

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

FBC, Concord, holds prayer meeting following suicide

CONCORD – First Baptist Church, Concord, turned its Wednesday evening church service into a time of focused prayer April 24 after receiving news of a student committing suicide at the local high school.

“At times like these, it does us good to come together and unite with one purpose and one goal,” Lee Dillard, pastor of First Baptist, told Fox 16. “That is to seek God’s help and God’s strength.”

A 14-year-old student shot himself in the restroom at Concord High School after lunch Wednesday, April 24, according to the TV station. The school was immediately put on lockdown. No other students were present in the room at the time.

Concord High School closed the school the day after the shooting, April 25, and it reopened April 29. Grief counselors were available for staff and students when the school reopened.

Cross Church affirms Nick Floyd as senior pastor

SPRINGDALE – Nick Floyd, 35, was affirmed Sunday, April 28, as the next senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, to succeed his father, Ronnie Floyd, president/CEO-elect of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Executive Committee.



Floyd

Donnie Smith, retired Tyson Foods CEO who serves on the church’s board of directors, said Nick Floyd “has the DNA of Cross Church.”

“I love this church. I am a product of you, this body of believers,” Floyd, said in a prepared video.

For more ABN Digest, go to arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest

Going to pot: How Arkansas Baptists can respond to legalization of medical marijuana

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

WITH MEDICAL marijuana approved by Arkansas voters about two-and-a-half years ago and the first medical marijuana sales expected to begin across the Natural State in mid-May, many Arkansas Baptists have questions and concerns about long-term implications as well as Christ-like response regarding marijuana legalization.

Background

The Medical Marijuana Amendment (Issue 6) was approved by Arkansas voters in November 2016, with 53.11 percent of voters approving the amendment and 46.89 percent opposing it, according to the Arkansas Secretary of State’s office.

Arkansas was the 26th state to approve medical marijuana, the *Arkansas Baptist News* reported Nov. 17, 2016. Today, Arkansas is one of 33 states approving medical marijuana usage, with 10 states approving recreational marijuana usage, according to procon.org. Marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

The amendment approves medical marijuana for numerous specific conditions listed on healthyarkansas.gov. Those seeking to use medical marijuana must complete an application with physician certification in order to obtain a medical marijuana identification card. As of April 25, 2019, approved medical marijuana identification cards numbered 10,877, healthyarkansas.gov reports.

“In Arkansas, we are likely to experience what other states have gone through. Many ‘pa-

tients’ will feign illnesses and medical conditions, such as chronic pain, as a way to legally obtain for personal use an otherwise illegal substance,” said Larry Page, executive director, Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.

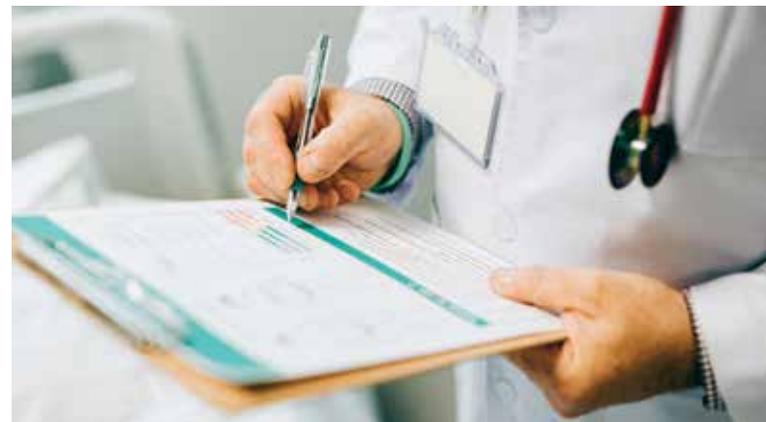
In February 2019, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) issued a public health advisory, warning Arkansans about risks associated with the use of cannabis, including marijuana and hemp. Risks include the addictive nature of marijuana. Additionally, the advisory stated, “Marijuana use is associated with adverse health outcomes, including the development of psychoses like schizophrenia and increased risk of motor vehicle crashes.”

Regarding such risks, Page said, “We need to continue to view smoked marijuana as a dangerous drug. ... What is sorely needed is much more solid, empirical research into this whole issue of marijuana use for medicinal purposes. Only then can reasonable, safe, legitimate use (if research reveals such use) and tightly regulated trade be achieved,” he said.

Recreational marijuana next?

Many Arkansans, particularly in the Christian community, fear that legalizing medical marijuana is a first step toward legalizing recreational marijuana.

“The most important thing to keep in mind is that the medical marijuana amendment was intended to be and is a prelude to a proposed amendment to legalize recreational marijuana. Many proponents of Arkansas’ medical marijuana initiative stated that that was their



Arkansas’ Alcoholic Beverage Control division gave final approval to the first medical marijuana dispensary in the state May 3, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The dispensary, Doctors Orders RX, is located in Hot Springs and is set to begin operations during the week of May 13.

intent; they are already at work readying an amendment for that purpose to be presented at the 2020 general election,” said Page.

Such a strategy to legalize recreational marijuana has succeeded in other states. “Marijuana supporters ... begin by playing on the public’s compassion with medical marijuana, and then follow up with their true agenda: the widespread legalization of recreational marijuana,” Barrett Duke, state executive director of the Montana Southern Baptist Convention and former vice president for public policy and research for the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), wrote in 2014.

Christian response

In response, John McCallum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, encourages Arkansas Baptists to be non-judgmental and to minister to those who decide to try medical marijuana.

“While most Arkansas Baptists (including me) probably voted against medical marijuana in 2016, it won’t do anybody any good to continue to lament its passage and sit in judgment on those who were in favor of it or who will use it for medical purposes. It’s important that we understand people with chronic pain, including some of our church members, are desperate for relief and will reach for any potential help, so we should avoid harsh, judgmental language as we talk about the issue with others,”

he said.

“It’s important to minister to our church family who may make the choice, per doctor’s advice and prescription, to utilize medical marijuana in their treatment plan. They need our love and compassion and prayer,” said McCallum.

“At the same time,” he added, “as Christians we can pray that the watchdogs among us will be vigilant in seeing that medical marijuana growers and dispensaries live within the restrictions placed on them by the law or even work to amend or repeal the laws based on data gained over time once the law is in force.”

In a 2014 article, Duke offered four suggestions for Southern Baptists grappling with marijuana legalization: 1) “Christians must make sure they balance their compassion with discernment;” 2) “Christians must not allow themselves to be persuaded that marijuana is an acceptable medical remedy;” 3) “Christians must stay engaged in local debates and politics to help keep their communities as drug-free as possible,” and 4) “Churches must engage their communities,” promoting “healthy lifestyles.” In addition to modeling drug-free lifestyles, Christians and churches “should provide services that can help people in their communities overcome drug addiction and reclaim their lives. Jesus not only saves the soul; He also restores broken lives.”

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



PRISON

continued from page one

ing this happen.”

Byers introduced Arkansas native Mike Spradlin, president of MABTS, who shared about the seminary’s role in the new partnership.

“We have a culture at our school. If you enroll at Mid-America, you are part of our Mid-America family, and we’re going to take care of you,” said Spradlin. “For our new members of the family that we are going to be meeting this fall,



Greg Sykes, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, prays during the April 30 event.

they’re part of our family. We are going to get them to the finish line.”

ADC Deputy Director Dexter Payne shared the ADC’s support of the new prison seminary.

“We fully support this seminary program and its goals. Our goal is to have a team at the Varner Unit in place to assist those inmates in achieving their mission,” said Payne.

“We want the inmates to be field ministers who will go unit to unit once they receive their degree, and assist us in caring for our population – teaching them, mentoring them and giving them a vision that will help them once they go outside of our gates,” said Payne.

“I am excited about the possibilities and the impact of this prison seminary at the Varner Unit. I am thankful to the many folks who made this happen, and to the Arkansas Department of Correction and Mid-America Seminary for partnering with us,” said J.D. “Sonny” Tucker, ABSC executive director.



Jarvis Smith, pastor of Second Baptist Church, West Helena, prays at the Arkansas Capitol during a time of focused prayer following the announcement of a new prison seminary at Arkansas’ Department of Correction’s Varner Unit, located about 30 miles south of Pine Bluff. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

“We owe a debt of gratitude to Burl Cain, former warden of Angola prison, for pioneering this concept, and to a very generous anonymous donor who helped get this started,” said Tucker.

Following the announcement of the prison seminary, a time of focused prayer for the new ministry was led by Greg

Sykes, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, and ABSC president; Tyrone Broomfield, pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, North Little Rock, and Jarvis Smith, pastor of Second Baptist Church, West Helena.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

ABN Digest

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to Arkansas Baptists

Methodists may split after affirming biblical marriage

EVANSTON, Ill. (BP) – A ruling by the United Methodist Church’s (UMC) highest court has upheld the denomination’s support of traditional marriage and its opposition to LGBT ordination. The ruling, some evangelical commentators say, could portend a split in the UMC.

“The United Methodist Church is not going to be able to hold together” as its liberal and conservative elements espouse conflicting views of human sexuality among other matters, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said April 29 in his podcast “The Briefing.” “It is not going to be a united Methodist Church.”

In an April 26 ruling, the UMC’s Judicial Council upheld 10 of 17 petitions in the Traditional Plan narrowly adopted by delegates to the UMC General Conference in February. The Traditional Plan affirmed the UMC’s longstanding declarations that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” and that “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” cannot be ordained to the ministry or married in the UMC.

The Traditional Plan also defined the terms in its policies more precisely amid longstanding defiance by Methodists who favor full inclusion of individuals identifying as LGBT in church leadership. The Traditional Plan established a one-year suspension from ministry for clergy who perform a same-sex wedding for the first time and loss of ministerial credentials for a second offense.

The 10 petitions upheld by the Judicial Council include all key provisions of the Traditional Plan dealing with same-sex marriage and homosexual ordination, media reported.

For more ABN Digest, go to arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest

International Mission Board seeks victims of ex-leader

FORT WORTH, Texas – The human resources official of the International Mission Board (IMB) has announced it will conduct an investigation into its handling of past allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

Stephen Haber of the IMB said in an email April 18 that the organization had hired a

third-party group to conduct an investigation into its handling of past allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported. One of the reviews will be of Mark Aderholt, 47, who was arrested in July 2018 in South Carolina on a warrant issued in the Tarrant County, Texas, case, on

a charge of sexual assault of a child younger than 17, the newspaper reported.

Though the accuser’s name is redacted from a copy of the indictment obtained by the Baptist Press, author and speaker Anne Marie Miller has identified herself online and in media reports as Aderholt’s accuser. Miller told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* at the time of Aderholt’s arrest she is “glad that truth is being heard and justice is being served.”

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has confirmed that Aderholt was a student at the seminary when the crime allegedly was committed. He graduated from the seminary in 2000 with a master of divinity degree. Aderholt served as IMB missionary in Europe from about 2000 to 2007, as executive pastor at Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, in 2008 and as associate pastor of missions and evangelism of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, from December 2009 to July 2016, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

At the time of his arrest, Aderholt was serving as associate executive director of the South Carolina

Baptist Convention.

The IMB has said it did not know about the allegations against Aderholt at the time of his employment. However, IMB acknowledged that it knew of the allegations against him in 2007, according to police records, emails and an internal investigation from the organization, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported. The allegations were not reported to authorities.

“While we are not aware of Mr. Aderholt engaging in any acts of child sexual abuse, sexual harassment or other sexual misconduct during his time of service with IMB, it is our desire to ensure that we learn of any victims of sexual abuse so that we can offer counseling resources to help them,” Haber said in the email.

Haber sent the email to people who could have been in contact with Aderholt during that timeframe or whose children could have been in contact with him.

“On behalf of IMB, I want you to know that we are taking this matter very seriously and are committed to reaching out to any potential victims,” Haber said.

Hoffpauir named ASU campus minister

JONESBORO – Tyler Hoffpauir has joined the Arkansas Baptist State Convention’s (ABSC) staff as Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) campus minister at Arkansas State University (ASU) in Jonesboro.

A graduate of ASU and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Hoffpauir served as a youth ministry intern for Nettleton Baptist Church, Jonesboro, and a campus minister intern for Baptist Collegiate Ministry at both Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., and Georgia Southern University in

Statesboro, Ga. He has served as an interim minister to college and young adults at First Baptist Church, Statesboro, Ga., and director of the Baptist Student Union at Southwestern Mississippi Community College in Summit, Miss.

“I am excited that the Lord led us to Tyler,” said Bruce Venable, team leader for ABSC’s college and young leaders team. “He is a young man who not only has the calling for collegiate ministry but is a strategic thinker. The long-term ministry impact will be deep under Tyler’s leadership.”



Hoffpauir

Editorial & Opinion

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

My 30-year journey in denominational ministry

As sunlight broke over the horizon of my little piece of dirt in central Arkansas in the early morning hours of May 1, it hit me: May 2019 marks the 30-year anniversary of my journey into "denominational ministry."

For some, 30 years might not be that big of a deal. For me, however, the fact that I would work all

these years for the denomination in which I grew up was nothing short of a miracle.

As the story goes, I was happily employed in the spring of 1989, working at the *Arkansas Democrat* in downtown Little Rock (before it became the *Democrat-Gazette*) and pursuing a master's degree in journalism at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

As it happened, a classmate of my mine, Mark Kelly, was managing editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and shared my name with a representative of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, the convention's men and boys mission organization, which was seeking to hire a new curriculum editor.

One thing led to another, and my wife and I were soon packing up and heading to Memphis, Tenn., to start a new phase of our lives.

Little did I know at the time what I was getting myself into.

At age 28, I found that the work was hard and the hours were long. Many weeks and months would pass where I logged 60 or more hours during the workweek, but at the same time, it was some of the most satisfying and fulfilling

work I had ever done in my life.

Highlights of my "service" at the Brotherhood – funny thing, I always said "employment" before working for the denomination – were many.

While at the Brotherhood, I was privileged to be a part of many significant ministries, not the least of which

was helping to birth World Changers and working closely with Southern Baptist disaster relief.

Our years in Memphis were good, and it is the city where our two children were born. But after about five years, God decided it was time to move us to another ministry opportunity. As it were, my move came shortly before the Covenant for a New Century reorganization of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies was announced, which resulted in a merger of the Brotherhood Commission, Home Mission Board, and Radio and Television Commission into the new North American Mission Board (NAMB).

My next stop was Jefferson City, Mo., where I was director of public relations and team leader of communications and technology for the Missouri Baptist Convention. "Jeff City," as it was known, was a good Catholic town, providing an excellent backdrop to raise a young family. As the locals would say, "Jeff City rolled up its sidewalks promptly at 9 p.m. every night."

When I arrived in Missouri in 1995, there was a funda-

mentalist takeover of the state convention brewing, which would culminate in 2002 resulting in the forced resignation of the convention's executive director. As would have it, I just happened to be one of the leaders in the same office that also housed the convention program coordinator and associate executive director (who was my boss).

Rather than my being forced to resign or be fired, God opened a door of opportunity for me – ironically – to join the team at NAMB in Alpharetta, Ga., as a media strategist. Later I would be promoted to church relations team leader and have the responsibility as national Acts 1:8 Challenge coordinator.

While some never get the opportunity to be a part of something truly special in their working careers, I have been blessed to be a small part of two: helping start World Changers at the Brotherhood and assisting in leading the Acts 1:8 initiative at NAMB in cooperation with the International Mission Board.

During the nearly nine years I was at NAMB, there were many highs and lows, but I'll admit that to witness more than 6,000 of our SBC churches commit to becoming intentional about missions was a personal highlight I'll never forget. I am eternally grateful to have played a part in it.

So it came as a bit of a surprise when the search committee of the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) asked me to consider coming to be a state Baptist editor – something I had long discounted ever doing – especially in light of denominational turmoil that ensued in the 1970s and 1980s.

But I did, and it was kind of like returning home in January 2011 when I took over leadership of the ABN.

What I found when I arrived was a ministry that needed a lot of TLC and a new vision and direction, and I set about to do just that by implementing a five-year stra-

See **JOURNEY** page 6

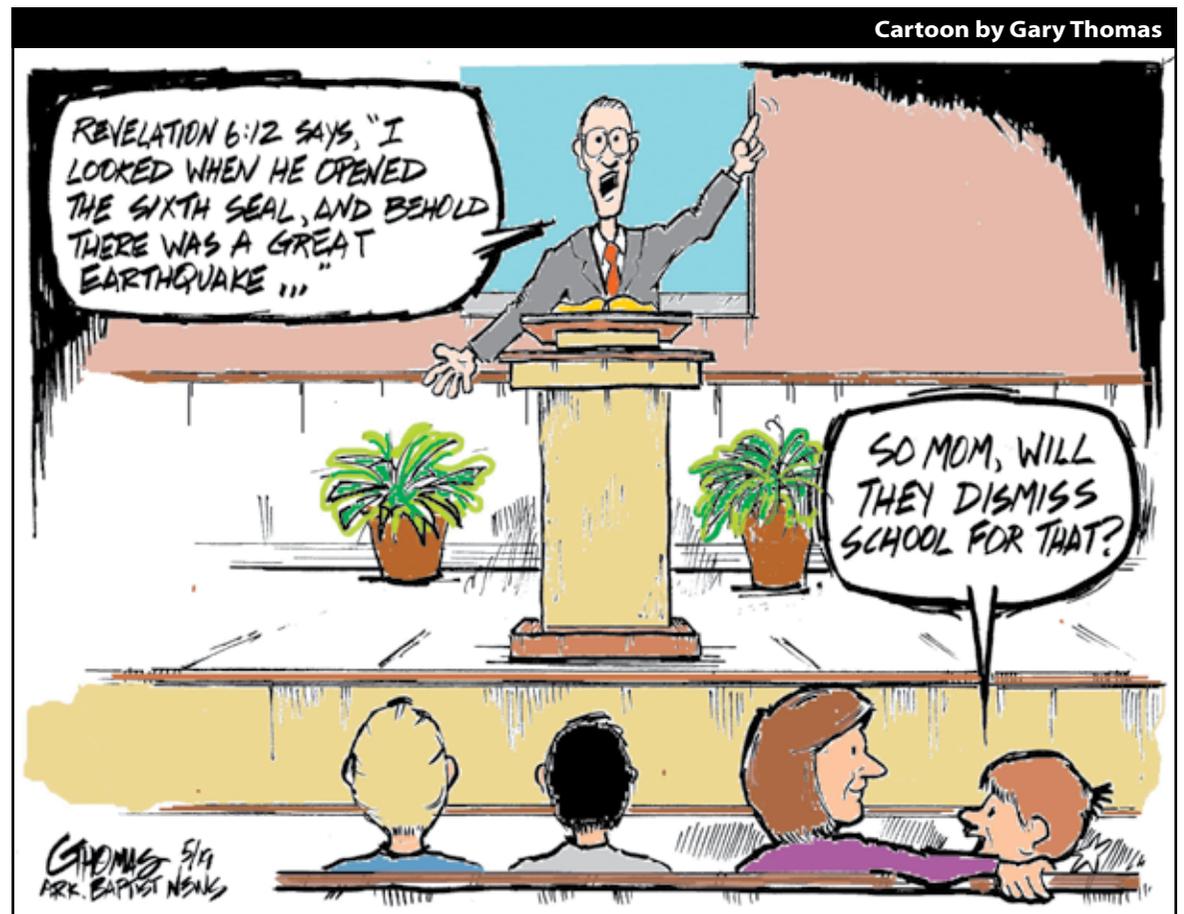


Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



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Is it OK for Christians to have doubts in their faith?

When Christians begin their journeys with God, there is certainty in their decisions and joy in their lives. It is often assumed that this certainty always accompanies believers. However, the longer a Christian walks with God, the deeper the journey becomes. What was once an “easy faith” often becomes hard to believe.

Several individuals in the Old Testament went through times of doubt. Abraham doubted how God would give him a son at such an old age (Gen. 17). As Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to the Jordan River, he often questioned and challenged God. Elijah (1 Kings 19) and Jeremiah (Jer. 12) doubted their safety while serving God.

New Testament individuals also went through times of doubt. Peter doubted Jesus while on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:31). A father, whose son had an evil spirit, doubted that Jesus could heal him (Mark 9:24). Thomas initially doubted Jesus’ resurrection because he did not receive the same evidence that the other disciples received (John 20:25). John the Baptist, who received the Holy Spirit before birth, even had doubts. He had his disciples ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Luke 7:20, ESV).

All of these individuals had doubts as they went through difficult situations or “crises of faith.” Although they already had faith in God, their life situations challenged them to move deeper in their faith than they previously had done. Habakkuk is a great example of such a crisis.

After praying earnestly that God would deal with Judah’s rebellion and sin, God informed Habakkuk that he was sending the Babylonians to invade the land. Habakkuk was upset at God’s plan; the Babylonians were more rebellious than the people of Judah! While he wavered in his faith and questioned God’s plan, God reminded him that the righteous would live by their faith (Hab. 2:4). When Habakkuk remembered the great things that God had done for Israel, he trusted what God was going to do. Habakkuk remembered that he could not depend upon what he saw or how he felt. He had to remember what he knew about God (Hab. 3:16-18).

The Christian journey is often tough, and most believers go through times of doubt. Theologian Paul Tillich reminded Christians that doubt is not the opposite of faith; rather, it is an element of faith. Doubt allows Christians to deepen their faith with God, for it gives them the opportunity to trust God all the more. As tough as some life events can be, they do allow Christians to trust God in a greater way than ever before.

Ken Gore is professor of biblical studies at Dallas Baptist University. Send your questions to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Letter to the Editor

SWBTS stained glass

The April 25 edition of the *Arkansas Baptist News* informed us that Southwestern Seminary recently removed the stained-glass windows from the MacGorman Chapel on campus. Normally stained-glass windows of a church or chapel would depict scenes from the life of Jesus or the Bible. These stained-glass windows

were there to pay homage to leaders of the conservative resurgence. Most prominently displayed were (former) Southwestern president Paige Patterson and Judge Paul Pressler. In its early days, the conservative resurgence was often referred to as the Pressler-Patterson Coalition. It is hoped the removal of these shameful

See **LETTER** page 6

Experiencing Camp Siloam

In the spring of 2014 Camp Siloam Board of Trustees adopted a 20-year master plan for Camp Siloam. Within the first five years of the master plan were two items that Camp Siloam will implement this year: paddle sports on the Illinois River and the ability to host individual campers during a week of camp.



Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie

the Lord has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?” (Job 12:7-9, NKJV).

I’m no Dr. Doolittle, but when I sit quietly and hear the birds greet the morning sun with their praise songs and I pause, captivated by the majesty of a Rocky Mountain

peak, or I lay in a field gazing at the stars, I can’t help but wonder about God.

One of our goals is to help campers disconnect from their world and experience God’s creation with members from their church. A kayak trip down a river creates memories, builds friendships, and exposes children who are captivated by the adventure of a digital world to the wonders of God’s world. Here God speaks: “But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you; Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of

Individual campers at church camp. I often hear people say, “I came to Camp Siloam as a child. My church doesn’t go to Siloam, but I would love for my child (or grandchild) to experience Camp Siloam.” I also meet people who aren’t attending church who want to send their children to Camp Siloam, but there’s not a way unless we connect them with a church. Connecting individual campers with a church is a time-consuming process, and it puts a burden on

church leaders. Starting this summer, we have set aside two cabins during two weeks of camp for individual campers. We provide college students as the cabin leaders and counselors. The dates are June 17-21 for campers under age 13 (Children’s Week featuring Jeremy Freeman) and June 24-28 for campers over age 13 (featuring Wes Hamilton). More information is available at campsiloam.com.

For campers who have completed ninth grade and above, Camp Siloam also offers a two-week discipleship program for individual campers called Servant-Core (nicknamed S-Core). If you have high school students who have come to Siloam as children, your youth attendance is too small to send a group, or if you have students in your youth group that, as a church, you would like to invest in, then consider sending them to S-Core. Scholarships are available for all of our programs.

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam in Siloam Springs.

Your will may not matter

According to the latest statistics concerning estate planning, more than 50 percent of United States citizens do not have an estate plan. This is unfortunate, given that each one of us knows that our time on this earth is temporary. Everyone needs an estate plan since we transfer every single possession in one of the following ways:

Intestate probate. This means you do not have an estate plan and the Arkansas legislature has written one for you in its statutes.

Will and/or trust. This means you have executed an estate plan during your lifetime that will effectively transfer your assets according to your intent.

Beneficiary designations. This means you have designated beneficiaries listed at a financial institution so that

asset will transfer automatically at your passing.

Despite knowledge of the inevitable, most individuals fail to execute an estate plan or fail to carry out their estate plan. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the oversights and misconceptions I’ve encountered when discussing estate planning:

1) Estate planning costs too much. Estate planning can be expensive, depending on which attorney you engage and how complicated your plan becomes. However, the costs and headaches of going through probate far exceed what you will pay for an estate plan.

2) Beneficiary designations and adding names to your accounts. Your Last Will and Testament (will) only governs the assets left in your individual name at your

passing. Generally, your will does not govern assets with joint names or that have a payable on death designation. These assets will be owned outright by the joint owner listed or designated beneficiary on that asset. Adding someone’s name to your account can cause unintended consequences for all parties involved.

3) Wills do not avoid probate. As mentioned, your will does not avoid probate. Your will only provides the court and your executor with instructions on how to administer your estate. Accordingly, your will must be submitted to the court before your executor can carry out your wishes and intent. If you want to avoid probate, you will need to utilize some type of trust instrument or beneficiary designations.

For more information about Foundation services, visit abf.org.

Dillon S. McClain is vice president and attorney at the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



Baptist Foundation

Dillon McClain

Judge rules for NAMB in case brought by former state exec.

ABERDEEN, Miss. – First Amendment legal precedent has been cited in a federal court's dismissal of a lawsuit against the North American Mission Board (NAMB) by a former executive of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

Senior Judge Glen Davidson of the U.S. District Court Northern District of Mississippi ruled April 22 that a lawsuit by Will McRaney would require the court to determine religious elements in the case.

"That the Court cannot do," Davidson wrote in a seven-page opinion.

Davidson, of the district court's division in Aberdeen, Miss., addressed the three claims that McRaney made in his April 2017 lawsuit seeking unspecified punitive damages that NAMB had: defamed him and harmed his career with the Maryland/Delaware convention as executive director, leading to his termination in 2015; harmed his ministry by cancellation of a 2016 speaking engagement in Mississippi; and caused emotional distress by posting a photo of him at NAMB's welcome desk describing him as an enemy of the mission board, which is based in Alpharetta, Ga.

Citing "ecclesiastical abstention doctrine, rooted in the First Amendment's free exercise clause," Davidson wrote, "The Court dismisses this case for lack of subject matter jurisdiction."

The doctrine is "built out

of numerous Supreme Court cases affirming that churches have the 'power to decide for themselves, free from state interference, matters of such government as those of faith and doctrine,'" Davidson wrote.

Regarding McRaney's claim that NAMB had defamed him and interfered with his employment, Davidson wrote, "Review of these claims will require the Court to determine why the BCMD fired McRaney – whether it was for a secular or religious purpose. It will require the Court to determine whether the NAMB's actions were done 'without right or justifiable cause' – in other words, whether the NAMB had a valid religious reason for its actions. That the Court cannot do."

Davidson noted the same issue with the canceled speaking engagement, stating, "That matter the Court cannot decide."

Regarding McRaney's claim of emotional distress from the photo and description as an enemy of NAMB, Davidson wrote, "Once again, to resolve these issues, the Court will need to make determinations about why the NAMB held these opinions of McRaney, and because the NAMB is a religious institution, the question will touch on matters of religious belief. The Court, therefore, finds that under the First Amendment it lacks subject matter jurisdiction to adjudicate McRaney's disputes."

The state court where McRaney initially filed suit

likewise would not be able to deliberate in such First Amendment matters, Davidson wrote. The case was transferred to federal court under a law permitting NAMB to make the request because the plaintiff and defendant were residents of different states.

In written comments, McRaney told the *Arkansas Baptist News* that he plans to appeal the ruling.

"While the judge did not rule on the merits of the case, we were stunned at the judge's reversal of his previous rulings by dismissing the case on ecclesiastical grounds. The new precedent should be sobering for all involved in voluntary partnerships with the SBC. This ruling makes acceptable under ecclesiastical protections what is unacceptable under tort law... libel, tortious threats weaponizing SBC mission dollars against a separate organization's leaders, and vindictive behaviors as they seek to resume ministry," said McRaney.

"If this ruling stands and if NAMB trustees and SBC leadership continue to abdicate their responsibility, Kevin Ezell will avoid accountability and will continue to operate in this ungodly and unlawful manner. I am not the only one Ezell has treated in this manner, harming other brothers and sisters in Christ without expression of regret or remorse. For these reasons, I will be appealing the ruling to the NAMB trustees, the courts and the public as necessary."

But in the end, God is in control, and He always has been. My journey has been a bit unexpected to me, but not to God. He had a plan all along, and I have just been along for the ride.

As I enter my fourth quarter of ministry, I can't wait to see what He has in store. One thing is certain: It won't be anything that I could have drawn up, and there might yet be a few surprises that no one – including Arkansas Baptists – would have expected.

Tim Yarbrough is the editor/executive director of the *Arkansas Baptist News*.



Arkansas Baptist disaster relief volunteers place blue tarp on the house of former ABCHomes worker Jeanie Hunt following an EF1 tornado spotted near Bergman.

Former ABCHomes worker's house damaged by tornado

BERGMAN – The Arkansas Baptist Ranch near Harrison was spared damage during an EF1 tornado that passed through the area Tuesday evening, April 30, while the home of a former Arkansas Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries (ABCHomes) worker was damaged.

"All safe at the Arkansas Baptist Ranch. No weather damage," Stella Prather, communications director at ABCHomes, said in a message to *Arkansas Baptist News* staff. "Thankful for God's provision and protection."

Prather said the house of Jeanie Hunt, former ABCHomes worker, sustained "lots of damage." Hunt was not injured.

Initially, damage to the area was believed to have been due to a severe storm that passed through the area. On Wednesday, May 1, the National Weather Service in Little Rock said the storm was actually an EF1 tornado that touched down just south of Zinc Road in Bergman in north central Arkansas.

Damage assessment of the tornado is still underway, according to the National Weather Service, with more information being released once the assessment has been completed.

The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management said the storm knocked down trees and possibly damaged numerous houses.

LETTER

continued from page 5

windows marks the end of the Babylonian captivity of Southwestern Seminary.

At last summer's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting in Dallas we witnessed the complete breakdown of our convention trustee system at Southwestern. Southwestern trustees totally failed in their responsibility of oversight and allowed the seminary under the leadership of Patterson to descend into financial distress, mismanagement and theological ambiguity. While faculty and staff were being dismissed for financial reasons, millions of dollars were being spent on an on-campus retirement mansion for the Pattersons as well as this stained-glass temple built to venerate Patterson and his political allies. Embarrass-

ment caused by this display of sacrilege forced the trustees to remove the stained-glass windows.

Many Arkansas pastors can remember the Southwestern presidency of men like Robert Naylor and Russell Dilday when Southwestern attracted students from throughout the SBC who wanted a theologically conservative Bible-based seminary education resulting in a full-time enrollment of over 4,000. Under the oversight of recent trustees and the leadership of Paige Patterson the enrollment has dropped to a full-time enrollment of 1,200 students while the seminary has become known more for its politics than its theology. Southwestern trustees should issue a statement of repentance and ask for forgiveness at this year's annual meeting.

Ron West
Little Rock

JOURNEY

continued from page 4

tegic plan that I hoped would put the news service on solid financial ground and preserve its mission to inform, inspire and involve Arkansas Baptists as a semi-independent arm of the state convention.

The challenges were numerous, but the first phase was completed in 2016 – fueled by hard work – to reduce overhead costs and raise advertising revenue.

Ironically, 2016 was the same year the Budget For-

mula Study Committee of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) recommended a 40 percent reduction in Cooperative Program funds provided to the *Arkansas Baptist News* by the year 2022. The reduction to the newspaper's funding was equal to the combined total reduction of the other five ABSC agencies: the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Camp Siloam, Williams Baptist University, Ouachita Baptist University and the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

So the challenges continue, and the obstacles are many.

SBC 2019

continued from page one

Board of Missions to mobilize 400 teams of volunteers to knock on doors in the metro Birmingham area.

Elections

Greear is expected to be nominated by Pennsylvania pastor K. Marshall Williams for a second term. He is currently unopposed.

SBC app

The SBC Annual Meetings mobile app is now available, and includes a listing of speakers for the SBC Pastors' Conference and annual meeting, as well as the daily program schedule, daily events, exhibitor listing, convention center maps, interactive map of the exhibit hall and 2019 Book of Reports. The app may be downloaded in iOS and Android versions by visiting the respective app stores.

Sex abuse panel

Prior to the SBC meeting Monday, June 10, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission will co-host with the Sexual Abuse Presidential Advisory Study a public conversation at 9 p.m. Greear initiated the study last year and is working with the ERLC to help congregations prevent sex abuse and minister to survivors of such abuse. The event, "Sexual Abuse and the Southern Baptist Convention," will be at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex.

Proposals

Messengers gathering in Birmingham will consider a variety of recommendations during the annual meeting. Among them:

- A recommendation of an amendment to the SBC Con-

stitution stating churches are not "in friendly cooperation with the Convention" if they "have evidenced indifference in addressing sexual abuse." To take effect, the amendment would need two-thirds approval at both the 2019 and 2020 annual meetings.

- A recommendation of an SBC constitutional amendment specifying racial discrimination as a basis to disfellowship a church. The proposed amendment would add a section to Article III of the SBC Constitution, specifying a cooperating church as one that "has not acted to affirm, approve, or endorse discriminatory behavior on the basis of ethnicity."

More highlights

- Women attending the annual meeting in Birmingham are invited to an SBC Women's Session, a Ministers' Wives Luncheon, and a women's expo at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex.

This year, all women across the SBC are invited to participate in a "Women's Session" at 9 a.m. on Monday, June 10, during the SBC Pastors' Conference. The three-hour event, which replaces the former Pastors' Wives Conference, will feature the newly launched SBC Women's Leadership Network (WLN). The event is "a collaborative community of women from the Southern Baptist Convention family who long to lead in diverse ways to significantly impact the Kingdom of God," according to the sbwomen.net website. The event is free, and no registration is required.



- The IMB will host a missionary Sending Celebration Tuesday afternoon, June 11, during the SBC meeting. Attendees will hear testimonies from current IMB missionaries as well as new missionary appointees.

- NAMB will host its annual Send Luncheon in the concert hall at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex at 11:45 a.m. on Monday, June 10.

- Attendees of this year's SBC Pastors' Conference will hear personal testimonies from speakers on living out "kingdom character," the theme of this year's event. Conference preachers will examine the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, while focusing on a Scripture exemplified in their own life, said Pastors' Conference President Danny Wood. The event will convene June 9-10.

- Prior to the WMU Missions Celebration, Woman's Missionary Union will host an Acteens for Life dinner at its national WMU facility at 6 p.m. on Friday, June 7. The event will mark 50 years of lives changed through Acteens. The gathering is for all women whose lives have been impacted through Acteens in their teenage years,

as well as current and former leaders of Acteens.

- The Cooperative Program Stage and Platform once again will be located between the IMB and NAMB booths in the exhibit hall. The panels will include newly elected presidents of three SBC entities - Ronnie Floyd, SBC Executive Committee; Adam Greenway, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Paul Chitwood, IMB. The panels will be held Monday through Wednesday throughout the day, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Registration

Messengers may register online at sbannualmeeting.net/sbc19 under the Messengers tab. Messengers, exhibitors and invited guests need to be registered and properly badged for entrance into the general sessions June 11-12. After completing online registration, each individual will receive an eight-digit registration code to present at the annual meeting's express registration lane. There, the registration

code can be entered into a computer, and a nametag will be printed.

Resolutions

Messengers planning to propose resolutions must submit them no later than 15 days prior to the annual meeting. Detailed guidelines on submitting resolutions are available at sbannualmeeting.net/sbc19 under the Messengers tab. Resolutions may be submitted online but must be followed up by a letter of credentials from the submitter's church.

Children & students

Child care is available for infants through age 12 during the SBC Pastors' Conference June 9-10 and the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting June 11-12 and for grades 7-12 during the annual meeting June 11-12. All activities for children/youth will be housed at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex.

There will be no on-site registration for the children's and youth programs.



Arkansans to be nominated for service at SBC Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Arkansas Baptists have been nominated to serve with six different Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) committees and boards.

The 2019 SBC Committee on Nominations recommendations will serve if elected by messengers to the SBC Annual Meeting June 11-12 in Birmingham, Ala.

Nominated to serve on the SBC Executive Committee for a second term is Harry "Archie" Mason, senior pastor of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro.

Nominated to serve on the International Mission Board Board of Trustees is James W. "Wes" George, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rogers, and

Lisa A. Lovell of Fayetteville.

Nominated to serve on the North American Mission Board Board of Trustees for a second term is Eric L. Brown of Jonesboro.

Nominated to serve on LifeWay Christian Resources Board of Trustees is Douglas W. Falknor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fayetteville.

Nominated to serve on Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Trustees is Richard B. "Brad" Lewter, pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith.

Nominated to serve on Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Trustees is Jeffery L. Dial, pastor of Life Line Baptist Church, Little Rock.



Six professions of faith made at Sproing! event

Jason Wilkie
Camp Siloam

SILOAM SPRINGS - "But God..." is a little phrase in Ephesians 2:4 with infinite possibility and hope. This phrase has carried Jeremy Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church in New Castle, Okla., and his family through difficult trials and the refining fires of God the Father.

The Freeman's trials have been Job-like. After Jeremy Freeman and his wife lost a 7-year-old son, Trey Freeman, to cancer in 2013, their oldest son's car was hit broadside by a semi-truck going full speed on a rainy night in Oklahoma City. On that night in December 2017, Caleb Freeman should have died, but God...

The Freeman family's path in life has not been easy. It's not what they would have chosen, but it is the race God laid out for them. The race is the message Jeremy Freeman talked about at Sproing! a children's retreat held at Camp Siloam April 4-6.

Using Acts 20:22-24 (NKJV), Jeremy Freeman talked about doing what God has called us to do even though it may be difficult. Acts 20:22-24 says, "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But

none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

Sproing! is designed to get first-time campers ready for summer camp. The keynote speaker this year was Jeremy Freeman, the son of well-known evangelist Ken Freeman. He used the story God has been authoring in his family to connect with campers, help them see the need for God and to run the race God has laid out for them, even though that race may get difficult.

"People think, 'If I become a Christian, life will become easier,'" Jeremy Freeman told campers. "I wanna tell you something. When you begin to follow Jesus, life often gets a little bit harder."

"I want to introduce you to my life," said Jeremy Freeman in his first sermon of the retreat. "Six years ago, my 7-year-old son passed away. He had cancer. Trey was awesome. Then, about 16 months ago, my 16-year-old son was on the way to a basketball game with his brother, Clayton, and he hydroplaned into oncoming traffic on I-35. That night he suffered such an injury that rescue workers had called in a fatality team because they assumed he wouldn't live."



Children run during a game at Camp Siloam. The camp's Sproing! event was held April 4-6. Camp Siloam photos

Jeremy Freeman told about how his son survived the wreck but was in a coma for eight weeks and has been recovering ever since. He also told the campers how Trey Freeman courageously faced death, but contemplated his salvation in the process.

Jeremy Freeman said, "It took me a long time to talk about it because it was so raw and personal; I almost couldn't do it. I would get so emotional, and then I would feel bad about it because I don't want this to be about me. So, one of the things I pray every time I share Trey and Caleb's story is, 'Let the story point people to You.'"

Jeremy Freeman's family story wasn't about him this

weekend; the campers were gripped by his children's stories. Six campers were moved to make professions of faith during the weekend. "Trey's story is so powerful, and it resonates with younger kids. Why wouldn't I tell his story?" said Jeremy Freeman. "I want Trey to meet a lot of people in heaven who are there because they heard his (Trey's) story," he said. "I often think about that, like tonight, when people give their life to Jesus."

Sproing! continues to be a retreat that is reaching children for the kingdom and connecting children with their church. Josh Kimbrell, children's pastor at First Baptist Church, Greenwood, said, "Time after time, I see our kids hear from

the Lord in this moment (at Camp Siloam)."

"I love kids. I have six kids of my own. I feel like I'm able to speak 'kid.' But the other thing is, I get great joy out of talking to kids because they listen. They take your word as gospel truth, which is why you've got to preach the Word, because they'll take in what you say."

An Oklahoma City director heard about Caleb Freeman's story and is making a documentary on the family's journey. You can see more of the Freeman's story and trailers for the movie at facebook.com/prayforcalebfreeman.

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam.

Sam Moore Evangelistic Ministries

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Downs, longtime Ouachita professor, dies at 87

ARKADELPHIA - William D. Downs Jr., 87, of Arkadelphia, longtime professor of communications at Ouachita Baptist University (OBU), died April 20.

Downs retired from OBU as professor emeritus of communications in 2007 after serving for 41 years. While at the university, he served as director of public relations, professor and chair of the department of communications and adviser to the school newspaper and yearbook.

His early career in public relations included work with the March of Dimes, Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and Canteen Corporation of America.

Downs was director of the Arkansas High School Press Association for 25 years and was instrumental in the development and enactment of the

Arkansas Student Press Law, which established a framework of freedom of expression for Arkansas high school newspapers.

He served as president of the Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce, director of the Clark County United Way, member of the Rotary Club of Arkadelphia and chairman of the Arkansas Television Network Commission.

Downs also was a Sunday school teacher and deacon at First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.

He was honored with numerous awards, including the Gold Key Award from Columbia Scholastic Press Association, a Pioneer Award from the Associated Collegiate Press, a Distinguished Yearbook Adviser Award from the National Council for College Publication Advisers (now College Media Association) and the

1996 Distinguished Educator of the Year Award by the Arkansas Advertising Federation.

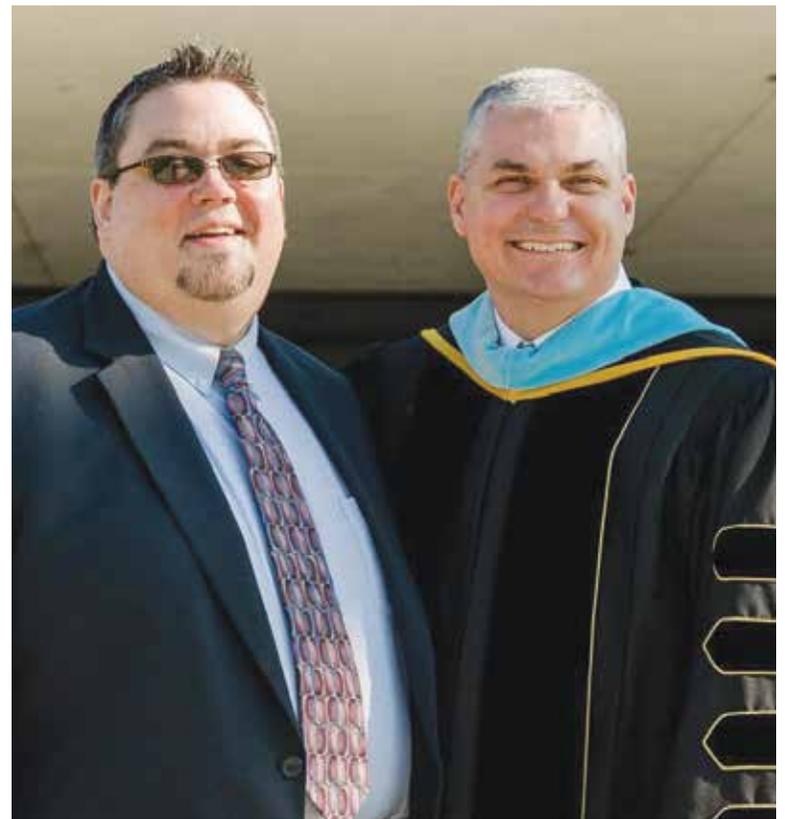
Downs was the author of two books. "The Fighting Tigers" tells the stories of the lives and deaths of the 36 Ouachitonians whose names are engraved on Ouachita's World War II memorial. In 2011, Downs published "Stories of Survival: Arkansas Farmers During the Great Depression." The book was based on interviews of farm families across the state and recounts how these families survived the hardships of natural disasters and economic collapse with extraordinary faith, resourcefulness and a sense of humor.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Jean Estelle Downs, and is survived by his wife, Vera Prince Downs; three sons and two grandchildren.

A memorial service was held April 25 at First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.



Downs



MOFFETT PREACHES INAUGURAL MESSAGE - Eric Moffett, (left), pastor of First Baptist Church, Pocahontas, preached the inaugural message for Eric A. Turner, president of Southwest Baptist University (SBU) in Bolivar, Mo., April 26. Turner worked in fundraising academics and accreditation at Williams Baptist University in Walnut Ridge for 17 years before becoming president of Black River Technical College (BRTC) in Pocahontas in 2014. He is the 25th president of SBU.

Leadership Profile for 2019 ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2019 Arkansas Baptist State Convention invite Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons to that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards. This recommendation will not ensure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting in June and needs all recommendations no later than June 1. Members of the committee are: Paul White, chairman; Erby Burgess, Doug Falknor, Dave Hughey, Chris Johnson, Mark Roberts, Tad Rogers, Mac Stroud, and Wade Totty.

June 1 is the deadline for recommendations.

PLEASE PRINT

Nominee _____
 Minister Layperson Occupation _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Member of what church? _____
 Association _____

Current leadership responsibilities

Professional _____
 Civic _____
 Church _____
 Association _____
 State or SBC Boards _____

Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards _____
 Association _____
 Local Church _____

**MAIL THIS FORM TO: Connie McCall, c/o Executive Director's Office,
 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204
 or fax to 501-410-1603.**

Personal

This person's greatest contributions, based on his or her past record, knowledge and experience, should be in the area of: _____
 Is this person currently active in a local church? Yes No
 Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? Yes No
 On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the Cooperative Program? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (10 being the highest rating)

Check the board or committee on which you believe this person could best serve.

Board of Trustees

- Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries
- Arkansas Baptist Foundation
- Arkansas Baptist News
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Memphis, Tenn.
- Camp Siloam
- Executive Board of the ABSC
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Williams Baptist University

Committees

- Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- Convention Program Committee

Print Name _____
(Name of person making recommendation)
 Signature _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Editor's Note: The Arkansas Baptist News would love to share your church news with the state. Send your information to sarah@arkansasbaptist.org or call 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5153. Please submit information three weeks prior to the event.

Obituaries

Joyce M. Smith, 87, of Cherokee Village, died April 14.

Smith was a member of Myron Baptist Church and served as a pianist and organist.

She is survived by her husband, two sons, one daughter, 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held April 16 at Myron Baptist Church.

Alvin Wiles, 86, of Sidney, died April 18.

Wiles pastored several churches during his 68 years of ministry. He also served as a teacher and elementary principal for 34 years.

He is survived by his child, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The funeral was April 22 at Sidney Baptist Church followed by burial at Finley Creek Cemetery.

Jimmy Burks, 89, of Camden, died April 23.

Burks was a former pastor of Cullendale First Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife and a brother.

Burks is survived by one son, two daughters, four

grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, one brother and one sister.

The funeral was held April 27 at First Baptist Church, Cullendale, followed by burial in Bethesda Cemetery.

Baptist life

Mississippi County Baptist Association (MCBA) will host a golf tournament at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, May 25, at Osceola Country Club. The evangelistic event will include prizes, lunch and a free golf club. Call Osceola Country Club to sign up at 870-563-6218 by May 20.

Church life

First Baptist Church, Sherwood, will host free movie Saturdays during the month of May. The church will show "Mary Poppins Returns" May 11, "The Princess Bride" May 18 and "Incredibles 2" May 25. Activities begin at 7 p.m. in the church parking lot, with movies at sundown. Popcorn and water will be provided.

FBC, Ashdown, celebrates 125 years of ministry

ASHDOWN – The year was 1894. Grover Cleveland was president of the 44 states in America, and Coca-Cola was only sold in a bottle. It was in this year that a small group of believers organized what would become First Baptist Church of Ashdown.

Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Mount Vernon, will host a women's conference at 5 p.m., Saturday, June 22. Andrea Lennon, women's ministry specialist at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and founder of True Vine Ministry, will be the guest speaker. For more information visit mtvernonbaptist.ticketspice.com/womensconference.

On the move

Chris Neaveill is serving as associate pastor of families, youth and children at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Hudson, N.C. He was previously serving at First Baptist Church, Osceola.

On Sunday, April 28, the church celebrated its 125 years of ministry to the community of Ashdown.

"The significance of our hitting this important milestone is a testimony to the continuing ministries of our church family," said Butch Riddle, pastor. "We have sent several of our members to the mission field and currently have a family serving with the International Mission Board."

The celebration included historical recollections, hymns from each generation, and a sermon from Robby Sherman, associational missionary for Little River Baptist Association.

"The future plans for our church coincide with the history of our church: to love God and love each other while reaching our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth with the good news of Jesus," said Riddle. "I can't wait to see what God has in store for us in the years ahead!"



First Baptist Church has ministered to the Ashdown community since 1894.

You may be the One!

The Baptist Ranch, Harrison, is seeking a houseparent couple.

This full-time position includes salary, housing, medical and life insurance, training, annuity after one year, and paid leave. If you're looking for a ministry working with a great group of children and teens, contact: Roger Langlie at (870) 741-5784 or rlanglie@arkansasfamilies.org

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Classifieds

PASTOR

Bella Vista Baptist Church of Bella Vista, AR, is seeking a **senior pastor** to shepherd a loving congregation in Northwest Arkansas. Contact Renee Estes, restes@bvbaptist.com. 479-855-3748.

Wyandotte Baptist Church seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to Pulpit Search Committee, PO Box 216, Wyandotte, OK 74370.

FBC, Ash Flat, seeking **bi-vocational pastor** for a small congregation. Contact Carl Fuller, 870-994-2139 or mail resume to FBC, PO Box 335, Ash Flat, AR 72513.

Saltillo Heights Baptist Church in Conway, AR, seeking **full-time or bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to westk28@gmail.com.

Witt's Chapel Baptist Church in Maynard, AR, is seeking a **pastor**. Send resumes and references to: David Byers, 1340 Legate Road, Maynard, AR 72444.

Bigelow Baptist Church, Bigelow, AR, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to brandonrakridge@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church, Hector, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume to 801 East 16th Street, Russellville, AR 72801, or email: arvba@suddenlink.net.

East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, AR, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. Please mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, East Side Baptist Church, 529 E. Court Street, Paragould, AR 72450, or email resumes to: brichey@connect2eastside.com. You may also include a sermon DVD or a link to a sermon video/audio.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Baring Cross Baptist Church, Sherwood, is looking for a responsible **custodian** to clean our facilities. This is part time 20 hours a week. Must pass a background check and provide references. Please contact 501-833-2347 or email bcbariane@sbcglobal.net for more information.

First Baptist Church, Lowell, is seeking a **full-time youth pastor**. Send resumes to rob@fbclowell.com or mail to P.O. Box 246, Lowell, AR 72745.

First Baptist Church, Hardy, seeking **part-time worship leader** for congregational singing and adult choir. Send resume, inquiry to PO Box 27, Hardy, AR 72542, 870-856-3767.

First Baptist Church, Pottsville, is seeking a **bi-vocational youth minister**. Send re-

sume to pastorjimhuffman@gmail.com or by mail to PO Box 153, Pottsville, AR 72858.

FBC McAlester, OK, is seeking a **FT worship/media pastor**. Please see our website for more information and to submit resume.

First Baptist Church, Lepanto, Arkansas, is seeking a **F/T youth pastor**. Parsonage provided. You may e-mail resume to kyle@fbclepanto.com or mail to First Baptist Church, PO Box 400, Lepanto, AR 72354.

Cocklebur Baptist, Ward, AR, is prayerfully seeking **part-time worship leader**. Accepting resumes until June 1. Email resumes to cbc4138@gmail.com or mail to Attn: Worship Leader Search Comm., 4138 Cocklebur Rd, Ward, AR 72176.

North Central Baptist Association is seeking a **full-time associational missionary**. Send resumes to ncbaclinton@gmail.com or mail to: NCBA, 268 Main St., Clinton, AR 72031.

Glendale Baptist Church, Booneville, is seeking a **full-time minister to students**. For more information visit our website at www.glendalebc.org.

South Main Baptist Church, Crossett, is seeking a **bi-vocational youth pastor**. Send resume to: smbcsecretary@windstream.net or PO Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635.

Perryville FBC is seeking a **bi-vocational music director**. Send resumes to pvfbc.church@gmail.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

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MAY 12, 2019

What would you say is the most momentous event in history? An American might answer the American Revolution. A German might answer the bringing down of the Berlin Wall. For an Egyptian, it may be the discovery of the intact tomb of Egypt's most famous king, Tutankhamun. Many Christians would answer the Reformation.

The most momentous event in history hasn't occurred yet: the Second Coming of Christ. The Second Coming of Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. The late Princeton theologian Charles R. Erdman said the Second Coming of Christ "is embodied in hymns of hope; it forms the climax of the creeds; it is the sublime motive for evangelistic and missionary activity; and daily it is voiced in the inspired prayer: 'Even so: Come, Lord Jesus.'"

There are unprecedented signs that will accompany His coming. The sun, moon and stars will no longer shine (Mark 13:24-25). The very cosmos will be impacted (Mark 13:25). This is not what

makes this event the most momentous. Unlike His first coming, His return will be seen by everyone as He comes "in great power and glory" (Rev. 1:7; Mark 13:26). Angels will be sent out to gather the saints (Mark 13:27). Sadly, for some it will be a time of judgment.

Jesus used an illustration of the fig tree to assure His disciples He would return and establish His eternal kingdom. Just as winter gives way to spring, spring is a sign that summer is coming. Jesus reminded them to stay alert because no one knows the time of His coming (Mark 13:33). Jesus is coming back, and when He does it will be sudden. We do not want to be like the doorkeeper who has fallen asleep (Mark 13:34-36). Christ-followers must remain faithful and vigilant.

The promise of His return should motivate us to be vigilant about our personal evangelism and missionary efforts to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. May it be our prayer, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Promises

MARK 13:24-37 (HCSB)

The pastor explained to the congregation, just before the offertory prayer, that you really haven't given unless you give until it hurts. After the offertory, he preached a sermon titled "Jesus Helps the Hurting."

The idea of sacrifice in the Bible indicates that whatever is being offered comes at a cost. In the culture, and even in the Church, we tend to use "cost" and "sacrifice" synonymously. In reality, we can pay for a lot of things while sacrificing very little.

Jesus was in Bethany having a meal at the house of Simon. While Jesus was reclining at the table, an unidentified woman came in with a jar of very expensive perfume that cost about a year's salary. John identified this woman as Mary, sister to Martha and Lazarus (John 12:2). She broke the seal and poured the contents on Jesus' head. This was a public demonstration of a sacrifice of extravagant love.

The disciples criticized her, saying the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. When they

began to scold her, Jesus told them to leave her alone. He gave Mary's act of extravagant love a prophetic and symbolic significance. She had anointed His body for burial. Mary stood in stark contrast to Judas who would betray Him and Peter who would deny Him.

The Passover meal with His disciples, Judas' upcoming betrayal, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the prediction of Peter's denial probably contributed to Jesus' soul being "distressed and horrified" ... "to the point of death" (Mark 14:33-34).

In Gethsemane, while Jesus struggled for the souls of men, His disciples slept. Mary had prepared His body for burial, and now in prayer He prepared Himself spiritually. He prayed three times for the cup to be removed. He agonized over the cup of passion all alone. Jesus prayed, "Not what I will, but what You will" (14:36). He awakened them and said, "Enough! The time has come" (14:41). The issue was settled; He was prepared to bear the sins of the world.

In his book "Follow Me," David Platt states, "Ultimately the call to follow Jesus is a call to die - to die to ourselves and to die to the things of this world. But at the same time, it is a call to live - to experience unbridled joy as we follow Jesus wherever he leads in this world." This lesson forces us to examine and measure our commitment to God. The commitment to follow Christ is serious, and one must count the cost.

A man came up to Jesus and said to Him, "I will follow You wherever you go!" (Luke 9:57). Jesus responded, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head" (Luke 9:58). Matthew tells us this man was a scribe (Matt. 8:19). This is an important detail because the scribes were known to question Christ and His message (Mark 2:6-7).

Jesus said to a second man, "Follow Me" (Luke 9:59). This man wanted to first go home and bury his father. Both

the man and Jesus were using proverbial sayings. The man wanted to go home and take care of his father until he died. Jesus was saying the spiritually dead should bury the physically dead. The most important thing is to spread the news of the kingdom of God.

The third would-be disciple wanted to go home and tell his family goodbye first. Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Looking back will cause crooked furrows. The word "fit" is the Greek word *eutbetos*, meaning "ready for use." We must be ready for the Master's use. Looking back will keep us from the demanding challenges of the present and the future.

We can always find excuses to resist a commitment to Christ. A commitment to Christ takes precedence over all other commitments. We must surrender all excuses and follow Him.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Let the dead bury their dead

LUKE 9:57-62 (HCSB)

MAY 19, 2019

The more Jesus isolated religious leaders, the larger the crowds that followed Him became. The crowds were probably excited, enthusiastic and expectant. Some wanted to see some grand miracle. Some wanted to hear great teaching. Some wanted to be fed - physically or spiritually. Some wanted to see Him spar with the religious leaders. Some hoped He was the revolutionary warrior Messiah who would overthrow Rome and set up a Davidic kingdom.

Jesus knew most of the crowd had no interest in spiritual things or making a lifelong commitment. To spread the good news of the kingdom and to build the kingdom require followers who are serious about discipleship.

Jesus made it perfectly clear that, when it comes to personal discipleship, quality is preferred over quantity. This crowd would have to count the cost. They would have to make a decision if they could pay the price. We must make note that salvation and discipleship are not the same thing. The invitation to salvation is available to all. Discipleship is

for those who can count the cost and pay the price. Bible scholar Warren Wiersbe says it like this, "Salvation means coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, while discipleship means carrying the cross and following Jesus Christ."

Jesus needed to thin the crowd. He turned to the multitude and preached a sermon that would do just that. Most Bible scholars agree that the word "hate" is not used in an antagonistic way. The Greek lexicon applies the signification as "loving less." This means that we must love Jesus supremely over our love for family, friends or self.

If we are to be His disciples, we must carry our cross and follow Him. Carrying our cross is identifying constantly with Christ's shame and suffering and surrendering to the Father's will. Whether we are building a tower, going to war, or being salt in the world, we must count the cost. Jesus said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Will you stay in the crowd, or will you be His disciple?

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Prepares

MARK 14:3-11, 32-36 (HCSB)

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Hate your family

LUKE 14:25-35 (HCSB)

Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

Gerald Nash is a registered respiratory therapist and EEG technician at St. Mary's Regional Health System in Russellville. He is involved in medical research, determining antibiotic resistance in tuberculosis. Nash leads a small group and is involved in many ministries at Second Baptist Church, Conway. He has attended several universities and seminaries, including Williams Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His degrees include a bachelor of arts in Christian ministries, master of arts and doctor of ministry in pastoral studies, and master of arts in theological studies. He is currently studying archaeology and paleography and volunteers on the Cairo Geniza Project, deciphering and analyzing ancient Greek and Arabic documents. Nash enjoys reading, bass fishing and spending time with his family. He and his wife, Mary Ann, love to travel, explore ancient ruins and go on wild animal safaris.



Inside:

- IMB VP of communications resigns
- Clergy applaud LR congregations study
- Child abuse awareness and prevention
- The gospel versus cultural Christianity
- Ballard celebrated for 60 years of ministry

SWBTS removes stained glass

Southwestern removes and relocates windows honoring CR leaders

page 2



Cabot runner reaches goal:

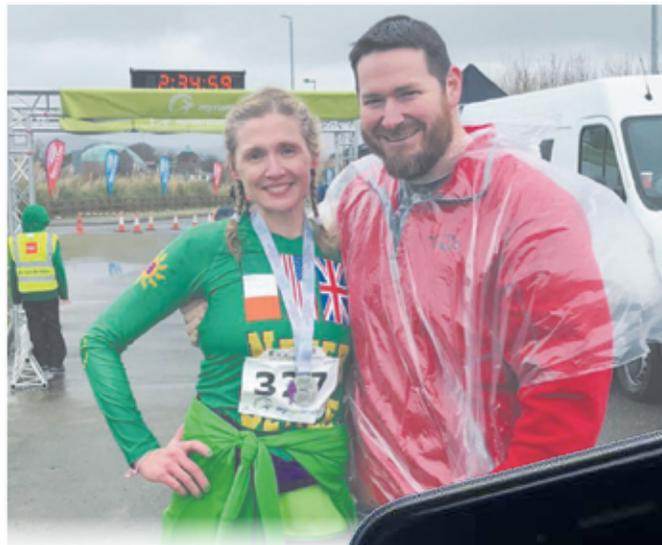
'Made perfect in weakness'

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

CABOT - "Anyone who knows me knows I love to run," said Laranda Burrow. "It's just something in my blood."

For the next two years, Laranda Burrow sought help and advice from other professionals. Her new goal was to get her body back to where she could safely run.

She tried Rolf therapy, a mix between physical therapy and massage that releases



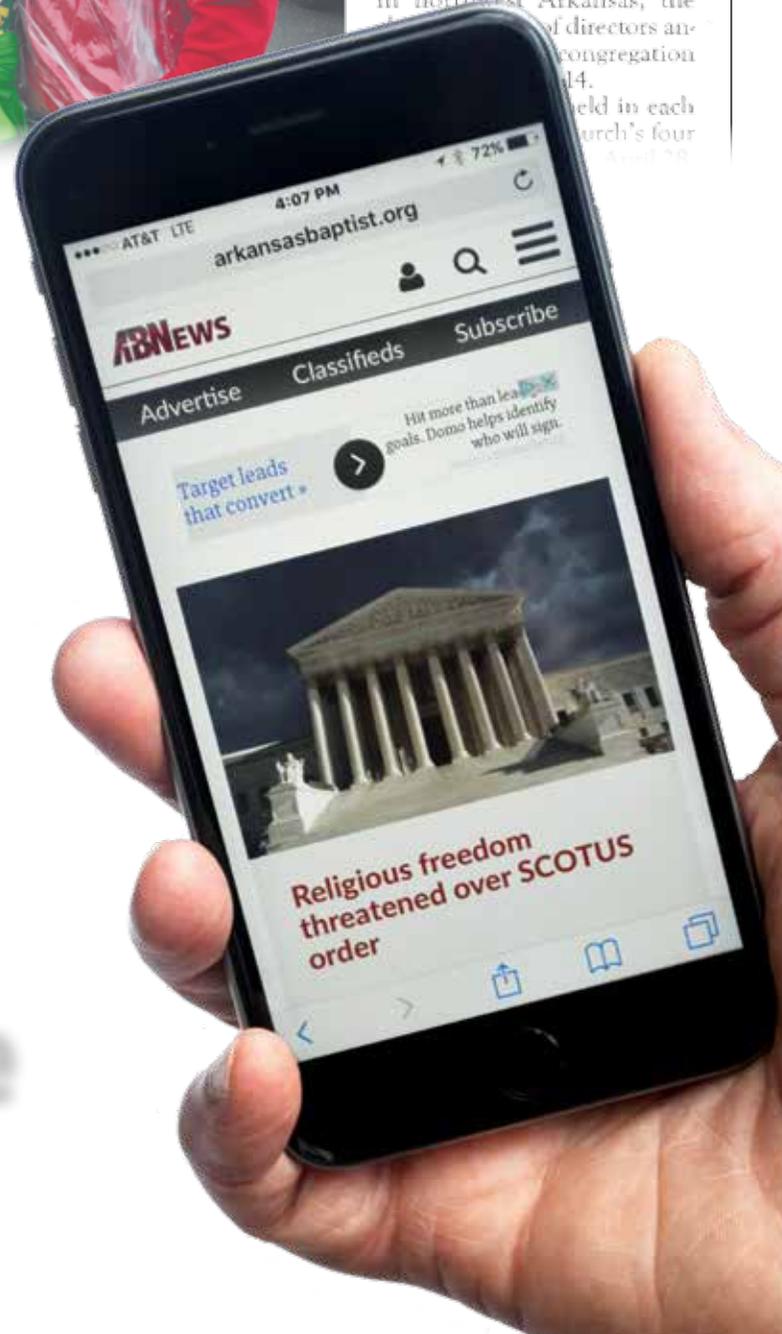
Nick Floyd nominated to lead Cross Church

SPRINGDALE - Nick Floyd has been nominated as senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, the first of directors and congregation members. The church's four

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