



# Madison Baptist Association

THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER  
15,  
2016

“Assisting churches in fulfilling their mission, and providing them opportunities for fellowship and to work together in advancing the kingdom of God”

Someone once said, “If you don’t think there is a divine plan to life, just read the newspaper and notice how everyone dies in alphabetical order.” Laying all jokes aside, there really is a divine plan at work in our world. The “Christmas Story” reveals the biggest part of God’s divine plan for humanity. The shepherds were called to Bethlehem by the majestic voices of the angels, and the magi would be led there later by following a single star. The angel said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12) Mankind needed a Savior, Deliverer, someone to rescue us from the darkness of sin. Jesus is that someone, the only one who can save us. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) The true meaning of Christmas centers around a Savior, not a Santa. It has to do with salvation, not a stocking. And ultimately there would be a cross, not a Christmas tree, for Jesus came to die on that old rugged cross for the sins of the world. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” (1 Pet. 2:24)

The shepherds were given “a sign” (a distinguishing mark by which something is known) to verify the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The baby Jesus would be “wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” There would be no baby clothes or baby bed, but Jesus would be resting in a manger, a feeding trough for animals located in a stable or a stall. So the manger would be a sign of recognition for the shepherds that they had arrived at the right spot, and were indeed in the presence of the Messiah. Jesus would be the only baby sleeping in a Bethlehem manger that night; He lay where animals ate. The manger was also a sign of rejection. There was no room for them in the inn. This would be a reoccurring pattern in the life of Christ. “He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” (Isa. 53:3) Jesus was “the stone which the builders rejected.” (1 Pet. 2:7) But the manger was also a sign of reconciliation. Why was Jesus born, why was He lying in a manger? Christ came on a mission to effect

reconciliation between a holy God and fallen, sinful man. Thus, He lived a sinless life and ultimately was slain on the cross for us, because of our sins. He bore our sins in His body on the cross, the death penalty for sin was paid that all might have eternal life by faith in Him. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) As we celebrate Christmas and the birth of Christ, I hope everyone reading this article has freely received the greatest gift offered to man: eternal life. Your Christmas will never be the same.

Merry Christmas!  
Charlie

*Guidestone and Brotherhood Mutual present:*

## Church Safety & Security Conference

January 26, 2017  
9 a.m.—4 p.m.

First Baptist Church, Huntsville  
600 Governors Drive SW

At this one-day conference, you’ll receive real-world training on:

- Best practices for your safety and security team
- Protecting kids in the ministry environment
  - Volunteer screening process
- Learning to spot domestic violence in the church

Space is limited. **REGISTER NOW!**  
GuideStone.org/cssc

\$50 per person

Includes lunch and one free copy of *The Church Safety & Security Guidebook* per church. (Retail price \$39.95)

Registration deadline: January 14, 2017

Want to send more than two people from your ministry? Call (214) 720-4721 for group discount information.

## Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Media kits and other resources can be ordered online at [imbresources.org](http://imbresources.org). The national goal for 2016 is \$155 million.



Your faithful giving has changed lives and given hope to the lost across the globe!

Dec 23-Jan 2	Christmas Holiday (MBA Office Closed)
Dec 25	Merry Christmas!
Dec 29	<i>The Alabama Baptist</i> will not publish
Jan 1	Happy New Year!
Jan 3	MBA Office Reopens
Jan 12	Minister’s Conference (10:30AM)
Jan 15	Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
Jan 30	Executive Board Mtg (MBA, 10AM)
Feb 9	Minister’s Conference (10:30AM)

**Minister’s Conference**  
**Thursday, January 12, 10:30 a.m.**  
**The guest speaker will be Rev. John Dees, CrossPointe Church.**  
**Fellowship and lunch will take place after the conference. Lunch will be provided for \$5 per person.**  
**We hope to see you there!**

## Mission Opportunities for 2017

### Rocket City Missions

Week #1 June 18 — 23, 2017  
Week #2 June 25 — 30, 2017

### Williamsburg, Kentucky Mission Trip

July 16 — 20, 2017

### Romania Summer Missions

April 27—May 9, 2017

Mark your calendars now — more information is available at the MBA!

*only \$150 per student!*  *space limited register soon!*

**changing one house and one life at a time!**

Rocket City Missions is a ministry of Madison Baptist Association.

## Madison Baptist Association, Inc.

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