assortment of other men, women and children. Many of the customers know each other and enjoy chatting over their meals. Some patrons look worn and appear to be espe-

cially grateful for a good, hot meal.

Although the attractively decorated restaurant looks and operates much as any family-owned commercial enterprise would, it doesn’t turn a profit, Lisa says.

### Up to God

“Nobody gets paid,” she says. In fact, Lisa says, she and her husband devote half of their retirement income to keeping the restaurant going. The small church they attend — Zion Fountain AME Church — and the Greater Brewton Lion’s Club also regularly contribute to its operation.

And, of course, some regular income comes from the donations box, though not nearly enough to cover the daily cost.

As for the rest, it’s up to God. “If anything is going bad, I know God is going to handle it for me,” Lisa says. ☞

**“If anything is going bad,  
I know God is going to handle it for me.”**

**Lisa Thomas-McMillan  
proprietor, Drexell & Honeybee’s**

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# 3 stories you should know



Photo by ChinaAid via AP

China has sentenced Wang Yi, pastor of Early Rain Covenant Church which operated outside the Communist Party-recognized Protestant organization, to nine years in prison for subversion. On Dec. 30 a court in Chengdu said Wang also was convicted of illegal business operations, fined and had his personal assets seized. Wang (pictured above in 2016 with his wife, Jiang Rong) was arrested a year ago during China's ongoing crackdown on unauthorized religious groups. (AP)

## Gardendale FBC to host *Who's Your One?* event

With its challenge to church members to intentionally engage in personal evangelism, the *Who's Your One?* Tour is coming to Gardendale First Baptist Church on Jan. 12–13. The event is open to all pastors, staff and lay people.

It will begin Sunday, Jan. 12, at 6 p.m. with a worship service focused on evangelism in the local church. Johnny Hunt, senior vice president for evangelism and leadership for NAMB, will be the keynote speaker.

The Jan. 12–13 kickoff event will be followed by a series of *Who's Your One?* district training events held throughout the state in March and April. For a complete list of trainings in Alabama and more details about the Gardendale event, go to [alsbom.org/tag/whos-your-one](http://alsbom.org/tag/whos-your-one). (TAB)

## Sudanese Christians hold Christmas march

Christians in Sudan marched in the streets Dec. 23 to celebrate Christmas, resuming a tradition that had been suspended in recent years under authoritarian President Omar al-Bashir, whose government was accused of harassing and marginalizing Christians and other religious minorities before it was overthrown in April 2019.

The marching group from the Bahri Evangelical Church was small, but the symbolism of the moment loomed much larger.

December 25 was declared a public holiday in Sudan and a Christian woman was appointed to the country's interim ruling Sovereign Council.

Sudan was ranked No. 6 on Open Doors 2019 World Watch List of countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### ALCAP director emeritus, unofficial state chaplain Ireland dies at 89



D.L. "Dan" Ireland, director emeritus of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), died Dec. 24. He was 89.

Ireland made an impact on the state during his 30 years at the helm of the moral watchdog group, monitoring state legislation and working with city and county governments on wet/dry elections. During that time, many lawmakers viewed him as a sort of unofficial state chaplain.

Joe Godfrey, current ALCAP leader, said, "I wish everyone could have seen and heard what a gracious yet powerful voice he was for the Christian community. I now realize more than ever how our state would be overrun with gambling and liquor had Dr. Ireland not been so actively involved all those years."

Ireland was ordained in 1949 and served his first pastorate at Jackson Memorial Baptist



IRELAND

Church, LaFayette. He went on to serve four other churches — Dolomite Baptist, Birmingham; Eastside Baptist, Birmingham; First Baptist, Fort Payne; and Jackson Way Baptist, Huntsville.

He became ALCAP executive director in 1978 and retired in 2008.

Ireland was not only known statewide for his fight against gambling and alcohol but also across the nation. In 1994, he helped launch the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (NCALG) to help fight gambling in other states.

He helped Alabama defeat the lottery in 1999, something no other state in the nation had accomplished.

Bob Riley, governor of Alabama at the time of Ireland's retirement in 2008, said when Ireland believed in something, his passion was contagious.

"This person — without fear of any contradiction — has voted his conviction, what is best for his state, nation and God because he believed it was right," Riley said. "You can't replace Dan Ireland, but it is up to everyone of us to try to emulate him."

Members of Green Valley Baptist Church, Hoover, Ireland and his wife, Polly, have been

active in Alabama Baptist life for more than 70 years. Ireland served on various committees and boards and as president of the state convention.

Ireland is survived by his wife, Polly; daughter, Denise; son, Jeffrey; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. (TAB)

### Religious groups, houses of worship frequent targets of attack in 2019



On Dec. 1, 2019, a band of assailants opened fire on worshippers at a small-town Protestant church in Burkina Faso, an impoverished West African country where the Christian minority is increasingly a target of attacks.

The victims included the pastor and several teenage boys. Regional authorities attributed the attack to "unidentified armed men" who, according to witnesses, got away on motorcycles.

Attacks on places of worship occurred with relentless frequency in 2019. Hundreds of worshippers and many clergy were killed in the attacks, which targeted several religious groups.

A two-week span in January 2019 illustrated the scope of this somber phenomenon. In Thai-

# News near you

## BALDWIN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Calvary Baptist Church, Foley**, will host a ministers conference for pastors, retired pastors and staff ministers Jan. 14 at 11 a.m. University of Mobile President Lonnie Burnett will be the guest speaker. RSVP to office@baldwinbaptist.com. John Pratt is pastor.

## BIGBEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Livingston**, will host a men's/boy's breakfast Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m. Thomas Fletcher is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

▶ **Will Haynes** is the new associate pastor of **Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville**. He previously served at Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, where he was children's pastor for nearly two years. Haynes also has served various roles in churches in Tallassee, Eclectic and North Carolina. He holds degrees from University of Mobile and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Caro-



HAYNES

lina. He is married to Kim. Glenn Sandifer is pastor. ▶ **Birmingham Metro Baptist Association** will host the 2020 Vacation Bible School (VBS) Jumpstart Training Conference for pastors and VBS directors Jan. 21 at 5:30 p.m. at the association office. For more information call 205-599-3245. Chris Crain is executive director of missions.

## FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Oneonta**, will host a Baptist men's prayer breakfast Jan. 26 at 7 a.m. Sam Sox will be the guest speaker. Sox is a Vietnam veteran and member of Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville. Larry Gipson is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Jeff McFarland** is the new interim pastor of **Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery**. He was named interim beginning Jan. 5 following then-newly called pastor Adam Bishop's change of mind about accepting the pastorate prior to his first Sunday in November. McFarland has served as interim pastor of Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, and previously served on staff at Highland Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Thorington Road Baptist. He and his wife, Trudy, spent 13 years as missionaries in India and in 2004 founded TREC (Teach, Reach, Equip, Comfort) International. McFarland holds a degree from Auburn University at Montgomery. He and



MCFARLAND



JOHNSON

Trudy have two children and three grandchildren. ▶ **B.R. Johnson** is the new pastor of **Cloverdale Baptist Church, Montgomery**. He previously served as pastor of Santuck Baptist Church, Wetumpka. He holds degrees from Samford University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort

Worth, Texas. Johnson also has served other churches and worked in chaplaincy with law enforcement and the U.S. Secret Service. He and his wife, Charlene, have three children.

## MUD CREEK ASSOCIATION

▶ **Smithville Baptist Church, Bessemer**, will host a fish fry Jan. 18 at 2 p.m. Worship will be led by the Adger Baptist Boys and Todd Garrison. Rick Cato will preach. Mike Simpson is pastor.

## OTHER

▶ **Temple Baptist Church, Cullman**, will host the second annual North Alabama Quartet Convention on Jan. 17-18. The event is hosted by Living Faith Ministries and will feature various southern gospel groups, including New Ground, The Williamsons, The Primitive Quartet and many more. Friday night's event will begin at 6 p.m. and Saturday's concert will start at 1 p.m. For more information visit North Alabama Quartet Convention on Facebook or contact Mark Byrd at 256-303-0983 or livingfaithcullman@gmail.com. Malcolm Carter II is pastor.✝

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

land, a group of separatist insurgents attacked a Buddhist temple, killing the abbot and one of his fellow monks. In the Philippines, two suicide attackers detonated bombs during Mass in a Roman Catholic cathedral on the largely Muslim island of Jolo, killing



AP photo

23 and wounding about 100. Three days later, an attacker hurled a grenade into a mosque in a nearby city, killing two Muslim religion teachers. On Easter — April 21 — bombs shattered the celebratory services at two Catholic churches and a Protestant church in Sri Lanka. Other targets, in coordinated suicide attacks by local militants, included three luxury hotels. But Christian worshippers at the three churches — including dozens of children — accounted for a large majority of the roughly 260 people killed.

Six days after Easter, a gunman opened fire inside a synagogue in Poway, California, as worshippers celebrated the last day of Passover. A 60-year-old woman was killed; an 8-year-old girl

and two men, including the Chabad of Poway's rabbi, were wounded.

In October more than 60 people were killed in a bombing during Friday prayers at a mosque in the village of Jodari in eastern Afghanistan.

And in December five people were stabbed Dec. 28 as they celebrated Hanukkah in an Orthodox Jewish community north of New York City. The next day a gunman killed two people at a Texas church (see story, page 7). (AP, TAB)

### *New Friendship pastor Smothers retires after 51 years of ministry*

At the end of 2019, Tommy Smothers retired as pastor of New Friendship Baptist Church, Somerville, where he served for 35 years.

After being licensed to preach at 18 years old and ordained four years later, Smothers spent more than 51 years pursuing God's call on his life. While stationed at Del Rio Air Force Base in Texas in his early 20s, Smothers pastored Pumpville Baptist Church. He returned home to Gordo after the military and began college at Samford University in Birmingham. Shortly after

he became interim pastor of his home church, Flatwoods Baptist, Gordo. Since that time Smothers served as pastor of Springhill Baptist Church, Carrollton; Pine Grove Baptist Church, Ethelsville; and Highland Baptist Church, Clanton; before being called to New Friendship Baptist in 1984.

It was at Highland Baptist that Smothers met his wife, Cathy, and had twin boys.

Smothers graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979.

Smothers' time at New Friendship has seen its highs and lows but he has stayed faithful, said church member Patricia Slaten.

"He celebrated with us and he mourned with us," she said.

Ken Blackwood, director of missions for Morgan Baptist Association, echoed that sentiment.

"Brother Tommy is well-loved by his church and well-respected by his colleagues," he said. "He is not only an excellent preacher, he also is a faithful pastor who has both fed and cared for his flock." (TAB)



SMOTHERS



Photo by Doug Rogers

Flatline Church at Chisholm, Montgomery, baptizes a new believer during one of the church's baptism services. The community is responding to the church as it meets their practical needs.

## Church plant, partnership thriving in Montgomery community

Dewayne Rembert says he's tired sometimes, but he can't help but smile. The miracles just keep coming.

It's been about nine months since Strong Tower at Washington Park, Montgomery, sent him out with associate pastor Keelan Adams along with their families and six other core team members to plant a church in the city's Chisholm community.

And in those nine months, they've seen an aging congregation — Chisholm Baptist Church — welcome them into their building with open arms. They've observed a community soften as they've met some of their physical and practical needs. They've baptized and disciplined new believers.

And they've officially become Flatline Church at Chisholm.

"We're just seeing God do miraculous things," said Rembert, who was Strong

Tower's first church planting resident. "The church is growing faster than we anticipated."

On Sundays, around 100 show up for services, sometimes more. And often so many people come to the

**"We're just seeing God do miraculous things."**

**Pastor Dewayne Rembert  
Flatline Church  
at Chisholm**

altar for prayer at the end of the service that there aren't enough people ready to counsel them.

"Sometimes some of the worship team will have to

come down and help us pray with people," Rembert said. "It's a good problem. We look around and so many people are showing up and responding to the gospel."

Through Christian hip-hop, food distribution, volunteer legal assistance and other ministries, they've built diverse relationships in the community and discovered people who are hungry to be disciplined, he said.

Terrence Jones, pastor of Strong Tower at Washington Park, said that's what their church wants to repeat over

and over — to identify places that need a gospel presence and send out members to plant a church there.

"We feel called to plant churches because we felt called to significantly impact the world for Christ," Jones said. "God has called us to make disciples. The church is the one institution Christ has promised to build and protect in its disciple-making endeavors."

Cameron Bell, Strong Tower's current church planting resident, is one of those. He's being mentored by Jones and gathering a team to plant a church in Montgomery's Cloverdale area in late 2020.

### Future plants

"I'm spending 15 months at Strong Tower learning from them and learning what it looks like to build a multicultural church with multicultural leadership," he said. "We want to be able to plant a church in Cloverdale that is representative of the diversity of the community."

For more information, visit [flatlinechurch.org](http://flatlinechurch.org). (Grace Thornton)

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### MISCELLANEOUS

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FBC Foundation provides scholarships to students studying for a church vocation at a Baptist seminary. Interested students should complete an application by Feb. 1. Email [foundation@fbchsv.org](mailto:foundation@fbchsv.org) for application information.

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# Opioid addiction

## Churches on front line of responding to nation's drug epidemic, ministering to those affected

Opioid addiction remains at crisis levels in the United States, and churches are faced with the challenge of serving those affected by the addiction epidemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), increased use of opioid medications like oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin) and morphine in the past 20 years has led to widespread misuse of both prescription and non-prescription opioids, like heroin and illegally made fentanyl. Prescription drug misuse is now among the nation's most commonly used illicit drugs, second only to marijuana use.

### Overdose deaths

In 2017, opioids were involved in 47,600 overdose deaths, accounting for 67.8% of all drug overdose deaths, according to the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alabama reported a total of 835 overdose deaths in 2017. In a 2016 survey, more than 11.5 million Americans reported misusing prescription opioids.

### Personal connections

In the midst of the epidemic, pastors have seen the tragedy play out in the lives of people connected to their church and even among members of their congregation.

A 2018 LifeWay Research study asked 1,000 Protestant pastors about their personal connections with the opioid epidemic and how their churches are addressing the issue.

The study revealed that two-thirds of pastors serve congregants with a family member who is personally affected by opioid abuse.

Half of those pastors say someone in their church



Unsplash.com

deals with an opioid addiction.

Robby Gallaty, pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee, and a recovered opioid addict, writes in his book "Recovered: How an Accident, Alcohol, and Addiction Led Me to God," that the drug epidemic is not localized to a particular region or socioeconomic class.

"Addiction is no respecter of persons," Gallaty said.

Roughly 4 out of 5 pastors say their churches serve people with opioid addictions through prayer and discipleship. Fewer than half offer physical support in the form of food, shelter or clothing while 1 in 8 pastors admit their church currently isn't doing anything for people battling opioid addiction.

Even though most pastors have first-hand experience with someone suffering from opioid abuse, Gallaty said that many don't know how to respond to the crisis.

Churches can begin to address the problem by educating their people on the dangers of addiction, talking about it publicly and preaching sermons about the topic, Gallaty said.

But pastors and leaders don't need to start from scratch to find resources. American Character Builders (ACB) can help, said Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP).

### Resources available

A nonprofit educational program designed to help students and adults learn how to make wise choices, ACB provides an extensive list of online resources to aid schools and churches in dealing with the opioid crisis.

A 5-minute video at the ACB website introduces viewers to the ways opioid addiction can start and how addiction affects not only the addict but the addict's friends and family as well.

ACB also provides non-religious lesson plans focusing on opioid awareness. One is aimed at middle school students, the other at high school students. Both are available as free downloads. Three Bible studies on opioid addiction also are available.

The ACB website also includes a list of opioid addiction facts and statistics, tips on how to respond to an overdose or safely dispose of drugs and links to many other resources to assist pastors and churches to build a support program for those affected by the epidemic.

All ACB resources are free to download and may be used in churches or schools.

### Helping educate

"Churches can partner with local schools using our materials to help educate the entire community on the problems and solutions to the opioid crisis in America," Godfrey said.

Gallaty said church congregations need to be aware of addiction and ready to serve people who are affected.

"When people come to our churches as hospitals for healing, pastors should have a game plan to help them," he said. (Lanell Downs Smith, BP)

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*For more information on the opioid crisis and the complete ACB resource list, visit [www.americancharacterbuilders.org](http://www.americancharacterbuilders.org).*

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# Testimony of addiction recovery leads to first church pastorate

**T**welve years ago, Adam Montgomery and his wife weren't in a good place.

"We were both down in addiction and heading down a terrible path," he said. "Through a chain of events we got into some trouble. Everything in our life had fallen apart."

They ended up at Center of Hope, a yearlong, in-house discipleship program in Anniston.

"Through gaining biblical knowledge and building a relationship with the Lord, He radically changed my life, radically changed her life and restored our marriage," Montgomery said. "He put our family back together."

## 'There was hope'

Over time, Montgomery started working in one of Center of Hope's stores. A decade later, he was still working at the ministry as assistant director.

"God was able to put

us in a position where we could minister to people coming out of the same type background and we could be proof there was hope, that God can take your mess and make a message out of it," he said.

But God wasn't done yet.

One day, Montgomery went with a student from Center of Hope who was going to share his testimony at Reno Baptist Church, Woodstock. After the student shared, the church asked Montgomery to share his story too.

"The pastor there at the time later told me that when he heard me speak, God told him he had seen his replacement," Montgomery said. "He turned in his resignation and began processing his retirement and the church approached me about being the pastor."

At first, Montgomery was hesitant to leave the center

he loved — a place that had changed his family's life.

"But I began to pray and God showed us that we needed to get out of the boat," he said. "Year after year, God has lined up every piece perfectly. It's really been amazing to watch Him work over the years."

Dan Wiggins, associational missionary for Pleasant Grove Baptist Association, said the association has been blessed by Montgomery's ministry.

"I have been pleased to see Brother Adam and his sweet wife embrace his first pastorate with enthusiasm and a heart for missions both here in his local association and around the world," Wiggins said. "He loves his people and his community, and he has a heart for the lost wherever they are found. Reno Baptist has found a good match." (Grace Thornton)



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## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Thou \_\_\_ the Christ. (Matt. 16:16)
- Ruler of old Russia.
- He \_\_\_ unto his own. (John 1:11)
- \_\_\_ Dolorosa, Jesus' route to Golgotha.
- A Midwest state.
- His ears are \_\_\_ unto their prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12)
- New Testament letters.
- In the beginning was the \_\_\_ . (John 1:1)
- A word peculiar to the Book of Psalms.
- Morning dampness.
- A ship's distress call.
- Ye have made it a \_\_\_ of thieves. (Matt. 21:13)
- Quench all the fiery \_\_\_s. (Eph. 6:16)
- Opposite of on.
- He that hath the \_\_\_ hath life. (1 John 5:12)

- In the days when the judges \_\_\_ . (Ruth 1:1)
- A distinctive quality that characterizes a person.
- Abraham caught one in the thicket. (Gen. 22:13)
- \_\_\_ ye one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2)
- \_\_\_, and it shall be opened. (Matt. 7:7)
- Whether it be good or \_\_\_ . (2 Cor. 5:10)
- Pig pen.
- \_\_\_ the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4:17)
- Drew the \_\_\_ to the land full of great fishes. (John 21:11)
- A form of "to be."
- Puppy's bark.
- The \_\_\_ of one crying in the wilderness. (John 1:23)
- Rant.
- In that hour Jesus \_\_\_ in Spirit. (Luke 10:21)

- Similar.
  - Jacob's brother. (Gen. 25:26)
  - Adam's helpmeet.
  - Kept in one's grasp.
  - Separate systematically.
  - A tribe of Israel.
- ### Down
- Thoroughfares. (abbr.)
  - The harvest of the earth is \_\_\_ . (Rev. 14:15)
  - Does the dog wag the \_\_\_, or does the \_\_\_ wag the dog?
  - A tenth part. (plural)
  - Sun. (Spanish)
  - Filled with reverence.
  - Demolished.
  - Bovine.
  - The chosen 12.
  - Israel's enemies converged at \_\_\_m. (Josh. 11:7)
  - All the \_\_\_ of the earth. (Isa. 45:22)
  - Sorrowful.
  - Battle.

- Neither purse, \_\_\_ scrip. (Luke 10:4)
- "\_\_\_ my back, please."
- King Saul was buried beneath one of these trees. (1 Chron. 10:12)
- Enjoyment.
- Deliver us \_\_\_ . (Matt. 6:13)
- Catch.
- "\_\_\_ your vegetables."
- Arid.
- Expert.
- \_\_\_ shall not live by bread alone. (Matt. 4:4)
- Lock's companion.
- Dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, \_\_\_ men. (Acts 2:5)
- The \_\_\_ are gathered and burned in the fire. (Matt. 13:40)
- They \_\_\_ I not. (Matt. 6:28)
- Abraham's wife, S\_\_\_.
- Gather leaves.
- Mexican coin.
- Frozen over.
- This priest had seven sons, S\_\_\_ . (Acts 19:14)
- Adam's home.
- Cease.
- Glass container.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For January 12

## Explore the Bible

By Douglas K. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Dean of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### GOD EXPECTS Numbers 32:20–32

God expects His people to walk by faith. The writer of Hebrews described the necessity of saving faith: “Now without faith it is impossible to please God since the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). God expects us not only to acknowledge His existence but also to trust Him and live in covenant relationship with Him.

By this time in Numbers, the first generation of fighting men had died. In chapter 26, Moses authorized the second census of available men for the army.

God had established Joshua to be Moses’ successor, and Moses had instructed the tribes about the worship celebrations to be observed annually. God expected Israel to honor His covenant.

Representatives from the tribes of Reuben and Gad requested land east of the Jordan River. Moses asked them if it would be right for the other tribes to go to war in Canaan while their tribes settled the eastern lands. The men of these two tribes considered Moses’ concerns and gave their response.

They would provide settlement for their families and livestock, but they would leave and not return home until after the other tribes received their lands. The focal verses for our lesson pick up in the midst of their interchange.

#### Warning Issued (20–24)

The men of the two tribes had expressed their plans. Moses repeated their plans back to them. In fact, he agreed. Then he warned them of the consequences of failing to carry out their commitment. Note that they would not only fail their fellow Israelites but also sin against God for breaking their commitment.

We enjoy economy of words. Whether we are measuring a sermon, a tweet or a Bible study article, we often prefer a limited word count. Not so in Hebrew historical narratives.

What may seem to be unnecessary repetition to us provides clar-

ity in the text. A verbal agreement was repeated so both sides understood the serious nature of the commitment. Such a commitment required a verbal witness against oneself for failure to complete the promised act.

#### Agreement Given (25–27)

As witnesses against themselves, the Reubenites and Gadites agreed to leave their families and their livestock east of the Jordan. They further agreed to fight along with their countrymen until Canaan had been conquered and divided by inheritance.

The men of these tribes would fulfill their commitment. The book of Joshua records the armies of Manasseh, Gad and Reuben did indeed fight alongside their fellow Israelites until the lands were divided and Joshua released them to return home (Josh. 22:1–4).

#### Accountability Established (28–32)

Moses gathered the key leaders: Eleazar, the high priest; Joshua, the second in command; and the tribal fathers. The agreement was repeated for the purpose of accountability.

This experience may have laid the foundation for Joshua’s final address. He called the men of Israel to make a commitment, then challenged their commitment and finally explained that their words were witness against them if they failed to carry out their promise (Josh. 24:15–22).

Authentic discipleship is costly because His grace was costly. In “The Cost of Discipleship,” Dietrich Bonhoeffer made a clear distinction between cheap grace and costly grace.

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, ... grace without discipleship,” he wrote. By contrast, “Costly grace ... is the kingly rule of Christ. ... It is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him. ... Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.” 🌿

## Bible Studies for Life

By Dr. Jim Barnette, Professor, Samford University  
Senior Pastor, Brookwood Baptist Church



### WHY DOES SUFFERING EXIST? Genesis 3:16–19; Romans 8:18–25

#### One of the consequences of our sinful state is hardship and pain. (Gen. 3:16–19)

Although Adam does not himself receive a curse, the ground from which he was formed does.

Human beings will continue to need food from the plants of the field, but the thorns and thistles that emerge from the ground will make the food more difficult to acquire.

Furthermore, “travail” will now characterize humanity’s bloodline and the reinstated marriage relationship will be disturbed by sinful inclinations.

In the earlier account of creation, God formed man “from the dust of the ground” (see Gen. 2:7). Now because of his sin, God says to Adam, “to dust you shall return.”

Because the ground entered into the composition of humanity, the curse on the ground became a contributing power to human mortality.

Death, formerly present in nature and in subservience to humanity, will now terrorize sinful, covenant-breaking humanity as the wages of their sin.

#### All of creation suffers because of humanity’s fallen state. (Rom. 8:18–22)

“I consider” is a bookkeeping metaphor that Paul used in Romans 3:28 and 6:11. This is not merely a feeling or a personal opinion. It is something Paul has carefully and prayerfully thought through.

The glory that will burst upon broken believers will far outweigh the sufferings that have to be endured in the present. Creation is pictured eagerly anticipating when the glorious future of Christ followers is realized.

In his classic paraphrase of verse 19, J.B. Phillips declares, “The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.”

The present state of the world with its evil is accepted as real, but it is not the Creator’s last word.

The physical universe was frustrated by Adam’s sin, but there is

hope. The day is coming when the created order will be set free from its bondage to decay.

This is not merely Paul’s speculation but a firm assurance of biblical hope. Christians pray this assurance frequently when they recite the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth.”

Currently, however, the universe struggles as if it were enduring the pains of a birth. As in childbirth the pain is not meaningless but rather leads to a new creation — or in this case, an entirely new cosmos.

As sin brought the curse of death to the physical universe, the day is coming when a new heaven and a new earth will be fully established. They will take their place with the children of God in the perfect freedom of a sinless universe.

#### In Christ, we will experience the full redemption of our bodies from this life of suffering. (Rom. 8:23–25)

As creatures in God’s world, believers sigh along with all creation, longing for God’s future victory. As the first fruits of the coming age, the Spirit within and among them is already a foretaste and a guarantee of God’s new world that has dawned in the living Christ.

The phrase “in hope we are saved” is unique among Paul’s letters, as “saved” is used in the past tense and is inseparably attached to future hope.

Hope does not mean pious wishing as in “we hope we win the game” or “I hope I get a raise next year.” Hope is the complete confidence in the future reality of God’s kingdom.

Blessed are those who have yet to see but believe. This quality of faith in the future calls for patience among God’s people.

Patience is not mere solemn passing of the time. The word Paul uses for “wait” connotes eagerness and excited expectation.

And so we hope with excitement as God the Creator brings all things into perfect newness. 🌿

TOP **15**

*best-selling Christian books*

DECEMBER 2019

1. **Total Money Makeover**  
By Dave Ramsey (Thomas Nelson)
2. **The 5 Love Languages**  
By Gary Chapman (Moody)
3. **Girl, Wash Your Face**  
By Rachel Hollis (Thomas Nelson)
4. **Live in Grace, Walk in Love**  
By Bob Goff (Thomas Nelson)
5. **Jesus Calling**  
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
6. **It's Not Supposed to Be This Way**  
By Lysa Terkeurst (Thomas Nelson)
7. **When Less Becomes More**  
By Emily Ley (Thomas Nelson)
8. **The Oracle**  
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
9. **Because of Bethlehem**  
By Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)
10. **The Road Back to You**  
By Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile (Intervarsity)
11. **Jesus Calling for Christmas**  
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
12. **Boundaries**  
By Henry Cloud (Zondervan)
13. **Take the Day Off**  
By Robert Morris (Faithwords)
14. **Almost Christmas**  
By Magrey Devega (Abingdon)
15. **The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry**  
By John Mark Comer (Waterbrook)

Source: Christian Book Expo at press time



Media **reviews**

**Review: Readers will love 'The Reading Life' compiled from C.S. Lewis' writings**

By **Jana Reiss**  
Religion News Service

**D**rawn from his fiction and nonfiction writings, "The Reading Life: The Joy of Seeing New Worlds Through Others' Eyes" takes snippets of C.S. Lewis' various writings, all themed around the capacious love he had for books and reading, and gathers them into a gift book perfect for the new year.

**Nostalgia for childhood**

The pieces are short and well-chosen, and often draw upon nostalgia. Several times in different essays, Lewis reflects on children's literature as a nourishing source of adult reflection. He says those stories meant something different to him as a mature man than they did in childhood, but that very timelessness is what makes them important to revisit.

"When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up," he writes.

This attraction to myth and children's fantasy leads him to review his friend J.R.R. Tolkien's work. Lewis' early reviews of "The Hobbit" and "The Fellowship of the Ring" are included in the collection and make for fascinating reading for anyone who loves the series.

He urges people to take "The Lord of the Rings" books seriously as literature, asserting readers who revisit "The Hobbit" again and again will realize "what deft scholarship and profound reflection have gone to make everything in it so ripe, so friendly, and in its own way so true."

"Prediction is dangerous," Lewis writes, "but 'The Hobbit' may well prove a classic."

In a similar vein, he notes that true readers just don't have an age-based timetable for what they find interesting:

"The neat sorting-out of books into age-groups ... has only a very sketchy relation with the habits of any real readers. Those of us who are blamed when old for reading childish books were blamed when children for reading books too old for us. No reader worth his salt trots along in obedience to a time-table."

Lewis covers some familiar and controversial questions — is it permissible to dog-ear a book? No, he insists; such behavior ought to fill us with shame. (I stubbornly dog-eared that page.) Yet he gives the thumbs-up to marginalia: He

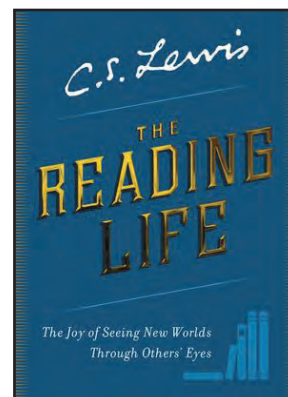
underlines, indexes and comments in his books, particularly ones he didn't think were very good, thereby making them his own.

"Many an otherwise dull book which I had to read I have enjoyed in this way, with a fine-nibbed pen in my hand: one is making something all the time and [a] book so read acquires the charm of a toy without losing that of a book."

Not all of the essays are lighthearted love letters to the act of reading. In "The Case for Reading Old Books," he takes on a question that plagues me constantly: What will turn out to have been the blindnesses of our own age?

When we read writers across the centuries, we are alive to their false assumptions in a way they were not able to be:

"Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. ... We can be sure that the characteristic blindness of the 20th century — the blindness about which our posterity will ask, 'But how could they have thought that?' — lies where we never would have suspected it, and concerns something about which there is untroubled agreement. ..."



**'Magic about the past'**

When we read this collection more than half a century after Lewis' death, his own blind spots will seem obvious to us — his utter lack of attention to questions of gender, race and colonialism; and his assumption that the Western canon of literature is canonical because it is superior and not simply because it helps to reify those assumptions about gender, race and colonialism.

But that's not the point. Or at least, that's not the only point. That essay, like all great literature, should make us pause and turn the tables on ourselves, and try to spot our own Achilles' heels. It's not that "there is any magic about the past," as Lewis makes clear. People were not cleverer or more moral than they are now.

But a regular habit of keeping "the clean breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds," as Lewis wrote, broadens our perspective and makes us challenge the unquestioned assumptions of our age in a way that reading only contemporary writers cannot. 📖

# Lattes FOR Lottie

## Church coffee shop provides hot drinks, creative missions education opportunity

If you're heading to Mount Harmony Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, you don't need to stop at a fancy coffee shop on your way to church. Multi-flavored coffees and lattes will be ready for you when you arrive, served by smiling baristas. Donations at the coffee counter raise money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) but also raise awareness about the offering's namesake.

"I didn't just want it to be a table with people coming up to give money and get a latte," said Emily Sheddan, who started "Lattes for Lottie" in her church in 2017. "It was on my heart to get them involved and really know who Lottie was."

Sheddan, the daughter of International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries, grew up in Southeast Asia and remembers learning about Lottie Moon.

With her own missions experience and with her parents still serving on the field, she has personal connections and the knowledge of how

LMCO contributions make a difference in the lives of missionaries.

But as an adult she noticed many people in local churches didn't know about the feisty missionary. Those who did not participate in missions education programs, like Girls in Action and Royal Ambassadors, may never have learned about Lottie.

"It wasn't just a name of an offering but was indeed a sweet soul who went forth," Sheddan said. "I feel like it has to be pushed out there that she's an actual person in history that we speak of, not just the name of the Christmas missions offering."

### Learning about Lottie

Each year, Sheddan refines the process and introduces new ways to teach church members about Lottie Moon and about current missions efforts. In past years she has distributed quizzes about Lottie's life and used displays that taught more about the missionary to China.

In 2019 she displayed an IMB map featuring unreached people groups. Each time someone bought a latte, Sheddan added a "Send and



Photo by Kris Wysong

Members of Mount Harmony Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, stop by the coffee counter for a sweet drink before leaving a donation for the offering.

Go" pushpin to an unreached area of the world. Sheddan's 2019 goal for latte donations was \$800 toward Mount Harmony's LMCO goal.

As for the lattes, Sheddan prepares batches in crockpots and offers flavored syrups, espresso and whipped cream at the counter.

Church members stop by before Sunday School or before the worship service and add their donations to a collection box.

Sheddan enlists youth from the church to don the barista aprons, and together they serve up the hot treats. The team even adds the special touch of shaking the beverages in mason jars before serving, to add the frothy effect common in coffee shop lattes.

### 'For the glory of God'

Elijah Morton, 15, is taking his place as a volunteer barista for a third straight year. "My friends and I enjoy it and we always make it a blast, whether we are making coffee, having competitions of who can make the best whipped cream swirl or just chatting while we have downtime," Morton said.



Photo by Kris Wysong

Elijah Morton, 15, adds a whipped cream swirl to the top of a latte.

Morton credits Lattes for Lottie for helping grow his own understanding of missions.

"It has helped me understand why we do this, why we need to reach other states, countries, nations. It's all for the glory of God and I realize that now, by seeing people with loving hearts give to see more people get to know the Lord," he said. (BP)



Photo by Kris Wysong

Emily Sheddan (second from the right) grew up on the missions field and wanted to teach her church members more about Lottie Moon. In 2017, she started Lattes for Lottie to raise money for missions but also to help educate others.