



# 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."



Photos courtesy of Mallory Friese

# Coffee, community, missions, ministry

**Main photo:** Soul Caffeine volunteers Brent and Angie Middleton dispense free coffee and hot chocolate to Hurricane Michael victims. **Small photos:** Soul Caffeine hosts a latte art competition.

## Soul Caffeine Coffee House serves with people, not profit, in mind

By Lanell Downs Smith  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

What began as a dream to combine coffee and community with missions and ministry became a reality in 2015 when friends Eric and Mallory Friese and Gabe and Lynne Holway opened Soul Caffeine

Coffee House in Daphne.

Today the coffee house is a gathering place where coffee is served with attention to the detail of the drink and to the life of the customer.

"[Soul Caffeine] has given us the chance to really get to know so many people and their stories, and by extending them warm service and lovingly crafted drinks, we are hoping to show them how valued they are, not just as customers but as people," said co-owner Mallory Friese.

Funds collected in a tip jar are donated to local ministries,

missions organizations and nonprofits, helping to build the local community outside the store's walls.

### People wanted to give

Soul Caffeine owners didn't begin by asking for tips. Friese said they felt that their cus-

tomers already paid enough for their coffee. But they soon discovered that people wanted to give. They decided to put out a tip jar, agreeing to gather funds to support missions and ministries, families and individuals.

(See 'Daphne,' page 14)

**"... We are hoping to show them how valued they are, not just as customers but as people."**

MALLORY FRIESE  
co-owner, Soul Caffeine Coffee House

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# TAB News volunteer reader shares voice with listeners

**D**on Shipp has been putting his voice to good use for a long time.

“I’ve been singing in church choirs since I was 10 years old,” he said. “I just enjoy singing generally.”

Most recently he’s singing in the choir at Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham. He’s received feedback from music directors and fellow choir members through the years and tried to get better at singing.

“I love singing, even if it’s just to the radio,” he said.

But one year Shipp decided to try something a little different.

“I did a little narration, and I decided I liked it,” he said.

He liked the challenge of making words engaging and understandable, pacing them and using inflection well. He was good at technical things — he served in the Air Force and Air National Guard, and he worked for about 50 years designing software and hardware for different companies.

Now retired, Shipp floated an idea one night over dinner with his wife, Iris — he had thought about

calling The Alabama Baptist/TAB Media to inquire if they would be interested in some guest readers for their podcast.

“On my wife’s encouragement, I gave them a call,” he said.

He’s now been reading on the weekly TAB News podcast since April 2019.

It’s something he really enjoys. He said activities like that are “informative and exercise a person’s ability to think and present himself to others.”

That’s something Shipp values in life — his mother instilled that in him

from when he was small.

“My mother stressed to me about using the Golden Rule — she told me you never have to apologize for using the Golden Rule,” he said.

## ‘Dignity and respect’

So he tries to use his words well when he talks about anything — religion and politics included.

“People should be treated well in every conversation you have,” Shipp said. “My wife and I try to live by that — that you should treat others always with courtesy, dignity and respect.” (Grace Thornton)



SHIPP

## Rash shares story with Cleburne Baptist women



Photo by Debbie Campbell

TAB President and Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Davis Rash (left) speaks during the Jan. 20 meeting of Baptist Active Women, a missions fellowship in Cleburne Baptist Association that began more than 40 years ago. Rash shared about TAB’s ministry efforts with the 24 women gathered, recounting the many changes she’s been part of during her 24 years with the ministry, which she joined at 24 years old — meaning she has now officially spent half her life serving Alabama Baptists through TAB. (TAB)



THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018  
as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist  
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Association or Religion Communicators Council



The crossword puzzle  
can be found on page 17.

# MY RASHIONALE

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

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@RashionalThts



## Interesting exercise to draw a line down the middle of your story

**S**tepping into this new year and new decade brought a significant milestone for me personally.

I've now spent half my life serving Alabama Baptists through The Alabama Baptist/TAB Media — and I can't think of anywhere else I would have rather been.

I joined the TAB team on Jan. 1, 1996, at 24 years old, and on Jan. 1, 2020, I celebrated 24 years with TAB.

Countless people have poured into me through the years, and many continue investing in my growth, something I truly treasure as a big believer in mentoring and cross training.

A quick look back over the years shows clearly how God was working all along the way.

What I thought was a short-term position while completing my studies at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University quickly became home and the obvious place where God had called me to serve.

### 'If God called me ...'

While I had no idea how the calling would work itself out nor what all would appear along the path, I trusted that if God called me to do it, He would guide me step by step — and He has been faithful.

He has provided continuous opportunities to learn and grow, and He has put many amazing mentors and co-workers in my life to teach me along the way.

The deep friendships formed

through the years fill my heart and make me even more grateful to be part of the broader Alabama Baptist family.

But how did I get here?

Drawing a line down the middle of your story can be an interesting exercise. For me, there are two sets of 24 years.

### Early years

In the first set, you will find my growing up years on a farm in Phil Campbell, Alabama — a rural community in the northwest corner of the state.

During those years I thought the norm for all children was to grow up in a safe, loving environment with plenty of food and parents who taught life skills and a strong work ethic.

Experiencing life outside those early years has taught me many people didn't have that opportunity and what a privileged upbringing I had.

Also in my first set of 24 years, you will find two years spent studying at Northwest Community College and another two years spent studying at the University of Alabama.

And while I grew up in church and part of a large extended family of believers, it wasn't until my sophomore year of college that I truly gave my heart and life to Christ.

It also was during college that I surrendered to a call to full-time Christian service, which led to a search for what that meant.

After college graduation, I

spent two years serving with the International Mission Board as an editorial assistant with Caribbean Christian Publications focused on the English-speaking Caribbean.

God provided intense opportunities for me to grow spiritually, professionally and relationally during those two years. When the term ended, I found my 24-year-old self at TAB with no idea where that would lead.

Reflecting on my current midpoint marker and these past 24 years at TAB helped me realize just how many strides have been made by a variety of different team members who were under the direction of Bob Terry for most of those years. What a gift to get to tag along for the ride.

### Second half

Since 1996, the TAB team has moved from focusing on one product — a weekly newspaper — to becoming a full media group with multiple daily deadlines in 2020.

The first webpage came along in 2000 and a fully functioning website in 2004. TAB found its way onto social media platforms in 2007–2008 and then launched the digital version of the print publication in 2010.

Augmented Reality was added to the mix in 2015 and lasted for a few years, along with several attempts at live streaming and video newscasting.

A robust new multilevel website was developed in 2016 along with the debut of a new logo and rebranding effort.

In 2018, the TAB News radio

show and podcast hit the airwaves, and in 2019 a visually impaired cartridge and new glossy magazine were added.

Granted, technology advancements allowed for much of the expansion to take place, but it also took vision, courage and training to make the moves.

With the various new elements in the picture, it could be easy to let the print product slide away, but the focus on the newspaper continues to be an important part of the team's work.

We plan to continually polish the 177-year-old weekly newspaper currently entrusted to our care. It has won more than 250 national awards in less than 25 years, and we are determined to keep it among the best available.

We also are excited to introduce a trickle of new glossy magazines being produced by TAB for special events and specific emphases.

Coming to the airwaves will be more podcasts available on the TAB Media channel as well as more growth in the audio digest version of TAB for the visually impaired.

### Going forward

And our online presence through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), web resources and the digital version of the paper will no doubt continue to adapt to that constantly changing realm.

What changes will we see in the next 24 years? I'm not sure, but I'm confident we are ready to figure it out step by step. 🌈

# Your Voice



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

## Distracted by phones, people miss message

By Pastor Michael J. Brooks  
Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster

Recently I visited with a lady recuperating in the hospital from a very serious illness.

While she told me about what she had faced and how God brought her through, one of her adult children never looked up from her phone.

As I prepared to offer prayer, I wondered if I should, for the first time ever, ask the daughter to put her phone away so we could pray. It reminded me of the times we used to say, “Can we turn the television off so we can pray together?”

Years ago when home visits were more common, I remember count-

less visits for the church when I competed with blaring televisions.

One training program many of us took back in the day suggested trying to sit between the person and the television, or saying, “I’m interrupting your program — can I come back later?”

Now, of course, a viewer can click “pause” or “record” and not miss anything. But we have new competition today — the cellphone.

Statistics say 96% of Americans own one. An estimated 81% of those are smartphones. No one is ready to return to the wall phone or the party line, but it’s sad that common courtesy is often elusive when it comes to phone usage.

Many public schools have instituted cellphone policies. For example, one local high school decrees cell phones must not be visible in class unless teachers give permission for research. The policy is for a reason.

We’ve seen the diminishing of verbal skills among our youth. A recent survey suggests that for the first time, Americans now communicate more online than face-to-face.

Research shows people are prone to be more direct, often angrier and less grammatically precise online than in person. In this way, online communication can be like an anonymous survey.

Many churches have instituted policies too, posting announcements in their programs about turning off electronic devices or asking ministers to request this.

Funeral directors also make this request before services in their chapels. I conducted a funeral last year in which a participant’s phone rang three separate times before he got the idea to switch it off.

However, cellphone use is hard to police in churches. Many use smartphones as their Scripture, enjoying 30 or more translations and a larger font with a single click.

But it’s wrong to frivolously text or visit Facebook while hymns of praise are sung and the word of God proclaimed. When we do that, our priorities are askew.

Smartphones are wonderful tools, but like other tools, they must be used courteously and responsibly.

Although missionaries have very different life experiences and challenges, they are still like us — they are people who are desperate for connection. As friends, family and members of local churches, we need to give them a listening ear for connection and community. There is no way we could ever fully understand what they have experienced on the missions field, but it doesn’t mean we can’t try.

**Skyler Womack**  
Minister of Missionary Care  
Houston’s FBC

Identity is something that our Creator alone can bestow on us. As we journey through this life, we may catch glimpses of who we are — sinner, servant, manager or consumer — but these are only broken images in a dim mirror. Our true selves ... will only be revealed when we are fully with God.

**Skye Jethani**  
“With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God”

God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supplies.

**Hudson Taylor**  
19th century Christian  
missionary to China

## Letters to the Editor

In the Jan. 9 “My Rationale” column, you listed qualifications for ministers as a nonessential of the faith. However, the New Testament has rather specific qualifications for ministers in Timothy, as well as in other books.

**David Branham**  
Mount Olive, Ala.

I loved the recent articles on The Bible Project and Bible reading plans for 2020.

I have been watching videos from The Bible Project in conjunction with my daily Bible

reading plan, The Bible Recap with Tara-Leigh Cobble by D-Group.

The chronological Bible reading plan is accompanied by a 7–9 minute daily podcast in which Cobble recaps each day’s reading. Each time we start a new book, she links to the corresponding Bible Project video.

This plan makes the Bible so understandable. I did it last year, and I’m doing it again this year because I learned so much.

I highly recommend it!

**Sarah Gill**  
TAB customer relations

Share online or email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org)

# “Let God’s promises shine on your problems.”

CORRIE TEN BOOM

*Writer, Holocaust survivor*

Ministry can become an idol if you let it. God hates idols. God destroys idols. I prayed for divine balance before I said yes to this assignment. I don’t have to be the vessel preaching every Sunday, teaching every Bible study or solving every problem. That’s where equipping leaders comes into play. Love them well and serve them well, and they will love and serve others well.

**Pastor Dwayne Rembert**  
Flatline Church at Chisholm  
Montgomery

Forgive us for allowing our busyness to squeeze You out of our schedules and lives. Give us a passion to know You better.

**Shirley Crowder**  
Facebook

Pray for our churches and volunteers [in Puerto Rico] that as opportunities to share the gospel open up, we take them. I keep reminding our volunteers that though we are here helping to meet needs, our hope is to be able to have the chance to share the gospel.

**Jonathan Santiago**  
Send Relief missionary  
Puerto Rico

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to, as Philippians 2:4 says, consider others better than ourselves. So what hurts you should hurt me and what hurts me should hurt you.

**Pastor Derwin Gray**  
Transformation Church  
Indian Land, S.C.

Whether our issues are theological, cultural, methodological or personal, always choose to honor God in everything — including the way we conduct ourselves online. Defaming, demeaning or degrading others is unbiblical and unchristian in every way. Choose to bless others with your words and actions.

**Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO**  
Executive Committee of the  
Southern Baptist Convention

There’s no place God cannot give the victory. Don’t ever feel like you’ve hit a dead-end wall. God is able to give victory anywhere, anytime we look to Him and ask.

**William “Dub” Henry Jackson Jr.**  
(1924–2020), Texas  
Pioneer of partnership missions



Samford University photo

Andrew Westmoreland is president of Samford University.

## A good day at work

I have no recollection of where I encountered the quote nor of the author, but several years ago these lines stuck with me: “The day is over, and I am leaving the office with a tremendous sense of accomplishment. What have I achieved?”

Through the years I’ve realized that I do not gain a sense of accomplishment by returning hundreds of email messages or sitting through endless meetings, although these are important pieces of work that require my active participation.

As adults we learn, sooner or later, the discipline demanded of our jobs, regardless of our vocational calling.

But what does constitute a tremendous sense of accomplishment for me at the end of a day? I can answer that question in three points.

First, to be faithful. Faithful in relationships to others and faithful to God.

Second, to listen. Listening for needs and concerns, for stories of triumph and for echoes of wisdom in the voices of those I encounter.

Third, to act. Sometimes one small action, produced through faithfulness and in response to listening, offers enough inspiration to sustain me through endless meetings and addressing the demands of an overflowing inbox.

—Andrew Westmoreland

# From the *Twitterverse*

## @DBoneSnyder

Got a call today from a former student of mine, informing me of his recent call into full-time ministry. If you are a student pastor, keep up the investment. You may not see much reward in the present, but you may get calls like that in the future.

## @SWBTS

“Our institutions, our ministries, our churches must model ways that we are able to be builders of the soul, not destroyers of the soul; places where there is real hope and healing for the hurts.”  
— @AdamGreenway

## @LoriMMcDaniel

Teaching is not a new thing for me. But as I’m getting ready to speak at @brainerdbaptist women’s conference, I’m very aware of the richness my seminary education

from @SEBTS has added to how I think and prepare. Women, let me encourage you to pursue continual theological training.

## @randyalcorn

God tells us to prepare for eternity by using our short todays to exchange earthly treasures for heavenly ones. In heaven we’ll worship God with people of every tribe and nation. We’ll say thanks to them and they’ll say thanks to us for acts of faithfulness done for Christ.

## @micahfries

Leading through any changes or strategy requires relational capital. It is imperative that you develop strong relationships across the congregation to lead well. Spend time on relationships as soon as possible when you get to the church.

## @TrevinWax

The church is the public truth of Jesus Christ, and also the public goodness and public beauty of God’s plan of redemption. — Kevin Vanhoozer

## @MattSmethurst

There are only two ways of dying. We can die in faith or we can die in our sins. — R.C. Sproul

## @LifeWay

“As you’re looking to recruit leaders in your church, understand that you need a process. This process is your leadership development pathway as you begin your small group journey.” — @SteveGladen

## @Summerchele71

“We can’t be new creations if everything stays the same.”  
— Bob Goff

# BIVOCATIONAL/COVOCATIONAL pastors

*Serving God in the marketplace and in the church*

## Common calling offers benefits of financial stability, greater community awareness

By Margaret Colson  
The Alabama Baptist

**M**ike Perrigin works as a machinist at the University of Alabama and has pastored Chapel Hill Baptist Church, a 150-year-old-plus congregation in rural Fayette County, for a little more than five years.

Jason Harris is a distributor of Western wear to stores throughout the southeast and recently was ordained and accepted the pastorate of historic Greenwood Baptist Church, just across Alabama's border in the Florida Panhandle, a small church with members coming from Alabama, Florida and Georgia.

### Grounded in Scripture

Both ministers serve as bivocational pastors — serving their churches while also working secular jobs. It's an approach grounded in the Scripture, with the Apostle Paul described as a tentmaker in Acts 18. And it's an approach that has long been embraced among Southern Baptists. While no "exact numbers" are available, an estimated 50 to 65% of churches, "with a probable error of up to 10%," are served by pastors who also work in secular jobs, said Joe Wright, executive

### Understanding bivo/covo ministries

**G**od has called all of us to unique paths within His kingdom. No two pastors are alike. No two ministries are alike.

When it comes to bivocational and covocational ministries, one of the key things we need to remember is not every pastor is hoping to become a full-time pastor, said Rick Barnhart, director of the office of associational missions and church planting for the Ala-



BARNHART

bama Baptist State Board of Missions. "A bivocational pastor of-

ten is hoping to grow that church to a point that it's going to be fully funded, but a covocational pastor knows he's going to continue to be a lawyer and a pastor or an accountant and a pastor. He's going to share his time."

For more information, contact Barnhart at 800-264-1225 or rbarnhart@alsbom.org. (TAB)

director of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN). In Alabama, an estimated 55% of pastors are bivocational.

The impact of Southern Baptists' bivocational pastors is far-reaching. In June 2019, Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, told a group of bivocational pastors who gathered during the SBC annual meeting in Birmingham, "My entire life as a child and teenager, I had a bivocational

pastor. Some were schoolteachers, some were doing other things and others were painting houses ... but that's who poured into me. That's who really taught me the importance of the inerrancy of the Word, how to witness and share my faith. ... Thank you for what you have done to help people like me."

Today, the term "bivocational," long used to describe these ministers, is in some circles being replaced by the term "covocational." Brad Brisco, director of bivocational church planting for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), said the "language of covocation pushes against the temptation to compartmentalize different aspects of our lives."

Brisco believes "all vocations contribute to God's redemptive mission."

Serving in his position with BSCLN for almost two years, Wright has been a part of discussions regarding the terminology describing ministers who work other jobs in addition to their ministerial positions; he offered "multivocational" as yet another descriptive term.

"In my experience," he said, "there is very little difference (in the terms). I have spoken to different individuals who espouse different definitions, but it always boils down to individuals supplementing their income through an alternate means along with their ministry position."

From his perspective, he said, "Those who do the work don't really care what you call them just as long as they are called and recognized for their work within the Lord's kingdom."

### Benefits and challenges

While some have observed a decrease overall in the number of men called to small church pastoral ministry, Wright said he sees an increasing number of young ministers who intentionally choose the bivocational path as their means of doing ministry.

"They are not bivocational because a specific church requires it, but they see it as a way to achieve doing meaningful ministry while being invested within the community which surrounds their place of ministry," Wright said.

Brisco believes ministry leaders get to know community members better when they get out of the "church bubble." Secular employ-

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**IN ALABAMA, AN ESTIMATED  
55% OF PASTORS  
ARE BIVOCATIONAL.**

ment is one way to do that. Wright agrees.

“The number one benefit reported by bivocational pastors is a closer daily relationship with lost people through their work in the social marketplace,” said Wright.

Perrigin, who was recognized for his faithful service as a bivocational pastor by NAMB at the 2019 SBC annual meeting, said serving as a bivocational pastor is a “blessing.” Through his job at the University of Alabama, he gets to meet a lot of people, he said, and at his church, he gets to preach.” Building relationships and preaching are two joys in his life, he said.

A second benefit of bivocational/covocational ministry is financial independence, which may give ministers greater “freedom to speak prophetically without the threat of losing their primary financial stream,” Wright said.

With such benefits, the most sig-

nificant challenge facing bivocational/covocational ministers is time.

Bivocational/covocational ministers can feel time pressures in accomplishing all they want to accomplish in their churches, in caring for their families and in mentoring and discipling others, Wright said.

Perrigin understands the challenge of time. He and his wife have two special needs children, and his commute to his job at the University of Alabama takes a chunk of his precious time each day.

“I don’t want to shortchange the church or God,” he said. Still, after five years he has found his rhythm. “It seems always to work out,” he said.

However, even the challenge of limited time among bivocational pas-

tors has the potential to strengthen churches and lay leaders. Pastor Joe McKeever, speaking to bivocational pastors at the 2019 SBC annual meeting, said his time as a bivocational pastor taught him to delegate

**“The number one benefit reported by bivocational pastors is a closer daily relationship with lost people through their work in the social marketplace.”**

**Joe Wright  
executive director  
Bivocational and Small Church  
Leadership Network**



Photo by Marc Ira Hooks

North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell (left) informs Mike Perrigin, bivocational pastor at Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Fayette, and his wife, Kim, the June mortgage payment they made would be their last.

The announcement that a donor had paid off their home was made at the NAMB Send Luncheon during the 2019 SBC annual meeting in Birmingham.

work and train others for ministry.

“I’ve learned that God does not send us to do all these jobs ourselves but to train others to do them,” he said.

### Looking ahead

With its strong roots biblically and in Southern Baptist life, bivocational/covocational ministry is here to stay, Wright said. When he

speaks with denominational leaders, “They almost universally answer that they see bivocationalism [as opposed to full-time ministry positions] increasing in the near future. With the rising costs of living coupled with the increasing numbers of smaller-attendance churches, this strategy of financial support within church leadership must by necessity increase in the future.”

## Covo church planting creates opportunities

Church planters often come to the role of pastor differently than others in ministry, which may be one reason bivocational/covocational ministry is common among this group.

For some church planters “their hope is that the church will eventually be able to provide the financial support for the planter to leave his bivocational job to focus full-time on the church plant,” said Brad Brisco, director of bivocational church planting for the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

For others that’s not the case.

“A covocational church planter is one whose primary vocation is in the marketplace and [who] at the same time is called to start a church. A ‘covo’ planter is one

who has a clear calling in the marketplace that they never intend to leave. They know God has called them to be a teacher, mechanic,

graphic designer or doctor, and they desire to weave that calling into the plan to plant a church.”

Bivocational/covocational church planting provides financial stability for the church planter, the new church and the church planting entity, according to Brisco. But among

both bivocational and covocational church planters, holding a second job is about more than a paycheck.

### First option

The decision to serve bivocationally comes from the “conviction that bivocational church planting actually provides a more desirable way to plant a new church. ... In other

words, it is becoming a first option, not a last resort,” Brisco wrote in a blog post, “What is covocational church planting?”

In his book “Covocational Church Planting,” Brisco writes, “Covocational church planting creates opportunities for leaders in the congregation to use their God-given talents to create a culture of participation rather than one of spectatorship.”

And, he adds, “perhaps the most significant benefit of planting as a bivocational leader is that it gives the planter greater opportunities to connect relationally with people in the community.”

Secular employment helps ministry leaders get out of the “church bubble,” where they might spend most “of their time talking with church people about things of the

church. ... It is not until [people] actually incarnate into the local context that they begin to understand the values and interests of the people. It is difficult to really love and serve the people God has sent us to from a distance,” Brisco wrote in a blog post, “Covocational Church Planting.”

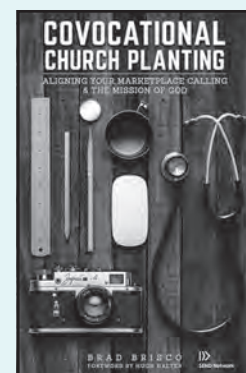
“Without a doubt” bivocational/covocational church planting will become increasingly prevalent in the coming years, Brisco said.

“As we live in an increasing missionary context, we will have to plant more and more

churches with bivo/covo planters. I think it will become one of the best missiological and financial strategies for church planting.” (Margaret Colson)



BRISCO



On May 3, 2015, Conecuh Baptist Association held a dedication ceremony for a historical marker set in place on the property. The marker is in memory of Alexander Travis, who was instrumental in the constitution of several Southern Baptist churches in Conecuh County, as well as other churches in the surrounding counties and into Florida. Pictured are (l to r) Joey Rodgers, associational missions director for Conecuh Association; Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC); Eugenia Brown, local historian and former director of missions for Conecuh Association (she held the first full-time position); and Frances Hamilton, former ABHC representative who began the process of creating the marker (she died a little more than a year after the dedication).



Photo courtesy of Conecuh Baptist Association

# ‘Inspiration for our future’

## ‘Father’ of Alabama Baptists leaves legacy of church planting, cooperation

In 1835, First Baptist Church, Montgomery, was not in a good spot. Church members were not getting along with their pastor, James H. Devotie, and they’d written letters to five pastors to see if anyone would come help them with some good old-fashioned conflict management.

Only one person responded — Alexander Travis.

“He was a skilled peacemaker,” said Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. “He made his way from Conecuh County up to Montgomery, and in order to maintain neutrality, he refused to stay at the home of either group. He stayed in a hotel.”

When Travis got there, he called a meeting to let everyone share his or her side of the story. But when that was done, the arguing was over — it was time to talk to God.

“He called a prayer meeting, and James Devotie said he wasn’t going to go to that meeting — but he did,” Berg said. “He went and he stood

behind the door and listened as Travis prayed a passionate prayer for repentance and unity. Devotie was so moved that he came out from behind that door and walked down the aisle with tears in his eyes and prayed for a restoration of fellowship.”

And that’s just one way Travis helped change Alabama’s spiritual climate. In fact, in a lot of ways he helped mold it from the ground up.

### Settled in Alabama

Alabama wasn’t even a state when Travis first arrived in 1817 from South Carolina. It would be two more years before that happened. He settled into south Alabama as a farmer, circuit riding pastor, church planter and associational moderator.

When he made his rounds to preach on the weekend, he would strike out on foot if he could — his horse needed to rest from the week of plowing.

“He was one of the messengers at our first state convention and was appointed as one of our first state mis-

sionaries,” said Berg, who told his story to those present at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting in Daphne on Nov. 12.

Travis started at least nine churches, including Murder Creek Baptist Church. It’s now called Belleville Baptist Church, Evergreen, and it celebrated its 200th anniversary last year. When Travis died in 1852, he had been a minister of the gospel for 40 years, and he was buried in the old cemetery of Beulah Baptist, another church he had served as pastor.

He’s now known as the father of Baptists in Alabama, and his story is told on a historical marker right outside the Conecuh Baptist Association office.

“Hundreds, perhaps thousands of

people were influenced for Christ because of Alexander Travis’ life and his legacy,” Berg said.

### ‘Solid foundation’

Joey Rodgers, associational missions director for Conecuh Association, said the legacy of a man like Travis is “a solid foundation for our present-day ministry.”

“Some may think of church planting as a new concept, and yet that is what Alexander Travis did 200 years ago,” Rodgers said. “He found dark places that needed light and started a church to provide that light. I have heard that the past is the foundation of the present, and that may be true; but I also believe that the past is the inspiration for our future.” (Grace Thornton)

**“[Alexander Travis] found dark places that needed light and started a church to provide that light.”**

**Joey Rodgers**  
associational missions director, Conecuh Baptist Association

# Edmondson sees ministry as chance to be 'peaceful mediator'

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

Ben Edmondson says God has taught him a lot of things over the years, but one of them is this — every church has unique needs. And the biggest mission of an associational missionary is to help each church deal with those needs.

He can remember one night while he was serving as director of missions for Limestone Baptist Association — a role he took on in 1999 — when he went to preach at a church that had let its pastor go the week before.

“The vote was 50 to 51 to dismiss the pastor,” Edmondson said, noting that the split vote showed the state of the church. “They weren’t united on what they needed.”

So he got to work helping them pull things back together. At their request, he helped them rewrite their church’s constitution.

And as he served as their interim and they worked together, slowly Edmondson began to help them see where reconciliation might be needed in the church.

“I saw grown men go across the aisle with tears in their eyes and ask forgiveness from other church members,” he said. “When they voted on their next decision after that, the vote was 100%.”

Through his 60 years of ministry — a decade of bivocational pastorates, 30 years of full-time pastoral work, 20 years at Limestone Association and 10 years of supply preaching — Edmondson felt that God confirmed over and over the need for him to serve as a peaceful mediator.

At one church where he was called, he was asked to tackle the issue of helping to reunite a splintering youth program. At another, he was asked to shepherd a young minister who was resisting the staff’s leadership. One day, that young man came to him in tears and said God had shown him he needed to get his spiritual life back on track.

“This journey, it’s been a blessing,” Edmondson said. “Everywhere I went, I tried to simply say, ‘I’m here as your servant; what are your needs?’ I want to love them well,

and I enjoy mentoring younger ministers.”

He says he never could have imagined where the journey would take him when he surrendered to God’s call years ago. But he always knew it was a yes — and he says it also was a yes for his wife, Geraldine.

Together they committed to the road God had laid out for them, and with confidence in his call, Edmondson drove down to Howard College (now Samford University) from his home in Gadsden one weekend to tour the campus.



EDMONDSON

Finding a faculty member still at work, he asked if she could enroll him.

“She said, ‘Well, since you’re so adamant, I’ll give you the admissions test,’” Edmondson said. “Then after she graded the test, she asked me why I wanted to come to school, and I told her I wanted to get an education.

She told me I definitely needed one, but with my enthusiasm, she was going to recommend that they let me in.”

They did — and it only made Edmondson’s confidence in his call stronger. Years later when he interviewed for the Limestone Association position, he was certain it was where God was leading him.

“They asked how sure I was God was calling me there, and I said, ‘You can interview 100 men, but I know what God’s will is for me,’” he said.

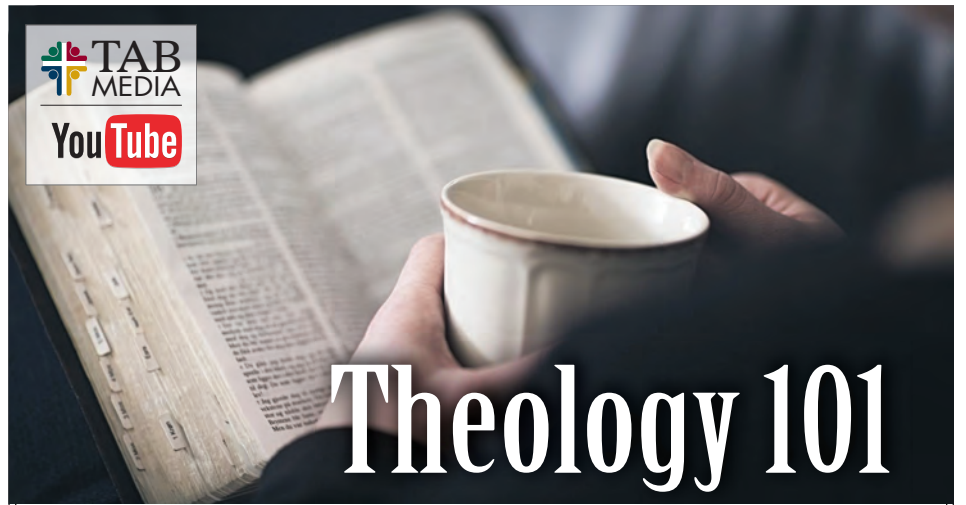
## Miracle moves of God

He got the job and he saw God move. While Edmondson was there, not only were churches reunited, he helped plant Clements Baptist Church and Lindsay Lane Baptist Church — stories that also involve miracle moves of God, he said.

“In all of the years, I never questioned the call of God,” Edmondson said. “He is so faithful — what a Savior.”

Now after the loss of his wife in recent years, he said he’s walking through the valley of the shadow of death — but he’s still doing ministry.

“I get to share what God has done for me wherever the door opens. And He has been good,” Edmondson said, giving glory “to the only wise God, our Savior.”



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## What’s New?

# A New Name

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

In thinking about new things in the opening weeks of this New Year, Theology 101 has called attention already to a New Covenant, a New Commandment and a New Creation. This week the focus turns to a New Name. The impetus for this stems from the statement in Acts 11:26: “And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Until this notation, other names were attached to those associated with Christ. One such name was disciples. This designation, of course, came to have a distinctive use for the 12 who were called apostles. However, the term disciple also had the broad meaning of a student.

Often in the Gospels the persons who crowded to hear Jesus are referred to as disciples or interested learners. Luke 6:17 speaks of “a crowd of His disciples.”

## Followers

Another name for those who associated with Christ was simply followers. This designation applied to many interested or intrigued individuals who gathered around Him as He moved from place to place preaching and teaching the good news of God’s kingdom. Of course, it fit at a deeper level those who embraced and embodied Jesus’ message about being “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6).

Two other terms also became apt designations for those followers, namely friends and servants. Jesus Himself applied both of

these terms to His followers in John 15:14–15: “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends.”

## Christians

It was years later that Jesus’ friends and followers began to be called by the new name Christians. Having taken note of the transformation of Christ’s followers in becoming new creations in Christ, onlookers labeled them as Christ-followers or Christ-like ones. This new name was an apt description of what was happening to those who chose to commit themselves to Christ as the promised Messiah and Savior.

This new descriptive term took hold and has continued to be used for these two millennia.

Sadly, some labeled as Christians bear very little, if any, resemblance to Christ. If following Him at all, they are doing so only at a great distance or somewhat half-heartedly.

Perchance we need in spirit to revisit Antioch and recapture that older name so today’s Christians become known as committed disciples.

*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.*





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

# < Sharing hope > 1 Peter 3:15

## 2020 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

February 23-24

Heritage Baptist Church  
MONTGOMERY



EVENING SESSION SPEAKERS:  
**Michael Catt & Don Wilton**

SPECIAL MUSIC:  
**Andrew Peterson**  
Songwriter  
"IS HE WORTHY?"

### SPEAKERS

**Michael Catt**

*Pastor*  
SHERWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH  
Albany, Ga.



**Vance Pitman**

*Pastor*  
HOPE CHURCH  
Las Vegas, Nev.

**Brett Kunkle**

*Founder/CEO*  
MAVEN  
Tustin, Calif.



**Robert Smith, Jr.**

*Preaching Professor*  
BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL  
Birmingham



**Sean McDowell**

*Apologetics Speaker and Author*  
San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

**Don Wilton**

*Pastor*  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH SPARTANBURG  
Spartanburg, S.C.

### MUSICIANS

**Andrew Peterson**

*Vocalist*  
Nashville, Tenn.



**Daniel Crews**

*Vocalist*  
DANIEL CREWS MINISTRIES  
Starke, Fla.

**Kenneth Loomis**

*Worship Leader*  
HERITAGE  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
Montgomery



**Frank Jones**

*Pianist*  
FRANK JONES MINISTRIES  
Birmingham



**Rick Lance**  
*Executive Director*  
ALABAMA BAPTIST  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS  
Prattville



**Sammy Gilbreath**  
*Director, Evangelism*  
ALABAMA BAPTIST  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS  
Prattville



**Daniel Wilson**  
*Co-Director, Evangelism*  
ALABAMA BAPTIST  
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS  
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**Feb 23:** DISCIPLE MAKING  
MINISTRIES DINNER

**Feb 24:** REACHING GEN Z  
CONFERENCE

MINISTERS' WIVES  
LUNCHEON

SHARING HOPE  
CONFERENCE FOR  
HISPANIC PASTORS AND  
LEADERS

[ALSBOM.ORG/SEC](http://ALSBOM.ORG/SEC)

Surrounded by more than 38,000 fresh flowers, Kayne West and the Sunday Service Choir headlined one session of the Strength to Stand youth evangelism conference.

# 'All about Him'

## Kayne West headlines Scott Dawson's Strength to Stand Conference in Tenn.

**K**ayne West may have drawn them, but a crowd of more than 17,000 heard the gospel in song and sermon at this year's Strength to Stand Conference, an annual event of the Birmingham-based Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association.

West, one of the most critically acclaimed musicians of the 21st century, performed Jan. 19 during two services held at the LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. West performed several songs from his album "Jesus is King," including

"Selah," "Follow God" and "Closed on Sunday."

West was joined by the Sunday Service Choir, which led the audience in several songs, including "Ultralight Beam," "Every Hour" and "Revelation 19:1," along with traditional hymns including "How Great Thou Art" and "Jesus Loves Me."

### 'One focus'

"38,000 fresh flowers, 12,000 people, 100 choir members, one focus — Jesus," Carrie Adams, a member of New Harmony Baptist Church, Heflin, posted on Facebook. "I can't speak for



Photos courtesy of Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association



Kanye's heart, but I can tell you it was all about Him, not him."

West's pastor, Los Angeles-based Adam Tyson, also spoke on the story of the prodigal son.

"We were so thankful that Kanye West and his team were willing to come to Strength to Stand this year," said Scott Dawson, founder of the Strength to Stand Conference. "It was an honor to have Kanye and the Sunday

Service Choir along with Kanye's pastor, Adam Tyson, join us for the conference to tell the world about Jesus."



The service included songs from Kanye West's album 'Jesus is King.'

Other artists featured at the conference included Hillsong Young & Free, Lecrae and Jonathan Edwards.

Dawson reported that some 600 attendees made decisions

for Christ during the conference.

West joined the Strength to Stand lineup in Novem-

ber 2019 when the conference had to cancel previous headliner John Crist's appearance after he admitted to "destructive and sinful" behavior.

The Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association has conducted the Strength to Stand conference since 1994 in the Pigeon Forge area, serving more than 250,000 students since the conference began.

To watch a video from this year's Strength to Stand Conference, visit TAB Media on YouTube.

For more information about the conference and related events, visit [strengthtostand.com](http://strengthtostand.com). (TAB)



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Brad Rooker, Deacon  
First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Woodstock, Ala.





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# 3 stories you should know



Facebook photo

Massive wildfires have burned 16 million acres in Australia, and though recent rains have helped in the firefighting effort, the country has another month of summer left. Australian Baptist Ministries and the Baptist Union of Victoria are providing aid to affected churches and residents, including coordinated calls for prayer and giving through state Baptist associations. An international call for aid has not been issued, according to Baptist Global Response. (BP)

## *Al Shabaab rebels kill 3 Christians in Kenya*

Somali Al Shabaab rebels killed three Christian teachers in northeast Kenya on Jan. 13, calling them infidels before shooting them, according to a teacher who escaped.

The attackers arrived at the school in Kamuthe as the teachers were sleeping, ordered them out of their rooms and separated the ones who had come from other parts of Kenya, assuming they were Christian.

School leaders refused to provide the identities of the victims out of fear of reprisals from Al Shabaab, but an area pastor said the victims attended his church after coming to the area at the start of the school year last September.

Kenya is ranked No. 44 and Somalia No. 3 on Christian support group Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. (MS)

## *Protections for student prayer emphasized*

The Trump administration announced several moves on Religious Freedom Day, Jan. 16, aimed at supporting the rights of religious people, including students who report their freedom to pray has been violated.

Nine federal agencies joined the president in affirming "constitutionally protected prayer" rules in place since 2003 when issued by then-President George W. Bush.

Students gathered in the Oval Office shared stories of being told to hide when they wanted to pray during noninstructional time and being bullied for discussing their observance of the Jewish Sabbath or wearing a Muslim hijab.

The administration also said it plans to remove some requirements on faith-based social service providers. (AP)

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

### *Mobile worship pastor, founding member of Luke 4:18 Fellowship retires*



Ed Keyes felt called to music ministry as a teenager — he loved singing in the choir and his church leadership began encouraging him to think about it.

But even though he loved music, it was never the driving force behind his call, he said.

"It's not just about building songs and music for a service — it's about people, helping them grow and learn how to worship and praise the Lord effectively," said Keyes, who retired Jan. 19 as worship pastor of Luke 4:18 Fellowship, Mobile. "A worship leader needs to be a pastor, a minister, and use music as a way to live out that calling."

During his ministry, he served 31 years at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, 25 of those years serving with Pastor Fred Wolfe. After that, he served five years at First Baptist Church, Opelika — "a great church with such loving



KEYES

people" — before Wolfe called him to help him start Luke 4:18 Fellowship in 2008.

"We've made a lifetime of serving together now," Keyes said of Wolfe. "It's a wonderful thing to have a pastor you can work with as a team."

In this new season, Keyes and his wife, Jan, are planning to move to Florida to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

"It's been a wonderful, wonderful lifetime of ministry," he said. "God's just blessed everywhere we've been." (Grace Thornton)

### *Boko Haram kills Nigerian pastor amid upsurge in violence*



Boko Haram insurgents killed Nigerian pastor Lawan Andimi on Jan. 20. Andimi, who had been kidnapped by the terrorist group Jan. 3, led a local chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), according to Today.NG.

Boko Haram, loyal to the Islamic State, is resurging in northeast Nigeria, with splinter groups believed responsible for several deaths since December, according to news reports.

The terrorists are suspected in the Dec. 26, 2019, murder of a Christian woman and her two bridesmaids as they traveled from Borno to Adamawa for her wedding, ordering the women from a vehicle and beheading them as they professed Christianity, Morning Star News reported Jan. 13. Eight other Christians also were killed that day, according to Naga Williams Mohammed, chairman of the Borno State chapter of CAN.



Screenshot by Morningstar News

On Dec. 24, Boko Haram killed 11 Christian captives in Borno, Today.NG reported.

Nigeria is the most violent country for persecuted Christians, according to the 2020 World Watch List released recently by Open Doors USA. The list ranks Nigeria at No. 12 among the top 50 countries where it's hardest to be a Christian.

According to Open Doors, Nigeria led the world in Christian martyrdoms, with 1,350 confirmed, and in Christian abductions, with 224

# News near you

## AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Camellia Baptist Church, Prattville**, will host a deacons/pastors and wives banquet Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. John Temple will be the guest speaker and Annel Robayna, associate in the office of associational missions and church planting at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, will provide special music. All active and inactive deacons, pastors and wives are invited. RSVP by Feb. 6 to 334-365-7802 or ksegura@autaugabaptist.org. Rick Marshall is interim pastor. ▶ **Michael Gillyard** is the new pastor of **Autaugaville Baptist Church**. He has served on staff at Autaugaville Baptist for three years as director of ministry services. He and his wife, Tanya, have four children.



GILLYARD

## BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

▶ **First Baptist Church, Monroeville**, will host an associational children's missions explosion Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to noon. The event is open to children kindergarten through sixth grade. Come hear about missions from interna-

tional and local missionaries. Lunch will be provided. Micah Gandy is pastor.

## CALHOUN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Calhoun Baptist Association** will host a Church Safety and Security Seminar on Feb. 11 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Parker Memorial Baptist Church, Anniston. Mark Wakefield, disaster relief and chaplaincy ministries strategist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, will be the instructor. The seminar is open free of charge to churches with existing safety and security teams and churches desiring to establish a team. Roger Willmore is associational missions strategist. ▶ **Golden Springs Baptist Church, Anniston**, recently recognized **James "Sonny" Conaway** for 60 years of perfect Sunday School attendance. Eileen Mitchell from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions presented him with a plaque from the office of Sunday School and discipleship. Roland Brown is pastor.



CONAWAY

## COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Calvary Baptist Church, Enterprise**, and **First Baptist Church, New Brockton**, will host joint revival services Feb. 9–12. Don Graham will be guest evangelist and Danny Williams will lead worship. Sunday and Monday services will be held at Calvary Baptist at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m., respectively. Tuesday and Wednesday services will be held at First, New Brockton, at 7 p.m. Kerry Mitchell is pastor of Calvary Baptist, and Nathan Sims is pastor of First, New Brockton.

## MADISON ASSOCIATION

▶ **Tyler Twombly** is the new associate student minister at **Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville**. He previously served in North Carolina. He and his wife, Brittany, have one child.



TWOMBLY

## MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

▶ **Sardis Baptist Church, Boaz**, will host a spring revival Feb. 9–12. Bob Pitman will be the guest evangelist and Ken Patterson will lead worship. Sunday services will begin at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday services begin at 7 p.m. For more information call 256-593-7762. Mike Goforth is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION

▶ **Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery**, will host the Montgomery Baptist Association Pinewood Derby on Feb. 9. Registration begins at 1:30 p.m. Open to elementary age children. Michael Trull is pastor and Neal Hughes is director of missions.

## WEST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

▶ **West Cullman Baptist Association** will host *The Power of a Praying Church*, a conference on prayer in the local church, Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the association office. Director of Missions Dennis Trimble will speak. For more information call 256-734-7383.

## — NEWSBRIEFS —

confirmed, during the list's reporting period from November 2018 to October 2019. (TAB)

### *Reeltown baptisms draw complaint from religious freedom group*

The baptism of 26 Reeltown High School football players on the 50-yard-line in their football stadium has drawn complaints from a group who pushes for separation of church and state.

After the players were baptized in a tub on the field at their request in November 2019, the Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation demanded an investigation.

Michael Altman, a religious studies professor at the University of Alabama, said the Wisconsin group "is doing its best to call attention to a practice it finds unconstitutional by trying to take a local story national."

Tallapoosa County Schools Superintendent



Facebook photo

Joe Windle told Alabama Media Group he found no wrongdoing because the baptism was not conducted by the school.

Windle said he knew about the baptism, since he had spoken with Coach Matt Johnson ahead of time. He said he approved as long as it wasn't a team requirement for everyone to attend — and that it wasn't sponsored by school employees.

"The coach told me it would happen, and I told the coach he couldn't be involved," said Windle, who did not attend the baptisms. "I said that I had no problem with it, to be sure they get two pastors to do it and to be sure that they do it and that (Coach Johnson) stay out of it and that's what we did."

Several other students had their baptisms at their churches, Windle said. (AP)

### *Supreme Court hears case regarding public funding for religious education*

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Jan. 22 in a case that could make it easier to use public money to pay for religious schooling in many states.

The case involves a Montana scholarship program for private K–12 education that provided a dollar-for-dollar tax credit to individuals who donate to organizations that provide scholarship money to students in private schools.

Though the scholarships could be used at both secular and religious schools, almost all the recipients attend religious schools, which make up 70% of all private schools in Montana.

Ultimately, the Montana Supreme Court struck down the entire tax credit program for all private schools, religious and nonreligious alike.

The state said the tax credit conflicted with a provision in Montana's constitution that bars state aid to religious schools. Montana is among 37 states with similar "no aid" clauses for religious education.

School choice advocates are asking the Court to revive the scholarship aid program in its entirety. A decision in the case is expected by late June. (AP, TAB)



supremecourt.gov

# Daphne coffee house uses customers' tips to help area ministries, nonprofits

(continued from page 1)

Since then the tip jar has blessed the Daphne community, funding contributions to a wide range of local, regional and national organizations and ministries.

## 'Actively love'

"That's one of my favorite things: being able to work at a place where we actively love on people and our community," said Angie Middleton, the shop's general manager. "Watching so many being affected by the donations (and) tips of our customers is a blessing."

Tip jar funds have allowed Soul Caffeine to help homeless and low-income families in the region with basic needs through partners like Eastern Shore Baptist Church and the local Family Promise team.

Everyone involved in the coffee shop has been blessed through personal involvement with several of the outreach projects funded by tips, Friese said.

One of their most touching projects involved their work with Eye Heart World, an organization that combats human trafficking, she said. Coffee house tips were used to purchase airline tickets for the parents of a young



Photo courtesy of Mallory Friese

Soul Caffeine Coffee House owners Eric and Mallory Friese and Lynne and Gabe Holloway opened the business in Daphne in 2015 with the vision to connect people with great coffee.

trafficking victim, allowing the victim's parents to fly to their daughter's location and bring her home.

Soul Caffeine's recent Latte Art Throwdown



Photo courtesy of Mallory Friese

Soul Caffeine is a gathering place where coffee is served with attention to the detail of the drink and to the life of the customer.

helped the shop bring awareness to human trafficking and raised additional funds for the cause, Friese said.

Following Hurricane Michael in 2018, many storm victims sought refuge in Daphne, Friese said. The coffee house partnered with

V60 Community Church, which got its start at Soul Caffeine, and a local Target store to fill the store's coffee truck with supplies. Store employees and church volunteers then distributed the supplies

— and free coffee and hot chocolate — at the Robertsdale Coliseum.

Soul Caffeine also has partnered with Dumas Wesley Community Center to stock apartments at the Sybil H. Smith Family Village, a nonprofit housing community helping homeless women and families become self-sufficient. Soul Caffeine has provided items like dishes, bedding, small appliances and towels, completely funding one apartment once a year. The coffee shop's staff works with the center, shopping for supplies and helping to set up apartments.

## 'See a bigger picture'

Friese said the Soul Caffeine team is like family, working together to support each other, and they strive to extend the same sense of value and worth to each other that they offer to customers.

Middleton added that hearing customer's stories and offering them a safe place to open up has deepened her relationship with Jesus and shown her how much people really need Him.

"It gives me the opportunity to pray for them, love on them and see a bigger picture."✝

**"That's one of my favorite things: being able to work at a place where we actively love on people and our community."**

**ANGIE MIDDLETON**  
general manager, Soul Caffeine Coffee House

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

#### SENIOR PASTOR

Woodridge Baptist, a large SBC church in west Mobile, is prayerfully seeking God's leadership as we search for our new senior pastor. Located in heavily populated west Mobile, Woodridge is positioned for revival and explosive growth. If God leads, please submit resumé with references to: [WoodridgePST@gmail.com](mailto:WoodridgePST@gmail.com) or Woodridge Baptist Church, ATTN: Kerry Woods, Chairman Pastor Search, 2700 Schillinger Road S, Mobile, AL 36695.

#### PASTOR

Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church, 8717 Fairhope Ave., Fairhope, AL 36532, or email to: [fabcc@att.net](mailto:fabcc@att.net).

#### MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION

First Baptist Church, Clanton, is seeking a full-time minister of music and education. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 210 Sixth St. North, Clanton, AL 35045 or email resumé to: [office@clantonfirstbaptist.org](mailto:office@clantonfirstbaptist.org).

#### MINISTER OF MUSIC/ YOUTH

First Baptist Church, Leeds, Alabama, is seeking full-time congregational minister of music/youth minister with other ministerial duties as assigned by senior pastor. Email resumé to: [rbras699@aol.com](mailto:rbras699@aol.com).

#### STUDENT PASTOR

Thorington Road Baptist Church is looking for a full-time student pastor. Please send resumé to: [michael@trbaptist.org](mailto:michael@trbaptist.org).

### OTHER POSITIONS

#### DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Coosa River Baptist Association is an association of 66 churches in Talladega County. The DOM serves as mission strategist, leader of the associational body and ministers to the churches and pastors of the association. Ministry experience in the local church with active participation in associational ministry required. College/seminary education preferred. Email cover letter and resumé to: [DOMsearchteam@crba.org](mailto:DOMsearchteam@crba.org).

#### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR CCM

Shelby Baptist Association, Co-

lumbiana, Alabama, is seeking an assistant director for Church and Community Ministries. Job description, application and submission information located at <https://shelbybaptist.org/job-opportunities>. Please submit by Jan. 31.

### BUSINESS

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### TRAVEL/VACATION

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### MINISTRIES

#### SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN BOOK EXPO

The second annual Southern Christian Book Expo will be held at Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Feb. 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, search for the Southern Christian Book Expo on Facebook or email [scwritersconference@gmail.com](mailto:scwritersconference@gmail.com).

# World Watch List

## Open Doors USA: Technology advancing Christian persecution in many nations

**T**he use of technology is advancing and strengthening Christian persecution, according to Open Doors USA CEO David Curry.

“Christian faith is under attack, and the methods of that persecution are becoming more sophisticated and thus pose a greater threat,” Curry said Jan. 15 in releasing the organization’s 2020 World Watch List of countries where persecution is most severe.

The World Watch List annually ranks countries based on violence and systemic pressure in five spheres of Christian life: the church, community, family, private life and national involvement.

Open Doors counted 260 million Christians who experienced high levels of persecution in the 50 countries listed, 2,983 who were killed for their faith and 3,711 who

were detained without trial, arrested, sentenced or imprisoned. Attacks on churches and Christian buildings totaled 9,488.

Topping the list for the 18th consecutive year is North Korea, where some 300,000 Christians are persecuted under the regime of leader Kim Jong-un.

“If North Korean Christians are discovered, they are deported to labor camps as political criminals or even killed on the spot,” according to the Open Doors report. “Driven by the state, Christian persecution in North Korea is extreme and meeting other Christians to worship is nearly impossible unless it’s done in complete secrecy.”

### ‘There’s hope’

Rounding out the top 10, in descending rank, are Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, Iran and India.

Completing the list, in descending rank, are Syria,



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Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, China, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Morocco, Qatar, Burkina Faso, Mali, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Nepal, Jordan, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Brunei, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Colombia, Oman, Kuwait, Kenya, Bhutan, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, Cameroon, Indonesia and Niger.

While North Korea claims the top spot in overall Christian persecution, Nigeria remains the most physically violent country for Christians to live in, Open Doors said, with violent Islamic extremism especially active there and spreading to other areas of sub-Saharan Africa.

Radical Islam is also spreading violence and fear in Southeast and South Asia with “completely unexpected atrocities” including Easter attacks on churches and hotels.

In China, which ranks No. 23 on the list, the government has installed surveillance cameras and employs facial recognition technology to track Christians more than ever, punishing them for their Christian lives.

“Iran [ranked 9th] is interested in this technology,” Curry said, “and you can imagine how, in the hands of an Islamic regime, this could be a massive tragedy” for people of other faiths.

Christian persecution “is worse in every theater around the world,” Curry said, but he reported hope despite the trends and spiking numbers.

“I think there’s hope in

### Top 20 countries where it’s hardest to be a Christian

1. North Korea
2. Afghanistan
3. Somalia
4. Libya
5. Pakistan
6. Eritrea
7. Sudan
8. Yemen
9. Iran
10. India
11. Syria
12. Nigeria
13. Saudi Arabia
14. Maldives
15. Iraq
16. Egypt
17. Algeria
18. Uzbekistan
19. Myanmar
20. Laos

that Christians are building community even in the midst of this persecution, and people, even at high government levels, are talking about it, recognizing that this is a problem,” he said.

He encouraged Christians to share the persecution list, to read the report’s stories of individual persecution and to pledge to pray weekly for the persecuted church at ODUSA.org/pledge, which offers an app with prayer requests and reports of answered prayer.

“We’re asking people to take a prayer pledge, once a week, to pray for persecuted believers,” he said. “We’d love for tens of millions of Christians to be praying for the persecuted church on a weekly basis.” (BP, TAB)

## 2020 SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN BOOK EXPO

FEBRUARY  
01

10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

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BIRMINGHAM

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AND EVERY GENRE — Christian  
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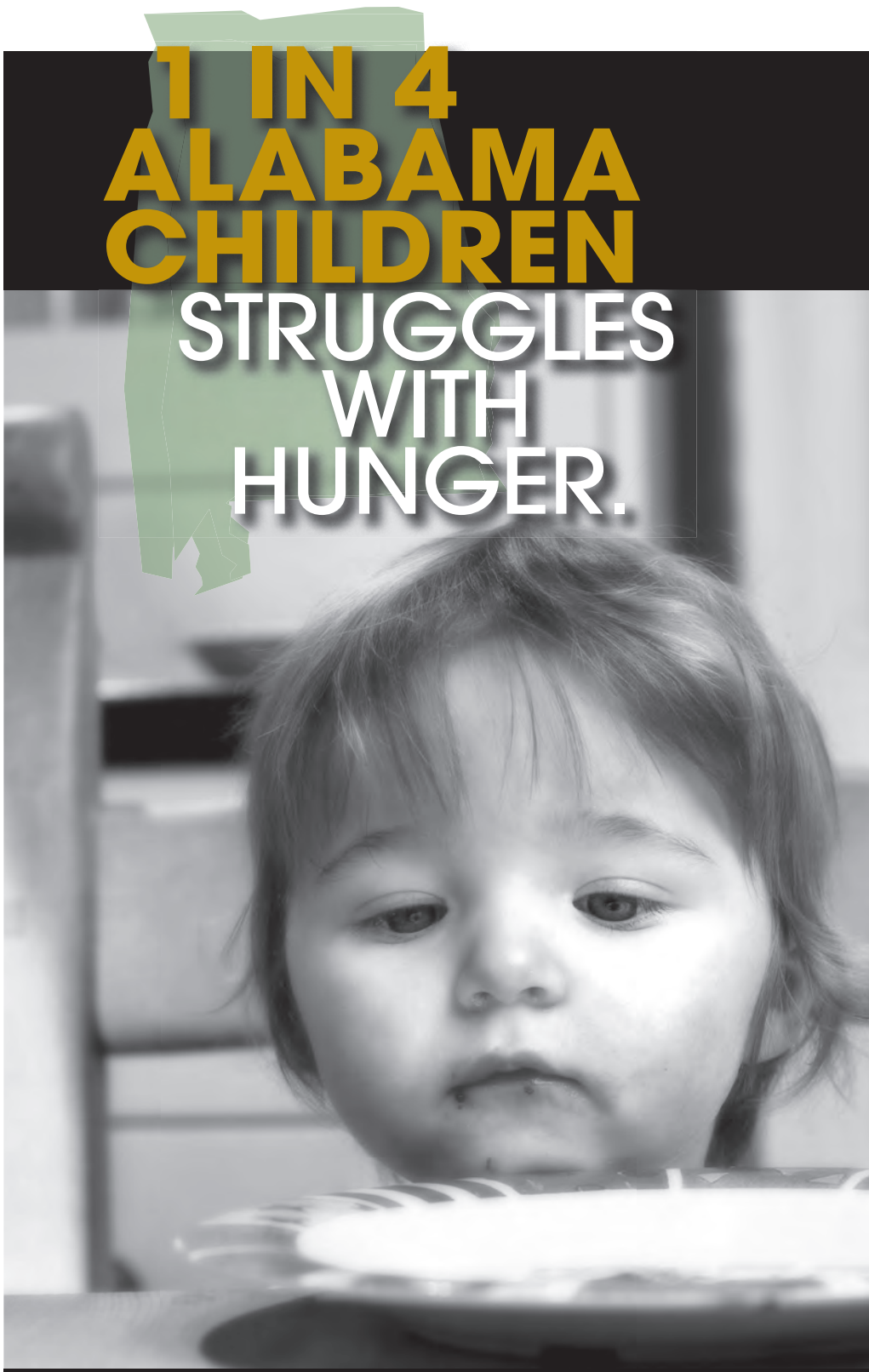
Sponsored by the Southern Christian Writers Conference and The Alabama Baptist.

For more information, search for the Southern Christian Book Expo on Facebook or email [scwritersconference@gmail.com](mailto:scwritersconference@gmail.com).

To view the full report visit [www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list](http://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list).



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



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Event and location is followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613-2 + the extension, or visit [alsbom.org](http://alsbom.org).

**JANUARY**

- 31-2/1 **Alabama Bible Drill Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Belinda Stroud, ext. 255
- 31-2/1 **Activators Training**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Laura Glass, ext. 226

**FEBRUARY**

- 1/31-2/1 **Activators Training, WorldSong**, \*\*Listed on January calendar
- 1/31-2/1 **Alabama Bible Drill, Shocco Springs** \*\*Listed on January calendar
- 9 **Racial Reconciliation Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 11 **Minister's Tax Conference**, FBC Decatur, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 13 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Birmingham Baptist Association, Birmingham Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 15 **Children's Missions Day**, Trish Jackson, ext. 224
- 16 **Hunger Sunday**, Jim Swedenburg, ext. 283
- 18 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Mobile Baptist Association, Mobile, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 20 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 21-22 **Pursue**, First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Mike Nuss, ext. 276
- 21-22 **Bivocational Minister/Spouse Retreat**, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 22 **Renew...a day away with friends**, Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 23-24 **State Evangelism Conference**, Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, Lori McGough, ext. 258
- 23 **Disciple Making Ministries Dinner**, Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, Daniel Edmonds, ext. 285
- 24 **Reaching Gen Z**, Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, Lori McGough, ext. 258
- 24 **Ministers' Wives Luncheon**, Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 24 **Sharing Hope Conference for Pastors and Leaders (Hispanic)**, Heritage Baptist Church, Annel Robayna, ext. 270
- 27 **Minister's Tax Conference**, Calvary Baptist Church, Dothan, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 28-3/1 **Children's Honor Choir Tour**, North Alabama area, Karen Gosselin, ext. 318

**MARCH**

- 1-8 **Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering**, Laura Glass, ext. 226
- 5-6 **Ministry Evangelism Retreat**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311
- 5-6 **Uplink on the Road**, State Board of Missions, Prattville, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 6-7 **Complete...A gathering for teen girls**, Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, Kathryn Helms, ext. 325
- 7 **Central Alabama Spring Library Workshop**, Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Deatsville, Marty Woodall, 334-569-3854
- 8-11 **Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Conference**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Lee Wright, ext. 241
- 12 **2020 Singin'**, Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221
- 12 **Who's Your One District Training**, Stapleton Baptist Church, Stapleton, Bailee Dixon, ext. 258
- 15 **OneVoice Honor Choir Tour**, Southside Baptist Church, Greenville, April Brewer, ext. 279
- 19 **Who's Your One District Training**, Mobile Baptist Association, Mobile, Bailee Dixon, ext. 258
- 19 **The Basics of Church Security**, State Board of Missions, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 20-21 **Adventure Weekend**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 20-21 **Hispanic Worship Retreat/Taller de Adoration**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Annel Robayna, ext. 270
- 21 **State Disaster Relief Admin Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 21 **State Disaster Relief Child Care Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Mark Wakefield, ext. 367
- 22 **Substance Abuse Prevention Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289
- 26 **Who's Your One District Training**, Millry Baptist Church, Millry, Bailee Dixon, ext. 258
- 28 **State Disaster Relief Communications Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 28 **State Disaster Relief Shower & Laundry Unit Training**, Disaster Relief Center, Prattville, Mark Wakefield, ext. 267
- 30 **Who's Your One District Training**, New Vision Baptist Church, Prattville, Lori McGough, ext. 245

# Alabamians among recent Baptist seminary graduates

Alabama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist theological seminaries in December 2019. *The Alabama Baptist* was provided the following lists of graduates by the schools.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Doctor of Ministry* — Timothy John Mathis, Gilbertown

*Doctor of Philosophy* — Keenan W. Braden, Gardendale; Linda Kaye Littlefield, New Brockton; Patricia F. Sanders, Helena

*Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry* — Jason Bradley Stewart, Alexandria

*Master of Arts in Christian Education* — Spencer Alan Jones, Trussville; Rob Henry Livingston, Northport

*Master of Theological Studies* — Joshua Michael Pendergrass, Prattville

*Master of Divinity* — John Wayne Baker, Mobile; Patrick John Finley, Birmingham; Walter Austin Mason, Thomas-

ville; Lorraine McAuthor, Birmingham; Derek Alan O'Quinn, Tuscaloosa; Jason Lee Smith, Gulf Shores; Heather Shae Watson, Alexandria; Joshua Van Wilks, Trussville

*Master of Arts in Discipleship* — William Earl Short II, Clanton

*Master of Arts in Missiology* — Clayton Mullins, Irondale

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Theological Studies* — Thomas Jestin Anderson, Thomasville; Jon Gary Buchanan, Arab; Christopher Lee Weide, Opp;

*Master of Arts in Christian Education* — Kenneth Gunter Northrop, Florence

*Master of Arts in Theology* — Jarrod Reese, Decatur

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Doctor of Ministry* — Jimmy Joshua Sammons, Alexander City; Kaleb Tillman Wimberly, Enterprise;

*Doctor of Educational Ministry* — Brandon R.



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Scroggins, Wetumpka

*Master of Theology* — Kyle Beshears, Mobile

*Master of Divinity* — Matthew Fowler, Tusculumbia; Zachary Van Gieson, Anniston; Philip Moser, Oxford; Garrett Walden, Opelika;

*Master of Church Music* — Allen Roy Knight, Bay Minette

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Arts in Ethics,*

*Theology and Culture* — Kiah Clay Crider, Auburn

*Master of Arts in Christian Education and Biblical Counseling* — Jennifer Bagley McCracken, Montgomery

*Master of Arts in Christian Ministry* — Clint Allen Barthel, Decatur

*Master of Arts in Ministry to Women* — Amanda Lyn Bramlett, Clanton

*Master of Divinity with Christian Ministry* — Philip Doyle McDuffie, Mobile

► **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Theological Studies* — Sunhae Chung, Montgomery

*Master of Divinity* — Michael Fitzgerald, Alabaster

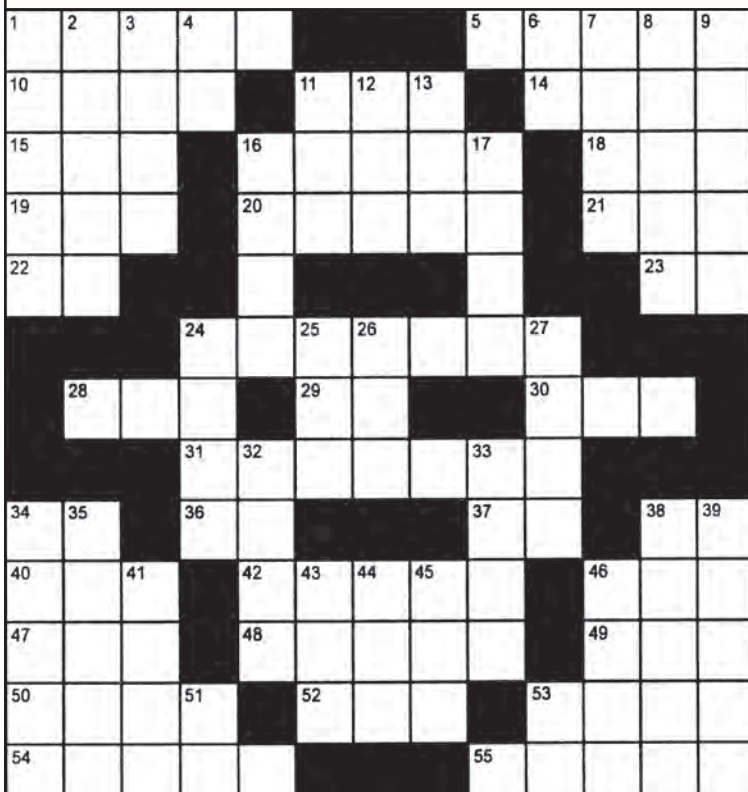
*Master of Theology* — Christopher Hanna, Birmingham

► **Gateway Seminary:**

*Master of Theological Studies* — Michelle Brizendine, Huntsville (TAB)

## Christian Crossword

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**Across**

- Where she is nourished for a time, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 12:14)
- I am ... a \_\_\_\_ woman. (2 Sam. 14:5)
- \_\_\_\_ and Thummim. (Ex. 28:30)
- Father of Kish and Abner. (1 Chron. 26:28)
- Grain storage building.
- Scottish cap.
- Jacob served \_\_\_\_ years for Rachel. (Gen. 29:20)
- Edge.
- Pull out the m\_\_\_\_ out of thine eye. (Matt. 7:4)
- \_\_\_\_ in Me, and I in you. (John 15:4)
- Madame Peron.
- Concerning.
- Half an em.
- For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, \_\_\_\_\_, Amen. (Matt. 6:13)

- \_\_\_\_ did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. (1 Kings 15:11)
- Eldest son of Judah. (Gen. 38:3)
- Chalice.
- God shall \_\_\_\_ them. (Deut. 7:2)
- Address word. (abbr.)
- Per. (abbr.)
- Exist.
- Cubic. (abbr.)
- The ungodly shall not stand ... \_\_\_\_ sinners in the congregation. (Ps. 1:5)
- Moses said, Why \_\_\_\_ ye with me? (Ex. 17:2)
- Sea eagle.
- \_\_\_\_ boy!
- So he bringeth them unto their desired \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 107:30)
- Food from a tree.
- \_\_\_\_ your heart, and not your garments. (Joel 2:13)
- Then shall the kingdom of heaven

- be likened unto \_\_\_\_virgins. (Matt. 25:1)
- Legwear.
- The \_\_\_\_ dwelt therein in times past. (Deut. 2:10)
- Thou madest him a little \_\_\_\_ than the angels. (Heb. 2:7)

**Down**

- Is under \_\_\_\_s ... until the time appointed of the father. (Gal. 4:2)
- Angry.
- Silent actor.
- Printer's measure.
- Exists.
- Dreadful.
- In her mouth was an \_\_\_\_ leaf. (Gen. 8:11)
- Out of man.
- Bird's beak.
- King of Midian. (Num. 31:8)
- Scarlet.
- The next day we arrived at \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 20:15)

- Glacial snow.
- The strangers shall \_\_\_\_ away. (Ps. 18:45)
- Religion. (abbr.)
- A son of Gad. (Gen. 46:16)
- It is a \_\_\_\_ thing that the king requireth. (Dan. 2:11)
- Every.
- Israel pitched beside \_\_\_\_-ezer. (1 Sam. 4:1)
- The \_\_\_\_ is laid for him in the ground. (Job. 18:10)
- A symbol.
- A little oil in a \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Kings 17:12)
- Under. (German)
- Indian princess.
- Headwear.
- I have.
- O king, he shall be cast into the \_\_\_\_ of lions. (Dan. 6:7)
- Sufficient. (arch.)
- Data management. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_ everyone that thirsteth. (Isa. 55:1)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For February 2

## Explore the Bible

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



### LOVED Deuteronomy 6:1–13

#### The Promise (1–3)

God promised Moses and the people of Israel a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8). Moses repeated this promise multiple times to one generation freed from Egypt, and Deuteronomy contains more references to this promise directed to the next generation.

In Numbers 13:27, the men who spied on Canaan confirmed the land was indeed fruitful, as God said, with good livestock and good crops. Unfortunately, the majority of the spies discounted promises from God to give them Canaan, so they brought a report that the land could not be taken. They said the inhabitants were giants, and Israel’s army were like grasshoppers by comparison.

A new generation arose, one Moses was preparing to enter the promised land. He repeatedly instructed them to listen. It was imperative they heed the commandments of God (Deut. 5), the promise of God and the instructions which accompanied the promise (vv. 4–25).

#### The Passion (4–5)

In Mark’s Gospel, we read of a scribe asking Jesus about the greatest command. While we might consider which of the Ten Commandments is the greatest, Jesus knew the scribe was asking about the 613 instructions in the Torah.

Jesus answered the question by quoting Scripture, specifically Deuteronomy 6:4–5. Mark 12:30 parallels Matthew 22:37, but only Mark includes Jesus’ inclusion of Deuteronomy 6:4: “Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The verses belong together.

Jesus continues His instruction to the scribe: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). With authority as Incarnate God, Jesus added to the text of Scripture (“with all your mind”) when quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. His instruction continued with a quotation of Leviticus 19:18. Ironically, they are statements, not commands, in both verses — “you WILL love.”

John did not miss this connection between loving God and loving neighbor, stating that believers cannot love God without loving others as well (1 John 4:20–21). In fact, John goes to great lengths in the chapter to explain how love for God and love for others are interrelated.

#### The Proclamations (6–9)

Proclamation 1: a life of faith and obedience. “These words ... are to be in your heart” (6:6). Believers must know the commandments. They must live the commandments, speak the commandments and share the commandments.

Proclamation 2: family conversations day and night, at home and away. You must “talk about them” as a normal part of daily life. Fathers have the task of teaching the commandments and leading by example. Paul addresses this family stewardship responsibility in Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21.

Proclamation 3: written reminders of God’s words. In a literal sense, one could take on the practice of Hasidic Jews, who wear phylacteries wrapped with leather straps upon their arms and head. Mezuzah (boxes on a door frame) could be installed as well. Both practices include utilizing small boxes, which contain the words of the Shema (Deut. 6:4–9). Alabama Baptists are more likely to carry a copy of the Bible or hang framed Bible verses on their walls.

#### The Possession (10–13)

The remainder of this chapter is a call to action. Loving God is to be lived out. Jesus quoted from the latter part of Deuteronomy 6 when tempted in the wilderness (Matt 4:7, 10; also see Deut. 6:16, 13, respectively).

Remembering God when satisfied by the bountiful provision of God is loving God. Answering the questions of children who ask why believers do what we do and believe what we believe — that is loving God.

Worshipping God, practicing wise stewardship of His belongings and carefully discipling our children — that is loving God. Faith and obedience demonstrate love.✠

## Bible Studies for Life

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



### WHAT IS GOD’S ANSWER TO SUFFERING? Job 40:1–8; 42:1–6

#### We often don’t know enough to understand God’s work. (40:1–5)

God has answered Job’s charges about suffering with questions that Job cannot answer. The mere human has neither the knowledge nor the experience to comment on the wonders of nature which God the Creator has graciously granted him. Now God asks His challenger what he has to say. Job’s inability to comprehend the totality of God’s divine plan is obvious. However, though God has every right to lay the man low, God is not contemptuous of Job, nor does He seek to browbeat Job into submission. The tone is corrective but not mocking.

Job’s “answer” in verses 4 and 5 consists of an admission, a gesture and a confession. His admission is a word of humility and wonder. Job deems himself “unworthy” or “small.” The Hebrew adjective magnifies the great gap between the Creator and the creature. In a gesture of his humility, Job places his hand over his mouth. Interestingly, this is the same gesture of deference and respect that Job’s own presence evoked among members of his community when he appeared among them (see Job 29:9).

Finally, Job offers a submissive confession: “I have no answer.” God’s discourse of divine majesty and mystery has left Job speechless. The divine revelation from God Almighty has turned the challenger into a humble worshipper. How much more can the God of Calvary bring any sufferer or challenger to his or her knees in wonder and praise?

#### We often don’t know enough to understand God’s justice. (40:6–8)

God is not quite finished with Job, as the man needs to reach a more complete change of perspective. God’s second speech begins just like the first, with divine confrontation and command for answers to questions that verify the limits of Job’s understanding. In verse 8, God

asks Job if he is prepared to hold to his own innocence at the price of rejecting the justice of God. In his own speeches, Job has been using words that have legal connotations (e.g. “claim of right,” “declare guilty,” “declare innocent”).

Job has been using these words in their most elementary connotation: one party must be right and the other must be wrong; one must be guilty and the other must be innocent. But these Hebrew words have other connotations as well. They also belong to the language of governance. In His second speech, God elevates these terms to highlight God’s governance over all creation.

It is inadequate of us to reduce the ways of the Sovereign God to the human courtroom. One cannot degrade God’s rule over the world to legal categories.

#### We are to acknowledge God and humble ourselves before Him. (42:1–6)

The man who had been a contender against God is now a worshipper, humbly confessing his sinfulness and entering into an encounter with divine forgiveness.

The unveiling of God’s glory leads to an unprecedented experience of reconciliation with the Lord God Almighty. Job renounces the force of his human words and human reason. Now he has gained a faith that can at least begin to look upon his suffering from an eternal perspective.

More than hearing about God, Job has seen God, and it has changed the way he sees himself and the world around him. Now it is a world that Job is not the center of, yet he still holds a significant place in it. Furnished with a more complete faith, Job can celebrate life in all of its freedoms and limits, trials and triumphs, until he “sees” his Creator in eternal fullness.

Job has finally received what he most needed, which is a deeper relationship with God. God does not always give us a reason for the trials and tribulations we face, but He gives us the greatest of gifts: Himself.✠



# Media reviews

MOVIES/TV

## Eye-opening ‘One Child Nation’ leads January streaming lineup

By Michael Foust  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**W**hat happens when a nation limits families to one child in a society that has a strong preference for boys? Answer: Unimaginable horrors.

The new documentary “One Child Nation,” now on Amazon Prime, takes a critical look at China’s One Child Policy through the eyes of director Nanfu Wang, who grew up in China under the policy before moving to the U.S.

The policy began in 1979 and ended in 2015, limiting urban families to one child and subsequently sparking the abandonment and deaths of countless baby girls. It also led to a demographic gender imbalance.

Wang interviews family members, former government officials, midwives and orphanage experts as she uncovers a not-so-hidden history of infanticide, forced abortions and forced sterilizations.

Female babies were put in baskets and placed on the side of the street.

Women were sterilized

against their will. Pregnant women were ordered to abort their babies, and if they complained were held down while the procedure was performed.

Twins were split up, with the “extra” one adopted to a family overseas.

Signs were placed across the country reading, “Report anyone who has more than one child, get up to \$120 reward.”

A member of Wang’s own family abandoned a baby girl. She died after several days from malnutrition and bug bites.

Millions of baby girls either were aborted or abandoned. Wang interviews one man who says he was responsible for the transporting of 10,000 baby girls to an orphanage — at a pace of five a day. She interviews a midwife who says she killed thousands of infants.

“One Child Nation” is one of the most eye-opening documentaries you’ll ever watch. Content warnings include two f-words (only in subtitles), jars of formaldehyde housing deceased unborn babies and discussion of infanti-



‘One Child Nation’

Photo courtesy of Amazon Prime

cide. Aside from a brief, out-of-place pro-choice statement from Wang, it’s a pro-life film.

No, it’s not for children, but it will forever change the way you view China’s government and the unborn.

Also worth watching this month:

### For adults/teens

► **“The Lord of the Rings” series (Netflix)** — The final two films based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s novels — “The Return of the King” and “The Two Towers” — enter the Netflix lineup. Both are rated PG-13 for battle sequences and frightening images. The movies contain Christian themes about sin, temptation and redemption, although they’re not

as obvious as they are in “The Chronicles of Narnia” films.

► **“Tiny House Nation: Volume 2” (Netflix)** — It’s a reality series that will challenge your beliefs about possessions as families prepare to live in extra-tiny homes.

► **“The Conspirator” (Hulu and Prime)** — A woman, Mary

Surratt, is convicted for taking part in the plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln. Even today, her conviction remains a controversy. Rated PG-13 for some violent content.

### For children

► **“Chitty Chitty Bang Bang” (Netflix)** — An inventor (played by Dick Van Dyke) takes children on a fantastical ride in his flying

car. This 1968 musical was nominated for an Oscar and is rated G.

► **“Lady and the Tramp” (2019, Disney Plus)** — A pampered female Cocker Spaniel named Lady befriends a homeless mutt, Tramp. This live-action remake is rated PG for some mild thematic elements and action/peril.

► **“Aladdin” (2019, Disney Plus)** — A street urchin tries to win the heart of a princess with the help of a genie. This live-action Disney remake is rated PG for some action/peril. 🌟



‘Lord of the Rings’

Photo courtesy of New Line Productions

## Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

# 'Sisters together'

## Ohio WMU retreat encourages women to pursue deeper relationship with God

By **Trennis Henderson**  
WMU National Correspondent

**M**eshing the impact of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and women's ministries, more than 110 women from across Ohio gathered for the Ohio Baptist Women's Fall Retreat and Missions Celebration.

The weekend retreat, held at Seneca Lake Baptist Assembly, explored the WMU theme, "Unshakable Pursuit: Chasing the God Who Chases Us." Keynote speaker Kristy Carr, senior hub manager at National WMU, challenged participants to "stand firm" in their faith.

In a pair of messages highlighting 1 Corinthians 15:58, Carr urged participants to give themselves fully to the work of the Lord, "knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

"If we truly believe the gospel, we will live it and we will tell it," she declared. "We are very relational people. For us to know people, we really have to know our Father" through such disciplines as prayer, Bible study, worship and ministry to one's neighbors."

On a practical ministry level, the weekend included such activities as an early morning prayer walk and an offering for the Joan White Scholarship Fund to help finance women and girls going on first-time missions trips.

Participants also collected practical and personal gift items for the Appalachian Backpack Ministry and designed notecards to send to missionaries.

The women had the opportunity to choose among several breakout sessions ranging from how to minister



WMU photos by Pam Henderson

Speaking from 1 Corinthians 15:58, Kristy Carr, senior hub manager at National Woman's Missionary Union and retreat keynote speaker, told participants, "If we truly believe the gospel, we will live it and we will tell it."

to victims of human trafficking and reports of recent missions trips to Kenya and Nicaragua to a ministry wives' tea and ways to grow in one's personal faith.

### 'Bridge together'

Ohio WMU president Jean DiFilippo said one of her goals is to bridge together women's ministry and WMU.

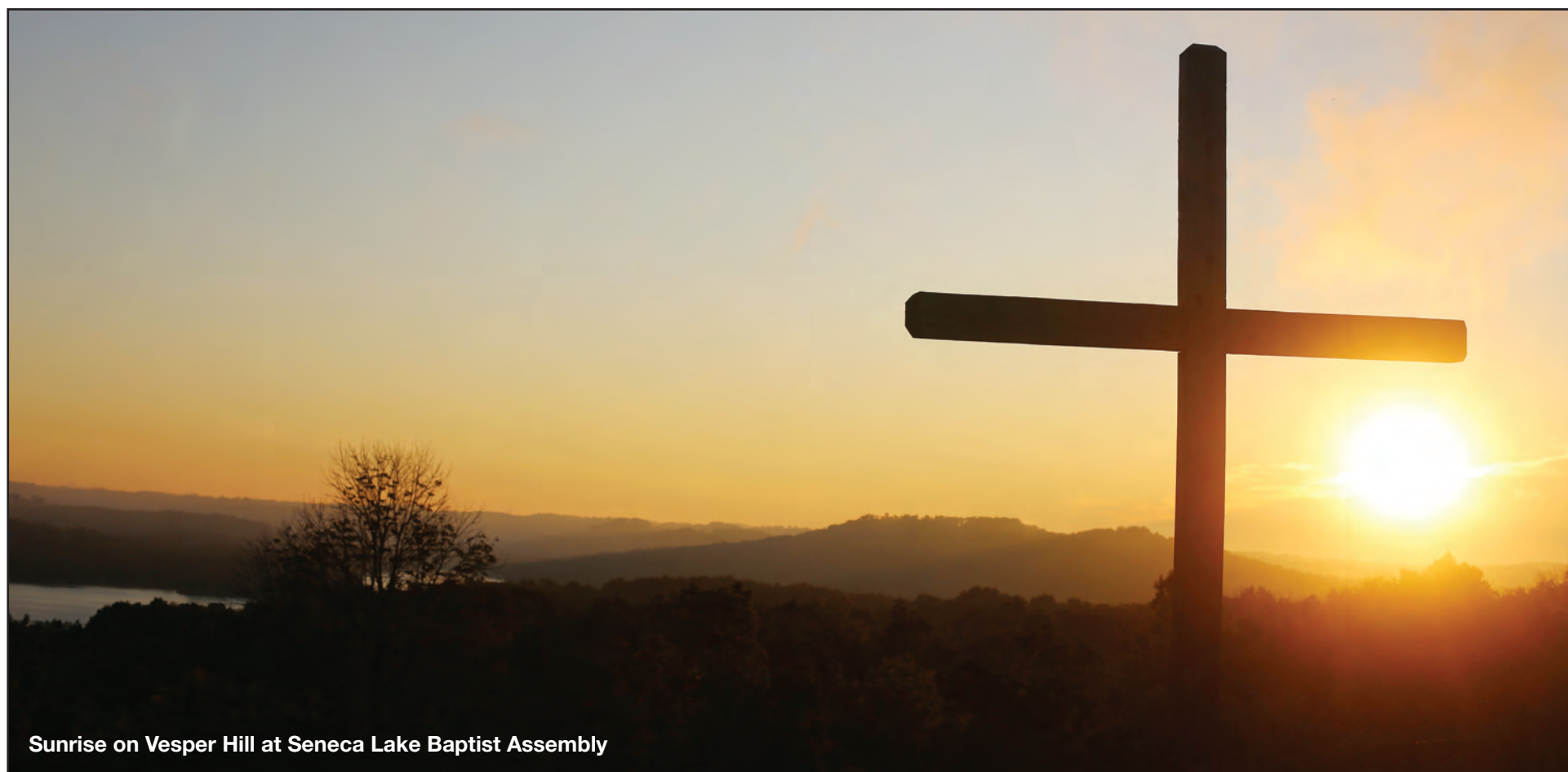
"We're all serving the same God," she said. "We need to all be working together with missions, of course, being one of our central focuses, but also building each other up in Christ."

The women also enjoyed lighter moments of fellowship throughout

the weekend, including a bonfire, movie night and even spontaneously breaking into the "OH-IO" cheer.

But "the No. 1 thing we hope the women take away is a deeper personal relationship with the Lord," said Cathy Pound, Ohio WMU executive director. "We also would hope that this would be a time, especially for women who are so busy with many responsibilities, to be able to hear His voice in a new way or in a specific way that speaks to the situation that they're in right now."

The annual retreat helps women affirm, "we are sisters together," Pound said. "What God is doing is not only impacting our churches, our communities; it's impacting Ohio." 🇺🇸



Sunrise on Vesper Hill at Seneca Lake Baptist Assembly